Original contributions

Community asset mapping for violence prevention: A comparison of views in Erijaville, South Africa and Memphis, USA

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ABSTRACT

In the context of addressing challenges relating to ongoing interpersonal violence, this article conducts a comparative analysis of findings from a community asset mapping process drawing responses from 100 community participants across the two sites of Erijaville, South Africa and Memphis, Tennessee in the USA. Specifically, we describe the similarities and differences across sites regarding community assets linked to safety and peace promotion, with a particular emphasis on tangible and intangible factors relevant to the promotion of safety and peace. The findings reveal a major emphasis on 'intangible' factors that relate to the promotion of safety

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and peace, including personal values and behaviour (such as love, compassion and prayer), family relationships (such as family socialisation, care and supervision, role modelling, and peer guidance), and community connectedness (including community hope and trust, and the development of ethical leadership). The findings suggest that religious assets and spiritual capacity constitute important resources, which should be more intentionally mobilised and enhanced to promote safety and peace. This constitutes an important challenge in relation to violence prevention in both South Africa and the USA.

Keywords: community-based participatory research, community asset mapping, interpersonal violence, violence prevention, positive forms of masculinity, peace and safety, religious assets, spiritual capacity.

INTRODUCTION

This article shares findings from a cross-site community asset mapping project conducted in South Africa and the United States of America (USA), where the focus was on identifying community and religious assets that contribute to peace and safety, particularly with regard to the promotion of positive forms of masculinity. The main research question guiding the study was: "How can the mobilisation of community assets, with a particular focus on spiritual capacity and religious assets, promote safety and peace in a low-income community in South Africa and in the USA, particularly through the promotion of positive forms of masculinity?" One key objective of this study was to identify factors that promote community safety and peace, the focus for this discussion.

The SCRATCHMAPS[2] project, located in the Violence, Injury and Peace Research Unit (VIPRU) of the South African Medical Research Council and University of South Africa, arose from a recognition of the high levels of violence in South Africa and Memphis and the over-representation of males as both perpetrators and victims of violence (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002; Lazarus, Tonsing, Ratele, & Van Niekerk, 2011; Seedat, Van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla, & Ratele, 2009), and the relatively unexplored area of religious assets and spiritual capacity for addressing violence and promoting peace (ARHAP, 2006). Responses to this violence take many forms, including various violence prevention and safety and peace promotion initiatives.

The focus on safety and peace promotion in this study is directly linked to violence prevention, and therefore includes the mitigation of both direct or episodic violence and structural violence. Our theoretical approach to safety and peace promotion draws on

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theories of peacebuilding, which emphasise the promotion of harmony (which includes various approaches to conflict management, resolution and transformation) and equity to promote social justice (Christie et al., 2014). This includes embracing and promoting values, attitudes and behaviours that reject violence and actively promote peace (Britto, Gordon, et al., 2014).

Research conducted and instruments developed in this area have been pursued at a global level (e.g., World Health Organization's Safe Communities, 1999) and there is some evidence that researchers have been involved in developing indicators for community safety and/or peace in various contexts (e.g., Holtmann, 2010; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999; Whitzman, 2008; Whitzman & Zhang, 2006). This includes other projects pursued within the umbrella of VIPRU's research agenda, including a photovoice project implemented in various countries in Africa (e.g., Suffla, Kaminer, & Bawa, 2012).

Following on the positive approach evident in research focusing on safety and peace promotion, and in order to pursue SCRATCHMAPS' objective to identify factors that promote safety and peace, an asset-based approach was adopted in this study. Community development practitioners and researchers recognise that needs assessments are important, but there is growing recognition that it is important to focus on assets to move beyond a deficit mentality (Kramer, Amos, Lazarus, & Seedat, 2012; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Lazarus et al., 2014). Community asset mapping is one strategy that focuses on helping communities to identify and build on their strengths, resources, and capabilities (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008). Characteristics of an assets approach include promoting community development, focusing on strengths and human capabilities, recognising that important assets lie in networks and relationships, focusing on making community assets visible for the community (and relevant decision-makers), promoting leadership engagement for the purposes of supporting action, adopting a participatory inquiry approach, and creating new theoretical understandings (see Kramer, Seedat, Lazarus, & Suffla, 2011). A focus on assets provides an effective strategy to foster participation, agency, and inclusivity (via inviting participants into the process who may otherwise be marginalised or 'invisible' to more powerful stakeholders), and to reconceptualise or reframe communities as being resourceful and resilient rather than contexts of problems. Community assessments can include an evaluation of various aspects of community life, including the development of lists of strengths that already exist in a particular community, noting identified needs, and identifying what should need to happen in order to promote change and development.

Community asset mapping, as a strategy that is often used to pursue the abovementioned objectives, has been developed to focus specifically on religious and spiritual assets in communities across Africa and the USA (See IRHAP website: www.irhap.uct.ac.za), and was utilised in the cross-site workshops presented in this paper. Drawing on the work of

the African Religious Health Assets Programme (ARHAP), now renamed the International Religious Health Assets Programme or IRHAP (2006; see also De Gruchy et al., 2007, 2011; Cochrane, Schmid, & Cutts, 2011) religious assets refer to assets (capabilities, skills, resources, links, associations, organisations and institutions) located in or held by a religious entity that can be leveraged for the purposes of development or public health. The most obvious religious assets are those that are 'tangible', such as facilities and personnel, care or service, and material support or curative interventions, most of which appear identical to secular entities. Underlying this tangible level, however, are the volitional, motivational and mobilising capacities that are rooted in vital affective, symbolic and relational dimensions of religious faith, belief, behaviour and ties. Local knowledge, access, reach, participation, trust, hope, resilience and accompaniment are just some of what we call 'intangible' religious health assets (De Gruchy et al., 2007; Cochrane et al., 2015).

The concept of spiritual capacity, arising specifically out of this research project, is described more fully elsewhere (Cochrane et al., 2015; Lazarus, Cochrane, Taliep, Simmons, & Seedat, 2015). In the project's Conceptual Position Paper (Cochrane et al., 2015), 'spiritual capacity' is defined in terms of the explicitly human capacity of *creative freedom*, that is, our extraordinary ability, to a degree not true of any other creature to our knowledge, to use symbol systems to understand phenomena in nature (including our social experience) so as to be able to imagine something that does not yet exist and bring it into being; thus, to change or alter the world in ways that could never happen otherwise. Intrinsically good (because we would not be human without it) but nonetheless amoral (because it can be turned to either good or evil actions), how we use or act out of it will be significantly determined by our orientation towards ourselves, others and the world. In short, it places before us an unavoidable and profound moral responsibility for why we do what we do (we are the only creatures, as far as we know, who ask ourselves: 'ought' we to do something or not?).

A literature review on religion and violence prevention conducted within the SCRATCHMAPS project (Amos, 2010) revealed that religion and spirituality can act as positive resources. These resources can be and have been mobilised to promote prosocial values and norms, and cultivate a sense of hope and purpose through religious and community activities, including rituals and ceremonies, provision of safe spaces, pastoral counselling, and the facilitation of dialogue. The positive role of religions, faith and spirituality in peace promotion has also been highlighted by others (Britto, Salah, et al., 2014).

In the sections below, we outline the methodology pursued in this study and then provide a summary of the cross-site findings from multiple community asset mapping workshops conducted in the Western Cape and Memphis sites during 2012. As mentioned earlier, these workshops focused on identifying local religious assets and spiritual capacity relating

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to safety and peace, with a particular focus on the promotion of positive forms of masculinity to prevent violence. In our discussion and conclusion, we briefly discuss key issues arising from the study, and share potential implications of the findings, specifically as these relate to attempts to develop interventions that mobilise spiritual capacity and religious assets to create safety and peace at community level.

METHOD

RESEARCH APPROACH

In order to pursue the research aims and objectives outlined above, the SCRATCHMAPS project was initiated. An early history of the five-year collaborative, cross-site SCRATCHMAPS research project was described previously in this journal (2009). The overall objectives of this participatory research were (1) to develop conceptual and theoretical frameworks to understand the possible mediating influences of spiritual capacity and religious assets in the promotion of safety and peace, particularly as it relates to the promotion of positive or generative forms of masculinity; (2) to identify spiritual capacity and religious assets in a local community, and to understand the processes and dynamics by which they work; (3) to develop, implement and evaluate an intervention that mobilises spiritual capacity and religious assets to promote generative forms of masculinity to create safety and peace; and (4) to contribute to the knowledge base and practical understanding of community engagement as expressed through a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach. This paper focuses primarily on the second objective, i.e. identifying and mobilising spiritual and community assets to promote safety and peace via a community asset mapping process pursued in a community in South Africa and in the USA.

The SCRATCHMAPS research methodology was guided by a critical and participatory meta-theoretical perspective, enacted through the values and principles of a CBPR approach: The 'community' is the unit of focus; community engagement occurs at all levels of the research process; the research is relevant to the community; it builds on the strengths and resources of the community; there is a commitment to action research, which emphasises a dynamic relationship between theory and practice; it is based on a partnership between the research institutions and community members; it promotes co-learning and mutual benefits, and sharing findings and knowledge (including indigenous knowledge) with all relevant stakeholders; and it is a long-term process, with commitment to ownership and sustainability (Israel, Eng, Schulz, & Parker, 2005; Lazarus, Duran, Caldwell, & Bulbulia, 2012; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008; Wallerstein & Duran, 2006). 'Researcher' in this context refers to both academic and locally situated researchers, a critical aspect of community asset mapping (De Gruchy, Cochrane, Olivier, & Matimelo, 2011).

RESEARCH SITES

The *South African research site*, *Erijaville*, formerly known as Blikkiesdorp ('Tin Town'), is situated in the Western Cape province of South Africa. There are about 164 houses and about twice as many backyard dwellings within this small community. The bulk of residents are Afrikaans speaking, previously categorised as 'Coloured' by the apartheid regime, and the majority adhere to the Christian faith. Previous general population estimates indicate that about half of the population is male and more than half of the residents are younger than forty years of age. Statistics also show a high percentage of low to no educational levels, and almost half of the population earning less than R1 000 (roughly $74 USD) per month. Although homicide is limited in this neighbourhood, a high level of non-fatal injury occurs through violence, with a particular emphasis on domestic violence (Isobell & Lazarus, 2014a, 2014b).

The *USA site in Memphis, Tennessee* included two large apartment blocks in South Memphis (Peppertree and Bent Tree). The approximately 3000 residents of these blocks are of African-American descent (98%), Christian faith, and were selected for this study due to already existing faith community partnerships with clergy and local ministries. The 2013 population estimates (US Census Bureau) of the zip code in which these two apartment blocks are located indicate that, of the total 48169 residents, 46.1% are male, with a median age of 36.3 years. Fewer than 25% of residents complete a secondary education and the median household income is $2589 (USD) per month, with 21.9% unemployment and 30.5% of the population living under the poverty level.

COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING METHODOLOGY

During the early phases of the SCRATCHMAPS research process, community asset mapping was used to help identify and mobilise community assets to promote safety and peace, and to prepare for the development, implementation and evaluation of a violence prevention intervention. Community asset mapping is a particular methodology employed for community assessment and development purposes (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008). The main objective of this approach is to focus on human capacities and assets (particularly spiritual and religious strengths and resources), recognising that important assets lie in networks and relationships, and that it is important to make these community assets visible for the community and relevant decision-makers for the purposes of taking action. Drawing on the work of IRHAP, we focused on making both tangible and intangible religious assets visible.

The asset mapping methodology and toolset were designed by the collaborative research team for this SCRATCHMAPS process, drawing on prior community asset mapping

experiences within the team. The process involved the redesign of an existing religious health asset mapping toolset established by IRHAP (see De Gruchy et al., 2007; De Gruchy et al., 2011). Several varieties of this mapping toolset have been developed and practised in Africa and the USA (for more on these varieties, see ARHAP 2006; Blevins, Thurman, Kiser, & Beres, 2012; Cutts, 2011; Olivier, Cochrane, & De Gruchy, 2012). The main redesign aspect for this version was a focus on identifying factors that promote safety and peace (rather than on 'health' more broadly speaking). It should be noted that the concepts of safety and peace were deliberately used together rather as distinctive notions, with the main focus being on their links to violence prevention. We recognise that distinguishing these concepts would be appropriate for certain research purposes but also recognise that, in the context of violence prevention, they are often used interchangeably in the literature, and supported in this study itself. The redesign of the mapping toolset also included a topical refocusing of some of the exercises onto issues relating to positive forms of masculinity – to better suit the SCRATCHMAPS focus. Community asset mapping manuals were developed to guide the workshop facilitators and to ensure cross-site consistency between the South African and USA sites (Cutts, Olivier, Lazarus, Cochrane, & Taliep, 2012; Olivier, Cutts, Lazarus, Cochrane, & Taliep, 2012). The main aspect of the mapping approach that preserved consistency between the sites, in spite of the obvious contextual differences in the USA and South Africa, was the logical flow within the mapping workshops (see Table 1.)

Table 1: Logical flow of community asset mapping workshops

Exercise 1: Contextual considerations (community mapping)
The exercises begin with a deliberate focus on context. Exercise 1 therefore starts with participants drawing community maps and identifying the key social entities and facilities in their community, as well as key contextual considerations.
Exercise 2: **Peace and safety within the community context**
Having engaged in conversation about context, participants are now asked in Exercise 2 to identify the key factors that both (i) contribute to and (ii) undermine peace and safety in the community. These two sets of factors are then integrated in a participatory discussion to create a contextual, group-identified peace and safety index. This gives us a picture of what the key peace and safety issues in the community are perceived to be.
Exercise 3: The relative contribution of community assets to peace and safety
Exercise 3 then combines some of the key community assets (public facilities and programmes, including religious entities) identified in the maps of Exercise 1, with key factors contributing to peace and safety from Exercise 2, to create a community asset/peace and safety ranking matrix. This enables participants to rank the relative contribution of community facilities to the group-identified factors contributing to safety and peace.
Exercise 4: Religious assets and masculinity within the community context
Exercise 4 then focuses on religious assets, with further probes on masculinity. The facilitator returns to community assets identified in EXERCISE 3 during discussion.
Exercise 5: Local action
There is a guided discussion on spiritual capacity and positive forms of masculinity, which then moves towards an integrated identification of characteristics of local examples promoting positive forms of masculinity, and peace and safety. Opportunities for further local action and intervention are then identified.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

In both sites the asset mapping process began with transect walks in the communities, and researchers met with local community advisors before the community asset mapping workshops were conducted. In most cases, these workshops were conducted over a single day, usually running from 09:00 to 14:00 – with a facilitation team consisting of at least three people. The workshops, which included a number of interactive exercises, followed the asset mapping logic outlined in Table 1.

In *Erijaville*, three community asset mapping workshops were conducted in 2012, in which 74 community members participated. This was followed by a service providers' workshop which included 18 service provider representatives from 15 different sectors, and thereafter an action planning workshop that included 41 community members and service providers combined. Most of the community participants in the first three workshops were between 36 to 55 years old and almost equally spread in terms of gender (36 males and 38 females). They were predominantly Afrikaans speaking, and mostly from Christian backgrounds. Local academic and 10 community researchers, employed as the local SCRATCHMAPS research team in this context, conducted the asset mapping workshops.

In *Memphis*, two community workshops were conducted with a total of 26 participants. The initial workshop held in 2012 consisted of 10 adult participants: seven females and three males, ages ranging from 23 to 66 years. In the second workshop, targeting youth, 16 individuals participated (14 males and two females) with ages ranging from 13 to 18 years. The Memphis asset mapping was conducted by six local academic staff from the hospital system and four community members.

DATA ANALYSIS

Workshop data from each site were captured through the workshop exercises, and through researcher note-taking during the processes. These data sets, which were captured and discussed in separate research reports (Cutts & Gunderson, 2013; Lazarus et al., 2014), were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Numerous scribes captured the workshop conversations and these reports were compiled and reviewed by both academic and community researchers. Descriptive statistics were used to provide a demographic profile of research participants present at the community asset mapping workshops. Combined frequency distributions were used to arrange the values of a quantity of different variables identified on (a) factors that act against safety and peace, and (b) factors and local community assets that promote safety and peace. Other methods used included: composite analyses of community workshop maps (i.e., consensus reviews from the combined academic and community research teams), particularly focusing on safe and unsafe spaces; service providers Time-Line and Time-Trends analyses; the mapping of services provided in the

local community; the identification of relationships between service providers – mapped on spidergrams; brainstorming lists outlining suggestions for action – from both community members and service providers; and qualitative thematic content analysis of community members' views on how religion and spirituality contribute to safety and peace and link with masculinity. The latter content analyses followed the traditional steps of coding and categorising, usually pursued within thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with inter-coder consensus being obtained from both academic and community researchers. The overall categories of 'intangible factors' and 'tangible factors', drawing on previous work of IRHAP, were used to summarise the findings within and across sites.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethical clearance for this project was formally pursued and received through the University of South Africa. In addition to the formal university process, ethics agreements were developed and signed by both academic and community partners. The formal and community ethics documentation covered all key aspects of research, including various principles relating to providing protection (e.g., informed consent, respect for anonymity, voluntary participation, and risk management), as well as the promotion of beneficence, with an emphasis on the benefit of this research for both communities. The ethics agreement placed a major emphasis on the commitment to a participatory and empowering process, central to the principles of community-engaged research.

FINDINGS

When viewing the findings from this study, it should be noted that the data provided below constitutes the synthesised views of members from the two communities concerned and thus constitutes the 'grounded theory' contribution to our understandings of safety and peace promotion. In the final sections of this paper we examine how these understandings link to the theoretical framework used to guide the study, as summarised above. With the focus on identifying factors that promote community safety and peace, the findings from both sites initially centred on identifying safe and unsafe spaces through community map creations. This was followed by the identification of tangible and intangible community assets or factors, including religious and spiritual resources that promote peace and safety. Because of the specific focus of the project, factors relating to positive forms of masculinity and mobilising males for peace and safety were also identified and highlighted.

IDENTIFICATION OF SAFE AND UNSAFE PLACES

Participants in the *Erijaville* workshops drew community maps which represented pictures of their community, and their views of areas that were considered safe or unsafe. Analysis of these maps revealed that churches were linked to safety by many workshop participants.

Other key structures or groups identified as creating safety in the community included: mobile shops (which function as a communal gathering space); the sports field or park; the existence of a soup kitchen, run by one community member; contributions by some specific people and organisations in the community; and the presence and value of elders in the community, who were considered to be assets in the community of Erijaville.

'Unsafe spaces' identified within Erijaville during these workshops included drug hotspots, gambling hotspots, shebeens (informal liquor shops), the soccer field/park, and garbage dumps. The presence of people 'loitering' around the streets was also considered to be an unsafe characteristic of the community. Some members referred to these groups of young men as 'gangs', but this perception was challenged in several workshops – suggesting contested perceptions about what constitutes 'gangsterism'. Lastly, the lack of adequate community infrastructure was linked to unsafety in Erijaville, including a lack of lighting and good streets, garbage dumping, and generally a lack of safe spaces for extramural activities (for all ages, but youth in particular).

The community asset mapping process in *Memphis* also highlighted many areas deemed to be safe and unsafe. Schools were generally named as safe, as were retail stores, daycare centres for children, churches and health/dialysis centres. Participants reported:

> "Daycares have children; where children are, people won't go after the kids. It is safer because there is a baby present. Most families have babies, or you were a baby, or you know someone who has a baby." And, "Having a safe place (a church or sanctuary) to go will provide people with a safe place to go and with people to talk to."

Petrol stations and the apartment complexes were deemed unsafe. Time of day also factored into ratings of safety, for example, participants felt that the park was safe during the day, but unsafe at night, when prostitution, drug dealing and gang violence occurred there. Many participants noted that there was a mix of *"good or safe places"* and *"bad or unsafe places"* in each area. One participant noted that *"It's not really the place, but the community – the people – that determine the level of safety."*

FACTORS THAT PROMOTE SAFETY AND PEACE

Erijaville participants were asked to identify various factors that promote and act against peace and safety within their community or potential assets and risks. Factors that act against peace and safety were: drugs, poverty, unemployment, violence and crime, lack of amenities, broken families, lack of education and a lack of values (especially respect). Thus any action that addresses these issues would promote safety and peace. Participants noted about drugs, "*Reach out to deal with the curse [of drugs] because change comes if we take*

responsibility, otherwise the community suffers … if someone around you uses, you suffer." Specific factors contributing to safety and peace included: community cohesion (respect/ love/working together/unity), employment, police and neighbourhood watch, churches, religion and spirituality, sport, education, housing and amenities.

Factors identified as acting against peace and safety in *Memphi*s included gangs, guns, violence and crime, ignorance, lack of control, powerlessness, helplessness, poverty, drugs and alcohol, lack of knowledge and education, and unemployment. Memphis participants also identified tangible factors that promote peace and safety within the community, including having adequate money (and/or employment), strong leadership, laws, police enforcement, sports, education (formal and skills training), adequate living conditions/environment, being connected, and personal responsibility. For example, with regard to resources or finances, participants reported,

> "Money leads to prostitution, gang violence and robbery; if people had money, they wouldn't need to prostitute or rob people. Money is needed for food, supplies, and other essential things."

Participants also reported, in terms of safety and educational benefits,

> "Libraries offer books and knowledge. People learn things, and they have a sense of something better. Reading a book will offer options [such as] moving out to something better. This knowledge gives people a sense of something better." Also, "Having an education is important because education is the key to getting away from the hood, away from poverty, and away from a bad situation."

Lastly, a direct link was drawn between gang activity and ending violence:

> "Stopping gangs and taking a stand against violence … will help. During recruitment, gangs will try to pull you in using violence. Stopping gangs will stop violence."

Religion, faith and spirituality were seen as intangible factors contributing to peace and safety in Memphis insofar as they uplift the community, assist people in feeling connected, give community members a safe place to go, instil hope, and create a sense of respect and responsibility. For example, with regard to how churches instil hope and the interaction of faith and community uplifting, participants reported,

> "Hope gives people something to look into the future and look forward to. It offers a sense of motivation. Churches give a sense of hope. People respect church ... Faith lifts up the community and uplifts the community."

Community connection, trust, faith and love were also cited:

> Connecting with community, which increases trust – "If you're connecting with someone, you don't want to hurt someone in that connection. You feel the connection."

Also, participants noted the ways in which gangs provide love in lieu of families:

> "Kids often turn to drugs and gang violence because they aren't loved. They go to gangs because they feel loved or connected in those areas."

Positive values, alternate role models and promoting morals and values were seen as the anecdote to this role for gangs:

> "Positive things for youth to do to keep them out of trouble – youth will look in the other direction instead of joining gangs."

Also,

> "Morals and values make a difference. Nothing will stop people from committing crimes and bringing violence, but morals and values can stop them."

Tables 2 and 3 summarise tangible and intangible factors, respectively, named by participants in both sites.

Table 2: Tangible factors contributing to peace and safety

Erijaville	Memphis
1. Environment	**1. Environment**
Trees	Safe and quality housing
Crime and violence-free	No gang activity
Absence of women and child abuse/domestic violence	Drug-free environment
Drug-free environment	Crime and violence-free areas (contingent on time of day)
Safe places for children to play	
Community and street cleanliness	
No gambling spots	
2. Service delivery	**2. Service delivery**
Police and neighbourhood watch working with community	Police and Fire Department working with community
Formal education	Mentoring for children and adults

Erijaville	Memphis
Non-formal education (workshops)	Formal education
Employment/job opportunities	Employment/job opportunities
Access to healthcare (including emergency services)	Access to healthcare for improved health and wellbeing
Housing	Access to quality childcare
	Adequate finances
3. Activities	**3. Activities**
Sports activities	Sports activities
Youth activities	Youth activities
Recreational activities	Community gardening activities
NGO/NPO activity	Hospital training for community
Community projects (e.g., soup kitchen)	Afterschool opportunities
4. Structures	**4. Structures**
Churches	Churches
Community hall/facilities	Daycare and other facilities caring for children
Safe parks	Community centres (YMCA)
	Schools and libraries

Table 3: Intangible factors that promote peace and safety

Erijaville	Memphis
1. Personal aspects	**1. Personal aspects**
Respect	Respect
Morals	Morals and values
Positive values	Encouragement
Learning good things	Prayer
Love	Goals and responsibilities
Compassion	Love
Prayer and meditation	Sense of motivation
	Self-help
2. Community connectedness	**2. Community connectedness**
Community cohesion	Trust
Trust	Hope
Working together	Peace
Standing together	
Unity	
Healing	
Peace	
Positive mindset	
Leadership (strong community leaders)	
Taking responsibility	
No police corruption	

Erijaville	Memphis
3. Family/relationships	**3. Family/relationships**
Family socialisation (rules/obedience)	Family socialisation (rules/obedience)
Family care	Family care (as alternate to gang involvement)
Family cohesion	Alternate role models for parents (particularly fathers)
Peer guidance	Positive peer role models (non-family)
Children playing	
Caring for animals	

Comparing the findings from the two sites, Erijaville workshop participants named environment (safe parks), structures (churches), service delivery (access to healthcare) and role models as key in terms of *tangible factors* that promote peace and safety. Memphis participants also focused on safe structures such as churches and childcare centres, but more emphasis was placed on service delivery factors, for example, having adequate financial resources, education, adequate criminal justice, access to healthcare and childcare, and combating gang violence and crime.

Both Erijaville and Memphis participants highlighted several *intangible factors* that were seen to contribute to community peace and safety. Erijaville participants focused on personal aspects (e.g., respect, prayer and meditation), family relationships (e.g., family cohesion and care), and community connectedness (e.g., trust and healing). Participants in Memphis focused more heavily on factors that centred on personal aspects (e.g., hope, compassion, love, morals and values, setting positive goals), with fewer responses focused on connectedness, trust-building and positive influences. Memphis participants emphasised keeping youth from engaging in gangs, as these often function as an alternate to a family connection.

FACTORS THAT RELATE MASCULINITY TO PEACE AND SAFETY

An additional focus of the community asset mapping workshops in both sites was to identify factors that relate to masculinity in relation to promoting safety and peace.

In *Erijaville*, a common understanding is that socialisation, particularly at home, plays a central role in promoting either positive or negative forms of masculinity. It was stressed that *all* social structures that create norms and promote values are interrogated in relation to whether or not their 'messages' are positive in relation to views of manhood. This includes the family, but it also includes the schools, churches, other faith-based organisations, and the media at large. Some participants recommended that churches should reach out more to the community, even if they are of different denominations:

> "They should go to households to help where needed … They need to be seen more in the community … Churches make people feel safe … change people's lives and help people."

One interesting finding from the Erijaville workshops relates to the suggestion that a 'reversal of roles' be explored between men and women, which some believe would help to address the negative effects of unemployment for men. Here it was suggested that men should not be expected to always be the breadwinners, and should be valued and supported when doing other voluntary or family work that supports both family and community development. A silent reality is that

> "Many women work and men stay at home and look after the children (reversed roles) … There is a need to redefine work and family roles.… Roles and responsibilities of men and women should be looked at… Men can help with chores; cleaning the house etcetera … This will help everyone to see fatherhood in a positive way".

The Erijaville discussions strongly emphasised the importance of fathers in their families and in the community. Participants noted,

> "Fatherhood and responsibilities that go hand in hand with being a father are important to being a 'good man'. My father … he taught me how to look for a good man."

As many of the families do not have a present father, this raises a number of challenges. It was noted, however, that even if one does not have a 'blood' father, other male members of the community can act as positive father-figure role models. This was highlighted by one participant, who shared,

> "Sometimes we learn from the street, choosing role models [… this includes brothers and religious leaders, and grandfathers …] I learned from my grandfather … to never give up."

In fact, on many occasions during the workshops, members stressed that men and women should 'parent' all the children in the community, irrespective of whether or not they were 'their own'.

Numerous factors were linked to negative, violent forms of masculinity in these discussions. These included reacting out of emotional 'defense', operating out of patriarchal norms and values, and abusing others under the influence of drugs and alcohol. Conversely, a number

of attributes were identified as being central to a 'positive masculinity'. This included respect (a central theme running through all the findings), as noted by this participant,

> "A good man has respect", and, "A good man respects himself first by looking after himself, and then his family"… "They must have respect for women."

Additionally, participants cited a sense of responsibility:

> "Fatherhood and responsibilities that go hand in hand with being a father are important to being a 'good man'."

Final factors included being hard working, being a good father: It was seen as important for the man *"to raise your children along with your wife"* … to help *"take care of your children"*, being a good role model, and having work (being employed), as highlighted in this comment, *"Lord said your job is to work for your wife."*

In *Memphis*, similar trends emerged. In an initial discussion about traditional negative views of masculinity, participants noted that "*Men are sometimes viewed as having to be aggressive, to prove their manhood – to prove that they are a real man."* Participants then shifted focus (as in Erijaville), seeing taking on the 'head of household' role as a positive sign of masculinity, arguing that

> "Men are often tasked with paying the bills and being responsible; men offer protection; in a family, significant others want a man to be there to take care of them; in positive masculinity, men are responsible."

Erijaville and Memphis discussions held with community members, religious leaders and service providers qualitatively illustrate that a great deal of emphasis is placed on a man's ability to provide for a household, which requires financial stability and is linked to a particular way of dressing and representing oneself as a man. A number of characteristics linked to positive manifestations of masculinity were also linked to spiritual capacity and religious assets in the promotion of peace and safety, especially regarding the need to mentor and provide positive role models for young people while being able to overcome potentially divisive differences. Similar to criteria that identify a 'real man', participants also felt that women have specified roles within relationships and society, believing that scripts for gender roles are acquired through contact with older males and females, in families and more widely.

Role reversals suggested by Erijaville participants also appeared in Memphis, where participants felt that men can fulfil the role of positive masculinity through hands-on parenting: "*Leading by example, thinking about and helping to take care of the baby and the family.*" A strong focus on family or parenting as a value is also present, even when the question was about masculinity per se. For example, Memphis participants said that "*…having better role models, patience, presence and parenting from* both *fathers and mothers*," would be a way that positive masculinity could promote peace and safety. Likewise, when asked about ways to promote positive forms of masculinity, Memphis respondents pointed to the role of broader support systems: "*Build relationships, protect children and be more aware of the neighbourhood, take responsibility, and build a system of support.*"

MOBILISING SPIRITUAL CAPACITY AND RELIGIOUS ASSETS TO PROMOTE POSITIVE FORMS OF MASCULINITY TO CREATE PEACE AND SAFETY

An overarching goal of the workshops was to investigate whether and how spiritual capacity and religious assets could be mobilised to promote positive forms of masculinity to create community peace and safety. In *Erijaville*, one participant drew on religious discourses to emphasise that males must provide for their households, and another, drawing on religious texts (but de-emphasising attendance in places of worship), believed that it was important to be an example to young people: "*We must sweat for our household. It says so in the Bible. The Lord said your yoke is you will work for that wife.*" And, "*Read the Bible. You don't have to attend church, but you mustn't do wrong things in front of your child.*"

In the Erijaville data a fair amount is said about the importance of focusing on commonalities between various groups, be it religious institutions or criminal justice organisations or even various individuals such as drug dealers. One participant noted the need to mentor young people as a way to mobilise spiritual capacity and religious assets to promote positive forms of masculinity and safety and peace. The following quotes illustrate this: "*All churches and religions should get together in the square and decide to pray...*", and, "*...put differences aside...even if they are drug dealers...include everyone and make a peace offering,*" and, "*Take the young people along a process.*"

Likewise, in Memphis, it was felt that integrating peace promotion through churches and safety promotion through police was potentially useful. Participants stated, "*…if the family communicates, talking and in discussion, even in a community like the neighbourhood watch; this will promote safety,*" (this was supplemented with an example of the police and fire departments going to elementary schools to tell children about their jobs). Another commented, "*…with a strong faith … you want peace if you have a strong faith … you have more of a reason to want to be peaceful. Pastors seem to have … more influence on*

families and should speak more because of their credibility." Memphis participants noted how faith beliefs and behaviours (providing hope, values, family support and prayer) are often quite incompatible with violent behaviour. For example, one female participant stated, "*You know, you're not going to find a praying person with a gun."*

PARTICIPANTS' SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

In the final community asset mapping workshop exercises, participants in Erijaville and Memphis named potential next action steps for developing interventions to promote peace and safety that would incorporate what had been learnt through the research process in ongoing community building and workshops. Erijaville participants named steps that clustered in the areas of creating a drug-free environment, providing educational and personal growth venues, building family, providing safety and security, engaging churches/ faith-based organisations and partnerships, promoting community building and improving service delivery.

Memphis participants' suggestions for action steps clustered in the areas of mentoring, training youth and/or being a good role model or leader, engaging faith-based organisations and partnerships, using an asset-based approach, promoting community building, explicitly promoting positive masculinity, self-transformation or self-help, community volunteerism, and offering youth activities.

Across both Erijaville and Memphis, community building, organising and capacity building were seen as key action steps. However, Memphis tended to view this more as a traditional community organising response (particularly for youth), while the Erijaville participants focused more on community capacity building. Engaging churches and faith-based organisations was highlighted across both sites, especially in providing a 'sanctuary' or safe space for youth and others and in offering alternative pathways to being involved in crime, violence or drug abuse.

DISCUSSION

It is interesting that community members' views of peace and safety, as revealed in the findings outlined above, link clearly to key aspects of safety and peace promotion as defined by various scholars. In particular, the community views highlight the need to mitigate against direct or episodic violence, with an emphasis on conflict management to promote harmony. The findings from the communities also reveal a strong emphasis on the development of prosocial values and capacities, an important aspect of peacebuilding. The findings also highlight the need to focus on structural aspects, including pursuing goals related more to equity and social justice. An important aspect of structural violence indirectly referred to in

these findings is the legacy of historical and contemporary oppression seen as a risk factor for violence in these communities. For example, the legacy of apartheid in South Africa was recognised as being a major factor in the Erijaville community, resulting in repeated requests for community healing from the trauma of the past. This is an important aspect of safety and peace promotion that often does not receive sufficient attention.

Findings from both sites were distinctive, yet evidenced similarities, among them being the view that in each of these contexts churches are key in providing 'sanctuary' and common space for neighbourhood gatherings and dialogue. Both sites emphasised the need for broader community involvement and responsibility for safety and peace promotion. Views on positive forms of masculinity in both sites suggested the need to enhance young males' sense of selves as primary breadwinners or protective 'heads of household', without shaming regarding potential lack of finances, and intentional mentoring of male youth. Clearly, the role of intangible factors in promoting peace and safety was prominent in findings across sites, discussed in some detail below.

We earlier discussed the usefulness of an asset-based approach to the role of religion and religiosity, and of a distinction between tangible and intangible religious assets. The notion of 'religious health assets' (as termed in IRHAP, see ARHAP, 2006) has been introduced above (see also Gunderson & Cochrane, 2012). In the SCRATCHMAPS study, several ways in which such assets are regarded as important by community members were noted. What is most striking is the apparent link between our understanding of spiritual capacity (refer to the introduction in this article) and the research findings emerging from the community asset mapping workshops. In particular, this link is evident in the heavy emphasis that many participants placed on agency and taking responsibility for oneself, for one's relationship with others and for the community in general. *Agency*, and its associated moral responsibility, was also linked to notions of empowerment and courage, seen as crucial in enabling new actions to be undertaken with some possibility of breaking through a distorted, painful actuality marked by violence and insecurity. Community members in Erijaville specifically introduced the term *in*powerment, which is not unrelated to empowerment but emphasises a primary orientation to the world as directing how one embodies one's capabilities (whether turned to good or ill). Members of the communities thus spoke of changing mindsets and of a positive attitude to the world within which they live their daily lives.

Linked to the idea of agency is the need to take *moral responsibility* for one's actions, which emerged as a major theme across both sites. This links directly to the view of spiritual capacity as being about creative freedom and the responsibility it places before us of how we 'ought' to act in the world. Autonomy (taking responsibility for oneself) rather than heteronomy (handing one's moral responsibility over to some external authority)

repeatedly enters into ways in which community members expressed themselves about what makes for peace. Personal responsibility is strongly and repeatedly linked to respect, empathy, care and compassion, all expressions of the moral imperative that accompanies our creative freedom. In short, moral responsibility, by virtue of how we choose to use our creative freedom, is reinforced here as a general characteristic of what it means to be or become human. This contributes to a theory of safety and peace promotion in two ways: first, it emphasises the importance of an internal subjective orientation that promotes pro-social behaviour through "empathy, respect for others, and a commitment to fairness and trust in relationships with other individuals and groups" (Christie et al., 2014, p.274); and, second, it points to the agency one has as a result of one's creative freedom to act, with others, in creating the objective structure and institutions that do not yet exist that can contribute towards a social ecology of peace and safety. Both elements reinforce a concept of peacebuilding and open up space for peacemaking (dealing with conflict and violence directly).

The values, attitudes, capacities and behaviours associated with the concept of spiritual capacity, and linked to our understandings of peacebuilding (Lazarus et al., 2015) emerged strongly from the two communities. This suggests two things when considering safety and peace promotion: first, material and environmental factors, unquestionably in every sense vital, are matched in their importance by non-material or supersensible, that is, spiritual factors. Second, paying attention to enhancing the capabilities, virtues and values that express human spiritual capacity in all its dimensions offers much to any intervention for peace and safety, whether about positive forms of masculinity or not. It may indeed be most critical to the motivational and emotional drives that enable people to take on greater responsibility for transforming themselves and the conditions within which they live, often referred to as 'activation' of individuals, and recently noted in the field of self-management of chronic diseases (Simmons, Baker, Schaefer, Miller, & Anders, 2009) and partnering with health providers (Hibbard, Stockard, Mahoney & Tusler, 2004).

PREVENTION IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Similarities and differences about views on factors that promote community safety and peace existed across two very culturally distinct and different sites in South Africa and the USA, but action steps identified in both sites point to several potential interventions as implications of the findings.

First, interventions aimed at promoting health, safety and peace would benefit from intentionally including and engaging communities and youth in faith-based programmes, focusing on developing and providing better role models, being more intentional in

promoting positive values such as love, trust, and compassion, and providing cultural and sports activities, after-school mentoring and other educational amenities. In communities where family and other social institutions are in serious trouble, religious institutions can play a key role in providing both people and structures to create spaces for safety and peace promotion.

Second, community organising and capacity building seems critical to strengthening community infrastructure to create more healthy, safe and peaceful neighbourhoods. For example, as has been done in Memphis (Cutts, 2011) and Erijaville (Taliep, Simmons, Van Niekerk, & Phillips, 2015), these communities, through faith-based organisations and/or sports, recreational, school and childcare venues, could offer training to enhance interpersonal values such as compassion and altruism, teach anger modulation or management skills, and promote resilience or other positive coping strategies through, for example, mindfulness meditation.

In terms of the promotion of positive forms of masculinity, both sites named the need for more intentional programmes that provide good role models for young males, as well as highlighting the 'protector' or 'provider' role for males in relation to healthy parenting, without stigmatising men who cannot provide financially for their partners or children. Congregational influences on building positive forms of masculinity in both settings were seen as providing alternative environments to foster healthier socialisation and learning, especially for youth who might otherwise be pulled into gang and/or criminal activity. However, discussion of these factors at a cross-site colloquium conducted in 2013 (Simmons, Isobell, Lazarus, & Van Gesselleen, 2014) raised a caution regarding the uncritical acceptance of all 'positive masculinity' attributes and behaviours identified by community members. For example, identifying 'being employed' as a 'positive form of masculinity' could be used to view unemployed men as expressing 'negative' masculinity, a dangerous consequence. The need to engage in further debate on this issue was therefore recommended.

Despite these valuable lessons, we recognise that this study manifests limited generalisability because of the necessarily participatory research approach, the small sample sizes, and the particular nature of the two local contexts. However, the intangible factors noted to potentially promote health, peace and safety generally and with regard to masculinity, across both the South African and US sites, merit further examination. Conducting research in settings with more diversity in religious traditions and culture could determine if these factors and our engagement with the concept of spiritual capacity are found to be as visible and pertinent. Findings from such research might help to develop and refine tailored community-based interventions for promoting peace and safety, specific to given sites, cultures and contexts, while potentially having a strong integral core of promoting spiritual capacity. Continued

work in the Erijaville site, designed to develop and test the efficacy and effectiveness of one such potential community-based intervention, is also warranted and has been pursued (Isobell, Simmons, Lazarus, & Taliep, 2015; Van Gesselleen, Taliep, Lazarus, Phillips, & Carelse, 2015).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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