

SELF-CONSTRUCTIONS OF STREET KIDS SITUATED IN LUSAKA (ZAMBIA)

by

Richard Mukuka

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

Unless specifically indicated to the contrary, this coursework dissertation is the result of my own work.

.....
Richard Mukuka

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Date

ABSTRACT

On one hand, Zambian street kids have been portrayed as needy victims of socio-economic forces; on the other hand, they have been portrayed as a social menace that needs to be gotten rid of. In this study, I set out to investigate how Zambian street kids see themselves. In doing this, I shifted the focus from street kids' etic representations to emic discourse-emergent reflexive identities. The study sought to explore 1) the reflexive identities of Zambian street kids, 2) how these identities are constructed, and 3) the social functions of these identities. The research design was anchored on positioning theory, and used ideas of space and social construction of meaning to inform data collection and analysis. Qualitative data from peripatetic interviews were analysed using discourse analysis, with a specific focus on the positioning triad. The analysis has shown that, as male Zambian street kids carve for themselves a survival niche on the streets of Lusaka, they construct themselves as vulnerable victims, heroic victims, and as human beings par excellence. These identities are indexed to the hard times storyline. In constructing these identities for themselves, street kids legitimise their unreserved inclusion in the mainstream Zambian society while at the same time undermining ascribed negative identities by which they are separated from, and discriminated against, by society. The identities also help street kids attract charitable reactions. It also emerged that the self-constructions of street kids are constrained by the panoptic gaze of the hegemonic moral order. However, the voices of female street kids are still absent and future research remains to include them.

KEY WORDS

Discourse, hegemonic struggles, identity, moral order, normalisation, positioning theory, street kids, Zambia

ULUNSOMPO (ABSTRACT IN ICIBEMBA)

Kubantu bamo, ba street kid bamu Zambia bamonwa ngembulwa-maka, abasha babunkalwe bwa mibele ya calo cesu; kubantu bambi, ba street kid masebanyafye, abashifwile nokumonekela kumenso yesu. Eico natile ukucila tuleloleshashe pafyo abantu bambi bamona ba street kid bamu Zambia, cimbepushe abene pakuti tumone ifyo nabo baimona. Pakucita ifi, nabomfeshe ifintu fitatu: 1) natile cimfwailikishe ifyo ba street kid baimona abene, 2) cinsange imisango yalekana-lekana iyo babomfya ukulanda pafyo baimona, elyo 3) cinsange nefyo cafwa ba street kid ngabaimona muli iyi misango yapusana-pusana. Nabomfeshe ukufwailikisha kwamano uko mucingeleshi patila 'exploratory qualitative design'. Amalyashi nalelanda naba street kid ilyo balentandasha muncende basangwamo mu kalale nayapelulwile kubomfya 'discourse analysis', umusango upelulula amashiwi abantu babomfya elyo nefyo aya mashiwi yalenga ifintu fimo ukucitika elyo pamuku umo wine yalenga ifintu fimbi ukukanacitika. Ilyo napelilwile amashiwi yaba street kid abapusana-pusana, nasangile ukuti limo limo ba street kid baimona ngembulwa-maka, limbi baimona nge mpalume ishacimfya ubucushi, elyo limbi nalyo baimona inga abantu umupwilapo. Ngabaimona muli ishi misango, cilabafwako ukususha abantu ababamona ngamasebanya elyo pamuku umo wine cilabafwako ukulwisha ukuti abantu balebamona ngabantufye. Ubwafya nasangile bwakutula imisango ba street kid baimwenamo yalishingwana ne minyololo: imisango bengaimwenamo ba street kid ilashingwana nobupingushi bwamipololweke yabumi bwabo. Ba street kid bamona ati abantu bambi bamona ati ubumi bwabo tabwapololoka iyo. Icintu cimo ico nshacitile kulanda naba street kid abakashana –aba nabo bafwile ukwipushiwa pakuti tukeshibe nabo ngabaimona munshila shimo shine.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS.....	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ANC.....	African National Congress
CHIN.....	Children in Need Network
FOH.....	Fountain of Hope
HIV.....	Human immunodeficiency virus
MMD.....	Movement for Multi-party Democracy
NGO.....	Non-governmental organisation
PCI.....	Project Concern International
UNAIDS.....	Joint United Nations Programme of HIV/AIDS
UNICEF.....	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIP.....	United National Independence Party
UTH.....	University Teaching Hospital
ZANU.....	Zimbabwe African National Union

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Research

Historically, a number of 'ways of being' have been dichotomised: white/black, masculinity/femininity, normal/abnormal, Christian/pagan, healthy/sick, us/them, and good/bad, among many. These epistemic and relational stances have variably arranged the social space within which people at different sides of the dichotomies live. Inherently, this dichotomisation results in different constellations of advantage and disadvantage, and dictates what and who is to be visible, valued, and powerful. Consequently, this has led to the invisibility of some 'races', genders, and social groups.

In the Zambian context, street kids (see later discussion concerning use of this term) have been invisible for a long time in spite of their growing numbers. Suddenly, Zambian street kids began to attract heated media debates in mid-2005. These media debates have featured both sympathisers and adversaries. Sympathisers have been representing these kids as vulnerable and in need of society's help; adversaries portray street kids as a menace that has to be gotten rid of, preferably by force. Yet, the voices of the street kids themselves have been absent from the public discourse, the discourse by which they are separated from, and discriminated against by, society. Therefore, this study set out to give the perspectives of street kids¹ a privileged hermeneutic. Giving street kids a voice, I suspected, would produce interesting discursive data about street kids' own self-construction in the face of the world that is both hostile and friendly to them.

¹ Note: In the end, only male street kids were sampled. Whenever the terms 'Zambian street kids' are used in this dissertation, they refer to male street kids who took part in this study.

Research Issues

The absence of Zambian street kids' perspectives from the public and dominant discourse that shapes their position in society makes it imperative for the present study to give this group a privileged hermeneutic. By according the Zambian street kids this privileged position, this study deliberately problematised the hegemonic position occupied by public discourse – thereby creating a space within which the perspectives of the street kids can also compete for hegemony. It should be noted, however, that existing research on street kids has addressed some issues. This study only addresses the pertinent issues that existing literature has not addressed.

Why is the alliance between “street” and “kid” so powerful in street kids? Why do street kids remain on the streets even when the economic need they cite as the reason for being on the streets is addressed? These issues have important implications for policy and practical programming. A consequent very fundamental issue deserving empirical investigation, especially in a country where social science research is scanty, is that of the street kids' subjective sense of self. Such a study should use the new paradigm ideas of space, time, and social construction of meaning, and should pay attention to macro-level structural constraints on these reflexive identities.

This is done from particular theoretical and methodological stances: positioning theory that allows one to investigate the relationship between identity and discourse (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) and a peripatetic data collection method that nurtures the co-ingredience of place and identity (Anderson, 2004). These are discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

Justification for the Research

The research issues identified in the foregoing section are important theoretically and practically. On the practical level, the identified research problems prioritise a population that is often openly neglected and marginalised (UNICEF, 2006). On the theoretical level, the identified research problems address 'identity', a substantive area of research in psychology. Although there is a plethora of identity research in psychology, this study sought to contribute something unique: the study sought to give street kids a voice by offering them an opportunity to speak for themselves and to self-define. Both the practical and theoretical aspects have been, until now, absent from existing street kid literature and practice.

Methodology

In order to investigate the identified research problems, a qualitative paradigm was used. In this research, I did something seldom done in street kids research and never done with a focus on street identity: I asked street kids to guide me through their territories of meaning (the places they use for sleeping, working, playing, and resting), putting them in charge of their space, and letting them tell their own stories. The essence of these tours was to capture the life stories of the children within the context of their daily life. This is a socio-spatial methodology (Anderson, 2004). This method harnesses the co-ingredience of people and place by spatialising social knowledge. Interviews followed the peripatetic tradition (Wallace, 1993 in Anderson, 2004) and assumed that place is an extension, or even co-ingredient, of identity (Casey, 2001 in Anderson, 2004). So, I conversed with street kids as they guided me through their co-ingredient environments: places where they beg, the Post Office where most of them either wash or guard cars, restaurants where they buy and eat their food, shop

corridors and broken down buses where they sleep at night and during the day, and the streets they stroll through. This ‘talking while walking’ produced the ‘naturally occurring texts’ that formed the research data (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

Using discourse analysis (DA), I have attempted to highlight the the reflexive self-construction of Zambian street kids and the social positions of street kids that these identities legitimise and undermine. The analysis demonstrates that Zambian street kids construct themselves as vulnerable victims, as heroic victims, and as human beings par excellence. These identities serve as resources for attracting charitable responses (vulnerable victim identity), resisting a marginal position that society accords street kids (heroic victim identity), and normalising street existence (human beings par excellence identity).

Outline of the Dissertation

The outline of this dissertation reflects a careful consideration of the troubled philosophy of scientific inference. The way I have structured my work is a product of a mammoth research task I wrestled with for a long time: How do I strike a credible balance between the discipline of psychology, the research methods available to me, the data I have collected, and the context (cultural, academic, social) of my research?

Firstly, the discipline of psychology is not univocal; instead, it is characterised by many perspectives, most of which do not agree. For instance, ‘identity’ within the discipline of psychology can be viewed as ‘relatively stable’ (Eriksonian perspective) or ‘fluid, emergent, and relational’ (sociogenic perspective) –two opposing views. Secondly, the study context is a site for power struggles about what is to be valued when making scientific inference: Is it only

the logic of modern classroom that is acceptable in academic research or are alternative modes of thought (like Afrocentric perspectives that have different logic) also acceptable? Is it evidence or intuition that is valued? How much of objectivity or affect is acceptable? I must admit here that I am not confident about this balance because the academic context wields more powers than the knowledge systems I would have loved to employ.

I come from rural Zambia, and for a greater part of my childhood I learnt the basic and higher-level social skills through codes. Competency within my childhood cultural context entails one's ability to seize and apply codes to various real-life situations. Modern classroom, however, teaches through a different logic that is predominantly Aristotelian. Competency in modern classrooms entails one's ability to argue his/her case logically, from premises to conclusions. I have been exposed to the two non-coherent systems of thought, and they both tried to inform the structure of this dissertation. So, there is a crack running through the structure of this work –I have tried to de-code my earlier learning and then present it in the logic of today's classroom. I had to do this for the dissertation to have 'coherence'.

Chapter Two (Background, Research Issues and Theoretical Framework) identifies the knowledge gap out of which the research issue emerges. The global and Zambian situation of street kids is discussed, and my own empirical and practical puzzles about street kids are highlighted. Relevant literature is reviewed here. The 'worth' of my research issues for theory and practice is established. The appropriate theoretical perspective for dealing with the identified research issues is presented. Chapter Two ends with the research question and research aims. Chapter Three (Methods) describes the methodological framework that this study adopted. The study setting and site are described. Issues of design, methods of data collection and analysis, and research procedures are explained. Reliability and validity issues

are discussed. The ethical considerations relevant to the study are also presented in this chapter. Chapter Four (Results and Discussion) presents the analysis, answering all the identified aspects of the research question. The findings are discussed in the light of the literature. Chapter Five (Concluding Remarks and Implications) does two things: 1) it makes conclusions about the research questions and the research problem, and 2) covers possible implications for theory, policy/practice, and further research. Limitations of the study are reiterated, and implications for further research are identified.

Definitions

Several terms used in this study have multiple meanings and attract different interpretations. Unless specifically defined to the contrary, this dissertation uses the following terms in the sense outlined here. The definitions incorporate links to sections that deal with the terms in detail. The definitions in this section only give the positions taken by this study; the justifications of such positions can be found in the sections that discuss the terms in detail.

Discourses

In general, discourses refer to actual practices of talking and writing (Woodilla, 1998). My use of the term is more specific: I define discourses as inherently positioned diverse ways of representing social life (Fairclough, 2001). Social reality is produced and made real through discourses. Discourses are also ways of self-representation, and they have a social function: they legitimise particular social relations and activities, they afford actors different social positions, and they engender particular outlooks (Macnaghten, 1993).

Economic Odyssey

I have coined this term to refer to the emotional and social gravity of the street kids' journey from home to a fancied economic emancipation on the streets. This 'heroic' homeless mobility is likened to that of Odysseus. Odysseus is the hero of *The Odyssey*, the classic Greek tale by the ancient bard Homer. *The Odyssey* tells of Odysseus' 10-year struggle to return from the Trojan War to his home in Ithaca. A manly warrior at Troy (he was among those who hid in the famous Trojan horse), Odysseus is cunning and resourceful, but also loaded with his share of pride and human failings.

IciBemba

IciBemba (or simply *Bemba*) is a Zambian language that is spoken in about four of the nine Zambian provinces. It is usually referred to as the lingua franca of Zambia because of its wide usage throughout Zambia.

Identity

Identity has been conceptualised and studied in various ways across various social science disciplines. In this work, I argue for the analytic value of approaching identity as social, relational, and emergent in interactional microcosms. The following definition of identity is used: *Identity refers to multiple social positions one accords himself, herself and/or others in any social space.* This definition emerged from the literature on the theoretical framework used in this dissertation (Harre & van Langenhove, 1999; Gergen, 1985). This is discussed in Chapter Two.

Normalisation

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979) outlines the mechanisms used to judge, measure, differentiate and compare people. *Normalisation* is one of those mechanisms. Desired norms are used to judge who fits in or not, or to measure who is good or bad, sick or healthy, and conforming or not. The normalisation process uses these judgements and measurements to compartmentalise homogeneity. It should be noted that normalisation strategies are contested, and individuals are constantly establishing and negotiating their position in relation to norms (Carabine, 2001). Foucault's (1979) notion of *normalisation* is adapted in this study to focus on the mechanisms different groups of people use to normalise the version of reality in which they have a stake. Since these versions are often competing, there is a struggle for normalcy, or even hegemony.

Pondo

Pondo comes from *ukupondoka*, an iciBemba word that roughly means 'rebelliously leaving home'. The street kids often used *pondo* (=one who has rebelliously left home) to refer to other street kids, but not to themselves. For this reason, I have not used it as the referent term for the study population; instead, I prefix it with *bu-* (=exist as) so that it can refer (in the context of this dissertation) to the conceptual social space occupied by Zambian street kids. So, *bu-Pondo* will refer to the conceptual social space that society marks out for street kids, and one that street kids mark out for themselves. As such, *bu-Pondo* has its own status identity—as is the case with other societal status categories: childhood, adulthood, priesthood,

bachelorhood, or professorship. So, *bu-Pondo* will refer to both the conceptual social space occupied by street kids and the status identity that comes with occupying this social space.

Street Kid

While there are many referent terms for my population of study (see Chapters Two & Four), ‘street children’ is the most commonly used term. There is a sense of innocence and vulnerability associated with the word *children*. I do not wish to highlight, or even assume, a sense of innocence and vulnerability; instead, I wish to highlight the sense of resistance to (and counter-voicing of) assumed normal childhood behaviour. Such an emphasis draws attention to my recognition of the resilience and healthy mischievousness of these youngsters (Diversi, 2006). In addition, the term *kid* seems to be more inclusive of the age range of my research participants (13-20 years) than the term *children*. The term *kid*, however, has some potential implications: not being taken seriously by others, the implication of perpetual dependence, etc. The fact that the term used does not adequately describe what it was meant to is partly a limitation of language.

Street-kid-speak

This term refers to the ways in which street kids present themselves, or are presented by others in written and spoken forms. I specifically coined this term for this dissertation. The term is used in the same way Harré, Brockmeier and Mühlhäuser (1999) used the concept of *green speak* in their study of environmental discourse. Street-kid-speak will include the different ways in which the identities of street kids are constructed, presented and negotiated in discourses produced by different stakeholders.

Turn

Used with reference to interview extracts to signal each speaker's utterance before another speaker intercepts or responds. A turn has a number before it. The number indicates the place of an utterance in the whole interview from which it comes. For example, turn 243 means that there are 242 other utterances before the current one in the interview. Similarly, turn 1 means it was the first utterance in the interview. Within the turns, M refers to the researcher; other initials (J, B, etc) refer to respondents.

Utuntemba

Mobile vending took a sudden turn during the time of the liberalised economy, introduced in Zambia's 3rd Republic. Mobile vendors (baKaponya and Mishanga sellers) who had been going around bus stops, streets and pubs to sell cigarettes, sweets, stationery and other items began to identify areas where their wares were more readily bought. So, they began to either erect make-shift shelters for their merchandise or simply spread their wares on the ground where they were most visible. These places and shelters of business became stationary and populated. They were known as *intemba*, an iciBemba word from the fishing communities. Those who go fishing with hooks would often clear a spot on a grassy river and then lower their hooks down this *intemba* for a catch. The plural of *intemba* is *utuntemba*, a word I have used to refer to a period when many Zambians were compelled to 'fish' a living on the streets. Among these people were blind beggars, prostitutes, vendors (dealing in food, phones, clothes, stationery, etc), municipality workers (those collecting parking levies), and street kids.

Delimitations of Scope and Key Assumptions

This study focused on *Zambian street kids* situated on the streets of the Lusaka Central Business District (CBD), particularly those operating from Cairo Road and the nearby streets. So, there was a pre-meditated geographical delimitation. Only male street kids were interviewed –the female street kids were difficult to find during the day. So, there is a gender limitation. The youngest and oldest street kids who were around were included in the study. So, there is no age limitation.

Conclusion

This chapter has laid the foundation for the dissertation. I have introduced the research issues, the research question, and the aims of the study. I have also justified the research, presented the definitions of terms that might have multiple meanings, and I have briefly described and justified the methodology. I have outlined the dissertation, and given the delimitations. It is on these foundations that the following detailed descriptions of the research have been built.

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND, RESEARCH ISSUES, AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This section provides the background information to the study. This information will include a clarification of the highly contested definitions of street kids. In addition, I will provide the global and Zambian (local) context of street kids. I will then locate my own empirical and practical puzzles within the situation of Zambian street kids. A review of literature will focus on my search for answers to my puzzles. I will demonstrate that existing literature cannot provide answers to my puzzles; however, recent trends in street kid research do map out a sufficient conceptual and methodological space for solving my puzzles. I will identify the fundamental issue that deserves empirical investigation, the theoretical framework from which I will study this fundamental issue, and the aims of carrying out this study.

Definition of “Street Kid”

Researchers who have studied the group of people that I studied have used different referent terms for this population. Visano (1990), Donald and Swart-Kruger (1994), Rizzini and Buttler (2003), and Beazley (2003) referred to their study populations as ‘street children’ while Diversi (2006) referred to them as ‘street kids’. Diversi justified his use of the term; Donald and Swart-Kruger discussed the various available terms; the rest of the authors were silent as if the phenomenon known worldwide as ‘street children’ was not conceptually problematic.

Who is a street child? Is it any child and/or adolescent seen 'working' on the streets? Or, is it only a child actually 'living' on the streets? Is it a child living or/and working on the streets by choice? Or, is it only a child living or/and working on the streets because there are no other viable alternatives? Is it a child who confesses to being a street child? When we have answered these questions, another question arises: What should be the referent term for these children and adolescents?

Existing literature on this social group seems to suggest that any operational definition of the group should make a distinction between those *on* the streets and those *of* the streets (Donald & Swart-Kruger, 1994; Ennew, 1986; Richter, 1991; Schärf, Powell & Thomas, 1986; Swart, 1990; Mathiti, 2004). A number of operational definitions have been premised on this distinction.

Richter (1988, p.7) defined children *on* the streets as those who "go into urban areas in order to earn or beg money and who then return home" and children *of* the streets as those who "have abandoned (or have been abandoned by) their families, schools and immediate communities, before they are 16 years of age, and [have] drifted into a nomadic life." When such a distinction is made, it is the children *of* the streets who are the street children. Such a distinction and reference to family connection and age is problematic –particularly with reference to Zambian street children.

Firstly, these children may or may not have family connections. When they have family connections, they move between living a nomadic life and staying at home. Secondly, the definition is premised on a problematic definition of a 'child'. The definition of a 'child' is not straightforward in the Zambian legal framework. Zambia uses two parallel legal systems:

the common law (remnants of the British colonialism) and the customary law (remnants of indigenous legal frameworks). Under the common law, a child is someone under the age of 16 years. According to the customary law, however, you can earn adulthood –and therefore cease to be a child –whenever you are initiated into adult institutions, particularly marriage. This can happen from puberty for girls. And the onset of puberty (and marriage) can be as early as at 12. Similarly, one can remain a child as long as he or she has not been initiated into adulthood through marriage. One’s state of being a child can go on even at the age of 30. Both these systems of thinking about childhood have limited applicability to conceptualising the “child” part of street children.

The question that immediately follows from the foregoing is: What should we actually call the members of this social group? Street children, children of the streets, or what? Donald and Swart-Kruger (1994) and Mathiti (2004) argue that these terms are often given to this group of people by outsiders. So, Donald and Swart-Kruger propose that we need to ask members of this group and hear how they would want to describe themselves. For instance, Schärf, Powell and Thomas (1986) found that these young people refer to themselves as ‘strollers’ in South Africa’s Cape Town. Similarly, Swart (1990) found ‘malunde’ and ‘malalapipe’ as the favoured self-referent terms in Johannesburg, South Africa. However, N. J. Mkhize (personal communication, March 26, 2007) observed that ‘malalapipe’ (=those who sleep in the pipes) is an anglicised word that is likely to be ascribed, and not a self-referent term. Donald and Swart-Kruger propose that once local terms like these are identified, the separating principle between street children and non-street children is how comfortable they are to be labelled with local referent terms. Those who strongly refuse to be labelled by these terms should be regarded as ‘not street children’. This, however, is also problematic.

I worked with Zambian street children before I conducted this study with them. The most common local term is '*pondo*'. These young people freely use this term in the third person, when they are talking about other street children; yet, they refuse to call themselves or to be called *ba-pondo*. So, it was difficult for me to use this 'local' term. In spite of this, I have not been eager to call these young people *children*.

There is a sense of innocence and vulnerability associated with the word *children*. I do not wish to highlight, or even assume, a sense of innocence and vulnerability; instead, I wish to highlight the sense of resistance to (and counter-voicing of) assumed normative childhood behaviour. Such an emphasis draws attention to my recognition of the resilience and healthy mischievousness of these youngsters (Diversi, 2006). The term *kid* seems to be more inclusive of the age categories (child, adolescent, and youth) of this population, than *children*. So, I will refer to these children, adolescents, and youth as street *kids*. This is also a pragmatic choice based on my experience during data collection.

Mid-way through my data collection, I was sitting on a traffic island with about five boys. We were sorting out the order in which they would guide me through town on that Thursday morning. Then two boys came running towards us and explained in between sobs that one of their friends had been train-surfing on a goods train and he fell off. One of his legs was completely cut off by the moving train and he had been rushed to the University Teaching Hospital (UTH). The boys wanted to go with me to the hospital so they could properly identify the boy. This would help them inform the boy's family. We went to the accident scene and one woman wrote a short letter to the hospital to request the authorities to allow the boys to see their friend. I took a photo of this letter, it read (see also Figure 1, below):

(Date)

Casualty,
Assist these Street
Kids locate their
friend who was
fell off the train
under the Post Office
Bridge this morning.

Concerned
citizen

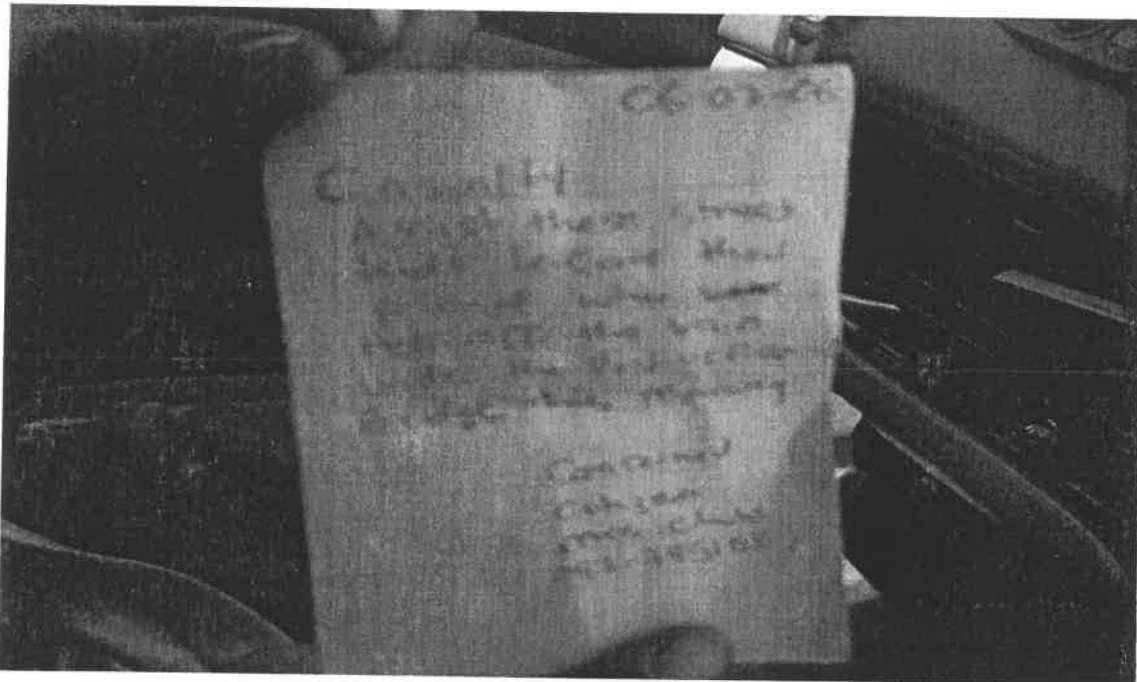


Figure 1: Letter Introducing the Street Kids to the Casualty Department

Although this is a single instance of the term 'street kid', the context of use is very revealing. What is striking is that this 'concerned citizen' was addressing the 'Casualty', where the letter could possibly land in the hands of any one of the many hospital staff. From the perspective of linguistics, it becomes evident that the concerned citizen's choice of words in this social interaction reveals how she cast her linguistic style wide enough to match that of all those

possible recipients (Niederhoffer & Pennebaker, 2002). So, I felt assured that my use of 'street kids' was not only conceptually justifiable but it was linguistically justifiable, too.

In this dissertation, I will use 'street kid' to refer to my study population. For the purposes of this dissertation, 'street kid' will refer to children, adolescents, and youth who carve for themselves a survival niche on streets and public city spaces without direct supervision and control of adults. The street kids in this study spent most of their waking and sleeping time on the streets.

Street Kids: The Global and Zambian Situation

Today, there are an estimated 100 million street kids worldwide, including 40 million in Latin America, 30 million in Asia, and 10 million in Africa (Sexton, 2005). At their 2002 meeting in Kenya, the Civil Society Forum for East and Southern Africa on Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Street Children reported that there were 75000 street kids in Zambia. Although there are no updated statistics about Zambian street kids, it can be expected that the numbers have increased in the past five years.

UNICEF, a United Nations body for children, argues that "[these] children are invisible to the world because their plight is hidden, underreported, or openly neglected" (2006, online).

UNICEF further argues that "By allowing children to disappear from view and failing to reach and protect them, societies condemn children to more neglect and abuse, with lasting consequences for their well-being and for the development of their communities and countries." One category of children whose plight is hidden, underreported, or openly neglected is that of street kids. The presence of street kids on the streets of Zambia elicits

heart-rending public concern, the concern that is considerably covered in both print and audio-visual media (See Extracts 1-5 below). Titles such as *Rising number of street kids overwhelming –Masebo* (Extract 1) and *Street kids are a time bomb, says Mumba* (Extract 4) capture the alarming nature of this concern.

Extract 1: From the Post Newspaper

Rising number of street kids is overwhelming - Masebo

By Nomusa Michelo (Sunday December 25, 2005)

HEALTH minister Sylvia Masebo has said the government is overwhelmed by the growing number of children living on the streets.

Masebo said the problem of children living on the streets was not for the government alone but required the assistance of all stakeholders.

Extract 2: From the Post Newspaper

Let's do something about street children

By Editor (Wednesday February 22, 2006)

It is truly an absolute disgrace to have so many children living like rats on our streets.

Extract 3: From the Post Newspaper

Moved by misery and suffering

By Amos Malupenga (Wednesday March 15, 2006)

WITHOUT sounding like a racist, did you ever imagine that a Whiteman [sic] in Zambia could embrace and adopt a filthy, ailing and stinking street kid as his own son?

This is what Zambian Airways chief executive officer Don MacDonald did about three years ago. Don and his wife Christine did this not because they did not have children of their own.

They have two daughters. But they were moved by the misery and suffering of young Nicholas Kunda who was just eleven years at the time.

Extract 4: From the Post Newspaper

Street kids a time bomb, says Mumba

By McDonald Chipenzi (Wednesday April 05, 2006)

ZAMBIA will be in flames if the issue of street kids is not addressed urgently, Ministry of Home Affairs permanent secretary Peter Mumba has warned.

Appearing before the parliamentary committee on legal affairs, governance, human rights and gender chaired by Nalikwanda UPND [United Party for National Development] Member of Parliament Simasiku Kalumiana yesterday, Mumba said the issue of street children was a big problem facing the country.

Extract 5: From the Post Newspaper

Helping street children

By Chiwenda Tumbama Nevyson, Hope for Africa (Sunday February 26, 2006)

I want to advise M. Ndhlovu who called on the government not to ignore street kids through an article in The Post of Friday 24, 2006, with a title Helping street children. It is a pity that Ndhlovu, despite being a concerned citizen, has to still think it is ONLY the government's responsibility to take care of the children he is mentioning that they sniff glue in front of him.

I appreciate your concern on our brothers and sisters living in the streets and from today stop calling them street children but rather call them missing children because at one time they were happy family members and as Christians we should take that responsibility of continuing to raise these children in our own communities.

These discourses and my own experience with working with street kids have left me with empirical and practical concerns.

My Practical and Empirical Puzzles

In this study, I begin with two puzzles: an empirical one and a practical one. The puzzles concern phenomena I have noted in public discourse and in my own work with street kids.

From mid-2005, Zambian street kids started attracting public and media debates in an unprecedented way. The foregoing verbatim newspaper extracts are only the tip of the iceberg. In these extracts, we see how Zambian street kids have been variously positioned as problematic (Extracts 1 & 4, above), a disgrace to society (Extract 2), a substandard kind of child one would not readily call one's own (Extract 3), or simply a potential for the downfall of society (Extract 4). A careful consideration of Zambian public discourse (both media and political discourses) about street kids shows people's strong desire to remove the word "street" from "street kid" so that they can remain with something special – a KID or CHILD.

For example, the writer in Extract 5 above pushes for this discursive end by advising the interlocutor to "stop calling them street children but rather missing children." On a number of occasions, government has tried to forcefully remove Zambian street kids from the streets. Yet, these kids usually go back to the streets. The strength of the street/kid alliance has on various intervention-occasions highlighted the powerlessness of the Zambian society vis-à-vis overcoming this 'problem'. Efforts, commitment, and resources have failed to remove the word "street" from the label "street kid". What is it about the alliance of "street" and "kid" that makes the "street kid" an almost unbreakable and impenetrable way of being? This is my first puzzle.

Prior to coming to the university, I worked for a few years with Fountain of Hope (FOH), during my vacations from college. My work with FOH spanned 1997 and 2000 when I was studying philosophy and religious studies at St Bonaventure College in Lusaka. FOH is a shelter for street kids and it used to provide shelter for about a hundred male and female street kids. Other kids only dropped-in for food and a bath during daytime.

One of the programmes under FOH aimed at getting the street kids off the streets to the shelter. Later, efforts would be made to reintegrate them with either original or foster families. The shelter would provide the children with clothes, food, temporary housing, and help them get back to school. Yet, the street kids would often return to the streets after days, weeks, or months. Most of them would cite hunger and harsh home conditions as the reasons for going to the streets. Why, then, would street kids still return to the streets despite FOH's offer of necessities and opportunities for getting back to school? This is my second puzzle.

My puzzles are articulated most succinctly in the words of a work colleague at Fountain of Hope. After a four-hour tiring street visit in 1998, my colleague was moved by the dirt of the children who had run away from the FOH centre, and wondered: "we give these children everything but they still want to be on the streets, what do they really want?" In seeking to understand these two puzzles, I turned to academic, policy and welfare literature on street kids to see whether some studies have explained this kind of behaviour among street kids. I was excited to do this because I hoped the answer to these puzzles would also inform programmes and policy for street kids².

² It should be noted here that my empirical and practical puzzles did not become my main research focus but they provided the background for the research issues that I ended up addressing.

There was no literature specifically focusing on Zambian street kids, and there has not been any systematic study of this population within Zambia. The one and only systematic study I found was a rapid assessment, conducted in 2001 by a group of NGOs that are under the auspices of Afrika KidSAFE. This applied research aimed at providing information to NGOs and only gathered basic demographic data: age and sex profiles, reasons for being on the streets, duration on the streets, sources of livelihood, knowledge and use of street kids' facilities, education, health, pregnancy, drugs, violence, and needs for assistance (Project Concern International Zambia, PCIZ, 2002). Another conceptual paper that refers to Zambian street kids comes from Sauv  (2003), a reference only made in the process of discussing the shifting paradigms in Street Kid International (SKI)'s work with street kids.

In the absence of specific literature on Zambian street kids, I turned to the street kid research that has been done elsewhere. To my surprise, however, the loads of available literature on street kids supplied very little information that would unravel my puzzles. In the following sections, I demonstrate that existing literature on street kids, vast though it is, fails to address itself to my puzzles. I argue that a researcher interested in unravelling my puzzles ought to fill the missing gap in the existing literature by accessing street kids' self-constructions (identities) from a methodological and analytic perspective that allows their language and perspectives to stand out.

The Existing Literature on Street Kids

There is a vast body of literature about street kids. This literature spans over two decades. Notably, two special publications within the last decade brought together theoretical and practical literature about street kids: i) the 1996 special issue of *Africa Insight* (Volume 26,

Number 3), and ii) the 2003 special online issue of *Children, Youth and Environments* (CYE; Volume 13, Number 1). These two publications specifically focused on street kids. The CYE issue is very comprehensive in presenting the issues of street kids because it uses many sources (academic researchers, practitioners, and policy makers), it brings together sources from many fields (social anthropology, geography, psychology, and sociology), is cross-national, and presents new research as well as previously published literature.

In the following review, I trace pertinent paradigm issues in the construction of, and work with, street kids. I highlight shifts in the paradigms that have informed research and work with and for street kids. I demonstrate that the earlier “old” paradigm constructed street kids as passive and lacking capacity. The old paradigm also adhered to ideal-type constructions of the normative childhood (what is appropriate in terms of family and morality) and reproduced existing relationships of power. The new paradigm, on the other hand, constructs street kids as subjects with rights (not just objects of rights), and active agents in their lives, relationships, and environments. I also highlight a growing number of studies that are looking at how street kids appropriate spaces and places, and how these studies have challenged taken-for-granted ideal-type constructions of homes, families, and home-based children. I argue that, in line with the new paradigm, the questions raised by Butler and Rizzini (2003) have not yet been researched: how do street kids understand their situation, how do they self-identify? I identify these interrelated questions as the research issues that this study addresses.

Paradigms in Research and Work With, And For, Street Kids

For over two decades now, street kids have attracted both academic and welfare interest. This has resulted in what Rizzini (1996, p.226) calls “a prodigious outpouring of texts.” This

literature reflects the way the phenomenon of ‘street kids’ is viewed, interpreted, and acted upon by different stakeholders. In this review, I focus on the literature from Asia, Latin America, and Africa because the socio-economic changes that have taken place in these countries (rapid urbanisation, deteriorating economic conditions, weakening family ties, and declining government social programmes) are similar to those that have taken place in Zambia (Bibars, 2003; Nalwamba, Ntalasha, Chilala, Simfukwe, Songiso, & Sichali, 1997).

Literature on street kids reveals a two-stage global shift in paradigms from the “old paradigm” to the “new paradigm” (Buttler & Rizzini, 2003; Ennew, 1996, 2003; Panter-Brick, 2003). Buttler and Rizzini traced the paradigm shifts in theory and practice in the context of Brazil; Ennew explained parallel changes in African constructions of street kids. Panter-Brick described shifts at the global level, with particular emphasis on the role of the powerful human rights discourse that has emerged from the 1989 United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Old Paradigm

In the late 1970s and early 1980s when the phenomenon of street kids became a concern of many societies³, academics and welfare faced the problem of defining and responding to the phenomenon. In the following sections I demonstrate that, characteristic of the old paradigm, street kids were constructed as passive, lacking capacity, and were “othered” because their existence differed from the ideal-type order of childhood existence (van Beers, 1996; Aptekar & Heinonen, 2003; Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003; Buttler & Rizzini, 2003). Within the old

³ See ‘*Children, Youth and Environments*, 13(1)’ of 2003 for discussions of the emergence of this phenomenon.

paradigm, research among street kids was typological, seeking to create profiles of street kids (Buttler & Rizzini, 2003).

Street-kid-speak: discourses about street kids (in the old paradigm).

In this dissertation, I will use the term *street-kid-speak* to refer to all the ways in which street kids are presented, or ways in which they present themselves, be it in written or spoken form. I coined this term so that it can be used in the same way Harré, Brockmeier and Mühlhäuser (1999) used the concept of *green speak* in their study of environmental discourse. Street-kid-speak will include the different ways in which the identities of street kids are constructed, presented and negotiated in different discourses produced by different stakeholders (street kids themselves, researchers, organisations interested in children in general or street kids in particular, the political communities, religious organisations, the media, and ordinary members of society).

In the old paradigm, the prevailing discourses regarding street kids, and more generally, children facing hardship highlighted these young people's *needs*, passive position, risk, and deviance (Buttler & Rizzini, 2003; Panter-Brick, 2003; Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003). Under the old paradigm, street kids were regarded as *children in need*, *vulnerable children*, *children at risk*, and *deviant children*. These discourses that positioned street kids as problematic are discussed.

Children in need

Discourses that position street kids as 'children in need' are based on the concept of childhood. In many societies, children are constructed as immature creatures whose needs

must be met by parents or charitably inclined adults. The discourse of children in need is applied to all children living under difficult circumstances. The child is constructed as deficient (having a need), weak (being needy) and in need of charity (being needy). The fundamental assumption made by these discourses is that street kids are both weak and dependent (Panter-Brick, 2003).

The concept of a 'child in need', although characteristic of the old paradigm, found its way into public discourse where it can still be found. By labelling street kids as 'needy', health and social service professionals are able to see themselves as providing a service of fundamental value that is lacking in the lives of street kids. An example of the retention of the 'child in need' concept in public discourse is in the name of one of the organisations that look after the interests of street kids in Zambia. It is called the Children in Need Network (CHIN).

Vulnerable children

The 'vulnerable children' discourses in the old paradigm were also based on the construction of childhood that holds that children should be protected and provided for. These discourses position children as vulnerable, victims and powerless (Panter-Brick, 2003). For example, Kruger and Richter (1996) looked at the health vulnerability of street kids and concluded that

[Street kids] who have little sense of self-worth and a large degree of fatalism in their make-up can hardly be expected to protect themselves from contracting a virus of which they have heard but whose devastating effects they have not personally encountered. (p.242)

In this way, Kruger and Richter highlighted street kids' vulnerability to HIV. Similarly, Williams (1996) highlighted the 'victimhood' of street kids, particularly when it comes to street violence. The representation of street kids as vulnerable and powerless has an impact for welfare decisions (Ennew, 1996). Interventions based on this representation of street kids

seek to work *for*, street kids –usually focusing on ‘rescuing’ street kids from the streets by taking them to shelters, back to school, or re-integrating them with their families (Panter-Brick, 2003). In this view, street kids remain passive.

Children at risk

The welfare literature that looks at street kids from the public health concern constructs street kids as ‘children at risk’ (Donald & Swart-Kruger, 1994; Kruger & Richter, 1996). Within the old paradigm, discourses of children at risk were built around risk factors that characterise the life of street kids: poverty, minority age, lack of education, absence of health care, instability of residence, disability, and family dysfunction. The kids were also seen as being at risk of negative physical and developmental outcomes (Donald & Swart-Kruger, 1994).

The children at risk discourse also emanates from societal views of childhood. Childhood is more commonly constructed as a protected state in which children should lead supervised lives (Panter-Brick, 2003). A number of studies have highlighted street kids as a category of children whose life circumstances place them at both physical and psychological risk (Donald & Swart-Kruger, 1994; Kruger & Richter, 1996; Ebigbo, 2003).

Deviant children

Within the old paradigm, the discourse of ‘deviant children’ was also based on societal assumptions about childhood. Levi-Strauss (1949 in Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003) identified a set of mutually constructed oppositions (see Table 1 below), now used on street kids, that are the basis of social meaning:

Normative and appropriate order of social existence	Against social order of existence
Family unit	Abandoned, lone street kid
Home	Street
Social	Anti-social
Moral	Amoral
Domestic normality	Street deviance
Home-based child	Street-based child

Table 1: Position of street kids vis-à-vis the dominant normative childhood

Street kids have always challenged the order of social existence (Aptekar & Heinonen, 2003), particularly the normative and appropriate childhood. Consequently, they are in conflict with society (van Beers, 2003). Since morality is normative and rests on what is appropriate and acceptable, street kids find themselves at the lowest ebb of the moral continuum.

Within the old paradigm, street-kid-speak categorised street kids as children in need, children at risk, and deviant children. These generic-term constructions obscured the heterogeneity of street kids' actual circumstances and experiences (Panter-Brick, 2003). The old paradigm street-kid-speak emphasised weakness, dependency, and deviation from normative childhood. These categorical constructions of street kids pre-structured adult agenda vis-à-vis street kids: adults were mandated to rescue street kids from the streets and placing them in 'homes' like shelters, institutions, or foster homes. Ennew and Swart-Kruger (2003) observed that such a mandate to rescue street kids reproduced and perpetuated skewed relationships of power. Therefore, the old paradigm street-kid-speak both objectified and dis-empowered street kids.

Methodology: researching street kids within the old paradigm.

How were street kids (constructed as passive, powerless, vulnerable, needy, amoral and deviant) studied within the old paradigm? Buttler and Rizzini (2003) describe what was characteristic of earlier research on street kids, particularly in the early 1980s in Brazil. Characteristic of this early research were descriptions of a typical street kid: needs, risk factors, deviant behaviours, and circumstances of vulnerability (Schärf, Powell & Thomas, 1986; Richter, 1988; Swart, 1990; Donald & Swart-Kruger, 1994; Kruger & Richter, 1996; Richter & van der Walt, 1996). Street kids were a new phenomenon, and researchers wanted to establish similarity of circumstances in each of the localities in which these street kids were found.

Survey questionnaires were employed in data collection. Schärf et al. (1985) and Swart (1990) documented the common physical risks which South African street kids were exposed to. They identified exposure to cold, vulnerability to pedestrian traffic accidents, and exposure to gang violence as the major risks encountered by street kids. Kruger and Richter (1996) and Swart (1990) highlighted street kids' health risks. These risks included lack of treatment of injuries and illnesses, intoxication from glue-sniffing, and the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

A critical 'gaze' at the old paradigm.

I use Michel Foucault's idea of "the gaze" to critically reflect on the constructions of street kids that are characteristic of the old paradigm. Foucault (1979) drew on the supervisory efficiency of the architectural design of 'panopticon' prisons. The "panopticon" is a prison layout designed by English philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century. In

these prisons, all (*pan-*) prisoners could be observed (*-opticon*) from a central point. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979) used the panopticon metaphor to refer to modern “disciplinary” societies and their pervasive tendency to observe and normalize. Foucault argued that a panoptic gaze is a hierarchical, automatic and anonymous power that functions through a network of relations to hold societal institutions together. When people’s behaviour become self-regulating because they do not know if they are being observed or not, the network of relations that make this control possible becomes a panoptic mechanism.

Our earlier look at the ‘deviant children’ discourses around street kids highlighted how adults make meaning from constructing oppositions in normative childhood existence: home versus street, moral versus amoral and domestic normality versus street deviance. In these street-kid-speak, adult supervision of children (the category to which street kids belong) carries a similar gaze of power as Foucault’s (1979) ‘gaze’. Through this home-based gaze, parents and adult observers exercise their control over children through mechanisms of inspection and surveillance (Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003). For street kids, it is the awareness that adults are watching, judging, and applying norms of appropriate and acceptable behaviour on street kids that necessitates self-censure and self-regulation. This panoptic gaze, however, is coupled with adult desire for direct surveillance where street kids (the ‘children’ who have escaped adults’ direct gaze) are consequently constructed as amoral, deviant, anti-social, and problematic. Who is served by the desire for a direct surveillance?

Aptekar (1988), Ennew (1996), and Hecht (1999) have argued that this gaze on street kids only serves the interests of particular sectors of society. Butler and Rizzini (2003) observed that this street-kid-speak is related to the desire to keep youngsters in their place: it mandates adults to rescue the children who fall outside the frame of what is considered ‘normal’. In the

study of Columbian street kids, Aptekar (1988) noted that adults who saw young street kids on the streets experienced some form of cognitive dissonance because these children fell outside normal expectations of childhood. The adult observer's concept of a home-based child who is innocent and in need of family protection and the sight of a street-based child who is self-reliant are incongruent. Society's supervisory gaze, therefore, contributes to the stigmatisation of street kids. The concern for street kids within context of the old paradigm can be seen as not a concern for street kids' needs but a concern for society's need for resolving cognitive dissonance. The new paradigm sharply contrasts the old paradigm.

The New Paradigm

The emergence of a new paradigm has been facilitated by a two-fold awareness: 1) that children are subjects with rights, not just objects of rights, and 2) that children are active agents in their own lives, relationships, and environments (Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003). The first awareness has been facilitated by the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which came into effect in September 1990 (Panter-Brick, 2003). The second awareness is mainly due to the introduction of the ideas of space, place and time to street kids research (Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003; Young, 2003, 2004; van Blerk, 2005). What this means is that street kids are not merely recipients of rights that are assigned by adults but they are capable of negotiating their rights and their place in society. At the same time, street kids are seen as capable of actively engaging with, and appropriating, their spaces and places in life-giving ways.

It was noted from the old paradigm that street kids were a matter of charitable concern. The Convention, on the other hand, asserted a number of rights for all children, and effected a legal obligation falling on nations. For example, Article 13(1) of this convention states:

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideals of all kinds, regardless of frontiers either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

A principle like this recognises that children, as individuals or as groups, are active participants in society; so, they should have a right to be heard and to contribute to issues that affect them. Some studies in the old paradigm were informed by children's rights, like Kruger and Richter's (1996) and Swart's (1990) studies that were informed by an understanding that street kids had a right to health; however, these studies underplayed how street kids actively negotiated their place vis-à-vis illnesses like HIV.

In addition, social science researchers are recognising the importance of acknowledging children's perspectives as these may differ from, and may be more sophisticated than, views based on what adults think children think (Balen, Blyth, Calabretto, Fraser, Horrocks & Manby, 2006). Mullender et al. (2002, in Balen et al., 2006, p.31) argue that "children's own perceptions and actions in all areas of their lives deserve separate study if existing gaps in our understanding are to be filled."

The paradigm shift has also been partly due to the intervention of geographers in street kid research (Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003). Geographers –like Young (2003 & 2004) who also writes as van Blerk (2005) –have used ideas of space, time and place to enrich street kid discourses. Characteristic of the new paradigm is the acknowledgement that street kids are capable social agents who interact with various environments to construct meaning (Buttler &

Rizzini, 2003; Panter-Brick, 2003). The new paradigm has implications for both the street-kid-speak and research methodology.

Street-kid-speak: discourses about street kids (in the new paradigm).

The new paradigm is characterised by following shifts: 1) from highlighting the street kids' needs to highlighting how they actively appropriate their places and spaces, 2) from portraying street kids as vulnerable and incompetent (passive) to listening to them and fostering their participation (active), 3) from focussing on individual children to analysing the structural constraints operating at the macro-level of their societies (Panter-Brick, 2003; Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003). In the new paradigm, street-kid-speak is guided by ideas of space, time and the social construction of meaning (Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003). Table 2, below, highlights how the ideas of space, place and social construction of meaning have changed street-kid-speak.

Old paradigm street-kid-speak	Idea bringing change	New Paradigm street-kid-speak
Street kids are homeless and abandoned victims	Space	Street kids create meanings for using street spaces and form supportive networks
Street kids' lives are chaotic; they will become delinquents	Time	Street kids have changing lifestyles on the streets, and their increasing age is an important factor
Adults know better; adult control and supervision is necessary to ensure street kids' welfare	Social construction of meaning	Street kids are active agents in their own lives; they construct meanings and are subjects with rights

Table 2: Shifts in paradigms, using ideas of space, time, and social construction of meaning (Adapted from Ennew and Swart-Kruger, 2003)

Methodology: researching street kids within the new paradigm.

A number of studies have used the ideas of space, time, and social construction of meaning to study street kids (Beazley, 2003; Rizzini & Buttler, 2003; van Blerk, 2005; Diversi, 2006). In this section, I show how the ideas of the new paradigm have been used in three different studies in three different contexts. Firstly, I show how Beazley (2003) used the ideas of space and social construction of meaning to show how Indonesian street boys constructed their own subculture, the Tikyan, as a strategy for both collective and individual survival. Secondly, I show how van Blerk (2005) used the ideas of space and time to show the fluidity of the identities of Ugandan street kids, particularly as these identities changed in response to the nomadic (space) and episodic (time) processes of their homeless mobility. Lastly, I show how Diversi (2006) used the idea of social construction of meaning to show how Brazilian street kids employ sophisticated knowledge of what is highly desirable in the dominant culture of consumption as a way of striving to become part of that culture –and in so doing, show a desire to be perceived as full human beings.

Beazley (2003) studied Indonesian street kids. Her interest was in street kids' social world which exists within marginal spaces. She wanted to find out how Indonesian street kids survive their marginal position in society. To study this, she drew on Turner's (1985 & 1994 in Beazley, 2003) self-categorisation theory, Visano's (1990) concept of a street life as a career, and the work of sub-cultural theorists to do a social analysis of the street kids' social world. Her analysis showed that Indonesian street kids 'won' their marginal space, made their life within this space a career, and used this space as a form of mental and physical escape from numerous negative experiences. Within this new space, the Indonesian street kids

constructed their own subculture, the Tikyan, which restored individual and collective feelings of self-worth.

Beazley (2003) observed that street kids who have been on the streets for over a year would find it difficult to go back home because they would miss friends, become bored, and long to go back to the street. If this empirical observation was sufficient to describe street kids, then it would logically follow that street kids who are taken into street kid shelters where they share the company of other street kids but are introduced to school and other 'normal' activities would not miss anyone, would not be bored, and would feel at home.

Yet, in practice this is not the case. One of the puzzles that inspired this research was my own experience of working with street kids. What puzzled me about the street kids I worked with some ten years ago was that when we asked street kids what forced them to go on the streets they would site poverty, hunger, and lack of opportunities to go to school. Yet, when some organisations provided free shelter, clothing, food, and school, the street kids still ran back to the streets. So, there must be more to being on the streets than friends.

Van Blerk (2005) recruited 20 Ugandan young men (ages 16-24) using snowball sampling. She employed a child-centred participatory method and did in-depth life history interviews. Her analysis supported the view that street kids' nomadic movements around the city and their episodic movements between the streets and other places were important for fully understanding their multiple and changing identities. The nomadic and episodic movements resulted in different behaviours and constructions of identity that were acceptable in each place they moved to. For van Blerk, street life was a homeless career. This construction of street life as a career has a long history.

The idea that street life is a career has been used by Visano (1990) who studied North American street kids, Hanssen (1996) who studied Sri Lankan street kids, Beazley (2003) who studied Indonesian street kids, and van Blerk (2005) who studied Ugandan street kids. This perspective was also taken up in May's (2000 in van Blerk, 2005) conceptual paper. Conceptualising street life as a career is, however, problematic. In the age in which people have lost a sense of career permanence, and are inclined to changing careers every now and then, then those engaged in the street life career –not being immune to societal changes – would follow suit and try out other career options at will. Practical experience has shown that this is not the case.

Diversi (2006) did a critical ethnography with Brazilian street kids. He documented the stories of Brazilian street kids as they evaluated the Nike shoes he was putting on as old-fashioned, and as they asked him if his Nike cap was imported. He argued that the street kids' Nike stories reflect and constitute a very sophisticated understanding of the pervasive culture of consumerism. He further argued that the culture of consumerism represents what is highly desirable to the dominant culture. Diversi concluded that the street kids' sophisticated knowledge about the Nike products can be interpreted as an attempt to become part of the dominant culture. This, for Diversi, is a desire to be perceived as full human beings.

An important finding in Diversi's (2006) study is that street kids are active agents in the construction of their identities. For Diversi (2006), however, the street kids' desire to be perceived as full human beings only accounts for efforts by street kids to align themselves with the dominant culture. In other words, by aligning themselves with the dominant culture, street kids see in this action a chance to be perceived as 'one of them' (members of a

dominant culture). This, however, does not explain what facilitates street kids' continued presence on the streets.

Research Issues in This Study

The 'problem' of street kids is a global concern. At the moment, this concern has currency in Zambia. It is clear that a lot of research about street kids has been done in many other countries for over two decades. Paradigms for researching street kids have changed during this time. It is also clear that the ideas of space, time, and social construction of meaning that are characteristic of the new paradigm promise an increased potential for studies to explain how street kids construct their reality, how they experience their life on the streets, and why they remain on the streets. However, there are pertinent issues that existing literature has not addressed.

Why is the alliance between "street" and "kid" so powerful in street kids? Why do street kids remain on the streets even when the economic need they cite as the reason for being on the streets is addressed? These issues have important implications for policy and practical programming. A consequent very fundamental issue deserving empirical investigation, especially in a country like Zambia where social science research is scanty, is that of the street kids' subjective sense of self. This is the research issue that this dissertation has addressed.

In addressing this research issue, I have used the new paradigm ideas of space, time, and social construction of meaning, and I have paid attention to macro-level structural constraints on these reflexive identities. I have argued that positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990;

Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) is the appropriate theoretical framework for studying these research issues.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses the ideas of space and social construction of meaning to explore the reflexive self-constructions of Zambian street kids. The dissertation is anchored in Davies and Harré (1990) and Harré and van Langenhove (1999)'s positioning theory. Additional sensitising concepts and ideas are drawn from Pike's (1967) emic-etic distinction, Foucault's (1979) ideas of the gaze and normalisation, and Gramsci's (1971) idea of hegemony. Positioning theory and the frameworks from which this dissertation derives general ideas and concepts are discussed in this section. Positioning theory, as the key theoretical position, is discussed in detail; Foucault's (1979) gaze has been discussed earlier in this chapter; emic-etic distinction, normalisation, and hegemony are briefly discussed in this section.

Main Theory: Positioning Theory

Positioning theory is used in this study as an explanatory scheme for understanding and studying discourse and its relation to identity (Harré & van Langehove, 1999). In order to frame positioning theory as a conceptual tool that allows one to investigate the relationship between identity and conversations/discourses, let me first locate the ideas inherent in this theory in the broader social constructionist approaches to psychology.

Social Constructionism

Social constructionism has many shades and nuances. A discussion of these differences is beyond the scope of this work. However, this study draws on common epistemological and methodological themes. Common to all varieties of social constructionism are two basic principles (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999):

1. What people do (publicly or privately) is
 - a) intentional: directed to something beyond itself, and
 - b) normatively constrained: this means that what people do is subject to assessments like proper/improper, correct/incorrect, good/bad, appropriate/inappropriate, or acceptable/unacceptable.
2. What people are (to themselves or to others) is a result of lifelong interpersonal interactions.

In addition to these two principles, one view that is common to all forms of social constructionism is that language is not a passive reflection of the external world. Language does something and it leads to action. In short, language is a site for 'doing reality' rather than describing it (Gergen, 1985; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1999). This has implications for doing psychology.

In psychology, this epistemological and methodological stance leads us to see language as worth studying in its own right. So, the language that constitutes a topic (like the identity of Zambian street kids) is approached in terms of construction, variation, and function (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Potter, Edwards, Gill, & Wetherell, 1990; Edwards, 1997; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). These approaches are briefly explained.

Construction.

The focus is on the reality that is being constructed and the discursive resources that are used to make this construction. In focusing on discursive constructions, the aim is not to get closer to the truth but to identify the way people produce reality at a particular time. In addition, the interest is not in people's motivations, what they really believed or what they meant to do; instead, the focus is on what they did and how they did it. In the context of the present study, our interest in the identities of Zambian street kids is more on what identities are produced in particular interactional microcosms, and how these identities are produced (Woodilla, 1998; De Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999; Dyer & Keller-Cohen, 2000; Apker & Eggle, 2004).

Variation.

This pertains to the different ways in which people talk about a topic. Edley (2001) noted that every topic has different ways of being talked about. This means that there are many possible versions of constructing a topic. When a topic like 'identity of Zambian street kids' is taken, it should be noted that there are many possible versions of constructing street kids. Some versions come from the street kids themselves while others are ascribed to street kids by stakeholders. Within the group of street kids, there would be various versions of street-kid identity; similarly, other people would also construct street kids in various ways.

Function.

When talking about the identity of Zambian street kids, for example, each version will function to construct reality in a way that makes some actions, beliefs and understandings possible, while making other understandings impossible. This means that each version of reality has a consequent constellation of advantage and disadvantage (Billig, 1987; Hardy, Palmer, & Phillips, 2000; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Bishop & Jaworski, 2003).

Positioning

It is within this broader social constructionist perspective that positioning theory falls. Positioning theory seeks to understand how psychological phenomena are produced in discourse (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999; Davies & Harré, 1999; Slocum & van Langenhove, 2004). According to Harré and van Langenhove (1999, p. 1), positioning theory facilitates “The study of local moral orders as ever-shifting patterns of mutual and contestable rights and obligations of speaking and acting.” Positioning is the central tenet of this theory. What, then, is positioning?

The term was first introduced in social sciences by Holloway (1984), although instances of its use can also be found in the field of marketing and in the military (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) argue that every psychological phenomenon is to some measure indeterminate. When a phenomenon is indeterminate, we find ourselves asking: What does ‘that’ actually mean? The ‘that’ in the foregoing question can be replaced by different psychological phenomena: intelligence, attitude, emotion, personality, identity, or abnormality.

Sometimes, however, situations and the people involved in a social interaction require that we make these phenomena determinate –that we clarify what we mean. For example, an indeterminate racial attitude ‘I don’t like black people’ can become a determinate racial attitude when a black person, who is qualified for a job you have advertised, submits an application. So, positioning “...is a procedure of making determinate a psychological phenomenon for the purposes at hand” (van Langehove & Harré, 1999, p.17). In other words, positioning is the discursive process by which people are located in conversations as participants in co-produced story lines (Davies & Harré, 1999).

Davies and Harré (1999) identify two ways of positioning. The first is interactive positioning, whereby what one person says positions another. The second is reflexive positioning whereby one positions oneself. In this study, the interest is in how *Zambian street kids* position themselves –their reflexive positioning.

In discourse, people take up different positions and accord their interlocutors different positions. A position can be taken up or given to an individual, a representative of a group, or an exemplar for a group (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Each position, assumed or ascribed, sustains very specific rights, duties and obligations (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999; Slocum & van Langenhove, 2004). An assigned position can be accepted, contested, or even subverted (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Consequently, what people do (and can do) is restricted by the rights, duties and obligations that are congruent with their position. For example, if someone is positioned as powerful in a social group, s/he may legitimately issue orders and demand the obedience of the powerless or less powerful in that group.

Positioning, within the constructionist perspective, is directed at something beyond itself (it is intentional). As noted in the discussion of social constructionism, an act of positioning should be approached in terms of construction, function, and variation. In positioning theory, construction, variation, and function take place in what is known as the positioning triad. Analytic meaning emanates from the positioning triad.

Positioning Triad

Within positioning theory, there are three key sources of meaning: the actor's given position, the actor's actions which have social forces, and the storylines which are the discursive contexts of the actions (Slocum & van Langenhove, 2004; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). The mutual influence of these three aspects is referred to as the positioning triad (see Figure 2 below).

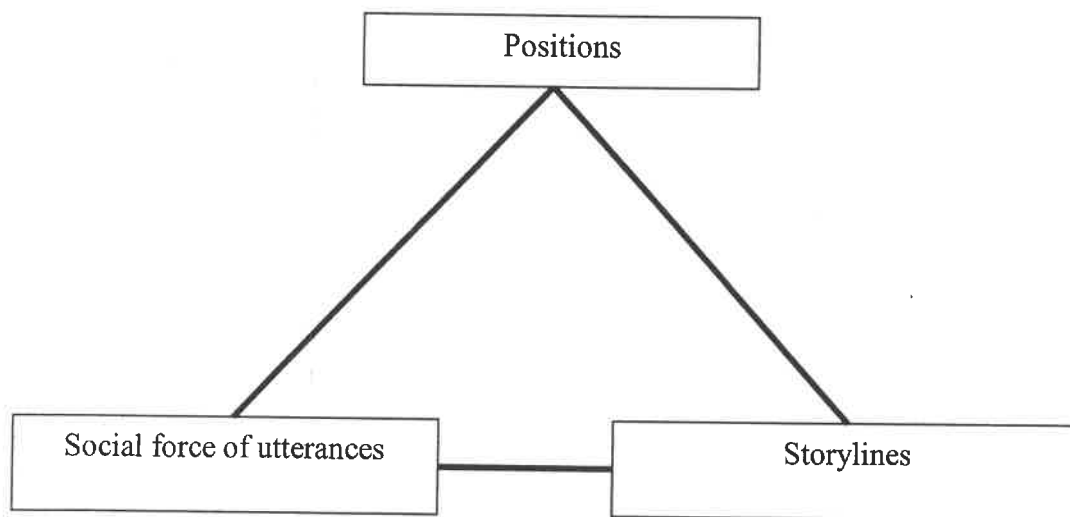


Figure 2: The positioning triad

Positions.

Positions have been discussed (see *Positioning* above). In addition to what has already been discussed, it should be noted that one can adopt a position as an individual, a representative of a group, or as an exemplar for a group (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Harré and van Langenhove also argue that each position sustains particular rights, duties, and obligations. Positions are also relational.

A position entails particular relations of power, relations of competence, and relations of moral standing (Törrönen, 2001). In terms of power, if one person positions himself/herself as powerful, there are other people s/he will relate to as the less powerful or even powerless. The same is the case with the moral/immoral or trustworthy/untrustworthy moral relations. Lastly, when one is positioned as knowledgeable (competent), others can be positioned as ignorant (incompetent). Positions have consequences.

If one is positioned as ignorant (incompetent) in psychology, for instance, that person cannot be accorded the right to speak as a psychological expert witness in a court of law. So a position comes with rights, duties, and obligations to act at various levels, in various realms, and towards various ends (Slocum & van Langenhove, 2004). In other words, positions create a social order of rights, duties and obligations.

It should also be noted that positions are created within a particular interactional microcosm. A lecturer who is standing in front of a class may be positioned as knowledgeable (competent), and as such will have the right and duty to transfer that knowledge to students. Students within this class will be obliged to learn from this competent lecturer. However,

Törrönen (2001) argues that these positions of lecturer and student have continuity beyond the “here and now” (p.326) class situation and the social order constructed in it. The social order created in a classroom (lecturer imparts knowledge on students) marks out possibilities of how the lecturer and student should interact beyond the current classroom interaction. This observation is important for this study.

The positions that street kids can take within an interview microcosm can be part of a reality and experience beyond a particular one-to-one interview. Street kids’ utterances within an interview interaction can reflect the norms and values that they are pushing for in the wider social interactions. So, positions should be seen as having continuity beyond the here and now interactions.

Acts / Social Forces.

An act is the meaning one assigns to an action. It is a (discursive or non-discursive) social accomplishment. Suppose I tell a story to my friends about my adventures through Africa. Telling a story (a linguistic action), can mean that I am trying to entertain my friends (act) or that I want them to see me as a hero (act) or that I am boasting about my accomplishments (act). So, in telling a story, I would be accomplishing something socially: “pleasing” my friends, “annoying” my friends, or even “accusing” my friends. So, pleasing, annoying, or accusing would be the social forces of my story-telling (act).

An action (telling a story) can have multiple social forces (annoying some friend while entertaining others). Social forces (entertaining) can position an actor (as friendly or caring).

Storylines or Discursive Contexts.

Storylines are the discursive contexts within which positions and social forces find meaning. Storylines are temporal and teleological, comprising of a series of plots, events that happen at specified times with a precise ending (Slocum & van Langenhove, 2004). For example, in street-kid-speak, there may be a storyline of 'an eminent departure from the moral order' in which individual street kids are interpreted as drifting on the road of moral degradation. These temporal and teleological elements in street-kid-speak are entrenched in a complex socio-cultural history. Storylines define actions as acts, and give positions and social forces a rational appearance.

Positioning Theory and Personhood (identity)

In line with the theoretical framework, I argue for the analytic value of approaching identity as social, relational, and emergent in interactional microcosms. The following definition of identity is used: *Identity is a social position people accord themselves and/or others in any social space.* This definition of identity makes a number of assumptions:

1. Identity is not stable but emerges in specific social interactions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Within these social interactions, identities are produced, reproduced, transformed, destroyed, and contested (De Cillia, Reisigl & Wodak, 1999; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).
2. In according themselves and others social positions, people who are constructing themselves will draw on tools that facilitate this. Such tools will include constructions of difference, similarity, uniqueness, and distinction (De Cillia, Reisigl & Wodak, 1999; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). It is also assumed that when people take up these

epistemic and interactional stances, they will draw on discursive structures that achieve this. These discursive structures and systems can be located in the language-in-use (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

In the context of this study, the positioning triad is seen as embedded in particular spaces and places. This study harnesses the alliance between 'street' and 'kid'. So, place is here seen as a co-ingredient or even an extension of street kids' identity (Casey, 2001 in Anderson, 2004). In addition to positioning theory, the theoretical framework for this study also makes use of the following sensitising concepts.

Sensitising Concepts

Emic-Etic Distinction

Pike (1967), an anthropologist, made distinctions between two ways of looking at phenomena. An emic perspective looks at phenomena by relying on the cultural insider-perspective of members of a given society. An emic account or analysis would be one that is expressed in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories that emerge from, and are meaningful and appropriate to, members of the culture under study. In order to validate emic knowledge, one needs to seek the consensus of 'insiders' who must agree that the knowledge is congruent with their cultural tenets.

On the other hand, an etic perspective looks at phenomena by relying on the cultural outsider-perspective that uses concepts and categories that are meaningful and appropriate to the scientific community. Validation of etic knowledge is based on judgement of how precise,

logical, comprehensive, replicable, falsifiable, and observer-independent it is (Okello, 2006).

Both emic and etic perspectives refer to the nature of knowledge, not its source (Okello, 2006).

These concepts are salient for this study because my interest was in the way street kids construct their identity, from the schemes that are meaningful to them. However, since this study is not descriptive but analytic, these identities will be made sense of from the perspective of social science theory. So, the findings of this study come from the interface between the street kids' emic knowledge and my etic knowledge –an integration of the two approaches. It should be noted, however, that this study sought to give equal value to both emic and etic approaches. It was foreseen that emic knowledge would be essential for an intuitive and empathic understanding of Zambian street kids while etic knowledge would enable me compare the findings with existing literature and theory.

Hegemony

This concept is attributed to the Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci. 'Hegemony' has been used by Gramsci (1971) and others to talk about power and struggles over power.

Hegemony refers to the forms of power that are based on winning consent rather than coercion (Fairclough, 2001). Hegemonic struggles permeate all areas of social life, including the construction of identities.

Within the context of this study, it was foreseen that when Zambian street kids are asked about their identities, they would be aware of other ascribed identities. In that case it was also

expected that Zambian street kids would either accept existing ascribed identities (consent) or propose alternative identities that they would push for hegemonic status.

Normalisation

This concept comes from Michel Foucault. In his efforts to reconceptualise power, Foucault (1979) argued that power circulates and operates at all levels of society. He identified *normalisation* as one of the ways by which power is deployed. Foucault argued that there are many procedures used to judge, measure, and compare people. One of these is the use of norms. These norms are not just 'what is' but also 'what should be'. These norms have to be negotiated and won. As a result, they are constantly contested, negotiated, reassessed and established (Carabine, 2001). Individuals are also constantly negotiating, contesting, reassessing, and establishing their positions in relation to norms. During the process of negotiation, some ways of understanding the world can become culturally dominant or hegemonic while others can become marginal (Gramsci, 1971).

In the context of this study, normalisation was used to interrogate normative assumptions about childhood or those taken-for-granted characteristics that are considered the standard of acceptability for childhood. These are the assumptions circulating in public discourse pertaining to acceptable and appropriate childhood. Since we wanted to access the 'reflexive' emic perspectives of Zambian street kids, we did not allow adult etic perspectives to push street kids' worldviews to the margins.

Normalisation was also used in this study to focus on the strategies employed by Zambian street kids to normalise their self-constructions so that their versions of reality become the

hegemonic discourse. We expected Zambian street kids to deploy the discursive resources available to them to struggle for, and win, an identity that would create a social space within which their stake would be inoculated.

It was also noted that Zambian street kids found themselves in a society where there are competing 'normative' assumptions about what a street kid is. So, they were expected to draw on the discursive resources available to them to make their version of reality the widely accepted one. This struggle over power can be won or lost. Both winning and losing are consequential on the constellation of advantage and disadvantage.

Research Aims and Questions

Research Aims

The study had the following aims:

1. To describe the Zambian street kids' subjective sense of self,
2. To highlight the social consequences of constructing themselves in these ways, and
3. To highlight the normative constraints on Zambian street kids' reflexive self-constructions.

Research Questions

This study set out to answer the following research question: How do Zambian street kids self-identify? This research question needs to be explicated so that it can be conceptually and methodologically unambiguous. From this research question, the following can emerge:

1. The identity/identities of Zambian street kids (positions of personhood),

2. Identities that reflect street kids' spontaneous positioning of themselves (as individuals, representatives of the group, or exemplars for the group).
3. Discursive tools used by Zambian street kids to construct themselves, and
4. The social consequences of such constructions, positions, or identities.

The way 'being a street kid' is constructed by street kids is the form of street-kid-speak that this study is interested in. To reiterate, street-kid-speak will refer to the ways in which street kids discursively present themselves.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described a threefold background to my study: the global and Zambian situation of street kids, my empirical and practical puzzles that ignited my interest in the research topic, and the research issue deserving empirical research. This research issue is the Zambian street kids' subjective sense of self. I have highlighted positioning theory as the appropriate theoretical framework for employing the ideas of space, time, and social construction of meaning to study these identities. In the following chapter, I will look at the methodological framework used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Introduction

In this chapter, I highlight the methodological framework used for the study. I also highlight the national setting and the local site of the study. The design, methods of data collection, study participants, research procedures, and methods of data analysis are also discussed. I also highlight how the research design and methods have sought to improve the validity and reliability of the study. The chapter ends with a discussion of the ethical issues that were considered.

Methodological Framework

This study used qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is a generic term for investigative methodologies that emphasise the importance of the investigator to be an integral part of the research (Silverman, 2005). This differs from quantitative research which attempts to remove the investigator from the research.

Qualitative methods of individual interviews were chosen for the following reasons:

1. I was studying a relatively unknown terrain which required an exploratory design for which qualitative methods are suited (Fouché & Delport, 2002; Silverman, 2005),
2. Qualitative research tries to maximise the use of context as means of locating local knowledge and subjective understandings (Pike, 1967; Silverman, 2005),

3. Qualitative methods allow culturally sensitive approaches to data collection and interpretation (Pike, 1967),
4. Qualitative methods, especially *in situ* mobile interviewing, allow researchers to gain access to participants' language-in-use for place-to-place or activity-to-activity interactions (Anderson, 2004; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

Another salient feature of qualitative methods is that they allow for a detailed engagement with data, allowing the researcher to analyse the data while adhering to the form in which they were recorded or transcribed (Okello, 2006). In addition, the qualitative researcher pays attention not only to the results but also to the processes.

The qualitative method was appropriate for this study because the decisive research aim was to describe Zambian street kids' identities from their own perspectives. This could only be accomplished with a reflection-emerging distinction between my own perspectives and the street kids' perspectives. It is by this ability to learn the perspectives of research participants that qualitative research illuminates the emic characteristics of a situation that may be invisible to outsiders (Pike, 1967).

The particular qualitative approach used was the discursive approach. The discursive approach to the street kids' identities facilitated an activity-orientation (how people co-construct reality) that can be the foundation for encouraging stakeholders to accept some responsibility for the reality of street kids that they have co-authored.

Study Setting and Site: Zambia's Location and Socio-Economic Situation

Zambia's Location and People

Zambia is a landlocked central African nation. The country shares its borders with nine countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, and Angola. Zambia is divided into nine provinces. The population of Zambia is just over 10 million. Much of this population is concentrated on three economic powerhouses of the country: 1) Lusaka, the political capital city and industrial capital, 2) the major towns of the Copperbelt Province (Ndola, Kitwe) where copper mining activities are centred, and 3) Livingstone which is the tourist capital and home of the Victoria Falls (see Figure 3, below).

There are about 72 indigenous languages in Zambia. Only seven of these are official: Chewa, isiLozi, iciBemba, Tonga, Ngoni, Luvale, and kiKaonde. This study was conducted in iciBemba, the language that is used in much of the Northern, Luapula, and Copperbelt provinces. The language is also widely used in the Central and Lusaka provinces.

Conversance in, or even home-use of, a particular Zambian language does not necessarily mean one belongs to the tribe to which the language belongs. From independence and about three decades after independence, civil servants were by standard practice rarely sent to home-language provinces –they would be sent to provinces of other tribes to curb tribalism. This resulted in the diffusion of languages.

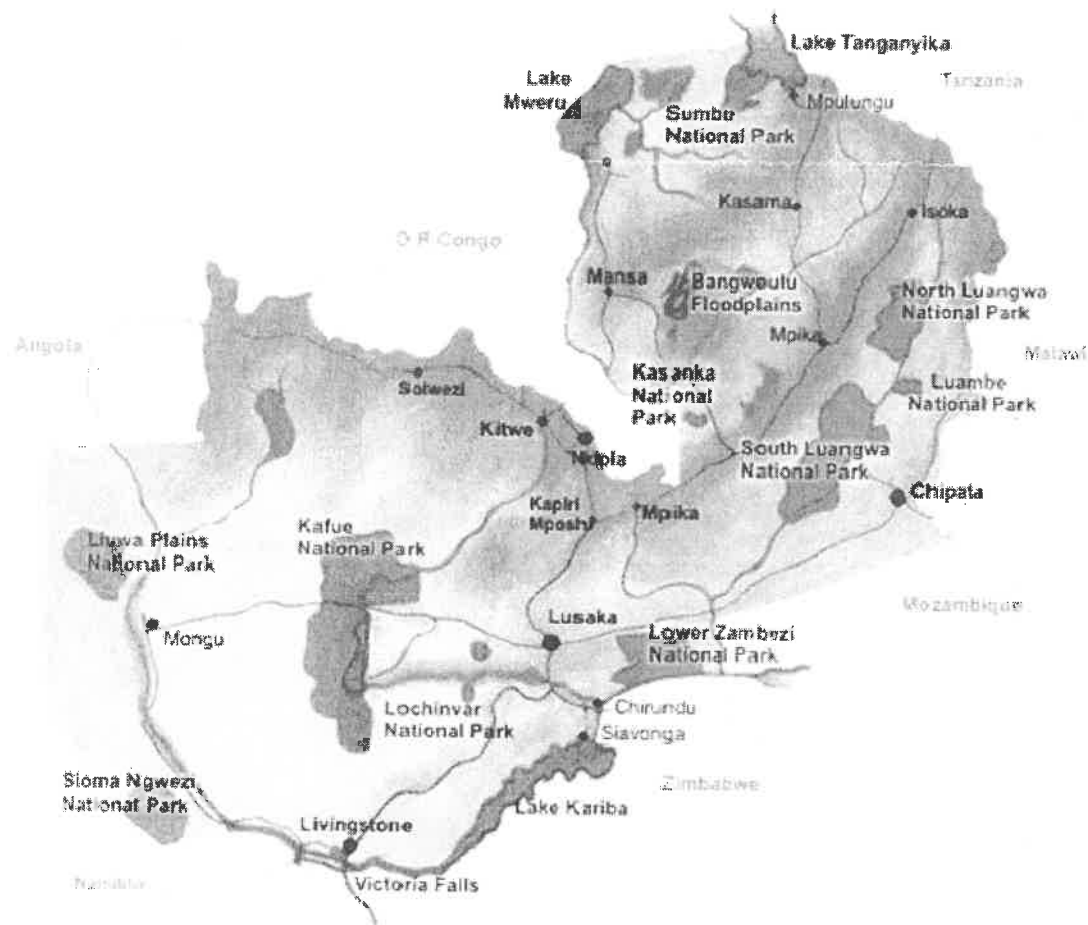


Figure 3: Map of Zambia⁴, showing neighbouring countries and major towns

Zambia's Socio-Economic Situation

Zambia is categorised under resource-constrained countries in terms of infrastructure and household income. Like many other developing countries, Zambia has poorly developed public service and welfare. Two political periods in Zambia are important for understanding the presence of street kids on the streets of Zambia's major towns. These periods have crucial economic and social ramifications.

⁴ This map is found on <http://www.zambiatourism.com/travel/maps/maptowns.htm>. Used with the permission of Angela Curtis –Africa Insites (11 June 2007).

The Age of Humanism (1964-1991)

Zambia got its independence from Britain on 24 October 1964. From 1964 to 1991, one political party and one state president led Zambia. The United National Independence Party (UNIP) was the ruling party; Kenneth Kaunda was the state president. During this time, humanism was the political ideology; economic policies were informed by the socialist philosophy.

Humanism, a political philosophy aimed at creating a just society, was the national ideology from 1964 to 1991 –spanning the first and second republics (Nalwamba et al., 1997).

Socialism was seen as the means of achieving a humanist state, a state in which there would be (i) equal distribution of wealth, (ii) freedom of individuals, (iii) political equality, (Nalwamba et al., 1997), (iv) mutual aid, and (v) loyalty to the community (Kandeke, 1977).

This political philosophy also translated into consequential foreign policies.

The Zambian humanist government opposed both the apartheid policy in South Africa and the white minority rule in the then Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Several African liberation movements like Rhodesia's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) were allowed to set up headquarters in Zambia.

Consequently, white minority governments in Rhodesia and South Africa attacked and bombed Zambia quite frequently. Zambia's main trading partners –Angola, Mozambique, and Namibia –were also at war, burdening Zambia's economy. As a landlocked country, Zambia's access to the seaports was limited as bulk cargo needed to go through white-controlled countries. Under this pressure, Zambia negotiated for a railway link to Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania in 1975.

At independence in 1964, Zambia inherited a free market economy (Nalwamba et al., 1997). The economy of the country was completely in the hands of foreigners. The government of the day saw this as economic colonialism, in which light government interpreted political independence as meaningless. Consequently, the government introduced economic reforms in 1967 and 1968. These reforms were socialist and were aimed at achieving humanism. A command economy was introduced and remained in effect until 1991: the government bought majority shares in the country's biggest companies and nationalised these companies (i.e. government either controlled or owned these companies), ownership of land was taken away from individuals and companies to government, and only Zambians could be licensed to run transport services (Nalwamba et al., 1997). Consequently, government decided what companies did, what kinds of goods and services could be made available, and the cost of goods and services.

The nationalisation programme, a well laid out plan for national development, became difficult to sustain when the price of copper (which accounted for 95% of Zambia's export earnings) dropped by half in the mid-1970s. At the same time, there was a massive increase in oil prices. Rapidly, Zambia's borrowing rate from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) resulted in the balance-of-payment crisis. As a result, Zambia was among the most indebted nations in the world in the mid-1980s. The IMF started insisting on its own economic restructuring programmes: reduction of dependence on copper, devaluation of the Zambian currency, reduction of subsidies on food and fertilisers, increase of prices of farm products, and ending of price controls.

An ordinary person heavily relied on the beneficence of government for the betterment of conditions of living. People looked up to the government for goods and services: state hospitals, state schools, state shops, state roads, state telecommunication, state radio stations, and a state television station among others. Government subsidised basic services and goods so that these commodities could be available to all Zambians. For example, government provided direct financial assistance in order to keep the prices of education, medical services, fertilisers, and farming equipment low. At some time, basic medical care (consultation and medicines) and education (tuition, books and uniforms) were 'free' on the part of Zambians. Tertiary education was also very cheap. Bus and train fares were cheap. Essential commodities like mealie-meal, cooking oil, soap, and sugar were very cheap. Social security was not a constitutional right but government tried to provide it (Nalwamba et al., 1997). When government could no longer financially sustain its 'beneficence', the people demanded a change of government, and economic and political policies.

The Age of Utuntemba (1991-Present)

This age started with the 1991 constitutional re-introduction of a multi-party state (Nalwamba et al., 1997). In 1991, the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) became the ruling party and UNIP became the main opposition party. Today, the MMD is still the ruling party and the number of opposition parties has grown tremendously, with some only existing on paper.

The MMD saw the economic hardships that plagued Zambia in the 1980s as a result of the socialist economic policies introduced by UNIP (Nalwamba et al., 1997). Therefore, MMD came in as a 'corrective' government, aiming at redressing the economic hardships that were

apparently caused by socialist economic policies. Consequently corrective economic policies were introduced.

Political interference, lack of competition, and price controls were seen by the 'corrective' government as the hindrances inherent in the nationalist economic policies. To correct this, the MMD government introduced a free market economy, famously known as a 'liberalised' economy. Some of the economic policies that have been implemented during the age of *utuntemba* are the (i) privatisation of parastatals (government-owned companies), (ii) removal of price controls, (iii) removal of subsidies, and (iv) removal of trade restrictions (Nalwamba et al., 1997). These new policies were consequential.

Some companies were liquidated, and all their employees remained jobless. Some companies were restructured, and this led to the retrenchment of many employees. The high unemployment levels that the 'corrective' government wanted to correct became greater than before, the medical and health services that were once subsidised and cheap became extremely expensive for ordinary people, and prices of commodities increased. The time of the liberal economy, coupled with the IMF/World Bank's economic structural adjustment programme (SAP) produced an economic playground in which only the fittest could survive. Without government's direct assistance in the form of subsidies, and without government control over the prices of essential commodities and services, people were left to carve a survival niche for themselves. And here comes in the *iciBemba* word *utuntemba* that I have used to refer to this period.

Carving a survival niche on the streets started with *mishanga* (=cigarettes) sellers, the boys and young men who would walk around and sell loose cigarettes at street corners and pubs.

Then came *ba-Kaponya* (the rude, fierce, and frequently fighting boys and young men) who moved around and sold sweets, chewing gum, books, pens, pencils, drinks, and many other small commodities. Both the *mishanga* sellers and *ba-Kaponya* were mobile vendors who traded their wares wherever they found customers: on the streets, at pubs, bus stops, and in front of established shops.

In the liberalised economy, mobile vendors seemingly began to identify areas where their wares were more readily bought. So, they began to either erect make-shift shelters for their merchandise or simply spread their wares on the ground where they were most visible. These places and shelters of business became more stationary and populated. They were known as *intemba*, an *iciBemba* word from the fishing communities. Those who go fishing with hooks would often clear a spot on a grassy river and then lower their hooks down this *intemba* for a catch. The plural of *intemba* is *utuntemba*, a word I have used to refer to a period when a lot of Zambians were compelled to 'fish' a living on the streets. Among these people were blind beggars, prostitutes, vendors (dealing in food, phones, clothes, stationery, and other items), municipality workers (those collecting parking levies), and street kids.

Site

The study site was Lusaka central business district. Street kids who operate from Cairo Road and the nearby streets were targeted. Lusaka Main Post Office served as a meeting place for the street kids and me. The post office was chosen because its characteristics and geographical location attracts many street kids (see Figure 4, below).

The post office has a vast parking space which attracts the many vehicles street kids guard. It is also near the traffic-lights controlled intersection of Cairo Road and Church Road. The close proximity of the post office to the intersection offers street kids a chance to do both begging and car guarding at the same time. Older street kids also use the big numbers of car-guarding and begging street kids as a target market for aviation fuel and bolstik –two common state of consciousness-altering substances used by street kids.

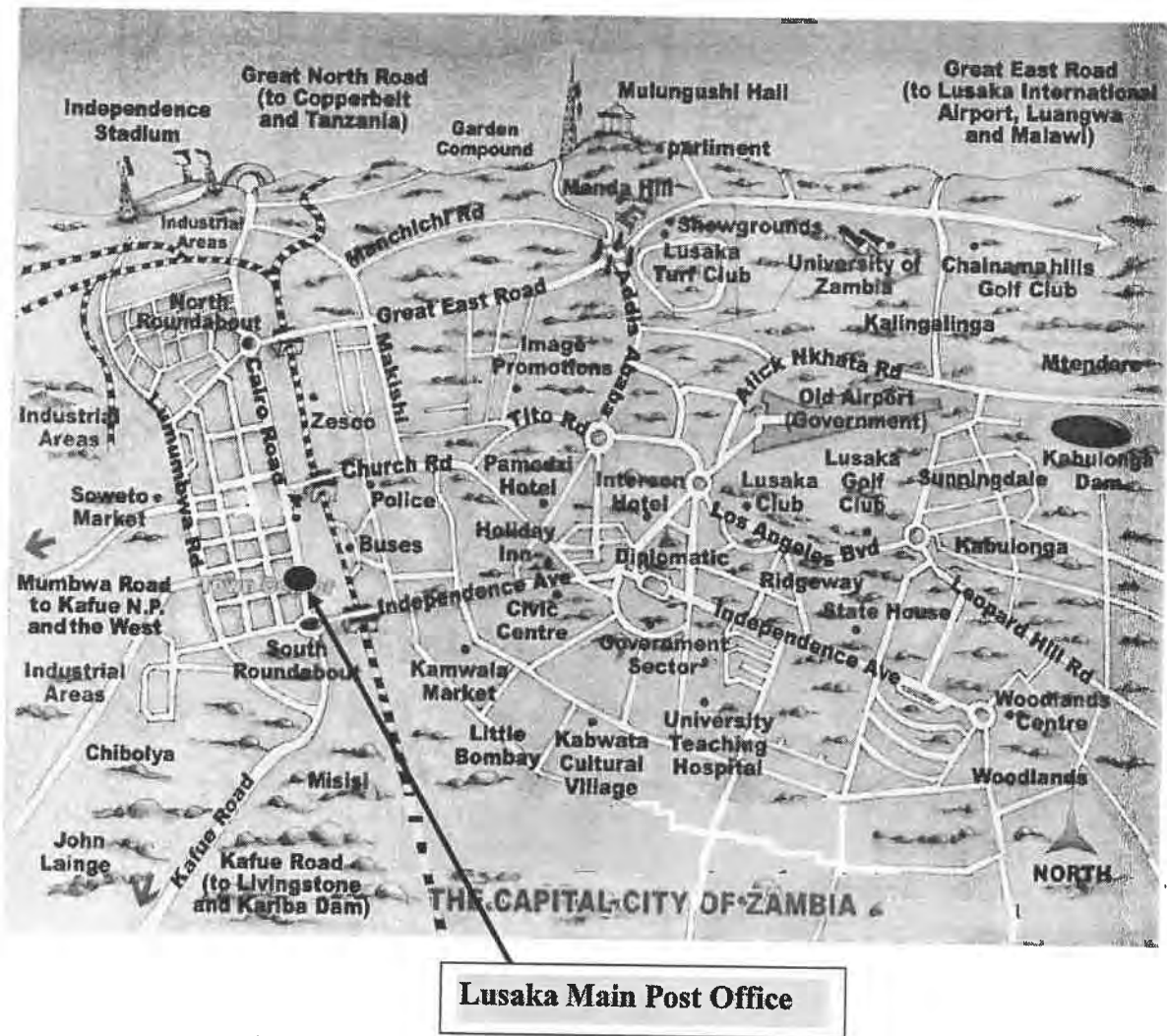


Figure 4: Map of central Lusaka⁵, showing the location of the Main Post Office

⁵ This map is found on <http://www.zambiatourism.com/travel/maps/maptowns.htm>. Used with the permission of Angela Curtis –Africa Insites (11 June 2007).

Design and Methods of Data Collection

The study adopted an exploratory design. The methods of data collection were informed by both theory and literature on street kids. Particularly the following aspects were found important for data collection:

1. The idea of space. The referent term for the population that this research studied is *street kid*, a term that highlights the alliance between 'kids' and 'streets' (van Blerk, 2005) and alludes to the centrality of streets and public spaces to their identity. The way Zambian street kids use, interact with, and move along streets and public spaces – like the Cairo Road, shop verandas, the Lusaka Main Post Office, the Town Centre Market, and the Railways, among many places –discloses a lot about their own self-constructions (Hecht, 2001; Creswell, 1999). As van Blerk (2005) notes, spatial processes cannot be excluded from studies of how street kids construct their own identity. The method that would harness the co-ingredience of place and identity, the peripatetic method, was used.
2. Emic perspective: I wanted to access data that is naturally produced in the context of the street kids' day-to-day homeless mobility through streets. Interviews in the form of a guided tour provided Zambian street kids with the opportunity to talk about themselves in their 'natural' setting, their territories of meaning. In addition, the presence of street kids in these public spaces provides an antithesis to the widely normalised image of appropriate childhood: growing up within the confines of the home and family (Ennew, 1996). It is from this 'out of place' position (Connolly & Ennew, 1996) of Zambian street kids that they have to negotiate their identity as they

move from place to place. So, the method of data collection needed to nurture these socio-spatial experiences.

3. Interview data/social construction of meaning: the position taken here is that of Phillips and Hardy (2002) who hold the view that the way in which individuals construct themselves in an interview is similar to how they construct themselves in other arenas of talk. It was under the same assumption that Potter and Wetherell (1987) used interviews as naturally occurring texts when they investigated how individuals constructed themselves and others with reference to race.

So, data collection was based on interviews that were conducted while walking. Talking while walking or the peripatetic method was aimed at mimicking the homeless mobility of street kids through diverse city spaces. Peripatetic methods of data collection contribute to the process of making the research data naturally occurring while at the same time spatialising social knowledge (Anderson, 2004). For street kids, this was an imperative.

Three types of questions were asked: main questions, probes, and follow-up questions. The main questions were pre-structured, and were used to begin and guide the conversations. The main questions that were asked as we walked from place-to-place are:

1. Would you take me to some other places that you frequently visit?
2. What activities do you do in this place?
3. Why do you choose this place, not another one?
4. In what ways is this place important to you?
5. When people call you a street kid, what does it say to you as a person?
6. With whom do you do this activity? Why them and not others?
7. How did you find yourself on the streets?

8. What activities do you engage in to make a living?

In addition, probes were used when responses lacked sufficient detail, depth or clarity. In such cases, probes were used to complete or clarify answers, or to request further examples and evidence (Greef, 2002). Probes were also used to find out more about certain themes that had come up from previous interviews. I also fielded follow-up questions that interrogated implications of participant answers to the main questions. Appendix 2 gives the detailed interview schedule. The questions focused on the activities street kids do, where they do the activities, with whom, and why they do them. Field notes were taken to track themes, and to inform subsequent interviews. All the dialogues were recorded on a digital voice recorder. These audio files were later transcribed, using the transcription conventions in Appendix 1.

Sampling and Study Participants

Snowball sampling was used. This followed the overarching sampling technique of purposive sampling. My goal of sampling was to choose Zambian street kids who showed characteristics of being engulfed in street life: by appearance, actions, and association. So, those who judged themselves to have been on the streets for 'a long time' were selected. This selection process was aimed at selecting street kids who would provide rich detail that would maximise the range of specific information that could be obtained from and about Zambian street kids (Strydom & Delport, 2002). Eleven street kids aged between 13 and 21 years were selected to participate in the study. This number was not pre-determined; instead, I sampled until redundancy was achieved (Miles & Huberman 1994; Silverman, 2005). This means that I sampled until I reached a saturation of information, a point at which I began to hear the same

information repeatedly being reported. When I no longer heard anything new, I knew I had sampled 'enough' street kids.

The modal age of the street kids was 16. Their duration of stay on the streets was difficult to determine: a few said they had been on the streets for two years, others said they had been on the street for a 'long time', while others were inconsistent (they would say they had been on the streets for three months but they talked about what was happening on the streets a year or two ago). All the street kids had some connection with a family: a single parent, both parents, siblings, or an extended family. However, they rarely went back 'home'. Two of the boys, the 20-year olds, were children of blind parents who themselves lived on the streets. Nine of the participants were not from Lusaka. Seven of the street kids had come from Kabwe, a once thriving mining town over a hundred kilometres from Lusaka. Two were from the Copperbelt. They were all quite conversant with *iciBemba*, the language I used for data collection. Only one seemed to struggle with the language. The participants were mainly based at the Lusaka Main Post Office, along the Cairo Road. They often referred to themselves as *ba*-Post Office (=those who belong to the Post Office), as opposed to other groups of street kids within central Lusaka City: Simonson/City Market, Nandos, Manda Hill, Kamwala, and Town Centre.

Procedure

I have worked with the street kids in Lusaka before under the auspices of Fountain of Hope; so, I had earlier planned to use familiar street kids to gain entry and acceptance into the street community. However, when I had gone to the streets about three times to 'pilot' my data collection, I could not come across any familiar street kid. So, I decided to establish fresh

familiarity so that the kids would be able to trust my conversations with them. I went to the Main Post Office, along Cairo Road, and spent hours making conversation with the street kids until they could recognise and regard me as a 'friend'. I developed a trusting relationship with the street kids, and I built a non-threatening presence among, as evidenced in Extract 6, below, which is taken from the first interview in which the street kid was sniffing aviation fuel while with me:

Extract 6: Interview 1 (17 year old)

363: M: inga ifi ((points to a bottle with some mixture being sniffed by another boy))
abanobe baleputamo tauputamo iwe

364: J: ifi ndaputamo shimo inshita ee

365: M: ninshi uputilamo

366: J: ((laughs)) ico imputilamo (.) tapali

636: M: and this ((points to a bottle with some mixture being sniffed by another boy))
your friends are using you won't join

637: J: this yes i use sniff sometimes

638: M: why do you sniff it

639: J: ((laughs)) why i sniff it (.) nothing

I learnt the names of about three boys, and these boys would come to my car as soon as I got to the post office parking bay. I introduced my study to these familiar kids and used them to access the unfamiliar ones. This is snowball sampling.

The standard procedure that was used to introduce the research was part of the consent form, and is attached (Appendix 3). Demographic data about each participant were gathered (length of stay on the streets, age, and nature of family connection if there was any). The informed consent letter was read out and the participants were asked to give verbal consent. The ethical implications of this procedure are discussed under the ethical considerations section.

The street kids were encouraged to take me on a guided tour of their space. I gave them an overall task of taking me to places that are important to them. Most of the times, we started

our 'walk' from Lusaka's Main Post Office which is located towards the north-end of the Cairo Road. On average, we walked for about 30 minutes, although some interviews took as long as an hour. The distance we covered depended on the participant: some took me for as long as six kilometres, others took me for about two kilometres while others took me the traffic islands they were begging from and we talked while they were begging, and they occasionally demonstrated how they go about with their 'business'. The guided tours took us through winding routes through open spaces, densely populated streets, shop corridors, markets, restaurants, and make-shift stalls. This was done over the period of one and a half months in mid-2006.

Data Analysis

During interviews, field notes were taken to track themes, and to inform subsequent interviews. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, using the transcription conventions in Appendix 1. Positioning theory, particularly the positioning triad, informed data analysis. According to van Langenhove and Harré (1999) and other proponents of this theory, a researcher using positioning theory should search for explanations that illuminate what the actors are discursively doing, how they do it, and the social consequences of such actions.

QSR NVivo® was used for coding and organising transcripts. This was aimed at isolating the bodies of text which showed the following, and other emerging codes:

1. Positioning
 - Moral positioning
 - Self and other positioning (implicit and explicit)
2. Storyline

- Plots
 - Teleological series of customary events
 - Context of an utterance
3. Social forces
- Social accomplishments
 - What is being done socially

This process required a lot of detailed reading, memoing, classifying, and tracking themes between transcripts and field notes. This process was followed by putting data together to achieve new understandings. The final stage of the analysis involved integrating what was emerging with the literature. A constant comparative method was used (Silverman, 2005). This meant a constant movement between different parts of the data to test the emerging identities.

Reliability and Validity Issues

An integral part of a rigorous research effort is a discussion of how a chosen research methodology can facilitate validity and reliability (Riege, 2003). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not usually have independent realities against which researchers can evaluate their findings. This is augmented by the fact that there are different paradigms in social science, and the quality of research conducted in each paradigm needs to be judged by its own paradigm's terms (Healy & Perry, 2000). For qualitative research, the general criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Miles and Huberman (1994) are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the best possible conclusions from the data have been reached. To ensure confirmability of our research findings, the raw data has been retained so that they are available for later inspection should there be a need (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Credibility refers to the extent to which the findings are coherent and the concepts are systematically related (Riege, 2003). To ensure credibility, I monitored myself during both the data collection and the data analysis stages to make sure the design, data collection and data analysis conformed with the standards of acceptability in the chosen theoretical framework. Transferability is the degree to which the findings of a study can be useful in other settings, and the extent to which these findings are connected to prior theory (Lincoln & Guba 1985). A constant comparative method was used to link the themes that were emerging to literature, theory, and the broader experiences of street kids. Dependability refers to the consistency of research procedures and techniques (Riege, 2003). I ensured dependability by making research questions and the study design congruent. These issues will be demonstrated in the discussion of results.

In addition to the foregoing general criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research, Potter and Wetherell (1987) have offered four ways of assessing the validity and reliability of discursive analyses:

1. Coherence: this means that the analysis should reveal the internal logic of discourses, and how the discursive structure functions. Coherence is sometimes referred to as plausibility, analytic adequacy, or apparency of phenomena (Silverman, 2005).
2. Participants' orientation: this requirement is in line with the principles of ethnomethodology (Slocum & van Langenhove, 2004). Participants' orientation is a requirement for the analysis to focus on how the participant interprets the researcher's utterances or the ongoing dialogue, not on what the researcher meant. For example, if

the utterance 'Do you have cigarettes?' is replied to with an offer of a stick of cigarettes, then the utterance was interpreted as a request and not a question.

3. New problems: discourse analysis clarifies the discursive resources people use to make certain things happen, to make sense of reality, and to pre-structure meanings. While solving these problems, discourse analysis also creates problems. These problems can involve instances in which what is expected to happen is not happening.
4. Fruitfulness: this refers to the ability for the analysis to make sense and to generate new accounts of phenomena.

During the analysis, the criteria for validity advocated by Potter and Wetherell (1987) of coherence, participants' orientation, new problems, and fruitfulness were used. Coherence has been supported by the way the elements of the positioning triad (positions, storylines, and acts) fitted together. Participants' orientations have been supported by paying close attention to the positions participants took, and by taking the emic perspective before introducing etic ones. New problems have been evidenced by the emergence of new research issues that future research can address. Fruitfulness has been evidenced by the fact that the findings are not merely descriptive; instead, the analysis is drawing stakeholders' attention to the ways they actively co-construct the reality of street kids. This activity orientation will be the base for encouraging other people to accept their share of responsibility for the kind of social realities street kids live in. In this way, the findings in this study can be a good basis for lobbying stakeholders to re-evaluate their relationships with street kids.

Reliability in traditional qualitative research is arrived at by assessing how coded categories stand the criterion of inter-rater reliability. However, this consideration only indicates that the raters are using the same interpretive procedure (Slocum & van Langenhove, 2004) while not

saying much about the basis of their agreement. In this study, I conducted an exhaustive data collection and analysis, and no further information or insights were forthcoming. I also used QSR NVivo® to improve the rigour of the analysis, especially by keeping and linking together documents and themes. This enabled me trace the progression of ideas from the earliest stages to the final stages.

For Miles and Huberman (1994), reliability is also the quality of ‘workmanship’, something that translates into the rigour in terms of how data are collected, transcribed, checked, coded, and analysed. The interviews I conducted were phased in such a way that I would interview one or two street kids, go home and listen to the conversations while taking note of recurring themes, and then use these themes to inform subsequent interviews. This was a kind of member-check, making sure the emic perspective I took was adhered to. Tracing the progression of ideas by rigorously listening to the emerging themes and following them up in subsequent interviews ensured that the analysis was not some isolated activity that happened haphazardly.

Ethical Considerations

As social scientists, we uphold that research data should never be obtained at the expense of human beings (Williams, Tutty, & Grinnell, 1995). Natural scientists have their own ethical imperatives they are obliged to address. Ethical principles of non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy, respect for participants, and justice need to be upheld whenever human beings participate in research. These, and any applicable local and international ethical guidelines, serve as standards on which researchers ought to evaluate their own conduct (Strydom, 2002). Informed consent (under the ethical principles of autonomy and respect for persons), harm

(under the principle of non-maleficence), and confidentiality (under the principle of respect) were the pressing ethical issues in this study, and they are discussed here.

Most members of the research population for this study arguably constitute 'children' that can notionally be regarded as minors. In addition to being minors, they live under social and economic conditions that make them vulnerable. Vulnerable populations need protection. Participation of minors and vulnerable populations in any form of research –be it behavioural or biomedical –raises contentious ethical issues. One such issue is informed consent.

Hakim (2000) argues that informed consent is not a luxury but a necessary condition.

Informed consent seeks to uphold the autonomy of participants by ensuring that they have full knowledge of the study and they are willing to cooperate without any feelings of coercion (Sieber, 1998; Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). Ideally, minors cannot give informed consent because they are presumed to be 'socially incompetent' to understand the complexities of the research process. Although eight of the 11 research participants were below the age of consent, they can be regarded as emancipated minors because they are already living independently (Allmark, 2002; Balen et al., 2006). Street kids can be regarded as emancipated minors because, by virtue of their street existence, they rarely wish to hand over control over their lives to their parents, guardians, families, or even to adult institutions. So, the participants themselves were required to consent without the agreement or even the awareness of their parents or guardians. When soliciting informed consent, I informed the street kids that they had the liberty to withdraw at any time without suffering negative consequences.

Another ethical concern that I expected at the start of the research is that of harm, particularly emotional harm. Street kids are living in harsh conditions, and as a safety precaution, I

expected that they might relive their emotional pain when they are asked to talk about their homeless mobility. Bringing out emotional pain without putting in place referral mechanisms to handle this pain is tantamount to emotional harm. So, I liaised with the colleagues that I had worked with earlier on a street kids' project so that I could use their existing psycho-social counselling facilities for referrals. When data collection got underway, however, I never encountered a case where these referrals were necessary.

In terms of beneficence, although I took the street kids' time (the time they could use to earn a living), the research might be beneficial to them. The results of this study, with my own advocacy, are likely to change or influence social policy in Zambia. This might benefit current Zambian street kids, or at least future street kids.

Being a street kid is not only stressful but also a frowned-upon phenomenon within the Zambian context; so, it became an ethical imperative to safeguard the privacy and identity of the research participants. This entailed handling all the information about the research participants in a confidential manner. Since there was no clause in our informed consent to find out how privately the participants wanted their personal information to be handled, I have kept all the data anonymous. I have also avoided using the photographs I took of participants for illustration. The audio recordings, which were only done under consent, have been secured under a password on a digital disc, and no personally identifying information has been used in the extracts reported in this dissertation. The names of street kids that I have used in the extracts and analysis are pseudonyms.

Ethical clearance was obtained (27 July 2006, Approval number: HSS/06381A) from the following ethics committees of the University of KwaZulu-Natal:

- Faculty research committee/Higher degrees committee, and
- University research ethics committee (Human and social sciences).

The ethical clearance letter is attached in Appendix 4.

This study applied general ethics guidelines regarding research with minors. Efforts were made to get local (Zambian) guidelines. From my personal communication with the Director of the Zambian Children in Need Network (CHIN) and my information search from the Ministries of Health and Social Welfare, I discovered that there were no guidelines for social research with minors. Efforts to get information from the Zambian Directorate for Public Health Research Ethics and the Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies at the University of Zambia (UNZA) failed.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have justified the qualitative approach as the suitable methodological framework for the research issues addressed in this study. I have highlighted the key features that characterise my study setting and site: Zambia's location and people, the socio-economic variables, and the characteristics of the Lusaka Main Post Office, the site at which much of my contacts with the study participants took place. I have also highlighted that the study adopted an exploratory design. I have discussed the peripatetic method of data collection that was used, the procedures followed, and I have described the study participants that were sampled. Data analysis procedures, reliability and validity issues, and ethical considerations have also been discussed. In the following chapter, I present and discuss the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study set out to answer the following research question: How do Zambian street kids self-identify? In answering this question, I sought to describe the Zambian street kids' subjective sense of self, the social consequences of self-identifying in these ways, and the normative constraints on these identities. This chapter presents and discusses these three aspects.

Overview of Results

As highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3, I used the positioning triad of the positioning theory as the analytic framework. The triadic interaction of positions, storylines (discursive contexts), and the social force of acts (discursive accomplishments) are the basis of the analytic meaning in positioning theory (Slocum & van Langenhove, 2004).

Within the context of peripatetic interviews, Zambian street kids talked about their lives before coming to the streets, their lives on the streets, and their dreams for the future. As we walked through the places that constitute the street kids' homeless mobility, our conversations became a site for street kids to rhetorically re-describe themselves as individuals and as members of the social group of street kids.

The data showed that Zambian street kids construct themselves in the context of competing ascribed negative identities. These identities, believed (by street kids) to be circulating in

public discourse, position street kids as vulnerable, at risk, in need, undergoing moral degradation, immoral, and inhuman or at least sub-human. A moral order storyline provides a context for constructing street kids in this way. The teleological elements of the moral order storyline are that street kids are on the road to moral self-destruction; so they should be stopped or rescued. Adults take this as their moral obligation to street kids who, as vulnerable and powerless children, should either be stopped from moral self-destruction or be rescued and helped to regain their lost humanity.

It is against this background that Zambian street kids construct themselves as: vulnerable victims, heroic victims, and as human beings par excellence. These identities are indexed to different temporal, spatial, and conversational realities. For example, the “vulnerable victims” identity often referred to the street kids’ subjective sense of self at the time of moving to the streets, the “heroic victims” identity referred to how street kids self-identify in order to make sense of their continued stay on the streets, and the “human beings par excellence” identity was used when street kids were negotiating their identity vis-à-vis other people. There were accompanying storylines and discursive social forces that gave these identities a rational appearance. Street kids efficaciously drew on the hard times or “odyssey” storyline to give meaning to their justification of street life. The hard times storyline also justified the street kids’ claim that they are full human beings. Within this storyline, the marginal existence that society accords street kids was positioned as unjustifiable and ‘immoral’.

What we have, in brief, are pairs of competing street kid identities, storylines, and discursive accomplishments. These two types of street-kid-speak (see Table 3, below) are competing for normalcy or hegemonic status.

	Street-kid-speak done by street kids	Street-kid-speak attributed to perceived “others”
Identity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vulnerable victim (at time of leaving home) 2. Heroic victim (while on the streets) 3. Moral (while on the streets) 4. Misunderstood group (while on the streets) 5. Human beings par excellence (in relation to personhood) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vulnerable/ at risk /powerless /in need (at time of leaving home) 2. Undergoing moral degradation (while on the streets) 3. Immoral (while on the streets) 4. Wilful rebellious home-leavers (at time of leaving home/while on the streets) 5. Inhuman/Sub-human (in relation to personhood)
Storyline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hard times (odyssey) storyline 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Moral order storyline
Social force	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mount up compassion 2. Defend street life 3. Make ‘this sort of life’ another normal way of being human 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fulfil moral obligation to ‘children’ 2. Supervise childhood 3. Stop/protect children from street life 4. Restore the humanity that street kids have lost 5. Rescue street kids from moral degradation

Table 3: Overview of results

The storylines within which these street-kid-speak emerged are strikingly different. On one side, we have a “hard times” storyline –the context for what street kids think of themselves. On the other side, we have a “moral order” storyline –the context for what street kids think others think of them. Each of these storylines pre-structures the identities of street kids, and maps out different social realities for street kids.

Research Question: How Do Zambian Street Kids Self-Identify?

Discursive Context: Hard Times (Odyssey) and Moral Order Storylines

A key to understanding the results of this study is an understanding of the dominant storylines that give the opposing street-kid-speak a rational appearance. When one looks at the storylines used in the opposing street-kid-speak, it becomes clear that street kids are speaking a different language from that which they attribute to other members of society. Street kids draw on the hard times storyline. The street kids' home-leaving stories and stories of their homeless mobility through city spaces were overt descriptions of hard time after hard time – with only a few glimpses of joy. The hard times stories unfold like an odyssey.

Metaphorically, an odyssey is any difficult and prolonged journey. It comes from Homer, a blind old poet in ancient Greece (Jantzen, Krieger & Neill, 1990). One of Homer's great epic poems, the *Odyssey*, tells of the adventures of a Greek hero Odysseus who spent ten years on the Trojan War and another ten years in a series of courageous adventures on his way home (Jantzen et al., 1990). Difficult life circumstances characterise the Odyssey. In this study, I will refer to the street kids' stories of homeless mobility as an economic and social odyssey because Zambian street kids constantly positioned themselves as heroes triumphing over social and economic odds. While the term *odyssey* is an etic one, the experiences it refers to are emic to the Zambian street kids.

It should be noted, however, that while street kids are most of the times making sense of their identity in the context of hard times, they attribute to perceived others the context of a moral order. The moral order storyline makes use of adults' moral obligations and duties towards

children. Key obligations include protecting, supervising, and providing for children. Street kids are problematised on this account because they defy normative childhood.

Street kids are also making use of the moral order storyline. They frequently draw on human universals (need for warmth, peace, tranquillity, and cleanliness) to characterise their state of destitution –the hard times.

*Zambian Street Kids as (1) Vulnerable Victims, (2) Heroic Victims, and (3) Human Beings
Par Excellence*

Extract 7, below, shows how two street kids, Banda (B) and James (J)⁶, rhetorically reconstructed street kids in general. Banda and James were the oldest street kids I interviewed. They were passing by the Post Office when I asked them to participate in the research. They had little time to do two separate interviews; so, I decided to talk with both of them at once.

I asked Banda and James about how it felt to be on the streets. Extract 7 was the resulting dialogue. Within the context of this dialogue, the two street kids construct street kids (general group) as ‘victims’, ‘human beings par excellence’, and a ‘misunderstood group’. These identities are achieved through the hard times storyline in which they contest and undermine ascribed negative identities attributed to perceived others.

Extract 7: Interview 6 (20 year olds)

283: B: muno tacumfwika bwino tatumfwa bwino
tamwaba ati limbi (.) tebufwayo bwesu bucushi

283: B: here it doesn't feel good we don't feel good
there isn't like (.) it isn't our wish it's because

⁶ Not their real names (see: “Ethical Issues” in Chapter Three).

- bulenga (.) ngawaisa sanga ati ba wiso balifwa
banoko bobbe nabo ati limbi balifwa waisa sangafye
ati washalafye nama sisters bobbe naba mbuya bobbe
- 284: M: uhm
- 285: B: waisa sanga ati ulesangwa namu town uleisa
mukulwishako filya fine (.) kalya kene akanono
ako wakwatako walyako icakulya eco tulalila mu
town ilingi futi (.) sometimes wakwatako
akandalama akanono
- 286: M: uhm
- 287: B: wayamonako ba mbuya obe (.) wabapelako filya
fine ngopobali ngawalikwata abaice bobbe ama
brothers bobbe filya fine wabamonako (.) but
icilenga ilingi tuleba mu town bucushi nge
fifine tulecula fino fine
- 288: M: oho
- 289: B: nensala ubucushi fino fine ubucushifye efyo
ningalanda
- 290: M: oho
- 291: B: ya
- 292: M: ok nombamba ilingi filya abantu ngabalepita so
bamimona ifi muli mu town so ilingi balanda ati
oh balya niba street kid filya eh cumfwika shani
abantu ngabalamita amashina aya ifyo
- 293: J: ah tatumfwa bwino
- 294: M: mulandu nshi'
- 295: J: mulandu tebufwayo bwesu ebwalenga
- 296: M: uhm
- 297: J: bucushi
- 298: M: oho
- 299: B: street kid tekweba ati kuifwaila aha
- 300: M: uhm
- 301: B: niilya iyakweba ati (.) walikwete banoko naba wiso
limbi waisa sanga ati bawiso monga ine pano ndi
batata apo bafwilile nshabamonapo (.) apo bafwilile
nshabamonapo nasangilefye ati babata balifwa
- 302: M: uhm
- 303: B: mukukula kwandi nasangilefye ati batata
balifwa nshabamonapo but nakwatafye abafyashi
bambi abafyashi bambi nabena nimpofu
- of suffering (.) if you find that your father is
dead and maybe your mother too you find that
you only remain with your sisters and grannies
- 284: M: yes
- 285: B: you find yourself in town like that where
you try (.) the little that you get food that's
why we sleep in town most of the times
but (.) sometimes you get a little bit of
money
- 286: M: yes
- 287: B: you go and visit your grannies (.) you give
them if they're around or if you've siblings
your brothers you visit them like that (.)
but most of the time what causes us to be
in town is suffering like this we're suffering
- 288: M: ok
- 289: B: suffering from hunger like this it's
suffering that's what i can say
- 290: M: ok
- 291: B: yes
- 292: M: ok most of the times passers-by when they
see you staying in town usually they say
oh those are street kids uhm how does it
feel when people label you like that
- 293: J: ah we don't feel good
- 294: M: what's the reason for that
- 295: J: because it's not a result of our wish
- 296: M: yes
- 297: J: it's suffering
- 298: M: ok
- 299: B: to be a street kid it's not that we desired this
- 300: M: yes
- 301: B: it's like (.) you had a mother and father then
you find your father like in my case when
my father died i never saw him (.) i never
saw my father i found he had died
- 302: M: yes
- 303: B: in my growing up i found my father had
died i never saw him but i only have other
parents but they're also blind

304: M: so ngacakwebati abantu balya abeta ati aba niba street kid kuti mwaterwishapo balemita ati shani (3) muimona shani mwebene (.) muli bantu ba musango shani	304: M: so for those people who say that these are street kids how'd you like to be addressed (3) how do you see yourselves (.) what kind of people are you
305: J: ah ifwe tuli bantu fye nga::: ngefyo baimona	305: J: ah we're people li:::ke the way they see themselves
306: M: uhm (4)	306: M: uhm (4)
307: B: tuli bantu monga beve kupema kwamene bapema	307: B: we're people like them the way they breathe
308: M: eh	308: M: yes
309: B: ndikupema kwatu	309: B: that's how we breathe
310: M: eh	310: M: yes
311: B: we're the same people	311: B: we're the same people
312: M: uhm (2) oho	312: M: uhm (2) ok
313: B: kupema kwamene bapema	313: B: the way they breathe
314: M: eh	314: M: yes
315: B: naife ndikupema tipema	315: B: we too that's how we breathe
316: M: eh	316: M: yes

Before I go into the details of the discourse-emergent identities of Zambian street kids, let me point out the general standpoint from which the two street kids in this extract speak. Banda and James position themselves as

1. individuals,
2. representatives of street kids, and
3. exemplars of street kids.

From 301 to 303, Banda speaks both as an individual (denoted by the use of first person pronoun "me") and as an exemplar of street kids (those *like me*). In turns 283, 287, 293, 295, 305, 307, 313, and 316, both Banda and James speak as representatives of street kids. Each of the two street kids uses the personal pronouns "we" and "our" to refer to themselves as members of the street kids group. For example, Banda uses "*we (=street kids) don't feel good*" and "*it's not our (=street kids) wish*" in turn 283 to refer to his group. In addition, Banda speaks as an exemplar for street kids by using the third person "you" to narrate his own

story and to describe his own situation (turns 283, 285, 287, and 301). So, Banda and James interchangeably position themselves as individuals, representatives of street kids, and as exemplars of the group.

Banda and James deploy acts and storylines to construct their identities. As noted in the discussion of positioning theory, the act is what is accomplished socially through a particular action (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999; Slocum & van Langenhove, 2004). Since we are working with interview data, such acts are constituted by linguistic discourse. When Banda and James describe their life situation (turns 283-303) and present their points of view (turns 304-316), they are doing something socially. In broader social constructionism language, the things that people are doing socially are referred to as discursive accomplishments, social consequences, or social accomplishments of texts (Burr, 1995; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Slocum & van Langenhove, 2004).

In the context of positioning theory, these accomplishments are seen as acts that have social force (Slocum & van Langenhove, 2004). The social force of the street kids' utterances in this extract is what they are achieving when they tell their story (turns 283-303) or what they achieve when they take a particular point of view (turns 304-316).

Banda and James do two things: they describe their life situation (turns 283-303) and take a perspective (turns 304-316). By making these utterances, Banda and James *defend* street kids against an (implicit) accusation and *adequate*⁷ street kids with other people. Furthermore, Banda and James are *undermining* existing negative street kid identities and *normalising* their street existence. These are demonstrated with reference to the extract.

⁷ "Adequate" is being used in a special sense here as a verb, and will be explained below.

Firstly, when street kids are asked to talk about themselves, they are aware of the existing identities that are circulating in public discourses. Banda and James seem to be aware of these ascribed negative identities. They also seem to be aware that they are held responsible for their stay on the streets. This responsibility seems to stem from a perception that the street kids have wilfully gone to the streets. Responsibility for wilful action lies on the action-taker. So, Banda and James *defend* street kids on three occasions (turns 283, 295, and 299) by positioning street kids as people who have been forced into being ‘people of this sort’:

- 1) tebufwayo bwesu (turn 283) it’s not our wish
- 2) tebufwayo bwesu ebwalenga (turn 295) it’s not a result of our wish
- 3) tekweba ati kuifwaila aha (turn 299) it’s not that we desired this no

By attributing their presence on the streets to the force of circumstances (Edwards, 1987), Banda and James offer themselves a powerlessness-bearing position from which becoming a street kid was inevitable. They subvert their ascribed responsibility-bearing position, an action that *undermines* the existing negative identity.

Secondly, Banda and James are “adequating” themselves with other people. “Adequation” is an etic concept that I will borrow from Bucholtz and Hall (2005) to demonstrate the social force of the utterances in turns 304-316. Bucholtz and Hall introduced the concept of adequation to refer to a discursive strategy that one can use to position people as alike. The people one positions as alike need not be identical; instead, all one needs to do is let his or her interlocutor understand that the different people are sufficiently similar for the current interactional purposes. So, differences that are irrelevant to the ongoing effort to adequate different people will be downplayed, and the similarities that are supportive are foregrounded. Hodges (n.d. in Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) used George W. Bush’s speeches to show how Bush

tried to adequate Saddam Hussein of Iraq to the Al Qaeda which claimed responsibility for the 11 September 2001 bombings in the United States of America. By repeatedly juxtaposing Al Qaeda and Saddam, Bush's speeches sought to establish discursive grounds for adequating the two as being morally and politically equivalent.

In repeatedly highlighting the similarity between street kids and other people, Banda's utterances in turns 304-316 seek to establish discursive grounds for perceiving the characteristics of street kids as adequately human. In doing this, Banda is *negotiating* street kids' position in relation to normative ways of being human. In other words, normalisation of street existence is sought (Foucault, 1979).

The whole episode in Extract 7 makes reference to a life of deviation from the moral order. However, there are shorter storylines within the macro-story. From turn 283 to 285 and 287 to 303, one storyline is being followed. This episode displays a double loss of family and subsistence. The second storyline (turn 287) displays Banda's fulfilment of his moral obligation to his kin. The third storyline (turns 305-316) is Banda's version of the similarity between street kids and other people. In other words, the street kids' identities are acts in the following storylines:

1. We (=street kids) have found ourselves in a forced socio-economic desperation (loss of significant family members, lack of subsistence) that forced us to act [hard times].
2. We (=street kids) have been able to fulfil some of our moral obligations because of our being on the streets [moral responsiveness=moral order]
3. There is an ever-widening gap between street kids and other people because our (=street kids) characteristics are (unrealistically) perceived as different from those of other people [widening moral gap].

These storylines (hard times, moral responsiveness, and ever-widening moral gap) foreground both the social acts and the identities Banda and James construct for their group.

In the extract, Banda and James construct themselves as *heroic victims*, members of a *misunderstood group*, and *people par excellence*. This street-kid-speak is emergent in the storylines and social forces presented in the extract.

Street kids are "heroic victims": Banda and James describe and narrate their choice-less life predicaments (turns 283-285, 287-303). This foregrounds their victim-identity, an identity that makes sense in the context of the hard times storyline. As a group that is forced by harsh familial and economic circumstances, street kids are left without choices about life (turns 283, 295, and 299). To be victims, however, they also need to be powerless. So, by constructing themselves as victims, Banda and James are also by implication positioning themselves as powerless kids –or at least powerless at the time of going to the streets. Going to the streets, it can be argued, might have been a way of regaining these kids' lost control over their lives.

Furthermore, Banda and James position themselves not as passive victims but victims who have done something about their life predicaments. So, they position themselves as people who continue with life despite difficulties. In this way, Banda and James become 'heroes triumphing over the odds'. This hero-identity is sustained by the hard times storyline which provides the 'forced socio-economic desperation' context. What we see here are two street kids who subvert ascribed negative positions, within the context of the dis-empowering forced desperation storyline, and position themselves as heroic victims. They then identify themselves with this heroic victim position.

Banda and James also position themselves as members of a *misunderstood group* – constructing street life as a misunderstood way of life. By positioning street life as a misunderstood way of life, Banda and James also create positions for those who do not know (the misunderstanding) and those who know (the understanding). Consequently, Banda and James map out a discursive space in which those who do not know (the misunderstanding) have no legitimacy and authority to speak about street kids (the group they have misunderstood). The street-kid-speak attributed to the epistemically underprivileged is therefore open to ridicule and undermining –and cannot be taken serious. Banda and James, however, assign to themselves an epistemic vantage point.

I have highlighted, above, that one of the social forces of the utterances of Banda and James is to defend street kids and to undermine existing negative ascribed identities. By defending street kids, Banda and James position street kids as a misunderstood group that needs defending. In turns 283 and 299, Banda defends street kids by demonstrating that their presence on the streets was not wilful in the first place. James does the same in turn 295. Both Banda and James contest the (implicit) perception upon which they are negatively evaluated. This misperception of their intention for going to the streets, they reckon, is the source of misunderstanding. They undermine the existing negative evaluation by offering an alternative explanation: we were forced by circumstances (turns 283, 295, and 299).

What we have seen are two street kids who manage their intentions for going on the streets (within the context of the hard times storyline) and position themselves as members of a misunderstood group. In addition to this identity, Banda and James position themselves as *human beings par excellence*.

Banda and James use adequation and normalisation to position themselves as full human beings. In the episode in turns 285 to 287, Banda positions himself as a family person who fulfils his obligations to his kin. This is within the moral order storyline. In the episode in turns 304 to 316, both Banda and James address the us/them divide, the divide between street kids and other people. This is done within the context of the ‘widening us-them moral gap’ storyline. By adequating themselves to other people, both in terms of characteristics and in terms of fulfilling familial obligations, Banda and James position themselves as ‘people par excellence’ or people who are as good as other people.

In Extract 7, we also see two street kids who (through adequation of street kids and other people as morally and humanly equivalent) position themselves as full human beings. The *misunderstood group* and *people par excellence* identities are also evident in Extract 8 below.

Extract 8: Interview 6 (20 year old)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 320: M: so nombamba like pe shina lyabu street kid bwafya
nshi musangapo ilingi ⁸ | 320: M: so about the label of street kid what's
the problem you find with it |
| 321: J: ok ifwe cilatukalipa tekwebati bufwayo bwesu | 321: J: ok it pains us because it's not our fault |
| 322: M: eh | 322: M: yes |
| 323: J: because ubucushi busanga umuntu uuli o (.)
uuli onse | 323: J: because suffering comes to eve (.)
every one |
| 324: M: eh | 324: M: yes |
| 325: J: tekwebati ninshi naena akekalilila filya fine (2)
naena akesasangwa muma problems ayakwebati
takese cetekela futi | 325: J: it's not like that person will stay like
that all the times he'll also be found in
unexpected problems |

This extract is a continuation of my conversation with Banda and James. In this extract, James manages the intentions of being on the street (turn 321) and adequates street kids with other

⁸ In line with the transcription convention used, there are no punctuation marks in the transcripts. Even proper names are in lower case. For other aspects of the transcriptions, see Appendix 1 below.

people (turn 323), thereby constructing street kids as a misunderstood group and people par excellence, respectively.

In Extract 9 below, I started the dialogue by presenting to John the image of his group that circulates in public discourses. I deliberately made reference to his group's referent term "street kid" and the source of the term (turn 431). I did so without describing the term so that John could attach to it any of the meanings or connotations that he would normally attach to it. In turn 432, John confirms his knowledge of the term. The ensuing chat became a talk about the term "street kid", and John's position in relation to it. As such, utterances in turns 433 to 444 became rhetorical re-constructions of what "street kid" meant for John.

It is worthy noting that for the greater part of the chat, John talks in his capacity as an individual, using first person indexicals ("I", "I'm", "me", and "myself"). It is only in turns 440 and 442 that he speaks as one of the street kids.

Extract 9: Interview 1 (17 year old)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 431: M: abantu ilingi ngabamimona balanda ati
ba street kid | 431: M: most of the times when people see you
they call you street kids |
| 432: J: ee balanda ati ba street kid | 432: J: yes they say street kids |
| 433: M: ee (.) ingaiwe uimona shani | 433: M: fine (.) and you how do you see yourself |
| 434: J: a::h njimona ati teine street kid | 434: J: u::h I don't see myself as a street kid |
| 435: M: niwe ani (.5) uimona shani we mwine | 435: M: who're you (.5) how do you see yourself |
| 436: J: ndaimonafye bwinofye ififinefye (.)
ndili muntu | 436: J: i see myself ok like this (.) i'm a human
being |
| 437: M: abantu ngabakumona street kid iwe uimona
ati shani | 437: M: when people see a street kid in you what
do you see in yourself |
| 438: J: ndi muntu fye bwino fino fine | 438: J: i'm perfectly human the way i am |
| 439: M: oho ninshi abantu balandila ati muli ba
street kid | 439: M: ok why then do people want to see you
as street kids |
| 440: J: pantu ati tulala mu town nokulomba filya fine | 440: J: seemingly because we sleep in town and
that we beg |

441: M: uhm	441: M: uhm
442: J: ati ni street kid alipondoka (.) pang'anda pamyabo	442: J: that it's a street kid who's run away (.) from his home
443: M: ok, nomba iwebo kuti watemwa abantu bakumona shani (.5) kuti watemwa abantu balekwita shani	443: M: ok how would you like people to see you (.5) how'd you like them to call you
444: J: balenjitifye filya fine at:i or nangu ishina lyandifye filya fine	444: J: they should just call me:: or just by my name like that

This rhetorical re-construction of street kids has three episodes. The first one spans turns 431 and 434, and sees John establishing his position in relation to the idea of “street kids”. The second episode spans 435 and 438, and sees John negotiating his position. The third episode spans 439 and 444, and sees the researcher asking John to provide his perceived rationale for other people’s attitudes towards street kids. In all these episodes, John creates one identity for himself: he is fully human. This identity becomes clear with reference to the positioning triads within which it emerges.

In turns 431 to 434, the storyline is anchored on the idea of “street kid”. In turns 435 to 438, the storyline shifts to the idea of “*ubuntu*”, being human. In turn 434, John says “I don’t see myself as a street kid” and immediately draws on the concept of *ubuntu* in turn 236 when he says, “i’m a human being.” Putting the two concepts (“street kid” and “*ubuntu*”) this close to each other creates some discursive relationship between them. By collocating “street kid” and “*ubuntu*”, John creates hyponymy. Direct reference to a superordinate (=general group) “*ubuntu*” has a concomitant direct reference to a particularisation “street kid”. This discursive activity can be interpreted as drawing attention to “*ubuntu*”, the significant general group, and underplaying “street kid” as an insignificant instance of *ubuntu*.

While John acknowledges the presence of the “street kid” idea in public discourse, he refuses to acquiesce it as his identity in turn 434. Even though John distances himself from the “street

kid” identity, he also goes on to construct a street kid as a human being. John’s emphasis on the superordinate “ubuntu” can be seen, in the context of the current dialogue, as a diffusion of a particularised “street kid” identity. So, street kids –not just himself –are positioned as *abantu* (=human beings).

From turn 439 to 444, a moral order storyline unfolds. In turn 439, I asked John (as a member of street kids) to account for his group’s marginal position. John went on to give a picture of activities that are morally unacceptable about being a street kid, the activities that accord street kids a sub-human status:

- sleeping in town (turn 440),
- begging (turn 440), and
- *ukupondoka* (=rebelliously running away from home; turn 442).

John does not distance himself from these activities; instead, he strives to change their meaning by reappraising the local moral order. Later in the same interview (Extract 10, turn 466), John reiterates the meaning he offered in turn 438. In saying “i’m perfectly human the way i am” (turn 438 in Extract 9) and that “a human being just like this, that’s how i am” (turn 466 in Extract 10), John contests the ascribed sub-human status and positions. What remains, then, is street life as just another way of being fully human. So, a street kid *muntu fye* (=is an unreserved human being; turn 438).

Extract 10: Interview 1 (17 year old)

455: M: ifi wikala mu street, taumona ati cilaku
pusanyako ku bantu bambi

456: J: ee cilampusanyako

457: M: mumusango nshi

455: M: the way you stay in town do you see
yourself different from other people

456: J: yes it makes me different

457: M: in which way

458: J: bambi filya fine balimpata (.) bambi balintemwa filya fine balemfundako ifyamano	458: J: some people hate me (.) others like me like that and they teach me good things
459: M: ninshi abantu bengakupatila	459: M: why would they hate you
460: J: mulandu wakweba ati walipondoka (.)	460: J: saying you have run away from home
461: M: kwena walipondoka	461: M: have you run away
462: J: walibutuka pa ng'anda filya fine balekukalipila	462: J: they rebuke you that you've run away
463: M: nomba iwe ulaimona ngo muntu uwapondoka	463: M: do you see yourself as one who's run away
464: J: awe	464: J: no
465: M: uimona shani	465: M: how do you see yourself
466: J: umuntu fino finefye, efyo naba	466: J: a human being just the way i am

In the following interview (Extract 11), we see Yanga (Y) narrating his homeless mobility through many city spaces and his hard times. Yanga draws on both the moral order storyline and the hard times storyline to reconstruct his identity and the identity of street kids.

Strikingly, Yanga dis-aligns himself with other street kids so that he can be seen as a human being par excellence. He constructs himself as a victim of other street kids' 'immoral' behaviour –thereby problematising other street kids and reinforcing his own victim-hero and moral-human positions.

Extract 11: Interview 10 (19 year old)

255: Y: efyo naishile fuma ku soweto ((market)) nayamba uku lasangwa pa simonson ((shopping complex))	255: Y: that's how i left soweto ((market)) and pitched camp at simonson ((shopping complex))
256: M: uhm	256: M: uhm
257: Y: pa simonson efyo twaishile yambafye uku sukila imyotoka nabanandi tulesuka (.) tulesuka ama days yaleya manje behaviour iyo naishile mona pama robot palya ngandi pa simonson palya	257: Y: that's how we started washing cars with my friends at simonson (.) and days went by but the behaviour i observed at the robots when I was at simonson
258: M: uhm	258: M: uhm
259: Y: ama guys twalebomba nabena baleiba palya pene mwamona iyakweba ati limbi umu bosses limbi ashila ine wine motoka	259: Y: the guys i was working with were stealing just there you see such that when some boss once gave me to guard his car
260: M: uhm	260: M: uhm

261: Y: ama guys balaisa palya pene limbi ati wa pwalala waya mukusunda filya fine wadabwa ati limbi basenda itayala bacita shani babutuka filya fine mwamona wise ubwele uoleshe itayela tamuli wipushe-ipushe ama guys ama guys nabaisoya umwine aisa filya fine njebele ah but ine nshishibepo ifili fyo (.) ifili fyonse naciya mukusunda kulya but motoka nacisa isungafye bwino manje uusendele itayala naine wine ca ndabwi(.) candabwisha njebele awe itayala ili lyalidula iwe teti nkulekelele fye awe filya ifya kuti nakushila motoka ninshi njishibe ati ninku cetekela nalaisa nkulipile ne ndalama ninjishiba ati nalaisa nkupele ne ndalama so iwe walasonta fye itayela uko utwe(.) uko utwele awe umu bosses efyo aishile nsendafye nokuntwala mu poli(.) mu police pa city marke (.) city market efyo baishile nkomena muma cells ba kapokola banguma filya fine baipusha (.) eh kaili ine nshishibepo fimo nalekana fye nati awe ine but nshishi(.) nshishibepo ifili fyonse but limbi in case abanandi balya bene abo tubomba nabo ebacimpitafye pamano limbi basenda itayela (.) awe efyo naishile yambafye ukulaikala naishileikalapo::: shinga naishile ikalapo 2 weeks palya pene

262: M: uhm

263: Y: complainant taleisa futi nati awe kaili kulaba ati naba:: officer-in-charge balya bene abakalamba balya abalolesha pama juniors balya efyo baishile isa balolesha baipusha-ipusha imilandu ee bamona namwi book nama days ayo waikalamo filya fine eh efyo baya amba fye ukubakalipila njebele awe mwilasunga abantu ifi tamwaishiba ati ishi milandu

264: M: uhm

265: Y: kuti baisa twisalila ino nani kane police so uyu muntu mufwilefye mwamufumya since complainant talipo na docket tacita shani ta iswisha

261: Y: the guys would come there and when you relax and go to pee like that they surprise you they take a tyre and run like that you see when you're back you find the tyre isn't there you ask around but the guys disappear and the owner comes and i say ah i don't know any (.) anything i went to pee there and i guarded the car well but the one who took this tyre i'm also surpr(.) surprised i say no this tyre's expensive i can't just let you go because when i leave a car with you it's because of trust i know i'd pay you and i know i'd give you money so just show us where you've tak(.) taken the tyre and that's how the boss took me to the pol(.) the police at city mark(.) city market and i was locked in the cells and was beaten up like that by the police as uh but i didn't know anything i just said i don(.) i don't know anything but maybe the friends i work with are the ones who tricked me and took the tyre (.) that's how i started staying i stayed fo:::r how long i stayed for 2 weeks in the police cells

262: M: uhm

263: Y: the complainant never came then there is the:: officer-in-charge the senior who supervises juniors that's how he came and looked and asked around about the cases and he checked in the book the days one had stayed and he started reprimanding them i said don't keep people like this it's against the law

264: M: uhm

265: Y: they can close our police post so you should release this person since the complainant hasn't come and he hasn't opened a docket

266: M: uhm

267: Y: awe iyo ine day efyo baishile:: iyo day ta bamfumishe ulucelo lwakaena elyo baishile mfumya awe ati baisa mpyangishako pa reception palya pene nabapyangila efyo na ishile fuma naisabwelela pa simonson palya pene twaisa yamba nokulabomba (.) pantu na ishile bwelelapo manje naliisaba (.) naliisaba u wacenjela mumano njebele umuntu nganshila icintu

268: M: uhm

269: Y: mfwile first umwine acita shani afika elyo manje naya uko ndefwaya (.) awe iyaishile konkapo ba guy bakaena iyakweba ati u musungu aisasha motoka tapali nomuntu uo ashililile uuli onse ama guys efyo baishileya baisa isula motoka ilya ine baisa fumyamo ne cilimba basenda nefyakufwala na brief case iyalimo mulya mwine efyo baishile isulafye no kwisula but aba bantu abasendele nali bamwene mumenso (.) so efyo baishile isafye palya baeba na simonson umwine (1) wa cikulwa nejebele abaice aba tulecita shani tatule bafwaya apa pa ncende apa niba kabwala(.) ni bakabwalala so aba mukabacita shani muka batamfyepo pano tatulebafwaya (.) awe umwine simonson efyo aishile tubikafye panga pamo ayamba ukutucita ama interview ati awe bana bandi ukumitemwa nalitemwa manje imi sango isho mwayamba ukulacita teshisu(.) teshisuma

270: M: uhm

271: Y: abantu baleilishanya ati abalemipelako utundalama utunono ati mwakwatako aka bwali futi ebo mulelufyanya futi ninshi mufwaye nshi (2) tamwakasange umuntu uwakweba ati kuti amyafwilisha imwe baice imwe (.) awe mama Simonson efyo naishile musontelafye njebele awe ba mayo ifwe mwicita shani mwitu tamfishamofye tuli ba kaele abasendele ifipe ni

266: M: uhm

267: Y: that's how that day the::y that day they didn't release me the following morning that's when they released me but they first made me sweep the reception then i got back to simonson and we started working (.) when i went back i became(.) careful i said when a person leaves something under my care

268: M: uhm

269: Y: i should first wait he comes then i can go wherever i want to (.) then what followed the guys a white man left a car without asking anyone to look after it that's how the guys opened that car and removed a radio and took clothes and a brief case that was in there and that's how they opened it but I saw them with my own eyes (.) so that's how people came and told simonson (1) the owner of the building i said what should we do about these children we don't want them here at this place they're thie (.) they're thieves so just chase them away we don't want them (.) so simonson came and gathered us together and started to interview us and said ok my children i do love you but what you've started doing is not good

270: M: uhm

271: Y: people are complaining that they're giving you money so that you have something to eat but you're doing bad things to them what do you want (.) you won't find anyone to help you (.) that's when I showed mama simonson I said mum don't send us away we're innocent this one and this one took

uyu noyu aba ebasendele ifipe efyo baishile
bekatafye ama guys nokubatwala ku police (.)
ku police kulya baishile batwala eko baishile
basenda no kubatwala kuma lead pakuti baya
sonta uko bashitishye filya ifipe filya basonta e
fyo baishile pokafye ne fipe ama guys baisa
batwala namu police efyo baileikalamofye 1
month mulya mwine mu police bali banga 5
(.) ukwikala mulya muma cells efyo naishilemo
nafye njebele ati iyi style iyo balepanga iyi pa
last kuti waisa cita shani waisa ilamo ku
jefe kwakaena (.) pa simonson efyo naishile talu
kapo naisafumapo efyo naishileya fye manje
ku intercity ((bus terminus)) kuma railways
(.) ku Intercity kulya efyo naishileyamba uku:::
naisa eshako iyakweba ati kulaimishako ifyola
namona ati awe ileshupa (.) efyo naishileyamba
fye ukulatolafye manje utuma 750mls eko twaba
utuma 750mls utwamenshi tulya

272: M: ee

273: Y: nganatola (.) naisushako nangu 50kg filya fine
kaili ukupenda K100 ni tutatu utumabotolo

274: M: uhm

275: Y: 100 tutatu 100 tutatu

276: M: uhm

277: Y: efyo naishileyamba ukulabombafye ne
ncito ilya ine mu Intercity mulya mwine nga
natola nayashitishamo filya fine but ifyakulya
naleyalya mulya mwine mukati icakweba ati na
citako ka piece work naposako bin bampelako
bwali nalya filya fine limbi bampelako notu
malasha utusheleko filya fine nashitisha nakwata
ko limbi ka 10 pin filya fine nashitako ifya
kufwala (.) so time yaishile konkapo ba::: ama::
nani kane ama kaili mwaliba ama general workers

278: M: uhm

the items and that's how those guys were
apprehended and taken to the police (.)
at the police they were taken to their
leads so that they could retrieve the items
from the buyers and they recovered them
the guys were taken into police custody
for 1 month they were 5 guys (.) staying
in the cells I came to see that this lifestyle
they are living like this in the end you can
find yourself in you can go to jail (.) that's
how i distanced myself from simonson i
left it and then went to intercity ((bus
terminus)) by the railways (.) at intercity
i started to::: i tried carrying people's
luggage for a fee but i found it difficult
(.) so I just started collecting 750mls
there're those 750ml bottles of water
those ones

272: M: yes

273: Y: when I collect (.) I fill something like
a 50kg bag like that since we counted
3 bottles for K100

274: M: uhm

275: Y: 100 for 3 100 for 3

276: M: uhm

277: Y: that's how i started working inside the
intercity like that i collect i sell but
food i ate in there by doing piece work
i take rubbish bins to the dump they give
me food i eat like that or they'd give me
left over charcoal and i'd sell and pocket
maybe a 10 pin ((ZMK10000 ≈SAR20))
and I'd buy clothes (.) so the next time
the::: the::: isn't it there are general
workers

278: M: uhm

Extract 11 presents Yanga's (Y) homeless mobility through many places (City Market, Soweto Market, Intercity Bus Terminus, Police Post, Simonson) and varied economic activities (washing cars, guarding cars, selling, begging, collecting garbage, stealing). The story blends economic activities with social relationships and places relevant to those economic activities. Yanga presents himself as one who has wandered through many difficulties, including victimisation and running away from risky situations. The storyline, eventful and characterised by hard times, unfolds like an odyssey.

Yanga does the most talking in the interview, with the researcher only giving one-word utterances: uhm or yes. While the language used by the participant is predominantly IciBemba, there are instances where the participant uses words and phrases from IciNyanja (turn 261), English (turns 257, 259, 263, 265, 267, 269, 271 & 277), and slang (turn 261). On three occasions (turn 261, 263 & 269), Yanga uses the word *njebele* (=I said) to report what another person said (=he or she said) which indicates that his IciBemba is not fluent.

Two related stories are narrated: being a victim of the friends' behaviour (turns 257-268), and being a witness to the friends' crime (turns 269-278). On one hand, the stories map out a moral order of acceptable and unacceptable forms of street life. Within the moral order storyline, street life is generally problematised, and Yanga negotiates a position that exempts him from the problematised identity. On the other hand, the stories become a site for the rhetorical re-construction of street kids. The odyssey/hard times storyline emerges and, within this storyline, Yanga positions his homeless mobility as heroic. I demonstrate this with reference to the data.

In the first episode (turns 257-268), Yanga tells of the price he paid when his friends stole from the car he was guarding. In narrating this story, he constructs two separate identities of street kids. One of these identities is problematised; the other is favourable. Yanga creates two positions: the problematiser and the problematisee (Ochs & Taylor, 1995 in Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). He then accords himself the problematiser position and dis-aligns himself with the problematisee, the other street kids. At the very beginning of the conversation (turns 257 & 259), Yanga negatively evaluates the behaviour of other street kids –and he maintains this position throughout the story. This storyline, as I will demonstrate, re-constructs street kids.

Yanga constructs himself as an innocent victim:

- other street kids steal from the car he is guarding (turns 259-261), and
- he is locked up in police cells, for two weeks, for a crime he did not commit (turn 261).

By telling this story, Yanga condemns the actions of other street kids. This creates two positions within the group of street kids: Yanga, the victim; and other street kids, the morally depraved victimisers. In doing this, Yanga assigns the negative identity to other street kids (thereby confirming public discourse) while at the same time assigning the favourable identity to himself (disconfirming public discourse).

This display of heterogeneity among street kids undermines the assumed presence of a unitary street kid identity, one that is shared by all street kids. Yanga constructs street identity as a co-occurrence of both acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. By implication, a co-occurrence of good and evil is characteristic of any group of people, the street kid fraternity being just one of those groups.

The second episode (turns 269-278) involves Yanga witnessing a theft by other street kids. Towards the end of turn 269, Yanga constructs the theft of other street kids as earning him/them rejection. Then he goes on to negatively evaluate this behaviour (turn 271). Another resource that he uses to position himself is the action of distancing himself from the Simonson Shopping Complex, the place that is populated by his problematisees. What Yanga tends to do is to contrast himself with other street kids –by ‘othering’ them.

In Extract 12 below, we will see Robbie (R) telling his home-leaving story. Within this story, he rhetorically reconstructs street life as a forced circumstance on which the judgements of the moral order should not strictly apply. Like James, in Extract 8 above, Robbie manages his intentions for going on the streets in such a way that his action becomes a normal way of responding to the choice-less hard times. By going to the streets, he did what any other person in such circumstances would do. Robbie also positions himself as one who paid attention to the moral limits on his actions. So, he cannot be morally depraved, as ‘other’ people would want to perceive him.

Extract 12: Interview 3 (13 year old)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 43: M: ninshi wafumineko ((ku Kabwe)) | 43: M: why did you leave ((your home town)) |
| 44: R: munandi mu(.)mu::nandi ee wansendele
ati kuno ((ku Lusaka)) kwaliba indalama
nomba ine naleshitisha ama plastic ku Kabwe | 44: R: my friend it(.)i::t was my friend who took me
he told me there's money here ((in Lusaka))
but I was selling plastics in Kabwe |
| 45: M: ku Kabwe walecitenshi | 45: M: you were doing what in Kabwe |
| 46: R: naleshitisha ama plastic | 46: R: i was selling plastics |
| 47: M: oho elyo umunobe aisa kusenda ati
kwalibe ndalama ku::= | 47: M: ok then your friend came and took you
saying there's money i::n= |
| 48: R: =ati tuleya ku Lusaka kwalibe ndalama
but ine nalikene ukuya ku Lusaka | 48: R: =saying let's go to Lusaka there's money
there but I refused to go to Lusaka |
| 49: M: oho | 49: M: ok |
| 50: R: ee | 50: R: yes |

The organisation of this discourse is very revealing. The extract is organised as a narrative. A story of home-leaving is told. This narrative basically has a need-solution structure. A need is presented together with a solution. To be exact, this need-solution sequence is structured as:

- 1) *need*: for money or economic emancipation,
- 2) *obstacle*: not making enough money from selling plastics,
- 3) *solution*: go to the streets of Lusaka (offered by a friend),
- 4) *evaluation of solution*: I was resistant because leaving home is seen by the public⁹ as bad for children but I see it as a normal economic odyssey.

This, however, is not merely a story; it is a series of arguments that are obliquely concealed under the ostensibly neutral home-leaving narrative. An explicit argumentative version of this extract might go something like this:

- 1) I needed sustenance *but* there was no money,
- 2) I began selling plastics *but* I was not making enough money,
- 3) my friend told me that money could be found on the streets of Lusaka *but* I was hesitant to come to Lusaka and stay on the streets *because* this is negatively evaluated,
- 4) there were no other alternatives, I had to come to Lusaka to find a living on the streets,
- 5) under the present circumstances, being a street kid should be a normal way of economic emancipation.

What discursive function does it serve to leave all these arguments implicit? Robbie takes a narrative position that suggests some awareness of the identity associated with people who

⁹ This theme emerged in the earlier part of the conversation which is not in Extract 12.

have left home to become street kids. These ascribed identities of street kids are hegemonic in the public discourse. Robbie constructs street life as a normal economic undertaking in the context of the hard times storyline. He prepares the interlocutor for this construction by pre-structuring the economically limiting social space within which such an action unfolds.

Robbie positions himself, implicitly and explicitly, as young, vulnerable to peer-influence, struggling economically, and choice-less. These circumstances can annihilate Robbie's life if nothing is done. Within this storyline, Robbie positions himself as one who made a choice to go on with life in spite of the odds.

Robbie also uses a 'privileged-knower' position to build a firm ground for his way of re-constructing street life. This is evident in the organisation of his utterances in turns 44 and 48.

The epistemic stance assumed by Robbie in these two turns positions his feelings and experiences as the authority on issues of a street kid's identity. The first part of turn 44 is the action of Robbie's friend (my friend took me), the second part is Robbie's own action (but I was selling plastics); the first part of turn 48 is the friend's stance (there's money in Lusaka), the second part is Robbie's own stance (but I refused to go). Table 4 below shows the unfolding of this co-presence of experiences and evaluations.

First Part	Conjunction	Second Part
Turn 44: "my friend took me" (Friend's action)	"BUT"	Turn 44: "i was selling plastics" (Robbie's own action)
Turn 48: "there's money in lusaka" (Friend's stance)		Turn 48: "i refused to go" (Robbie's own stance)

Table 4: Co-presence (collocation) of Robbie's experiences and evaluations: An allusion to an epistemically privileged position.

This co-presence of personal experiences of economic emancipation (by selling plastics) and feelings of hesitancy to go to the streets calls attention to the speaker's experience-based

personal authority. It is this authority that sets up an experiential divide between the one who knows and the one who does not know what it means to be a street kid. This organisation legitimises the street kid as the one whose experience-based and knowledge-based opinions should count on matters pertaining to street kid identity. We saw the same discursive strategies at work when Banda and James (Extract 7, above) also took the 'privileged-knower' positions to undermine rival street kid identities.

A close look at Extract 12 also points to a perceived hegemonic struggle between the researcher and Robbie. Robbie seems to interpret my question in turn 43 (Why did you leave home?) as an accusatorial assertion: you have rebelliously left home. Such an assertion would entail that the researcher is taking the dominant societal view of street kids, a view which antagonises and competes with Robbie's version. The need-solution structure of the home-leaving narrative signals and services this perceived hegemonic struggle. Consequently, Robbie begins to account for his position. How does he do this accountability? The turn-by-turn organisation of the narrative illustrates this activity.

Turns 44 and 48 are two compound sentences that share the same co-ordinating conjunction 'but'. The first paragraph uses the *iciBemba* version of the word; the second uses the English version. The collocation of the 'selling of plastics' as the first solution (turn 44); the 'externally suggested solution of going to the streets' (turns 44 and 48); the 'unwillingness to go to the streets' (turn 48), and the 'eventual moving to the streets' (turn 44) pre-structures the conclusions of Robbie's interlocutors to one version: going on the streets is not an act of will or choice but a bold economic decision. In this way, Robbie positions street life as a forced circumstance. The moral limits to what Robbie could do, the limits beyond which he has

gone, is what attracts criticism of street life. In a forced circumstance, however, the absence of choice exempts Robbie from moral blame.

In the following extract, the street kid, Lungu (L), constructs street life as resulting from the force of circumstances. Lungu positions himself as one who is not contravening the moral order by choice. He also positions himself as one who is not just a victim of circumstances but one who is overcoming the odds.

Extract 13: Interview 11 (18 year-old)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 61: M: oho inga ku Kabwe cinshi tawaikalileko | 61: M: ok why didn't you stay in Kabwe |
| 62: L: ku Kabwe ah nali isa mona filya ifyakweba
ati wati njikale mu town | 62: L: in Kabwe uh i came to realise that you try
to stay in town |
| 63: M: uhm | 63: M: yea |
| 64: L: naleumfwa insoni abakaya bali isa fula | 64: L: i felt shy i knew many people around |
| 65: M: oho | 65: M: ok |
| 66: L: ee | 66: L: yea |
| 67: M: ku Kabwe baliisa fula abakaya | 67: M: you knew too many people in Kabwe |
| 68: L: ee | 68: L: yea |
| 69: M: ekwisa ku Lusaka uko bashikwishibe | 69: M: so you came to Lusaka where you're not
known |
| 70: L: ee nomba kabili ha (.) | 70: L: yea but again (.) ah |
| 71: M: eh | 71: M: yea |
| 72: L: e(hhhhhhhh)h | 72: L: ye(hhhhhhhh)s |
| 73: M: walibutuka abakaya ku Kabwe iwe | 73: M: you ran away from people you know in
Kabwe |
| 74: L: kabili teti (.) nalalomba shani | 74: L: yes because (.) how am I going to work |
| 75: M: ee | 75: M: yea |
| 76: L: indombe uyu ale (.) alepunda ati kanshi
efyo ucita ↑ifyo | 76: L: i beg from this one he ex-(.) exclaims ↑that's
what you do |
| 77: M: ee | 77: M: yea |
| 78: L: usungeko motoka, ati ↑h::a encito ubomba iyo
balembwenamo so efyo naishile tontonkanyafye
(.) abanandi efyo baishilepunda ati boyi kuyafye
ku Lusaka | 78: L: you guard cars they say ↑a::h that's the
work you do they despised me so
I decided (.) my friends suggested friend
we just go to Lusaka |
| 79: M: oho | 79: M: ok |

This is another home-leaving story. Although it is a story of economic emancipation, it has a particular twist: it focuses on the shame associated with street life (turns 62, 64, & 78). The episode narrates Lungu's homeless mobility from the known places to the unknown places in search of economic emancipation with a lesser burden of shame. The episode unfolds like an odyssey. In turns 62, 64 and 78, Lungu narrates how shame forced him out of his hometown. Home-leaving, constructed in this way, cannot be seen as a free personal choice.

This absence of freedom of choice has implications for moral responsibility. One cannot be blamed for something that is beyond his or her powers. So, the perceived moral judgements that are passed about street kids are undermined by this position. Lungu, then, is just a victim of social and economic circumstances. However, Lungu is not just a victim, he is triumphing over the odds. This means that Lungu's subjective sense of self is that he is a heroic victim.

In Extract 14, the force of circumstances is used as the basis for constructing the street kid's subjective sense of self. Age-related social norms are used to position Bwalya (B), the street kid in the extract, as a human being par excellence who is responsive to the social and moral demands that age and life circumstances put on him.

Extract 14: Interview 9 (19 year old)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>383: B: kubantu ifwe ukulomba kwesu nifi fine uku
 sungile myotoka ngatwamusungila umuntu
 motoka umuntu nokumusukila ekulomba
 kwesu kulya filya fine</p> <p>384: M: but paliko inshita imo iyo mwalelomba fye</p> <p>385: B: ee twale(.) nalelomba monga ukufuma mu
 '98 ine mu street elyo naishilemo mu '98</p> <p>386: M: eh</p> <p>387: B: ndili street kid from 1998 elyo naishile muno</p> | <p>383: B: the way we beg from people is like this
 we guard cars when we guard someone's
 car and wash it that's how we beg like
 that</p> <p>384: M: but there was a time you just begged</p> <p>385: B: yes we were(.) i begged starting from '98
 myself i came in the streets in '98</p> <p>386: M: ok</p> <p>387: B: i've been a street kid from 1998 when i</p> |
|---|--|

mu street	came to the streets
388: M: ehe	388: M: yes
389: B: mu '98 twalelomba	389: B: in '98 we were begging
390: M: oho	390: M: ok
391: B: twalelomba	391: B: we were begging
392: M: mwalekele shani	392: M: how did you stop
393: B: ukuleko kulomba ah kainge ifi fine twa kula ifyakweba ati ngawaya lomba bakweba ati uli mukulu naukula	393: B: to stop begging ah we became old and it was like if you go begging they tell you that you are big you've become old
394: M: ee	394: M: ok
395: B: wilalomba ufwife ufwaye ncito	395: B: you shouldn't be begging get a job
396: M: eh	396: M: ok
397: B: that's why nalekelo kulomba ine nayambafye ukusungile myotoka nokusamfya	397: B: that's why I stopped begging and started guarding and washing cars
398: M: ok so nifilya ifyakwebati wakula abantu bala landa ati awe teti tukupele uli mukulu kuti wa bomba	398: M: ok so it's like you become old and people say they can't give you anything you're old enough to work for it
399: B: ee ati uleibombela	399: B: yes that you should work for yourself
400: M: oho nomba cumfwika shani filya abantu bale tila kuti waibombela elyo uleti ico wabombako waeshako tafilebombeka bwino	400: M: ok so how does it feel when people say you should fend for yourself but what you try to do is not materialising
401: B: ee ngefifine mwalande fi	401: B: yes just like you've said
402: M: uhm	402: M: uhm
403: B: ngabakweba ati ufwife wabomba	403: B: when they tell you that you should work
404: M: uhm	404: M: uhm
405: B: elyo ififine incito tailemoneka that's why filya ifyakwebati tulalwisha ukuti incito nga waisanga yamoneka kubomba	405: B: then like this you can't find a job that's why we try hard to work whenever we get a job
406: M: oho	406: M: ok

Bwalya shows how fluid and negotiable his identity is. He represents the street kid identity as one that is age-dependent. From turn 392 to 397, he narrates the negotiation that was involved in the transition from his earlier younger age when begging was 'begging' and his current older age when begging involves 'work'. It was possible to beg for money when he was a younger street kid. Since Bwalya has grown older, the people he used to beg from can no longer tolerate this economic activity. People think begging is no longer age-appropriate for

Bwalya. So, it becomes necessary for him to re-negotiate his position vis-à-vis the economic activities that are possible.

Bwalya seems to liken being a street kid to begging. In turn 383, he implicates begging in his guarding and washing cars: “the way we beg from people is like this we guard cars...and wash it”. He re-works begging to incorporate car washing and guarding. Why would he discursively incorporate the two activities that are capable of standing independently?

Begging is positioned here as the main economic activity that defines and ties the street kid group together. The inclusion of Bwalya into the street kid fraternity is threatened by his age-necessitated change of economic activities. So, he reworks the criterion for inclusion in the group, the group that seems to be facilitating Bwalya’s ‘helping’ social networks.

In Extract 15 below, we see how Lombe (L) draws on the hard times storyline to justify his use of consciousness altering substances. In making this justification, Lombe positions his behaviour as what every human being would do in hard times. He draws on the second person *you* to anchor his personal experiences on general human experiences. So, he constructs himself as a human being par excellence.

Lombe was the second person I interviewed. He told me that he had come from a town that is about 150 kilometres from Lusaka. During the consent process, he asked for my cellphone number which I gave him. Our interview started at 10:00hrs and ended around 11:30hrs.

Between 11:30hrs and 14:00hrs, I chatted with him and a few other street kids I intended to interview later. Just after 14:00hrs, I set out for my second interview of the day. I left town for home at around 15:30hrs. I was exhausted, more on the emotional level than on the physical level. I had barely sat down for my late lunch at home when my cellphone rung. “Hello boss,

this is Lombe the one you were talking to in town”, came the voice from the other side of the phone, “boss, John has been hit by a car, please come.” The phone was cut immediately. The John he was talking about was the first street kid I had befriended, the one who had introduced me to the other boys including Lombe. So, I felt obliged to go back to town, a distance of about eight kilometres. While I was driving out of the gate the phone rung again. “Are you coming?” Lombe asked. I replied that I was just starting off. He laughed, “Ok boss don’t come, I was just finding out if your cellphone number is correct!” I did not know how to react.

Extract 15: Interview 2 (16 year old)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 565: M: oho (5) ee nomba naukwata ifyo uleputamo ifyo ((pointing to the bottle that the boy is carrying and occasionally sniffing from)) | 565: M: ok (5) yes now you’ve those things you’re sniffing ((pointing to the bottle that the boy is carrying and occasionally sniffing from)) |
| 566: L: ee | 566: L: yes |
| 567: M: nifinshi ifyo | 567: M: what’s that |
| 568: L: ni sticker | 568: L: it’s sticker |
| 569: M: oho | 569: M: ok |
| 570: L: ee | 570: L: yes |
| 571: M: (4) | 571: M: (4) |
| 572: L: iyi ni sticker | 572: L: this is sticker |
| 573: M: oho | 573: M: ok |
| 574: L: ee | 574: L: yes |
| 575: M: ibombenshi ngauleputamo | 575: M: what does it serve when you sniff it |
| 576: L: ok iyi (2) ngawapepa ilapwi (.) eilenga (.) tulelala bwino ilatupwishako utulo nangu filya ifyakweba ati ulebako jacked up we muntu | 576: L: ok this (2) when you smoke it finis(.) it makes (.) us sleep well it clears our sleep or makes you jacked up as a person |
| 577: M: ee | 577: M: yes |
| 578: L: ngawakolwa | 578: L: when you’re high |
| 579: M: oho ilakola | 579: M: ok it can make someone high |
| 580: L: ee | 580: L: yes |
| 581: M: ok so ngawakolwa wakalabanako | 581: M: ok so when you’re high you become active |
| 582: L: ee | 582: L: yes |
| 583: M: ehe (.) mwacilanda ati mwaba jacked up | 583: M: ok (.) you said you become jacked up |
| 584: L: ee | 584: L: yes |

585: M: ehe imyafwa ukucitenshi	585: M: ok, what does it help you to do
586: L: iyi ((drug))	586: L: this ((drug))
587: M: ee	587: M: yes
588: L: nangu naulala ubushiku impepo takuli kumfwa	588: L: like when you're asleep in the night you don't feel the cold
589: M: oho	589: M: ok
590: L: ee	590: L: yes
591: M: elyo fimbi ifyo imyafwilisha finshi	591: M: what else does it do for you
592: L: namatontonkanyo ukupwishako	592: L: it even takes away worries
593: M: oho yalapwa kwena	593: M: ok are you sure they disappear
594: L: hm kaili filya ifyakweba ati te=	594: L: hm it's like=
595: M: hm	595: M: hm
596: L: =nangu naulamba kwati ifi ifyo inambile	596: L: =when you're dirty the way i am
597: M: ee	597: M: yes
598: L: ehe ku (.) ku (2)	598: L: yes you (.) you (.)
599: M: ninshi kulabako ati naulamba	599: M: you forget that you're dirty
600: L: kutontonkanyafye ati ya but ya lesa alensu (.) lesa alensunga ubucushi but (.) shani ilapela na mano (.) ati no problem lesa umwine ewishibe	600: L: you just think god's taking (.) is taking care in suffering (.) like it also gives wisdom (.) you think there's no problem god knows what he's doing
601: M: oho	601: M: ok
602: L: ee	602: L: yes

My conversation with Lombe demonstrates another instance of the rhetorical re-construction of street kids. The dialogue in Extract 15, above, resulted from my probes about the what/why of drug taking by street kids. Neither the researcher nor the participant dominates the conversation. The balance in the turn-by-turn utterances evidences this. In terms of word use, Lombe does not use the first person pronoun when talking about the use and benefits of drugs; instead, he uses the second person pronoun, *you*. Another characteristic of this dialogue is that the participant does not modulate his truth claims. The assertions he makes are rather categorical. What is going on in this extract?

Lombe locates the action of taking drugs in its wider context: the hard times (odyssey) storyline. Sparingly, he draws his interlocutor's attention to the characteristics of the hard

times, some of which are cold nights (turns 576 & 588), worries and anxieties (turns 592, 596, & 600), dirt, and nakedness (turn 596). Inherent in these characteristics are shame, and emotional and physical hardship. It is becoming evident already that Lombe is drawing attention to an all too human need, a need to which drugs will be a solution. It is, however, in the process of discursively highlighting the need for drugs that his subjective sense of self emerges. The hegemonic struggles become evident at the same time.

By using the second person pronouns (*you* and its variant '*we muntu*') when describing the shame and the emotional and physical hardships associated with being a street kid, Lombe draws attention to the knowledge that every person in this situation would have these needs. So, his stake in drugs is inoculated. Furthermore, this helps contest the assumed particularity of street kids' needs, and positions these needs as universal to all human beings. Lombe constructs himself as one who shares the universal identity of *abantu*.

In Extracts 16 and 17 below, the street kids, Jobo and Lubasi, position themselves as full human beings. These positions are meaningful in relation with God (for Jobo) and streets (for Lubasi).

Extract 16: Interview 4 (16 year old)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 118: M: oho ok inga ifi abantu ngabakusanga ifi ilingi
besa mukulanda ati nimwe ba street kid tefyo | 118: M: ok most of the times when people see
you they say you're street kids not so |
| 119: J: ee | 119: J: yes |
| 120: M: umonapo shani abantu ngabalande fi | 120: M: how do you react to this label |
| 121: J: (2) | 121: J: (2) |
| 122: M: ulabasuminisha nangu ulakana (.) umfwapo
shani umonapo shani | 122: M: do you agree or not (.) how do you feel
how do you see this |
| 123: J: peshine lya street kid | 123: J: about the name street kid |
| 124: M: ee | 124: M: yes |

125: J: awe nd:::::akana	125: J: no i refu::::se
126: M: ninshi ukanin(hhhh)a	126: M: why do you ref(hhhh)use
127: J: k(hhhhhh)a kabili ndabombako utuncito ncito kaili	127: J: b(hhhhh)e because i do various pieces of work
128: M: ee	128: M: yes
129: J: ndasukako utumyotoka	129: J: i guard cars
130: M: ee	130: M: yes
131: J: street kid ()	131: J: street kid ()
132: M: ee so iwe teti uimone ati uli street kid kuti waimona ati uli muntu wamusango shani	132: M: yes so you you can't see yourself as a street kid you see yourself as what kind of a person
133: J: ine	133: J: me
134: M: uhm	134: M: yea
135: J: ndili muntu wakwa lesa	135: J: i'm a god's creature
136: M: oho	136: M: ok
137: J: ninebo special street	137: J: i'm special street
138: M: niwebo spe(.) ati niwe shani	138: M: you're spec(.) you said you're what
139: J: special street	139: J: special street
140: M: special street	140: M: special street
141: J: uhm	141: J: uhm
142: M: calola mwisa ico	142: M: what does that mean
143: J: ee	143: J: pardon
144: M: calola mwisa ico	144: M: what does that mean
145: J: ah niba pastor batwebele	145: J: ah we were just told by a pastor

While most of the street kids interviewed used the collocation of 'street kid' and '*ukupondoka*', Jobo (J), does not do this; instead, he draws on the discourse of 'work'. I perceived the silence in turn 121 as Jobo's lack of understanding of the question. So, I went on to pre-structure the possible answers to the question (turn 122). Jobo immediately drew on this to contest the street kid identity. In turn 125, Jobo contested the ascribed identity of street kid. In turns 127 and 129, Jobo drew on the discourse of work to dis-align himself from the street kid identity. What he seems to imply is that only those who beg can be labelled street kids; those who work are not street kids.

In addition to discounting the street kid identity, Jobo constructs himself as a full human being. This is particularly evident in turn 135 where he positions himself as “*umuntu wakwa Lesa*” (=a human being who belongs to God). This position is similar to the one taken in Extract 17, turn 190 below, where Lubasi (L) observes that “*manje umusebo tewafyalapo umwana*” (=but a road has never borne a child).

Extract 17: Interview 6 (16 year old)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 173: M: so ilingi ngamuli pano abantu abengi abapita tali balanda ati muli ba street kid | 173: M: so most of the time when you're here passers-by say you're street kids |
| 174: L: ee balatweba (.) balitupela ka nickname but ine (.) e:e ilya bu street kid nshalitemwa | 174: L: yes they tell us (.) they've given us a nickname but i (.) e:h i don't like it |
| 175: M: ninshi | 175: M: why |
| 176: L: pantu teshina lyandi teti mbe mwana wamu musebo (.) bambi balandila mofye tabaishiba ifyo cipilibula | 176: L: because it's not my name i can't be a child of a street (.) some just say it without knowing what it means |
| 177: M: oho | 177: M: ok |
| 178: L: ee | 178: L: yes |
| 179: M: inga iwe kuti watemwa balekwita sha (.) balemita shani imwe mwebalumendo mwebasangwa pano | 179: M: so how would you like them to (.) to call you the boys who're found here |
| 180: L: ee | 180: L: what |
| 181: M: kuti watemwa balemita shani | 181: M: how would you want to be called |
| 182: L: umuntu kumwipusha ishina lyakwe elyo manje (.) elyo wamwita ishina lyakwe osati fye onse uo wamona ati street kid | 182: L: a person should be asked his name then (.) you call him by his name not to call whoever you see a street kid |
| 183: M: kaili kwaliba nafilya ifyakweba ati limbi nga waisa mona abama uniform balya (.) wamumonafye wati balya niba kapokola or balya ba soldier or balya ni ba teacher (.) so nabo abantu nga bamimona filya abaisati oh balya niba street kid (.) eh so wafimonapo shani ifyo | 183: M: but there's a practice like you see people in uniform like that (.) you just see them and you conclude those are police officers or soldiers or those are teachers (.) the same here people say those are street kids (.) what d'you think |
| 184: L: u(hh)m manje i(hh)lyo ishin::a | 184: L: u(hh)m but tha(hh)t na::me |
| 185: M: ee | 185: M: yea |
| 186: L: tali street kid cipilibula ati umwana wamu musebo | 186: L: doesn't street kid mean a child of a street |
| 187: M: ee | 187: M: yea |
| 188: L: (2) elyo street musebo | 188: L: (2) and street is a road |

189: M: ee
 190: L: manje umusebo tewafyalapo umwana
 191: M: ee
 192: L: no (.) ndakana ifyo ine
 193: M: oho
 194: L: ee

189: M: yea
 190: L: but a road has never borne a child
 191: M: yea
 192: L: no (.) me i refuse that
 193: M: ok
 194: L: yes

Extract 18 below presents another instance in which Robbie (R), the street kid we have already encountered in Extract 12 above, draws on the moral order storyline to contest the street kid identity. He positions himself as a full human being.

Extract 18: Interview 3 (13 year old)

179: M: oho (3.0) ninshi cabipamo ngabakwita ati
 street kid
 180: R: kabili ninshi tecisuma cilya balekwita ati
 street kid
 181: M: uhm
 182: R: tecisuma cilya
 183: M: ninshi yabipamo
 184: R: iyabipamo
 185: M: uhm
 186: R: ah street kidi nshaishiba but nshaishibafye
 ifyo ci mining'a street kid
 187: M: tawaishiba ifyo ipilibula
 188: R: street kid
 189: M: uhm
 190: R: uhm
 191: M: nomba kuti waipata shani ngatawishibe
 ifyo ipilibula
 192: R: ah kaili street kid cimofye nokulandati
 walipondoka
 193: M: ee
 194: R: teifyo fine te
 195: M: (4.0)
 196: R: uhm

179: M: ok (3.0) what's bad about being called a
 street kid
 180: R: yet again it's not good being called a
 street kid
 181: M: yea
 182: R: that's not good
 183: M: what's bad about it
 184: R: what's bad
 185: M: yea
 186: R: ah street kid i don't know but i just don't
 know what street kid means
 187: M: you don't know what it means
 188: R: street kid
 189: M: yes
 190: R: no
 191: M: then how would you hate it when you
 don't know what it means
 192: R: ah street kid is the same as saying
 you've rebelliously left home
 193: M: yea
 194: R: that's how it is isn't it
 195: M: (4.0)
 196: R: yea

This text adds voice to pervasive contestation of the street identity. Firstly, Robbie calls the interlocutor's attention to his own feelings and experiences (Turns 180 & 182). He reports his bad experience of being called a street kid and implicates his interlocutor in the knowledge of this cultural value. The turn-by-turn texturing of turns 180-182 assumes we all know, and it should go without saying, that "that's not good". The storyline is that of a moral order where some things are acceptable and appropriate while others are inappropriate and unacceptable. In this storyline, positioning people as street kids is not morally good or acceptable.

Vulnerability, Victimhood, and Childhood as a Practical Resource

As demonstrated in the foregoing section, Zambian street kids construct themselves as individuals and members of a social group. The 'child who is a vulnerable victim' identity emerged in the triadic interaction presented in Figure 5 below.

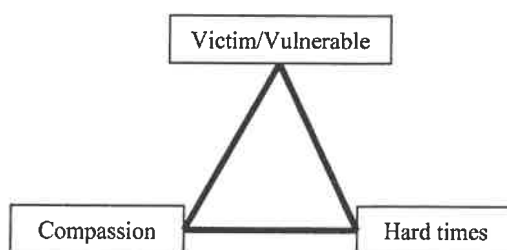


Figure 5: The triadic interaction in which the "child who is a vulnerable victim" emerged

The street kids' constructions of social and economic odds (odyssey-like hard times) are reflexively and constructively linked to their own agency and responsibility. In the 'child who is a vulnerable victim' identity, the street kids distance themselves from agency. In this way, they also distance themselves from responsibility and blame for being on the streets.

Implicitly, what should be blamed and held responsible for their life predicaments are the social and economic odds.

The 'child who is a vulnerable victim' identity, constructed in this way, can be a resource for sustaining street begging because the amalgamation of *vulnerability*, *victimhood* and *childhood* is a powerful resource for attracting sympathy and charitable responses in the modern world. This is evidenced by the print and visual media's depiction of these three elements. In reporting about casualties in areas of military and civil unrest (see the extracts from the *Washington Post* and *Al Jazeera* below), it is almost a cliché to append "women and children" to highlight the severity of the casualties:

100,000 Civilian Deaths Estimated in Iraq

One of the first attempts to independently estimate the loss of civilian life from the Iraqi war has concluded that at least 100,000 Iraqi civilians may have died because of the U.S. invasion.

The analysis, an extrapolation based on a relatively small number of documented deaths, indicated that many of the excess deaths have occurred due to aerial attacks by coalition forces, with *women and children being frequent victims*, wrote the international team of public health researchers making the calculations (Stein, 2004, p.A16, Italics added).

Photos confirm US raid child deaths

Al Jazeera has obtained exclusive footage that confirms children were among the victims of a US air raid northwest of Baghdad. Local officials said that the bodies of 17 civilians, including *six children and eight women*, had been pulled from the debris of two houses in al-Ishaqi ...

He also told the AFP news agency: "This is the third crime done by Americans in this area of Ishaqi. *All the casualties were innocent women and children* and everything they said about them being part of al-Qaeda is a lie." ("Photos", 2006, par.1 & 10, online, Italics added).

In other words, it almost goes without saying that it is not acceptable to see *women* and *children* (the most vulnerable) suffering while society is doing nothing about it. It follows, therefore, that this vulnerable-victim identity is a powerful resource for sustaining street begging by arousing compassion in charitably-inclined people. This finding echoes Van Blerk's (2005) empirical finding among the street kids in Uganda. Van Blerk found that Ugandan street kids developed many street identities that facilitated survival in various social, spatial, and temporal locations they found themselves in.

It should be noted, however, that there is a surface convergence of street-kid-speak around "vulnerability". The street-kid-speak attributed to perceived others also draws on the vulnerability of street kids. Yet, the same street-kid-speak is serving different functions to the different people that are employing it. This is consequential. Street kids are constructing themselves as vulnerable, particularly at the time of going to the streets; stakeholders are constructing street kids as vulnerable "children". There is likely to be frustration and bitterness when the two groups are talking about the same 'vulnerability' but still competing. In fact, street kids are saying: we were vulnerable, so you should feel sorry for us and praise us for doing something about our situation. On the other hand, the stakeholders are saying: you are vulnerable, so you should allow us to supervise your lives and protect you from harm.

Heroic Victim Identity as a Resource for Resistance

The 'heroic victim' identity emerged out of the triadic interaction presented in Figure 6 below.

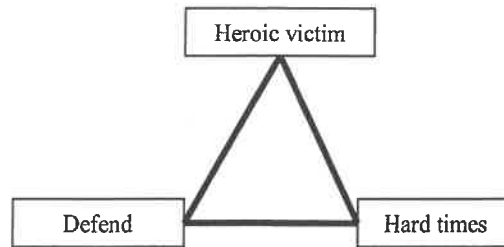


Figure 6: The triadic interaction in which the “heroic victim” identity emerged

Like in the ‘child who is vulnerable victim’ identity, the street kids used the hard times (odyssey) discourse to hold the social and economic odds responsible for their life predicaments. In this identity, however, they claim some agency: they hold themselves responsible for triumphing over the odds.

The ‘heroic victim’ identity is a resource for tacitly demanding admiration, compliments, and some respect for such accomplishments. A construction of ‘one who is triumphing over the odds’ can also be used as a resource for resisting accusations of *ukupondoka* (=rebellious home-leaving). In addition, this identity can be used to highlight the inappropriate nature of the marginal positions street kids are accorded by the perceived ‘others’.

It follows, therefore, that the ‘heroic victim’ identity can function as a resource for resisting the marginal social space that society accords street kids. However, street kids are not only resisting their marginal space but they are also contesting it. They are re-appraising the very moral and normative grounds upon which their marginal social existence is constructed.

*Umntu Par Excellence Identity as a Resource for Establishing Street Life as a Normal Way
of Social Existence*

The *umuntu par excellence* identity emerged from the triadic interaction shown in Figure 7 below.

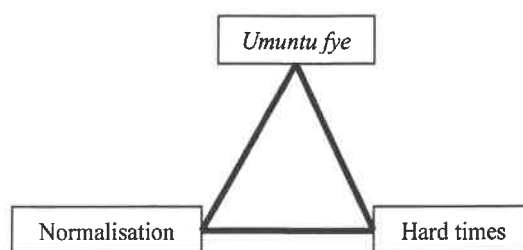


Figure 7: The triadic interaction in which the “umuntu par excellence” identity emerged

In constructing this identity, the street kids assigned to themselves agency and accountability by positioning themselves as people who were actively overcoming economic odds. The construction of a street kid as ‘*umuntu par excellence*’ can be used as a resource for making the street kids’ marginal social existence illegitimate, and position this way of being as normal social existence.

Zambian street kids construct themselves as human beings par excellence. This way of self-identifying has consequent constellations of advantage and disadvantage. Zambian street kids have actively contested and reappraised the normative standards of acceptable livelihood that are set forth by the moral order discourses. Since street kids construct themselves as moral and human beings par excellence, society cannot justifiably accord them a marginal existence. They should, if seen as full human beings, possess the rights, duties and obligations of human beings.

Normative Constraints on Zambian Street Kids' Reflexive Self-Constructions

Zambian street kids constructed their identities with reference to ascribed negative identities. So, the moral order within which ascribed identities were constructed became the starting point for the street kids' own constructions. The identities that Zambian street kids construct for themselves (human being par excellence, vulnerable victim, and heroic victim) emerge out of the reappraisal of the moral order. Much of what the street kids did in the interviews evolved around managing their intentions for going on the streets and re-describing their activities on the streets so that their movement to the streets and their continuing stay on the streets can be seen as moral.

The identities that Zambian street kids construct for themselves sought to establish that their activities should be seen as what any human being under the force of these circumstances would do. So, the rhetorical re-constructions of Zambian street kids were constrained by the voice of the moral order.

Earlier research with street kids has shown that a substantial number of street kids go to the streets to attain 'freedom' (Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003; Rizzini & Buttler, 2003). Yet, the findings (particularly the co-presence of two street-kid-speak) demonstrate that the panoptic gaze of adult institutions pervades the lives of street kids. This is particularly evident in the moral order discourse which turned out to be the starting point of the Zambian street kids' self-constructions.

Summary of Results and Further Discussion of Results

What we have seen this far are street kids who talked as individuals, members of a group, or as exemplars of street kids. The interview microcosm provided a site for the rhetorical re-description and re-construction of street life and street kids. Street kids constructed their identities around three temporal and relational points:

1. at the time of leaving home,
2. while staying on the streets, and
3. in relation to personhood.

At all these three levels, Zambian street kids used the hard times (odyssey) storyline to position themselves. However, each level of self-positioning was accompanied by a competing same-level ascribed identity which street kids attributed to perceived others. These ascribed identities were constructed along the moral order storyline. The identities (reflexive and ascribed ones), and their accompanying storylines and social force, are summarised in Table 5 below.

The co-occurrence of competing identities, storylines, and social forces provides a site for a struggle for normalcy or hegemony. This uncompromising struggle is a barrier for the meeting of the two worlds –the street kids’ and the stakeholders’. Yet, these two worlds are both in the minds of street kids. This is a powerful demonstration of Foucault’s (1979) panoptic gaze. Even though street kids have defied the control and normative expectations of the adult society, they display an awareness that their homeless mobility on the streets is a subject of surveillance by adults. Street life is characterised by “independence” from adults and adult institutions, and the absence of adult supervision. Yet, the findings in this study show that there is still adult control through a variety of panoptic mechanisms. By attributing

the moral order storyline to adults, street kids demonstrate that they believe that the morality of their street life is watched and judged. The moral order storyline, therefore, becomes panoptic when street kids do not know for sure when their homeless mobility is being gazed and judged. So, street kids become self-regulating.

The panoptic gaze deployed through the moral order storyline seems to create an alienating barrier between street kids (sub-human, rebellious home-leavers) and norm-abiding “others”. The street-kid-speak done by street kids and the one attributed to others are layered in the sense that they are indexed to the time of home-leaving, the time of being on the streets, and to a comparison of street kids with other people. Yet, each of the two sides (see Table 5 above) maintains a common theme that runs through the different identities constructed. On the side of the street-kid-speak done by street kids, all the identities are indexed to hard times; on the side of the street-kid-speak attributed to others, all identities are indexed to the moral order. These two opposing street-kid-speak are contending for hegemonic status or normalisation. For example, it has emerged in this study that street kids are trying by all means to subvert competing street-kid-speak. I have repeatedly demonstrated that Zambian street kids seek to undermine the force of the panoptic gaze by repeatedly juxtaposing the “moral order” against “hard times”, creating a discursive context that would make the force of the moral order an inappropriate evaluation of desperation-induced actions.

Table 5: Hegemonic struggles in the reflexive self-construction of Zambian street kids

	Street-kid-speak done by street kids	Competing street-kid-speak attributed to perceived "others"
Street kids vis-a-vis personhood	<p>Normalisation</p> <p>Umuntu, fye</p> <p>Hard times</p>	<p>Inhuman/immoral</p> <p>Normalisation</p> <p>Moral order</p>
Street kids	<p>Defend</p> <p>Heroic victim</p> <p>Hard times</p>	<p>Ukupondoka</p> <p>Stop/protect</p> <p>Moral order</p>
Children at home (potential street kids)	<p>Compassion</p> <p>Victim/Vulnerable</p> <p>Hard times</p>	<p>Vulnerable/at risk/in need</p> <p>"Gaze" (supervise)</p> <p>Moral order</p>

While I am still talking about the hegemonic struggles in the reflexive self-construction of Zambian street kids, I should point out the role played by the methodology of data collection I used (peripatetic interviews) in bringing out the hegemonic struggles. By allowing myself to be guided by street kids through their territories of meaning, and by allowing street kids to talk about themselves in these spaces, I set up conversations that became an intersecting gaze where all the possible versions of the street-kid-speak could become visible. At this intersection, I was not merely a researcher; but, I was also an adult member of society who could rightly have been viewed as a representative of the perceived “others”. So, I needed convincing about how street kids should be viewed –and particularly, how the version of street kids presented by the street kids themselves should be the hegemonic way of constructing street kids. As discussed in Chapter 2, the identities of street kids that emerged at this intersection of various street-kid-speak can be viewed as marking out possibilities of how adults and street kids should interact beyond the interview interaction (Törrönen, 2001).

It should also be noted that the street kids in this study consistently indexed their identities on the hard times (odyssey) storyline. The knowledge of the Zambian socio-economic situation is important in understanding why this is such a powerful resource for giving the identities of Zambian street kids not only a rational appearance but also a hegemonic status. In Zambia’s age of *utuntemba*, carving for oneself a survival niche even in unconventional ways should not be problematised. A force of circumstances (declining government social programmes, HIV/AIDS, deteriorating economic conditions, and weakening family ties) provides a background for understanding street kids’ unconventional survival behaviours.

These findings cannot be discussed without reference to the way the research topic was approached. This study was located in the new paradigm of researching and working with

street kids. Within this paradigm, ideas of space, time, and the social construction of meaning are the central tenets. Broadly, this study set out to use the idea of “social construction of meaning” to find out how Zambian street kids self-identify; so, positioning theory was used as the theoretical vantage point from which the reflexive self-constructions of Zambian street kids could be explored. So, it has been possible to see how street kids variably construct their agency, how they discursively re-arrange their social space to their advantage, and how the discursive tools they use to accomplish different constellations of advantage.

Researchers who have used the idea of social construction of meaning to study street kids have obtained results that are remotely similar to the current findings. Van Blerk (2005) found that Ugandan street kids constructed for themselves multiple identities that were responsive to the multiple interactional contexts they encountered in their homeless mobility. In this study, we see similar constructions going on. The street kids in this study constructed themselves as vulnerable and lacking agency at the time of going to the streets (vulnerable victim identity). Then they used this identity to facilitate begging. At other times, however, the same street kids constructed themselves as agents in their own lives (heroic victim identity). But they are not deploying this identity for attracting charitable responses; instead, they use their agency to make sense of their continued stay on the streets and to resist marginal social existence. In this way, Zambian street kids construct themselves in multiple ways, ways that are not always congruent.

In addition, this study made use of the idea of “space” from the new paradigm. The idea of space was used in data collection. This was operationalised by using what Anderson (2004, p.254) calls “conversations in place” or a socio-spatial methodology of data collection where interview conversations are triggered by both interview questions and a respondent’s

interconnectedness with the place itself. So, the conversations that were transcribed to form the research data for this study (and the data on which the findings under discussion are based) exploited the potential of the city spaces to hold Zambian street kids' knowledge and to trigger memory. This was the first time the idea of space is used in this way in street kid research.

Mobile interviewing of street kids produced very rich data in terms of conversations that are very exhaustive and engaging in their re-telling of the life and experiences of street kids on the streets. Extract 11, above, is an example of how, by walking with the street kid, our conversations were able to elicit the experiences of street kids in the places we walked to. This has made it possible for the analysis to engage with both the present and the past of street kids. For example, street kids retold their stories of home-leaving in such a rich way that it has been possible for their identities at the time of leaving home to emerge in the interview data.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed the findings of this study. I have shown that Zambian street kids construct themselves as vulnerable victims, heroic victims, and human beings par excellence. I have also shown that these identities are bound by normative constraints, particularly the panoptic gaze of the moral order discourse. I have also demonstrated that the identities of Zambian street kids are resources for managing charitably-inclined adults (vulnerable victim identity), for resistance (heroic victim identity), and establishing street life as a normative way of being human (human being par excellence).

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUDING REMARKS AND IMPLICATIONS

Concluding Remarks

Conclusions about Zambian Street Kids' Identities

In this study, I sought to find out the identities Zambian street kids construct for themselves, how they construct these identities, and the social constellations of advantage and disadvantage that these identities bring about. From the findings, it can be concluded that:

- i) Zambian street kids constructed themselves as vulnerable victims, heroic victims, and as human beings par excellence. These constructions were resources for negotiating their home-leaving, homeless mobility, and their position vis-à-vis other members of society.
- ii) The identities of Zambian street kids were reflexively constructed with reference to perceived competing public street-kid-speak. This collocation created
 - 1) a hegemonic struggle for normalcy. This struggle was characterised by constructions of arguments/positions and counterarguments/counterpositions that established distinctions of oneself (or us) from others, were rhetorical reconstruction of oneself, and created various positions of power, knowledge, and moral standing.
 - 2) variable positions of agency and accountability. These positions established who and what was to be blamed, complimented, or held accountable.

- 3) resources for attracting sympathy, charitable responses, and for demanding admiration and respect. These were also resources for resisting and contesting street kids' marginalised position in society.
 - 4) a need for society to pay attention to the co-constructive nature of their version of street-kid-speak. The social realities of street kids emerged as co-produced realities, a production in which both street kids and society (even if only attributed) were parties.
- iii) The street-kid-speak that emerged from this study is novel, and has never emerged in the existing empirical studies of the identities of street kids.

Conclusions about the Research Problem

The findings of this study have illuminated my initial puzzles, and the research problem that I set out with has been addressed. My primary interest was in how Zambian street kids construct their identities. My related interest was in linking these identities to my puzzles: why the alliance between 'street' and 'kid' is so powerful, and how these identities can inform policy and intervention responses to street kids.

My primary interest has been answered: Zambian street kids construct themselves as vulnerable victims, heroic victims, and as human beings par excellence. They construct these identities in the the context of the hard times (odyssey) storyline. Street kids seek to normalise this street-kid-speak. While constructing themselves in these ways, Zambian street kids also attribute competing identities to perceived-others. The competing identities position Zambian street kids as vulnerable (at risk, in need), rebellious home-leavers who are undergoing moral

degradation, and as sub-human. These competing identities are constructed in the context of the moral order storyline. Perceived others seek to normalise this street-kid-speak.

The hegemonic struggles in the reflexive construction of Zambia street kids also offer the answer to one of my puzzles. At the beginning of my study, I was wondering why Zambian street kids refuse to stay in shelters even when basic necessities are provided. From the findings, it appears that this may be due to the fact that the way street kids construct their identities clashes with how they see others constructing them.

My related interest in the practical use of these identities and the processes of their construction has also been fulfilled. I have identified, in the section (below) that deals with implication, how the identities of Zambian street kids, and the processes of their construction, can inform policy and practice.

Remarks about the Theoretical Framework and Methods

Positioning Theory

Positioning theory focuses on understanding how psychological phenomena are produced in discourse. Its starting point is the idea that the constant flow of everyday life in which we all take part, is fragmented through discourse into distinct episodes that constitute the basic elements of both our biographies and of the social world. The skills that people have to talk are not only based on capacities to follow the rules that shape the episodes of social life. Not only what we do but also what we can do is restricted by the rights, duties and obligations we acquire, assume or which are imposed upon us in the concrete social contexts of everyday life (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p.4).

The design of this study was based on van Langenhove and Harré's (1999) positioning theory. According to Slocum and van Langenhove (2004), this approach has been useful in drawing people's attention to how they actively co-construct social realities of our research participants. By focusing on activity, we, as researchers, can encourage stakeholders to accept some responsibility for the realities of our research participants they have constructed and brought about, even if their constructions are only attributed as was the case in this study. For example, the identities that Zambian street kids constructed for themselves (reality) were done with reference to the competing identities that were attributed to perceived 'others', the stakeholders. So, the street-kid-speak that emerged in this study are co-constructed by street kids and stakeholders.

The use of positioning theory also helps us understand how discursive constructions accomplish various social ends. This information can help us as social scientists to provide policy-makers with information about the various discursive means or strategies that our study populations use to accomplish their goals of interest. In this way, policy-makers can undertake interventions that address themselves to the realities of the groups of interest.

Positioning theory, as the theoretical framework for this study, was an appropriate orientation. By taking this theoretical orientation, this study has the potential to inform policy and challenge social practices or people's ways of relating with street kids.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods where the researcher participates in the world being investigated were used (Silverman, 2005). The strength of the methodology used lies in the fact that it provided

in-depth insights, it offered the flexibility to respond to the direction in which conversations with the respondents were going, was small-scale, exploratory, and the results obtained are close to real-life.

The study was conducted in IciBemba, the local language. As a result, the extracts required translation so that non-IciBemba speaking supervisors and examiners can relate with the conversations. The limitation this translation brings in is equivalency –to what extent are translations equivalent to the actual utterances of research participants? Conceptual equivalence is an important issue because dependability, one of the criteria for reliability in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), requires that a researcher maintains consistency in the process of enquiry. In this study, only the researcher did the translation, creating a limitation. A second independent translator would have been useful. However, I tried to be meticulous with the translations, and I have presented the IciBemba version alongside the English translation to allow transparency and to facilitate future inspection and comments on the translations.

Use of the peripatetic method of conducting interviews

Peripatetic interviews through places that are meaningful to the respondents' day-to-day economic and social activities provided rich data that was grounded in the street kids' territories of meaning. This was felt to be particularly pertinent to the aims of the study in terms of exploring street kids' identities and highlighting the discursive strategies used to construct these identities. Interviewing street kids at shelters or in children's homes would not have provided equally rich data. The peripatetic method of interviewing promises to be useful in exploratory studies that seek to understand phenomena from an emic perspective.

Implications

The results of this study suggest several important implications for dealing with street kids, be it in the context of welfare, policy, or research. The co-occurrences of the street-kid-speak done by Zambian street kids and the one attributed to perceived others have broader implications. This uncompromising struggle is a serious hurdle for the meeting of the two worlds –the street kids’ and the stakeholders’. If the uncompromising divergence of street-kid-speak is not addressed, the perceived alienation (or self-alienation) of street kids will continue.

The findings also highlighted the need to draw the attention of stakeholders to how they actively co-construct¹⁰ the street kids’ social realities. Consequently, stakeholders should be made aware of their role in the kind of realities that street kids construct. Stakeholders should accept some responsibility for this indirect (through the panoptic gaze) role. This is a critical starting point for engaging street kids in dialogue around welfare, policy, and research.

Implications for Welfare

In welfare, agreement between the welfare provider and welfare receiver is salient. The hegemonic struggle between the street-kid-speak done by street kids and the one attributed to perceived others points to the presence of competing interests, ways of making sense of the street-kid phenomenon, and (by implication) ways of managing this phenomenon. So, welfare should pay attention to, and appreciate, the social functions of the street kids’ reflexive identities and use these understandings as the starting point of convergence.

¹⁰ Although this is only attributed to them by street kids, the reality is very “real” and powerful for street kids.

Implications for Policy

Policy should desist from regarding street kids as passive. Instead, there is a need to acknowledge the active ways in which street kids make sense of their realities and how they negotiate their position in relation to other members of society. Policy-makers should also acknowledge that theirs is just another version of street-street-speak which assigns a position to street kids that can be accepted, contested, or even subverted. So, policy should take into account the identities that have emerged in this study because these are powerful resources used by street kids --the people that policy should address itself to.

Implications for Research

Firstly, there is a need to conduct a larger study of Zambian street kids that would assess the validity of the local identities that have emerged in this dissertation. Such a study will facilitate the practical use of these identities, particularly in policy and welfare where competing street-kid-speak are most evident. Secondly, there is a need for future research to investigate further the social functions of the street kids' reflexive identities.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the qualitative methods used, one cannot draw empirical generalisations (Silverman, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Theoretical generations, however, are possible since the data from this study provide theoretical insights that are universal to contexts or street kids comparable to contexts/street kids in the current study.

Conclusion

In this study, I started out with two puzzles that concerned the phenomena I observed in public discourse and in my own work with street kids: an empirical one (why street kids return to the streets even when the problems they cited as reasons for going to the streets are addressed) and a conceptual one (why the alliance between 'street' and 'kid' are so powerful among street kids). I searched for answers in existing literature about street kids. There was a gap in the literature; so, my puzzles remained unanswered. However, the literature on street kids gave me pointers to the research issue worth investigating. So, I set out to study the reflexive self-constructions of Zambian street kids.

I used positioning theory as the anchor for my study (Davies & Harré, 1999; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Hegemony (Gramsci, 1971), etic-emic distinction (Pike, 1967), normalisation and the idea of the gaze (Foucault, 1979) were used as additional sensitising concepts. The research was designed as an exploratory qualitative study (Silverman, 2005). The ideas of space, social construction of meaning, and a socio-spatial methodology were used to inform data collection and analysis (Gergen, 1985, 1999; Potter et al., 1990; Ennew & Swart-Kruger, 2003; Anderson, 2004).

The results show that Zambian street kids construct themselves as vulnerable victims, heroic victims, and as human beings par excellence. These identities are constructed in the context of a hard times storyline and they serve social functions. The vulnerable victim identity sustains a begging relationship by appealing to charitably inclined members of society. The heroic victim identity contests a marginal social existence of street kids by re-appraising the moral and normative grounds upon which their marginal social existence is based. The human being

par excellence identity is a resource for establishing street life as a normal way of social existence. However, these identities are normatively constrained by the street-kid-speak that street kids attribute to other members of society. This street-kid-speak uses the moral order storyline to problematised street existence.

In this study, I have shown that the ways Zambian street kids construct themselves, as shown in this study, have implications for policy, welfare, and further research. Zambian street kids perceive hegemonic struggles between their own street-kid-speak and the street-kid-speak they attribute to other members of society. This is a barrier for a convergence of street kids and stakeholders' intentions around welfare, policy, and the street kids' place in society. If this barrier is not addressed, Zambian street kids will continue feeling alienated from the very society that professes a love and care for vulnerable members.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Transcription Conventions

The form of transcription conventions used was from the system developed by Gail Jefferson, printed in the book edited by Atkinson, J. M. & Heritage, J. (1984), *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversational Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[]	Brackets indicate overlapping utterances
=	Equal sign indicates contiguous utterance or absence of discernable gap between the end of one speaker's utterance and the beginning of another speaker's utterance
(.)	Full stop within parenthesis indicates a micro pause
(2.0)	Number within parentheses indicates of length in approximate seconds
ye:s	One or more colons indicate stretching of sound it follows. The more the number of colons, the longer the stretch
YES	Capital letters indicate increased volume
hhh	H's indicate audible aspiration, or laughter. The number of h's is a rough marker of duration of laughter
ye(hh)s	H's within parentheses indicate within-speech aspiration, and within-speech laughter
((walks))	Items within double parentheses indicate some sound, feature of speech which is not easily transcribable, or comment
(true)	Parentheses indicate transcriber's doubt about hearing an utterance
255: M:	Number at the beginning of an utterance, followed by colon indicates

255: L:	<p>a conversational turn. Each speaker's utterance is a turn. The first utterance of the interview is turn 1. The bigger the number, the further away the utterance is from the beginning of the interview.</p> <p>M:=researcher; all the other letters (L, B, R, etc) =participant. Each letter represents a distinct participant</p>
↑yes	The ↑ before a word indicates a stress on the word

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule (IciBemba and English Versions)

Section One: Demographic Data

1. Waishile lilali mu street? / Mu street upwilemo inshita iili shani?
2. Uli ne myaka inga? / Wafyelwe lilali?
3. Nikwisa wafumine pakwisa mu street?
4. Walikwata ba lupwa? Nibani? Baba kwi? Mulamonana?

Section Two: Questions on the Tour

5. Ndelomba ukuti untandasheko muncende umo usangwa lingi? Finshi ucitamo muli ishi ncende? Ninshi usangilwa muli ishi ncende, not kumbi?
6. Nimunshilanshi iyi ncende yacindama kuli iwe?
7. Ici nga cacitika, uimona shani iwe ngo muntu?
8. Nibani ucita nabo ifi? Ninshi aba, not bambi?
9. Abantu ngabalelanda pali imwe, bamita ati shani?
10. Inga iwe nabanobe ngamuleitana mwebene, muita shani?
11. Nondolwelako ifyo mulomba kubapita-nshila.
12. Nondolwelako ificitika nga bwaila. Uko uya, abo usangwa nabo, nefyo cumfwika.
13. Munshita shakunuma, waleumfwana shani nabanobe, balupwa, nabantu bambi?
14. Pali ino nshita, umfwana shani naba nobe, balupwa, nabantu bambi?

Section One: Demographic Data

1. When did you come to the streets? / How long have you been on the streets?
2. What is your age? / When were you born?
3. Which part of Zambia/Lusaka do you come from?
4. Do you have any family connections? Who? Where? How often do you communicate or see them?

Section Two: Questions on the Tour

5. Would you take me to some other places that you frequently visit? What activities do you do in this place? Why do you choose this place, not another one?
6. In what ways is this place important to you?
7. When this happens, what does it say to you as a person?
8. With whom do you do this activity? Why them and not others?
9. When people are talking about you and your friends, what kind of labels do they use?
10. When you and your friends talk about your selves, what do you prefer to call yourselves?
11. Would you narrate to me how you go about when you want to get or ask for something from passers-by?
12. Would you narrate to me what happens after sunset? Where you go, the people you hang around with, how it feels?
13. What characterised some of the past relationships you had with friends, family, etc?
14. What characterises some of the present relationships you have with friends, family, etc?

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Letter

Icibemba (Used in Interviews)

Shani mune,

Nine Mukuka, nsambilila pa University of KwaZulu-Natal, ku South Africa. Ndefwaya ukusambililako ifyo imwe bane mwikala muno mu town. Makamaka ndefwaya ukulanda naiwe pafyo ucita mubushiku bumo, ukutula ulucelo, ukufika icungulo: abantu usangwa nabo, incende uyako, ne fintu ucita. Kuti natemwa sana wampishamo umo usangwa monse.

Ico ufwile ukwishiba apo taulasumina cakuti ifi twalacita ine masambililo. Abaletungilila aya masambili niba kafundisha baku university nsambililako. Niba Professor Nhlanhla Mkhize naba Professor Kevin Durrheim. Ninkwata akeyala kabo. Naukwata insambu shakusumina ukulanda naine nokuntandasha. Ngawasumina ukumpishamo, kuti waleka apo ulefwaila ponse. Ngawakana ukumpishamo naco temulandu iyo. Ngacakutla kuli amepusho ayo ushingatemwa ukwasuka, temulandu kuti wayaleka ukwabula ukwasuka. Ndelomba ukuti tulanshanye nobe pa nsa imo. Kuti natemwa sana ngacakuti walanjasuka amepusho yandi mucishinka. Limbi kuti naipusha amepusho ayo ushatontonkanyapo, nangu amepusho ayengalafwaikwa ati ulande pafyakucitikila nangu amapange yobe ayakuntanshi. Ninjishiba tekuti wishibe fyonse nomba kuti natemwa watontonkanyapo nelyo line kushili amasuko yacishinka nangu ayashili yacishinka.

Kuti natemwa ukucita record ifyo twakulalanda. Fyonse ifyo nakulacita record nkafifuta nganapwisha ukufilembulula. Ishina lyobe talyabemo iyo, ndebikamofye imyaka ukwete,

nokuti uli mulumendo nangu umukashana, elyo nefyo ukokwele mu town. Tapali abakesa ishiba ati uwalandile ifi niwe awe, ninefye nkeshiba neka.

Pakuti cikeshibikwa ati niwe nacistile record, nshakwipushe uku saina icipepala cakutilla wasuminisha ukulanda naine. Usuminefye pakanwa nangu ukane.

Nacakuti nakwipusha icintu icakwibukisha ifibi, nangu calenga waumfwa ububi, kuti wanjeba twaleka ukulandapo. Kuli nabantu abo naishibana nabo abo wingalanda nabo pamilandu yonse iyakufundausha kuukoshi.

Ngacakuti pali ifyo wingatemwa ukuilishanya pali ifi tulelanda nobe, kuti wamona ba CHIN baba pa FINDECO House pa mulu (foni namba yabo kuti nakupela). Kutu bakwafwako ukutwala ukuilishanya kobe kubantu abengakwafwa.

Ngapali fyonse ifyo wingatemwa ukulanda naine pali ifi ndecita kuti wamona pang'anda yaba Mariannahill Missionaries, C32 Mutende Road, ku Woodlands. Nangu kuti wantumina foni pali cellphone number yandi: 097402280.

Natotela mune.

English Version (Not Used in Interviews)

Greetings,

I am Richard Mukuka, a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa and I am interested in learning from you how you live your life in the course of a day: the people you

interact with, the places you go to, and the activities you do. I would be very grateful if you would agree to be my guide for the duration of the tour.

Please understand that this is a part of my studies. These studies are being supervised by Professor Nhlanhla Mkhize (+27332605963, Mkhize@ukzn.ac.za) and Professor Kevin Durrheim (+27332605809, Durrheim@ukzn.ac.za), both from my university. The choice of whether to participate or not is entirely yours. If you agree to participate, you may stop at any time and discontinue your participation. If you refuse to participate or withdraw at any stage, there will be no penalties and you will not be prejudiced in any way. However, I would really appreciate it if you would guide me through your space and teach me about your life. I will ask you some questions as we go about. You may choose not to answer any of those questions –and that will not disadvantage you in any way whatsoever. I would like to be with you for about an hour. Please, be as open and honest as possible in your talk about your space and in your answers to my questions. I will also be asking some questions that you may not have thought about before, and those that might involve thinking about the past and/or the future. I know that you cannot be absolutely certain about these answers but I do ask that you think about them as there are no right or wrong answers.

I would like to audio-record our conversations. These recordings will be erased once data capture and analysis are complete. I will not record your name but will document your age, gender, and duration on the streets. No one will be able to link you to the answers you give. Only I will have access to the linked information.

In order to ensure your name is not linked to my research I will not ask you to sign an informed consent form. **I require that you give verbal consent.**

If I ask you a question or if we have a conversation that makes you feel sad or upset, we can stop talking about it. There are also counsellors whom I can put you in contact with, who are willing and able to talk with and/or assist you.

If you have a complaint about any aspect of this study, you may also contact the Children in Need Network (CHIN) here in Lusaka (14th Floor of INDECO House, +260-01-231298).

They can take your complaint to the relevant authorities.

Please feel free to contact me at anytime to discuss this research. You can contact me through Missionaries of Mariannahill, C32 Mutende Road, Woodlands, in Lusaka: +26097402280).

Many thanks.

Appendix 4: Ethics Approval Letter



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587
EMAIL: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

27 JULY 2006

MR. R MUKUKA ~~20120851~~ 203 503 775
PSYCHOLOGY

Dear Ms. Singh

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/06381A

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project:

“Children and adolescents situated on the Streets in Lusaka – their sense of identity”

Yours faithfully

MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA
RESEARCH OFFICE

PS: The following general condition is applicable to all projects that have been granted ethical clearance:

THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE CONTACTED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY APPROVAL SHOULD THE RESEARCH INVOLVE UTILIZATION OF SPACE AND/OR FACILITIES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS/ORGANISATIONS. WHERE QUESTIONNAIRES ARE USED IN THE PROJECT, THE RESEARCHER SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE QUESTIONNAIRE INCLUDES A SECTION AT THE END WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE PARTICIPANT (PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE) INDICATING THAT HE/SHE WAS INFORMED OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT AND THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

- cc. Faculty Officer (Post-Graduate Studies)
cc. Supervisor (Prof. N Mkhize, Prof. K Durrheim)

