

Young women and the lived experience of political violence – perspectives from the civil war in KwaZulu-Natal

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ABSTRACT -----

This paper wishes to explore the gender relations between men and women who were ‘on the same side’ during a period of civil war. More precisely my research on the political violence in one small town in KwaZulu-Natal shows that United Democratic Front-aligned women, in particular young women, were exposed to the sexual violence that was part of the conflict. But the danger that they faced was not only from ‘the other side’ but also from the young men who were supposedly on their side. One of the interesting dynamics is that despite this reality and the threats and dangers they faced, these women continued to identify themselves with the UDF. Their political identities remained UDF even when the UDF ‘boys’ threatened them sexually.

Keywords: gender, political violence, South Africa, women

Over the past fifteen years or so reports on political conflict and civil war have exposed the added danger that women have faced from the ‘opposing side’. In the wake of the Bosnian conflict and the Rwandan genocide, amongst others, the rape of women has been recognised as an integral part of war and conflict. But what has not been so readily acknowledged is the way in which sexual violence and the rape of women have been used to discipline and enforce loyalty within political groups.

This paper explores the gender relations between men and women who were ‘on the same side’ during the political violence in KwaZulu-Natal during the mid-1980s. My research¹ on the political violence in one small town in KwaZulu-Natal (Mpumalanga Township, approximately 30 km west of central Durban (see Map 1) shows that United Democratic Front (UDF)-aligned women, in particular young women, were not protected from the sexual violence that was part of the conflict. However, the danger they faced was not only from ‘the other side’ but also from the young men who were on their side, supposedly protecting them from the enemy. Paradoxically despite the

¹ The research strategy involved the use of a variety of archival sources, existing violence databases and newspapers as well as ethnographic field research. However, this paper is primarily based on oral interviews. Focus-group interviews were held with twelve groups of older women during 1993 and 1994, eleven individual interviews were conducted with young women during 1999 and eleven key informant interviews were conducted between 1998 and 2003.

threats and dangers they faced, these women continued to see themselves as UDF. Their political identities remained UDF even when the UDF 'boys' threatened them sexually. Through an exploration of the way in which political identities were crafted during this conflict the paper attempts to understand why this was so. Why did women, themselves under threat from 'UDF boys' remain UDF?

The paper is divided into three sections. The first section provides a brief context to the political violence and a discussion on the modalities of the violence. The second section examines the shifting spatialities of the violence and in so doing explores the ways in which women were drawn into the political violence. It demonstrates how the modality of the political violence articulated with age and gender. The third section looks at the lived experiences of political violence. A particular focus of this section is the gender relations between the comrades and women living in their areas.

Political Violence in KwaZulu-Natal

1987 presented a clear rupture in the politics of Natal. From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, the province of Natal, South Africa was fractured by a low level civil war between supporters of two political groups. On the one side were Inkatha² and their supporters and on the other supporters of the African National Congress (ANC) aligned United Democratic Front (UDF).³ Prior to 1987 conflict in the region was not unknown. However, it had never previously reached this order in terms of deaths, arson and rape. Neither was the geography of the countryside politicised in the way that violence reterritorialised the province, turning areas into no-go zones for supporters of one or the other political grouping.

The political violence developed a distinctly spatial form (in combination with a gendered and generational form). There were differences within the province with some areas being more acutely affected than others. Furthermore, there were differences in temporality, with different places being affected at different times. But most distinctive was the form the violence took within these places. This form shifted over time, initially being between individuals and finally being about the pursuit of territory. The spaces of everyday life became reterritorialised. Borders were established marking clear boundaries between territories or areas controlled by one or other political group. The meaning of these spaces changed. They became singular, the only meaning with any significance being who controlled that territory. This had profound implications for residents and even for visitors.

Who were the actors in the political violence. An initial reading suggests that the violence was between those who were supporters of on the one hand, the UDF and, on the other, Inkatha. A second look reveals other, subtler, fault lines. An examination of the statistics of those killed and injured in the violence (see Aitchinson, 1989b)

² Launched in 1975 as a Zulu cultural movement Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe, Inkatha is now a political party, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) participating at all levels in the South African government structures (see Maré and Hamilton, 1987).

³ Launched in August 1983 the United Democratic Front was constituted as a broad front. It was loosely constituted thus allowing a range of organisations, including those that were non-political, for example church organisations, to affiliate. Its affiliates were diverse with no common policy although Charterist organisations were in the vanguard. They were bound simply by adherence to the struggle for a non-racial, unitary state and tactics of non-collaborationism (see Seekings 2000:49-51).

indicates that the majority were young and male. In effect, the political violence concealed a generational rupture. Township politics became the domain of youth organisations, and politics the sphere of young men. Older people, men in particular, were marginalised from local politics. When the young men brought their political stances into the domain of the household it unsettled the practice of *hlonipha*⁴ and consequently patriarchal relations.

The technologies of this violence were distinctive. Violence involved killing (first by stabbing and then by shooting), arson and rape. Initial reports indicated that the bodies that were found scattered around Natal's townships had numerous stab wounds. Soon, however, the press were reporting more and more incidents of death as a result of gunshot wounds. With the exception of the few areas known for faction fighting (eg Msinga) and *uqhwasha* (home-made guns), guns had not been a feature of conflict in the province. Reports of killings were soon accompanied by those of arson. The houses of those believed to support the opposing political group were torched. The inhabitants were often killed as they fled the burning house. This contributed to the spatialised form of the violence as in the wake of arson areas were cleansed of political opponents. The sexualisation of the violence resulted in many women being raped. Rape was a standard practice during many of the attacks on political opponents. Those (whether UDF or Inkatha) who protected their area expected young women to be sexually available on demand. The old ways of 'proposing love' vanished with the violence.

All African inhabitants of the province were assumed to have a political identity. They were either UDF or Inkatha. It was not possible to be politically neutral. Political violence reterritorialised the geography of the province. In the process these spaces acquired political meaning. Political identities were read off the place of residence of that person or their family. The spatial nature of the political conflict was a crucial element in the formation of political identities, with individual residents, households and entire neighbourhoods firmly identifying 'the other' whom they did not simply oppose politically but hated.

Mpumalanga Township

Mpumalanga township was built in the late 1960s. It was formally gazetted in 1972 and once the KwaZulu Homeland was established direct control of the township passed from Pretoria to the KwaZulu capital Ulundi. A township council, under the control of the Department of Community Affairs in Ulundi was established in 1976.

Mpumalanga had a vibrant and active cultural and political life. A number of different political and community organisations had established a membership in the township. Amongst these were Inkatha, which established a branch soon after its 1975 launch. The Mpumalanga Residents Association was involved in council and community

⁴ *Hlonipha*, which means 'respect' is a cultural practice central to Zulu identity/ies. *Ukuhlonipha* refers to the practice of granting respect either linguistically or performatively on the basis of age or status. Children are brought up with a strong emphasis on *ukuhlonipha abadala* (respect for adults), and on non-confrontational ways of disagreeing with adults. It should be noted that in *isiZulu* there is no distinction between the concept of 'elderliness' and that of 'adulthood', thus even somebody one-year older requires 'respect'. Furthermore, status does not only apply to social position but also to gender, all women were required to *hlonipha* all men. (See Dlamini, 1989:483-385)

politics. The Black Consciousness organisation the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) had launched a branch in Mpumalanga in the early 1980s and a large proportion of their membership were scholars belonging to the student wing the Azanian Students Movement (Azasm).⁵ The UDF-affiliate the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) had a small but lively presence in Mpumalanga schools. By the mid-1980s there was also a branch of another UDF-affiliate the Natal Organisation of Women (NOW). Other organisations like *oQondo* point to a dark side of life in Mpumalanga and to the fact that violence, albeit of a different form, predated the political violence of the late 1980s. They were a community-based group active in enforcing law and order. *oQonda* were primarily composed of older men, their job to patrol the streets and ensure that crime did not thrive in Mpumalanga.⁶ With the exception of the Natal Organisation of Women the membership of these organisations was primarily male.

Many residents remember life in pre-violence Mpumalanga as quiet. Neighbours were friendly and visitors and strangers could visit from many parts of the country, and were welcomed. It was possible to engage in cultural and sporting activities after school, and cultural activities like ball-room dancing were held in the community hall and it was safe to walk home afterwards. These descriptions and idealised memories do suggest there was free, easy and safe movement between Mpumalanga and the outside world as well as within Mpumalanga, and describe the accessibility of public space to all, regardless of age and gender.

Yet, as Fred Khumalo (2006) who grew up in Mpumalanga township during this time, describes in his autobiography, underlying this pleasant life was a strong undertow of violent masculinity. Youth gangs and sub-cultures flourished. Their membership was mostly male and their size and purpose varied. Some were about style and fashion (e.g. The American Dudes p. 110) but mostly there were criminal elements to these groups (e.g. *Amakwaitos* and *uMsingizane* p.82). Most boys carried knives and violent crime thrived (hence the need for *oQondo*). Gender relations were also edged with violence. Khumalo (2006:107-109) described the common practice of 'streamlining' (gang rape by men associated with her boyfriend).

Streamlining was a common practice, a form of "punishment". It wasn't considered rape. Rape was associated with physical violence and force. Streamlining was about control. A man must control his women. Girls could be streamlined for drinking, simply to teach them a lesson. And the girls never reported it. I suspect they felt no one would believe them, because

⁵ Azapo was a national political organisation, falling within the black consciousness tradition. It was founded in April 1978, the first organisation formed since the bannings of 'Black October' the previous year. They proclaimed their intention to focus on the black working class and saw trade unions as an instrument to 'redistribute power'. They recognised that some blacks would find it within their class interests to collaborate with the authorities (Lodge 1983:244-245).

⁶ From the late 1970s *qonda's* appeared in many townships in KwaZulu-Natal, composed of older men, they played a role between that of cultural enforcer of tradition and *hlonipha* and vigilante cleaning up the areas of petty criminals. Their almost simultaneous appearance in many townships throughout the province, and their links to township councillors led many to speculate that they had been organised by Inkatha. They were key in breaking the school boycotts of 1980 by forcing the children back to school. In 1986 members of the Durban Workers' Cultural Local workshopped and performed a play called *Qonda*, written by Mi Hlatshwayo, about the problems associated with *qondas* (see Von Kotze, 1988).

being streamlined stigmatised you. “Why did they do it to you, out of all the girls in the township? What wrong did you do? You must have asked for it!” (p.108)

The point Khumalo (2006:109) makes is how normative these practices were. He states that the young men who engaged in these practices came from solid church-going families, it wasn't only the gangsters and thugs.

Spatialities of Political Violence, Gender and Age

In 1979 Inkatha introduced *Ubuntu-botho*⁷ as a school subject in all KwaZulu schools. Interviews (Focus group discussion, Connie's group, Con1#1-2:2-3) have suggested that this was a key dynamic in the politicisation of school children. Those who were opposed to this compulsory education began to organise resistance and the schools became an important site in the development of a counter ideology to that of Inkatha. But it was only with the launch of the Hammarsdale Youth Congress (Hayco) in mid-1986, the majority of its small membership male scholars, that one saw overt resistance to Inkatha's strategies. Hayco's intention was to challenge Inkatha more robustly than had other political organisations, therefore it was not unexpected when Hayco and Inkatha youth were immediately combative. The schools became their battlefield.

Nonto⁸ arrived in Mpumalanga in 1986. She was from Swayimane and had come to live with her aunt and uncle as they were childless, and to continue her high school education. She described the atmosphere that she found in Mpumalanga.

... there was these small symptoms that there is something that is going to happen, or there is something that is going to take place. This unusual thing, even the atmosphere of the two politics, of the two political parties were not right. Because the main road has divided then. There was that small tension, north not going to south, south not going to north. When they meet [the] other they give the one the cold shoulder, not knowing what the hell's going on. Although they were not shooting each other, but there was that small tension. (Interview Nonto, Nond1#1-2:3)

As Nonto's comment illustrates the spatial differences were already evident prior to the severe ruptures of 1987. However, while there was a diffidence to places perceived 'to belong to' the other group, the firm boundaries of the post-87 period, as well as, the politicisation of those spaces was not evident.

The conflict escalated rapidly in early 1987. In February and March a number of prominent Hayco members were killed. Many of them were well known in their schools. Hayco soon retaliated killing Inkatha members. As a result of these attacks the Hayco leadership fled taking refuge in the nearby black township of Clermont. Around mid-July Hayco members returned to Mpumalanga in order to defend their families from attack (see below) and the violence resumed with even more ferocity.

As places where youth from all sides met the schools were the first battlefields. It was here that both sides tried to recruit members to their respective organisations. Later they served as conscription points for the armies of thugs that would carry out attacks,

⁷ According to Mdluli (1987:61) a key factor in the introduction of *ubuntu-botho* was student resistance in urban schools in the mid-late 1970s. *Ubuntu-botho* was part of Inkatha's ideological strategy to 'control youth who had rebelled against parental authority'.

⁸ Names have been changed to protect the true identities of participants. Nonto is the name given to interviewee NL1.

and they were easy picking grounds in the campaign to eliminate those of the opposing political group. Thembi⁹ was living with her family in unit four at the time the violence started. She had just started high school (standard six) at Ukuza High School in unit one south.

... Usually wars start at school. Okay, the UDF and Inkatha sometimes schooling, because I can say it was [unit] one north and [unit] one south they used to meet at the point, the point was school. They used to fight, the other members who were around [the area] there if they were UDF or Inkatha they come to help their party. There war broke out and then the school was closed at the time. Teachers and others evacuate. Others were killed there at schools. Sometimes at school, I see cars parking outside the gate. Then guys coming with the guns, coming to the class without talking to the principal or the teacher, sometimes the teacher is busy on the board writing some notes or explaining something to peoples, they used to come to the class and say 'you guys, you come here'. No other way round for you. Must go to them. Either they killed you, or they take you and kidnap you. (Interview Thembi, Tha1#1-2:12)

The stories of many of the young women I interviewed are similar. Central to their narratives are attempts by members of both Hayco and Inkatha to recruit the male youth to their organisations. Alongside these recruitment attempts were attacks at the school premises on members of the other political group and those seen to be supporting them. Dudu¹⁰ lived in Geordedale and attended the high school in the area. She described the situation at her school.

It all started in 1987, it was 1987 I was doing standard seven at that time. At Amatshezu High School. It all started there. I can say at Geordedale ... the youth started as Inkatha. ... they jump at ANC. So that is where the violence start. The youth of Inkatha usually came at school, maybe at this time [11.00ish] or early in the morning and search for the boys who were wearing t-shirts, maybe written by the ANC leader or what-you-call yes, and there's another thing. If they wear tackies there are tackies that were used by *amaquabane*, I can say that. ... They were *mbotiba*, they call them *mbotiba*, they black and white. So if you are wearing those tackies that mean you are an ANC. They came at school and they took them [the boys] by force. (Interview Dudu, Dud1#1-2:2)

Nonto¹¹ attended Ukuza High School in unit one south. She recounted her experience.

... It was [al]right in 1986 but in 1987 yes things changed. Because it happened when we were in the classes, it was about nine to ten [o'clock], before break when we were still sitting in the classes. We see the crowd of people coming in at the gate, we do not know what they want, they were saying slogans, they get in the classroom, they took one of our students, they go out with him, they stab dozens of time, stabbing dozens of time [at the school?] inside the school. And we drop out of windows, screaming and crying, running away. And that boy died at school in front of our eyes. The way the blood goes like a river. And there after teachers close the office, lock themselves, others crying, that crowd comes out without saying anything. (Interview Nonto, Nond1#1-2:4)

In telling these stories of their first encounters with the political violence, many of the young women recounted events quite matter-of-factly. They talked about these and other very brutal events with little emotion. This was in contrast to the older women who had expressed intense anger and sadness at how they had suffered at the hands of Inkatha.¹² But all of them (young and old) voiced confusion at what was happening.

⁹ Thembi is the name given to interviewee TN1.

¹⁰ Dudu is the name given to interviewee DM.

¹¹ Nonto is the name given to interviewee NL1.

¹² I suspect the different responses had to do with the different times at which these groups were interviewed. At the time of the focus-group interviews with the older women the violence was still very

Most of them were politically unaware and they didn't understand what had led to this violent turn of events, which made it even more difficult for them to respond, at the time, in any coherent way. The young women described being terrified by the events they were witnessing. For most of them, their immediate response was to run away from the scene, screaming and crying. Many of them talked about being too frightened to return to school. Mbali pleaded with her mother to stay home from school as she didn't know when she might be 'pointed out' (Mba1#1-3:3).

Initially the assassinations and fighting were between known and self-acknowledged members of UDF and Inkatha. Both organisations were determined to recruit members to their cause. In this atmosphere of intimidation and recruitment pressure was exerted, by both sides, on all male youth to declare a political allegiance. Failure to do so led to the conclusion that you were aligned to the other side and therefore needed to be eliminated. Many boys did become involved, and most of the young women I interviewed spoke of older brothers or cousins who were known as comrades (or Inkatha as the case may be) (see interviews: Phumzile,¹³ Dudu, Thando, Nomvula, Nonto, Thembu, Thoko,¹⁴ Mbali, Phumla¹⁵). However, not all boys were eager to become involved and others did so only to protect themselves or their families. Dudu explained how her older brother, who was later killed in the violence, became involved with the comrades.

... He wasn't active that much, he was forced by the youth. Because they know him, because he was a familiar boy. He was playing soccer so it was easier to take him. And my mother was so frustrated about that but nothing that we do was going to do, so he was forced to go there because if he doesn't we were going to be attacked at home, all of us. [Attacked] as Inkatha if he's not going there. Although he was an ANC. (Interview Dudu, 1#1-2:5)

Mbali gave a similar story about her two brothers involvement with the IFP.

.. fortunately they didn't burn my home because my brothers, they were scared of them, they just went with them and they said 'Ja, IFP too'. Because they just want to survive. (Interview Mbali, Mba1#1-3:5)

At first the violence only involved the male youth. They were expected to have a political allegiance and neutrality was not tolerated. Female youth, children and adults were excluded from this struggle for political allegiance.

When the violence starts, they were dealing with boys, they just don't recognise girls. (Interview Mbali, 1#1-3:9)

Nonetheless, girls were not excluded for long. They were not expected to be involved in fighting but they were expected to declare and show their loyalty either to the comrades or Inkatha. Phumzile lived in unit three and attended school in unit four. She was a member of the school choir; they used to meet after school to practice. However, all choir members came under increasing pressure to attend UDF meetings instead. This pressure didn't only come from the comrades but also from male members of the choir.

fresh and the effects and impact still very close to their daily lives. The older women talked about those close to them who had been killed but they also mentioned the very real deprivation they were suffering as a result of having lost houses and material goods during the violence.

¹³ Phumzile is the name given to interviewee PM1.

¹⁴ Thoko is the name given to interviewee TN2.

¹⁵ Phumla is the name given to interviewee PM2

... [they were saying that] they would prefer for us to go there [to the UDF meeting] like, I mean, boys. Boys they would like us to go because they too, they were like ANC's, I mean, members. So they used to say like, 'let's go there'. (Interview Phumzile, p.5)

Nonto remembers being told by three boys that there were 'not happy' as they did not 'understand me what politically am I'. They then questioned her, asking her about the political affiliation of her family at home in Swayimane. She informed them that the need to either belong to different parties or to declare loyalty to one of them was unknown in rural areas and that her family did not belong to any party. They indicated that they would investigate the truth of her statement, and then turned their attention to her beliefs.

They ask me, 'do you like UDF? What do you say?' ... There was going to be a meeting at community hall. So they told me that if you are a real, real UDF member we are going to be with you to that meeting. Then I say, 'ok I will be there. Fortunately I will try by all means to be there'. Then I think they were satisfied. Because from that [time] onwards they don't have any problems. We just talking, brothers and sisters. (Interview Nonto, Nond#1-2:10)

Initially the discussions about political allegiance and membership was restricted to the high schools. But it was not long (a matter of months) before the need to declare a political allegiance affected all children at school no matter their age. Mbali was in standard one (grade three) and ten years old in 1985¹⁶ when she first remembers violence starting. She attended a lower primary school in unit three. She remembers youths of sixteen and seventeen coming into the school and raping young female teachers in front of the children (Interview Mbali, Mbal1#1-2:4).

It was this random uncertainty to the violence that caused Mbali to ask her mother if she could drop out of school for a while; ultimately she ended up missing two years of schooling. She explained that everyone was terrified of these youth (she is talking about the Inkatha-linked youth) who carried knobkerries, guns and knives. Their brutality silenced any opposition as scholars were too afraid to draw any attention to themselves. Their only response was to run away. They received help from no quarter. The police who were meant to protect them were complicit. Any attempts to report the actions of these youths were interpreted to mean that you were an UDF-supporter. Most parents were just as terrified and instructed them to be quiet.¹⁷ This feeling of utter helplessness in the face of such terror, perhaps helps to explain the warm reception and support given to the 'UDF boys' when they 'returned from Pinetown' to fight Inkatha (see below).

Mbali explained that even though the violence started amongst older youth as younger children they were soon embroiled in the stories of allegiances.

... other children were very clever then, because most of them were older than us. Like children who were doing standard one, standard two, they were older because most of them were fourteen years, fifteen years. They just see what is going on, and they just came to our

¹⁶ Recollection of dates and ages is a problem here. Working from the date of birth she was indeed ten in 1985, however there is little other evidence to support her claim that violence in the schools was evident at this time.

¹⁷ Parents did have different strategies, particularly if they were politicised. One woman who was a NOW member visited a lawyer and got an interdict (not that it helped), others became more involved with assisting the comrades.

classes, the lower classes, and they will ask us one-by-one, 'do you belong to ANC or IFP?' Maybe you just shut your mouth first. What are you going to say? And because our parents told us at home, we must say we are nothing. And you say, 'no, I don't know what's happening. I'm nothing. At home we are nothing'. And maybe one of them will say, 'no, you are just lying. I know you. I saw your brother in a group of ANC. You are an ANC'. Then you cry because you say, 'no, I don't know. My brother is not an ANC'. 'Oh, if he is not an ANC, he is an IFP'. And you say, 'no, he is not an IFP, he is nothing'. And they say, 'no, you are lying. We will come at your home today, tonight, and I will tell my brother to burn your house'. Then you go home crying. 'Why are you crying?' You just tell them why am I crying, and they'll say, 'oh. Because you are not safe whether that child, that particular child will tell their brothers'. So my parents start to pack things that we will need and just run away to hide because we don't know whether they will come or not. (Interview Mballi: Mbal1#1-3:6)

In the process of the organisation of schoolboys into political gangs, attacks on pupils at school, and the defence of those schools, the schools themselves began to acquire a political identity. On the one hand this identity was synonymous with the political affiliation of the dominant group at that school. But soon the identity of the school and thus its pupils became aligned with that of the unit in which it was located. If a pupil lived in an area with a different political affiliation they were forced to leave that school and find another place to study.

... if the school is dominated by the ANC, everyone should be ANC because if you are not you being killed, even ladies. (Interview Dudu, Dud1#1-2:4)

This situation was particularly difficult for scholars living in Inkatha areas. There were no high schools in unit one north,¹⁸ and it became impossible for those scholars to continue with their high school education. The process of identity-making was used by youth to dismiss the authority of teachers. School pupils disobeyed school rules and disregarded the voices of their teachers. If teachers did attempt to impose discipline on the pupils this was taken as a sign that they belonged to the other side, leaving the teachers open to physical assault, rape or death.

These stories illustrate a number of dynamics significant to the broader argument. There was a small group of highly politicised male youth in Mpumalanga. On the one side were members of Inkatha, and, on the other side were those sympathetic to the ANC and charterist politics. As the conflict, which included the killing of opponents escalated, these youth began demanding political support of other male youths. This involved significant coercion and intimidation. These events sowed intense fear and confusion amongst many of the young women. With no protection or support from teachers or police, they adopted different survival strategies. Some attempted to evade involvement through 'ducking-and-diving'. The response of others was clearly performative, yet as time went on and the conflict intensified, their involvement with the youth and the violent politics of the day seemed to shift and deepen their political affiliation and identity.¹⁹

In these early days, this process was confined to male youth. But within a few months, young girls were also being asked to declare 'their politics'. Thus, the demands of

¹⁸ This was one of the main Inkatha areas. In fact, Inkatha was concentrated in two areas, unit one north and unit four.

¹⁹ In particular I am thinking of the stories of Mballi (whose brothers did initially become deeply involved with Inkatha), Thembi and Dudu.

political identity began to cross the gender boundary. Yet, as many of the young women indicated, their response was also performative – they attended the meetings in order to placate ‘the boys’ and protect themselves. As young men were being killed, parents began to be concerned. In order to obtain assistance they made contact with the UDF, both through this assistance and the behaviour of Inkatha youth, they began to align themselves with the UDF.

As a result of this worsening situation most schools in Mpumalanga closed for the rest of 1987 and education was disrupted. Perhaps, the authorities hoped that by closing the schools the violence would abate. Paradoxically it allowed the violence to escalate as it gave the youth the free time to continue to organise and fight each other.

... no more school. Because we, the crowd for UDF by that time coming together and saying no we are going to pay, we are going to revenge, we are going to do what they do. So the tension was very very very strong because here in school, both parties were inside in the school. (Interview Nonto, Nond1#1-2:5)

By mid 1987 violence was no longer confined to ‘boys’ in the schools or on the streets. Youth now went looking for those they wanted to kill at their homes and in the streets. At first they only looked for the particular person but when they did not find the boy they wanted the other members of the household came under attack. In the process the entire household was tarred with the same political brush.

... when Duma’s house was attacked they demanded the child of the house, the child ran away because he didn’t want to join them, ... They came again to Duma’s place looking for his child, when they arrived the child had ran away again, they told him that he was to die in the place of the child because he hid his child. It continued like that. (Focus group interview, Edi1#1-2:1-2)

The families of these youth were seen to share their political affiliations and the household became the target.

... it’s how we were divided, that it was known that here we were identified that when my child go out to help Inkatha that means I am in the Inkatha, and my child runs away that means that I am ANC member ... (Focus group interview, Edith’s group, Edi1#1-2:7)

For many older women their knowledge about the conflict came through their role as mothers. A young man brought home the political identity he had acquired in the schoolyard and/or street, and the entire household was judged to share it, making all its members vulnerable to attack. Mrs A who was from unit one south described her situation.

... my children were involved in the structure called UDF which I didn’t even know what it meant ... so then there was this mobilisation from ... this person who wanted to go into the intersection where some other road comes to the location, so they went there to sort of block the UDF from coming into the area. My children did not go there and that is where the whole discrimination began. And then we were attacked. Saying that my children are comrades. (Focus group interview: Connie’s Friends, Fri1#1-2:1-2).

The intrusion of such political stances, brought by the youth into the domestic space of the household, also unsettled the practice of *hlonipha* and patriarchal gender relations. Many parents, in particular fathers, were indignant that youths should be defining the politics of the household. Thoko explained the situation in her family. All the family, except her elder brother, supported Inkatha. This caused divisions amongst her family.

They were forced to flee their home as other Inkatha supporters labelled them UDF and their house was fire-bombed. While her mother was inclined to support her elder son, her father was angry with him.

... father stick to the point that you are wrong, don't do that because you sell us. They are going to kill you on your side. (Interview Thoko, Tsh1#1-2:8)

In an attempt to escape the wrath of their fathers and/or protect the household many young men fled the township, but this did not necessarily secure the safety of their families. Instead when the house and its remaining residents were attacked, the women were often raped. In these cases the attacks on women were a direct product of their relationship to men – as mothers, wives or sisters. For many older women these attacks were their first knowledge of the violence.

The ways in which political violence affected men/boys and women/girls was different. These differences were seen not only in its time-frame but also in its modality. Sexual violence and rape against women became a feature of many of these attacks. Most of those interviewed described a situation where rape was commonplace.

... those IFP people, they attack us. ... because they said they were looking for him,²⁰ 'you're going to give us the information'. So now we had to run in the middle of the night. They went there to rape us too and even by the time they hit my grandmother. And my grandmother did not want them to take us, because they want to rape us. So they hit her with a sjambok in the head, and my grandmother falled. By that time, the policemen flash light all over the area, then they ran away. (Interview: Thando, Tho1#1-2:17)

... first they come to grab boys and leave the women and the children as the time goes on they change their minds. What they are doing now, they get in the house and grab the girls, not the women, they grab the girls and stay with the girls. Who is going to disturb? Who is going to stop because once you open your mouth you be found six feet underground. Once you open your mouth, you close your eyes. They take the girls and go with them to the camp. (Interview: Nonto, Nond1#1-2:6)

At the time when Inkatha raped our children had run away to Pinetown. That is why they came back from Pinetown to defend. Because they heard that their mothers were being raped, houses burnt and their fathers killed. (Focus group interview: Mrs Mthembu's group, Mth2#1-3:27)

Other stories give greater prominence to the site of the household and place the role of women more at centre-stage. They tell how women came to be making major decisions themselves, the consequences of which would put them and their households into conflict with Inkatha. In most cases these decisions involved their authority as mother: refusing to allow their daughters to be dragooned into becoming Inkatha camp-followers providing sexual services to their fighters, or questioning the activities of Inkatha and in the process being labelled UDF.

When violence began it started by the emergence of a group that called itself Inkatha Freedom. This group took young ones from as young as twelve years, both girls and boys at night. They organised meetings, which took up late at night. We, the people who had grown up in this area and knew the policy of our fathers, did not agree with this. Then our children were labelled as comrades. Inkatha also started making demands for donations. It was not clear what the donations would be used for. Because I was very sceptical about all these

²⁰ This refers to her other grandfather who fled an IFP area; he had been staying with them.

things, I would ask them what the demands are for. They started to victimise me. I was the first of all the others. ... (Focus group interview: Mrs Mkhize's group, Mkh2#1-3:7-8)

Now our children were meant to have sex with them [Inkatha]. If you tried to refuse they asked you, 'how do you think the boys would enjoy themselves?' We, mothers, all of us refused this, [and] we hated it. They then started attacking houses. They would smash windows, and break everything up. They would beat everyone up and rape the girls and leave chaos in the house. (Focus group interview: Mrs Mkhize's group, Mkh2#1-3:14-15)

One day they came, a guy from KwaMajola and said that he is asking for boys. That guy is Inkatha. They said there was going to be a meeting at the school at night. Then I told this boy to talk with their father, I will not talk anything. This boy said he does not care about their father but he is telling me. This boy left running. My husband arrived he tried to find out about this thing. He looked at this thing and he found that it was okay. This boy who has passed away used to school there.²¹ Then they attended this meeting. After that they were always 'on the way'.²² They will go to many places maybe they will be taken to iNkandla. Until I received a message saying that I must stop my children from taking these trips. It was said it is better for children to study at home than to be always travelling. Then I stopped my children. When I had stopped them, people started shouting at me again. Even when they go to the shop, they will point them with guns. (Focus group interview: Connie's friends group, Fri1#1-2:13-14)²³

Paradoxically, the withdrawal by UDF-aligned youths from these spaces had made them more vulnerable to attack. It was the early period, before UDF-aligned youths returned to take control of their neighbourhoods, which many women describe as the time of greatest chaos and most frequent rape. It was in an attempt to protect their households from such attacks that the young men returned from 'exile'.

Many, many boys ran away [from] there. ... So that's why they just phone their families, to know what is happening there. And their families tell them that, 'no, its worse now'. ... after that those boys who ran away came back to help those, to help those boys who were fighting with the Inkatha. (Interview Mbali, Mba1#1-3:8)

Now because they are being killed they have [to] ran away. They started coming back. And the all came back. They were kept by Archie [Gumede] in Clermont. They came back hot as chillies, ready to fight. (Focus group interview: Connie's Friends, Fri2#1-2:32)

Many viewed these 'boys' as heroic rescuers. They returned from the relative safety of Clermont in order to protect their communities. This discourse of the 'boys' was particularly significant when older women discussed the events of that time. When reflecting upon the sense of confusion that existed amongst ordinary residents during this time, one can understand how and why many in the community welcomed them back, and ultimately, despite the excesses of the comrades, saw them as protectors (see below).

²¹ Mrs C had already lost her eldest son; he had been shot dead by a neighbour's son (linked to Inkatha), after the family ignored a warning to leave the area.

²² Direct translation, it means 'travelling around'.

²³ Mrs C's story is one of intense harassment. After this incident, the family was subject to constant police visits; her remaining son was detained by the police on many occasions. Her husband was not able to attend work regularly as he was staying at home to guard the family. One morning while on his way to work, her husband was followed by a car containing Nkheli and some of his boys, he was shot dead a short distance from their house. She continued to be harassed by both police and 'Inkatha boys', until the UDF took control of her area. She broke down crying many times while telling this story, saying her heart is still sore at the lose of her husband and son. After a while, we terminated the interview, saying we would return another day.

Groups of male youths located themselves in abandoned houses or moved into households near the border. Their job was to secure these boundaries, to watch out for and repulse attacks from Inkatha, and to attack Inkatha in turn.

It is not that our group was clean, honest and glorious. Because of their being abused. There are other parents who fail to control their children. Down here near my house there are burnt Inkatha houses. These children, it was them who were initially attacked by Inkatha, and they also lost their heads and they wanted to revenge now. (Focus group interview Connie's Friends group, Fri2#1-2:22-23)

Through these battles, the violence began to redefine the geography of the area. Mbali, who lived in unit three and six, both ultimately UDF-areas, described this process.

... But people who were IFP, they saw that, 'no, here we have no chances. So we'd better move somewhere, because now they killed us'. ... [Was there a big battle or was it just slowly that they moved out?] Just slowly. Their families just ran, they went. I would just see, we just saw trucks. Then they put their things there and just went. But not the same day, ... Some of them will go on Monday, some of them go on Tuesday, but it only took a month, just went within a month. (Interview Mbali, Mba1#2-3:1)

The process of 'cleansing' an area was fluid and contested for some time. The streets also became dangerous and unsafe places. Walking along the streets meant being vulnerable to attack.

Going to places was non-existent, because if you go you had to be careful that you are really protected because groups were in all the streets. (Focus group interview: Connie's friends, Fri2#1-2:1)

Gender and age impacted on the way in which different groups managed their access to the unsafe space of the street. Groups of mostly male youth gathered on street corners, ready to accost and attack those suspected of supporting the other party. They challenged the right of others to refuse them access to the streets, observed and challenged passers-by, and called on girls for sex. Boys across the political divide expected girls to be sexually available on demand. Reluctantly many girls acquiesced, concerned about the effect of a refusal on the safety of the family at home.

I was so scared to go outside ... I was so scared, because once we were getting outside, you were having a problem with the guys. Maybe they come to you and talk about things to you. Maybe some of them touch you, you see. And some often rape you. (Interview: Phumzile, PM1:1).

Thus, the street became reconstructed as a site of masculine power, whether it was an area controlled by the UDF or Inkatha (or the police who also moved across these spaces). Boys – whether Inkatha or UDF – patrolled and guarded the street, challenged strangers to declare their politics, and asserted their gender power by proposing or abducting young women and raping them. As masculine protectors of this space they protected the houses from attack, and guarded the integrity of women – albeit selectively – by escorting them to and from potentially unsafe places as well as running errands.

Our brothers went to our school to guard us, they were security. They just did look after us, ... go with us to school. ... they just quit school and just surrender to guide us as their young sisters. (Interview Mbali, pp.9-11)

Xaba (2001:109) suggests that ‘struggle masculinity’, characterised by its anti-authority stance (implicit here is opposition to patriarchal authority), opposition to apartheid and political militancy, coexisted with a street-gang *tsotsi* masculinity he calls ‘street masculinity’ which was ‘disparaging towards women’. Thus, he argues struggle masculinity also incorporated these ‘negative attitudes and behaviours towards women’. Yet, the discussion of pre-violence township life illustrates that these ‘negative attitudes and behaviours’, which included coercive sex and rape (including gang-rape) were more deeply embedded in township masculine culture than the allusion to their roots in street masculinity suggests. Xaba’s discussion of ‘struggle masculinity’ doesn’t seem to take into account the excesses and extremities of the political violence itself on the construction of these masculinities. The effects of these excesses were acknowledged by the young women interviewed.

It changed the boys in so many ways. They became wild animals. Even my brothers I was scared of them. The way they were. They became the wild animals and they just wanted to kill. If they are together, they were talking about ‘who are we going to kill today?’ And ‘when are we going to burn that house?’ ‘Which unit are we going to kill people who are Inkatha?’ Things like that, always they were just talking about killing, killing. So we were scared of them because we thought maybe they would kill even us. The way they were talking about killing. They were just wild animals. They didn’t even bath their bodies; they were just dirty and stink, all things like that. They were just like wild animals. Always talking about killing, killing. So, we were just scared of them because they were just like wild animals. Ja. So I can say the violence changed them. Because if there were no violence, they would be not like wild animals. They will be maybe good boys going to school, educated, whatever. But the violence came over them. It changed them. Changed them to be wild animals because they will kill. Ja. Always there was just a smell of blood everywhere. (Interview, Mbali, Mba1#2-3:9)

Generational differences undercut women’s relationship to the comrades. Young women had to cope with the demands for sexual favours from the comrades, but this was not the case with older women. Political violence turned generational relations upside-down. Regardless of their politics, many older women experienced the youth as ‘disrespectful’.

And people! And now this disturbance between the parents and the children during the time of violence, violence made the children aware of that the parent is nothing, he or she is not clever, the one who is clever is the child. (Focus group interview, Mrs Thusi’s house, Thu1#1-3:21)

Another woman who was herself politically active through her participation in NOW and whose children were comrades said,

In a way I always say that we were lucky because if we talk to these children [in my area] they listen, if we go to the rallies children smoke dagga, if you discipline them they get shocked because they are not used of being discipline[d] by old people. Old people are now afraid of children. (Focus group interview Connie’s friends, Fri2#1-2:31)

Nevertheless, the comrades were not a homogenous group. On the one hand, there were the well-disciplined comrades with an unambiguous and developed ideological commitment to political change and social justice. But, as time went on, these young men became few and far between. It was more likely that these comrades were in the leadership, having been amongst the founders of youth movements. A year or more into the ‘civil war’, many of these young men were either dead, gone into exile or detained, depriving the comrades movement of its political and moral leadership. While the UDF-youth leadership did try to discipline youth who raped and abused women

(Interviews Buthelezi, BB1#1-1; Thembi, Tha1#2-2:3; Mandisa, MN:7-8) this did not always happen. Due to the chaotic situation, there weren't tight organisational structures amongst the comrades and they operated as small independent and spatially dispersed groups, making such discipline both random and difficult to implement.²⁴ Mbali (see above) spoke about the effect of the excesses of violence on the psyche of those involved; and these excesses played themselves out in a number of ways, further distorting and exaggerating the already existing, frequently violent, patriarchal relationships between men and women. Others, amongst the comrades, were *com-tsotsis*. While the *com-tsotsis* fought Inkatha, they also used the generally chaotic situation as a cover for criminal activities. Many of the more politically disciplined comrades viewed those who raped women and stole goods as *com-tsotsis*. Other residents distinguished between the comrades and the *com-tsotsis* and attributed the excesses to the later.

The *com-tsotsis* were came at home and asking impossible things. Unnecessary. Unnecessary things and you say no, its not the way now, they are abusing you now. Maybe sometimes they will come and ask money that you didn't know [about]. So, they came even at night, whereas the comrades they didn't do that, at night it was not safe to open for the people whom you don't know. So they came at night say we want this, we want this. Maybe they will, sometimes they will knock and say we are comrades, maybe they want your TV or your radio or your what they will take it. They were *tsotsis* ... (Interview Dudu, Dud1#2-2:1)

When the leader of the ANC punished them, they leave that party and they form *com-tsotsis* ... It was the *com-tsotsis* [who were raping]. Because they don't like discipline. If you discipline them they form that groups. They think you're not working with them. Now they form their groups, called the *amacom-tsotsis*. I don't think they [UDF comrades] are raping. I don't know so. Don't think so. Because they know discipline. (Interview Mandisa, MN:7-8)

Violence crossed the gender boundary before the generational boundary. Mbali explained why after they had slept away from their house, it was their granny who would go back to check if it was safe for the family to return.

... they didn't recognise grannies or grandpas. They were dealing with youth, like my mother. My mother, I can say she was still young then because I think she was 25 or 26 then. But she was, she belonged to youth. So that's why we used to tell my Grandmother to go and check there what had happened, because they just don't recognise them, Ja. They were dealing with youth. Ja. (Interview Mbali: Mbal1#1-3:7)

But as political violence began to reterritorialise the space of the household and the street the number of attacks on older people increased.

In Mpumalanga Township, as in much of KwaZulu-Natal space was reterritorialised by political violence. In this process, the meaning of places was fixed, resting on a fixed and singular identity – the political affiliation and identity of its inhabitants. The creation of such identities was about closure, about the marking, creating and finally the sealing of the boundaries that divided one political space from another. This involved a process of cleansing. Those who did not, or we not seen to, share and support the political beliefs of the area had to leave. As the violence entered the third spatiality – the reterritorialisation of space - so it became impossible to reside in an area that was seen as having a different political identity to your particular household.

²⁴ Sitas (1992:632) also alludes to the loose 'fragmented' organisational structure of the comrades movement. But he doesn't distinguish between the comrades and the *com-tsotsis*.

Many families received threats informing them that unless they moved they would be attacked and killed. These threats were frequently but not exclusively linked to the active political involvement of a male member of the family. Phumla who lived in unit three explained that it was her elder brother's involvement in the UDF that led to her family having to flee²⁵.

The belief that the male youth defined the political identity of the family was paramount. Another informant (interview, Thoko, Tsh1#1-2) located within an Inkatha area told a very similar story. The entire family believed themselves to be Inkatha supporters yet because her brother was a comrade they were forced to flee their home.

The redefinition of places as either Inkatha or UDF areas meant that no family or person could avoid assuming the political identity of that place. It did not help for households to remain aloof from the political divisions and affiliations that were happening around them. Some families thought that by avoiding contact with either political party they would be left alone and their safety assured. However, neither group allowed such a situation. If one or the other group did not see that a member of the household was actively supporting them they presumed they supported the other party. Many informants (Interviews Thoko, Mandisa, Dudu) told stories of the impossibility of trying to remain neutral, and the difficulty that young men in particular faced if they wished to avoid being involved in the fighting. Ultimately they all had to either actively support the dominant group in their area or leave.

Many people moved and/or lost their houses because of this. Mandisa²⁶ (Interview Mandisa, MN:4) indicated that her family moved from unit one south (a UDF area) to unit one north (an Inkatha area) in 1987. Her mother was an Inkatha member and they moved to one north 'because I'm safe when I'm in there'. Dudu said that as the ANC became stronger in Geordedale so Inkatha supporters were forced to run away 'to the Inkatha place where the Inkatha is lives there' (Interview: Dudu, Dud1#1-2:6). Mrs T moved from an Inkatha area to a UDF area, 'I said to myself, 'no, it is not good for me to stay on that side', as I knew what organisation I was.' (Focus group interview Mthembu's group, Mth2#1-3:8)

In the process of the violence shifting to its third spatiality – that of capturing territory the political identity of individuals and households was becoming synonymous with the area in which the household was located. Mpumalanga township divided up as follows unit one north, and sections of units four and six and Woody Glen were Inkatha areas. All those who lived there acquired the political identity of Inkatha. Units one south, two south, three, sections of unit four and six and Geordedale were controlled by UDF.

²⁵ He had become politically active and was known as a UDF comrade. Early one morning they found a letter under their front door warning them they should leave the area as Inkatha is looking for him. The letter said that if they come to the house and he was not there then they would kill the rest of the family. Her mother immediately took the other children and fled to her sister in unit four. Her brother asked some of his comrades to stay with him in the house. Inkatha did not attack and after a few days the other youth left. But Inkatha youth saw her brother in the street and shot at him, badly injuring his hand. Once UDF youth had gained control of unit three they approached her mother and told her that the family should return home as the UDF now controlled the area and they would be safe.

²⁶ Mondisa is the name given to interviewee MN.

All those who lived there acquired the political identity of UDF. The geographical area in which the individual lived determined their political identity. (see Map 2)

These stories illustrate the different responses to the politicisation of space that occurred alongside the violence shifting to its third spatiality. Yet, common to most of them is the element of coercion, often undercut with fear, involved in ‘choosing’ a political identity. As one or other side won the battle to control that space, so families and individuals had to decide whether to stay and accept that political identity or move somewhere else. Yet, despite this chaotic, terror-filled, and confusing situation people still made choices about where to stay. And in the making those choices, they made choices about where they wished to align their political identity. For example, once UDF controlled unit three, Phumla’s family decided to return home; similarly, Thoko’s family decided they did support Inkatha and were prepared to make a final break with their UDF-supporting son and brother in order to plead their case and return to unit one north; Thembi’s family ‘remained neutral’ while living in unit four, realising they were being targeted as UDF and deciding they didn’t want to get involved on the Inkatha side they moved to Georgedale where her brothers became comrades; and, Mandisa’s family decided to move from a UDF area to an Inkatha area as they were supporting Inkatha.

Lived experiences of political violence

Pred (2000) suggests that a consequence of social crises is that central taken-for granted meanings become unhinged and problematic. This results in new or transformed practices and discourses. New subjectivities are constructed and derived in practice. What I suggest here is that political violence was one such social crisis. Residents had to develop new ‘rules’ of living. This had profound consequences for their subjectivities. Political identity might have been conferred on residents according to how territory was divided up between the two parties and where they lived, but it was the experience of living with that identity that forced residents to internalise it and to recognise themselves as that being. In the process, residents identified themselves as that subjective being.

Most of the older generation had unquestioning joined Inkatha when it had launched a branch in Mpumalanga. For example, the Church group, a focus group of more than twenty women confirmed that most of them had been Inkatha members before the violence. They explained that it was the only organisation and they were initially confused when they first heard about the UDF (Focus group interview: church group, Chu1#1-2:13). Now they are, like many of the older women who participated in the focus groups, staunchly UDF/ANC. They explained the reasons behind the shift. Primarily, Inkatha’s brutal behaviour caused them to question their loyalty and membership.

That time they started shooting these Hayco boys, that is how we noticed that there is something wrong here. Ja. There is something. That is when I noticed that ‘ah here is something going on’. (Focus group interview: Connie’s group, Con2#1-2:4)

I was once a member of Inkatha because it was the first organisation that was formed. It was said that we will unite, it was good. But when we were beaten and ordered to speak there is a new Inkatha, then I was surprised about this. It was said that children would be taken to the training camps and stay there in the *veld* with boys, and it was said the mothers will be left alone

at home. I was surprised as to what type of Inkatha is this because even people started complaining about this Inkatha. I stayed without knowing where I belong ... I then join the new organisation ... (Focus group interview: Edith's group, Edi1#1-2:20)

Their identity as mother frequently gave them reason to question Inkatha's inappropriate sexual demands of their daughters and hence its overall ethos (see also focus group interview: Mrs Mkhize's group, Mkh2#1-3:7-8). However, their identity as mother also frequently meant that they chose the politics of their children rather than split up the family or abandon their child.

If you've got a son or a daughter, if your child has gone to the other group, you have to support because you know that your child is supporting there – my daughter goes to UDF, they were know that when I'm living there²⁷ I am UDF because I can't throw away my child and go with Inkatha. (Focus group interview: Edith's group, Edi1#1-2:19)

Mothers it seemed were more likely to support their children's politics than were fathers.

However, political loyalty and identity became paramount. In some situations, it did superseded other relationships and identities. Not only did some families evict their children if they supported the opposing group (as in the case of Thoko) but there were also stories of brothers killing brothers.

... [the] Mkhize boy was standing there, his brothers came this side, Philani and Nathi. They shot him. ... when he told them 'no it's me, it's me, it's me', they shot him. They said, '*voetsak you qabane*'. Their brother. ... That boy had run away from home because he didn't like this organisation, this Inkatha, so he was staying here at Xaba's house. So he went that side, they came shooting, shooting, shooting. And when he ... because he was seeing his brothers, he said, 'oh my brother', then this one said 'oh *iqabane*', they shot him. It was so bad as like that, that you had no, there was no brothers, no sisters. (Focus group interview, Connie's group, Con1#1-2:22)

The rest of the group confirmed that the meaning attached to being a member of a political organisation was more significant than family ties.

Relationships were clouded in an atmosphere of intense suspicion and distrust. This was to be a feature of the violence throughout and the roles played by the Caprivi Trainees and other third force activities encouraged it. There was a constant need to prove and continually reaffirm one's loyalty. This need soon engulfed more and more of the youth. If you were not seen to be with one side the conclusion drawn was that you were with the other. It was necessary to actively show one's loyalty by attending meetings and participating in the activities of the comrades or Inkatha youth. The need to demonstrate loyalty affected all residents regardless of age or gender, however, the ways in which this loyalty was demonstrated differed according to age and gender.

Male youth were expected to defend their area and participate in attacking the opposing political group. Thembi explained her brother's involvement with the comrades after her family moved to Georcedale, fleeing from unit four (an Inkatha area).

... they go to war at Georcedale because they were the group of people who they called the 'house-guards'. They were in groups, group one today we will be the night

²⁷ This woman lived on the border of a UDF and Inkatha area. Initially her street was in an Inkatha area, her house was attacked when her daughter was accused of supporting the UDF. Her daughter left home to join the comrades. Later, her street became controlled by the UDF and she played a very active role in supporting the comrades.

watchmen's, group two today there divided. So it was easy for them to join or to participate. Because they were divided into groups, because at Geordedale we have unity we're one party. That was an ANC. And by that mean we are ANC. (Interview Thembi, Tha1#2-2:3)

Women played an important role in supporting the boys who guarded these borders. They extended their role of mother to incorporate these boys: a role extension that had two implications. First, 'mother' became socially rather than biologically defined, since, in situation of conflict, any boy became the son of any woman. Secondly, mothering happened across different sites, the street as well as domestic space. Mothering would include feeding and caring for the youth, accosting police who might be harassing them in the street, hunting for them as police stations, supporting them in court appearances and finally, if the worst happened burying them.

So the fighting boys ... I told them that they should come into the house. ... You find that they are hungry those people. You know the sleeping of a hungry person, sleeping helplessly on the grass. So I would tell the children that use the big pot to cook, that we do not use when we are alone. ... I dish stiff pap, I dish curry. We took out the curry pot, I said, 'here it is', they were satisfied. There is a child I have seen yesterday. He ran away and arrived here at home, and said he does not want to go back home. He asked to be my child. (Focus group interview, Mrs Thusi's group, Thu1#2-3:12-13)

As 'little sisters' young women were also drawn into caring for the youth.

If a guy comes with his washing and says 'I didn't sleep yesterday, I was a night watchman. I want to rest a little bit, may you please wash this washing for me'. 'With a please brother.' Washing it, drying it, ironing it. Afternoon, 'here is your washing'. 'Thank you sister.' That is how we participated as young ladies. (Interview TN, p.3)

All households were expected to have representation at the regular community meetings. Mandisa, from unit one north, explained the pressure on herself to be seen to be active in Inkatha youth. When nobody from their household attended Inkatha meetings her mother was questioned and their political loyalty queried.

... when they finished meeting, they came to our home, ask why we don't see anybody in this house. Why? Who are you? Which group you fall into? (Interview Mandisa, p.14)

Initially the youth demanded that her younger, ten-year-old brother attend the meetings. When her mother protested that he was too young they then demanded that her eldest daughter (ie Mandisa) should attend the meetings. Despite her reluctance to become involved as 'I don't like any parties' she was forced to attend Inkatha meetings. Her sister and brother did become active with Inkatha youth, however, she was able to persuade her mother to let her leave the township in order to continue her schooling elsewhere.

Thando who lived in the UDF-controlled area of Geordedale alluded to similar dynamics. She explained that the comrades also required attendance and participation at community meetings.

... we have to go to the meeting whether you want it or not. And if they uphold you to be something in the meeting, maybe to be a leader of that group, you have to do that. They didn't ask you. They want you to do it, whether you want it or not. They force the womans to go to the meeting during the night. ... And all of you must say your point. But if you just keep quiet and listen, they say, no, we just want to hear every views of them then can take it to the other member of the other Party. Then you have to participate in the meeting forcely. You can't decide that, oh no, I'm not going to say anything and I can't do anything. (Interview

Thando, Tho1#1-2:7)

Amongst youth living in Inkatha controlled areas one way of showing loyalty was to leave school and dedicate time to fighting. There were strong sanctions and even violence against those who had escaped the disrupted education offered by Mpumalanga schools and were schooling outside the township. Mandisa explained that she stayed with a relative during the week and came home to Mpumalanga at the weekend. When she reached the industrial area of Hammarsdale she would change from her school uniform into 'smart clothes' in the public toilet, as she didn't want the other youth to know that she was attending school.

They want you to stay with them. And move and *toyi-toyi*. You're doing *toyi-toyi*, and I don't like that thing. That's why went out at Hlangeza High School. Doing my standard seven. ... One day I came and I take out [my uniform] at the toilets, at Hammarsdale, take out my uniform and wearing smart, so they don't see me that I came to school. When the taxi reach me there, then I saw the big group. They say, 'hey, you, come on. You're going to school. But us, we didn't go to school'. Aish! I'm afraid. I'm so scared! I came and walked slowly. They say, 'oh'. Some of other girls there, they say, 'you go heavy'.²⁸ We want you to go to have the meeting with us. I saw you. You schooling. You are not sit with us here'. And someone say, 'you go heavy because your brother and your sister is here with us. If you didn't, you must walk'. Aish! The other girl, I didn't know, she know the situation there. They walk with the uniform and they take out the uniform and they move in the road. Nothing, wearing just the body. (Interview Mandisa, p.10 and 11)

This punishment of forcing errant female scholars to walk naked through the streets - called 'modelling' - while being beaten was carried out by young girls.²⁹ If the culprit was a boy he would be punished by boys (Interview: Mandisa, MN:10).

In UDF-controlled areas there was greater tolerance for those who left the township in pursuit of education. Dudu explained that a topic of conversation amongst her friends was how they would manage to complete their education given the violence. They decided leaving Mpumalanga was the only solution. When her mother agreed to send her away to boarding school her friends were supportive (Interview Dudu, Dud1#1-2:9). However, friends were not the comrades and while those who left to continue their education were not physically threatened, they were treated with derision and contempt by those who remained behind. Boys were taunted that they were *amagwala*³⁰ and were expected to join the fighting when they were home on holiday. Another common insult was to call them (both boys and girls) 'supry' which meant a 'superior person'. The allegation was that because they were attending school, while their compatriots protected the area from Inkatha, they saw themselves as 'a better person'. (Interview Thando, Tho1#1-2:11)

²⁸ I asked her what 'you going heavy meant'. She explained it meant she had a miracle, as her brother and sister were involved with Inkatha youth in the area she expected that they would save her from punishment.

²⁹ While this practice was common in many of Natal's townships at this time, it seems to have been confined to Inkatha areas (Mandisa was from unit one north). I remember first hearing about it, at the time, in the context of Pietermaritzburg's townships. There it was used specifically as a punishment for girls who were behaving in a culturally inappropriate way. Thus it does seem to be a gender-specific punishment designed to humiliate and discipline women.

³⁰ Cowards.

For many youth their identity as comrades was bound up with their gender identity as masculine. Dudu (Dud1#1-2:14) revealed what it meant to her boyfriend³¹ to be a comrade

So I was furious now because I didn't know the reason why he came back, why? Because he was already at this school at Stanger. So he left the school ... So he say, 'what am I going to do? I'm supposed to do. I am a boy. I have to attend. I have to attack, I have to attack, if they attack us I have to protect myself.

Young women were expected to show their support for the comrades by attending the funerals of those comrades who had been killed by Inkatha or the police. Dudu explained that young women were expected to be *toyi-toying* in front of the crowd of mourners as it was hoped that this would deter the police from opening fire on the crowd. Attending funerals demonstrated loyalty and political identity.

... because if there's a member of ANC, comrade has died surely you have to go there [funeral]. Everyone, everyone. They came even at home and take you. Because if you didn't attend that means you are another party, you belonging to other party. That they don't like. It was very difficult. (Interview Dudu, Dud1#1-2:2)

However, Dudu admitted that as time went on what began as coercion turned into willing support.

... when it started we were forced. When the time goes on and maybe it's your colleague or your friend he has died there we were willing to go there, in the funeral because it was your willingness. (Interview Dudu, Dud1#1-2:5)

Young women were also expected to show support for the boys when they were in battle. As Mandisa explained they did by calling out sounds of support and cheering when one of the opposing force were killed.

... [Girls] they make a noise, 'Kiri, kiri, kiri!' Yes to support the boys. Ja, they make the noise. When one of the other parties died, they shouted then, 'We are the heroes'. (Interview Mandisa, MN:19)

Failure to follow the boys into battle resulted in one's political loyalty and identity being questioned.

Because if you don't follow them when they're going to fight, you, you must say why you don't follow us, when they go in that. You must ask. If you don't like, you must go. You must go, to save your life. (Interview Mandisa, MN:19).

The comrades enforced their authority over the areas they controlled. This was done by controlling who could and could not enter an area (as discussed above) and by controlling the lives of those within the area. The comrades maintained community discipline by trying to remove criminality from the area. In the absence of policing they attempted to maintain tight control over their areas. As discussed above, this often put them in conflict with other youth and resulted in break-away groups of *com-tsotsis*. Partaking in the disciplining of community members who had 'done something wrong' was another way of showing that you identified with the community politics and were loyal to the comrades.

... Maybe if somebody is found doing, maybe there is someone who is breaking the house up, ..., the person was called, they have to discipline her or him. They tell maybe, ... each of you must give her three strokes. Even if they don't want to, they said, 'You must do it,

³¹ He was later killed in the violence. His house was petrol bombed and both he and his father died in the flames.

why you don't want to do it'. If your brother kill[ed] somebody, they said you must be the first one to kill him. If your brother, if your brother killed somebody else, there they caught him, then you are the one that's going to kill him. If you don't want to, they are going to kill you also. Then have to do it. ... You can do that and everybody must do that. ... (Interview Thando, Tho1#1-2:7)

For most residents of Mpumalanga their relationship to the comrades was a double-edged sword. On the one hand it was supportive as they were seen to be protecting them from something far worse – Inkatha, but it was undercut with fear. Dudu claims that most Georgedale residents supported the comrades as they were protecting them. The comrades went house-to-house asking for contributions, which residents complied with. But Thando explained that the compliance was always accompanied by the knowledge that if you didn't yield revenge would be extracted.

... Then those people want some money, they they have to go door to door to collect the money, official and the people in the area. So we have to give them money. If there is some of them want some clothes to wear and they don't have some, because some of them don't have parents, some parents died, been killed by IFP members. So we have to look their, that group of that area has to look over those kids. So if they want clothes, they have to collect money to you and you have to give them money. Even if that's [...] the house. You must give them that money, even if there is nobody who's working in that house, you must try. Because if you don't give that money, which means you are IFP, they are going to attack you, they're going to maybe burn the house. So you have to try your best and do it. If they want to stay in the house, maybe you will have seven-room house, maybe you are four in the house, they can demand half of the rooms to be theirs. You can't say anything. You have to live with them, have to cook for them, wash clothes for them, do everything for them. (Interview Thando, Tho1#1-2:10)

As described above a key factor in 'being UDF' was displaying unquestioning support and loyalty to the comrades. For women this loyalty and support was intrinsically bound up to their gender identities. The violence allowed the assertion of a particular kind of masculinity - one that had ultimate power over women, that ruled with an iron fist and that would be disobeyed on pain of death. Nonto said,

... by that time if you are being called by the boys, you always smiled although you don't say nothing but your smile. Because by that time they are taken as God. If the boy talk to you, you come attention, you talk to him friendly, because you are begging to be alive. Whatever he say, whatever he do doesn't matter, you accept what he say. (Interview Nonto, Nond1#1-2:11)

In the interviews many young women spoke about the fear and reality of rape and sexual violence. Being a comrade meant denying the boys nothing – if they wanted food you made it or stole it, if they needed a place to stay you organised it, and if they wanted sex you supplied it.

... And some of our ANC boys, they used to have the camping areas. If they come through the house, now the boys used to be rude, even into us, also the ANC. They can come in the house and ask for the girls. 'We want so-and-so. You can come and then stay with us. You can help us to, because we don't have the women to sleep with, we are going to sleep with you'. They ask you to your parents. ... the parents say, 'I don't want my children'. They said, 'Why? Because she's a comrade, we are the comrades. She's supposed to help us'. ... So we have to fight for the life every time. And we have to hide, if you are a girl. If they wish, if you are going to the road, if they saw you, they said, 'I wish to sleep with you', then they're going to come in the middle of the night and ask for you. Even they didn't ask, they just take you and go with you. You can't say anything. Your parents can't say anything, because if they said

anything they're going to be burning, they're going to be killed. So now you have to obey their thing, what they want from you. Do what they want so that your family can live there, can be safe. (Interview Thando, Tho1#1-2:7)

Any questioning the comrades' right to sexual access was taken as disloyalty and tantamount to 'being Inkatha'. Phumzile illustrated this through the experiences of herself and her friend.

... we was young, they [UDF youth] can just take you as your girlfriend. You can't say no. If you go to the police and charge them, they will say you are against them, how can you go to the police to charge them? ... We can't charge them, like one of my friends, they took her one day, they rape her. She went to charge them, they went to her house, they killed everybody, because they say, it means she's not, she's like Inkatha because she went and tell the police that thing. (Interview Phumzile, PM1:3)

Fear of a similar outcome following an encounter with the boys led her to leave Mpumalanga. She was walking home from school with a number of older girls.

... nearby my school there was a place, they will call it *Ngotha* in Zulu, where the ANC boys staying there. So one day the guy called me, he said I must come, he wants to talk to me. Those, I mean, all the girls, they told me, 'You mustn't go there, because there it's only boys'. So that, the way they were, those girl were laughing because that guy was like keep on asking me to come there and I just told him, 'I've got toothache, I can't come there'. So they were laughing. He just came in hits me badly. Then I went home, I told my brother, because he was the member of ANC now. I told him, 'Your friends there, they hit me because he was [...]', he wanted to know who was that person. Then I went with him, I show him. So they, there was a disciplining if you do something wrong to one of, you know, because they were calling me, I'm an ANC member because I'm, my brother is here. So they gave him that punishment. From there he was looking for me. He told me straight he will kill me, because the way they were hitting him with the sjambok, maybe twenty. So, he said he will caught me, so my mother decide[d], because I'm not walking with my brother all the time. Even those people who were discipline us sometimes they wanted even to kill them now. Because they want to do what they want to do. They're violent. They kill so much of people, so they got more hurt. So from there my brother told me, 'Please just go and stay to my auntie's house, then you look for a school there. Because I'm not walking with you every day. He can just come and rape you and do what he want[s] to do. You can't do anything because they're used to doing that things. (Interview Phumla, PM2:16)

While Phumla's account does reiterate the distinction between comrades and *com-tsotsis*, it, nevertheless, still demonstrates the gender power that young men wielded. The anarchy resulting from the violence had substantially increased the gender power of young men in relation to young women.

The fear of sexual demands inhibited young women from participating in political structures in their areas. Phumzile belonged to the school choir. She explained that the male members of the choir were eager to attend local UDF meetings, however, she and her friends were not.

... they used to say like, 'let's go there'. But we [the girls] didn't like it because even they, if we then in that meetings, the boys was like naughty, if maybe that guy loves me, he can't tell me nicely, propose me. It's like he can just take me to his house and do what he want to do to me. I can't go to the police because they will say I'm against them. You, that's why we didn't like it. Once we finished school we have to go [...], (Interview Phumzile, PM1:5).

Thembi gave a very different account to the other young women. She indicated that young women played a supportive role to the boys guarding their areas

... other women's participated in things like organising *intelezi* for UDF members ... we used to participate by cooking food for them, for those who evacuated from the location to stay here in cabins, cooking them food, if it was, um we acted as one big family. If a guy came at night, I knew he was staying at one north, his family were killed, sometimes their home was burnt, he came at night [makes knocking noise] 'T can you give me some food'. 'okay with a pleasure'. Giving him food, drinks, if he likes to sleep organise a bed for him ... That's how we participated. (Interview Thembi, Tha1#2-2:3)

She (Thembi) also indicated that girls would wash and iron for the boys who were defending the area. She (Thembi) denied that UDF comrades sexually harassed girls.

They used to make sexual harassment to those of Inkatha. But aye, they were not always like that. Those who were found doing that were disciplined. There were disciplinary committees of UDF. Looking after those, if you find an Inkatha girl its better to kill her rather than to harass her by sex. There were disciplinary committee of that. (Interview Thembi, Tha1#2-2:3)

Upon further questioning, Thembi said the concern was that guys who 'sexually harassed',³² Inkatha girls would get used to this behaviour and thus would be tempted to also 'sexually harass' UDF girls. For that reason it was better to kill the Inkatha girls, as there was little chance they would kill UDF girls. In a perverse way this explanation does recognise the gender power politics that became embedded in the political violence. Yet, for those young women who became intimately involved with the violence and the comrades (as Thembi was), it was difficult to acknowledge the gender violence that became integral to the construction of masculinities at the time.

This period was a time of terror and horror for most of those living in Mpumalanga township. Daily living was completely unpredictable; furthermore, they were forced to witness deeds of brutality on a regular basis. The trauma of the violence remains with them today. Nonto explained how the things she saw then still haunt her.

Whatever I see, even now I've not forgotten. Just, just, see if you are walking, when you are walking maybe one of you meet a corpse. When you look at the other side 'whoa, this one another corpse'. It's not a joke to see eighteen corpse a day. It's not a joke. Even now, till the end I won't forget. (Interview Nonto, Nond#1-1:6)

Thembi alluded to similar feelings,

... this thing disturbed us. Because if I am talking about this thing, I used to feel very unhappy. Because I see how my colleagues, my relatives were brutally killed. (Interview Thembi, Tha1#1-2:11)

The constant harassment by both Inkatha and the police made the lives of many wretched. Mrs C's (see above, interview Connie's friends, Fri1#1-2, Fri1#2-2, Fri2#1-2) story is a typical example of what happened to those who were targeted as enemies by Inkatha. Frequently, as in her case, alongside attacks by Inkatha (see above) the police also harassed the families of known comrades. Mrs C was not even able to bury her husband in privacy, on the eve of the funeral she and her children were detained by the police – the accusation being that they were supplying guns to the comrades. These incidents still disturb her.

³² This seems to be a euphemism for demanding sex or rape.

Most of those I interviewed had lost close family and relatives in the violence.³³ These events still cause them pain and suffering. Thembi shared her anguish at the death of her boyfriend;

He was killed by the younger brother of his father. Because he was a UDF member, his father's younger brother was Inkatha. ... It was terrible. Very terrible. I was badly affected. ... several times, months, some years, if I'm talking about this thing it makes me feel very unhappy. Because I miss him. Because of the violence. (Tha1#2-2:8)

Likewise Mr M talked about the lose of their son,

... this violence changed life. ... maybe we are seated at the dining-room. If maybe it happens that a wife keeps quiet, you can see that she is thinking. The picture of her child who died comes back, then she keeps quiet. You realise that you have all been talking and everything was ok, they you will see her keeping quiet to herself and maybe that came to her mind and she would go to bed. If you try to figure out maybe you realise that you have been discussing about violence, then it will come to your mind that she lost her child in that violence ... (Focus group interview: Mthembu's group, Mth2#1-3:21)

There was a sense that the experience of political violence had damaged all those who participated. Everyone mentioned the psychological side effects of those times. Mrs C, an older woman from one of the focus groups, said that she lost so much weight she became a size 30 dress (Focus group: Connie's friends, Fri2#1-3:2). Thoko said her mother suffered from stress because of the difficulties of that time (Interview Thoko, Tsh1#1-2:5). Thembi says that her mother is still suffering from 'post-trauma' and won't return to the house they abandoned in unit four,

She said she can't go back there. Because what she saw there, killing of people brutally, burning of houses, burning of people, seeing the person running with fire on his body. She's suffering from post-trauma. (Interview Thembi, Tha1#1-2:10)

Thembi explained how the violence changed her. She said that since she was a child she had attended church and was very well behaved, she didn't 'go to *toyi-toyi*'. But once they had been forced to flee, witnessing the horrors that they had, she became a changed person

... when I left town [unit four] to Geogedale, when there was a *toyi-toyi* I used to go there. When there is an insult, I used to go there, behaving like barbarians. Talking insults, aye. Violence did change my life. But, I can say by education I do recover bit-by-bit to go back to where I was before violence. But, aye, I was by that time; I become angry as if I can kill another person because of my anger. Seeing how other people were killed. ... Violence changed my life, but I am recovering now. (Interview Thembi, Tha1#2-2:2)

Everyone agreed, that it was the 'boys', who were fighting, who changed the most.

Nonto explained

The children become tough, become cruel, become brave to do whatever is unexpected to do by the child. I think it affects [them] too much. ... Being a fifteen old boy [who] is not afraid to stab anybody. When he sees a person knowing that this one is not my party, without asking help anyone, he just ... shotting that police or stabbing that [person], is too young to do that. (Interview, Nonto, Nond#1-2:4)

³³ Analysing the interviews with the eleven young women reveals a shocking picture: only three of them lost no close relative during the violence, four of them had brothers killed, two of them had their boyfriends killed, two lost close relatives and one's brother is now disabled after being shot. Its difficult to do similar calculations for the older women as the participants were many and not everyone spoke on all the topics.

Ultimately much of the township supported and identified with the UDF. Despite the superior fire-power of Inkatha and the support they received from state security forces, the comrades controlled most of the areas. The question that remains is why in this atmosphere of terror and uncertainty, where at times the behaviour of the comrades invoked fear, and where it seemed as if they compelled support through intimidation, did these women identify with the UDF? I would suggest that there are three reasons for this.

Firstly, the terror that Inkatha unleashed needs to be acknowledged. For many the alternatives were unthinkable. The period when 'the boys were in Pinetown' was very difficult, upon their return they were welcomed as the heroes who were going to save them. Paradoxically, once the initial battles with Inkatha had been won, the areas became safer.

They blamed Inkatha for the violence and everything they lost. And as such, they could not support such an organisation.

Women A: Gatsha started at first and trained the police force called *oblom*, he put the ZP [KwaZulu Police]. The ANC had no one when it was still called UDF. So in all that, in those tryings our children fought hard. They sweated; we were losing day by day. Day by day they died, we cried. God, but in one defeated cries. Today it is still him. But he has killed no. We have no homes because of him. Mah he has finished the country. (Focus group interview: Mrs Thusi's group, Thu1#2-2:20-22)

Secondly, in the minds of many there were distinctions between the comrades and the *com-tsotsis*. Many of the excesses were blamed on the *com-tsotsis*. The comrades protected them from Inkatha when no-one else did. Furthermore, amongst the comrades were their brothers, sons and lovers. The lives of those they loved were being lost and endangered (see footnote 35) at the hands of Inkatha (or the police who were seen to support Inkatha).

And thirdly, it was the relationship between violence, place and identity that in turn cemented support for the comrades and thus confirmed political identities.

We knew as we know that we live in this place, this place belongs to UDF not Inkatha. There are no Inkatha people in this area. They are only UDF. So we knew that our children are UDF. (Focus group interview: Connie's group, Con1#1-2:23)

Thando explained that they supported the UDF because their homes and the place where they stayed were under attack. She said that they were not forced to support the UDF but

... we are fighting for the place to stay. So now we have to fall to other party because you have to stay within that area, because that's where you were born, you can't go anywhere. She went on to say that,

... by that time I was so young, I believed in anything. . Because they told us that you have the ANC's fighting to the white people because you are being oppressed. By that time I didn't saw that thing that I am being oppressed. I am being or doing anything. I just know that if you are ANC are fighting the IFP people. If you are ANC party, you have to fight the IFP people. I didn't know that be there was conflict because all those people, ANC and IFP they are black. Why are they fighting? I can't answer. ... I was so confused because I don't know what are you fighting for. I only know that I have to fight for the place to stay, I have to fight for my party. You have to fight, like it or not, because it is the place where you are staying. (Interview Thando, Tho1#1-2:9)

Other informants reinforced the relationship between the spatiality of the violence and their political identity as UDF (and then later ANC) supporters. But underlying this was the reference to what Inkatha had done to them.

... Yes, I was a UDF supporter. As I said before the main road was the bridge as I was staying in one south I was forced to be UDF. Although I don't say that I was, I was not like it. I was like to be UDF. I like the UDF so but by liking it there is no reward that I got at the end. I just like it because it was the majority by that time. I was too young. It was not clear in fact what is UDF, what is the main cause of the UDF, what is the purpose of that UDF. I was still young but I saw ok, this brother I know, this my aunt, this my uncle, oh they are UDF, please this is the right thing. That's why I became a UDF by that time. ... now I'm a member of ANC, full member of ANC. Why becoming full member of ANC. I think because my relatives, the blood of my relatives that was split off, I can't leave, I can't leave it. So that's why I like UDF. The boys that were fighting by that time, stand the truth. Stand by us. They never leave us even times, times of trouble. There were times when the IFP comes and they were ready from line to line, line to line, line to line. Killing whatever is coming from. By that day they were killing even women. ... So what I realised then is that they are no longer fighting as they political parties, now they are destroying the world we got. (Interview Nonto, Nond1#1-2:8-9)

Yet, despite this support for the UDF, for many this was a politics without much ideological content. Support for the UDF was primarily based upon the need to protect one's home coupled with the need to defeat Inkatha.

It does need to be acknowledged that for some their identification as UDF was very shallow. It was an identification imposed upon them by the circumstances (the spatiality of the violence and fear). Phumla is a good example of this. She was fourteen years old at the time and didn't understand the politics,

How can a ten-years girl or a thirteen-years girl know what is politics. I prefer maybe twenty-one years, but I don't know who teach them what is, when they know what it's all about. What is happening at all? Like even now, I don't know what is happening, so I don't think a girl of the age of thirteen can know what is happening. They just say, 'I'm running, I'm this', you can just see, if you ask them, then they're ... she won't tell you. She don't know. Even though the boys do, there are boys who do know what it's all about. (Interview Phumla, PM2:27)

She blamed her brother, who was a comrade, for the situation the family found itself in; and, she feared the comrades. She persuaded her mother to let her leave to continue her schooling³⁴ and as a result was labelled Inkatha and couldn't return home for two years. Today she is politically uncommitted and feels the violence has destroyed trust between her and her brother as she 'doesn't know him'.

This discussion of the 'lived experience of political violence' demonstrates the spectrum of responses to the politicisation of space. Once space was claimed and identified as belonging to Inkatha or UDF those who resided in it were expected to adopt that political identity. For many this particular aspect of their identity did not become an all-consuming passion. They found ways to escape the violence, usually to pursue their education (with all the aspirations that contained). But for those that remained there

³⁴ While this was her first account of why she left, later in the interview she said that a comrade harassed her, and then hit her when she refused his advances. When she reported this to her brother he took it up with his comrades and that particular youth was disciplined with twenty lashes. Thereafter that boy vowed he would 'catch her' (Interview Phumla PM2:16). Ultimately her story is full of contradictory emotions, going back and forth, blaming her brother, blaming Inkatha, saying that the comrades protected them, and then saying that she feared them and was frightened to ask anything.

was the constant need to show / perform their identity. This involved attending meetings and funerals, supporting the fighting youth (or fighting themselves), bowing to the authority of the comrades, and for young girls providing them with sex. Any divergence from this performance would result in accusations of being Inkatha with the resultant consequences. In the context of political violence the often abusive gender relations of the pre-violence years had intensified. Youth had taken over the patriarchal mantle of the father and demanded absolute obedience and respect. But the 'father' is often abuser and protector simultaneously, and this was the case with the comrades. Ultimately they protected their communities from Inkatha. And it was this protection and the fear of what Inkatha represented (the other) that solidified support for the UDF, later translated into the ANC, and confirmed their political identity as UDF.³⁵

Conclusion

The paper shows how political violence began amongst youth in the schools. However, very quickly thereafter it was assumed that the families of those youth shared their politics. Once political violence left the spatiality of the body, it crossed age and gender boundaries. No longer were male youth the only targets. Initially many older residents had supported Inkatha. But the killings of youth and Inkatha's brutal tactics including the rape and sexual coercion of young women caused them to reconsider their support.

The reterritorialisation of space in Mpumalanga resulted in the meaning of places becoming fixed, resting on a singular identity – the political affiliation and identity of its inhabitants. The cleansing of areas was central to this process. This involved the intimidation and/ or burning out of those who it was felt did not share the political beliefs of the dominant political group. Neutrality was not an option. No family or person who wished to stay in a place could avoid assuming the political identity of that place. As Mpumalanga divided up into areas under the control of either the UDF or Inkatha, boundaries and borders between these areas were established. Both Inkatha youth and the comrades ruled through a reign of terror. Areas were demarcated as either belonging to one or the other. Those outside were not allowed to cross and those within were expected to visibly demonstrate their loyalty. Territory was constantly fought over, and the borders moved as the UDF expanded its control and influence. The establishment of borders allowed the creation of a 'them' and 'us' and aided in the creation of political identities. This was particularly relevant in this situation of political violence where the content of political identities was more about what 'we' are not, rather than what 'we' are.

The redefinition of space meant that residents had to develop new 'rules' of living. Political identity might have been conferred on residents according to how territory was divided up between the two parties but as the movement of internal refugees within the township illustrated, many ultimately choose whether to support the party that was gaining power in their area. The experience of living with these identities eg demonstrating loyalty, attending funerals, defending areas from attack etc, forced residents to internalise them and to recognise themselves as that being. In many situations political identity superseded all other identities.

³⁵ While the commitment to that particular identity as opposed to other components of one's subjectivity might vary, Mpumalanga Township has remained a firm ANC stronghold throughout the various national and local government elections since 1994.

For many, particularly women, their relationship with the comrades was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the comrades defended their areas from attack and ensured some level of safety for residents. On the other hand, they demanded much from residents, particularly young women whose relationship to the comrades was always undercut by fear for their personal safety and rape. Yet they supported the comrades and by extension the UDF. Ultimately they were fighting for ‘a place to stay’. The alternative if Inkatha won territory was further cleansing and the loss of their houses – ‘a place to stay’. This relationship between place and identity is what cemented their political identities.

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Oral Interviews and Focus Groups

- Chu1#1-2 Focus group interview (twenty women attending), Church Group, unit four, 26 October 1993, tape one, pp. 1-22.
- Chu1#2-2 Focus group interview, Church group continued, tape two, pp. 1-7.
- Con1#1-2 Focus group interview (four people attending – three women and one man), Connie Myeni's Group, unit 1South, 24 September 1993, tape one, pp. 1-27.
- Con1#2-2 Focus group interview, Connie Myeni's group continued, tape two, pp. 1-6.
- Con2#1-2 Focus group interview (three people attending - two women and one man), Connie Myeni's Group, unit 1South, 3 February 1994, tape one, pp.1-18.
- Con2#2-1 Focus group interview, Connie Myeni's group continued, tape two, pp.1-9.
- Dud1#1-2 Oral interview Dudu (DM), young woman, Mpumalanga Township, Geordedale, 6 April 1999, tape one, pp.1-17.
- Dud1#2-2 Oral interview Dudu (DM) continued, tape two, pp.1-17.
- Edi1#1-2 Focus group interview (four people attending - all women), Edith's group, unit three, 11 September 1993, tape one, pp.1-28.
- Edi1#2-2 Focus group interview, Edith's group continued, tape two, pp.1-13.

- Fri1#1-2 Focus group interview (two women attended), Connie's Friend, unit two south, 5 September 1994, tape one, pp.1-39.
- Fri1#2-2 Focus group interview, Connie's Friend continued, tape two, pp. 1-11.
- Fri2#1-2 Focus group interview (two women attended), Connie's Friend, unit two south, 17 September 1994, tape one, pp. 1-42.
- Fri2#2-2 Focus group interview, Connie's Friend, continued, tape two, pp.1-31.
- Mba1#1-3 Oral interview Mbali (MM), young woman, Mpumalanga Township, unit six, 11 April 1999, tape one, pp. 1-17.
- Mba1#2-3 Oral interview Mbali (MM) continued, tape two, pp. 1-13.
- Mba1#3-3 Oral interview Mbali (MM) continued, tape three, pp.1-5.
- Mth2#1-3 Focus group interview (five women and one man attending), Mrs Mthembu's Group, unit three, 16 October 1993, tape one, pp. 1-30.
- Mth2#2-3 Focus group interview, Mrs Mthembu's Group, continued, pp. 1-25.
- Mth2#3-3 Focus group interview, Mrs Mthembu's Group, continued, pp. 1-7.
- MN Oral interview Mandisa (MN), young woman, Mpumalanga Township, unit one north, 9 April 1999, tape one and two, pp.1-35.
- NK Oral interview Nomvula (NK), young woman, Mpumalanga Township, unit one north/six, tape one and two, pp.1-27.
- Nond1#1-2 Oral interview Nonto (NL1), young woman, Mpumalanga Township, unit one south, 9 April 1999, tape one, pp.1-14.
- Nond1#2-2 Oral interview Nonto (NL1) continued, tape two, pp. 1-8.
- PM1 Oral interview Phumzile (PM1), young woman, Mpumalanga Township, unit three and four, 11 April 1999, tape one and two, pp. 1-32.
- PM2 Oral interview Phumla (PM2), young woman, Mpumalanga Township, unit three, 12 April 1999, tapes one and two, pp. 1-35. Thu1#1-3 Focus group interview (four women attended), Mrs Thusi's group (2), unit four, 5 February 1994, tape one, pp.1-31.
- Tha1#1-2 Oral interview Thembi (TN1), young woman, Mpumalanga Township, unit four, 27 March 1999, tape one, pp.1-13.
- Tha1#2-2 Oral interview Thembi (TN1) continued, tape two, pp.1-14.
- Tho1#1-2 Oral interview Thando (TM), young woman, Mpumalanga Township, Geordedale, 7 April 1999, tape one, pp. 1-18.
- Tho1#2-2 Oral interview, Thando (TM) continued, tape two, pp. 1-17.
- Thu1#2-3 Focus group interview, Mrs Thusi's group (2) continued, tape two, pp.1-27.
- Thu1#3-3 Focus group interview, Mrs Thusi's group (2) continued, tape three, pp.1-16.
- Tsh1#1-2 Oral interview Thoko (TN2), young woman, Mpumalanga Township, unit one north, 18 March 1999, tape one, pp.1-19.
- Tsh1#2-2 Oral interview Thoko (TN2) continued, tape two, pp.1-7.