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Train surfing: the Soweto pastime

Moroke, Mapule Sheena

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University of the Witwatersrand

School of Human and Community Development

Discipline of Psychology

MASTERS RESEARCH REPORT

Train Surfing: The Soweto Pastime

Mapule Sheena Moroke

697333

Community Based-Counselling Masters

SUPERVISOR: Prof. Tanya Graham

A Research Report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters in Community Based-Counselling Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand

DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Community-Based Counselling Psychology in the Discipline of Psychology,
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

July 2015

The author herby declares that this whole thesis or dissertation, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is her own original work.

_____

Mapule Sheena Moroke

Masters in Community-Based Counselling Psychology

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Abstract

Train surfing or staff riding has been a part of the South African working-class economic fabric since the initiation of segregation under apartheid. Now within contemporary society the activity has gained great media attention due to the fatalities that are so commonly associated with it. Despite it being a globally and locally longstanding activity it is still an area that is under-researched. The current study was aimed at exploring the growing phenomenon and how it is constructed by youth in Soweto. A total of 32 adolescent boys and girls between the ages of 18 and 21 were recruited from a public secondary school in Orlando West, Soweto, to take part in one of four focus groups. The participants' responses from the focus group discussions were recorded then analysed using thematic content analysis. Emerging themes, including what it means to be an adolescent living in Soweto post-apartheid, what adolescents now consider having fun, and what they consider to be risky behaviour, were explored in the data analysis. In addition, alternative growing phenomena within Soweto were identified, namely biking and drag-racing. Evident from the analysis was the pressure felt and experienced by adolescents, especially by male adolescents within society and the school environment to fit in to popular constructions of a growing adult and the constructions of hegemonic masculinity in contemporary South Africa. It was also found that the train surfing participants used the practice as a means to define their identity as young, black males living in South Africa. However, as much as some of the accounts of the reasons behind risky behaviours were in line with hegemonic constructions of masculinity, also revealed were the alternative and opposing voices which appeared to be tense with emotional, personal and social sacrifices. This fluidity of identity was explored through the various components of identity such as race, class and gender that all interact within the context of Soweto and results in differing adolescent identity constructions, such as, the ambitious and inspired, as well as the risk-taking train surfers who are described as being 'in limbo'. The research concludes by shifting contemporary understanding of the phenomenon from one of thrill seeking to a performance of identity and masculinity that is influenced by race, class, and gender.

Keywords: adolescents, class, gender, identity, race, risk-taking, train surfing.

List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Virus
GDE	Government Department of Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NIAA	National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SIT	Social identity theory
TCA	Thematic content analysis
TPB	Theory of planned behaviour
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF ORGINALITY **i**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS **ii**

ABSTRACT **iii**

TABLE OF CONTENTS **iv**

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE **1**

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Background of Study 1

1.3 Rationale 2

1.4 Aims of the Study 6

1.5 Format of the Report 6

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK **7**

2.1 Introduction 7

2.2 Identity development in adolescents 7

2.2.1 Defining identity 7

2.1.2 Erik Erikson's stages of identity 8

2.2.3 Adolescence identity development 11

2.2.4 Identity as shaped by gender 12

2.2.5 Identity as shaped by race and ethnicity 14

2.2.6 Adolescent identify development within the context of South Africa 17

2.2.7 Social identity theory 20

2.3 Masculinity 21

2.3.1 The definition of masculinity 22

2.3.2 Hegemonic masculinity 23

2.3.3 Subordinate masculinities 26

2.3.4 Masculinities within the context of South Africa – past and present 28

2.3.5 Masculinities: adolescents, boys and young men 32

2.4 Conclusion 37

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW 39

3.1 Introduction 39

3.2 Risk-taking behaviour 39

3.2.1 Risky sexual behaviour 42

3.2.2. Alcohol abuse: binge drinking 43

3.2.3 Substance abuse: drug use 44

3.2.4 The allied risk-taking behaviours 45

3.2.5 Perception of risk 46

3.2.6 Factors contributing to adolescent vulnerability to risk-taking behaviours 46

3.2.6.1 Biological/hormonal factors 47

3.3.6.2 Environmental and social factors/theories if risk-taking in adolescence 48

3.3.6.2.1 Socio-economic inequalities: poverty 48

3.3.6.2.2 Peer influence 49

3.3.6.2.3 Parental influence 50

3.3.6.3 Theories of risk-taking behaviour 52

3.3.6.3.1 Developmental theory 52

3.3.6.3.2 Problem behaviour theory 53

3.3.6.3.3 The Theory of Planned Behaviour 55

3.3 Train Surfing 57

3.3.1 Train surfing in the South African context 58

3.4 Conclusion 61

CHAPTER FOUR: METHOD 62

4.1 Introduction 62

4.2 Research questions 62

4.3 Research design 62

4.4 Sampling procedure 64

4.5 Participants 64

4.6 Procedure 65

4.7 Data collection method 66

4.8 Data analysis 68

4.9 Credibility of the analysis 71

4.10 Ethical considerations 71

4.11 Researchers experience 73

4.12 Conclusion 76

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 77

5.1 Introduction 77

5.2 Theme One: "They think they know, but they have no idea" 77

5.2.1 "I'm black and proud" 82

5.2.2 "Weekends we have fun!" 86

5.2.3 "The non-conformist" 90

5.3 Theme Two: Train Surfing: the Staff boys 92

5.3.1 The consequences of train surfing: death 93

5.3.2 He used to be in our class 96

5.3.3 Addictive nature of Train Surfing 97

5.3.4 Family dynamics: "We all have problems! But that doesn't mean that you Give up 99

5.3.5 Gender roles in contemporary South Africa 101

5.3.6 Female train surfers: intersection of feminity and homosexuality 103

5.4 Theme Three: Bikers and Drag Racers 109

5.4.1 Material things: "money, money, money" 110

5.4.2 The Female presence: 'She's with the biker" 112

5.4.3 The hierarchy of masculinity: Train surfers, Drag racers and Bikers 115

5.5 Conclusion 119

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUDING REMARKS **121**

6.1 Introduction 121

6.2 Synopsis of the study 121

6.3 Implications for future studies 126

6.4 Strengths and limitations of the study 127

REFERENCES **130**

Appendix A: Department of Education Information Sheet **155**

Appendix B: Principle Information Sheet **156**

Appendix C: Principle Consent Form **157**

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet **158**

Appendix E: Participants Consent Form (Focus Group) **160**

Appendix F: Recording Consent Form **162**

Appendix G: Confidentiality Agreement **163**

Appendix H: Group Interview Schedule **164**

Appendix I: University of Witwatersrand Ethics Protocol Certificate **166**

Appendix J: Department of Education Approval Letter **167**

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces this study, which focuses on adolescents' perceptions of risk-taking behaviours in the light of the increased popularity of the phenomenon of *train surfing.* It was conducted in Soweto within one secondary school in Orlando West, which is located near a train station around which the phenomenon occurs. This chapter briefly discusses the background of the study, the rationale for undertaking it, the aim(s) as well as the assumptions underlying it. The chapter ends with an outline of the chapters within the research report.

1.2 Background of study

Since the first democratic elections held in South Africa in 1994, the changes that accompanied the adoption of new Constitution have impacted profoundly on the nation's political, social, economic and cultural life (Stevens & Lockhart, 1997). These changes were from minority rule to a representative constitutional democracy. The emergence of the new South Africa and its 1996 Constitution necessitated a reconfiguration of what is meant to be a South African citizen and identity. However, the generation of black youth born after the transition carried with them the legacy of apartheid and still face some of the same challenges of their predecessors. 'Born free' is an evocative notion, and is frequently used in the current media discourse to imply that the post-apartheid youth have an intrinsic advantage over the previous generation. A study conducted by Mlatsheni and Rospabe (2002) on factors that contribute to the high levels of unemployment within youth found that black males have fewer economic opportunities then their black female counterparts and white youth. A closer examination of the predictors of employment showed that level of education was one of the reasons that black adolescents were mostly unemployed in later life. During apartheid, Wilson and Ramphele (1989) similarly found that the higher unemployment rates within black communities resulted in many able-bodied adolescents resorting to self-destructive behaviour such as substance abuse, and high risk activities. One of these, which has become a growing phenomenon among black

youth in South Africa, is train surfing, which is often colloquially referred to locally as the "Soweto pastime". A daredevil act of bravado that involves jumping on top of or underneath a moving train in search of an adrenaline rush, it is a worldwide phenomenon that also occurs in Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, Germany, India and South Africa. It has been compared to other adrenalin sports such as skydiving and ski jumping, though its consequences are potentially more dangerous. In a study conducted by Karen Malone (2005) in Australia, a fifteen year old train surfer describes the sport as being "… like bungee jumping without a rope' (p.155). In some of these countries, train surfing is illegal and strict regulations have been enforced to stop it.

1.3 Rationale

Within the South African context, train surfing has been practiced since the 1950s, predominantly practiced among males, but in mid-2006 the phenomenon increased in popularity with the youth of Soweto. Although popular it is risky and dangerous, with a number of adolescents and young adults having been killed. In May 2006, *IOL* News reported 10 fatalities since the beginning of the year (Mbongwe, 2006), whilst later that year the *Mail and Guardian* reported a further 10 fatalities. Potential injuries may result from collision with a pole or tunnels, electrocution from an electrified overhead wire or a third rail injury when falling or jumping off, getting run over by a train, or being crushed between train and platform. The exact number of fatalities due to train surfing is unknown, as *Metro Rail* reports fatalities under three categories: a) train accident, b) level crossing, and c) other (which includes trespassing, suicides, falls from a train, and natural causes while travelling).

Given the lethality or other detrimental outcomes this poses the question of why this activity has historically been practiced and why it continues to be popular among youth, particularly in Soweto. Why would adolescents participate in an activity where the benefits are clearly outweighed by the consequences? Could the popularity of this risk-taking behaviour be explained through the concepts of disenfranchisement, boredom and hardship? These concepts flag the dangers of being a young black male within the South African context, particularly in the way the world responds to boys and men. The first and most researched is the manner in which

they are expected by their peers and elders to perform their masculinity, the second is the enmeshment of masculinity with violence, risk-taking and danger (Shefer, Bowman, & Duncan, 2008). An investigation into the phenomenon of train surfing thus provides insight not only into the motivations for participation in this phenomenon but also into the socio-cultural context in which it is embedded.

Risk-taking behaviour can be classified as thrill-seeking behaviour or as a desire for varied, novel and powerful sensations and experiences accompanied by the willingness to take a significant risk, whether physical, social or financial, for the sake of the experience or circumstance (Miles, van den Bree, Gupman, Newlin, Glantz, & Picken, 2001). Within the South African context, the high-risk behaviours that are most prominent among adolescents are participation in unprotected sex, gender-based violence, substance abuse and gang-related behaviours (Adar & Stevens, 2000; Barker & Richardo 2005; Gaer & Ngubeni, 2002; Jensen, 2008; Salo, 2007). A range of studies have been conducted, both internationally and locally, that have focused on different aspects of adolescents risk-taking behaviour (see for example Harris, 2002; Luster & Small, 1994; Morrell, Moletsane, Abdool Karim, Epstein, & Unterhalter, 2002). Within the last decade research has predominantly focused on two aspects of risk-taking within adolescents, namely the underlying factors and characteristics which contribute to it (Gullone & Moore, 2000). According to Adar and Stevens (2000), the majority of current literature on high-risk behaviour within South African youth is concentrated around the area of HIV/AIDS. Although numerous theories have contributed to the study of sexual and risky behaviours among adolescents (Swart, 2005), researchers have moved away from these types of theoretical perspectives to looking at gender construction as a central component of addressing risk-taking practice (Morrell et al., 2002). As many adolescents engage in a number of dangerous risk-taking activities it becomes imperative for researchers to explore reasons adolescents participate, specifically how these vary across gender lines.

This strengthens the need for such types of risk-taking behaviour to be further explored, especially since there in a steady increase in participation despite the activity being deemed illegal. In his discussion of train surfing in Berlin, Le Breton (1995) argues that the commitment to risk appears to be attributed to “crises of sense and value”, with train surfing a phenomenon of modern times, whereby “the individual is increasingly inclined to self-reference, trying to derive

from his own potentiality values which in former times could have be derived from within a culture and community" (Le Breton, 1995, as cited in Strauch, Wirthb, & Geserick, 1998).

Following the trend of other researchers within the field of risk-taking behaviour (e.g., DiClemente, Hensen & Ponton, 1996; Steinberg, 2003), it is important to consider the factors that underlie adolescents' decisions to participate in risky behaviour. These would include considering the characteristics that describe thrill-seeking adolescents, in addition to the associated socio-cultural meanings. According to Leather (2009), 'risk' can be defined in a number of ways, with frequent themes including the balance between the potential rewards and the potential losses, and the value of the link between short-term gain and long-term consequences. To better understand these links, adolescents perception of train surfing and of train surfers will be explored through the interpretation of their socially constructed viewpoints of identity and masculinity.

Current developmental literature highlights the period of adolescence as being one of multiple transitions, and a period in which risk-taking is heightened (Michael & Ben-Zur, 2007). According to Jessor and Jessor (1977), problematic behaviour can be viewed as a means of accomplishing age-typical goals of peer identity and adult status, ultimately leading to choices that may be perceived as risky. Black South African youth are generally faced with social problems, many of which can be classified as risky, as they endorse an element of danger, thrill-seeking and a sense of freedom and independence (Kinnes, 2008). It is for this reason that studies on adolescent risk-taking behaviour are imperative to understanding social constructions as part of decision-making, and ultimately to reducing deaths.

Researchers within the field of masculinity have linked high-risk behaviour to the construction of masculinities and what it entails to be a 'man' or a 'boy' (for example, see Gupta, 2000; Morrell, 2001; Ratele, 2001). Masculinity is a phenomenon that is socially constructed, based on everyday beliefs and activities that regulate behaviour between men and women and men and men (Lindegger & Maxwell, 2007). Dependent on the context and demographic information (age, race, socio-economic status) of the individual, masculinities can take many forms. Lead researcher in the domain of masculinity, Connell (2000) demonstrates that the construction of 'hegemonic' masculinity encourages adolescent boys to engage in risk-taking behaviours. 'Hegemonic masculinities' refer to the dominant forms of masculinity as well as the

social norms of cultural domination by men. Hyman (1999) found that boys are generally socialised from a young age to be more independent, show aggression and to take more risks, thus masculinities form an inherent part of a man, which encompasses a set of decisions defining what to wear, what to look like and how to behave. This is significantly different within the South African context, as men have reacted differently to the contextual and structural changes of the country. Some have adapted to the social, political and gender changes, whilst others have illustrated a 'crisis of identity'.

Amongst the limited available academic literature on the phenomenon is a German longitudinal study conducted by Strauch, Wirth and Geserick (1998) that analysed 41 fatalities in Berlin between 1989 and 1995. In South Africa, two academic reports have been conducted, the first by Hesselink (2008), who set out to investigate the feelings and experiences of train surfers, and concluded that the motives were strongly linked to thrill-seeking behaviour. It had a criminological approach and investigated the phenomenon as a crime being committed by adolescents. The second study, conducted by Mackay (2009), explored the way in which male train surfers constructed their black masculinity and what it meant to be a train surfer. Most of the studies have focused on understanding the motives and consequences, but not the context, which is at least as important. It is therefore essential to situate it within a specific developmental stage of adolescence, and to consider the role of constructions of masculinity in informing the meaning associated with the phenomenon.

1.4 Aims of the study

This research focuses on the phenomenon of train surfing and how this practice is constructed by youth in Soweto. It seeks adolescents' views and the perceived reasons behind participation in such a high risk-taking behaviour. In examining their constructions the study further explores what these constructions reveal about influences and how the phenomenon is linked to the issues at stake for defining identity within an urban context. Specifically, it examines how race, class, culture and masculinity are represented in young people's constructions of train surfing.

1.5 Format of the Report

After introducing the study here in *Chapter One*, *Chapter Two* is a review of the theoretical framework in which this research was conducted. For the purpose of this research study the researcher chooses to view identity, specifically adolescence and masculinity, as a social construction.

Chapter Three reviews the literature pertaining to risk-taking in adolescents, the factors that increase vulnerability in participation of high-risk activities as well as the protective factors. The chapter ends with a more focused look at the growing phenomenon of train surfing.

The *Fourth Chapter* advocates and describes the choice of method followed in the research. Focus groups were created to collect data from the participants who volunteered to take part in the research as a qualitative design and methodology were used within the research. Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) is elaborated upon as the primary analytic technique of the project. Each aspect of the research process is discussed, including the focus group, code development and analysis. The chapter also includes reflections on relevant characteristics of the sample of volunteers. The procedure is finally discussed in detail in order to interrogate the strengths and weaknesses of the selected methodology. It presents the detailed descriptions and discussion of the findings of the thematic analysis.

The *Fifth Chapter* concludes the report, providing a synopsis of the key findings and a conceptual conclusion. It discusses the strengths and limitations of the study, along with the implications of the findings and recommendations for future research, which conclude the chapter.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework

2. 1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks which guide the report and help in forming its theoretical basis (Houser, 2008). The participants were adolescents between the ages of 18 and 21, all pupils at a public secondary school in Orlando West, Soweto. Given their ages, and that of the train surfers under investigation, the developmental stage of adolescence was identified as the first theoretical framework. Within this chapter, the researcher mainly draws from the works of Erik Erikson to give a short review of the psychological processes involved in adolescent identity development, beginning with an outline of the concept of identity, followed by theoretical considerations of how identity is socially constructed. A few of the social constructs that impact on the construction of identity are examined, before discussion of the literature on gender identity and masculinity. Masculinity is defined through a brief overview of international and local literature before the chapter ends with a discussion of masculinity within South Africa and the societal changes that have occurred, and how these have created new forms of masculinity.

2.2 Identity development in adolescents

2.2.1 Defining identity

Current literature on identity illustrates overlapping definitions of identity. For instance, Shaffer (2002) defined it as a firm and coherent sense of who one is, where one is going and how all these elements fit into society, whilst for Sharf (2006) it is a clarity and stability of an individual's current and future goals. Regardless of how identity is viewed, whether it is referred to different social categories, such as race or gender, du Gay, Evans, and Redman (2000) argue that what is consistent is the concept of an individual subject, which is understood as a given entity. Despite automation and initiative of identity, it has been observed by researchers such as Seidler (2006) that in the face of new exploration and experimentation, even the most courageous cannot do without approval of some kind.

Current literature illustrates a wide range of psychologists who have theorised about psychological development. The developmental stage between childhood and adulthood, the "idea of the adolescent depends on a presupposed level of behavioural maturity, which translates into certain rights and privileges afforded to the younger person" (Stoker, 2007, p.4.). However, few have concentrated on what Rosenthal (1987) refers to as one of the most important psychological tasks of adolescence, namely identity development. Of the many definitions of identity, such as those by Erikson (1950, 1968), Marcia (1980) and Waterman (1984), similarities exist as each serves to provide continuity between past, present and future, integrating behaviours in multiple areas of life, and explaining an individual's motivation for behaviours as developing a sense of identity. More specifically with regards to this report, Freeman (1993) using Erikson's (1968) identity theory, observed that the apartheid regime in South Africa created a context in which youth in the townships developed a particular identity, usually involving participation in politics and protest actions.

2.2.2 Erik Erikson's stages of identity development

Erikson (1968) moved beyond Freud's classical psychoanalytic theory and emphasised the importance of environment in the development of identity. As his conceptualisation of identity has been used extensively throughout academic literature within the schools of psychology and sociology, it will be used in the present study "A sense of inner wholeness... between that which he has come to be during the long years of childhood and that which he promises to become in the anticipated future: between that which he conceives himself to be and that which he perceives others to see him and expect of him" (p.87).

According to Erikson (1968), no individual is born with a well-defined personal identity or self-concept, however, identity formation is a major psychosocial phase that takes place during adolescence, shaped within a social, cultural and historical context (Erikson, 1964, 1965, 1968). The roots of identity can be traced back to early childhood experiences and are universal, passing from one generation to the other but differing in terms of the time and the context. Within each context, the adolescent is given the structure to forge a particular type of identity. Adolescence is a pivotal stage for identity formation, as during this stage, intellectual, emotional, physical and societal factors are sufficiently present both to allow and demand that issues be dealt with (Sandhu & Tung, 2006). Erikson's (1968) concept of identity formation embraces a

complex of social and self-representations, including personal, public, individual and group identities. Personal identity refers to an individual's intra-psychic sense of continuity over time and situation; public identity includes an individual's own and other's perception of his/her various positions in society and social roles; and identity includes the individual's own and other's perceptions of personal characteristics, which distinguish one from the other. However, according to Thom and Coetzee (2004, p.138) "individual identity also indicates what one has in common with same others, and thus engenders a group identity or feeling of sameness and belonging to certain groups".

It is during this stage of development that the adolescent undergoes an exploratory period of self-analysis and self-evaluation. Erikson's model of psychosocial stages of development suggests that it proceeds through eight stages, each taking place during a different period of life and representing a period of heightened potential that increases vulnerability of a particular component of the personality. The model also suggests that the formation of identity is a universal requirement of adolescents, but the manner in which it is 'acquired' and formed is a function of cultural influences. These stages include: trust vs. mistrust, autonomy vs. shame and doubt; initiative vs. guilt, industry vs. inferiority, identity vs. role confusion, intimacy vs. isolation, generativity vs. stagnation, and integrity vs. despair. As mentioned above, each stage takes place during a different period of life and represents a crisis that must be overcome by the individual in order for healthy development to continue. This crisis is brought about by conflict between maturational changes in the individual and the new demands that society makes because of these changes. The positive resolution of each crisis depends on what Erikson (1968) calls 'mutuality' between the individual and the society. It is important to note that Erikson's (1950, 1968) model was the first to recognise the role of surroundings in shaping identity (Kroger, 1996).

According to Erikson's psychosocial model of identity, the most critical stage of identity development is adolescence, the stage between childhood and adulthood. Culturally, the "idea of the adolescent depends on a presupposed level of behavioural maturity, which translates into certain rights and privileges afforded to the young person" (Stoker, 2007, p.4), and depending on individual and cultural differences the age at which it ends varies from 17 to 21 (Louw, 1991). According to South African law, an adolescent is an individual between the ages of 12 and 18,

when, according to the Constitution, the individual is able to drive a car, legally consume alcohol and vote, and is held accountable for his or her behaviour. For the purpose of this research, the definition of adolescent is one between 13 and 21, within Erikson's eight-stages of psychosocial development referred to as the stage of identity vs. identity confusion. Erikson (1968) refers to this critical turning point in an adolescent's life, in which he/she has to move forward by taking a new direction in life. During this stage, individuals develop an identity through the process of assimilation of previous childhood identifications and the modification of these identifications into a coherent whole (Erikson, 1968). The new identity needs through consistency to be established within the individual as well as in the portrayal of others. This critical period of adolescence consists of the exploration of various identities and culminates in commitment to the final identity. The final identity results in "a subjective sense of an invigorating sameness and continuity" (Erikson, 1968, p.19).

Whilst a majority of adolescents successfully develop an unswerving identity, others are unable to form a consistent identity, in what Erikson (1950, 1968) referred to as 'identity confusion'. It primarily occurs as a result of failure to commit to an occupational or sexual identity and can be characterised by delinquency and psychotic incidents, over-identification with others, isolation, depression and inability to concentrate. This form of role confusion often comes about as a result of what is referred to by Louw, van Ede, Louw (1998) as 'identity foreclosure', when one's identity is shaped by a sense of premature decision-making with regards to identity, made in the presence of pressure and expectations of others and society, and is made so as to appease those making the demands (Louw et al., 1998). In all aspects of identity formation, few are immune to the influences of the social environment, family, peer pressure and society as a whole.

In his investigation of ethnic identity development in adolescents, Rosenthal (1987) suggests that Erikson (1963) had been the most successful theorist at analysing a combination of internal psychological drives and needs, in addition to the demands of the external social world of adolescents. Erikson (1963) is one of few theorists that places emphasis on the adolescent period of human development, and this theory is well suited to enhancing our understanding of adolescent identity development. His direct reference to the importance of socio-cultural factors

serves to strengthen the appropriateness of his theory for the investigation of adolescents' perceptions of others and the development of identity in adolescence in South Africa.

2.2.3 Adolescence identity development

Rosenthal (1987) argued that Erikson's theory of identity development had been the most successful in completely analysing the various combinations of interpersonal psychological drives and needs, in addition to the demands of the external social world of the adolescent (Stevens & Lockhart, 1997). It has thus been argued that Erikson (1963) placed emphasis on adolescent development, and would thus best suited to found our understanding of identity development. From this, Stevens and Lockhart (1997) posit that Erikson's reference to the importance of socio-cultural factors during the process of identity development serves to strengthen the appropriateness of his theory for the study of identity development in South Africa. However, they also highlight the inability of Erikson's (1963) theory to explicitly and adequately address the impact of prolonged structural oppression on black South African adolescents, "who find themselves located in situations of transitions from war to structural oppression" (p.252). With adolescents now being born within the area of the New South Africa (post-apartheid), the researchers suggests that the development of identity now has changed, mainly due to multiple political and historical developments. The impact the historical context has had on the development of identity within adolescents born after the first democratic election will help in understanding their constructions of race, gender and social phenomenon such as train surfing within black male adolescents from Soweto today. In contemporary society, the meaning of the stage of adolescence has shifted over time, and changes within modern society, many once attributed to the physiological period of adolescence, are now extended into a person's early twenties.

Separating the stages suggested by Erikson (1963) becomes harder to distinguish with the onset of globalisation. Jensen (2003) conducted ethnographical and cross-cultural research to demonstrate this idea as cosmopolitan cultures of many large urban cities and the global media expose adolescents to more than one culture. Jensen (2003) defines 'cultural identity' as a framework of ideas and beliefs of a particular community that could be enacted through behavioural rituals in everyday life. With the rise of globalisation this exposure would lead to a possible adoption of more than one cultural identity, an assumption based on findings that

adolescents are more open to shifts in beliefs and values than adults. Jensen (2003) explains that the global environment differs from Erikson's theory as it is based on an assumption that it only considers the values of a singular community. The direct and indirect influences of several cultures to which an adolescent would be exposed may, according to Jensen (2003), intensify the process if identity development as an adolescent is placed in a position of negotiating between several cultural identities and the conflicts that result from these tensions. Therefore, the already difficult process of becoming an adult becomes less predictable, resulting in the personal meanings of experiences holding more value rather than gaining an understanding of each person's worldview.

Within South Africa, political factors and ideological factors have changed dramatically since the first democratic elections in 1994. Arguably, the social context, in which the landscape is complex and contradictory, may have influenced how adolescents develop their identity. Stevens and Lockhart (2003) argue that this transition is not completely understood when referring solely to Erikson's theory as devised to address developmental transition and large-scale social transition. The transition from 1994 has redefined many concepts related to social class, gender and race. Erikson's theory is indeed appropriate and relevant when discussing the development of identity in adolescents; however it falls short of reaching equilibrium as it fails to take into consideration the greater social issues that are prevalent.

2.2.4 Identity as shaped by gender

Each individual may have a number of identities, among which, Kroger (2000) argues, is gender. According to Read and Bartowski (2000), gender is a social phenomenon that is best understood as constructed, contested and intersecting with other social phenomena. Various cultures around the world have different ideas about gender, therefore, cross cultures and an individual's biological sex do not necessarily imply that the individual will engage in certain activities or that people will believe that one possesses certain attributes (Beall & Steinberg, 1993). Gender identity refers to the extent to which a person experiences oneself as like others of one gender. An individual's sense of being male or female largely determines how the individual views himself or herself and provides an important basis for interactions with others, or "ways of being" afforded by disclosure (Willig, 1999). Weedon (1987, p.100) postulates that individuals

are afforded subject positions which assume what it is to be a women or man and which seek to constitutes an individual's femininity and masculinity accordingly.

According to researchers such as Best (2001) and Diamond and Butterworth (2008), although gendered identity qualities and interests tend to change during the period of adolescence, for the majority it is safe to assume that in every socio-cultural system, gender concepts and behaviours will be learned from childhood, will be salient, and will be taught with significance. Within the transition and modernisation of South Africa, the inherent changes will require changes within role expectations, as well as creating new constraints to boys' and girls' gender development. However, these changes, according to Best (2001), have had minimal impact on the strength of sex typing and learning, whilst a study conducted by Priess, Lindberg and Hyde (2009) over a longitudinal period found that adolescents did not become more stereotypical in their gender role identity across adolescence, attributed to the insufficient or lack of support for gender intensification hypothesis to change patterns of socialisation within modern day adolescents. An earlier quasi-experimental study conducted by Echabe and Castro (1999), which analysed the influence of contextual factors on gender identities, found that both men and women had a more communal image of themselves in the context of their closest relationships. In addition, results suggested that their self-image within their professional contexts was altered and more argentic-autonomous. From this, the authors conceived that gender identities are highly dynamic and historically derived from the social division of activities, thus fulfilling important ideological functions. Thus, if a society considers the transmission of culture in the home and community as crucial, gender relations are significant to identity construction.

Cultural and social values in different contexts contribute to the development of gender identity. Various researchers and theorists have investigated this, with these values including an emphasis on female submissiveness and passivity and particular role-specific identities which tend to reproduce asymmetry and a classical femininity that is continuously looking to the outside for its nurturance. Other views emphasis a more aggressive, dominating and forthright identity that reproduces a subordinate masculinity that is continuously fighting for its dominance. These processes of socialisation ensure that the gendered identity does not seek to consciously develop an inner world of political awareness that may challenge social constructions of identity (Thapan, 2001).

2.2.5 Identity as shaped by race or ethnicity

Traditional researchers within the field of identity development have researched the process of identity formation in different cultures and settings. A majority of the studies have found differences in terms of how different cultural and racial groups evaluate identity domains. Research within this field generally reports that identity foreclosure seems to be the more common among black than white research groups (Abraham, 1986; Steitmatler, 1988). Although, these studies report that black adolescents were mostly 'defined', when referring to identity development, more recent studies suggest that this trend may be changing with greater emphasis being placed on black adolescents towards identity formation.

Social psychologists believe that the identity crises of adolescence is resolved by reconciling the identities imposed upon oneself by family and society with one's need to assert control and seek out an identity that brings one satisfaction, feelings of industry, and competence. Forming a healthy, developed identity through processes such as exploration and commitment has been proposed as essential to the mental health of an individual. More specifically, social psychologists such as Tajfel and Turner (1979) have had a more specific interest in identity, centred on the feelings of belonging to a group and the consequences of identification with one's social groups in society. Instead of discussing social identity in developmental terms, by which a young person moves progresses through stages until he or she reaches an ideal state of social identity, social identity is placed in the broader context of the value society has placed on one's group membership. It is held that when an individual belongs to highly valued groups he or she does not need to modify or enhanced social identity. However, within a context in which some groups are devalued, the person may have to engage in a process to negotiate the meaning of the identity. This could apply to some groups in South Africa, even after apartheid.

As an aspect of identity, race can be expected to be of particular importance during adolescence. Racial identity has been defined and investigated by a number of theorists using a number of theoretical approaches and research methods. For instance, Miles (1989) postulates that racial identities are formed by the process of racialization, with racialization occurring whenever race is used to categorize individuals or explain behaviour. Robinson (2000) posits that since race is not a biologically defensible phenomenon, racialization involves an ideological

process in which it is given a status as an apparent truth. Within this study, in which the sample group is all black, racial identity does not imply acceptance of race as real, but acknowledges the social and political reality that these adolescents live in a society in which race identities are attributed to them, and that these have real consequences for their experience of life (Robinson, 2000). It is appropriate to discuss racial identities as the process of racialization have such power to shape people's perception of their shared world.

Amongst theorists who argue against the particular importance of racial identity, Gilroy (1987) argued that "the tendency to reify racial identity as a unique importance of the individual reduces the complexity of self-image and personality formation in the black child to the single issue of racial colour" (p.66). This, he argued, could lead to the neglect of other equally important social identities, such as gender and social classes.

In South Africa, as is in other countries, the issue of race and ethnicity is salient for all non-whites[1] throughout their lifespan (Aries & Moorehead, 1989; Robinson, 1998), and racial identity may predominate on occasions. The issue of black identity has been an area of both intrigue and concern to anthropologists, psychologists, researchers, and social workers for many years, and areas of low self-esteem, hopelessness, self-hatred, and a negative racial identity have been traditionally studied as characteristics attributed to black adolescents and adults (Robinson, 2000). Several theories or models of black identity development and transformation have been developed since the early 1970s, each hypothesising that identity development is characterised by a progression across a series of sequential stages and influenced by an individual's reaction to social and environmental pressures and circumstances (Bulhan, 1985; Cross, 1991; Thomas, 1979).

The earliest, most widely researched and known model of black identity development is Cross's (1991) model of psychological *nigrescence*, which refers to the process of developing a black identity in which black is defined as a psychological connection with one's racial group rather than mere identification of the colour of one's skin. Cross's (1991) theory was introduced in the United States of America (USA), suggesting that the development of black racial identity is often characterised by movement through a four-stage process, the first of which, the *pre-*

[1] The term 'non-whites' in this chapter refers to Blacks (Africans), Indians and Coloureds (commonly understood race classification categories in South Africa)

encounter, views the world from a white frame of reference (Eurocentric). The black person accepts a "white" view of self, other black people and the world, accepting a deracinated frame of reference, and because their reference point is usually a white normative standard they develop attitudes that are pro-white and anti-black. The second stage is the *encounter*, a shock or social event that makes the person receptive to new views of being black and of the world. The individual's Eurocentric thinking is upset by an encounter with racial prejudice which precipitates an intense search for black identity. This stage involves two steps, firstly, experiencing and personalizing the event when the person realizes that his/her old frame of reference is inappropriate and begins to explore aspects of a new identity; secondly as a testing phase during which the individual (first) cautiously tries to validate his/her new perceptions then definitely decides to develop a black identity. The penultimate stage is *immersion-emersion*, a period of transition in which the person struggles to destroy all vestiges of the old perspective. This occurs simultaneously with an intense concern to clarify the personal implications of the new-found black identity (Cross, 1991). This leads to the final stage, where the individual begins to immerse himself or herself into *total blackness*, and thus achieves an inner security and self-confidence with his or her blackness. The individual still uses "black as a primary reference group [but] moves towards a pluralistic and non-racial perspective (Cross, 1991, p.326).

Cross's model proves useful in understanding the problems of black identity confusion and examining, at a detailed level, what happens to a person during identity change. Thus, if a black adolescent, as Baldwin (1984) asserts, is exposed to an environment which is unsupportive, denigrating, oppression and even hostile, and if affirmation and validation of one's existence is lacking or non-existent, then a negative sense of self is the likely outcome with the models of *nigrescence* serving as an appropriate explanation of the resolution process than an individual will be likely to experience. In South Africa, both the apartheid and post-apartheid socio-historical context have had contradictory and multiple impacts on the development of black identity development, especially that of adolescents. Although Erikson (1963) and Cross (1971) have provided logical frameworks for understanding adolescent racial and overall identity development within a social context, they both fall short of adequately addressing the impact of the prolonged structural oppression faced by black South African adolescents (Stevens & Lockhart, 1997; 2003). Currently, black South African adolescents find themselves straddling and negotiating the unintended consequences of apartheid, a transition from war to structural

oppression, thus, an alternative identity development theory can perhaps fill the gap of considering the impact of prolonged oppression on the psyche of the oppressed and how this influences identity development and perception of black adolescents.

Bulhan (1980, 1985) proposed a theory of identity development, which took into consideration the impact of prolonged oppression. Although this was solely developed with adolescence as its focal point in human development, it did provide some insight and useful in the context of understanding black adolescent identity development in South Africa. Bulhan's theory postulates that there are three modes of psychological defences, which occur in stages (Bulhan, 1980, 1985). The first stage, *capitulation*, involves increased assimilation into the dominant culture, whilst simultaneously rejecting one's own culture. *Revitalisation* is the second stage, characterised by a reactive disavowal of the dominant culture and a concurrent romanticism of the indigenous culture. The third stage, *radicalisation*, consists of an unambiguous commitment towards racial change. Bulhan (1980) therefore argues that for the oppressed to reclaim their identity after prolonged oppression, the imposition of the oppressor has to be rejected, and the system must be prevented from determining the boundaries within which identity is defined (Bulhan, 1980).

It is evident from the three theories briefly discussed above that no single one provides a clear framework in which to analyse the identity development of black adolescents in South Africa, however, Erikson (1963), Cross (1991) and Bulhan (1985) provide promising components sufficient for the purpose of this study on black South African adolescent identity within the realm of risk-taking behaviour.

2.2.6 Adolescent identity development within the South African context

The socio-historical changes in post-1994 South Africa have, according to Stevens and Lockhart (1997), contributed to role confusion within adolescents, rather than the expected identity cohesion. During apartheid, many black adolescents developed a collective identity that, due to a shared and common political consciousness, resisted and challenged the pervasive racist ideologies of the era. The so-called 'young lions' (Marks, 2002) were adolescent political activists during the 1970s to 1990s, elevated to a status of freedom fighters, and their experiences of confrontation with the state security apparatus symbolised the commitment of radical social

transformation (Eagle & Langa, 2008). Active participation of township youth in the political struggle gave many young boys an opportunity to develop what has been termed by Eagle and Langa (2008) 'militarized masculinity', an expansion of Xaba's (2001) 'struggle masculinities'. It was partly due to a shared political consciousness under apartheid that many black adolescents developed a collective identity that resisted and challenged the perspective racist ideology (Eagle & Langa, 2008; Marks, 2002; Xaba, 2001). The psychological consequences of apartheid were profound (Steven & Lockhart, 1997) and Wilson and Ramphelele (1989) found that the higher unemployment rates in black communities led many adolescents to resort to self-destructive behaviour. The lack of good educational opportunities resulted in poorer academic performance and fewer prospects for social upliftment (Reynolds, 1989).

Apartheid's failings left behind a history of collective identity that has transformed into one of individualism, as new role models, economic structures, and dominance of Western ideologies came to play a greater influence on the development of identity, particularly for black adolescents. Stevens and Lockhart (1997) proposed that this shift could be best captured by the term 'Coca-Cola culture', a worldwide phenomenon informed by individualism, competition and individualistic aspirations. The shift among black adolescents was due not only to socio-historical contexts but also to their seeking a way of achieving greater integration.

International studies on adolescent identity formation have revealed the impact of social influences on identity formation, emphasising the complexity and need for it to be addressed in developmental interventions for the specific adolescents exhibiting foreclosed identities. While many are on their way to identity achievement, many have been hampered by post-apartheid obstacles and have not adequately addressed the role of subjective agency in personal identity development. Norris and his colleagues (2008) found that in South Africa's racially conspicuous society, adolescent identity development is likely to be heterogeneous with respect to the toll that apartheid had on racial groups.

2.2.7 Social identity theory

The above discussion of identity development has illustrated how the identity crises of adolescents are resolved through reconciliation of the identities imposed upon them by family and society, with the need to assert control and seek out an identity that brings satisfaction,

feelings of industry, and competence. Erickson (1968), Kirchler (1990) and Newman and Newman (1989) found that most adolescents belong to peer groups, serving as valuable networks through which conceptions of identity and self-esteem are negotiated. Although it was not specifically developed as an aid in the understanding of adolescents' group processes, Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory (SIT) is of importance in positing that a substantial part of self-concept derives from group membership ('in-groups'). Individuals who belong to highly valued groups do not need to modify or enhance their social identity, however, when faced with a context that devalues one's group the person may have to engage in a process of negotiating the meaning of his or her identity.

SIT defines identity as "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to a certain social group together with some emotional and value significant to him of group membership" (Tajfel, 1972, p.31), assuming that all people identify with varying social groups. Individuals segment society into different groups and consider themselves as either members of a particular group or outsiders, and members behave in a way that will be congruent with the values or norms of their group. Individuals compare themselves to members of other groups and try to represent their own groups as superior to external groups. In essence, the interpersonal behaviour of individuals may often be influenced by group membership. Being a part of a group may have an influence on the manner in which a person interacts with other members of his or her group or with members of other groups, and how those members interact amongst themselves.

After investigating contexts similar to that of South Africa, in which some individuals are members of groups that their society devalued, Tajfel and Turner (1986) proposed that the individual may engage in a process of negotiating the meaning of his or her identity. They outlined three strategies by which individuals can deal with being a member of a devalued group, firstly 'individual mobility', by which, if possible, the individual chooses to physically leave the group and change group membership, or if the group is not permeable (modifiable), such as by race or ethnicity, then the individual chooses to psychologically leave it by dis-identifying. In the second strategy, 'social creativity', the group as a whole chooses to redefine its membership by comparing itself with the 'out-group' in a dimension in which they are superior, or by changing the values assigned to the attributes of the group from negative to positive. In the third strategy,

'social competition', the group as a whole fights the current system to actually change the hierarchy of group membership in society.

Typical of adolescence is the emergence of peer groups consisting of adolescents who have a certain lifestyle (Brown, Elcher, & Peterie, 1986). This is often represented in a particular music preference, clothing style, or leisure activity. Social labels are used to refer to members of these various groups, or 'crowds', providing adolescents with a highly salient social identity (McLellan & Pugh, 1999). The crowd system helps adolescents select friendships, and provides them with the norms to guide their social behaviour (O'Brien & Bierman, 1988).

Subjectivity has left many opinions on the impact of apartheid on the psychosocial development of adolescents, notably limited educational opportunities, career limitations, and reduced economic, social, and leisure opportunities. Phillips and Pitman (2003) explained the relationship between the socio-economic background of adolescents and their identity formation by highlighting the negative influence of poverty on career aspirations. They concluded that lowered aspirations and expectations for oneself may be an indicator that exploration is already being retarded and a predictor of a shortened period of active identity exploration (Phillips & Pitman, 2003). Extending this argument, Stevens and Lockhart (1997) argue that diffusion or foreclosure should be more common among adolescents from lower socio-economic levels, thus, one could conclude that black adolescents acquire a stronger sense of identity than their white counterparts, as the former emphasise a strong cultural identity for the development of a sense of individual identity. Stevens and Lockhart (1997) argue that in the post-apartheid era many of these adolescents continued to draw from a strength of their cultural identity that was consolidated during apartheid as part of the struggle.

The above discussion on black adolescent identity development and formation reflects the importance of looking into the ideological context in which adolescents develop (Bekker, 1993). Although individuals are unique, they are largely a product of their cultural context. Individual identity and cultural identity cannot be separated from each other, so identity development is affected by changes that occur within that particular socio-cultural context as well as within the individual (Stevens & Lockhart, 1997). With particular emphasis on adolescents, the task of forming an identity is made no easier by the particular requirement that it be a gendered identity, be it masculine or feminine, and it is during this period of adolescence

that the individual's gender-role identity becomes the focal point (Brem, 1974, Karnoil, Grosz, & Schorr, 2003). An individual then starts to define him/herself in terms of the characteristics that are most closely associated with gender-roles.

2.3 Masculinity

According to Horrocks (1995), when discussing issues of masculinities it is important first to consider issues at stake concerning identity formation. Literature currently available on masculinity within the social sciences has an overriding concern with what it means to be masculine and how such identities are shaped, not simply by their biological drives but also by culture (Connell & Ouzgane, 2005). This brings up a question of whether masculinity simply refers to something all boys are biologically born with or something that is socially and culturally constructed. In an attempt to answer this question, Nelson (1999) postulates that there is a significant difference between an individual's biological sex and the notion of gender. Sex is perceived as the term that distinguishes men from women, whilst gender is a psychological and socially constructed term. Ratele (2008) argues that males are not born as men but through processes such as socialisation become boys and then men.

Conversely, McInnes's (1998) view includes both the biological and social understandings of gender, with both masculinity and femininity being socially constructed categories that are based on the existence of biological differences between males and females. It from these differing definitions and proposed arguments that the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are confused and at times used interchangeably. For the purpose of this study, they will be understood, respectively, as being biologically based and socially constructed within different cultural contexts.

It is evident that the existing literature on masculinity is motivated by two fundamental principles, that the definition of masculinities is not uniform or monolithic, is not generalizable to all men, and that masculine behaviour is not essentialised or unchanging. This indicates a shift towards a possible emergence of newer, less violent and oppressive ways of being masculine (Morrell & Ouzgane, 2005).

2.3.1 The definition of masculinity

Traditional writers, such as Brannon and David (1976), describe a typically Western ideal of what constitutes masculinity, using four clusters of norms. The first is that of avoidance of any feminine traits, suggesting that in order to qualify as a 'real man' all feminine traits need to be avoided, thus indicating distinct binary opposites (Markovic, 2003). The second comprises those norms specific to the achievement of status, indicating an expectance of a male as successful and to be respected for that success. The third speaks to the independence and self-confidence that a man should display, and expectations that he will be tough and self-reliant. The final cluster is one of aggression, deemed acceptable and even expected, to the point of violence.

The above traditional definition of masculinity assumes that it is inborn and natural, however, social constructionists argue that it develops primarily through gender socialisation. For Connell (1995) it does not occur in isolation but rather in relation to femininity, a cultural construction of maleness in which the man is gendered. Cultural, individual and structural factors are interdependent within human social relations, with Connell (2001) using the term 'culture' to refer to the customs, ideas, and social behaviours that are typical to a particular group of individuals, emphasising the separation roles within the different cultures.

Masculinity is no longer considered a homogenous set of stable traits, as within the last ten years no settled paradigm has emerged. Common themes are however broadening the construction of masculinity within everyday life, the importance of economic and institutional structure, the significance of differences among masculinities, and the contradictory and dynamic nature of gender. According to Connell (1995), existing gender relations analysis has placed emphasis on the larger social structures in which masculinity is located, and these influence the establishment of diverse masculinities. Such a conceptualisation suggests that gender can no longer be located within the individual but rather finds constant reproduction through socially informed behavioural interactions, continuously allowing for both men and women to continually affirm their membership of suitable sex categories (West & Zimmerman, 1991). Masculinity's vulnerability to the numerous interpretations of what it constitutes is ever evolving. For Edley and Waterell (1995, p.208), "masculinity is a concept which gets transmitted from one generation to the next through talk and text".

For a number of years masculinity was discussed as a single identity, however this has changed with further research and it has been shown to differ in terms of class, race, ethnicity and culture. Connell (2000) argued for the presence of multiple masculinities within different contexts and historical moments, and Britton (1989, p.14) that "since masculinity is socially constructed and historically and culturally located, it is spurious to talk of masculinity and in fact that the study of masculinity should be recognised as the study of masculinities". This conceptualisation of masculinity as a collective term provides a theoretical context within which to explore health inequalities among men. Therefore, this particular type of exploration should attend not only to differences but also to actual relations of dominance and subordination (Annandale, 1998).

2.3.2 Hegemonic masculinity

According to Connell (1993), masculinities are arranged hierarchically and are in consistency competition for power and legitimacy, as relations of alliance, domination and subordination include and exclude different types of men (Connell, 1993, 2005). One dominant understanding of masculinity that is found at the top of this hierarchy is *hegemonic masculinity*, a term developed in the early 1980s based on acknowledgement of the influential masculinities that were present at the time. Connell (1983) positioned this theory within the feminist paradigm, as critical theorists examined power relations between men and women, women and men, and between men and men. Messner and Sabo (1990) argued that gender identity was not imposed on an individual simply through socialisation, but rather that individuals actively build their gender identity as well as the manner in which they behave. Connell's understanding and construction of masculinities was no different from that of Messner and Sabo (1990) in that she also contended that gender was socially constructed (Connell, 1987). Where Connell differs from other theorists is that she argues that when studying and trying to make sense of masculinity the focus should be on the way in which people perform and engage in gendered acts, not simply on the normative gender roles. Thus, Connell's understanding of masculinity suggests that gender is not a consequence of one's biological sex but rather is a socially negotiated construct (Connell, 1995).

Connell's conceptualisation of masculinities draws on Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony to theorise gender as a form of power. Acknowledging the influence of Gramsci, Connell (1995) offered the following definition:

> Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the current accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women... the most visible bearers of hegemonic masculinity are (not) always the most powerful people [and] hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power, collective if not individual (Connell, 1995, p.77).

According to Gramsci's concept of hegemony, this power is said to take on two forms, that of power being exercised between genders which have power over women, and as power within genders. Connell (1995) states that it should be noted that not all men will benefit directly from hegemonic masculinities in a homogametic manner, and most importantly not all men are easily exploited. Within Connell's hegemonic masculinity there is a hierarchy, meaning that the more dominant males exercise power over the more inferior forms of masculinity.

Connell's (1999) conceptualisation of masculinities encompasses four 'types': hegemony, subordination, complicity, and marginalisation, reflecting the practices and relations that construct the main framework in current Western gender roles. Within this framework are specific relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men (Connell, 1999), as *hegemony* refers to the cultural dynamics by which men sustain a position of leadership in social life (Connell, 1997). *Subordination*, on the other hand, refers to the position of those men who are denied access to the hegemonic position, as hegemonic and subordination masculinities are defined in relation to one another (Connell, 1997). The interaction between the two types of masculinities is complex but important as it reveals that being a man is experienced differently and lacks homogeneity. *Complicity* refers to the manner in which the majority of men gain from hegemonic masculinity, since the benefit from the patriarchal divide, and *marginalisation* to the interaction between dominant and inferior forms of masculinities, and it is relative to the authorisation of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominate group (Connell, 1997).

Hegemonic masculinity is thus seen as a particular form that dominates within a society and exercises its power over inferior and rival masculinities. This can be translated into cultural prescriptions of what it means to be '*macho*' or what is sometimes referred to as a 'real man' (Wetherell & Edley, 1999), and illustrates that it is not being male in itself that is associated with

dominance and power but the particular manner of being and behaving (Connell, 2000). A central element of the notion of hegemony is that it operates in taken-for-granted ways, as the dominant construction of masculinity elicits the support of the oppressed by being seen by them as legitimate and accepted (Gramsci, 1971; Van Dijk, 2001). This particular type of gaining support can occur through the actions of members of the dominant group.

Connell's (1987, 1995) theory on masculinities has been particularly influential in drawing attention to how social, cultural and historical factors have influenced the various ways in which 'masculinity' comes to be defined and embodied by boys and men. With other literature, it is characterised by the view that the masculine identity is a cultural and historical phenomena (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1987; Segal, 1990), moving away from biological essentialism and rejecting any account of identity in terms of fixed and coherent roles.

From the notion of hegemonic and rivalling masculinities it is evident that not all men are socialised in a similar manner and that new considerations of masculinity are emerging. For Demetriou (2001), even the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which in his view is critical of essentialised depictions, is currently being challenged in order to provide an analysis of masculinity that is sensitive to diversity and change. Morrell (2001) extends this view by emphasising that masculinity is not fixed or an essential identity that all men share, but rather a fluid and dynamic practice that is socially and historically constructed. Therefore, an idealised hegemonic masculinity is interspersed with local ideas and produces new expressions of what it means to be 'a man' within a certain culture (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994).

In addition, when considering a single individual's journey of masculinity it reflects a shifting environment that is constructed in the context of endless influences, such as race, class, developmental stage, parental influence and numerous other life events (Morrell, 2001). According to Epprecht (1998), as with any other aspect of culture, masculinity is subject to change over time and may give rise to considerable contestation. The differing ideals of manliness may be more or less dogmatic, restrictive, and insist upon conformity in different historical contexts. However, throughout history, and across different cultures, definite characteristic features of masculinity occur with striking regularity. 'Real manliness' has tended to be characterised by putting a premium on men's ostentations heterosexuality, virility, control of emotions, and the acquisition and exercise of power (Epprecht, 1998).

Although no direct correlation has been identified between class, race and masculinity, authors such as Kimmel (1996) and Morrell (1998, 2005) have argued that hegemonic masculinity in the USA and many European countries is still overwhelmingly the domain of white, ruling-class men. The same argument could be made for South Africa (this is discussed later in the chapter), in which it has historically been perceived as that of a white, educated, heterosexual Christian male type (Kimmel, 1996). However, with an increase in research this seems to be shifting, and according to Morrell (1998) hegemonic masculinities are currently harder to identify in South Africa as a result of the number of varied cultures.

2.3.3 Subordinate masculinities

As described by Connell (1995), masculinities are socially constructed ideas about attitudes and behaviours, and within any given society are definitions of appropriate roles, values, and expectations associated with men. Masculinities are different from biological male factors, and there is no singular pathway to masculine constructions. According to Connell (1995) and Mac an Ghail (1996), they are a gendered phenomenon with no social, political, or historical boundaries, and are not universal. For this it is highly conceivable that in any given setting it is not uncommon to see several different masculinities that are being performed. Connell (1995) states, "there is no one pattern of masculinity that is found everywhere. There is a need to speak of 'masculinities', not 'masculinity'" (p.10). Due to the reality that power is not evenly distributed among men, Connell (2000) puts forward three forms of masculinity, which fall under the umbrella term posited by Donaldson (1993) of 'counter-hegemony'.

The first, *complicit masculinity* is constructed along a continuum as a type that does not always comply or agree with the dominant forms. Thus, within any given group, only a selected number of members of the group fall into the category of dominant or hegemonic masculinities, with the majority in the middle. They are constricted in alliance with hegemonic masculinities and against subordinate masculinities, thus easily able to conform to dominant or more powerful types within a particular context. The second type, *submissive* complies with dominant or more powerful types within a particular context. The third, *oppositional* or *protesting* is the type that is consistently in opposition or conflict with the more dominant or hegemonic forms. Shefer (2006, p.32) argues that in an attempt to classify men within these exclusive categories "any one man may position himself in different masculinities in different relationships and contexts, and

masculinity as a social construction is thus always prone to internal contradiction and historical disruption".

Apart from the counter-hegemonic masculinities within a society, there are also the more marginalised and subordinate types. According to Paulsen (1999), even though marginalised masculinities, for example, oppressed, ethnic, religious or racial male groups, may not be at the bottom of the masculine hierarchy, they do not share all the benefits afforded to those men who meet the criteria of hegemonic masculinity. Connell (2005) postulates that subordinate forms of masculinities are found at the bottom of the masculinity hierarchy, established in relation not only to the more dominate masculinities but also to the polar opposition of heterosexuality and homosexuality. In his attempt to clarify the dichotomy, he notes that while "gay masculinities are the most conspicuous, [they are] not the only subordinate masculinity" (p.79). Other theorists within the field of masculinities refer to subordinate masculinities as effeminate or homosexual, as illustrated by employment of police boys and men as performing 'dominant', or 'acceptable' forms of masculinities. In the early 1970s, Rubin suggested that gender and the notion of hegemonic masculinity acted as a means of institutionalising heterosexuality and connecting gender to sexual reproduction. Thus, sexual reproduction and heterosexuality were required for the survival of the human race, leaving homosexuality as 'unnatural' and non-masculine.

Other arguments were put forward by Rich (1986), who postulated 'compulsory heterosexuality' which allowed for the assertion of men's social power over women, and Imms (2000), who wrote that when boys/men did not conform to hegemonic standards then marginalisation (us/them; good/bad; right/wrong of some boys/men's experiences), oppression and dominance, and the restriction of participation and acceptance into peers groups, tended to transpire.

With regards to homosexuality, Glick, Gangi, Gigg, Klumpner and Weinberg (2007) contend that the negative, and at times hostile, attitudes of heterosexual men towards gay men in general stem from the need within men to demonstrate and defend their masculinity. Their study found that the negative attitudes held by heterosexual males towards homosexual men were intensified when the latter were perceived to act in an effeminate ways. According to Glick et al. (2007), homosexual men are seen to violate two types of gender norms, namely those of sexuality (by preferring male sexual partners) and those of personality, as evident in the

stereotype that gay men are effeminate. Thus, these authors state that "an effeminate gay men violates norms of sexuality and personality, whereas a masculine gay man violates norms of sexuality, but not of personality" (Glick et al., p.55). Within this study, typologies of masculinities will be used in an attempt to understand the differing/consistent constructions of gender and masculinities (dominant and subjugation of subordinate masculinities) within adolescent boys and girls.

It could be argued that when ranking masculinities, hegemonic forms would be considered dominant within any given grouping of men (Connell, 1995; Kimmel; 1987; MacGhail, 1996). Importantly, it is not necessarily the most practiced masculinity in a given group, but when compared side-by-side with other masculinities, hegemonic masculinities would rank top (Connell, 2000). However, it has also been argued by Connell (2001, 2002) in later papers that men are becoming increasingly critical of the dominant hegemonic understandings and perception of masculinities. Evidence has been gathered from international and local studies which provide evidence for the ability of men to resist dominant forms of masculinity that go beyond and challenge the gender order.

Although the above types of masculinity have been identified and researched, it may not be simple to distinguish between them as they are continuously changing and shifting along the continuum. Any male can position himself within a different form of masculinity and different relationships in different contexts, making masculinity as a social construct vulnerable to internal contradiction and historical disruption (Connell, 1993). With this in mind, caution should be exercised when attempts are made to label or categorise any one man as belonging to a set masculinity type. However, this does not then suggest that we should move away from 'identifying' a theoretical classification that allows for a better understanding of the power that is associated with the more theoretical understanding of masculinities.

2.3.4 Masculinities within the context of South Africa – past and present

During the decades of apartheid, 'hegemonic masculinity' in South Africa could be argued to have been reflected in Afrikaans-speaking white men who displayed an authoritarian, punitive and unforgiving form of masculinity (Morrell, 2001). During this time of political reign, constructions of masculinity were intertwined with inequalities and injustices, including high

levels of violence against women, dominance of certain spheres of public life and corporate state to the exclusion of women, as well as violence against minority groups, homophobia, xenophobia, racist and ethnic violence, to which black men fell victim of (Morrell, 2001; Morrell & Oozgane, 2005). The first application of hegemonic masculinity within the South African context was used to explain the nature, the form, and the dynamics of male power as according to Morrell (1994, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2008) it occurred within a specific political and intellectual circumstance. Intellectually, the concept was utilised to sought to analyse gender power in conjunction with issues of male hierarchy, allowing for a differential between groups of men in different relationship to one another and more or less power in relation to a dominate group. The country had an entrenched history of colonialism and apartheid that divided the political and economic landscape along lines of race and social class. According to Shefer (2006, p.29), the construction of hegemonic masculinity pervaded all aspects of life, during this era, characterised as "that of a white, educated heterosexual, Christian male type".

In his conceptualisation of masculinity within the South African context Morrell (1998, 1999, 2001, 2005) proposed three types of masculinities that were hegemonic, a 'white' masculinity, which represented the political and economic dominance of the white ruling class; an 'African' masculinity, based on the masculinity that resides in and is perpetuated through indigenous institutions (such as chiefship, communal tenure, and customary low); and the 'black' masculinity that had emerged in the context of urbanization and development of geographically separate and culturally distinct African townships. Within his historical and sociological application of the concept, Morrell deviated from the use of the concept which associated hegemonic masculinity with the dominance of one masculine ideal associated with gender order that arranged male power in a society.

According to Langa and Eagle (2008), little research exists on masculinity that explicitly uses the concept of hegemonic masculinity as a central theoretical construct. The psychological research that is available uses many parallel concepts such as dominant masculinity. Within these studies hegemonic masculinity is seen as predicted upon a concept that is embedded in and sustains the patriarchy in society. Both types of research that view the concept of hegemonic masculinity, or the parallel concepts, assume that the manner in which masculinity is constructed gives men power over women (Davies & Eagle, 2007; Langa & Eagle, 2008). Dominant

masculinity is usually used to refer to the expected or ideal norms of masculine behaviour and self-presentation, implicitly using the concept of dominance in the sense of power, implying hegemonic masculinity.

Connell (1993, 2005) postulates that, during apartheid, black men and black masculinities fell under the category of what she refers to 'non-hegemonic masculinity', that is, "minorities, defined in terms of race, class, ethnicity or sexual orientation, all characteristically understand what a man means differently from members of ruling class or elite or from each other too" (Morrell, 2001, p.7). Within this context of racial discrimination, white and African masculinities were hierarchically related, with a term such as 'boy' used to denote this difference. According to Morrell (1998, p. 616) this "captured a condensation, a refusal of acknowledge the possibility of growth and the achievement of manhood among African men. Servitude was combined with denial of adulthood and thus become a feature of black masculinity". It was used primarily in the context of the menial work undertaken by African that required a high level of strength and energy. From this, African and black masculinities were therefore associated with work and ethnicity, as demonstrated in studies by Campbell (2001) on men working within the gold mines.

Despite the emasculation experienced by black men during apartheid, Morrell (1998) contends that contact with their homes, in which men took on a more dominant roles and women more submissive roles, helped ensure that African masculinities remained hegemonic. Connell (2000) argued that black African migrant workers used violence as a means to affirm their sense of manhood as well as take revenge and act against the power inequalities of apartheid. These developments reflect the reality that other forms of masculinity exist within the context of hegemonic forms.

The works of Connell (1995, 2000) indicate an understanding of African men beginning from a position of diversity, in the sense of a lack of homogeneity characterised by Christians, Muslims, Hindus, traditional believers and healers, white settlers and Indian labourers, among others. Within this variation are communalities, noted by Connell (2005) as three factors with which African men have to contend. Firstly, all men have access to the patriarchal dividend, the power that being a man gives them to choose to exercise power over women, which can be extended to control of the lives of other men. The legacy of colonialism and current globalisation is essential to the conceptualisation of masculinity in Africa, as in Frantz Fanon's (1986) *Black*

Skin, White Mask, which examined the effect of colonial domination on the psyche of the colonised and identified the masculinity of black men as a central category of anticolonial thought. The final factor that African men contend with is their complex positioning as 'other'. According to Stecoopoulos and Uebel (1997) race is an obvious, although not the only factor here.

Within the South African context, race and class are of major importance in determining how men understand their masculinity and display it (Morrell, 2001). To concentrate on the influences of an individual's immediate peer group, family or community would be in essence to ignore the complicated history that still defines the identities of many South Africans. The majority of the studies conducted on adolescence as a life phase, peer group influences, early exposure to aggression and substance use and abuse were not conducted within the post-apartheid context, and placed little emphasis on socio-economic status or race or their relationship to the concept of power. In South Africa, specifically, this issue is connected to the legacy of apartheid.

The political reform which South Africa underwent in 1994 from an apartheid government to a democratic state impacted on all population groups and filtered through to everyday facets of life. A powerful discourse of masculinity evolved with the 'New South Africa', as an 'heroic masculinity' epitomised by the former President Nelson Mandela was becoming in dominance within black males. According to Morrell (2005), this form of masculinity is one that encompasses patience, peace, domestic responsibility, compassion, democracy and introspection. With the heightened levels of crime and violence a more violent type of masculinity was on the rise which has been illustrated in literature by high incidents of rape and violent crimes. These acts, Morrell (2005) argues, are attempts by black males to deal with loss of status and power. Prior to Morrell's studies, Miller (1991) postulated that with the increasing loss of men's power in society they may turn to violence in an attempt to assert their threatened sense of manliness and power.

The new democratic government that came after the first democratic elections in 1994 brought with it a Bill of Rights that campaigned for equality for all races and genders, especially for the previously disadvantaged. This did not, however, prove straightforward, as it brought with it a number of unintended consequences, such as high unemployment and crime rates.

Morrell (2005) contends that men tend to cope with these challenges through the consumption of alcohol and the exploitation of women. According to Joseph and Lindeggar (2007), psychological writing on masculinity has placed great emphasis on the manner in which young men establish a viable masculine identity for themselves in relation to other young men and women. They hypothesise that the hegemonic masculinity can be employed as a useful construct.

McPhail (2003) identified an increase in risks that face South African adolescent boys in relation to dominant norms and practices of masculinity. Connell (1995) shows how the process of becoming a working class male and the absence of clear life opportunities has a dispiriting and dangerous outcome on the way young unemployed males consider and conduct themselves. Morrell (2001) states that the youth from lower socio-economic communities generally live dangerous lives on the edge of crime, characterised by few opportunities and a randomness that often finds expression in anti-social activity, drug abuse, and heavy emphasis on heterosexual expressions of masculinity (Morrell, 2001). Based on these arguments, it is apparent that despite the political endorsement of equal rights for men and women, contemporary South Africa has high levels of domestic violence and practices that affirm gender asymmetries (Sideries, 2005).

With regards to ethnic masculinities, Waetjen and Mare (2001) state that the link between an individual's ethnicity (more specifically minority) and masculinities, as forms of resistance to racism and attempts to assert patriarchal power, may be a response to the powerlessness engendered by racist discourse. Wetherell and Edley (1999) suggest that the construction of what is now referred to as 'black masculinity' entails a constant, delicate negotiation between power and powerlessness, and the hyper-masculine identity of working class male culture. At a more micro level, masculinity is achieved within the context of social intersections in which versions of masculinity are open contestation (Epprecht, 1998; Hearn & Collison, 1993). Thus, being a man involves negotiating ideological dilemmas (Billg, Condor, Gane, Middleton, & Radley, 1998) as men define themselves as types of men.

Even though the prevailing gender norms and dominant views of masculinity still exist within South African society, Sideris (2005) contends that men are now at a point at which they begin the redefining and reworking of their gender practice in the private dimensions of their lives. The conceptualisation of marginalised masculinities has received particular attention in relation to young ethnic adolescent men. Connell (1999) describes the oppositional masculinity

of marginalised masculinity that picks up themes in hegemonic masculinity and reworks them in the context of poverty, that is, the most powerful men within a marginalised group dominate the inferior by overemphasising masculine behaviour, such as risk-taking.

2.3.5 Masculinities: adolescents, boys and young men

Boys within contemporary society are perceived as being trouble (Kimmel & Traver, 2005), with Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002, 2005) specifically highlighting the negative perceptions they hold in society, perceived as problematic potential delinquents, criminals, and sexual perpetrators. Langa and Eagle (2008) contend that since apartheid there has been an observable broad shift from political violence to criminal violence, with the majority of the crimes committed reportedly committed by young males between the ages of 14 and 24 (Department of Correctional Services, 2007). Research into young men's engagement in criminal activities in South Africa has found that engaging in crime and being associated or a part of a gang are viewed as ways of asserting masculine identity amongst other men (Frosh et al., 2003).

Frosh et al. (2003) specifically examined the various dimensions of masculinities that are of importance for adolescents in the United Kingdom (UK) at both individual and societal level. The study intentionally avoided the generalised view held of masculinity, and instead argued that "teenage boys have a troublesome reputation, making them the central figures in contemporary moral panic. Media, government, teachers and police; all focus on boys mainly as potential problems" (Frosh et al., 2003, p.84). Instead of this perception, Frosh et al. (2003) argue that it is this generalised view that is problematic and cannot be generalised to all boys. This argument highlights the complexities in understanding and constructions that exist in the negotiation of masculinity in boys. Apparent from this and other studies (see Kimmel & Traver, 2005; Nayak & Kehily, 2008) is that there is not a clear model of masculinity to which young males can aspire. Frosh et al. (2003) argue that this creates a potential developmental crisis for boys.

It has been argued that the main source of the crisis of masculinity is one of identity (Nayak & Kehily, 2008). Despite the plethora of literature available on hegemonic masculinities there is still limited information on the how young boys, adolescents and young men negotiate the constraints and freedoms with which these dominant male discourses present them (Frosh et al., 2003). More pertinent to this study is how adolescents negotiate their masculinity within the

pressures of normative masculinity. Studies attempting to answer this question have concluded with results in which the roles of males within contemporary society appear to be contradictory. Lindegger and Maxwell (2007) posit that in the presence of socialisation and development, especially during the adolescent phase, individual boys take up particular subject positions in relation to these dominant hegemonic standards. Some succumb to the pressures of conforming to these dominant forces of hegemony more than others.

From analysis of discourses of boys within individual interviews and focus groups, Lindegger and Maxwell (2007) found that boys feel pressure to present themselves in a particular manner when in a public context. Significant discrepancies were identified in the boys' accounts of sexual activities and number of sexual partners, which highlights the difficulties boys encounter in their attempt to negotiate their masculinity. The accounts that the boys provided when separate form their peers reflected a perception that their private lives were a deception and provided concrete proof of a failed masculinity, not being 'real men'. In addition, the findings on the power held by the hegemonic form of masculinity link back to the study, as when boys do not perform according to these hegemonic forms they are overcome with intense feelings of guilt that they have failed to perform.

The findings of a study conducted by Martino and Pallota–Chiarolli (2003) in the UK were similar to those of Lindegger and Maxwell (2007), in that boys experienced great pressure to look a certain way. Participants suggested that if a boy was more muscular in build he ranked higher in the hierarchy of masculinity. This pressure to look a certain way was identified with feelings of inadequacy if the ideal performance of hegemonic masculinity was not met. When looking at the constructions of masculinity within less muscular boys and boys with physical disabilities Martino and Pallota-Chiarolli (2003) found that boys would over-compensate for their limited physical ability by displaying overt forms of heterosexuality. This study is of particular relevance to this research as it provides evidence of the embodiment of masculinity, as in physicality and body deportment. These constrict boys' actions by acting as a monitor in which they learn to regulate themselves and as a gauge to categorise other boys.

Apparent from the above studies on adolescents' constructions of masculinity is that there are multiple voices of boys and men, and these need to be explored further (Pollock, 1998). Within the USA, Pollock (1998) challenges the traditional psychological models, focusing on the

values of the dominant Caucasian Euro-American culture that emphasise the development of autonomy, separation, and individualistic coping styles, especially the "premature separation from nurture and an early silencing of boys' genuine expression of an interdependent, humanly vulnerable self or *voice*" (Pollack, 2005, p.190). From this, a 'boy code' is created in which boys are shamed towards extremes of toughness, self-containment and separation, described by Pollack (1998) as "a set of behaviours, rules of conduct, cultural shibboleths, and even lexicon that is inoculated into boys in our society – from the beginning of a boy's life" (p.xxv). This code is said to shame boys away from their emotional vulnerability and basic need for human compassion, resulting in what Pollock termed 'gender straitjacketing', a discourse on the limits that are placed on boys to develop their own sense of who they are and what they understand masculinity to mean. This results in a specific view of masculinity that is associated with the hegemonic type, in which boys are limited to performances of aggression, strength, violence and non-emotional forms. Pollack (1998) concludes his argument by providing insight into the problems that arise from the adherence to the 'boy code', to which subscription includes wearing a mask of masculinity that restricts boys and men's true feelings, anxieties, pain and fear. Thus, this discourse of the construction of masculinity means boys and men deny and hide their true selves, although these feelings have been found to resurface as aggression, violence and risky behaviour. Shafer et al. (2007) also noted the great social pressure pace on boys to be and act in a certain way.

Morrell (2005) contends that the schooling system is the best place in which adolescents can be engaged and questioned on their understandings of masculinity. Taking into consideration the study by Pollack (1998) and others, it is of importance to understand how adolescents construct masculinity and which factors play important roles in their constructions. This may shed light on the factors that are influential in producing anti-social, irresponsible and violent masculinities such as the train surfers investigated within this study. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) highlight the important role that school plays in the constriction of masculinity, positing that "school as an institution, which historically reproduced rules, routines, expectations, relationships and rewards, and its deployment of artefacts, resources and space, actively shapes what happens within it, for all its inhabitants" (p.114). In their attempt to understand the roles of teachers, the curriculum and school culture have in the construction of masculinity in adolescent boys, they unearthed the complexities of masculinities, and the way in which adolescent boys

negotiated their understanding within a school environment. Their participants identified hegemonic masculinity in the form of being *macho*, which is associated with competitive and tough behaviour. In comparison, adolescent boys who took a more academic role within the school context were seen as not representative of 'true' masculinity, and to some extent as feminine. Analysis of the curriculum factor showed that boys where more inclined to select subjects they perceived to guarantee them financial success, which is harmonious with the 'breadwinner/financial provider' role characteristic of hegemonic masculinity, rather than pursuing personal interests (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). These apparent contradictions between pursuing one's interests and their achievement of being seen as *macho* speak to the complexities of masculinities and the difficult task of negotiation a form of masculinity that fulfils both personal and social need (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). These findings echo those of Mills and Lingard (1997) on masculinity within schools, which accounted for some of the harassment that boys who do not conform to the hegemonic type of masculine behaviour experienced within school.

Frosh et al. (2003) highlight the experience of social class and race, and the role they play in the conceptualisation that boys develop about their masculine identities. Research on the correlation between race and masculinity within schools found that black masculinities were viewed as inferior to white masculinities within the school context (Wright, Weekes, McGlaughlin, & Webb, 1998). The study highlighted an emergence of a stereotypical and homogenic view of black males as aggressive, sexist and violent. According to Julien (1998, in Wright el al., 1998, p.78), this perception incorporates the notion of *machismo*, by which "subjectivity incorporates and attributes associated with dominant definitions of manhood, such as being tough, in control, independent, in order to recuperate some degree of power active influence over objective conditions of powerlessness created by racism".

Wright et al. (1998) argue against the notion of homogenisation of black masculinity which perpetuates the belief that all black males are aggressive, sexist and violent. They were able to exemplify the manner in which gender and race were infused within the context of a school and found that when being expelled from a school, black masculinity was positioned with discourses of conflict, cultural misunderstanding and isolation. Within this context, black masculinities are positioned in opposition to white masculinities, resulting in 'over

masculinising' the identities of black adolescents (Wright et al., 1998). Within the United Kingdom where Wright and colleagues conducted the study, there is a system which is starting to gain popularity in South Africa of streaming. This process refers to placing students in classes dependent on their levels of achievement. Wright et al. (1998) found that this process of streaming and failure which are identified as race- and class-specific, pushed groups of working class boys towards alienation. According to Connell (1989, p.77), this "provides the boys with a perfect foil for the construction of a combative masculinity". Wright and colleagues (1998) contend that in order for the boys to defend against not fitting into the dominant form of masculinity as predetermined by their school context, their academic difficulties and failures are perceived by black boys as an opportunity to seek alternative forms of masculinity. This is evident in sporting achievements, physical aggression and sexual promiscuity (Wright et al., 1998). This was identified by Wright et al. (1998) as the black adolescents' attempt to regain a sense of masculinity through the exertion of power over others. In line with this particular way of thinking, Mercer and Julien (1988) state that defences and regaining of an alternative and acceptable form of masculinity result in the oppression of black women, children and black men as this form of masculinity is one that encompasses self-destructive acts and attitudes.

Another aspect of adolescent male masculinity construction that has been established frequently when investigating males in schools was the requirement of 'ritual' to symbolise the becoming of a man. Pinnock (1997) contends that the formation of gangs is one way in which adolescents create their own rites, due to a lack of such events within society.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, two theoretical frameworks were reviewed using applicable literature to support their relevance in the mapping out of this research report. It began by examining the works of Erik Erikson (1963, 1968), in his study of identity development during the stage of adolescence. Erikson's theory places great emphasis on the importance of context in the process of adolescent identity development. In this study, the researcher aims to explore how adolescents from one school in Orlando West, Soweto negotiate the multiple voices of identity, and more specifically of masculinity in relation to a growing phenomenon of train-surfing. Adolescence

has been found and theorised to be a period characterised by risk-taking behaviours (Seidler, 2006). Mainstream literature characterises this period of development as a time of turbulence, chaos and experimentation, especially in male adolescents (Burman, 1994; Seidler, 2006), leading into a discussion of the second framework, masculinity. The review aimed to provide a comprehensive introduction and overview of the various constructions and performances of the various masculinities within contemporary society. By focusing on the issues around gender and the social construction of masculinity, this chapter ended with the aim of laying a foundation for a more critical exploration of this concept of masculinity. As the research was focused on adolescents, the researcher aimed to sufficiently cover developments and arguments in this area. Both local and international studies were selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the various typologies of masculinity. Collectively, the literature reviewed within the two theoretical frameworks has been selected as a background against which the participants' voices within the study can be heard as they discuss issues they face as young black adolescents.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

Considering the identified concerns, in the previous chapter, about the vulnerability of risk-taking during the adolescent phase of development, this chapter aims to discuss briefly the theories and constructions around risk-taking behaviour in adolescents. It begins by identifying the ideas and theories around why experimentation of this nature is prevalent and of concern, especially within this particular stage of development. It then moves on to look more specifically at the link between masculinity and physical performance and activity. To narrow the discussion it will briefly discuss train surfing, as the main focus of this study is to explore the way in which adolescents understand the practice.

3.2 Risk – taking behaviour

The period of adolescence is characterised by multiple transitions, such as puberty and relationships, and associated with an increase in risk-taking behaviour, for example, sexually risky behaviour, substance use and abuse, delinquency, and participation in dangerous sports (Michael & Ben-Zur, 2007). According to Jessor and Jessor (1977), problem behaviours can be seen as a means of accomplishing age-typical goals of peer group identity and adult status. Igra and Irwin (1996) conceptualise this period as one growing from autonomy and emerging individualisation from the family, whilst continuing to be reliant on parents and other significant adults. Within this stage of development, Coleman (1992) posits that adolescents undergo changes in relation to roles and status in society, which may lead to confrontation and conflict with parents.

Although in many respects the broader profile of risk behaviour within South African adolescents is similar to that of their counterparts in other countries around the world (Darroch, Singh & Frost, 2001) there are a few factors that uniquely complicate the South African context (Sharp & Dellis, 2010), notably the new democratic government. Although South Africa is nearing two decades of democracy the country remains in a state of rapid, political, social,

demographic and economic transition. The youth seem to be directly affected by these changes, having to adapt to new opportunities and cope with new challenges, thus consideration of risky behaviour among adolescents must contend with a wider context of transition.

Risk-taking, also sometimes referred to as sensation-seeking (Plant & Plant, 1992), has been defined as the search or desire for varied, novel and powerful sensations and experiences and the willingness to take risks, be they physical, social, legal or financial, for the sake of experience or in some cases circumstance (Miles, van den Bree, Gupman, Newlin, Glantz & Picken, 2001). Risk has been defined in various ways, the most frequently cited themes including the balance of potential rewards and losses, and the value of the link between short-term gain and long-term consequences. It should be noted that there are different levels of risk, some being inherently more dangerous than others. Leather (2009) posits that individuals are influenced not necessarily by the reality of risk but rather by what they perceive that risk to be. Thus, one could posit that impulsive (and deleterious) and thrill-seeking activities are used frequently as examples of risky behaviour. For a number of years, the term 'risk-taking' has been closely associated with adolescents, more specifically with male adolescents (Rolison, 2002). For Ponton (1997), frequent risk-taking was a normative, healthy behaviour for an adolescent, related to developmental risks: "It is during adolescence that young people experiment with many aspects of life, taking on new challenges, testing out how things fit together, and using this process to define and shape both identities and their knowledge of the world" (p.6). Despite this normative stance, as the number of adolescents engaging in dangerous risk-taking activities increases it has become imperative to explore reasons they continue to participate in them.

According to Maggs, Frome, Eccles and Barber (1997), the motivation behind the intense public and scientific interest in adolescent risk-taking is founded on the firmly held belief that behaviours such as substance abuse and delinquency have catastrophic consequences. Current literature defines risk-taking as the participation in behaviour which involves potentially negative consequences, balanced in some way by the perceived positive consequences (Gullone & Moore, 2000). Defining risk-taking in this manner provides an opportunity to explore empirical groupings of different types of behaviour, with Gullone and Moore (2000) identifying four types. First are behaviours that are challenging but relatively socially accepted, with a thrill-seeking element such as participating in dangerous sports and sexual experimentation. Second are

reckless behaviours, carrying a higher chance of negative social or health related outcomes, for example drinking and driving, speeding, and unprotected sex. Third are rebellious behaviours, including those which are often considered experimental rites of passage for adolescents as they seek independence. The potential outcomes of these behaviours may be quite negative but not to the same extent as reckless behaviours. Examples are drinking, smoking and staying out till late (Gullone & Moore, 2000). The fourth and final grouping of risk-taking behaviour are generally socially frowned upon by both adults and adolescents and are not considered rites of passage.

Like Ponton (1997), Lightfoot (1997) takes a positive stance and views risk-taking as a normative part of development, comparing it with the play of young children. Adolescent risk-taking may be considered a form of play that unites personal meanings and goals with peer interactions, however, for Lightfoot (1997), "risk-taking is conceptualised as 'deep play' – a declaration of one's place in the social scheme of things, and a means of participating in peer group life" (p.67). According to Lightfoot (1997), the concept of 'deep play' "… is that in which the stakes are so high and the outcome so unpredictable, that it makes no sense to participate at all" (p.83). The adolescents interviewed within Lightfoot's study (1997) stated that "the ability to play, and especially to play deeply, has much to do with understanding, expressing and developing one's self in relation to others" (p.85). Ponton (1997) cites Gertrude Hite, who "described much of adolescent risk-taking as healthy behaviour that helps teens grow by allowing them to try new things and test themselves and their abilities" (p.10). Although the decision-making process and rational cost-benefit taking was the maintenance of one's own self-concept and group relationships, risky behaviours are considered as such only if they are understood by all to be risky and if they have an element of goal attainment.

During one's adolescent years one is expected to explore and experiment, yet in participating in some activities one is exposed to various health risks. These include smoking, drinking, using prohibited drugs and participating in unsafe sexual exploration. Other activities are life threatening, such as drag racing and train surfing (Ayman-Nolley & Taira, 2000). Although to some these may seem like a normal course of experimentation during this period in development, some could have serious negative and even fatal consequences for adolescents (Rolison, 2002). Although there are some heated debates among sociologists and psychologists alike with regards to whether or not risk-taking activities are beneficial to the process of identity

development (Pittaway, 2000), the dangers of various risk-taking activities are still real. It then becomes difficult to normalise some of these high-risk behaviours as being universally part of an adolescent's development. The transition in question is fluid and non-static and therefore becomes important to become aware of society's norms what acceptable behaviour is for an adolescent. Furthermore, it is also vital to acknowledge that some youth face multiple challenges because of the environment they grow up and live in, and that their behaviour forms part of this context. The manifestation of adolescence, like any other developmental stage, is largely context-dependent.

Risk-taking behaviour involves engaging in behaviour that is different, dangerous, confrontational or competitive, and that includes some type of risk-taking. According to Robinson (2004), risk-taking behaviour can be seen on a scale from low-risk to high-risk situations and activities. The majority of the research conducted within the field of risk-taking behaviours in adolescents has focused on factors that underlie an adolescent's decision-making toward participating in risky behaviour. However, most of the research has been limited by typically studying only one type of risk behaviour. High-risk behaviours that are prevalent in South Africa include engaging in unprotected sex, drug misuse, and gang-related behaviours (Adar & Stevens, 2000).

3.2.1 Risky sexual behaviour

The alarming number of HIV infections among South Africa's adolescents may be evidence of one of the many consequences of partaking in risky behaviours (Garbus, 2003; Maruping, 2006). Of the broad variety of studies have been conducted in South Africa and internationally pertaining to the issue of sexual risk-taking among adolescents a large number have concluded that adolescents are at a higher risk of HIV infection because young people, specifically adolescents, are still negotiating their gender identities and exploring their sexuality (Morrell et al., 2002; Shisana, Rehle, Simbayi, Zuma, Bhana et al., 2005).

Campbell and MacPhail (2003) found that levels of heterosexually transmitted HIV infections are high amongst South African young people. A study conducted by UNAIDS (2006) currently estimate that nearly half of the new cases of HIV occur among under 25s, however, there are substantial differences in HIV/AIDS prevalence among "racial" groups, with

prevalence among black South Africans being 13.3% compared to the 2.0% in the reminder of the population (Shisana et al, 2005). While group differences are not uncommon in the wider risk literature, given the extensive historical inequalities in the provision of services in South Africa, the existing group asymmetries are difficult to interpret. Specifically, in South Africa adolescents are widely associated with casual sex, multiple concurrent partners and less than regular condom use. A study conducted by Campbell and MacPhail (2003) found factors that increased the likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behaviour included a lack of perceived risk of acquiring the virus, peer norms that devalue the use of condoms, the lack of availability of condoms, adults' attitudes towards the use of condoms, gendered power relations and the economic context of adolescent sex, in which the priority was placed on purchasing condoms.

3.2.2 Alcohol abuse: binge drinking

The consumption of alcohol has a longstanding history in South Africa, dating back to ancient times (Gumede, 1995) and is widespread among different groups. According to Setlalentoa, Pisa, Thekisho, Ryke and Loots Du (2010), alcohol plays a major role in the lives of many South Africans, and apart from its direct and indirect impact on health and nutrition it also has a significant effect on social and economic aspects of communities. La Hausse (1988) highlights how traditionally, especially within the rural areas, alcohol served many purposes, from use as a means of payment to a way of socialising and strengthening friendships, however, in particular, beer was associated with manhood and the strengthening of the body. Alcohol and drug abuse among children and adolescents are causes of increasing concern, two types of risk-taking behaviours that are major contributors to crime, violence and intentional and unintentional injury, as well as to other social, health and economic problems.

Alcohol is regarded as the most widely abused substance, with research conducted by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAA) finding that one in 13 individuals around the world abuse alcohol or is an alcoholic (NIAA, 2000). More specifically, Weinberg (2001) found that drinking alcohol is a significant problem for 10%-20% of the adolescent population. In five major studies conducted with adolescents in South Africa, a higher link to risk-taking and the development of alcohol-related problems was found. A study using a sample of 7,340 learns from 16 secondary schools in the Cape Peninsula, including participants from both historically advantaged and disadvantaged communities, found that 53% had experiences of

consuming alcohol (Flisher, Zievogel, Chalton, Leger, & Robertson, 1993). In another study, specifically investigating alcohol abuse within black adolescents, 42% of the participants reported that they had drunk it at some time in their lives. In addition, 34% of the sample reported current drinking patterns (12 months prior and at the time of response). Closer analysis of the data found that the current drinkers were mainly from the urbanised areas and regular drinking (one a week) was found within adolescents aged between 18 and 21 years old (Flisher et al., 1993). Results of a study by Weir-Smith (2001), conducted with a sample of 300 adolescents from the Limpopo and Gauteng provinces, showed that 50% of adolescents in the rural area reported current alcohol use. In both contexts (rural and urbanised), alcohol was mainly used in the company of friends (Weir-Smith, 2001).

One in eight high school students reported starting to drink before 13 years of age, and nearly 25% of students within grades 8 to 11 admit to binge drinking (Reddy et al, 2003). Results from the study conducted by Reddy and colleagues highlighted that, although less common, cigarettes and marijuana were evident, with 21% of the adolescents interviewed admitted to having smoked a cigarette within the past month. 13% reported trying marijuana, with the majority of these having used it in the previous month (Reddy et al., 2003). Smith and Rosenthal (1996) write that these rates, like those for sexual behaviours, are not dissimilar to those found in the USA and have been found to have the same public concern consequences, such as accidental death and injury, self-harm and violence (Reddy et al., 2003).

3.2.3 Substance abuse: drug use

The use of psychoactive substances by adolescents in South Africa and globally is of great concern (Morojele, Parry, Brook, & Kekwaletswe, 2012), heightened by their increased access to legal and illegal substances, increases in the rates of use of certain drugs, and resultant unintentional and unintentional injuries and other problems (Flisher, Matthews, Mukoma & Lombard, 2006). The rate of illicit drug use among adolescents is particularly high (Morojele et al., 2012) with recent studies showing high rates of methamphetamine use in the Western Cape, and in Gauteng and Mpumalanga, and greater preference for heroine by adolescents living in low income areas (Morojele et al., 2012).

Substance use and abuse has been recognised as contributing greatly to school violence, along with other factors that can foster an environment that is not conducive to teaching and learning (Zulu, Urbani, van der Merwe & van der Walts, 2004). A study conducted by Parry, Pluddemann, Louw and Leggett (2004), into risk-taking behaviour in teenagers, found that they were disproportionally involved in criminal activities owing to substance abuse. Their sample of 999 arrestees who tested positive for use of any drugs in police holding cells in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg, 66% were under the age of 20 and more likely to test positive for each of the drugs tested, which included cannabis, mandrax, cocaine, amphetamines, and benzodiazepines (Parry et al., 2004).

3.2.4 The allied risk-taking behaviours

Literature has shown that risk-taking behaviours do not exist in isolation, but instead tend to be allied with each other (Irwin & Millstein, 1986). Evidence for a number of local studies have revealed that adolescents use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, engage in unprotected sex, and are both perpetrators and victims of violence (Department of Health, 1998; Reddy, James, McCauley, 2003; Sharp & Dellis, 2010; Swart, Reddy, Pitt, Panday, 2001; Swart, Reddy, Ruiter, & de Cries, 2002; Swart, Seedat, Stevens, & Ricardo, 2002). According to researchers such as Irwin and Millstein (1986) and Gonzalez and Field (1994), risk-taking behaviours do not occur in isolation, but tend to be allied with each other, meaning that adolescents may engage in a range of risk-taking behaviour. Literature on risk-taking behaviour has illustrated some correlations between some of the activities. For instance, a study by Jessor and Jessor (1997) found that substance abuse, precocious sexual intercourse, minor delinquency, aggressiveness and a trait which they labelled ‘unconventionality’ (social risk-taking) were constantly interrelated. Furthermore, a close association between alcohol usage and accidental injuries was found. In many of the studies on risk-taking behaviour, alcohol has been implicated in a number of unintentional injuries. On the other hand, research has shown an association among various forms of health-enhancing behaviours, such as healthy eating patterns, physical exercise and seatbelt use (Flisher et al., 1993). Pickett and colleagues (1994) contended that engaging in one form of risk behaviour often indicated an increased likelihood of engaging in other forms of risk behaviour. Alcohol and substance abuse, for example, are often assumed to be associated with higher levels of sexual risk-taking and lower levels of condom use.

Flisher, Ziervogel, Chalton, Leger and Robertson's (1993) study of the relationship between adolescent risk behaviours indicated substantial associations between many forms of substance abuse and between injury and getting home late at night. Adolescents who smoked marijuana, binged on alcohol, and often got home late were associated with engaging in sexual intercourse. The study concluded that there was a significant association between many adolescent risk behaviours. Palen, Smith, Flisher, Cadwell and Mpofu (2003) examined the covariance of substance abuse and various sexual behaviours amongst over 2,000 South African students, finding an association between lifetime substance abuse and certain sexual risk behaviour, such as association between use and lack of familiarity with sex partners.

3.2.5 Perception of risk

In relation to risk perception, Moore and Gullone (1996) found a strong relationship between risk-taking behaviours reported by adolescents and their perceived positive outcomes. Thus, an adolescent's perception of a risk is different from that of an adult, despite there being the hypothesis that the logical reasoning of a 15 year old is comparable to that of an adult (Reyna & Farley, 2006). What an adolescent may perceive as a positive outcome could be different from the perceptions of an adult. The study by Gullone and Moore (1996) investigated adolescent nominated risk from a sample of 570 adolescents aged between the ages of 12 and 17. They were required to nominate behaviours they believed risky, evaluate them in terms of positive and negative consequences and rate how frequently they engaged in them. The greatest finding of this particular study was that whether or not the adolescents engaged in their nominated behaviours was significantly associated with their judgement about the riskiness (Gullone & Moore, 1996). Although adults may view many risk-taking behaviours as too risky to undertake, an adolescent is more likely to see a positive side and appears to enjoy the unpredictability of the situation (Leather, 2009).

3.2.6 Factors contributing to adolescents' vulnerability to risk-taking behaviours

There are various factors in literature that have been recorded as contributing to an adolescent's vulnerability to participating in risk-taking behaviour, examined as follows.

3.2.6.1 Biological/hormonal factors

Literature indicates that there are a number of biological and evolutionary explanations for risk-taking behaviour amongst adolescents. According to Spear (2003), their deviant behaviour is often attributed to "raging hormones", as the individual in this phase experiences a significant rise in gonadal hormones (testosterone and oestrogen), though some researchers claim that there is no empirical evidence for a link (Susman, Inoff-Germain, & Nottelmann, 1987, in Spear, 2003). Within Irwin and Millstein's (1968) casual model of adolescent risk-taking behaviour it was noted that early timing of puberty maturation for both male and female adolescents was a good predictor of several risky behaviours. These behaviours include unprotected sexual activity, substance abuse and partaking in physical fights (Lerner et al., 1991). Current literature has focused on the social factors that contribute to risk-taking behaviour and little research has been conducted on the biological/hormonal factors.

Gender differences in risk-taking have been considered by a number of researchers (for example see Bergman & Scott, 2001; James et al., 2003; Reddy, James & McCauley, 2003; Reddy et al., 2002; Booth, Johnson, Granger, Crouter & McHale, 2003), who found that testosterone was related to risk-taking in males but not in females. The increase in adrenal androgens has also been linked to behavioural problems in adolescence (Spear, 2003). Michael and Ben-Zur (2007) investigated the relationship between social and affective factors and the risk-taking behaviour of adolescents aged 16 to 18, concluding that risky behaviour among male adolescents was related mainly to peer group influences, whilst that of female adolescents was related to relationships with parents. Therefore, differences in background causes or triggers to risk-taking behaviour were seen as gender-specific.

According to Lindeggard and Durrheim (2001) male dominance with regard to risk-taking could be attributed to the manner in which masculinity is constructed and implanted into male thinking through the process of socialisation. The single dominant construction of masculinity comprises a discourse of the male sex drive, the motion of consequent, masculinity-as-penetration, males as risk-takers and the notion of the idealised male body. Of importance and significance for this study is how these constructions of masculinity create a context for the fostering of risky behaviour that is potentially life-threatening and incidences of violence. This

impacts not only on future generations who should help govern the country but also on the population as a whole.

3.2.6.2 Environmental and social factors/theories of risk-taking behaviour in adolescence

Social theories are the most commonly cited ones used to explain adolescent risk-taking behaviour. Social factors that increase adolescents' suitability to risk-taking behaviour include lowered or poor self-esteem, single-parent households, child-headed households and lowered socio-economic status, high unemployment rates, childhood behavioural difficulties, and poverty (Arnett, 1992; Arnett, 1999; Gonzalez & Field, 1994; Igra & Irwin, 1996). In South Africa, the continuous effect of poverty for two thirds of adolescents means that they have fewer assets with which to develop resilience to environmental threats and risky health and social behaviours. In particular, Nattrass (2009) and Dryfoss (1993) have shown that poverty plays a pivotal role in the HIV pandemic in Sub-Saharan countries, and affects the vulnerability of people, including young people, to HIV infection by driving risk-taking behaviour.

3.2.6.2.1 Socio-economic inequalities: poverty

According to a report conducted in 2002 by the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive Systems of Social Security for South Africa (Taylor, 2002), poverty is defined as a situation in life in which people are living without basic daily necessities, such as housing, food, water and clothes. The report defined poverty as the "inability of individuals, households or the entire communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living", divided into two categories, *relative*, defined as "the individual's or group's lack of resources when compared to that of other members in society", and *absolute*, "reflecting an inability to afford an adequate standard of consumption" (Taylor, 2002). It should be noted that this definition of absolute poverty overlooks the distribution of resources in society.

A study conducted by Kamper (2001) found that 40% of South Africans were living in acute poverty conditions, below the so-called 'poverty line'. Hawkins, Catalano and Miller (1992) found that extreme economic deprivation increases the probability of risk-taking behaviour, such as substance abuse, amongst adolescents. Their situation renders them more likely to engage in risky behaviour for the purpose of modulating negative mood, which is caused by daily stress of economic burden (Hawkins et al., 1992). The acute poverty conditions

were due to the high levels of unemployment, which is some instances resulted in the sale of illegal drugs and alcohol as a means of creating an income (Matthews et al., 1999), fuelling the vicious circle by increasing availability of illegal substance and increasing the likelihood of engagement in risky behaviour.

3.2.6.2.2 Peer influence

There is a considerable evidence to suggest that family and peer contexts provide the proximal nexus at which genetic and many social-contextual factors meet to produce risk-taking behaviour in adolescence. It has been shown above that the majority of adolescent risk-taking behaviour, such as drink-driving and reckless driving, substance use and abuse, occurs in the company of peers (Simoms-Morfon, Lerner, & Singer, 2005). In a study cited by Poulson et al., (2008), Hallinan and Williams (1990) found peer-pressure to be a vital factor in a variety of adolescent outcomes, such as educational performance, aspiration and decision-making with regards to risk behaviour. Jessor, Donovon and Costa (1991) proposed that adolescents who engaged in risky behaviours were more likely to have peers who engaged in other problem behaviours. Most significantly, they found that when drugs were used in social situations, which usually included peers, adolescents were more likely to voluntarily or involuntarily engage in unplanned or intended sexual intercourse, and unprotected (Morojele, Brook, & Kachiengra, 2006).

Of the proposed explanations for the differences between adolescents' and adults' risk-taking, the majority argue that age difference in psychosocial capacities such as impulse control and sensation seeking (discussed briefly above) plays an important role in accounting for the age difference. In a follow-up study, Cauffmann and Steinberg (2000) concluded that once differences in psychosocial maturity between adolescents and adults are considered, age differences in risky decision-making disappear. With this in mind, an alternative and entirely compatible account of age differences in risk behaviour emphasises peer influence. Support for the explanation stems from research conducted within the field of criminology, a small but compelling body of evidence that when adolescents commit crimes, acts that are inherently risky, they generally do so with their peers (Erikson & Jenson, 1977; Zimrig, 1998).

Lashbrook (2000) provides an explanation of how peers exert influence on risk-taking by demonstrating that older adolescents may attempt to avoid negative emotions, such as feelings of isolation and inadequacy, by participating in risky behaviour with peers. Literature has traditionally pointed to peer pressure as an etiological factor in adolescent risk-taking behaviour, however, as Igra and Irwin (1996), Irwin, Igra, Eyre and Millstein (1997) and Lashbrook (2000) concluded, it is still unclear whether risk behaviour is initiated in order to conform to an existing peer group or whether those inclined to engage in it are drawn to those who are similarly inclined. Lushbrook (2000) shows that whether or not a friend smokes is the best predictor of whether or not an adolescent will also begin smoking.

3.2.6.2.3 Parental influence

Although adolescence is typically characterised as a period in which autonomy and individuation from the parents and family emerges, Steinberg (2004) found that most adolescents maintain close relationships with their parents, who continue to influence their children's behaviour throughout this stage, and play an important role in determining involvement in their risky behaviour. There are many dimensions of the adolescent-parent relationship that might influence adolescent health and developmental outcomes, as well as the development of risky behaviours. Components such as parental warmness versus coldness, acceptance versus rejection, involvement versus detachment or neglect, and strictness versus permissiveness have been considered when studying risk-taking behaviour in adolescents. Specific parenting behaviours that have been found to influence adolescent health and risk-taking behaviour include discipline strategies used, level of parental involvement, level of parent monitoring, the manner in which the parent communicates with the adolescent, and parenting style (Swadi, 1999).

Hawkins and Fatzgibbon (1993) found that parent modelling of permissive attitudes had been implicated in the initiation of substance use in early adolescence, and adolescents were less likely to abuse substances or to initiate sexual activity when their parents provided them with emotional support and acceptance. In addition to parent modelling, parental monitoring has been widely studied as an important factor of adolescent risk-taking behaviour, defined by Jaccard and Dittus (1990) as incorporating both communication between parent and adolescent, and supervision of the child. In a later study, Borawski and colleagues (2003) found that perceived parental monitoring combined with trust were protective factors against sexual activity for males

and females, alcohol use in male adolescents, and tobacco and marijuana use in females. Some of these results were also found by Smith and Rosenthal (1996), however, they found that less perceived parental monitoring was associated with increased participation in antisocial behaviours, and whilst Borawski et al. (2003) showed an increase in sexual risk-taking and substance use.

Baumrind (1968, 1978) was one of the first researchers to investigate the correlation between parenting style and risky behaviour, proposing that parenting styles varied along a continuum of two separate dimensions: demandingness (control) and responsiveness (acceptance), and that crossing these dimensions yielded further sub-categories, for instance: authoritarian (high control and/or low acceptance); authoritative (high control and/or high acceptance), or permissive/indulgent (low control and/or high acceptance). In recent literature, a fourth category has been included, namely neglectful parenting style (low control and/or low acceptance). Parenting styles that are permissive are more likely to be associated with adolescents whose behaviour is risky (Crockett & Petersen, 1993; Irwin et al., 1997), whilst an authoritarian parenting style can be a protective factor, discouraging adolescents from taking risks (Arnett, 1992). Research has also shown that parents may also influence their adolescents' risk behaviours by example. A study by Werner (1991) shows that adolescents whose parents use drugs are more likely to use drugs themselves.

Studies conducted on risky behaviour have found that adolescents from non-traditional families have a greater predisposition to exhibit behaviours related to substance use earlier than their counterparts from more traditional families (Field, 2002). In addition, the effects of emotional detachment are powerful predictors of initiation and maintenance of risky behaviour (Field, 1994, 2002; Lerner et al., 1991). The protective factor of having a supportive environment during the developmental phase of adolescence needs to be emphasised and acknowledged as playing a preventative role, hence family and peers remain crucial, with parental behaviour and style being important factors within the onset of risk-taking behaviours.

Research conducted by UNAIDS (2000) identified parental involvement as being a preventative factor in the onset of risky behaviour, and found it limited possible negative consequences. This is reinforced by the studies finding that a sample group of incarcerated men and abusers of women had either witnessed violence within their own home environment or have

been victims of violence themselves. The most common finding of this study and others within the area of risky behaviour found that lack of a father figure or good male role model played an influential role in male violence. Other factors, such as a sense of disempowerment that is consequential of the growing rate of unemployment and not being able to be a breadwinner or 'real man' also played a critical role in the deterioration, as they left some men feeling that they were lacking any meaningful role in the family and community. This in turn caused some men to turn to violence (UNAIDS, 2000).

3.2.6.3 Theories of risk-taking behaviour

Various forms of risk-taking behaviour have been the subject of the following theories.

3.2.6.3.1 Developmental theory

When viewing risk-taking in adolescents, the willingness to engage in risk-taking behaviour has been viewed to consider both the normal developmentally appropriate exploratory behaviour (sensation-seeking) briefly discussed in the introduction of risk-taking, and a negative by-product of cognitive development, more specifically egocentrism (Elkind, 1967). This theory suggests that some adolescents are more prone to behaving in an impulsive manner by seeking out intense and varied activities.

The egocentrism perspective, in contrast to the age-appropriate exploratory behaviour approach, emphasises a specific type of error judgement that is a result of a sense of uniqueness and specialness held by the adolescent. Egocentrism is characterised by two dimensions, the first being the imaginary audience and the second the cognitive distortion known as the 'personal fable'. According to Elkind (1967), this sense of uniqueness flows from a cognitive over-differentiation of self from others, coupled with an under-differentiation of the object of thought. The imaginary audience implies that adolescents feel themselves to be under pressure and constant scrutiny from their peers and believe that their own lives are unique and exceptional. According to Elkind's (1967) accounts of egocentrism, adolescents focus their attention on their own thought, and the assumption is made that others must also be thinking about the same thing (imaginary audience). The personal fable refers to adolescents' belief in their own invulnerability or tendency to believe that unpleasant consequences will not happen to them, only perhaps to others (Elkind, 1967, 1985).

The theory rests on an assumption that irrationality is not apparent to the adolescent, owing to (i) lack of awareness of the need to decide about how to act; and (ii) failure to recognise risk that is apparent to others (Yates, 1992). This source of risk-taking is not a problem of an error of judgement but rather a result of lack of recognition that a judgement is needed in a given situation, because they are 'blinded' by feelings of invulnerability that accompany feelings of uniqueness. Failure to recognise the need for a risk judgement could perhaps help in the understanding of why adolescents have been found to ignore health messages and interventions developed and directed for them as the target audience (Arnett, 1992; Green et al., 1996).

It has been suggested by Arnett (1990, 1992) that adolescents are egocentric and sensation-seeking because they may not have developed the ability to use abstract reasoning or the correctly estimate the likelihood of an outcome. Arnett (1992) maintains that adolescents are poor at making judgements and susceptible to assessing probability without reference to base rates, or do so according to a stereotypical belief.

3.2.6.3.2 Problem behaviour theory

One of the salient theories used to explain risk-taking is problem behaviour theory (PBT) (Jessor & Jessor, 1977), which conceptualizes adolescents' risk-taking as engagement in the behaviours that deviate significantly from the norms of the dominant culture. According to PBT, adolescents who are involved in behaviours such as delinquency, drug use and sexual activity, have problem behaviour proneness, developmental antecedents of social structural variables, for example, parents' education, occupation, religion, family structure, home climate and peer and media involvement.

Jessor and Jessor's theory emphasises social-environmental and personal aspects characteristic of adolescent risk-taking, and views it as a maladaptive personality trait. The fundamental premise of PBT is that all behaviours emerge out of the structure and interaction of three systems. The first system is the *behavioural,* which includes both *problem behaviours,* which depart from the social and regional norms of society and cause social control responses from external sources, under age binge drinking, criminal acts, abuse of drugs, gang affiliation, and the display of criminal acts, and *conventional,* which are socially and normatively expected and accepted. The second system is the *personality,* which includes a combination of persistent,

enduring psychological factors and the motivational-instigation structure, determined by value placed on achievements and independence, the personal belief structure related to a person's concept of self-relative to society, and personal control structure, which gives a person reasons not to participate in problem behaviour. Problem behaviour in the personality often has consequences such as low achievement, focus on independence, favourable attitudes towards deviancy, adoption of values that run counter to social expectations, and lower self-esteem. The third system is the *perceived environment*, which has two structures, *distal*, which includes a person's relationship to his or her immediate support network, and *proximal*, which includes with a person's environment in relationship to available models of behaviour. Within the perceived environment, problem behaviour is often associated with high peer approval, peer models, low parental control, support, and influence, and incompatibility between parental and peer expectations. These systems are, in turn, conceptualised as risk factors and protective factors for problematic and potentially risky behaviour (Jessor, 1991, 1993).

PBT postulates that when the personality system and the perceived environment system clash, behavioural problems manifest (Jessor, 1987a). A major developmental assumption of PBT is that risky behaviours increase during an adolescents struggle for independence. The features of adolescence during this time are impulsivity, risk-taking, perceived invulnerability ("can't happen to me"), struggle to find personal identity, errors in thinking due to being locked into normative peer culture ("everybody does it"), rebellion towards authority coupled with the disturbances in psychosocial adjustment, clash with the norms and the expectations of the culture and society.

Although risk factors play a strong role in the determination of adolescent problem behaviours, their influence is moderated by protective factors, which are also important determinants of adolescent adjustment. Jessor (1998) identified as contributory risk factors of deviance, low self-esteem, low success expectations, a sense of alienation and desperation (personality system), orientation towards antisocial friends and parents as well as peer models with problem behaviour (perceived environment), and disconnection with conventional institutions and lack of success in school. Protective or resiliency factors were considered as relationships with adults, supportive family relationships, the perception of a normative control from the outside, conventional friends' models of behaviour, good school results, an intolerance

of deviance, and religious faith. Jessor (1998) also argued that protective factors interacted with risky factors in such a way that when protection was high, risk factors had little impact on problem behaviour, whereas when there was no protection a linear relationship existed between risk factors and problem behaviour.

2.4.6.2.3 The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) was developed by Ajzen (1989, 1991, 2001) and is seen as an extension of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The theory of reasoned action, meanwhile, posits that the intention (motivation) to perform a certain behaviour is dependent on whether individuals evaluate the behaviours as positive (attitude) and if they judged others as wanting them to perform it (subjective norm). TPB builds on this theory and contends that all behaviour lies on a continuum form total control to complete lack of control. Both internal factors (cognitive skills, knowledge, emotions and external factors, situation or environment) determine the degree of control.

TPB is founded on the connection between attitudes and behaviours, guided by three kinds of beliefs and cognitive outcomes: (i) *behavioural beliefs*, about the expected or likely outcome of the behaviour that produces a favourable or uncomfortable attitude toward the behaviour (outcome); (ii) *normative beliefs*, about what others expect (normative expectations) and the desire of the individual to follow those expectations. These result in the degree of social pressure to comply or subjective norm (outcome), and which beaviour the adolescent thinks others (e.g., peers) want him or her to perform; and (iii) *control beliefs*, about the ease or difficulty of preforming the behaviour, resulting in the degree of perceived behavioural control (outcome). The concept of perceived control in TPB is similar to Bandura's (1969) concept of self-efficacy, a belief or judgement that one can successfully perform behaviour under certain conditions.

Each of these beliefs and outcome factors, namely attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control, combine to determine the behavioural intention. For example, the more favourable the attitude toward the behaviour the more favourable the subjective norm, the greater the perceived control, and the stronger the potential of the intention to perform the behaviour. Considering specifically the phenomenon being

investigated within this study, the intention to perform stunts on a moving train is strengthened when individuals believe that nothing bad will happen and they can handle the stunts. The *surfers* expect to feel powerful when experiencing the adrenaline and thrill-seeking sensations (behavioural beliefs), and perceive value in *surfing* with peers who adhere to a normative belief that a 'rush' and shared euphoria is worth everything. The behaviour and attitude toward it is strengthened when participants believe that peers expect them to function well ('stay cool') in an impaired condition (subjective norm). Furthermore, the behaviour is advanced and reinforced when the outcome is performing the stunts successfully and unharmed ('handling the situation') and the experience of power is connected with the thought ('I'm doing it, what a high') (control belief).

Many studies have highlighted the role of psychological factors and the range of these determinants linked to the establishment of identity, one of the key challenges in adolescence according to various developmental theories. A study on risk behaviour by Gonzalez and Field (1994) made a compelling argument that adolescents deliberately seek out risky behaviours as they are under the assumption that these permit them to take control of their lives, to express possible opposition to adult authority and conventional society, to help them to deal with feelings of anxiety, frustration, inadequacy and failure, to help gain acceptance with peers, to help demonstrate their new acquired personal identity, and to affirm maturity, thus marking their transition into young adulthood.

Rolison (2002) also investigated the factors that may have an influence on adolescents' decision-making with regards to engaging in risk-taking behaviours. More specifically, she explored the various studies that had been conducted in the field, and extrapolated on the reasons adolescents engaged in various risk-taking activities. The first reason she explored was the idea of *sensation-seeking*, leading to a construction that identified it as "a need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences, and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences" (Rolison, 2002, p.586). Her next area of focus was the widely used construct of *locus of control*, defined as the "perception one has of the control one has over the events that occur in one's life" (Rolison, 2002, p.586). The third and final focus was on why adolescents' *decision-making* might be different from that of an adult's when it comes to risky behaviours. One the other hand, a study by Gonzalez and Field (1994) found that differences in

interpretation might not necessarily explain why adolescents choose to take part in risk-taking behaviours. Instead, within their study, they found that adolescents described both physically daring activities and rule-breaking as risky behaviours, as did adults. They concluded that even though their perceptions might differ from those of adults, adolescents could discriminate between risky behaviours.

Systematic research does not support the stereotype of adolescents as irrational individuals who believe they are invulnerable and who are unaware, inattentive to, or unconcerned about the potential harms of risky behaviour. Reyna and Farley (2006) argue that the logical reasoning abilities of a 15 year old are comparable to those of an adult, and adolescents are no worse than adults at perceiving risk or estimating their vulnerability to it. It increases the salience of the risks associated with making a potentially dangerous decision, with comparable effect on adolescents and adults (Millstein & Halpern-Felsher, 2002). Because both groups reason about risk in a similar manner, many researchers have posited that age differences in actual risk-taking are due to differences in the information that adolescents and adults use when making a decision. Research (see Gonzalez & Field, 1994; Millstein & Halpern-Felsher, 2002; Reynolds & Farley, 2006) leans toward the notion that providing adolescents with information about the risks of substance abuse, reckless driving and unprotected sex typically results in improvements in the adolescents thinking pattern but seldom changes the actual behaviour.

3.3 Train surfing

Train surfing is a phenomenon that involves individuals, usually males, hopping in and out of carriages along the platforms and jumping on top or underneath a moving train in search of what many may refer to as ‘a thrill’. This particular type of risk-taking occurs in a number of countries, with growing popularity, such as Germany, Australia, India, the USA and the UK. It has similar aspects to other extreme sports, such as bungee jumping, skydiving and abseiling, but these usually require money to participate and tend to be a pastime for white adolescents. Within the last decade, adolescents from lower socio-economic background have gravitated towards

train surfing as their extreme sport, a trend identified in countries such as Germany, India and South Africa (Roussow, 2007; Strauch, Writh & Geserick, 1998).

Of the limited academic literature on the phenomenon, internationally, the first study to be published on the topic of train surfing was conducted by Strauch et al. (1998) who set out to analyse the fatalities associated with train surfing in Berlin, Germany. The longitudinal study took place during 1989 and 1995, within which period 41 accidents related to train surfing were reported to the local transport system operators. Due to this study being epidemiological in nature, the findings were limited to the types of injuries that were most frequent in the accidents (polytraumatisation), when the accidents were most frequent (summer time during the evenings), and the characteristics of the train surfers. It did not explore the meanings behind the phenomenon.

Malone (2005) adopted a narrative paradigm to explore the phenomenon within the Australian context, and through her discussions with current and past train surfers was able to unravel certain motivations. Grappling with understanding why anyone would participate in such a dangerous sport, she accepted that some degree of risk-taking within adolescents is important and has a positive effect on identity formation. The conflict for Malone arose from a finding by Moore and Parsons (2000) that involvement in chronic risk-taking can place young people at a high risk of negative physical and psychological harm. She concluded that train surfing was about the "rush, it is about the serious near death experiences and the thrill of escape" (Malone, 2005, p. 155).

3.3.1 Train surfing in the South African context

Within the South African context, train surfing is commonly known as *staff riding*, which has a number of variations. According to Sedite and colleagues (2010) the most popular type is the *sparapara*, a term derived from the noise made by the tap dancing of the young men's feet on the platform and the train, at full speed. Usually performed by adolescent boys en route to or from school, whilst this is happening other young men interfere with the hinges of the automatically operated doors to keep them from spontaneously opening of closing. According to Kgeledi (2010), other types of train surfing in South Africa entail slipping underneath the train

and holding on to the metal rods, going over the top and then underneath like a loop and playing soccer on the roof of a moving train.

In South Africa, there have only been two research reports written on the growing phenomenon, the first a scientific study conducted by Hesselink (2008) amongst Sowetan youth to determine the motives and possible associations with thrill-seeking. Because the study was leaning more towards the criminality of the phenomenon, the findings and interpretation were superficial and basic. The study found that those participating in train surfing also participated in other risk-taking behaviour, such as alcohol and drug abuse, however, it did find that participation in this 'criminal' act was not accompanied by further criminality (Hesselink, 2008). The second study was conducted by Mackay (2009), similar in aims to that of Hesselink (2008), in that she also aimed to explore the motives behind participation. However, she approached her exploration in an in-depth manner, by exploring the role that train surfing played in the social construction of black, South African masculinities. It found that train surfers tend to come from discordant families that usually had no permanent father figure, and young male adolescents usually participated in it to attract girls and gain status and popularity, often due to peer pressure from other males that deemed this activity a test of masculinity. Similarly to Hesselink (2008), Mackay found train surfing to be associated to other risk-taking activities such as drug and alcohol abuse and gang-related activates.

These epidemiological studies on train surfing in South Africa have identified it a practice that is "young, urban and male" (Sedite, Bowman, & Clowes, 2010, p. 582), with participants' ages ranging from 12 to 25 (Cohen, 1888, Deite et al., 2010, Straucha, Wilthb & Gersericka, 1998). Many of the train surfers have been identified as being of school going age, when peer acceptance is of great importance. The qualitative study by Hesselink (2008) provided a first-hand account of the phenomenon, regarded as important in that it foregrounded the criminology drives and legal implications, "especially in a country that explicitly identified the expansion of it is commuter rail networks as a developmental priority" (Sedite et al., 2010, p.582).

A number of studies have investigated the factors and correlates that have been posited in accounting for train surfing, including individual disposition such as boredom, thrill seeking (Straucha, Wirthb, & Gersericka, 1998), sense of hopelessness and machismo (Cohen, 1988),

rebelliousness (Lerer & Matzopoulous, 1996), and dearth of leisure time activities available within lower socio-economic contexts (Robertson, 1994). As a result of the lack of academic literature, both internationally and locally, it is expedient to refer to media reports on the phenomenon, at least as an opening for public awareness and editorial opinions of it. Reporters such as Kruger (2006) and Rossouw (2007) describe it as an adrenalin inducing activity, describing those who participate as being a part of a culture of high risk behaviour. As it is an activity that requires physical agility, adeptness and bravery, available literature has suggested that it be attributed to a form of 'rite of passage' through which boys pass through as a way of individuating themselves from their parents, especially the mother (Sedite et al., 2010). It is used as a way of aliening themselves with other men, doing so through their bodily practices to be recognised as men by the audience of the activity.

It is thus of importance to understand the reasoning behind the perceived understanding of wanting to engage in such risky behaviour, especially as South African adolescents have been identified as the group and gender at greatest risk of violence, traffic injuries and substance use and abuse (Ratele, 2008). This study attempts to understand this risky behaviour within the context of Orlando West, Soweto, in which life is perceived to be risky as a whole and the environment filled with risk (Sedite et al., 2010). Of great interest is these boys and men's choice to endanger their lives. As it has been suggested above, the positive consequences (fame and recognition) appear to outweigh the risk of physical harm. This choice has been linked with steps towards 'adult-manhood' (Gqola, 2007), and from this emerges an interest in the constructions of gender and masculinity within the socially changing context of risk-taking for this study.

What are the critical factors that contribute to this construction, apart from the historic understanding of hegemonic masculinity? Ratele (2008) argues that the concept of 'ruling masculinities' can be utilised as an 'instrument' in understanding some of the essential factors that make up the risky behaviours in which many South African engage. This type of masculinity is greatly influenced by hegemonic masculinity, as mentioned above, but he argues it is more sensitive to the community's conditions of power and the ruling masculinity "seeks to en-capsulate and emphasise how the specifics of highly inequitable economic relations, political arrangements, culturally embedded relations and colonial histories observed in societies such as South Africa shape how men behave think and relate to others" (Ratele, 2008, p.21). These

relations are typically expressed through the performance of masculinity, which according to Sedite et al. (2010, p.582) "can only be understood through recognizing the centrality of historically and socially produced power inequalities built around class and race as well as sexuality, ethnicity, religion and so on".

A study conducted by Shefer et al. (2007) into the construction of masculinities within adolescents boys, highlighted within their literature review a pressure on all males, young and old, to conform to the prevailing dominant mode of masculinity. Two of the key elements were heterosexuality and fearlessness or risk-taking.

3.4 Conclusion

This review has provided a comprehensive account of the information and research in the area of risk-taking and train surfing within contemporary society. The chapter begun by reviewing the various theories within contemporary society around the adolescent period and adolescent risk-taking. First was an exploration of those aspects that have been identified as possibly leading to this period being characterised as one filled with 'storm and stresses'. The chapter then discussed the various activities that have been identified as problematic within the period of adolescence, such as substance use and abuse, risky sexual behaviour, delinquency and criminality. This was brought together by a discussion of the possible factors that increase adolescents' vulnerability in participating in risky behaviours. The chapter ended with a discussion around the lethal and deadly activities recorded as predominately participated in by adolescents, leading to discussion around the growing phenomenon of train surfing, an activity emboldened by drugs and alcohol, spurred on by the promise of notoriety amongst peers. Surfing on train roofs has become a daily occurrence, despite attempts to prevent the practice, and part of the framework of Sowetan youths' social fabric. It is from the above literature review, that an in-depth research study on train surfing is warranted as it will provide further insights not only into the motivations for the practice but also into how issues of race, class, culture and masculinity are represented in adolescents' construction of train surfing.

Chapter Four

Method

4.1 Introduction

The methodology section is viewed as the backbone of the study, made up on a number of vertebrae that contribute to its strength. This chapter describes the research design and how it contributes to the study, the analytic techniques used to interpret the results. A qualitative research design was adopted, which in turn influenced the techniques used for sampling, data collection and analysis. Each of these procedures is discussed in detail. In addition, the credibility and reliability of the study is evaluated. The chapter ends with a discussion of the ethical considerations and issues that informed the study.

4.2 Research Questions

As posed in chapter one, the following questions addressed the key issues under investigation in the study:

1. What are young people's constructions of train surfing?
2. What do constructions of train surfing reveal about the issues at stake for defining identity in male youth in urban contexts?
3. How are issues of race, class and masculinity represented in young people's constructions of train surfing?

4.3 Research Design

Durrheim (1999) defines 'research design' as the link between the research questions formulated by the researcher and the execution of the research. Thus, since the design of the research provided the architectural guidelines for the implementation of the research it is logical that is should precede and therefore determine the method of the research. The importance of the

design lies in ensuring congruence between the research question, data collection and analysis (Durrheim, 1999).

This study is underpinned by a qualitative approach to research as this was considered the most appropriate way to gather data on the subjective dimensions of the phenomenon, namely train surfing as a risk-taking behaviour that is being influenced by contextually constructed factors such as identity and masculinity. Willig (2001, p.15) describes qualitative research as being concerned with "the construction and negotiation of meaning, and the quality and texture of experience". According to Boonzaier and Shefer (2006), the main focus of qualitative research is on understanding the various dimensions of human behaviour instead of explaining and predicting it. This paradigm of research involves data being collected in forms such as written or spoken language, and/or observation. Durrheim (2006) argues that an advantage of qualitative research is that it allows for a deep and detailed exploration of the particular dilemma or question by the researcher: "if the research purpose is to study a phenomena as they unfold in a real – world situations, without manipulation to study the phenomena as interrelated wholes rather than split up in discreet predetermined variables, then an inductive, qualitative approach is required" (2006, p.47). This was considered an appropriate approach to use within this present study as the focus was on exploring how participants construct identity and masculinity in relation to the risk-taking phenomenon of train surfing.

In order to effectively unpack the seemingly naturally occurring constructions of identity and masculinity from the data collected, the social constructionist paradigm was utilised. Social constructionist researchers argue that individuals' feelings, thoughts, and personal experiences are informed and shaped by the social context in which they reside, in such a way that the meaning of experiences exist at a social rather than an individual level (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Kelly 2006). According to Gergen (1992, p.266), social constructionism "is primarily concerned with elucidating the process by which individuals come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world in which they live in", and assumes that world views are constructed and changed during the course of interactions with other people, for example, experiences or conversations. Specifically, social constructionist research aims to identify "the various ways of constructing social reality that are available in a culture, to explore the conditions of their use and to trace the implications for human experiences and social practice"

(Willig, 2001, p.7). For Gergen (1992), social constructionist thought is mainly concerned with uncovering the process through which individuals come to account for, describe and explain the worlds in which they reside.

4.4. Sampling procedure

The researcher used a non-probability purposive sampling method to select an intentional population of adolescents, as it is claimed to "rely on experience, ingenuity, and/or previous researcher findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relative population" (Welman & Kruger, 2002, p.63). The researcher approached schools that were within walking distance of a train station, based on the assumption that adolescents who attended these schools would be aware of the growing phenomenon of train surfing, directly or indirectly.

The sampling method also used elements of convenience sampling, which consists of taking all cases at hand until the sample reaches the desired size (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006). The participants were sought by approaching students in Grades 11 and 12 of the identified school, requesting participation. Students who showed interest in participating were given a participant information sheet to brief them on the study as well as consent forms to be filled in for participation in and the recording of the focus groups.

4.5 Participants

Studies with a specific focus on masculinity have specifically demonstrated that schools provide information spaces for meaning to develop what it means to be 'male' or 'female', specifically, influencing the formation of gendered identities, making "correct' or 'appropriate' styles of being male" (Haywood & Mac an Phail, 1996, p.19). From the subjectivity of the participants, they also provide a possible entry point for accessing young male and female adolescents in Soweto. Orlando West is one of 50 districts that make up the greater city of Soweto, the genesis of which and its well-known subsequent history is inextricably linked with the lives of prominent South Africans such as Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, amongst others. While Soweto is characterised by particular features, many youths in South Africa

townships are growing up in similar circumstances. The youth of Soweto make up a significant proportion of the country's population therefore it is vital to capture their experiences of growing up in adverse or non-optimal life circumstances and environments, conditions that are not atypical for some youth in a range of global contexts. It has been hypothesised that many youths may be particularly at risk of problematic identity developmental trajectories, as revealed within the literature review chapter. With particular reference to this research study, the focus of interest is on identity, the construction and understanding of masculinity, and their participation in risk-taking behaviours amongst youth within the South African context.

A total of 32 adolescents took part in the research project, the number exceeding the 18 initially proposed. As there was considerable interest in participation it was decided that the larger number of participants would allow for richer and deeper data. The adolescents who took part were recruited from one school in Orlando West, an area that has a mixture of both poor working class and the wealthier middle class, both of which are found in the school although the wealthier tend to attend private schools outside the township. All 32 participants were Grade 11 students, representative of all academic abilities. The school had four classes in each year group, divided according to academic ability. For example, the 'Grade11 A' would suggest comprise the top achieving pupils and the "Grade 11 D' would be the pupils performing at the lower end of the spectrum. The focus groups reflected this as each was representative of each class, Focus Group One being Grade 11A, focus Group Two Grade 11B and so forth.

4.6 Procedure

After obtaining ethical clearance from the Wits University Ethics Committee, the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) was approached to obtain permission to conduct the studies in two to four of their schools. The schools were from Soweto, in an area in which the phenomenon of train surfing is known to be predominate within young black male adolescents. Once permission had been granted by the GDE those schools identified as having the particular sample that was required for the study were approached. A snowballing sampling method was implemented to identify other schools that had been exposed to the phenomenon in any particular way.

The next step in the data collection process was gaining informed consent from a school, allowing for the researcher to approach students within their school (see Appendices B and C). Once informed consent was received from the principal the researcher worked with the deputy principal to advertise the research and what was expected from participation. The researcher explained the aims of the study to the deputy principle, informing her of the need for adolescents over the age of 18 and of both sexes. The researcher initially spoke to the Grade 11 and 12 classes, explaining the aims of the study and what participation would involve, and providing them with participation information sheets.

4.7 Data collection method

With the research purpose in mind, the study utilised focus groups as a means of collecting data. These were selected as the discussions provide knowledge produced through dynamic interactions. The meanings and the answers obtain during the process were socially constructed rather than individually presented (Berg, 1998). Focus groups allow the researcher the opportunity to observe a large amount of interaction on a given topic within a limited time period (Morgan, 1997). The researcher conducted four focus groups consisting of eight adolescents each, and conducted the group over the duration of one to two hours.

Similar to individual interviews, in which according to Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall (1994) the investigation of complex phenomena may best be served by an interview process that provides access to subjective meaning, focus groups were used as a means of collecting data. Having both advantages and disadvantages, the greatest strength is that they allow the participants to share their own insights and to build on the responses made by other participants within the group, thus enriching the process of data collection. On the other hand, the greatest challenge is the managing of group dynamics. This management is essential as it ensures that the group is not dominated by one individual (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Morgan, 1997).

Before the focus group commenced, the researcher discussed issues pertaining to confidentiality and the provision of consent for taking part in the focus group. The participants then signed both the confidentiality agreement as well as focus group consent forms (see

Appendices F and G). They were informed that the group discussions would be recorded and the required permission was obtained (see Appendix E). Facilitation of a focus group was an important factor that needed to be considered in order to guarantee the effectiveness of the discussion, and the careful use of both leading and listening are important (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). In order to establish a sense of structure of focus groups, a semi-structured interview schedule was developed and utilised during their administration (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). The use of an interview schedule allowed the researcher to focus on specific questions of interest whilst also catering for the emergence of other topics that might not have been considered of value to the findings.

The discussions were guided by the semi-structured interview schedule that focused on various aspects of identity formation and construction, the construction of masculinity, and risk-taking behaviour. These allowed for flexibility during the sessions as well as creating an opportunity to follow up on issues highlighted by the participants during the discussion. The exploratory nature of the study dictated that the semi-structured schedule be drawn up by the researcher, rather than making use of standardised questionnaires (see Appendix H). However, questions emerged from the researcher's investigation into relevant literature. The focus group schedule consisted of 17 questions grouped into five sub-categories, namely the introduction, being an adolescent, risk-taking behaviour and train surfing, alternative behaviours and reflections. The structure of the questions was uniformed across the focus groups, due to having a focus group schedule that followed logical progression. The questions were open-ended in an attempt to prevent leading the participants into answering in a manner that the researcher wished or to have subjected them to any preconceived notions. Importantly, the researcher reminded the participants that participation was completely voluntary and that at any point during the process they were free to withdraw should they wish to stop participation.

The focus groups was facilitated with the adolescents with the intention of encouraging discussion on the different characteristics that make up the phenomenon of risk-taking and how this moulded their view of train surfers. The focus groups took place in the same room, that is the school's library and media room, and lasted about 80 minutes each. The researcher ensured that the environment was quiet, with as little interruption from noise and disturbances as possible. All the sessions were recorded and, as a backup measure, the researcher used audio-recordings with

permission from the participants (see Ethical Consideration section with regards to confidentiality and anonymity). Video recordings are seen as a valuable measure as they provide the researcher with information not only of what the participants are saying but also how they are saying it. This non-verbal behaviour often reveals as much about the participant as the content of their words (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). At the end of each focus group the researcher made notes concerning the interactional aspects and observations during the focus group (Banister et al., 1994). Once the information had been gathered it was transcribed and the resulting data analysed. Transcriptions were limited to the verbatim report of utterance as far as possible, and included dimensions such as strong emphasis, significant pauses, interruptions and overlaps in speech exchange. This method, according to Banister et al. (1994), is a recommendation for a typical psychological interview transcription.

4.8 Data Analysis

The data gathered data from the focus groups was analysed by using thematic content analysis, defined by Banister, Burnan, Parker, Taylor, and Tindall (1994) as "... a coherent way of organizing or reading some interview in relation to specific research questions" (p.57). According to Kruger (1988), content analysis is an appropriate method for analysing text from focus group discussion. Eagle (1998) expands on this by arguing that the essence of thematic content analysis is that it primarily draws influence from a given text, utilizing systematic procedures. It is a tool that aims to "provide knowledge, insight, and representation of 'facts', and a practical guide to action" (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 21). Literature indicates that there are numerous ways in which a researcher could use this method of analysis, but for the benefit of this study the steps suggested by Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999) were utilised to guide the process of analysis. It allows for a large amount of verbatim data to be sifted through efficiently, helping in the discovery of trends and patterns that may be referred to when drawing a conclusion.

This study was guided by the social constructionist paradigm, which may be defined as a perspective that holds firmly to the belief that the vast majority of human life exists as it does due to social and interpersonal influences (Gergen, 1985). As a research tool it is used to analyse

the power signs and images have on the representations of people that underlie one's experiences of them (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). "The methods are qualitative, interruptive and concerned with meaning, thus data analysis extended beyond the subjective understandings and experience are derived from and feed into larger discourses… treat people as though their thoughts, feelings and experiences were the products of system of meaning that exists at a social rather than an individual level" (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p.278). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), when one is guided by the constructionist perspective the researcher holds an interest in understanding the role of the social context in shaping the particular individual accounts. Relating this to the study, it draws on society's particular understanding of the constructions of train surfing and the discourses that influence how individuals understand and react to it.

The researcher was guided by these arguments when conducting the thematic analysis and aimed to investigate beyond the subjective experiences of the participants to examine the particular social discourses and arrangements that influence their realities and experiences. The first stage of analysis was directed by a number of commonly accepted procedural steps applied to the manifest content of the text. Due to the data analysis being based on the full focus group text, the researcher coded the content data into various themes, a process whereby "raw data is systematically transformed and aggregated into units which permit precise descriptions of relevant content characteristics" (Holsti, 1969, p.95). This process of analysing the data as well as creating and applying a coding scheme involved following several fundamental steps which have been highlighted by Weber (1985) as well as Krippendorff (1980):

1. The recording units were specified (i.e., whether the focus is upon words, sentences of themes). The analysis in this case was based upon the identification of thematic units, comprising a sentence, statement or group of statements about a particular topic. These thematic units were determined in terms of their logical coherence around a specific topic based on literature, for instance, the evaluation of how the construction of masculinity was perceived to influence risk-taking behaviour in adolescents. This topic was broken down, based on the literature and information volunteered by the participants, into thematic units of hegemonic masculinity, single headed households, and deprivation of adequate resources.

2. The categories of analysis were defined prior to the focus groups being conducted. The analytic categories of this study were initially guided by the theory covered in the literature, which provided a conceptual base for the identification of thematic categories. Thus, the researcher decided that every category would be mutually exclusive. Secondly, it was ascertained that the categories would be relatively narrow, for instance focusing on specific aspects of being a black adolescent living in Soweto.

3. In addition, the clarification of categories involved in-depth reading of transcripts in order to identify aspects of the text that had not been encompassed in the literature. It is accepted by Banister et al. (1994) that analytic categories can be derived from either theory or data. Considering the explorative nature of the study, Banister et al. (1994) places emphasis on the combination of deductive and inductive analysis, thus allowing for the establishment of new categories remaining open to the possibility that the data might generate new insights and theory.

4. Following this, the transcripts from the focus groups were coded in their entirety, identifying any thematic recording units that had relevance to the focus of the research. New generic categories were constructed when necessary. It was the researcher's aim to ensure that the analysis was as inclusive and widespread as possible. Once new categories were discovered, all scripts were re-examined for evidence of similar arising themes. This process continued until no further information could be picked up.

5. Each focus group transcript was systematically coded according to the abovementioned framework.

The analysis of the data was a process that took place throughout the research process (Kvale, 1996). Each of the stages discussed above provided an opportunity for redefining and gaining a better understanding and knowledge of the participants, constructions of identity, masculinity, risk-taking and train surfing. The data was sub-divided into separate sub-samples that would be explored as separate texts. This research consisted of four separate focus groups that each served as individual sample data (focus group transcripts) during the first stage of creating coding units. Reading each sample of data, content was identified as being possibly suited for further analysis (content meets the objectives of the analysis), then the code was

developed by comparing the different sub-samples to each other, each code representing a different theme.

As the researcher began to identify the various themes that arose these themes were interpreted through taking the social context of the adolescents into account (i.e., the themes that arose needed to be described as well as interpreted in relation to the adolescents' social context). Through taking more of an interpretive stance, it allowed the researcher to identify the adolescents' perceptions and experiences of risk-taking behaviour and train surfing at a deeper level of understanding.

4.9 Credibility of the analysis

The subjective nature of qualitative data analysis led to steps being taken by the researcher to ensure that the credibility of the results produced by thematic content analysis (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). The results provided an accurate representation of the social world under investigation as the researcher became immersed in the data during the analysis and writing up process, continuously checking and rechecking the identified categories, and working closely with the supervisor to ensure that there were no gaps in the analysis that were not accounted for. As a final point, drawing closely on Govender's (2006) argument, the researcher was cognisant of the social context that is the focus group, in influencing the adolescents' narratives. According to Govender (2006, p. 116) "talk does not occur in a vacuum" but is shaped by class, race and gender differences.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

After gaining permission from the University, an ethical clearance certificate and protocol number from the Ethical Committee was obtained and the researcher was able to proceed with the research process. The first step was to obtain written consent from the Department of Education (DoE) and the principle of the selected school (see Appendices A and B). This allowed the researcher to conduct the research at the school and with the students, introducing the aim of the research to them and, for those interested, providing the necessary

participant information sheets and consent forms (See Appendices C, D, and E). The information sheets briefly explained the purpose of the research as well as what steps needed to be taken to become involved in the research.

Confidentiality was assured to participants by guaranteeing that the researcher would not discuss the contents of focus groups (in the form of audiotapes and notes) with anyone, other that the research supervisor. All audiotapes, transcripts and notes have been kept in a locked cupboard in the researcher's office and will be destroyed once the research report had been handed in and evaluated. Prior to the commencement of the focus group discussion, the group was requested to keep the discussion confidential and all participants signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix E). They were informed of the limits of confidentiality in focus group research, of their right not to participate in the research, not to respond to certain elements of the discussion, and to withdraw from the study at any point without any repercussions. Some participants elected not to engage with certain aspects of the discussion. Great care was taken when asking the questions during the focus groups, with sensitivity, and that none of the participants were made to feel interrogated or judged by the interviewer. No ethical problems or concerns arose from the focus group discussions and none of the participants chose to make use of the private individual debriefing time offered by the researcher to all participants after the discussions.

Due to the potentially sensitive nature of the topic, the researcher arranged for those participants who felt they needed a space to debrief with the school life orientation and guidance teacher after each focus group. This was not taken up by any of the participants, despite the narration of difficult experiences and feelings during the groups. They did not feel the space was safe enough to further explore those or that they feared they might be judged by their teacher who holds a dual role of teacher and counsellor.

Finally, the outcome of the research will be made available at the request of the school, parents and participants in the form of a one-page summary. The data collected will be stored in a lockable cupboard of the researcher private's home office with access restricted access to the researcher until it is destroyed. The raw data will be kept for a period of three years, at which point it will be destroyed.

4.11 Researcher's Experience

Qualitative data analysis underlines the importance of the researcher's reflexivity, which involves the researcher's own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, and social identities may have shaped the research and the data analysis process (Halloway & Jeferson, 2000). According to Taylor (2001), the identity of the researcher influences his or her choice of a particular research topic. This was also found earlier by Hunt (1989), who argued that researchers should reflect on how past personal experiences influence them to choose certain research topics and an understanding of the self within the research context helps in being critical of his or her work. This researcher was cognisant of feelings before, during and after each focus group, which within the psychoanalytic sphere would be referred to as the transference or the researcher's counter-transference. Although the research was not founded within a psychoanalytic understanding, being aware of these feelings helped in better understanding the constructions that were being displayed by the adolescents during the focus groups. According to Cartwright (2002) and Kvale (1999), being "reflexive" is an integral part of understanding how knowledge is constructed.

It was during my Honours year that I became aware of the phenomenon of train surfing. A local investigative television programme, *Carte Blanche,* covered the phenomenon as one of its inserts. It began with gripping images of young black men performing breath-taking stunts on the top of moving trains. The voice-over commentary proceeded to reel off statistics on the number of injuries and deaths yet the activity was growing, and at a much higher rate in the township of Soweto. I was intrigued with why these boys would continue to engage in an activity, in which, they themselves had witnessed their peers die or sustain injuries that required amputation. After considering possible motivations and factors that increased the vulnerability to 'addiction' my thought was "do they not value their lives?" From this my wish and desire to study the phenomenon grew, and thus the study was conceived. Due to the ethics surrounding investigating a sport that had been deemed illegal, my shift was towards the perceptions of their peers, more specifically youth from Soweto. Learning their thoughts about this growing trend, and through those discussion perhaps I might gain a better understanding of their constructions around gender, masculinity, race and class.

Gaining entrance to the schools proved to be the first hurdle to overcome. For days I sat in the reception areas of the school waiting for a head or deputy head teacher. Now I can reflect back on those many hours spent waiting to speak to someone other than the receptionist and laugh, but at the time I was angered. This was especially so when I could tell that the head had been made aware of my presence and then being ignored, but in that time I was able to think and consider some of the reasons behind their resistance and reluctance. The heads of the school are the gatekeepers, defined by Kelly and Van der Reit (2001) as those who give entry into a community. Perhaps me introducing myself as a master's student conducting research I was perceived to have been sent to find a fault in their community. I was aware that the timing of my data collection was in possible conflict with the school's preparation for the final exams and I might have been considered an unnecessary distraction, but if this was so I was not being told. Being ignored was my experience at three schools before my persistence paid off at the fourth. The head teacher of the eventual research site walked up to me one morning and said "I hear you have been waiting for me for a while now, please come in". I recall seeing him walking from his office to the administration office on a number of occasions and I knew he had seen me. A part of me understood that, as the leader of a community, one would not want someone coming in and finding fault, and once he knew the purpose of my study he was more amenable. It was through the discussions with the deputy head that I was granted full access. She recalled three students who had fallen victim to the activity and was keen to know what her students thought and find ways to intervene.

Reflecting on issues of power between me and the participants was central to the research process as well as the analysis (see Reicher, 1994 in De Le Rey, 1997). All the participants were informed by the heads of the school that I was a master's student of Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand. My academic achievement immediately put me in a position of power, as I was viewed by both the teachers and the students at the school as educated and presumably middle class and from a wealthy background. This presumption I assume was based on my accent (I was told by one of the participants that I sounded like a white person), and the car that I drove (many of the students saw me driving as I arrived and left for my focus groups). As a researcher I needed to be aware of this position of power when interacting with the participants. The participants referred to me formally, despite me introducing myself using first name, and perhaps in some way this was their way of locating me as similar to a teacher in their

environment. I also believe that this was done out of respect, which is common practice within schools in South Africa, in which a visitor is referred to as 'Maam' or 'Sir'. I feared that this would distance me from the group and make it harder for them to relate to me, thus perhaps causing many not to present their 'true selves' but rather provide me the researcher with what could be perceived as a false self (what they thought I wanted to hear) and not with their everyday reality.

In preparing for the focus group the researcher considered if the focus groups should be facilitated and conducted in English or in the language with which the participants felt most comfortable. To my advantage I am familiar with most of the languages that are spoken in Soweto and felt comfortable communicating in any language they felt comfortable with. To my surprise, on the day of the focus group I was asked by the head English teacher to conduct the research in English so as to expose the adolescents to what a 'master's student' sounded like. At first I did not understand what this meant and admittedly was thrown by the statement, as I consider master students to be different, all with their unique characteristics. I explained that I needed the participants to feel comfortable and to be in a position to be express themselves and I would not forbid the use of English. She seemed unsatisfied with my response and concluded that she wanted them to know that they too could sound like me if they applied themselves. This left me thinking about what it is that symbolised intelligence and academic success to educators. Did sounding 'non-black' symbolise something in particular for them?

Despite the relaxed manner in which the focus groups were run by the researcher, given the interest in adolescents' perceptions of risky behaviours and constructions of being an adolescent from Soweto, the particular probing questions and the stance utilised by the researcher could have influenced the responses. This was noted when the participants initially presented themselves as a group of adolescents who did not partake in any risky behaviour and were more academically prone. This was then on reflection and tentatively listening to the recordings was met with probing from the researcher for the more negative parts of their narratives. This perhaps highlights the researcher's expectation of a more negative perception and personal fable from the participants, which in hindsight could have impacted on the manner in which follow-up questions were posed and responded to.

The researcher, throughout the data collection process, was sensitive to the matters raised during the conversations with the participants as well as vigilant about not imposing personal worldviews or assumptions on the participants. In order to encourage an open atmosphere, the researcher attempted to engage with the participants in a relaxed and informal manner. The intention during the focus groups was to convey to the participants an interest in understanding their lives and to get a glimpse into their daily experiences as youth, in no way trying to impose a certain way of being or any preconceived ideas onto them. Thus, the researcher aimed to create an atmosphere and space that was non-judgemental and encouraging, especially in the focus groups where participants shared personal information with not only the researcher but also their peers. This informal and open way of being encouraged the participants to be honest and sincere in their responses and participation. This was observed in the speed in which rapport was established with each of the participants in the four focus groups.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated how the participants were sampled and the method utilised to both gather and analyse the data. The following chapter presents the findings that were elicited from the research method of thematic content analysis and consequently provided an in-depth understanding of these adolescents perceptions of risk-taking behaviour among adolescents and that of the growing phenomenon of train surfing.

Chapter Five

Results and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

Since the first democratic elections in 1994, black identity has gone through a transition, especially that of the adolescent. From this notable change the last few years' literature on black adolescents has focused on the 'male identity crisis' that has been ascribed to feelings of disempowerment in the light of women's empowerment, leaving them, according to Morrell (2002), feeling robbed of their purpose and thus placed in a position in which they had to find alternative ways to assert their masculinity. Some adolescents chose to partake in potentially lethal high-risk activities for the achievement of masculinity. Reports have described this phenomenon as an adrenaline seeking activity, and those participating in it form part of a culture of high-risk behaviour. This study sought to understand adolescents' constructions of train surfing with a view to uncovering what they reveal about the issues at stake for defining masculinity and identity in male youth, as well as its intersection with issues of race and class.

This chapter provides an overview of emerging themes as well as a reflective analysis to provide a rich account of the qualitative data collected. The literature acts as a means of providing greater insight into the findings, whether confirmed or refuted by the research findings. The discussion is further informed by the objectives of the research project, which is to explore how adolescents negotiate the multiple voices of identity in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. It is divided into sections based on predetermined categories of analysis presented in the form of themes and sub-themes that emerged. Due to the large amount of data collected, only sections felt appropriate in illustrating the research objectives were drawn upon. Direct quotes from the transcribed data have been presented to substantiate and represent the themes and general findings.

5.2 Theme One: "They think they know, but they have no idea"

The participants in all four focus groups painted a positive picture of adolescence, evoking images of the 'born free generation' and Stevens and Lockhat's (1997) *Coca-Cola kids*.

They presented as part of a generation that had much to contend with but had found strategies to avoid negative outcomes and who aspired to make a difference. The participants were perceived as guarded in revealing negative aspects that might be affecting them and other adolescents, including the reasons some of their peers engaged in high-risk activities. Conversely, through the exploration of specific aspects that make up their post-apartheid identity, they began to reveal aspects of their lives, families and communities that might have an impact of how they perceive themselves and their peers, and how they chose to live their lives.

What was planned to be an icebreaker for the focus groups evolved into a personal narrative as participants were asked to introduce themselves to the group and summarise their aspirations for their final year of high school in a sentence. It was evident when listening to and reading the transcripts of the focus groups that they were describing themselves and speaking of their aspirations as definite ideas that emerged about what it means to be a black adolescent living in post-apartheid Orlando West, an area rich with political legacy, trauma and uprising. In addition to the aspirations of their families and communities they were reflective of a disappointment at the many unfulfilled promises of a democratic nation. The literature review on identity development in chapter two concludes that identities do not develop in a social vacuum, but rather identity is fundamentally shaped by a variety of different contexts, which include the individual's society, family, culture, peers, and social environments (Gossans & Phinney, 1996). Thus, within this theme of "Who am I?" it is argued that South African black adolescents' identities can be seen as functioning in relation to, and as a reaction against both South African's racialised past, and the present socio-cultural context.

Literature on post-apartheid black adolescents has leaned towards the assumption that the future expectations would be inherently more positive in accordance with the promises and implementation of the Bill of Rights. That blacks in particular had high expectations of their future, inclusive of the retributive and affirmative dimensions was the initial communication made by the adolescents, as evidenced in these extracts:

> Female Participant Group 1(FP1): … *I want to study Medicine at Wits.*
>
> Male Participant Group 4(MP4): … *I am the last born of three boys and the first to hopefully matriculate and go to Wits or UJ to study Engineering.*

> Male Participant Group 1(MP1): *I want to study Law like my brother. He got a scholarship so I want to also get one.*

The participants spoke of entering into fields of study that historically had been the preserve of the privileged (whites), such as Medicine, Engineering and Law. It would seem that there is a shift in the aspirations of black adolescents, a feeling of being enabled, and a connectedness to themselves and their futures.

Although the options for a career are available to them, there are barriers that keep the attainment of these out of reach. Many spoke of the uncertainties that faced them during their pursuit of 'becoming someone'. Not only were they facing current pressures to complete school but many spoke of being the first in their family to complete school or the pressure of doing as well as an older sibling, with financial considerations being the main driving factor in the 'doubt' they expressed. This was not only within their families but also within the school context:

> FP3: … *we don't have much here at our school. Even if you pass you need to think of how you going to pay for your fees when you get there.*

> MP2: … *it's not easy to get into the courses we want…. The competition is high… It's two thousand and thirteen and we still don't have all the books and computers and things that the Model C schools have…*

Within the previous three years, school book delivery in South Africa had been an issue of concern, with media reports of pupils only receiving their textbooks weeks before writing their final exams (Hess, 2015). The issue is impacting on the adolescents' attempts to achieve academic excellence, a source of frustration palpable in two of the groups and one that compounded existing problems, confirming Siegal and colleagues (2003, p.270): "The general path towards occupational prestige is education, and when youth are deprived of this avenue of success through poor school performance, there is a greater likelihood a delinquent behaviour". Not having the required and necessary resources is a form of deprivation that could result in anti-social behaviour. The participants were evidently disheartened and disgruntled that their school and government were not ensuring that a suitable atmosphere was in place for learning to occur. This understanding is shared by Angenet and de Man (1996), who maintained that it is the duty of the school to furnish the adolescents with the required cognitive, social and emotional knowledge and aptitude.

Despite feeling that they could be better resourced, the participants showed a great sense of connectedness to their school. Their academic stance reflected a belief that education would improve their current circumstances:

> FP4: *My parents don't have the best jobs, but they work hard to give me what I have. I can also do the same by studying hard so that one day I can get a good job that will help me and my parents live a better life. Maybe a house in areas like Sandton and Rosebank. Something nice*.

Siegal and colleagues (2003) assert that failure at school is a result of negative responses from important people in an adolescent's life, for example, parents and teachers. These responses serve as reinforcement to adolescents' feelings of incompetence and may pave the way to deviant behaviour. Conversely, if student's receive positive responses from the important people in their lives there is a greater incentive to succeed. With the case of the female student in the above extract, at home there is a supportive structure that is providing for her basic needs and has instilled a work ethic through modelling. Her commitment to school may have served her and many of her fellow academic peers as a deterrent to truancy, dropping out of school and even deviant behaviour, however this is not the fate for all students, particularly those who are difficult to manage. As Magun and Loeber (2003) found, the poorer the academic performance the greater the likelihood of delinquency involvement: "…the odds of delinquency involvement are about twice as high among learners with low academic performance as they are among those with higher academic performance" (p.114). The possible consequences and outcomes of constantly receiving negative responses are discussed in further detail in the following theme (i.e., 'He used to be in our class').

Participants made reference to their interpersonal skills when discussing their decision to be more academically inclined as supposed to taking on an identity that is stereotypical of adolescents in Soweto, as delinquents destined to a life of unemployment and crime (Langa, 2008). This difficulty was especially felt by the male participants, who spoke of the pressures and consequences of being seen as a 'nerd' by other males at school. They were quick to emphasise that this is a feeling that they experienced outside school and not from their peers, as the latter understood their aspirations. The tension seemed to stem from the public display of aptitude, as they would be known as 'good boys and girls', as one boy phrased it. This public validation of academic success caused doubt and questioning within the participants on what a

typical 'location'[2] teen was. It was apparent that peers outside school did not share the participants' views of being studious, and this was creating a tension similar to that noted by Frosh and colleagues (2002) for boys in publicly demonstrating academic interests and aptitude. This tension did not extend to the girls:

> FP1: *It is my hope that I can become something, and not end up like some of the girls from the township. They drop out of school because they have fallen pregnant. It is time that pattern is broken. It is not fashionable anymore. Girls don't just have to be at home with the children. They can have both the family and the job. Our mothers do it, teachers and so many more others.*

> MP2: *We are the new generation of black youth. We are here to make a difference and become successful. Our parents did not have the opportunities we have; it is not much of a difference from their day but it's better. Yes we still have to prove ourselves but at least we are able to compete in the race. We can compete for places at the universities and when we are eventually looking for jobs. My father always reminds me how fortunate I am and that I must take this opportunity to go to university and make a name for myself. He says that was what they fought for.*

Jenkins (1996) proposes that the development of an individual's identity is socially constructed, as echoed by the two female participants in the above extracts. It is through the socialisation of the adolescents with their parents, teachers, peers and extended community members that they defined and redefined themselves. Identity among this specific group of adolescents is constructed through the analysis of similarity and differences between themselves and others within their social environment. Also evident is that the adolescents did not have one singular formula for developing their identity:

> MP1: *It isn't like the schools in Sandton and stuff where you can be good at sports, plus you are good at school work. So since we don't have those things I go for school work. And not everyone is into that kind of stuff. There is a few in every year group. The ones that are the achievers.*

This young male indicates that his identity has been shaped by what is available to him, and within the school setting he and his fellow academically inclined peers were considered to be dominant within the school hierarchy. A closer look at Connell's (1995) dominant typology, as well as studies conducted on masculinity in schools (Lesko, 2000; Mac & Shall, 1994), suggest that this particular group of adolescents were considered to be privileged above their peers and were performing a dominant kind of masculinity. The non-violent type of masculine voice that was illustrated by the males in most of the focus groups was school-orientated and appeared to distance itself from the risk-taking behaviour associated with the more dangerous and violent

[2] A township slang word to describe a person from the locality.

types.[3] It was evident that their need to be successful academically was a protective factor against the stereotypical image of under-achievement in black adolescents from low economic environments. They displayed a sense of self that was internally validated rather than externally driven. Despite chastising and bullying from the more 'aggressive males', they remained studious, mature and responsible:

> MP1: *There are those that are known to be funny and always getting into trouble for not completing work and fighting. We all laugh when they say funny things in class but there needs to be a time for games and a time for serious work… Future comes first then the games.*

The above participant appeared to be driven by a clear sense of a masculine self. It should be considered that the students in the first two focus groups were considered by the school to be the top academic performers within their year, resulting in their being exposed to additional classes at top universities during summer holidays, mainly for the science, physics and mathematically orientated, and had taken part in science expositions. This exposure and the confidence that is instilled when selected among peers has assisted in their ability to reflect and to rely more on internal drives rather than external validation for their choice of behaviour. This has also enabled them to be reflective of the consequences of engaging in the more aggressive masculinities that are associated with school drop-outs, addiction and violent behaviour. This finding echoed those of Barker (2005), for whom academic achievement was a protective factor against the engagement of adolescent males in risk-taking behaviour such as gang associated violence.

Evident through the participants' discussion of aspirations reinforced Mbweu's executive summary of the Second Youth Risk Behaviour Survey: "Young people undisputedly are our future and ideally situated to change the 'fabric of society' through their own self-improvement and determination" (Reddy et al., 2010, p.10).

5.2.1 I'm Black and proud

While the participants presented themselves as proud black adolescents from Orlando West, it was clear that this was still viewed and experienced as difficult. The legacy of apartheid

[3] These alternative, hyper-hypo masculine types of risk behaviour will be discussed in greater depth in theme two: train surfing.

and negative feelings towards socio-economic inequalities along racial lines cannot be ignored, especially as it was a recurring theme:

> FP4: *We don't have the same things that the rich schools have. Even here in Soweto there are schools that have better equipment and things like that. Here in Orlando West there is a school that is run by whites, a private school kind of and they have better things than us. Then there are those that go to the schools in the suburbs and they have better education. They even have proper netball uniform and play other nice schools. It becomes clear that if you have money you get better opportunities.*
>
> FP3: *Errrm… I have to agree. I was at Parktown Girls last year. I was there for three years. My dad got a good job and was able to send my sister and I. He died last year and now I am here. So I can say there are huge differences and more opportunities. Things are really different! And the teachers don't make it easier for me and some classmates in fact. They expect me to be in the higher classes because of my past education. It has been very difficult for me. Yes I sound different but I struggle in certain areas like everyone else. But they don't see that… they just hear this voice and assume that I am a bhujwa[4]… like I'm less black for my past opportunities and even now that I'm here in a township school I'm not black enough because I don't speak my home language well and things like that.*

In both of the above extracts it is evident that the inequalities set in motion during apartheid years were still being felt by these members of the 'born free' generation. This finding supports Duncan's (2003) contention that one cannot negate the destructive impact of racism during apartheid on the social, political, economic and psychological reality that the majority of South Africans still experience. The first female, in the above extracts, speaks of the economic hardships that her school faced and the inequalities that remained between schools in townships and suburbs, and even of the inequalities that are found within the townships. Her statement that "*it becomes clear that if you have money you get better opportunities*" also raises the reality of class differences. Bond (2004, cited in Terre Blanche, 2006, p.73) states that "the reality [is] that South Africa has witnessed the replacement of the *racial apartheid* with what is increasingly referred to as class apartheid between the poor black and the rich black".

The second extract foregrounds the notion of class division, a narrative that reveals how she had experienced both worlds and speaks of the difficulties she was experiencing after being exposed to better opportunities and now finding herself without those opportunities. She alluded to a sense of shame at having previously attended a school within a predominantly white area, highlighting the difficulties she faced because of her previous 'privileged' background. She was

[4] Bhujwa a term used to describe a black who attends a private school within a predominantly white area. They are judged because they are perceived to come from rich families.

now expected to fulfil a certain stereotype and perform at a level of competence above that of the learners who had only been exposed to a 'lower' level township education. This difficulty was compounded by her 'white accent', and it later emerged that she was unable to speak her mother tongue fluently. She attributed this to her time spent immersed within the 'white culture' of her previous school. As a way of defending this stereotype she endorsed the need to be more 'township' and more 'black'. There was a sense of a loss of this aspect of her tradition for not being fluent in her mother tongue which was compounded by the lack of opportunities to regain it, being alienated for sounding 'white'.

This participant is a good example of the identity confusion that is characteristic of the period of adolescence. Referring to Fanon (1986), this may suggest she had become alienated and estranged from her race because of her previous education at a Model C school. According to Fanon's (1986) theory, through the structural oppression, the black individual's mind becomes colonised, resulting in constant feelings of inferiority and worthlessness. With specific regard to this female participant, it could be argued that she felt this sense of alienation and her peers perceived her to have lost her blackness, also resulting in her peers viewing her as not being a real township child. Fanon (1986) contends that through the process of adopting the culture and language of the white race the black individuals perceive themselves as both subjectively and intellectually white. This seemed to be the perspective communicated by those around her that was based on held stereotypes of the white race. She seemed to be simultaneously defending her position while attempting to acquire and perform the township identities that are established, monitored and produced by township adolescents. For Langa (2008), this occurs whilst engaging with the changing nature of politics and class in the ever developing democratic South Africa.

Frosh et al. (2003) contend that experiences of social class, ethnicity and race play an important role in the concepts that boys develop about their masculinity identities. The same could be argued for this female's sense of racial identity. For example, Frosh et al. (2003) found that middle class boys in private schools positioned themselves as intellectually superior and as being more career-orientated than working class boys within state schools. Interestingly, the state school boys referred to private school boys as 'snobbish' and 'wimpish', a dilemma that this young female faced, contending with such perceptions and discourses of assumed intelligence and fear of hard work, resulting in seeming isolation from her peers.

The adolescents' sense of pride was evident throughout the analysis of the data. Most evident was the role their race played in the way they viewed themselves and their peers. As already discussed, the adolescents were dealing with social inequalities that resulted from the apartheid system, perhaps most prominent in their minds as their school had played a pivotal role in the Sowetan youth uprising. Being black appeared to provide a great sense of pride for the participants, both male and female. These findings are in line with those of Sewell (1997), who found that the black boys located themselves within a 'phallocentric framework', as superior with regards to their creative style, sexual attractiveness and dress sense or style. This was illustrated by this participant:

> MP3: *I want to be educated, successful and stylish. I want to be those guys you see walking around Rosebank or having a business lunch. They always are in good shape and are dressed to the nines. That is the kind of black men I want to be when I grow up. Looking sharp all the time!*

The above extract alludes to the positive construction of black masculinity held by this participant, with a new positioning of identity within black adolescent males, in which they are identifying with a new type of masculinity in which a strong sense of self is core to their construction. When the above male states '*that's the black men I want to be when I grow up*', his narrative reflects a type of masculinity that rejects the previously held view within South Africa. It is a black masculinity that no longer considers itself inferior to white masculinity but is proud, and the desired outcome when success has been reached. This statement rejects the previously held view of white masculinity as the ultimate form of masculinity, indicative of Duncan's (2003) contention that as much as racism has an extremely constraining influence on the human agency of the target group, wherever it manifests itself opposing and anti-racist discourses will be found.

> FP2: *A successful black person stands out the most. Maybe because seeing a successful white person is normal but when you see a black person dress in stylish professional gear then for me that stands out! The style, the confidence and just the way they are. I remember when we went to Eskom and there were some black engineers and accountants that we were introduced to and that was inspiration for me. Some of them were better dressed then their white colleagues.*

The images of the young black professionals at Eskom seemed to have had an influential impression on the above participant. There was a sense of pride, which reiterated the black consciousness philosophy and discourse posited by Ratele (2006), in which black individuals take pride in their colour. There was a great pride when she noticed that her black counterparts

were better dressed than the whites. In contrast to Sewell's (1997) findings of a reinforcing of white racist stereotypes of black men, these engineers and accountants symbolised a resistance to and abolition of those stereotypes.

5.2.2 "Weekends we have fun"

Perhaps as a way of rewarding themselves for their diligent behaviour during the week, participants spoke of how they used their weekends to relax and enjoy being young. While on the surface this seemed to be a sensible trade off the adolescents mentioned the difficulties they experienced from their non-school peers when they placed a limit on the types of behaviours they engaged in during the weekend. As one of the females stated:

> FP1: *They don't understand when you say you need to prepare for a test or finals.*

It became apparent from the debate that stemmed from this statement that the adolescents experienced difficulty in balancing having fun with academic achievement. They wished to take up both positions and had somehow managed to find a balance, some with greater ease than others:

> MP4: *Maybe a good DJ or artist is coming to play in your "kasi"* (neighbourhood), *later in the day you'll get ready, connect with the boys and then head out to the spot for some drinks, music and girls… It's the weekend the time to have fun… we are young!*

The above extract confirms Arnett's (1992) finding that adolescents are statistically over-represented in most categories of risk-taking. The above extract mentions two of the four categories of risky behaviour that were investigated in The South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (Reddy et al., 2010). His statement articulated that these behaviours were atypical of an adolescent his age, communicated through his narration of his preparation before '*hitting the streets'.* It also confirms the findings of past research on adolescents and risky behaviour that these behaviours tended to take place simultaneously. Interestingly, the participant listed alcohol first, as one of the things to look forward to when going out with his peers. Alcohol and substance use and abuse in adolescents has been an area of great concern, identified by Mpofu et

al. (2005) as major contributors to crime, violence and intentional and unintentional injury, in addition to other social, health and economic problems.

Substance use and abuse were reported as the most common features of enjoying being an adolescent, although they there was some contradiction in the various groups about what substance use meant for them. On the one hand, it was acceptable and even *standi* (the standard or norm) to be smoking and drinking, there was also a strong voice within some that highlighted the risks associated with abuse of such substances. This raises the contradictory pressures that face young people on a daily basis. Although some participants suggested that the use of substances made them feel good about themselves, there was some ambivalence towards the impact drinking had on safe sex practices. This indicated that they had an understanding that it might also lead to unprotected sex, which could result in contracting a sexually transmitted disease such as HIV/AIDS.

> MP2: *Mam, after drinking neh, everything feels nice. You feel nice, you feel great and think and know you feel good. The girls look extra nice, and then one-two-three you are sleeping with her and that also feels nice* (laughter from group)… *When you drink everything feels nice.*

The above extract illustrates how impaired judgement and a loss of control may result from consuming alcohol to the point to intoxication. This impaired judgement and loss of control seemed to take him to an alternative world in which '*everything feels nice*'. Perhaps this was used by the adolescents as a way of escaping the demanding and sometimes harsh realities of their everyday lives. The pressures of the desires and hope perhaps seemed too great and this was his escape. This was alluded to within the first sub-theme, in which participants narratives were laced with the various pressures placed on them by their families to succeed. However, even in this alternative world, there was an acknowledgement that the impaired judgement and loss of control could lead to a lack of inhibition and risky behaviour. Of interest in this narration is that the blame is shifted to the substance and not the individual, exempting 'him' from taking responsibility. This was demonstrated in the following extract:

> MP4: *YOLO*[5]
>
> R: *What does YOLO stand for?*

[5] YOLO is an acronym for "you only live once". Similarly to the Latin phrase *Carpe Diem*, it implies that one should enjoy life, even if it entails taking risks.

Group of Girls: You Only Live Once!

R: *What does that mean for you?*

MP4: *That you must make the best of your life. You don't know when you are going to die so you might as well have a good time while you are still alive.*

FP2: *Drinking with friends is honestly not a problem. The problem is when you are doing such on your own.*

This was the first time the researcher sensed a little helplessness, although it was not a direct communication, but the above extract reflects the uncertainty that many black adolescent males face. It would appear that as these participants and others moved through their lives they were constantly thinking about how to fill their weekends and holidays, and were frequently reminded by such popular culture sayings to spend their lives wisely as their days were numbered. This construction is held by black adolescent males who live in socially deprived areas such as Soweto, in which they feel that they have no control of their current situations and do not have a bright future. Adolescence is perceived as the time for having fun the type of fun associated with being carefree and 'living in the moment'. Of concern and a contradiction to previous constructions of individual identity is that during the weekend there was little concern paid to the consequences of risky behaviour and the impact these might have on their desired futures. It appeared that in that moment the consequences were perceived to extend to others and not them. This was similarly the case with the train surfers, discussed later in the chapter.

The second extract above raises the stereotype held about substance use/abuse, which if in the company of friends had an element of social acceptability, as opposed to using them alone. However, although there was an unspoken belief that risk decreased when in the company of friends, from a social psychology theory perspective, classic diffusion of responsibility occurs in a group. This goes against social representation theory that identifies peer pressure as a factor that increases risk, thus those individuals who used or abused substances alone were perceived by their peers to be using more serious drugs, as articulated by a female participant: "*when we drink, we [are] all together because it is not serious, the ones on nyoape and stuff do that one their own".* Her statements imply that there is something that the individual is hiding that perhaps should be hidden and that the peers were viewed as outsiders and perhaps 'loners'. Their preference for certain substances added to them being alone, as they were not welcome around those who did not engage in that particular substance. However, these 'loners' were not seen as

doing something that they were doing, self-medicating, perhaps as an attempt to momentarily forget the problems they faced on a daily basis within society.

It was evident that substance use was seen as a social activity, secondary to socialising and friendship. This social aspect was contrasted to the individuals who used by themselves and isolated themselves. The greatest assumption held by the adolescents was that when they used substances with their friends there was a lowered level of risk. However, this was not an assumption held by all:

> FP2: *I have heard that saying and sometimes people take it too far. For example, you can be out with your friends and their boyfriends and then when it's time to go home people are drunk and we are in a car with a drunk driver that is driving fast. And you find yourself in a dangerous situation.*

It was interesting to note that the males viewed alcohol as a way of having fun with peers and with girlfriends, but analysis reveals that the alcohol use enabled them to take advantage of the girls. When the girls also engaged in drinking they were rendered more powerless and placed in a position in which they were unable to counter pressure to get in a car with a drunk driver. The female participant's emotional engagement within this statement was suggestive of fear of the risks associated with drinking and driving. She seemed to acknowledge the dangers in a limited sense, as her extract explicated a personal experience, although she saw her friends and their boyfriends as the main culprits.

It is also interesting to note the differences between the male and female responses, as they highlighted an interesting distinction in the manner in which risk is perceived by males and females. The former used substances and became intoxicated as a result of their own actions and planned behaviour whereas the latter spoke of the other end of the risk spectrum, at times in highly risky situations from which they could not extricate themselves, such as being taken advantage of by males. This indirect communication shed light on the possible gender and power inequalities in this context, in which the males had more of a sense of control and the women demonstrated a lack of control and/or helplessness.

The majority of the participants highlighted the pressure to engage in risky behaviour such as drinking, smoking, unprotected sex and entering cars driven by drunks, under peer

pressure, media representation, role models in their families, and boredom. There were, however, some individuals who seemed to resist the temptation to experiment associated with adolescence.

5.2.3 The non-conformist

Alongside family, religion was also identified as a protective factor against engaging in risky behaviour by some of the participants in the focus groups. This finding corresponds with Jensen (2008) and Ratele et al. (2007), who also found that participants drew on their religious beliefs to resist engaging in risky behaviour.

> FP4: *There is nothing wrong with drinking sometimes. It helps with the relaxing and chilling. As long as your parents and parent's friends don't see you then it's okay.*
>
> MP1: *I don't drink at all and that for religious reasons. My father is a pastor at one of the local churches and that is how my sisters and brothers were raised. I don't judge my friends that do drink even though my heart says it is wrong. But they will judge me and say that I am not a man, because I don't drink and smoke and have a girlfriend.*

During the discussion, of the various leisure activities available to adolescents living in the greater Soweto the males mainly sought out those that included drinking and other substance use. However, this was not a unanimous way of enjoying the weekend and the above quoted male participant questioned the understanding and meaning of masculinity, speaking of how he was made to feel inferior by his peers as he did not participate in behaviours they perceived as demonstrating masculinity, such as drinking and using substances while out on the streets to illustrate to others that one was becoming a 'man'. His questioning provided insight into his own conflicts with masculinity and attempts to consolidate his own understanding of this particular masculine construction and performance. He also showed his vulnerability and discomfort when his 'friends' put him down for not engaging in activities that they concluded were essential to heterosexuality.

Evident thus far in the analysis is that participants had developed alternative versions of what it meant to be a black adolescent living in Soweto. Within this new version there were two opposing identities, that of the 'future orientated' teen and that of the 'risk-taking' teen. This particular group of adolescents rejected the notion that black adolescents did not have control of their lives, and challenged the popular conception held of those from the township, viewed by

wider society, as being more inclined to engage in anti-social behaviour. Referring to race and class, Jenson (2008), found that black adolescent boys were commonly associated with gangs, crime and violence, though many decided not to engage in crime or belong to a gangs thus raising the possibility that the problem might stem from how they were negatively perceived by the public. As Langa (2009) states, it is these alternative 'voices' that are not heard, and in the safe and non-judgemental space that they felt comfortable enough to voice alternative norms.

Modelling and peer pressure were identified as influential in the way in which the adolescents affected one another, their sense of agency being minimised when in social company. Coupled with vulnerable environment this explained as inevitable consequences certain behaviours, such as underage drinking, substance use and delinquency. The strong sense of self was identified and perceived as being a protective factor, as individuals who were seen to be greatly influenced by their environment in their engagement of risky behaviours were viewed as having a weak foundation (home training) and an inadequate sense of self (not believing that they could have a better future). However, although some believed that an individual could not be held responsible for behaviour that was influenced by the environment, there was an acknowledgement that he or she was still perceived ultimately as becoming vulnerable in such a context when having a lowered sense of self.

Thus, it was clear that there was pressure from peers to engage in certain activities identified as having a particular status attached to them. However, there was also a view that they were part of being an adolescent (experimentation), perhaps even as a way of individuating themselves from their parents and taking on a more adult role (Wilbraham, 2004). In addition, it was observed that adolescents at times followed through with behaviours in which they would not ordinarily engage, for example being in a car with a drunken driver, because under the influence of a substance (alcohol), they rationalised them as a way of dissipating fears and hardship.

In summary, adolescents were vulnerable to being influenced by their peers. As in Zambuko and Mturi (2005), peers were found to have a considerable influence on one another, thus the participant's perception of peer influence might exacerbate risky behaviour and the perception of safety amongst friends might be a way of rationalising such behaviours (YOLO).

5.3 Theme Two: Train Surfing: "The Staff Boys"

Train surfing was indeed a phenomenon that the adolescents in all four of the focus groups were aware of and that some had witnessed first-hand. The extract of the two males below indicates that this was an activity with which they were familiar. As in previous studies (Cohen, 1988; Hessenlink, 2008; Sedite et al., 2010; Straucha et al., 1998), involvement was seen as stemming from a desire to be well known.

> MP4: *Those staff boys do those stunts for attention and for the attention for the younger boys and the girls*
>
> FP3: *Attention seekers. That is what I think. They like the attention they get when people know who they are/ they like it when they say "There is X the staff rider".*

The adolescents perceived notoriety and status as the main reason behind engagement in the activity, confirming the literature (Hessenlink, 2008; Mackay, 2009; Sedite et al., 2010). On one end of the continuum, train surfing was perceived to be a staging of a performance to illustrate skills, in addition to the entertainment factor. On the other end, the demonstration of these skills in a high risk environment often resulted in fame and being known within peer groups and the extended community. In their investigation of train surfing in Berlin, Strauch et al. (1998) attributed it to a desire for recognition, which correlates with the findings of the present study:

> FP1: *The girls will be shouting and screaming when they see the riders on the train and the boys bashaya amaflate. It is crazy, you would swear that you are at a concert the way they go crazy when they see them in action*.

The above extract confirms Hesselink's (2008) findings in the first study on train surfing, that involvement and support that previous train surfers received from the passengers was a major contributor to their decision to become involved. The reactions boosted their confidence which, as Taubman-Ari (2004) posits, adolescents must have in their ability to perform high-risk behaviours. Participants suggested that the train surfers gained some confidence and status from their peers and other onlookers whilst performing stunts such as 'gravol', in which the young male gets underneath a moving train and kicks ballast ('gravel') with his foot. They felt that these kinds of stunts and acts were perceived by the train surfers as bringing notoriety amongst their peers. Others within the group posited that the train surfers viewed this activity as a way of

escaping their daily problems. Thus, emboldened by substances, they jumped onto trains without giving a second though to the possibility of losing their lives.

5.3.1 The consequences of train surfing: death

> MP3: *Ya remember X's brother. He also was there doing this staff riding and he died last year (2012). He was sixteen… Eish. His family has not been the same since.*

The few studies in South Africa on train surfing have suggested that it is practiced by males aged between 12 and 18, correlating with epidemiological studies that have reported this age group and gender as being risk of engaging in or being victims of violence, traffic injuries and substance abuse (Ratele, 2008). However, as Sedite and colleagues (2010) pointed out within their study on staff riding, the risk is contextual. Within a neighbourhood such as Orlando West, life in itself is risky for many of the youth and they are continuously being presented with a variety of opportunities for risky practice. The above theme covered some of these behaviours. Thus, as the participants of this study made decision to engage in drinking, smoking, gambling and risky sexual practices, so the train surfers made a choice to risk their limbs and lives.

> FP2: *There have been stories in the paper and stuff about these guys dying while doing this. I mean they get seriously hurt, losing legs and hectic injuries. So me as I sit here I wonder if you see your friend dying while doing this mess then why would you continue?*
>
> FP2: *Maybe they think that they won't die*.
>
> R: *As in that they can do something to avoid death?*
>
> FP2: *Ya Miss just don't do what that guy did, sort of thing. That is the only reason I can think of for this madness.*

There was a general consensus of not understanding why these boys would partake in this activity, especially considering the consequences. The above dialogue was mainly by female participants, annoyed at the stupidity of the behaviour, but lying saliently under this annoyed communication was a curiosity of why these boys would not want to preserve their lives. Nell (2002) suggests that risk-taking is a highly desired social virtue and that the fear of death does not deter young men from engaging in high-risk activities. For these train surfers the thought of their own death was too distant and isolated to act as a deterrent. As the participant in the above

extract contends, *"They think that they won't die…"* Her statement echoes that of Nell (citing the work of Freud): "One's own death is beyond imagining".

The train surfers were perceived by their peers as underestimating the likelihood of risk, even when the possibilities of negative consequences were objectively high. According to Baumeister and Scher (1988), this impaired decision-making process was characteristic of adolescents who were often present-orientated and failed to take into consideration the future negative outcomes, as well as maintaining the immortality myth that young people are immortal and invulnerable to harm. Literature on 'invulnerability' argues that the adolescents' egocentrism encourages an over-differentiated of feelings that contributes to the sense of uniqueness and immortality (Elkind, 1967). It would appear that these train surfers had a 'personal fable' in which they believed that harmful outcomes were more likely to transpire for others than themselves.

In both the South African and international studies on train surfing, train suffers were clearly aware of the consequences of this dangerous past time, but despite deaths of fellow surfers and governments initiatives to end it, it remained popular. Death was explained as an ordinary occurrence when engaging in the activity, and while it was inevitable that one may get injured the participants highlighted their peers' inability to fully commit to alternative activities and stop train surfing. This social construction allowed them to minimise the powerfulness of the perception of death, seen by Rios (1993) as the reason behind their involvement.

The train surfers were involved because of the exhilaration and sense of adventure that they felt and because of the threat of death that was instilled in them whilst involved. Taubman-Ben-Ari (2004) found that an increase in mortality within a certain high-risk activity may lead to an increase in attraction of that particular high-risk activity for men. Could this be a reason behind the train surfer's engagement in this high-risk activity? Were they viewing the possibility of death as enthralling and exhilarating?

> MP1: *The more I sit here and listen to everybody. I am trying to think why? Why do they do this thing? There must be a reason. Because when you do something there must be a reason. We work hard at school because we want to go to university, people drink and what not because they want to forget their worries and distress. So then they do this to get away from something. I just haven't figured out what yet…*

The male in the above extract appeared to want to understand the train surfer's engagement in a cause-effect social representation of behaviours. He began by stating the reasons he had come to understand why people behave the way they do, and attempted to do the same in trying to understand willingly participating in an activity that almost guarantees injury and death. His reasoning was similar to that of Taubman-Ben-Ari (2004), who found that people are more frequently attracted to risky behaviour as a way to resolve their existential fear of death. She concluded that it was not that these individuals necessarily decided that they wanted to live or die whilst in the mist of performing the activity, but rather that 'walking on the edge' and the sense of being alive guided their behaviour. Perhaps they were trying to feel alive again after their experience of personal failure, i.e., the boy known to the participants who dropped out of school and is now a train surfer, and socio-economic demands, i.e., dropping out of school to aid financially at home, and did so by engaging in activities that gave them a sense of purpose and achievement, making them feel alive.

The extract above also belongs to a discourse of risk-taking behaviour as a way of shielding oneself from the harsh realities of everyday life, "*people drink and what not because they want to forget their worries*". The train is seen as an opportunity to escape from something, a place that is away from the judgement and pain of daily life. According to Barker (2005), many men are frustrated by their realities which are characterised by social exclusion and poverty. They are not given the space to reflect their frustration and struggles and often turn to high-risk behaviours as a means of masking the difficult feelings. Thus, risk-taking may be a way of expressing feelings that society has predetermined should not be shown by males.

The participants represented themselves as an optimistic group who were looking forward to the future and all it brings, despite the various barriers they faced on a daily basis. The optimistic view coupled with the academic achievement seemed to have contributed to the way they made decisions, especially those that could deter them from fulfilling their ambitions. Elkind (1967) posited that invulnerability is a problem of cognitive development, and it has been found that train surfers are usually school-drop outs. The belief that their future is within their control seems to be a preventative factor.

5.3.2 "He used to be in our class"

All the participant knew of the growing phenomenon of train surfing, and also evident was that those who spoke more about personal experiences with regards to other risky behaviours knew more about it. As noted above, adolescent boys and girls living in Soweto engage in behaviours that would be considered to fall under the umbrella of risk-taking, for example binge drinking, driving under the influence, smoking zol/dagga and unsafe sex practices. Although these adolescents spoke of occasionally going out and engaging in some of these behaviours, but distanced themselves from notions of delinquency by taking on a more academic identity, rather than that of a 'rebel without a cause'.

> MP: *Ya there was a guy here at our school, Adam[6], he train surfs now. The thing is school was hard for that guy, I mean we found him in Grade Nine and we left him there in Grade Nine* (group laughter). *It wasn't nice for him anymore. He used to be a tough guy but after failing for the third time, he could say nothing. So I think that's why he left and does that stuff.*

This boy mentioned in the discussion above was known for delinquent behaviour in the school before becoming a train surfer. He was described as a defiant boy who was always causing fights in and out of school if he was 'disrespected' by anyone. Boys in the same class as him in Grade 9 recalled how he would carry weapons to school and harass them for homework and money. He seemed to maintain his hegemonic status outside if school by taking on a heroic type of masculinity (Whitehead, 2005). Extending on this type of masculinity, Langa (2009) contends that violence within the context of a male peer group plays a vital role as it is used as a determinant of bravery and physical strength. This boy's ability to 'terrorise' his peers in and out of school made him a hero to his peers and seemingly his teacher's victims. When the tables turned and he failed Grade Nine for the third time one may assume that he felt emasculated in the classroom context. The narrative of this train surfer told by his peers reveals a demonstration of hegemonic masculinity. It has been found that adolescents who drop out of school due to poor performance place themselves in a situation in which their vulnerability to engaging in risky behaviour increases. Thus, when he dropped out of school, he had to find other activities and identities outside of school to validate his sense of masculinity, for him it was train surfing.

> MP2: *Eish Mam' but after failing three times! Adam wasn't serious about school. When people were studying for the year end exams he was on the streets. When assignments were due he was*

[6] Pseudonym used to preserve the anonymity of the peer being discussed.

busy copying off us at the gate. (Chuckles) *That time when he is copying our work he is teasing us calling us girls because our writing was neat. I would also leave school if I wasn't coping.*

Although this young man and his peers laughed when recalling stories of the former classmate and now a known train surfer, what stood out in the narrative were his attempts to remain in school. While his means were misguided and somewhat criminal, he was trying to remain in a context which was familiar. For this adolescent boy, school seemed to be a context in which he could demonstrate an identity that he had established for himself, that involved intermediating authority and peers, and going against social norms and values. When this was threatened he found alternative contexts in which he could demonstrate this, notably dropping out of school and joining a 'gang'. Within context, that is already stereotyped with a belief that young adolescents, especially black males, believe they do not have control over the outcome of their futures, a context which is scarce in resources and thus has limited future prospects for youth. It would appear that because of the lack of future prospects, this adolescent's focus was on having a good time rather than concentrating on academic achievement. Researchers such as Langa (2008) would argue that this is an outcome of many black adolescents, especially males, living in historically lower socio-economic areas.

5.3.3 Addictive nature of train surfing

In a documentary directed by Sara Blecher (2010) titled *Surfing Soweto*, two train surfers who filmed their lives over a four-year period stated that taking drugs and train surfing were less frightening then facing the prospects of a society that had nothing to offer. Despite being born in a generation that was free from the legislated racism of apartheid these two train surfers and many of the participants in this study nevertheless remained marginalised and unable to fully enjoy the fruits of a democratic nation. With what appears and is at times constructed to be 'nothing to lose', it appears that train surfers were viewed by their peers as having limited opportunities to realise their goals, therefore they had to resort to an addictive lifestyle in which their days were spent taking substances and train surfing. This dangerous Sowetan pastime is similar to the drugs that they take, as it can take their lives at any moment:

FP4: *The staff boys, ahhh those boys*.

MP4: *Those boys are something else. The things that they are able to do, is something to be seen I tell you. It's obvious that it's dangerous because the train is not standing still but it is moving at however many kilometres per hour. Those boys are brave but very stupid Mam.*

FP2: *Drugs are definitely involved with those boys. Dagga and cheap drugs*.

R: *What drugs are considered cheap drugs?*

MP4: *Nyaope and Mandrax*.

The above extracts indicate the adolescents perceived train surfers as adolescents who are abusing drugs that gave them the conviction that they could perform the dangerous stunts in life-threatening situations. One of female participants stated:

FP2: *You can smell them smoking the drugs if you walk past the open areas near the train station.*

In another five-minute documentary, ex-train surfers were featured speaking about the differences between train surfing now and when they did the sport ten to 15 years previously. In the documentary it was evident that the ex-surfer has endured multiple amputations, describing how he now sees the train surfers smoking before engaging in the activity and saying that when he was a train surfer all they smoked were cigarettes. This construction of train surfing 'now' indicates that the involvement in the activity is addictive, both to the drugs that give them the courage to engage in it and to the sensation they receive whilst train surfing under the influence of the drug. (Casino, 2013)

Despite the danger associated with the activity there is an element of notoriety, however different from the 'peer fame' discussed below in the findings. It may assist them with social redemption, however, this is debatable in some sense as Orlando West, like many townships in South Africa, played a prominent role during the anti-apartheid movement. The unemployment and adversity still experienced in the family and community contexts creates barriers to success, so the youth turn to this drugs and train surfing as a way of socially reinventing themselves.

Literature has shown the correlation between substances and risky behaviour, and within this study such a combination is largely based on most of these train surfers not realizing the value of their own lives. Literature indicates that those with a high sense of self efficacy or what is also referred to as an 'internal locus of control' may feel helpless and look for alternative ways of calming themselves. These alternative ways, according to Taubman-Ben-Ari (2004), may be high-risk behaviours, despite the long-term consequences. Thus, in relation to the train surfers and other risk takers it is possible that they may have a high sense of external locus of control

and may use activities such as train surfing as a way of empowering themselves in an attempt to increase their sense of agency.

5.3.4 Family Dynamics: "We all have problems! But that doesn't mean that you give up"

At first, the majority of the participants in the focus groups could not understand why 'other' adolescents would engage in activities that would endanger their lives. This stance stemmed from protective factors in their lives (internal and external) that deterred them from engaging in such. When encouraged to think about the hardships many face it was evident that there were many factors that could lead an individual to seek out these activities. Feelings of disconnection, a lack of parental guidance and socio-economic factors were identified by the participants as possible reasons behind engaging in activities such as train surfing. Conversely, many of the adolescents found it hard to accept that these were the problems that led to such behaviour, as these were problems that many faced but chose not to engage in:

MP2: *We all have problems. But that doesn't mean you give up and resort to these silly things.*

This quote from one of the participants reflects the feeling and perception that is held by the majority of the participants, that something internally had 'given up' and led to these individuals participating in activities that would probably end their lives.

The central theme that emerged when discussing in the focus group factors that might increase an adolescent's vulnerability to engaging in a high risk activity such as train surfing was identified as 'family situation'. Family dynamics and the risk-takers' relationship with family members emerged from the discussions as the central themes. Many identified low socio-economic status and a lack of emotional support from family members as predictors of train surfing, with a few participants specifically identifying an absent/unavailable father placing a financial burden on the remaining parent, the mother, which in turn would result in the burden being imposed on the adolescent male. The family was identified as a protective and a predictive factor to adolescents' risk-taking behaviour. In the section below, the focus is on the latter, family dynamics being a predictive factor for both train surfing and risk-taking.

MP2(1): *Things are hard for all of us, for some more than others. Each house and family is different. Maybe in those guys house there are real problems. Like the itimer*[7] *is not working and the oulady*[8] *as well. As a guy in the house you can't just sit and do nothing, you must 'maak a plan'.*

MP2: *Ya but they don't take that money home. They use that money on drugs and girls. So where is the plan in that? If you can see at home that your dad is not providing or he is not there. You must take that role*

R: *So instead of helping out at home…*

MP2 (1): *They are creating more problems for their families.*

MP: *Ya sure grand*[9] *grand that outi yiflop if you don't take care of the home. What kind of man are you if you jumping on trains but there are problems in your yard.*

The above quotation has many levels to unpack in understanding how adolescents in Soweto made sense of the various characteristics that make up the phenomenon of train surfing. It begins with the recognition that being an adolescent living in the townships is difficult, a theme that was also dominant when discussing being a black adolescent after apartheid. These adolescents appeared baffled by the choice that these men and women take in choosing to engage in this activity. There was an acknowledgement that things were difficult for them, to which they all to some degree could relate. This could be because, to many adolescents living in Soweto, financial difficulty is the norm within their environment. This ability to relate ended when they considered the ways in which these males reacted to a difficult situation, particularly a difficulty at home. Whereas they had made the conscious decision to change their lives in their future by applying themselves academically, participants explored other interpersonal and external factors that led a peer to engage in an activity such as train surfing.

There was an acknowledgment that there were degrees of hardship as the male participants empathised with fellow peers who experienced great difficulty. However, they seemed to follow this discussion with perhaps what is considered to be the more traditional type of masculinity. Drawing on an Afrikaans expression, the male as provider must "*maak* a plan", a corruption of the phrase "*a boer maak a plan*". Linking in with a traditional, as well as the apartheid notion of Afrikaner cultural understanding of 'being a man', the male participant in the above extract expressed both a need and a duty to protect family and their female caregiver, in

[7] itimer - timer: A term of endearment for a father or an old man (old-timer).
[8] oulady: A term of endearment for a mother or an older woman. It is now a term used by black youth to refer to their mothers.
[9] grand: adj. a colloquial term meaning 'fine' or 'very well'.

this case his mother. This protection seems to be coupled with a need to prove their authority and masculinity.

5.3.5 Gender roles in contemporary South Africa

The traditional hegemonic masculinity, in which it is constructed in terms of what it means to be a 'real man', seemed to be constructed by these participants as attained through certain practices. These practices included being able to financially provide for one's family. The participants' framed these discursive practices in terms of what society expects of them as men, as one participant in the third focus group put it:

> MP3: *As a man you are expected by the family to have a job, and then a later on in life a family of your own. But when we talk about now, if the father is not working for whatever reason you as the oldest boy must take on that role and help your mother.*

Although the train surfers demonstrated a certain behaviour of hegemonic masculinity, for example the risk-taking, they were not considered to be 'real men' as instead of providing assistance to their families they created more problems for them. However, it should be noted that the male provider role does not represent the identity possibilities for the entire population of men. As Petersen (2001) contends, the replacement of the term 'masculinity' with its plural form of 'masculinities' came as recognition that men do not experience the world in the same way, and thus would arguably react to it differently. To this, Morrell (2001) adds that there are various categories of masculinities, though not equally distributed in all contexts. Therefore, considering class and gender, boys and men would have to choose how to behave, depending on an array of characteristics understood as what 'being a man' involves. Linking this with the above extract it would seem that the male adolescent has determined his way of fulfilling his masculine duties and responsibilities by ensuring that he provides for his family when the time comes (male provider role). On the other hand, the train surfers within the same extract were perceived as only fulfilling masculinity roles that were used as an attempt to assert their power and authority. An individual's reaction to family crises is subjective and is related to the influence of their parents, confirming Khunou's (2006) argument that social institutions, such as family, churches and schools have a determining role in how men will fit into a certain category of masculinities.

FP4: *Your mother shouldn't be working too hard when there is a man in the house. Yes there are single mothers, as many of us are from homes with just the mother. But if you [are] not going to be in school then you must find a job and help out at home.*

The participants' beliefs on the provider and breadwinner role were heavily influenced by various factors, such as family, community and religion, believing that it was important for men to hold that position and for women to take on a more powerless one within the household. The above extract was from a female participant, which suggests that this belief was held irrespective of culture and gender (Morgan, 2001). Within her construction of the role of the man in the household as the primarily financial provider, she exemplified the patriarchal discourses which are used to construct the role of the man, a position which is at the top of the family hierarchy, as still prominent within contemporary South African societies. Her extract also betrays an understanding of 'the real man' role, perceived as being able to perform the ideal construction of hegemonic masculinity.

MP1: *I'm from a single parent house; it is me, my older brother, younger sister and my mom. My mom works at a bank in Maponya Mall. She is the one who gives us everything. My father is wherever he is. My mother is a hard worker, and she always says that she does this now so when we get jobs and get married she can sit down and we look after her.*

Women in the new democratic South Africa are taking on more active roles within society, without the expected resistance of men towards this shift, presumably due to the father being absent and unable to resist it. Black women are now constructed by their children as no longer holding the historically subordinate or inferior positions, but rather there seems to be a rejection of men's dominant and privileged position. The above extract, in which a participant speaks about his mother's role of being a provider and nurturer, also refers to the usurping roles that were previously held by men. It was noted by the researcher that this shift was found to create feelings of insecurity and anxiety in some of the male participants, as indicated in the following quote:

MP4: *These independent women sometimes can be a problem*.

This anxiety illustrates what Walker (2005) referred to as a 'crisis of masculinity', which he characterised as instability regarding gender roles and work.

It became evident to the researcher that the progressive account of women had implications for masculinity, the more progressive accounts reflecting a form of masculinity that

was in opposition to hegemonic constructions that allowed for men to be open to the ideas of others or to partake in duties that were historically designated to the role of women.

> FP2: *I wonder what it feels like to the 'real men' out there when they see and realise that things are changing. Everywhere you look there are women and sometimes in positions of leaders. Now they must be told what to do. Things are changing and both men and women must change*.

> MP4: *Things have changed, and now boys are helping out more in the home. Not just the garden but with the cleaning. In my home there are only boys and my mom works. So there are things that she has taught us to help in the house. The only thing she doesn't allow me and my brother to do is the cooking* (laughs).

Both the above extracts address the theme of opposition to some of the features that are synonymous with hegemonic masculinities. The first participant speaks of the changes that are occurring within the larger society in which men are no longer confidently holding positions of power and leadership.

The theme of identity was one that dominated the transcripts from all four focus groups. At the core of identity development is that it is socially constructed, in the process of primary and subsequent socialisation, and in the continuing process of social interaction, within which individuals define and redefine themselves (Jenkins, 1999). Narrated by the participants of this study is that identity construction occurs due to their individual analysis of similarities and differences between themselves and others in their social world. Another axis of identity development that was evident from the data was that there is no singular process to adolescents' identity development. In the theme that follows, the construction of difference between them and others in their social world is presented through the discussions that emerged about homosexuality and femininity.

4.3.6 Female train surfers: Intersections of femininity and homosexuality

> MP: *There is this one that I once saw; she has a large cut across her face. It looked like it was a deep cut. You can see that this one is a fighter. She is the only girl there among the guys. She even looks like a guy and she acts like she is a guy. But she isn't a guy and will get hurt*.

The gender of train surfers in all available literature has focused on the engagement of males and not of women, however this is not to say that females have been excluded from all risky behaviour. Female adolescents have usually been associated to a greater extent, with high

risk sexual practices and substance use and abuse in the South Africa context. This could be attributed to the traditional and cultural construction of high risk behaviours within our context, in which activities such as train surfing are synonymous with the traditional notions of masculinity. This type of masculinity is invested in the traditional gender roles in which males' understandings of masculinities and femininities are centred on physical strength. This invulnerability to injury by men is best summed up in the participant's final sentence "*But she isn't a guy and will get hurt*". He represents an image of masculinity and men being invulnerable to physical injury. It was observed that during that part of the discussion within all four of the focus groups the conversation was dominated by the males of the group. Their main gripe with these female train surfers was that they were behaving 'like … guy[s]'. Based on the various cultural and religious reasons, homosexuality within the context of Soweto was construed as 'abnormal' and in some cases as going against god ('un-Christian'). This is illustrated in the extract below:

> FP: (laughs) *this trend is becoming serious now. Even girls are now doing it (group laughter). Well they are not really girls but they are lesbians.*
>
> R: *Are lesbians considered not to be women?*
>
> FP: *They are women but these girls don't act and carry themselves like women. Things like train surfing are not things girls should be doing.*
>
> R: *We are hearing that they are participating in these highly dangerous activities*.
>
> FP: *Yes they are… Mam eish* (pause) *I don't know. Maybe because they think they are boys they do it but if they felt deep inside that they were girls and behaved like girls they would think differently. That is not how girls are.*

Interestingly, all the males, in all four focus groups, appeared to be united in their dislike of homosexuality, especially 'gay men'. The males seemed to articulate a violation of traditional gender roles, a perceived threat to male power and privilege. There appeared to be a subtle accusation of letting down the male gender, resulting in them 'taking' on a lower status within the hierarchy of masculinity. Homosexuality within the discussions of gender roles acted as a type of boundary around the more traditional view of masculinity. It was noted during the focus groups that the heterosexual males felt a great comfort in being a part of the majority, the 'normal'.

These women (train surfers) demonstrated a power that the males were unable to demonstrate (biological constructions). Because homosexuality is seen, in part, as rejection of the traditional gender roles, homosexuality presented a strong threat to the self-concepts of the individuals who were highly invested in traditional gender roles.

Although literature has indicated that males hold more negative attitudes towards homosexuals (Herek & Capitanio, 1999), the above female participant used cultural constructions of gender to explain the more negative attitudes towards lesbians. This contradicted the progressive view of gender roles that has been found in female adolescents and young adults' attitudes and perceptions toward gay men and lesbians.

MP3: *When girls dress and act like boys, it is not nice*.

It would appear that the participant above placed great emphasis of gender role in the construction and understanding of his own gender identity (in his case masculine identity). Both participants in the above extracts alluded to the socially held construction that gender differentiation reflects the belief that the nature of women and men require them to hold different social roles. The male participants aligned themselves with the hegemonic standard of masculinity, in which both homosexuality and femininity were viewed as inferior in comparison to heterosexual masculinity. Ratele et al. (2007) found that 'camp' behaviour, by which a homosexual male openly expresses his 'gayness', is viewed as problematic. With regards to this study's aims, this is considered an inverse finding as it does not focus on male homosexuality. The above extract illustrates and provides insight into the adolescents perception of gender and sexuality, and as Ratele et al (2007, p.116) posits "it reflects the continued and entrenched binaries of masculine and feminine and the imperative to prescribe all human identity and practice within such an understanding"

MP3: *There are some lesbians that don't dress and act like guys. And they are hot, let's be honest gents* (laughter). *Now those ladies I don't mind because even if they don't want me they are eye candy and we can still check them out.*

MP2: *Besides boy, these girls always end up with a real guy.* (Laughter from group)

MP3: *That's how the Bible says it should be.*

The objectification of women is evident in the above male's response in which he speaks of still being able to 'check out' the more 'feminine' lesbians. This statement speaks to the re-

entrenchment of a masculine role, in which he is still able to exhibit some form of power over the female. Even though this female is not interested in him due to her sexual orientation, he speaks of being able to identify female traits that allow him to objectify her and thus re-entrench his masculine role. The more 'feminine' lesbians are not considered 'real' lesbians as they are still considered attractive to a hegemonic male. This then leads to the conclusion that, given the right type of attention (attention from a man), the 'feminine' lesbian ('not real' lesbian) will end up with a 'real' guy (presumable the stereotypical hegemonic male). The above extract also illustrates how some of the participants used religion to validate their positions on gender roles. Within some of the other focus groups, the participants also invoked the Biblical to defend their gender role constructions and to oppose those that deviated from the social norms. This was best illustrated by a male participate who said:

MP1: *God created Adam and Eve and nor Adam and Adam or Eve and Eve.*

This extract illustrates how societal values, especially those determined by religion, fuel factors in the formation of attitudes and stereotypes about a specific group, in this case homosexuals. This is in line with the findings in other studies, in which they found that individuals, who are religiously inclined, have less favourable views towards gays and lesbians (Gray et al., 1996; Waldo, 1998). Because homosexuality is seen, in part, as a rejection of traditional gender roles, for the boys in the fourth focus group homosexuality presented a strong threat to their self-concept, as they subscribed to traditional gender roles. The religious ideologies have been used in the above extract to legitimise the belief that men and women are different and therefore cannot be seen to be behaving in a similar manner. According to Lerner (1986), women are seen in religious terms to specifically fulfil the role of child bearer, nurturer and homemaker, whereas men are seen to be strong, aggressive and physically more able. These functions are attributed to the biological make-up of men and women, confirming supposedly religious beliefs on specific abilities (Lerner, 1986).

FP2: *Girls that dress and behave like men are a problem. Just like the guys, I feel that it is not right for men to act as women; it is not right for a woman to act like a man.*

MP2: *But if she is hot – game on baba*

(Laughter).

FP2: *Nonsense man, hot or not it is just not right*.

MP2: *Ya okay sharp! We are saying that the problem here is not the beautiful ones, it more the rough looking ones*.

MP2: *A hot lesbian girl can get it!*

(Laughter)

Many of the boys viewed lesbians in a positive light, in comparison to the negative views held towards homosexual males (to be discussed below). It was the females who seemed to have a more negative attitude towards lesbians and a more relaxed attitude toward homosexual males. The female in the above statement that '*girls that dress and behave like men are a problem*' suggests a rigid discursive enforcement of masculinities in relation to femininities. This reflects a phenomenon Pascoe (2006) referred to as the gendered nature of homophobia. The males seemed to lust over the lesbian women, specifically those who still carried themselves in a traditionally feminine manner versus the more 'butch' associated with men. This more positive view appeared to be rooted in sexual desire, with positioning of the 'prettier' lesbian diminishing the likelihood of their masculinity being threatened, in addition, to its feeding into a heterosexual sexual phantasy. This extract betrays the desire for domination over women still evident in men.

Shefer, Boonzaier and Kiguwa (2006) argue that the two genders should not be portrayed as distinct but rather as a continuum, on which both females and males can freely place themselves. By deconstructing the idea of the dominant culture of binaries, power inequalities may stand a chance of being dissolved.

It became clear that, for the male participants in all four of the focus groups, thinking about masculinity issues only surfaced if heterosexuality and homosexuality were prominent in their minds. It was clear from the opinions voiced that the males were less excepting of gay males than were the females, who took a position on the other end of the continuum, by communicating opinions of ambivalence. The ambivalence itself seemed to include a cynical view and a sincere attempt to understand the need to explore different types of sexuality. It could be argued that these opposing stances signalled the anxiety that the adolescents felt towards understanding their own identities.

MP: *I'm like the other guy! I don't mind the lesbian girls. The gay guys are the problem. Bay'seshela.*

MP2: *Ya! They like the pretty boys.*

(Laughter)

MP1: *It is not nice Mam. It is uncomfortable. I don't like it*.

R: *Are you referring to when they hit on you?*

MP1: *Yes. It is not nice. I don't mind them as people but when they do that to me in front of people, it's not nice. I mean, what are people thinking when they see me talking to them? That I'm not into that stuff! No I like girls and they must respect that.*

R: *Do they not respect that?*

FP1: *They don't. They like doing things like that. They like attention. They are just drama those guys – they think that being gay is cool and the in-thing.*

MP1: *When they arrive at a party and they start their antics you'll see other guys moving away from them or leaving, because they can be too much sometimes.*

The above extract illustrates the negative perspective that was held by some of the male participants and a few vocal females towards homosexual men. Significantly, it demonstrates the performative nature of masculinity, central to the debate among the males around homosexuality. This strong vocalisation was not expected by the researcher as this theme emerged through a snowball like effect from the discussion of the female train surfers. Participants took an ambivalent stance, in some instances showing understanding as to why they would chose to be homosexual. This understanding did not seem to extend to homosexual men, about whom the fear of being thought of as gay permeated three of the four groups. For the male in the above extract (MP), being perceived to have any acquaintances (being seen conversing) with gay men seemed to hold the threat of being seen as 'one of them'. Perhaps the difference in understanding between lesbian girls and gay men is rooted in their ability to challenge or threaten their perceived masculinity. From the above extract it is evident that the males in the group might not have had strong negative feelings towards homosexuals but strong feelings towards them threatening their masculinity in a public space, in a sense perhaps emasculating them in front of their peers. When hearing the above male voicing his opinion on the topic it was evident that he felt the need to protect his masculinity or to explicitly defend it by forcefully, stating that: *"I'm not into that stuff. No! I like girls and they must respect that"*. Interestingly, it was also observed how he positioned himself as a non-expert *"I'm not into that stuff"*.

5.4 Theme Three: Bikers and drag racers

> MP2: *Those guys are no different from the bikers, of the drag racers there at Nasrec. They want to be popular and they want the babes.*

The discussion of other types of dangerous activities, drag racing and motorcycling were identified across the groups as other growing trends within Soweto. Like train surfing, these activities were perceived as behaviours that required bravery, agility and physical strength, the degrees varying across the three. Drag racing is a sport that has increased in popularity, not only in Soweto but throughout the country, Ian illegal form in particular reported to be popular among teens and young adults, with many of the dragsters spending copious amounts of money modifying their cars for racing purposes. The racers turn up to prove their worth and justify their spending. The bikers are described in a similar manner, spending money on expensive brands, such as *Honda*, *Harley Davidson* and *Suzuki* (the 'speed bikes'). The presence of bikers in Soweto has grown since the first biker club was established in Soweto in the early 1990s, with now a few clubs being known and seen by the adolescents in their neighbourhoods.

These two groups of men are characterised by abilities and assumed wealth. Although the train surfers are recognised to demonstrate a higher level of risk-taking, in the form of bravery and agility, the bikers and dragsters seemed to encapsulate a more desired type of masculinity. Arguably, this type of masculinity can amount to what Alexandra (2003) termed 'branded masculinity', a type of power branded through its ability to generate insecurities in boys and men about their bodies and consumer choices. As a result of these insecurities, boys are said to look to these brands to shape their fashion sense and to meet the expectations of what is presumed to be required for middle class men within contemporary society:

> MP4: *The dragsters spend so much money on their cars. They put in a new exhaust, new engines, the paint job, the works. And that is just their car. They are dressed in the big brands. Like Louis Vuitton, Cavella, Rocco by Rocco.*

> FP3: *The bikers will arrive here on Vilakazi Street[10] and they will fill the streets with superbikes. You can hear them revving their bikes and spinning… They drink and eat there by Sakumzi's[11] and have huge parties.*

[10] Vilakazi Street in Orlando West is the street in which former homes of Nelson Mandela and Bishop Tutu are found. It is also the site of where Hector Peterson died after being shot died by the police during *the Soweto Student Uprising.*

[11] A South African themed restaurant situated on the popular and historic Vilakazi Street.

The above extract illustrates how expensive cars and expensive brands of clothing are perceived to symbolise wealth and status. The importance that is placed by the above adolescents in appearance and material objects seems to set the bikers and the dragsters apart from any other risk-takers. The spending was used by the men as a mean of showing off and differentiating themselves from other men, resulting in the development of a culture of materialism.

5.4.1 Material Things: "Money, money money!"

> MP1: *Ya those activities are risky just like staff ridding, but there is a huge difference, the staff boys steal for money and the bikers and drag boys have to make money. And to keep in that kind of stuff you must continue to make the money.*
>
> FP3: *The Bikers have mad money! The kind of money that can get you almost anything your heart desires.*

Although a majority of the families living in Soweto are still struggling as a result of the deprivation caused by the oppressive practices of apartheid, there are some black adolescents who have financially prospered since the beginning of the new democratic legislation, which Stevens and Lockhart (2003) argue contributes to role confusion rather than identity cohesion. With such there are a number of young adolescents and young adults who have been given the material resources such as money, and by being able to access all that was previously out of reach[12], has propelled them to internalise the '*Coca-Cola*' culture (Steven & Lockhart, 1997). This reflects an American culture rooted in individualistic and competitive values as well as aspirations (Stevens & Lockhart, 2003).

The above extracts reflect the importance placed on material items such are cars, motorbikes and money, and important role in the way some of the participants, especially the boys, position themselves as either inferior or superior. In the case of the bikers these commodities position the men as superior and in a position to use their material consumption within the domain of masculine competition for the opposite sex.

The above extract communicates clearly the value that the adolescents' placed on possessing material objects such as *"a nice car"*. These objects are perceived as affording them a

[12] According to Stevens and Lockhart (2003), during apartheid, black adolescents were exposed to the imagery of personal success and progress, but were simultaneously refused access to the material resources required for this.

higher status among their peers and in such a way that would make them appear superior. This status was especially reinforced by the male participants:

> MP4: *Ahh Mam' the more expensive your car is or your bike. Then we all know that he is a real skoko. Things for him are great and he has no worries… like you can see that he has no worries and is just living life carefree. Eating his money!*

The above extract highlights the pervasive effect that hegemonic masculinity can create in pressurising boys to achieve a certain level of masculine status (Connell, 2000). It would appear that the adolescents identified material objects and financial security as a protective factor against the hardships of their environment. The participant also perceived financial security as a way of reducing an individual's participation in behaviours that are at times necessitated by poverty, such as train surfing and other life-threatening risky behaviours. Here, wealth may be associated with a perceived invulnerability, and a purpose and reason to live. This suggested that lower levels of economic wealth is associated with the increased vulnerability to participating in riskier behaviours associated with 'living in the moment' and not fully acknowledging the associated risks.

The above sub-theme clearly demonstrated what literature has identified as 'male enclaves'. According to Caru et al. (2004), this suggests that masculinity can only be enacted in the presence of other men, that is, in order for men to develop and assume a masculine identity they are required to spend some time with other men in enclaves that exclude strong feminine identities and are dedicated to the rituals of masculinity. This has been made clear with the formation of biker clubs and large events such as day *'jols'*. In modern society, men share their masculinity in places where passions that are mainly shared by men are enacted, for example, club houses for various sports and activities. Not only does sharing a male-orientated passion or group help to sculpt and strengthen masculine identity, but also, as the extract below indicates, it serves the function of excluding many women. It is not however assumed that there are no women within these sports or activities and bastions of masculinity, but rather that they are relatively marginalised and positioned at the periphery.

5.4.2 The female presence: "she's with the bikers"

> MP3: *You can see these girls are into money. They are the Khanyi Mabau[13] kind of gal. The ones who want to be with a famous guy who has money, cars and things of that nature. Girls that will do anything for nice things*.
>
> LP1: *If I see a girl that sitting next to those guys* [the bikers] *my mind just says to me she is a girlfriend or a side chick. You can see that she isn't in the leathers so she doesn't ride, so then, she must be a girlfriend or whatever*.

It is evident from the above extract that the women seen around these 'biker men' are not associated with the cultures of either drag racing or biking in the true sense of being active participants. They are not central but serve to reinforce the heterosexual component of this particular form of masculinity, seemingly relegated to a particular role and not participating in the actual activity. These are worlds in which women generally do not exist, or in the case of train surfing have taken a more masculine identity. Seen within such environments they are rarely taken seriously. Some of the participants felt that these women carried themselves in 'provocative' manner, and perpetuated certain stereotypes, but although there was resistance to some girls behaving in this way some of the participants admitted that they would at times participate in certain things, and engage in risky behaviour, to impress girls.

> FP4: *I'm not going to lie; a guy who can provide for you in that way is nice. But I would rather a biker or drag racer than 'those' hobo's that train surf.*
>
> MP1: *Girls want money. And if you want a girl you need to be able to give her something. Sometimes it is because you are handsome, sometimes you always have the money and sometimes you are famous somehow. Like if it is your brother, then it's a bonus. Or maybe pressure. It depends neh!*

Girls that were seen in the company and presence of bikers were perceived as doing so in hope that their need for money and gifts would be met, and their need to exchange this for sex as a way of solidifying a role as girlfriend, and as a mean of ensuring the continuity of the gifts and money.

I was at first taken aback by the candid way in which some of the female participants admitted that this was, at times, the only way that could ensure that they acquired the things they 'wanted' that their families were not able to provide. Economic disempowerment had been identified as having important implications for the youths' sexual activities. For example, in an

[13] Khanyi Mbau is a local celebrity who is known for the dress sense and expensive taste.

ethnographic study in the Eastern Cape, Wood and Jewkes (2001) proposed that the lack of economic and recreational opportunities for youth led to sexual relations being used as a means to gain respect and social status. This statement also rings true for the girls in the present study. They too used the gifts and money they received from their relationships with these men as a way of gaining status and obtaining more money, thus upgrading them to a higher social class. In the above statement the male participant expressed frustration at their female peers being attracted to the likes of bikers and drag racers because of their income and perceived wealth. Not only did these men have money that would get them girls, there was also the element of the wealth being used as a means of showing off and a way of competing with the younger and not so dominant males (Mature, 2002).

It was apparent from the extracts above that there was a social representation within the adolescents that men used for material gain. It became difficult for me to decipher if this material gain was seen as the 'nature role' of men or a performance by the men to show their hegemonic masculinity. Of significance is how girls were socially represented as holding underhand motives when in relationships with men identified as having the financial means to fulfil such stereotypical social representations. Historically, men have been characterised as being providers (Brannon, 2008), and this is seen as a man's ability to seduce or a women's willingness to date such a man. This male's extract speaks of transactional sex, a term used when referring to women who receive gifts from men and reciprocate the payment in a sexual manner. Although the initial interpretation of the comment made by the male participant above was that he was speaking of a sort of empowerment felt when girls received these financial gifts, he assumed love. The other side of this coin seemed to point out a disempowerment of women. When men are able to dominate women by providing gifts there is a power imbalance, albeit it slight (Kaute-Defo, 2004). This is suggested by this female participant:

> FP3: *I'm not going to lie; a guy who can provide for you in that way is nice.*

It has to be considered that there are some girls who are willing to engage in such relationships despite knowing the requirements and what they represent to others in society.

> MP4: *It is easier being a girl. They find older men with money or young guys who come from money and then they are set. They have cash, nice clothes and it's not from working but from being with that guy. Like my boy said earlier, the girls are there for the money. They would rather date a guy that is out of school and has money then us ordinary guys from their school. Even at*

school you have a better chance of scoring a girl if you have money. The bikers have money and so they get the hot girls. And the hot chicks want them! I look at them and think ya… that's me soon. To be able to have the nice car and the house in areas like Sandton and then you have a hot chick by your side… (Laughs). *You know that you have made it. That's me soon… watch and see.*

The above represents girls as materialistic, evidence of which is their choice to date a boy/man with money over an 'ordinary' guy that is of a similar age. Thus, the bikers were seen as having a powerful commodity that granted them access to women and other materialistic things for their own elevation within the hierarchy of masculinity, and their 'acquisition' of women. This young man felt that if he was able to acquire a car or money that would compensate for his 'ordinary' manhood, which was under threat from the older and wealthier boy/man. The expensive and fast cars, and the superbikes, were signified by the adolescents within the study as symbols of status, money and power. This was an aspiration for the adolescent boys, especially the one in the above extract, and a pressure felt by adolescents in their transition into manhood. Alexandra (2003) refers to this kind of pressure as one component of what she refers to as 'branded masculinity'. This is where boys and men are expected to own and publicly display certain branded products such as expensive and fast cars, as well as houses in upmarket areas. Alexandra (2003) posits that within contemporary society branded masculinity is shaping boys and men's understanding of themselves. From the above extract, it was clear that this adolescent male felt inadequate as he had yet to acquire these brands and felt envious towards the men who could attain them. However, despite the envy, there was increased motivation to acquire these things, to increase his perceived masculinity and be in a position to acquire material goods and women. In addition, the acquisition of a car symbolised the ability to move out of his current situation to 'greener pastures' (having a house in Sandton). The men who presented themselves as having these material goods were perceived as men to look up to, men who were seemingly achieving most of the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. Some of these ideals included owning an expensive and fast car or bike, wearing expensive clothes and having the pick of the 'hottest' girls.

This young man intended to work hard to achieve his dreams and seemed noticeably determined. Analysis of his narrative revealed the already identified 'alternative masculinity', in which adolescent males were determined to achieve this patriarchal masculinity through hard work and being resourceful. This high sense of self-efficacy and personal determination contradicts the stereotype of black adolescent boys as feeling that they have no future and are

constrained by inequalities. This boy's determination was similar to other adolescents' narratives, which displayed a high level of determination to achieve success and the associated wealth.

> MP4: *Have you seen movies like 'Biker Boys' and "Fast and Furious"? The lifestyle is exactly like that, fast cars and bikes, your crew and the ladies to service you and the bikes. So maybe these guys have are basing everything they do on these movies. And then on top of that you have the music. And there the rappers speak of having a bitch… eish sorry I'm not swearing but you know that is what they say… for different reasons and stuff*!

Bikers and drag racers in the media are often associated with a lifestyle that is synonymous with gangsterism. Like the males in the films mentioned above, the bikers and dragsters are perceived to have survived the hardship of streets of Soweto. Some suggested that their main focus was on escaping the hardships of township life though strength or 'street smarts' in an attempt to achieve wealth and success, which involved entering into a higher class. In addition, within the films there is a misogynistic description of women as sexual objects who serve as a conquest. This is often sensualised by the media then turns into what men strive to achieve with regards to performing a dominant form of masculinity. This stereotype is described by Iyamoto (2003) as being hyper-masculinity, which attempts to create an image of a man who has no feminine characteristic and epitomises exaggerated features of masculinity. These exaggerated features of masculinity are utilised to 'police' other boys and men into performing 'dominant' or 'acceptable' forms of masculinities.

5.4.3 The hierarchy of masculinities: train surfer's, drag racers and bikers

According to Pinnock (1997), boys need rituals or events to take place that will symbolise their 'becoming a man'. Sedite and colleagues posit that this could have been influenced by the apartheid legacies of racism, urban capitalisation and industrialisation, elements that have undermined the possibility of traditional cultural practices that are involved. Despite these legacies, the apartheid regime was able to simultaneously present new opportunities. From a similar understanding, Pinnock (1997) contends that the development of gangs stemmed from the need for male adolescents to form a defence against the personal pain and isolation that was a consequence of apartheid. Ganging is viewed by the members and their peers as a rite of passage that is required for a boy or man to become a 'real man' (Pinnock,

1997). In a similar study on gang membership and the construction of masculinity, Moolman (2004) investigated the role that political and economic impoverishment of coloured men during apartheid played in the development of a violent and sexual discourse of masculinity that is enacted within gang membership. Moolman (2004) highlights how the political economy at the time the study was conducted influenced gang dynamics, finding that the members became associated with owning land and women's bodies as a way of exerting some degree of power.

It is not the intention of the research to identify these groups of men as members of gangs, as it has been pointed out by Alexander (2000) in her analysis of British print media, in which she argued that the picture of 'the gang' is used as "the ultimate symbol of crises, deviant and threat". The researcher within Alexander's (2000) study is referring to these men as being a part of a gang, by engaging in a similar activity and holding a similar construction of identity and masculinity. These gangs have provided an alternative to the historically understood hegemonic masculinity, but although alternative there appears to be a masculinity that is juxtaposing rural and urban, and as well as taking on old and new masculine identities young men from the township are learning to negotiate (Hemson, 2001). In Henson's (2001) attempt to navigate the construction and performances of masculinities, he acknowledges that "despite the obstacles, the young African men… are generating a new masculinity which in significant ways diverges from the black oppositional masculinity of their township peers but which inescapably still draws in some element of that masculinity" (p. 72). This is happening with the black adolescents and men in the constructions of masculinity in the present study. The biker club/gangs and the drag racers are examples of the alternative masculinities that are emerging, and providing adolescents with alternative role models and guides in achieving the ideal masculinity.

According to Connell (1993), masculinities are arranged in a hierarchical manner, and are constantly competing for power and legitimacy. The components of masculinity and their relations of alliance, dominance and subordination include and exclude different types of masculinity. This hierarchy was addressed by some of the participants:

> FP3: *There is a huge difference between these guys. The train surfers yes are the ones who face bigger danger, but they are the ones that don't have the "bling bling" vibe. The bikers and drag guys have nice cars and bikes and dress well. The staff boys don't have that. They are just dry nje. Some of them look like they live on the street.*
>
> MP3: *But those boys jack people on the train. So there is some money involved too.*

FP3: *Okay sharp, but not the kind of money the bikers and them have. Phela there you can tell that there is money. And lots of it! I would rather date a biker than a staff boy.*

From the above discussion it is evident that money and material goods such as cars and superbikes play a vital role in the positioning of some boys and men as being superior to others. For example, the above exchange between members of a focus group illustrated how material goods and money were key components of the masculine competition between women. The female participant stated outright that she would rather be 'with' a biker than a staff boy, basing her decision on the visual appearance of money. She highlighted a social representation and correlation between the perception of having money, wearing branded and expensive clothes, and driving expensive cars and superbikes. A boy or man would attract women and exude superiority over other boys and men.

Continuing on the argument based on Connell's (1993) hierarchy of masculinities, the above statements allude to the reality that power is not evenly distributed amongst men. The female in the above extract alludes to this by identifying one hegemonic masculinity and two counter-hegemonic masculinities. This correlates with Jeferson's (1994) finding that as a result of hierarchical ordering of masculinity a great deal of pressure is placed on boys and men to live up to this ideal. It has been argued by Brod (1987) that pervasive images of a masculinity hold that 'real men' are physically strong, aggressive and in control of their work. However, through the evaluation of the three types of masculinity (train surfer, dragsters and bikers) there appears to be a structural dichotomy between manual and mental labour such that no one world could fulfil these conditions. For example, the train surfers are viewed at the lower level of the socio-economic ladder, the lower end of the class spectrum, but demonstrated the greatest physical strength, prowess and agility, and are known to be aggressive. The bikers and the drag racers were viewed as having more money, being higher on the class system, but demonstrating a lower level of masculinity in regards to physical strength and risk-taking. These contradictions generate insecurities that were dissatisfactory to men, leading them actively to seek the origin of masculine identity validation offered by the image scene so predominant within adolescents. According to Brod (1987), "for working-class males, who have less access to more abstract forms of masculinity – validating power (economic power, work place authority) the physical body and its potential for violence provide a concrete means of achieving and assuming manhood" (p.14).

MP1: *For me it is not just that they have the best cars and bikes. Yes that is what I am sure most of us want. But it is how they are able to get these things. These are professionals and they work hard for the money.*

R: *How are you aware that they are professionals? Do you know some of them?*

MP1: *Yes Mam, my brother is part of the biker Club "The PathFinders[14]". He works at Nedbank. And his friends also have the same kind of jobs and some are in graphics and construction*.

MP2: *Ya Mam, some are tender guys and then some own shops. These are guys that work in the week in well-known companies and in the weekend like everyone does! They have the things they like doing. Yes, there are injuries and we have seen or heard them but it is not as serious as the train boys. They are not doing anything to improve themselves and become someone while having the thing you like doing in the weekend. Soccer, biker boy whatever but you must work and be someone*.

Apparent from the discussions around the comparisons of the three identified masculinity types was that being identified as being a 'real man' goes beyond just the performance of masculinity, and extends to the creative ways in which boys and men create a new kind of space for the contestation of township masculine identities within contemporary South Africa. Black adolescents not only constructed their identities based on race but also on class, which appeared to play a vital role in status-making. However, as illustrated above, there is a strong link between race and class, even after apartheid.

The above extract reflects how the access of wealth, class differences and the changes within socio-economic factors influence how adolescents within Orlando West negotiate identity, and more specifically how adolescent boys negotiate and contest masculinity positioning. This is in line with Reid and Walker (2005), who contest that the construction of masculinity in the new South Africa is influenced by class politics. This was confirmed by the participants and to some extent expanded on through their observations and perceptions of others within the area. More evident is the how gender and class relations influenced the patterns of dominant-subordinate class relations among the adolescents in Soweto (the inference of working-class bikers). The position of men was strongly influenced by class position and access to wealth and material sources, playing a vital role in aiding the negotiation and structuring of the multiple voices of masculinity.

[14] PathFinders is the name of a biker club that is based in Soweto.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results obtained from the four focus groups conducted at one Secondary school in Orlando West, Soweto. The aim of the focus groups and the study was to focus on the phenomenon of train surfing and to unearth the Sowetan youth's constructions of this practice. The first theme identified from the analysed data revealed a proud and studious group of participants who aimed at obtaining jobs and making a difference to their current economic status. The students spoke of their dreams and their plans to fulfil them, acknowledging the difficulties they experiences both at school (under-resourced schools) and at home (financial constraints and emotional and financial support), but these was backed up with a determination and aspiration to overcome these hurdles. The students who receive greater positive feedback both at school and at home avoid the path into delinquency and risk-taking behaviour. The participants took great care not to align themselves with risky behaviour and at times 'othering' those that do. At times they referred to the risk takers as adolescents who did not have a fully constructed identity, as they were unable to self-reflect and act accordingly. The adolescents' views of the practice of train surfing and their perceived reasons behind participation in such a potentially fatal activity revealed issues of school dropouts due to academic difficulties and lack of support from the school due to under-resourcing as some of the factors that led to risk-taking behaviour. Family dynamics and responsibilities highlighted the social practices with which young adolescents struggle daily. Through discussions of their constructions of train surfing the focus groups revealed possible influences of participation in train surfing and how this growing phenomenon is linked to issues of identity, specifically issues at stake in the defining of adolescent identity when growing up in a the greater township of Soweto.

Discussions around female participation in this lethal thrill-seeking activity introduced the theme of homosexuality, construed as a treat to masculinity. Feelings of fear and anxiety of the possible association or contamination were evident despite the adolescents' perceived acceptance and tolerance.

Finally, the results obtained from the focus groups highlighted how race, class, culture and masculinity are represented within young people's constructions of train surfing, and other high-risk activities such as, drag racing and super-biking. A hierarchy of masculinity was made

most evident within this theme. Positioning within the hierarchy was based on class, wealth and gender, factors that again revealed that their interaction within a particular context have an effect on how individuals construct and perform their identity, in the case of the males their masculinity.

Chapter Six

Concluding Remarks

6.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter the researcher begins by critically discussing the central arguments of the study. The adolescent's perceptions and understandings of the phenomenon of train surfing revealed the fluidity of identity construction within this increasingly vulnerable period of development. The construction of a 'healthy and ideal' identity, perceived as being academically able, appeared to be in conflict with what was identified as the more typical description of identity at this stage, as one of experimentation and thrill-seeking. The shift between these 'polar opposite' identities appeared to be greatly influenced by the environment that adolescent found themselves to be at the time. Race, class, and gender were also identified as influential factors in adolescents' construction of identity and understanding of reasons behind the participation and performance of train surfing. Based on some of the key findings the chapter then makes some recommendations for future studies to be conducted in the areas of train surfing, identity and masculinity. The chapter concludes with a brief, but critical discussion on the limitations of the current study.

6.2 Synopsis of the Study

Overall, the theme that threaded through all three of the identified themes was that of the complexities associated with being an adolescent growing up after apartheid. Despite the establishment of the Constitution, which made promises for a better South Africa, some South Africans still face the hardships associated with apartheid. Discussions on identity and being an adolescent living in the greater township of Soweto revealed a variety of feelings and constructions, ranging from the traditional to the more contemporary understandings of what it means to be an adolescent. For example, students upheld more traditional and socially accepted views of what is expected of them, to be a hard working child, boys helping out the father with manly chaos and the girls assisting with the house hold chores alongside the mother. There were views which have become synonymous with black male adolescents in South Africa, the fun-

seeking, potentially violence prone irresponsible adolescents. The adolescents appeared to vacillate between these two 'identities', activating one according to the environment in which they were at the time. They did not appear necessarily to fit neatly into either of the above 'identities', an indication of the fluidity of concepts such as identity and masculinity.

Perhaps due to the setting of the focus groups, they presented themselves as the more academically inclined adolescents, demonstrating an ability to be self-reflective, academically driven and in pursuit of happiness and success. Despite this 'level-headedness', they revealed in their narrations conflicts in developing identity. There was a simultaneous acceptance and rejection of stereotypical practices associated with their age and gender. On the one hand, they spoke of hopes and aspirations, challenging the popular misconception of black adolescents from the township as being unmotivated and being involved in criminal activities. Their educational aspirations appeared and were identified by themselves as a protective factor that played a role in their choice to partake in certain activities, what they consider low level risk-taking (drinking and partying), and their choice to abstain from riskier behaviour such as train surfing. The students who received greater positive feedback both at school and at home appear to avoid the path into delinquency and risk-taking behaviour. This suggested and provided evidence of alternative identities being constructed by the adolescents, a shift that was also evident in the adolescents' constructions of masculinity.

On the other hand, the adolescents spoke of the potential perpetuating factors that could lead an individual to engage in high-risk activities such as train surfing. Drawing on knowledge of a mutual peer that is a known train surfer, they spoke of how class, race and gender played influential parts in dropping out and eventual participation. External factors such as attending under-resourced schools, lack of exposure to career possibilities, acceptance by peers and demands at home left them in a position of having to straddle these apposing identities. Discussions around the possibility of taking up the role of breadwinner, if necessary, highlights the struggles that black adolescents still face today, when academia is sacrificed and demands at home change. The change in the families' socio-economic status leaves some of these adolescents with the possibility of having to drop out of school and look for a means of obtaining finance for their families, an acceptance of certain masculine practices within black cultures in the townships of Soweto. This is one of the gaps that was identified as being the one into which

train surfers fell. Despite distancing themselves from this way of reasoning, there was a subtle acknowledgment that self-doubt, ambivalence and low socio-economic circumstances led some to seek approval, companionship and risky situations. The ability to momentarily forget about the difficulties and gain acceptance and fame, through the use of drugs and staff riding, were also identified as reasons risk-takers sometimes tempted death.

The context of Soweto is one of great importance when thinking and attempting to understand young adolescents' involvement in train surfing. Historically, the train was used as a method of transporting blacks between the segregated areas during the time of apartheid. They were a source of jobs, and the main mode of connecting the disadvantaged areas to the rest of the country. The adolescents in the study perceived train surfing to be a specific performance of masculinity, having failed to sustain a particular level of dominance at school, as now the more academically inclined were no longer discriminated against, teased or marginalised, seeking their dominance elsewhere. This performance of hegemonic masculinity is identified as being aimed at other males and females. With relation to other males, this demonstration of physical strength, agility and fearlessness is a performance of a stereotypical masculinity that is associated with power, strength and dominance over others. With regard to the women, the partaking in train surfing was viewed by the adolescents as a way for the males and lesbian girls to express heterosexual masculinity. This behaviour was noted to be one that is rewarded by the girls in the community, through applause and admirations (actual and perceived).

This public display of bravado and risk-taking, however, seemed to overtly shine light on the fragile individuals who participate in it. These young males, and recently females, emboldened by drugs and spurred on by both males and females with promises of notoriety, and invigorated by the thrill of the speed and possible fatality, are young adolescents who view their lives as hopeless and worthy of gambling. The train surfers are part of a generation born with hope and increasing promises of post-apartheid South Africa. A hope for a brighter future for many within Soweto appears to have declined in the face of parental unemployment, poor education, and a lack of opportunities. Within Soweto, train surfing has become a framework in which Sowetan youths' social fabric is understood and re-negotiated.

As pointed out by Sedite at al. (2010), train surfing should not be "merely viewed as a momentary lethal thrill seeking performance that is fuelled by characteristic of a hegemonic

male" (p.588), but rather should be viewed and understood as a performance that represents the union of subjectivities built around gender, race, class and age. Accordingly, such factors need to be understood as a blueprint to maintain and sustain certain social views that eventually produce a gendered individual within a particular context, specifically within this study a train surfing male within the township of Soweto. Again, the researcher noticed a polarisation in the construction of train surfing among the adolescents; some referring to it as an 'activity', 'hobby' or 'sport', whist others described the phenomenon using symbols of addiction by associating it to other risky behaviour such as substance abuse and criminality.

Within the adolescents' construction was the marginalisation of adolescents who participated in this phenomenon, yet to construct a strong identity. Identity was understood as 'knowing who you are' and 'where you are going', and the construction inability was considered to be affected by the adolescents multiple difficulties. The majority of the students within the focus groups described themselves as coming from working class families, with a minority from lower economic status. It was through these discussions that the correlation between hardship and fatalism was encountered. Difficulties of maintaining a positive outlook when faced with great levels of hardship were examined and revealed a likeness to Soweto's 1970s' 'lost generation', a generation that was rendered unemployed due to a high school drop-out rate experienced during the struggles against the then apartheid regime. These train surfers were the now 'lost generation' that struggled to construct a more positive identity in the shadow of high HIV/AIDS deaths, high unemployment rates, and low socio-economic statuses. All of these factors are often associated in South Africa with black communities that make up townships such as Soweto.

Train surfing is not a new phenomenon in South Africa, but is only now receiving more media attention, and has become a public health concern with the growing number of injuries and fatalities. Given that the train was and is still seen as an instrument of apartheid control and as a vehicle of the under-class, the performance on this type of masculinity within this particular space is of great importance. These boys that have been marginalised by schools due to lower academic abilities, and by peers as they no longer have common goals such as academic achievement, leaving them seeking acceptance and support in alternative situations. The escapism associated with taking drugs fuels this fatalistic mind-set. When faced with no future

prospects and feeling that they no longer have control of their future these adolescents in limbo attempt to add some meaning to their lives through testing the limits placed on them by society, and do so by taking control of their bodies. This performance of masculinity is described by Sedite et al. (2010): "staff riding may be a performance of young urban black masculinity in the limbo that separates one platform from another on the railway networks that continue to divide poverty from possibility" (p.587).

The study illustrated that men are constantly required to prove their masculinity, and that race, class and gender have a great influence on how an adolescent constructs their identity and of others both inside and outside their environment. The internal complexities associated with a developing identity and the environment in which it is developing, at times resulting in different forms of masculinity. Two alternative emerging types of masculinity were identified, associated with bikers and drag-racers, characterised by ability and assumed wealth. Although the train surfers were recognised as demonstrating a higher level of risk-taking, in the form of bravery and agility, the bikers and dragsters encapsulated a more desired type of masculinity, what Alexandra (2003) termed 'branded masculinity', through its ability to generate insecurities in boys and men about their bodies and consumer choices. As a result of these insecurities, boys look to brands to shape their fashion sense and to meet the expectations of what is presumed to be required for middle class men within contemporary society. Here the competitive and materialistic dimension of masculinity, in addition to the importance of success, translated into a need to be seen as being better and more successful than others (material display of wealth). These ideas reflected the powerful influence of hegemonic discourse in the shaping of adolescents' perception of risk-takers such as the bikers, drag racers and train surfers.

The emergence of alternative masculinities results in unspoken rivalries between males, a hierarchy of masculinity. The most novel find of the study is how masculinity is now constructed by adolescents. With their aspirations of success and wealth they used the same factor to assess a man's masculinity. This construction connected both the more traditional and contemporary views of hegemonic masculinity. The bikers and the drag-racers were seen to be at the top of the masculinity hierarchy as they were able to both demonstrate physical strength or agility and are perceived as successful as they can purchase the vehicles and bikes needed to participate in their risk-taking behavior. These bikers and drag racers demonstrated a more capitalistic South Africa,

in which ownership of property propels one into a higher and more powerful position. This is in stark contrast to the equal opportunity society that the New South Africa promised. The train surfers fall to the bottom of the hierarchy, but were not as low as homosexuals, and were perceived as individuals without ambition or direction, another symbol of being in limbo. These train surfers, like other Sowetan adolescents, have aspirations of bettering their lives (moving away from poverty) and embracing the possibilities of success. However, they had fallen victim to the number of influencing factors such as class, race and gender. Being from a township that is woven with intergenerational poverty, a lack of resources, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, unemployment and criminality increases some adolescents vulnerability to partaking in risky behaviors such as train surfing. The feelings of helplessness propel them to seeking a sense of belonging and autonomy in risky situations. Their public display of masculinity allows them to enter the world of the 'in-crowd' and lessen the possibility of being discriminated further. Tempting death through taking control of their bodies is rewarded with applause and a feeling of invincibility, and this for them is perceived by their peers as a key marker in their constriction of masculinity.

By providing a space in which the phenomenon of train surfing could be understood from the perspective of adolescents, the research aimed to move away from viewing the behavior as a temporary lethal thrill seeking behavior or criminal act by revealing the complexities associated with constructing an identity within a context such as Soweto. Race, class and gender were revealed as factors that interacted in the maintaining and rejecting of certain societal views that are stake when defining identity within the urban context of Soweto. The study illustrated how race, class and culture played an influential role in the fluidity of identity and masculinity.

6.3 Implications for future studies

Apparent from the first stages of data collection were the complexities associated with adolescents' construction of their identity. Identity, as masculinity, was perceived as fluid and not rigid or fixed. This resulted in the adolescents seemingly consciously shifting from one position (identity) to another, dependent on the environment they found themselves in at the moment. It would be of interest to conduct a similar study with adolescents from different

townships, those with known train surfers and those without, to assess how the role of race, class and gender influence understanding of high risk behaviours and masculinity. It would also contribute to contemporary understanding of how class, gender and race intersect with identity within a transitioning context such as South Africa.

Contemporary literature and this research's findings have identified and confirmed the extreme risk factors associated with train surfing, thus it is of importance to find interventions that can help in the reducing of incidences. This research, alongside other previous studies such as Cohen (1988) and Sedite et al. (2010), has highlighted that train surfing in South Africa needs to be understood as a culturally historic specific performance of masculinity, thus a greater understanding of how train surfers themselves understand their practice is needed. Future research could look into the attitudes, perceptions, understandings and views of actual train surfers, thus eliminating the speculative nature of literature on train surfing.

Finally, the role of media on the influencing of identities, especially gender identities, appeared sporadically throughout the adolescents' discussions of social representations and constructions of gender. A shift in the constructions was noted by the adolescents, although there appeared to be a distancing from the non-conformist understandings and representations. School-based programmes that address the shifting constructions, representations and performances of identity would be beneficial in issues of tolerance and acceptance of differences.

6.4 Strengths and Limitations of Study

The selected method of investigation, focus groups, has been critical in unearthing the understandings and constructions of adolescents with regards to the growing phenomenon of train surfing. This methodology proved to be effective as the data provided by the participants was rich. The main limitation identified in the utilisation of focus groups from a singular school. The researcher recognises that the findings of the study are to a limited extent transferable as these are across all four groups (internal consistency). The limitation, however, is again recognised that these findings cannot be generalised to all black adolescents living in Soweto or all black adolescents. Subsequently, it is advised that care should be taken when these findings are taken into consideration for further studies or interventions.

An important limitation of the study was the researcher's subjectivity. While all attempts were made to ensure reflexivity throughout the research process, it is acknowledged that an active and vital role was played in the conceptualisation of the research, as well as in the data collection and data analysis. Because of the authority given when the research was conducting the study by the school heads, it may have made it difficult and to some extent uncomfortable for the respondents to honestly contribute to the discussions with the focus groups, and it was recognised that some of the participants might have been invested in presenting themselves in a particular way. The researcher was aware of this after the first focus group and ensured that within the remaining three focus groups all participants were made comfortable to ensure genuine responses.

The researcher's observations during the focus groups identify an additional limitation of this study during the focus groups. The researcher noticed that there were already established friendships and groupings of peers, and on topics such as peer activities the participants that knew each other or were friends would hold side conversations and encourage and support each other when making what they felt was a valid point of view. Thus, in the case of not already having established friendships they would remain silent. The researcher tried to limit the negative impact of this by encouraging the participants who seemed to be silenced by this dynamic, as well as breaking up the smaller conversations according whilst within the focus group setting.

Finally, the use of follow-up interviews after the focus groups could have proven to be beneficial in the unpacking of the understandings and construction identified within the focus groups that are used to construct masculinity and train surfing. However, given the context in which this study was conducted, this was not possible as the researcher was only given one morning to conduct all the focus groups.

This research has gone some way in unearthing the perceptions held by adolescents from Soweto of the growing phenomenon of train surfing. They identified possible reasons and factors that increase an individual's vulnerability to participate in such high risk behaviour. The study described how class, culture, gender, and masculinity were represented in the adolescents construction of train surfing. It was demonstrated by these adolescents that within the group of the socio-economically marginalised lay an additionally vulnerable group who find themselves

in a state of identity ‘limbo’. It is within this limbo that these adolescents, if not given the support and encouragement needed for a developing identity, turn to a life in which the act of ‘defiance’ gives meaning to their lives. These fragile train surfing men and women appear to cling on to a historical demonstration of masculinity, in the absence of a sense of power, not only over others, but of their own lives.

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APPENDIX A: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INFORMATION SHEET

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

To whom it may concern,

Hello, my name is Mapule Moroke and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a Master's degree in Community Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. My research aims to explore adolescents' view and opinions of train surfing (staff riding). More specifically, this study will explore adolescent's understanding of why some youth participate in such a dangerous phenomenon and how their understanding of this practice is informed by perceptions of youth identity and gender roles in the community.

I have gone through the Wits Ethical Clearance and would like to request permission to access schools within the Soweto area to conduct my research on train surfing.

Participation in the study will involve the students participating in focus group discussion of 1-2 hours, which will take place after school at the school premises. The focus group will discuss issues around being an adolescent in Soweto, adolescents and risk-taking and the issues of identity and masculinity. I would like to approach students in grades 11 and 12 for participation. Information collected from of a research report, and may also be written up in a journal article.

The individual's that express interest in participating will be given participant information sheets which will explain the study further, as well a consent form that would need to be filled in either by themselves .

All participants' responses will be kept confidential and no information identifying them or the school will be published in the research. An executive summary will be made available to your school after the completion of my study should your school require one, and a copy of the research report will be given to the Department of Education.

Should you grant me permission to conduct my study within your school; it would be appreciated if you could fax the attached consent form to 0865534913 for the attention of my Supervisor, Ms Tanya Graham confirming this. Should you require further information on the study please do not hesitate to contact myself or my supervisor.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

_____
Mapule Moroke

_____
Prof Tanya Graham
Supervisor

APPENDIX B: PRINCIPLE INFORMATION SHEET

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

Dear Principal

My name is Mapule Moroke and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a Master's degree in Community Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. My research aims to explore adolescents' view and opinions of train surfing (staff riding). More specifically, this study will explore adolescent's understanding of why some youth participate in such a dangerous phenomenon and how their understanding of this practice is informed by perceptions of youth identity and gender roles in the community.

I have requested permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to approach learners within the school and invite them to participate in the study, but would like to request your permission to access your school.

Participation in the study will involve the students participating in focus group discussion of 1- 2 hours, which will take place after school on school premises. The focus group will discuss issues around being an adolescent in Soweto, adolescents and risk-taking and the issues of gender and youth identity. I would like to approach students in grades 11 and 12 for participation. Information collected will form part of a research report, and may also be written up in a journal article or presented at a conference.

The individual's that express interest in participating will be given participant information sheets which will explain the study further, as well a consent form that would need to be filled. The information sheet will also make provide students with information on the locally available counselling services should the participants need to discuss any issues brought up in the groups in a more in-depth and personal level.

All participants' responses will be kept confidential and no information identifying them or the school will be published in the research. A copy of the dissertation will be made available to your school after the completion of my study should your school require one.

Should you grant me permission to conduct my study within your school; it would be appreciated if you could fax the attached consent form to 0865534913 for the attention of my supervisor, Ms Tanya Graham confirming this. Should you require further information on the study please do not hesitate to contact myself or my supervisor.

I look forward to hearing from you.
Yours Sincerely,

_____
Mapule Moroke

_____
Ms Tanya Graham
Supervisor

APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM





Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

I _____ give consent to Mapule Moroke to conduct her research at my school for her study on train surfing. I understand that:

- All participation of the learners will be voluntary
- No information that may identify the school or the teachers will be included in the research report, and all the parents responses will remain confidential
- Participants will be required to provide personal consent
- Participants consent to use direct quotations in the research write up will also be obtained

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION





Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

Hello, my name is Mapule Moroke. I am currently completing a Masters in Community-Counselling Psychology at the University of Witswatersrand. One of the requirements on the course involves completing a research project. My research is interested in your views about train surfing. I am interested in why some young people living in Soweto train surf, how they understand the risks and the benefits and the status that train surfing may give them. I am also interested in how other young, friends of train surfers and adults in Soweto understand the past time of train surfing and how this understanding informs identity and gender roles in the community.

I have requested permission from your school principle and the Gauteng Department of Education to approach learners within the school and invite them to participate in the study.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. Should you agree to participate, you will be required to participate in a group discussion of 1-2 hours with other school mates on identity, masculinity and risk-taking behaviour in adolescents. The focus groups will take place after school hours on the school premises. Information collected from the focus group will be analysed and written up in a journal article. With your permission, the focus groups will be video recorded to ensure accuracy of the data. Your identity will be kept strictly confidential and privacy will be assured. However, it should be noted that in the focus groups, due to the nature of a group, even though confidentiality will be discussed, it cannot be guaranteed by the other group members, although all group members will be requested to sign a confidentiality agreement. Nevertheless, no identifying information will be included in the research report. The data (transcripts and video recordings) will be stored in a safe and secure location within the psychology department with restricted access to only my supervisor and me. Video recording will be destroyed after the research report has been examined. Transcripts will be kept for two years should publications arise from the research and for five years if no publications arise.

No risks or benefits are anticipated for participating in the study. If you choose to participate in the study please will you fill in your details on the form below. Attached to this form you will find a form that requires you to obtain your parents' permission to participate in the study. This is only required if you are under the age of 18 years old. Please return all relevant forms to the researcher. Should you feel vulnerable after participating in the focus groups and feel the need to discuss any of the topics discussed in the focus group further please contact the following organisations within your area:

FAMSA **NICO**

Power Park, Orlando, Soweto

http://www.famsa.org.za

011 986 1020

LifeLine

0861 322 322

752 Elias Motsoaled Road, Mofolo South,Sowet

011 933 1301

Yours Sincerely,

_____ _____

Mapule Moroke Tanya Graham (Supervisor)

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FROM PARTICIPANT (FOCUS GROUP)

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

I have read and understood what this research involves and what is expected of me.

I understand the following:

- I may refuse to answer any questions that I feel are too uncomfortable to answer
- I may withdraw from the study at any time during the study and this decision will not be held against me
- Participation in the focus group discussions is completely voluntary and no information that may identify me will be included in the research report
- I am aware that the confidentiality of what is discussed and my anonymity cannot be guaranteed
- I agree to the use of direct quotes in the research report
- I am aware that there are no benefits for participation in this research
- This is a minimal risk study

I hereby consent to participate in this research project. Also give Mapule Moroke permission for my result to be used in the write up this study.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Contact Number: _____

APPENDIX F: RECORDING CONSENT FORM

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

I _____ consent to the focus group discussions with Mapule Moroke, in her study on the social construction of identity and masculinity and how this could explain the continued participation in train surfing (staff riding).

I understand that:

- The tapes and transcript will be kept in a safe and secure place at the University of the Witwatersrand
- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation other than the researcher and her supervisor, and will only be processed by them
- All tape recordings will be destroyed after the research in complete and qualification has been obtained
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report as the researcher will make use of pseudonymous in the identifying of the different participants.

I further give consent to the researcher, Mapule Moroke, to use direct quotes that will be stripped of any identifying information.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX G: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

I _____ agree to keep all information disclosure in this focus group confidentiality.

I understand that:

- Anything that is discussed during the focus group is to be used for research purposes only and therefore I will not disclose any of the information shared by the other participants.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX H: GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

- Participants to introduce themselves to the group. Introduction will include their names, age and grade.

BEING AN ADOLESCENT

- How does being a young black adolescent in Soweto mean?
- How is life different for male and female adolescents in Soweto?
- Who are your role models within the community?

ADOLESCENTS, RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOUR AND TRAIN SURFING

- What kind of behaviour do you consider risky behaviour?
- Are males still prone to participating in risk-taking behaviours more than females? Why?
- Do you know what train surfing is?
- What do you think of train surfing?
- Why do you think these adolescents participate in this practice?
- Are males or females more inclined to participate in train surfing?
- How popular is train surfing in your area?
- How does peer pressure play a role in train surfing?
- Why do you think they participate in this practice even though it is dangerous?
- What happens to people that train surf?

ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIOURS

- Some youth train surf, what kind of other activities are available to youth?
- Those that don't train surf, what other activities do they engage in?

- Would you consider train surfing a criminal act? Why?

REFLECTIONS

- How did you feel about the focus group?

- Are there any matters that you feel weren't discussed?

Appendix I: University of Witwatersrand Ethics Protocol Certificate

Appendix J: Department of Education Approval Letter