Someone Stole My Smile

An Exploration into the Causes of Youth Violence in South Africa

EDITED BY

PATRICK BURTON

Acknowledgements

The authors

Lillian Artz is director of the Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit at the University of Cape Town

Angela Bonora is a researcher at the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention.

David Bruce is a senior researcher in the Criminal Justice Programme at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

Patrick Burton is the director of research at the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention.

Diane Jefthas is a researcher in the Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit at the University of Cape Town.

Elise Kipperberg is an associate professor at the University of Stavanger, Norway.

Lezanne Leoschut is a researcher at the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention.

Catherine L. Ward is a senior research specialist in the Child, Youth, Family and Social Development Programme at the Human Sciences Research Council.

Contents

List of abbreviations

ADHD	Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ANC	African National Congress
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
FAS	Foetal Alcohol Syndrome
HRC	Human Rights Commission
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IRG	Individual reparation grant
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
RRC	Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee
SAPS	South African Police Service
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UK	United Kingdom
Unicef	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

In an interview on International Women's Day in 2007, a rape survivor told reporters how at the age of 15 her 'smile was stolen' by a young man who raped her after repeatedly beating her mother at their home. This is just one of the approximately 302,000 rapes endured by young girls under the age of 18 in South Africa in the 2005/2006 reporting year – or rather, just one of those reported to the police. That statistic can be added to the 1,075 reports of murder of children, 20,879 reports of assault and 4,725 reports of indecent assault against children that the South African Police Service (SAPS) received during 2005/2006.[4] Unofficial estimates of actual figures put this at a much higher rate, while victimisation surveys place the rate of reporting by children and youth at approximately 10% – roughly the same as the reporting of crimes by adults.[5]

Crime is clearly a priority concern in South Africa. Of particular concern is the fact that young people constitute a considerable percentage of both victims and perpetrators of crime, and in particular violent crime, in the country.

Children and young people constitute a major sector of the country's population, with the 2001 census indicating that some 26% of the country's population is 24 years or younger.[6] In addition, research indicates that the ages between 12 and 21 are the peak years for both offending and victimisation.[7] Therefore, if one considers that the 12–21 year age group is the most likely to be involved in crime, it is clear that a large proportion of South Africa's population falls within this 'high risk' age cohort. Indeed, the number of young people in South Africa indicates that they are likely to be disproportionately perpetrators and victims of crime. As such, the cost to government and to society of not adequately addressing youth offending is significant and the issue should be given the requisite attention.

Children in South Africa are prey to daily incidents of robbery, assault, shootings, rape and murder. A cursory perusal of any South African newspaper headline over the past few years would reveal that reports of crimes constitute a significant proportion of daily news fodder. A more in-depth reading, however, would reveal that more than mere victims, in many of these cases children (or youth at least) are involved as perpetrators of violence. These instances are occurring in realms traditionally considered safe from the violence that might plague the rest of the outside world (such as schools) as well as in homes, open spaces, shopping malls, or any private or public space where young people might find themselves. It is clear that rather than such instances of violence against children being random acts or pathological or aberrant behaviour, it is reaching the endemic stage.

The implications of this violence are profound. Young people who are exposed to violence at such a young age are more likely themselves to get caught up in cycles of violence, both as repeat victims and as potential perpetrators of violence. For example, it is a widely accepted fact that people who are sexually abused as children are more likely than those who have not had such negative experiences to abuse children later in life.

There is empirical evidence to support the fact that children who are exposed to any form of violence, or who are themselves being victimised, are significantly more likely to become perpetrators of criminal, violent or other antisocial behaviour. Ergo, in a society that is characterised by high levels of violence against and by young people, and in which for youngsters violence is an everyday occurrence, levels of violence are only likely to increase over time unless drastic interventions succeed in breaking the cycles of violence.

These incidents prompt a single question that as yet no-one appears to be able to answer with any conviction: why is this happening?

Violence in any form runs counter to the common moral and value code within any society. Violence is perceived as a real threat to everything that a modern society aspires to (peace, individualism, emotional well-being, stability and equality) as well as a threat to standards of development, equality and economic growth. When violence among young people becomes common to the point that some might say it is entrenched, the moral outrage is even more pronounced. Furthermore, a growing consciousness of the related issues and implications of such violence for the society as a whole, and for the future trajectory of young people's lives, creates a serious concern about the future of any environment in which such youth violence is so common.

A number of theories for the high levels of violence, both generally and among young people, are commonly postulated in public and academic literature. Some of these include the following:

■ Exposure to violence at every level (in the news, on television and the radio and in films and computer games) entrenches violent behaviour.

- The apartheid regime led to an alienated generation for whom violence was the only legitimate means of achieving change.

- The fundamental dislocation of society under apartheid resulted in a generation of future parents who themselves were products of an abnormal society and fragmented family structure, thus lacking the vital parenting skills required to raise healthy children.

- The impact of increasingly available drugs and alcohol, in particular tik (methamphetamine), is also blamed for the violence that South Africa is witnessing among its young people, with the rise in related gang activity particularly in the Western Cape and Gauteng.

Arguments can certainly be made for the negative impact of all these factors on young people, yet each factor individually fails to explain the trend adequately. For example, the impact of violent media images on children has been argued for decades. In the United States (US), for example, the increase of youth violence in the 1980s and early 1990s was accompanied by a rise in the levels of violence in both television and cinema, leading to an apparently obvious correlation. However, in the mid 1990s the trajectory of youth violence in the US was reversed: the number of violent incidents involving young people decreased dramatically although the levels of violence in the popular media continued to increase along the same trajectory.

Similarly, many of the arguments premised on the impact of apartheid fail to recognise that much of the violence occurring now takes place among those relatively untouched by the violence of apartheid, specifically with regard to middle and upper class white South Africans. With notable exceptions, these families remained divorced from the fragmentation, disruption and violence associated with the struggle against apartheid. Access to drugs and alcohol might be a factor that cuts more across class or colour barriers; but while certainly a factor, there is little evidence that substance abuse is the driving factor behind the levels of violence seen, for example, in schools throughout the country.

With this in mind, this monograph presents a number of key theories as to the causes of violence among young people in South Africa. It does not attempt to provide a single, definitive solution to the problem but rather seeks to analyse what the authors feel are a number of key factors impacting on children and young people, and which potentially combine to increase the incidence and levels of violence among South Africa's youth and children.

In criminology, discourse has moved away from citing the 'causes' of crime, in a tacit acknowledgement that suggests a simple causal relationship. Rather, the discussion focuses on the correlates of crime, recognising that a range of factors impact on the phenomenon and may interact in different ways to produce different outcomes.

The approach in this monograph is similar in that it recognises that no single cause of violence is likely to exist to explain the levels of violence we are currently experiencing, but rather that a series of interrelated factors impact on young people in different ways, one of which will be in the perpetrating of violent acts against other young people and society in general.

It is imperative at the outset to stress that the apparent trend in the rise of violence among young people is not unique to South Africa. When comparing the overall crime rate of South Africa with other countries, it is argued, justifiably, that comparisons should be made only with countries at a similar stage of development as South Africa. Thus South American countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Chile are often cited as the countries most suited for a comparative analysis of crime. Yet those 'developing countries' which are perceived to be much safer than South Africa also appear to be experiencing the same trends.

Indeed, this trend is not even limited to developing countries. The levels of youth-on-youth violence are on the rise in a range of countries, not just South Africa, and they too are battling to come to a better understanding of the phenomenon. For example, a recent lead story in a United Kingdom (UK) newspaper was on 'Children who kill',[8] and a survey of other recent headlines of stories emanating from the UK and Australia reveal similar headlines: 'Girl, 15, charged with young mom's murder'; 'Australian girls jailed for killing peer'.[9] In many instances, acts of youth violence abroad appear just as devoid of motivation or rational explanation as those in South Africa. In two of the incidents cited above, the young people responsible for the murders stated simply that they wanted to know what it felt like to kill.

While increasing youth violence is not unique to South Africa, it is not to say that a universal set of causes or correlates exist for all countries experiencing this phenomenon. Certainly, there may be some 'universal' factors fuelling this trend, but in all likelihood there are a range of factors unique to any particular environment that exacerbate, interact or otherwise contribute to other correlates resulting in increased violence. This monograph explores a range of causal factors, many of which are a particular result of South Africa's history and a product of the transformation from apartheid to democracy. Some of these ideas reflect those found in existing literature, in this case applied with particular relevance to the South African environment. Others are presented and analysed in detail for the first time.

OUTLINE OF THE MONOGRAPH

In Chapter 1, **Catherine L. Ward** explores some of the risk and resiliency factors that predispose or increase the likelihood of antisocial or violent behaviour, with the range of environments in which children live and function. She analyses why young people use violent behaviours rather than other more socially acceptable behaviours in certain situations. Her arguments depart from a social learning

perspective, that is, the way in which people acquire certain information from a range of experiences. Children, Ward argues, model the behaviours and attitudes around them, and reflect the behaviour they see among adults and leaders in their communities and society.

Different levels or spheres of experience impact on the development and learning of young people, namely: the individual level, the microsystem, such as parent–child or child–peer relationships; the mesosystem, or the interactions between the microsystems; the exosystem, a sphere to which children have little direct access but which still plays an influential role; and the macrosystem, such as the socio-political environment.

Starting with the individual, each system is nested inside the other: the individual is at the centre of the microsystem, which is in turn surrounded by the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem. Each level of interaction is interconnected. Thus, for example, the socioeconomic conditions that exist impact on the exosystem, and again in turn the variables that fall within the inner sphere of the mesosystem, and so on.

Three key questions are posed in the discussion: to what extent is violent behaviour being rewarded; to what extent is non-violent behaviour being rewarded; and under what conditions do children disengage from moral censure?

The levels of violence that exist in South Africa, compounded by pro-violent messages from leaders and the media, push children towards social contexts that are more likely to inculcate violence. Concomitantly, there is a dearth of opportunities to learn pro-social attitudes and behaviours.

Finally, Ward suggests that both high rates of substance abuse and levels of abuse and neglect are likely to result in situations where young people are less likely to apply acceptable value judgments or moral decisions in the case of the former, and are less likely to develop the sense of guilt that may otherwise prevent antisocial behaviour in the case of the latter.

In Chapter 2, **Dianne Jefthas** and **Lillian Artz** explore youth violence from a gendered perspective. The argument highlights the relationship between structural inequalities initiated and exacerbated by apartheid, and notions of masculinity and femininity entrenched in a patriarchal society. The dearth of literature on women and girls in criminological theory in general and in South African literature more particularly, and specifically on the correlates of female crime and criminality, is noted and the resulting limitations on existing analyses are identified. As argued in the chapter, this gap not only renders violence committed by girls invisible, but 'signals the absence of an informed theoretical and analytical vocabulary that allows investigation or conceptualisation of violence in a way that is not grounded in male behaviour'.

Jefthas and Artz focus on notions of masculinity and femininity as they relate to the legacy of apartheid, violence within the home and family, gang activity and school violence, as well as sexual violence against young women and girls. The authors argue that crime and violence constitute a way for young men to reclaim

and assert their manhood in an environment where masculinity is widely compromised. In a social setting where men are expected to be socially and physically powerful and provide for their families, they argue that the high levels of poverty, unemployment and powerlessness experienced by men under both the apartheid and post-apartheid regimes have emasculated men, who have reasserted their masculinity through crime and violence.

Recognition is made of: the complex relationship that exists between the correlates of crime and in particular exposure to violence in the domestic sphere; the lack of constructive family guidance and social control; the socialisation of young men into violent versions of manhood; economic imperatives; the desire for material and social goods; and peer pressure.

The chapter concludes that the lack of gendered analyses of violence and crime has resulted in a simplistic presentation of men as villains and women as powerless victims, and argues for a more nuanced analysis of violence literature, in particular on women and girls as perpetrators of violence, and men and boys as victims of particularly, but not exclusively, sexual violence.

The importance attached to material and social goods and the issue of status and masculinity are taken up by **David Bruce** in Chapter 3. Bruce cites Young referring to societies as 'bulimic', in that they simultaneously include and exclude people.[10] He uses this concept to develop the concept of status insecurity and the accompanying frustration that is lived out in the form of violence.

Bruce explores research into gender violence conducted by Wood and Jewkes in Ngangelizwe in the Eastern Cape. One of the key findings is that violence against female sexual partners by young men is intimately bound up with their perception or worldview. Locating his arguments within Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Bruce identifies status as comparable with Maslow's esteem, or fourth level.

Citing the 'A Nation in the Making' report released by the South African government in 2006, Bruce locates violent property crime, crimes of violence against women and interpersonal violence between men within the arguments made in this report that the obsession within South African society with status and materialism may drive some to operate outside the bounds of legality.

After analysing SAPS and victimisation data for South Africa, Bruce shows how the quest for self-respect and respect in the eyes of peers and potential partners and the associated quest for status, often translates into violence.

An individual's ability to deal with the complexities and uncertainties of the modern world and a society in a state of transition is affected by that individual's sense of self-worth and integration. In a society that does ultimately exclude and include through a range of social and economic processes, the inability to deal successfully with such pressures and to 'be someone in the world' results in frustrations that are acted out in various forms of violence.

Chapter 4 moves away from a conceptual analysis of violence among youth and focuses on the failure of what has been cited as one of the outstanding

successes of South Africa and a model for replication in many post-conflict societies, namely, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Elize Kipperberg argues that the failure of the TRC to address adequately the atrocities and violence perpetrated under apartheid has left a dismal legacy. In particular, in excluding children affected by apartheid violence and gross human rights violations from the reparation process, the TRC effectively failed to 'address the crucial tension between perceived "protection" and the individual right to reparation and rehabilitation, and deprived thousands of young people – today's parent generation – access to resources that could have helped them to ensure a better future'. This has been compounded by the failure to implement adequately the promised reparations process. These factors, Kipperberg argues, compound a range of other factors presented in previous chapters and exacerbate the levels of crime and violence in contemporary South Africa.

In the final chapter, Chapter 5, **Lezanne Leoschut** and **Angela Bonora** provide preliminary findings from a forthcoming Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention resiliency study on perceptions and experiences of violence among young violent offenders. Many of the factors discussed in the earlier chapters highlight the relevance of these arguments to explanations of violence in South Africa. Issues of early and ongoing exposure to violence within the home and community, unemployment and poverty, undue emphasis on material goods, peer relationships and issues of substance abuse are all discussed in relation to the experiences of young offenders.

As suggested earlier, it is by no means the objective of this monograph to provide a definitive etiology of violence among young people in South Africa: it would be at the least naïve to suggest a simple cause-effect relationship between any single factor, or group of factors, and violence. However, the following chapters do attempt to highlight what are arguably some of the key correlates of violence among young people in South Africa, as well as the manner in which many of these factors interact to increase the likelihood or risk of violent behaviour among children and youth in this country.

ENDNOTES

1 <http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=vn200707250509 41198C418634>

2 <http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw200706051438 42824C243240>

3 <http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=15&art_id=nw200704221257 42185C199683>

4 Amnesty International, 'South Africa: Country Report on Human Rights Practices, 2006'. Available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78758.htm> (accessed 3 March 2007).

5   Leoschut L & Burton P, *How Rich the Rewards? Results of the 2005 National Youth Victimisation Study*, Monograph No 1, Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, Cape Town, 2006.

6   Statistics South Africa, 'Census in Brief', 2003. Available at <http://www.statssa.gov.za>.

7   Sherman LW, Gottfredson DC, Mackenzie DL, Eck J, Reuter P & Bushway SD, *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*, National Institute of Justice, 1998

8   *The Spectator*, 1 September 2007. Available at <www.spectator.co.uk>.

9   Australian girls jailed for killing peer, <http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=2024&art_id=nw20070509114026519C316796> (accessed 11 May 2007).

10 Young J, Crime and social exclusion, in Maguire M, Morgan R & Reiner R (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, p 477.

Young people's violent behaviour: Social learning in context[1]

Catherine L. Ward

INTRODUCTION

Violent behaviour in young people results from a complex interaction of risk and protective factors in different environments and over time, which influence how children learn behaviours. These factors are at play in individual children, in their families, peer groups and neighbourhoods, and in the broader socio-political context within which all of these factors are nested. Children who are exposed to more risk than protective factors are more likely to use violence, while children who are exposed to more protection than risk are more likely to develop pro-social behavioural repertoires. As the number and intensity of risk factors increase, so does the likelihood of aggression.[2]

This chapter explores the nature of risk and protective factors influencing children's development in South Africa and the implications for levels of violent behaviour. It examines the different contexts in which children learn how to behave, the factors that increase and reduce the likelihood of them becoming violent, and how the social environment in South Africa contributes to the levels of violence used by young people today.

DEFINITIONS

In the literature reviewed in this chapter, the terms 'child', 'youth' and 'young people' are used interchangeably and loosely, often without clear-cut age ranges. This is the same sense in which the author has used them: in this chapter, the term 'children' is used to refer to the full age range from infancy through to adolescence; the term 'adolescent' is applied specifically to those aged 13–18 years; and the terms 'young people' and 'youth' might refer to children, adolescents and even young adults.

'Violence' is another term that is fraught with definitional difficulties. The World Health Organization (WHO), defines violence as:

> the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.[3]

This definition has several important implications:

■ It explicitly includes the *intention* to cause harm, thus excluding unintentional injuries that might occur, for instance, in a traffic accident.

■ It includes the word 'power' as well as the phrase 'use of physical force', thus broadening the definition to include those acts that may result from the misuse of a power relationship, such as threats and intimidation. While Krug and colleagues suggest broadening the scope of the definition to include neglect and all types of physical, sexual and psychological abuse as well as suicide and self-abusive acts, this chapter will not focus on violence against oneself. Although suicide and other acts of self-harm do share some similarities with violence against others, they have unique psychological characteristics[4] that will not be the focus of this chapter.

■ It includes a broad range of outcomes and recognises that even if violence does not result in injury and death, it can still impose a substantial burden on individuals, families, communities and health care and social systems.[5]

This chapter will thus draw on the WHO's definition of violence, but with the omission of self-directed violence. Having said that, it must be recognised that the term 'violence' is often ill-defined in the literature and is used interchangeably with the term 'aggression'[6] – a concept that includes a broader set of generally less serious behaviours.[7] Both terms are used in this chapter.

HOW DO CHILDREN ACQUIRE VIOLENT BEHAVIOURAL REPERTOIRES?

A 'behavioural repertoire' is the set of behaviours one has acquired, in much the same way that the only pieces a musician can play are those she[8] has learned – those in her repertoire. The central question of this chapter is how children acquire violent behaviour as part of their repertoires, why they use violent behaviour rather than other behaviour in specific situations, and, following from this, why so many young people in South Africa seem to develop and use so much violent behaviour.

The acquisition of any complex social behaviour, such as aggression, occurs

through what has been termed social learning.[9] People acquire information from a variety of social experiences, including exposure to models of behaviour, discipline from parents and other authority figures, and discussions from which they form an internal, mental representation of behaviours and how they work.

This abstract representation in the mind includes not only the behaviour itself but the outcome that might be expected if the behaviour is performed, the person's perception of his own self-efficacy (his ability to perform the behaviour and, through performance, to produce the desired outcome), and standards for evaluating his behaviour.[10]

As children develop they are exposed to information from a variety of social sources that leads them to develop their own moral standards.[11] These sources include direct teaching, evaluative reactions to their own behaviour, and exposure to the standards by which others evaluate themselves. Once these moral standards are formed, they guide and deter or encourage behaviour through the consequences that people apply to themselves. People will do those things that solve their problems, give them pleasure and make them feel worthy; they will tend not to do those things that do not solve problems, give them pain and make them feel guilty, worthless or ashamed. In essence, people do things that make them feel good (that give them satisfaction and a sense of self-worth) and they avoid doing things that make them feel bad (things for which they censure themselves according to the moral standards they have acquired).

There is one more key layer to how children develop violent behaviour, namely the notion of reciprocal determinism:[12] children not only learn from their environment but their behaviour elicits reactions from the environment. As time passes, children's behaviour affects the aspects of the social environments to which they are exposed, and in turn those environments modify their behaviour. For instance, a child whose aggression becomes unacceptable to his more gentle peers is likely to be rejected by that group. She may then only find acceptance in a more aggressive group, which over time will model aggression and reward her for being aggressive. As such, she will drift from a non-violent setting into a violent one and over time her behaviour will become more and more aggressive.

In essence, then, the question why South Africa's young people are so likely to use violent behaviour reduces to the following sets of questions:

■ To what extent are young people being exposed to situations in which they are able to learn violent behaviours, where they learn that violent behaviour is rewarded, and where they learn standards for regulating their own behaviour which suggest that violence will provide them with satisfaction and a sense of self-worth?

■ To what extent are young people being exposed to situations in which they are able to learn non-violent behaviours, where they learn that non-violent behaviours are rewarded, and where they learn standards for regulating their

own behaviour which suggest that non-violence will provide them with satisfaction and a sense of self-worth?

■ If they have learned moral censure for violent behaviour, under what conditions might they disengage from such censure and use violent behaviour regardless of their moral standards?

THE CONTEXT OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

These questions can only be addressed by considering the context within which children develop. It is helpful to view children as growing up within an ecology of contexts: smaller, more intimate contexts, such as family and school, that are nested within larger contexts such as the neighbourhood.[13] A conceptual illustration of this is provided in the figure opposite.

The first level of this ecology is the *individual*: characteristics of the child – such as age, race, gender and temperament – are likely to influence how he interacts with the other contexts and the influences that those contexts bring to bear on him. Temperament, for instance, is influenced both by biology and by social interactions.

As an example, some children are born very active while others are born more passive. These traits are brought by children to their social interactions: very active children whose caregivers are capable of appropriate soothing and of teaching self-calming methods early on may learn to manage their activity levels appropriately, while others who are too difficult for their caregivers may not learn this kind of self-discipline and may be at risk of becoming aggressive.[14]

Individuals are nested within *microsystems*; systems where the child is involved in continuous, face-to-face interactions with familiar people. These proximal relationships are most influential in shaping children's development.[15] Examples would be parent–child relationships and relationships with peers and teachers, all of which can influence the behavioural repertoire of children. Children who learn in these intimate contexts that violence is an acceptable means of solving a problem are more likely to use violence in their own interpersonal relationships.

The *mesosystems* refer to interactions between the microsystems, thus capturing the influence of one system on another. Interactions between systems can exert significant effects on child development. For example, children whose home lives are not happy might find alternative support in the structure of a group of peers who later induct them into a gang, which in turn may socialise them into violent behaviour.

The *exosystem* includes those domains to which children have little direct access but which nonetheless influence them and those people with whom they have close relationships. Children who are exposed to high levels of violence on television, for instance, are more likely to respond with violence to difficult situations.[16]

Finally, the level of the *macrosystem* encompasses more remote (but still influential) arenas of socioeconomic factors, government policy and cultural and societal attitudes towards (in this instance) violence.

A key element of the ecosystemic model is the connections between the nested layers: none of them can be viewed in isolation. Socioeconomic conditions that allow for widespread poverty will influence what the exosystem makes available in terms of health and social services, and will influence the whole system.

Poverty does not cause violence but it does set the conditions under which delinquency, crime, violence and substance abuse flourish.[17] Poor families may be

Child context relations
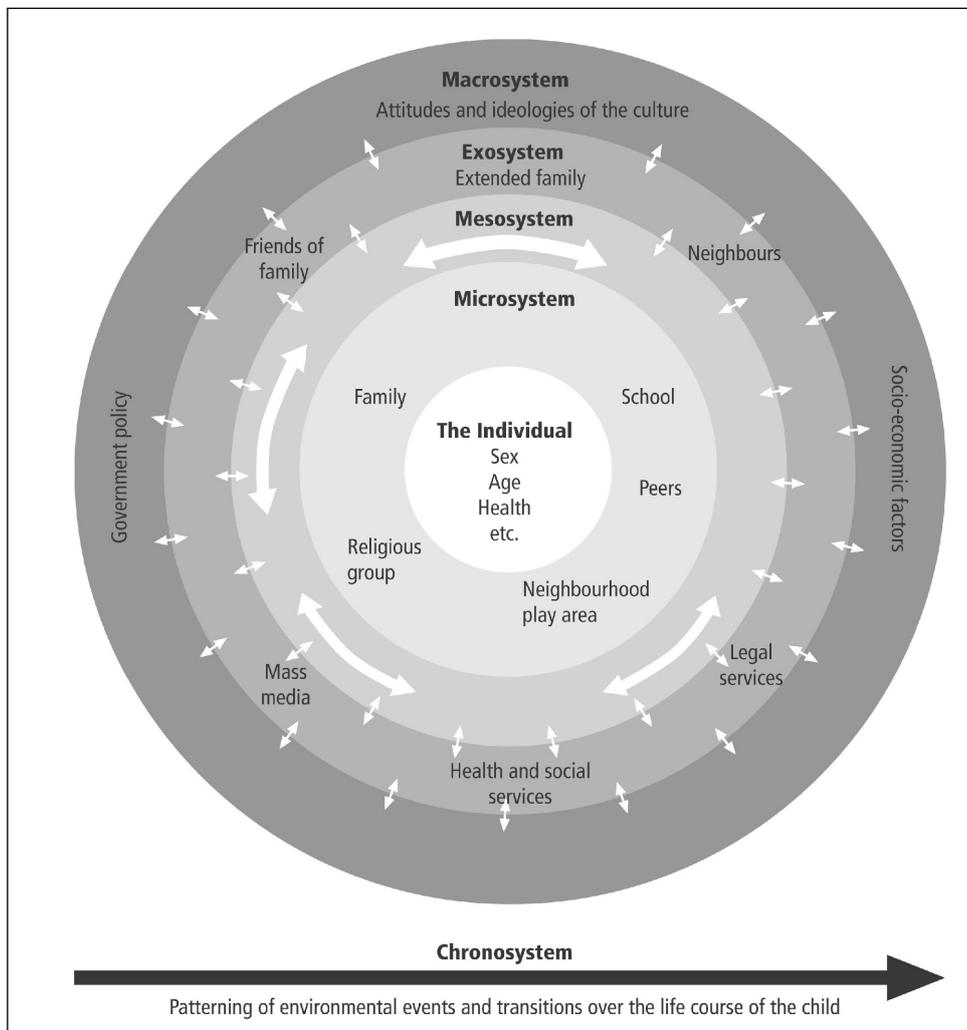
Source: Adapted from Cole M & Cole S, *The Development of Children*, Worth Publishers, New York, 2001.

less able to afford school fees and uniforms, for example, which may be a tremendous stressor for a child in relation to her peers and may increase the chance that she will drop out of school. Children living in poor areas may also have less access to pro-social activities, such as sports or structured after-school activities, which when paired with high levels of crime and violence in their neighbourhood may increase their chances of turning to antisocial and violent activities to occupy their time.

Alongside these systems is the *chronosystem*, which reflects the passage of time and accompanying developmental changes in both the children and the systems with which they have contact. For instance, as children grow up they have more contact with community contexts and spend more time out of the family home than when they were younger.[18]

This, then, describes the environment within which children develop and within which risk and protective factors affect the types of behaviour that children learn. Each element of systems and their associated risk and protective factors are described in further detail below.

DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT: THE INDIVIDUAL

Individual children bring elements to their social contexts which affect how that social context responds to them. Individual attributes such as gender, age, impulsivity, inattention and hyperactivity, substance misuse, the inability to feel guilt, and one's own victimisation have been identified as risk factors that increase the likelihood of aggressive behaviour. Protective factors have also been identified.

GENDER

Gender is one of the key determinants of aggressive behaviour. Men are far more likely to be violent than women. This is a well-substantiated fact that appears to be related to the different socialisation processes that boys and girls receive, as well as perhaps to biological determinants for how people respond to situations.[19] For instance, the high levels of intimate partner violence in South Africa suggest that a violent model of masculinity has become widespread and that rather than learning a more protective role, many men have been socialised to believe that violence is an integral part of being a man.[20]

It is equally well-established that girls are more likely to develop what are known as internalising disorders (such as anxiety and depression) than boys, who are more likely to develop externalising disorders such as aggression.[21] The presence of internalising symptoms appears to protect against the expression of aggression,[22] perhaps because anxious or depressed children withdraw from threatening environments or are too afraid to carry out aggressive behaviours themselves.

AGE

Age is another key individual-level variable: the earlier a child develops an aggressive pattern of behaviour, the more likely she is to continue to be aggressive. Among males, patterns established between the ages of six and 13 are likely to persist into adulthood (findings for females are not as consistent).[23] In one study in Sweden, two-thirds of the boys whose teachers rated as aggressive at ages 10 and 13 had criminal records for violent offences by age 26; this was six times higher than for their classmates who were not rated as aggressive.[24] A Chinese study yielded similar findings.[25]

From the social learning perspective, young aggressive boys have already acquired a violent repertoire which encourages a drift towards environments that reward violence and perhaps even broaden the repertoire of violent behaviour to which they are exposed.

In South Africa, the young age at which children are likely to become involved in criminal environments is of particular concern. Studies show that many children become involved in gangs around the age of 11 or 12;[26] and since joining a gang is a gradual process, this suggests an earlier exposure to and drift towards violent contexts.

Another indicator of concern is the very young age of many arrestees: recent figures from the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) indicate that at the end of December 2006, 1,997 of South Africa's 160,198 prisoners (1.2%) were under the age of 18. The figures show that 1,250 (62.5%) of these children had been arrested for violent or sexual crimes.[27] However, these figures most likely under-represent the number of juvenile arrestees as children awaiting trial may also be detained in police cells, places of safety and secure care centres, or may be released into the care of their parents or guardians.[28] Whether held in correctional facilities or elsewhere, this information suggests that a great many South African children are deeply involved in very violent contexts from an early age, which puts them at risk of strengthening their violent repertoires rather than learning alternative, pro-social behaviours.

That most (52.3%)[29] of the children in prison are awaiting trial is concerning as unsentenced prisoners are excluded from rehabilitation programmes. They also receive no training or schooling and seldom have access to recreational activities.[30] Detention facilities for children awaiting trial also often lack the capacity to detain children separately from adults.[31] Thus rather than curbing these children's violent tendencies, the prison environment is likely to reinforce their socialisation into aggression.

IMPULSIVITY, ATTENTION PROBLEMS AND HYPERACTIVITY

The association between impulsivity, attention deficit and hyperactivity, and aggression and violence are well documented[32] and may reflect the difficulty that many impulsive, hyperactive or attention deficient children have in relating to

their environment. This may prevent them from learning that violence does not have uniformly positive outcomes, or learning how to monitor and regulate their own behaviour.

Although the extent of these problems among South African children is not documented, it is likely to be high. The prevalence of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has been estimated to be 5% among children in the Western Cape.[33] The proportion of children who go undiagnosed or who do not meet the criteria for a diagnosis yet suffer some of its symptoms is likely to be even higher.

Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) also contributes to high levels of attention deficit and hyperactivity among children.[34] The prevalence of this syndrome in one high-FAS community in the Western Cape has been found to be between 65.2 and 74.2 per 1,000 first-grade children, a rate 33 to 148 times higher than estimates for children in the US.[35]

This study was deliberately conducted in a community known to have high rates of FAS, and hence rates of FAS in other areas of the country are likely to be lower. However, rates of alcohol use in South Africa are very high and usually take the form of binge drinking, the pattern that is most likely to cause FAS.[36] Therefore, while this study reflects what are probably among the highest prevalence figures for South African communities, significant proportions of children in other communities are also likely to suffer from FAS. Maternal pre-natal use of drugs other than alcohol, such as tobacco, cocaine and methamphetamine (tik), are also likely to compromise foetal development and have been shown to be associated with attention deficit, and in the case of tobacco, aggressive behaviour.[37]

Tobacco is widely used among South Africans.[38] The use of tik is increasing,[39] and cocaine has been identified among patients seeking treatment for substance use disorders.[40] Mothers of many South African children are thus compromising their children's brain development and put them at risk of developing violent behaviours even before they are born.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Young people who have positive attitudes towards substance use are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour. The use of alcohol has been associated with aggression,[41] and there seems to be a mutually reinforcing relationship between the development of aggression and the use of alcohol over time during adolescence.[42] One longitudinal study found that previous violent behaviour and current use of illicit drugs together, form the most robust predictor of violent behaviour.[43]

Intoxication may interfere with young people's ability to monitor and regulate their behaviour. The use of substances may also introduce children to social environments where violent behaviour is modelled and rewarded. For instance,

children living in communities in Cape Town where gang activity is endemic report that substance use provides a route into gang membership: once addiction begins they may start to sell drugs on behalf of a gang in order to acquire their own drugs, and turn to a life of crime and violence in order to meet the demands of the gang.[44]

The literature consistently identifies children who have beliefs or attitudes that are favourable towards deviant behaviour – such as substance use, violence, rule-breaking or cheating – as being more prone to aggression since they tend to internalise an expectation that violence will be rewarded.[45]

As just one indicator of the extent of the link between youth substance use and violence in South Africa, a recent study of male arrestees found that 65% of those under the age of 20 tested positive for drug use.[46] National data also confirm high rates of youth drinking: in the 2002 National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey, 29% of males and 18% of females in Grades 8 and 11 reported binge drinking in the month preceding the survey.[47]

LOW GUILT

Youth who feel little guilt in response to their aggression are at risk for future violence.[48] Low feelings of guilt minimise the perceived consequences of a child's actions.[49] Whether a child is able to feel guilty appears to depend heavily on parents' actions in terms of teaching children what to do when they have done something wrong.

Children whose parents are warm and affectionate, responsive to their child's temperament, and who teach them empathy for the wronged person are able to develop guilt, whereas children whose parents use high levels of discipline that involve asserting the parents' own power are less likely to develop guilt.[50] In a context such as South Africa where many children are abused or neglected, it is likely that many parents forcibly discipline their children rather than teaching than empathy and guilt.

PERSONAL VICTIMISATION

Being a victim of aggression or abuse also puts a child at risk of developing violent behaviour. Studies show, for instance, that male adolescent sexual offenders are likely to have been sexually abused themselves and to use in their own offending the same methods used by their abuser.[51]

Some sense of the scope of the problem may be obtained from figures gathered by Childline, a South African hotline for children to report child abuse and neglect. In 2000, Childline received 1,734 calls related to child sexual abuse: in 43% of these cases the perpetrators were themselves under the age of 18 and many had been victims of sexual offences.[52] In terms of crime more generally, a recent South African National Youth Victimisation Study reported that 41.4% of young people

aged 12–22 had been victims of crime in the year preceding the study, and that victims commonly became more aggressive afterwards.[53]

Victims of severe violence are more likely to approve of aggression as a social response, to have problems interpreting social cues and to have deviant social goals. Young people who witness severe violence are also likely to perceive positive outcomes for aggression.[54]

The very high rate of youth victimisation in South Africa is thus cause for concern not only in and of itself, but also because of what children may learn in terms of violent behaviour, what violence might accomplish, and what is acceptable in terms of behaviour used to reach goals.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective factors at the individual level include the reverse of attitudes that value violence and deviance: children whose attitudes are pro-social are less likely to behave violently.[55] Children who engage in religious practices (especially those that are practised privately, such as prayer and Scripture reading) also consistently show lower levels of deviance.[56] The mechanism by which religious involvement protects against deviance is not well understood but there are at least two factors that discourage antisocial behaviour, namely: exposure to norms that discourage deviance; and the influence of a peer group that models pro-social attitudes and behaviours.[57]

Although the 2001 census indicates that 85% of South Africans report affiliation with a religion (80% with Christianity), there is no data available on either private religious practices or on youth involvement with religion. This makes it difficult to estimate the extent to which faith-based organisations might play a role in helping young people to develop the kinds of spiritual practices that are protective. However, given the large number of adult South Africans who do report a religious affiliation, it is possible that they play a fairly significant role in mediating the behaviour of young people in South Africa.

DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT: THE MICROSYSTEM

Individual risk factors describe characteristics that young people bring to their social environments or that they internalise through their socialisation in those contexts. This section examines the everyday social contexts in which children develop – that is, those contexts that are most powerful in terms of socialising children.[58]

It is in the interactions between what children bring and what these socialising environments bring that children learn to be either violent or pro-social. For instance, boys bring their male gender to their environments, but they only learn violence as part of their masculine identity if their environments encourage and reward such an identity. Similarly, while attention deficit would put children at

risk of using aggressive behaviour, such children are far less likely to be aggressive if their day-to-day environment excludes violence.

THE FAMILY

The family is one of the most, if not *the* most, powerful socialising environments for children – an effect that continues throughout adolescence.[59] Many risk factors for youth violence identified in the literature are located in the family. These include:

- family conflict and violence;
- criminality on the part of caregivers;
- antisocial siblings, large family size;
- low maternal education;
- low maternal age;
- poor family management practices;
- harsh and/or inconsistent disciplinary practices;
- poor monitoring and supervision of children's activities;
- permissive or lax parenting; and
- low levels of family bonding.[60]

Several of these speak to the modelling that occurs within families. Children who are exposed to conflict and to family violence (including intimate partner violence and child abuse) are exposed to models who demonstrate violent behaviour and who use it (often successfully, at least in the short term) to solve problems. Children are thus likely to learn both the behaviour itself and that it is rewarded.

Since violence in these families is normalised rather than condemned, the standards by which children learn to judge violent behaviour are implicitly favourable towards violence. The role of family violence in children's violent behaviour has been confirmed in a number of local and international studies. Violence in the family of origin, for example, has been shown to predict physical and psychological abuse in later intimate partner relationships and against one's own children.[61]

Data from the Western Cape suggests that many of South Africa's children are exposed to violence within their families. In 2005, 0.3% (or 4,358) of the Western Cape province's children were sufficiently seriously abused or neglected as to be the subject of a Children's Court inquiry. This is likely to be the most reliable source of data on confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect, but it is also likely to underestimate the scale of the problem as it reflects only those cases brought to the attention of a mandated official.[62]

Other data about family violence comes from a recent national survey which found that although the majority of South African parents agree that corporal punishment is an undesirable form of discipline, 57% of parents smack and 33%

beat their children. Although these rates are lower than those found in many other parts of the world,[63] they are still unacceptably high.

This same study investigated intimate partner violence and found that 20% of respondents had experienced violent physical abuse in their relationships, which is higher than the rate of 16% found in the US using the same method.[64] This data dovetails with that of the National Youth Victimisation Study in which 21.8% of young people reported that they had witnessed aggressive disputes between members of their family.[65]

Caregiver criminality also provides children with direct role modelling of deviant behaviour (that may include violence) and may also give children access to social environments, such as the caregiver's friends, which similarly model and/or reward deviant behaviour. Deviant siblings will do likewise. In this regard, it is concerning to note that 10.5% of the young people surveyed in the National Youth Victimisation Study reported that their parents had engaged in behaviour that could get them into trouble with the law.[66]

The relationships between large family size, low maternal education, low maternal age and youth violence is likely to be one of poor family management practices, harsh or inconsistent disciplinary practices, and poor monitoring and supervision of children's activities. It is much harder to monitor children in large families, while low maternal education and age are associated with greater stress and less knowledge of effective child-rearing practices on the part of the parent.[67]

This is not to say that all large families or young and poorly educated parents will be bad parents, but rather that these situations make parenting much more difficult. It also does not imply that all small families and older and well-educated mothers will be good parents. The key factor in terms of children's development is *how* one parents. Poor parenting practices – such as failure to set clear expectations for children's behaviour, failure to supervise and monitor children's behaviour, severe and/or inconsistent discipline, and either very strict or very permissive parenting – consistently predict children's violence.[68] Similarly, good caregiver–child relationships and communication and good family management are related to lower rates of violence among children.[69]

Although no data is available on family management and parenting practices in South African families, some data is available on family structure in the Western Cape. For instance, in 2001 a significant percentage of households in the Western Cape were single-parent households: the proportion was highest among black households at 11.25%, and the lowest among white households at 5.75%. In many cases the head of the household had not completed high school.[70]

Demographic data from the National Youth Victimisation Study indicates that nationally, only 43.3% of respondents live with both their parents. Around one-quarter (27.8%) live with only their mothers, and another quarter (22.4%) live with extended family members.[71] Anecdotal evidence also suggests that many South African children live in poorly managed families and receive harsh or inconsistent discipline.

Given the strong relationships between family factors and youth violence, the data for South African families is alarming. Too many children are being exposed to violence in the home, to caregiver criminality and, quite possibly, to poor family management practices.

Family poverty also influences child development in many ways. Poor women are less likely to access or receive good perinatal care, with the result that children's well-being is often compromised from the very beginning, and poor families have less access to resources that may help to address developmental problems.

Poor children are also more likely to be exposed to lead in, for instance, the paint used in houses and on toys, which has negative effects on brain development. Poor mothers are less likely to stimulate their children at home, partly because of their own poor education and due to the fact that they have many other demands on their time. Poor children also tend to be less ready to begin school and their teachers often have low expectations of them.[72] There is also evidence that poverty is associated with the continuity of violence: once involved in a violent lifestyle, socioeconomically deprived young people are less able to access pro-social opportunities.[73]

Many South African families are living in conditions of deep poverty: a study based on the 1999 October Household Survey found that 50% of South African households had an income of less than R2,000 a month, while a further 30% earned between R2,000 and R5,000 a month.[74] One sign of hope is that interventions to reduce poverty may also reduce violence. For example, participants in an initiative in South Africa's rural Limpopo province which combined a microfinancing programme with a gender and HIV training curriculum reported a reduced experience of intimate partner violence by 55% over the two years of the project.[75]

THE SCHOOL

Schools are important arenas for child socialisation and tend to become more important as children move into adolescence.[76] Children who achieve poorly at school, who drop out of school, who are not committed to school, who have low educational aspirations, and who change schools often are more likely to engage in violent behaviour. Conversely, attachment to school protects against youth violence.[77]

A child's valuing of education is likely to be influenced by the value attached to schooling by his parents, but is also affected by the characteristics of schools themselves. Schools that promote academic competence usually have a clear mission, high-quality instruction, monitor students' progress and emphasise staff development.[78] These characteristics speak to a school's ability to model and reward pro-social behaviour and to assist children to feel able to develop pro-social norms and behaviours.

However, many South African schools are chaotic and difficult environments that do not achieve these standards. Teacher time is limited by the many other functions teachers are required to perform, with one study finding that on average teachers spend less than half (46%) of school time on teaching.[79] Other research shows that the majority of students fail at most levels of the system and that school management is often incapable of fulfilling its assigned functions.[80]

One indicator of this is the very high dropout rate in South African schools: in 2000, nearly 70% of respondents in a survey had not completed high school.[81] Not only does this raise concern about school quality and children's futures, it also raises the question of what these school drop-outs do to occupy their time. Boredom has been shown to be a substantial contributor to high-risk behaviours, including violence, among young people.[82]

An additional concern about South African schools is that they often directly model violence for learners. Despite the fact that it is illegal, many schools still use corporal punishment. More than half (51.4%) of the respondents in the National Youth Victimisation Study reported having been caned or spanked at school.[83] In addition, 16.8% of young people indicated that they fear travelling to school and 20.9% had been threatened or hurt while at school.[84] This suggests that South African schools are unsafe places for young people and often model violence rather than pro-social behaviours.

THE PEER GROUP

Peers are another key socialising influence, especially in adolescence.[85] Affiliation with a delinquent peer group or siblings, and particularly gang membership, consistently predicts youth violence, while affiliation with peers who disapprove of delinquency lowers its likelihood.[86] Many delinquent acts are committed by children seeking peer approval, suggesting that peer groups play similar socialisation roles as families and schools. They too model and reward violent behaviour, enable children to develop self-confidence to commit violent acts and set standards that approve of violence.

There is no data to show how many South African youths associate with delinquent peer groups; however, it is concerning that those young people who reported being threatened or hurt at school in the National Youth Victimisation Study typically indicated that the perpetrators were either other learners or other young people from outside the school.[87] There are also many gangs to which children may be exposed. At the end of the 1990s, for instance, it was estimated that there were 130 gangs operating in and around Cape Town, involving approximately 100,000 gang members[88] – this in what is, according to Census 2001, a city of 2.9 million people.

In a context of poor family monitoring and low school safety it is therefore likely that South Africa's young people are socialising each other into violent behaviours.

AFTER-SCHOOL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Children whose time is occupied with pro-social activities such as homework, tutoring, sports and cultural or artistic endeavours, are far less likely to engage in substance abuse or delinquency.[89] However, a study in Cape Town found that South African high school learners have high levels of leisure boredom, suggesting that children are either tired with the activities available to them or that they do not have access to a sufficient range of activities.[90] Also in Cape Town, in a study exploring children's views of gang activity, children emphasised that a lack of access to after-school activities made gangs attractive.[91]

DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT: THE MESOSYSTEM

The mesosystem refers to interactions between the microsystems. For instance, what happens at home may well affect how a child performs at school: a child who is witnessing violence between his parents might not be able to concentrate well and may therefore perform poorly at school. A sympathetic teacher may notice this and may provide the necessary support to the child. But if this does not occur the child may enter into a downward spiral of increasingly poor work, placing him at risk of the factors discussed above.

Risk in one system therefore affects risk in another, while protective factors in one system may compensate for risk in another. Unfortunately, the more risks young people face, the less likely they are to experience protection: children with bad home environments are also likely to have bad school and peer environments.[92] The flipside of this is that interventions that operate in more than one environment will be more effective than those that target just one. So, for instance, supporting parents and working with teachers to provide better parenting and teaching to children, and helping parents to collaborate with teachers, is likely to be more effective than simply a parenting or a school intervention on its own.[93]

DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT: THE EXOSYSTEM

The exosystem consists of more remote factors that affect the intimate contexts of school, home and peer group. Chief among these are the media and the neighbourhood – not the physical, geographical neighbourhood so much as the social context created by how people act as neighbours to each other.

NEIGHBOURING

The neighbourhood is the context in which schools, families and peer groups are embedded. Factors at neighbourhood level influence parenting,[94] schools[95] and the formation of peer groups. In this sense, neighbourhoods have far more to do with the people and how they neighbour each other than with the physical, geographical area in which people live.

Socially disorganised communities are unable to support the common pro-social values of their residents and so are unable to maintain effective social controls.[96] In practice this means that even if children's own homes encourage pro-social norms, they may encounter different standards of behaviour in different neighbourhood venues: the values of their own home are less likely to be upheld in their school, in their friends' homes and at the local park. This lack of consistency prevents children from developing one consistent set of pro-social standards by which to evaluate their behaviour and provides different models of pro-social behaviour.[97]

The longer a child spends in a neighbourhood, the more likely she is to be influenced by it. The National Youth Victimisation Study found that 63.3% of the respondents had lived in their current neighbourhood for more than 10 years,[98] suggesting that the young people surveyed had had plenty of time to be socialised by neighbourhood norms, in addition to norms held by their families, schools or other social contexts.

Social disorganisation also affects parenting by reducing the amount of social support parents receive from neighbours. This is particularly important for poorer families who may be less able to access social support networks outside the neighbourhood. Lower levels of social support for parents have consistently been found to be associated with child maltreatment.[99] Schools, too, are affected. Communities with lower social organisation are likely to have higher rates of suspension from school[100] and higher drop-out rates.[101]

There are no direct assessments of social disorganisation in the neighbourhoods across South Africa; however, the literature suggests that neighbourhoods that are characterised by both poverty and high crime rates, particularly drug sales, are likely to be socially disorganised. Judging from the high proportion of respondents to the National Youth Victimisation Study who reported drug-selling in their neighbourhoods, many South African children live in such neighbourhoods: 21% of respondents said they personally knew people in their neighbourhoods who sell drugs, while 28% reported knowing people who buy drugs.[102]

Neighbourhood poverty or affluence also influences children's well-being. This refers to the average poverty or affluence of the neighbourhood as a whole, which has an effect separate from the poverty or affluence of individual families. Neighbourhood affluence has been shown to be related to young children's IQ scores[103] and to boys' likelihood of completing high school,[104] while neighbourhood disadvantage has been associated with teen parenting,[105] delinquency,[106] more restrictive parenting practices,[107] lower birth weights[108] and child maltreatment.[109]

The socioeconomic status of the neighbourhood thus affects children's survival, protection and development. A possible explanation for these effects is that affluent neighbours are likely to have professional and managerial occupations, and so provide positive role models and evidence of the rewards for

completing school. Concentrated affluence (together with residential stability) also seems to support exchanges between parents that promote effective child management, such as helping to manage each other's children and to solve child-rearing problems, while concentrated disadvantage is associated with low expectations for shared child control.[110]

MASS MEDIA

Another prominent socialising influence for young people is the mass media. Evidence from around the world suggests that where children are exposed to violent images on television and live in an environment that does not have strong anti-violence norms, they are likely to become more aggressive.[111]

According to Census 2001, 53.8% of South African households have a television set – a figure which probably under-estimates access to television. A study of South African children's exposure to films and parental monitoring of the content[112] found that families have the greatest exposure to films on public access television, followed by DVDs, videos and finally the cinema. Parents were concerned about exposure to violence, sex and bad language via the media, and reported that they struggled to inculcate their value system in their children in the face of what children are exposed to in the media. Children (aged six to 12 years) echoed this, reporting that films – particularly scary ones – could directly affect their emotions for long periods.

Even though most parents in this small study indicated that they do control what their children watch, particularly with younger children, children indicated that they find ways of watching inappropriate material without their parents' knowledge. This clearly shows that the media has an effect on South African children, and where its content is violent may place them at risk of developing aggressive behaviours.

DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT: THE MACROSYSTEM

The contexts of the microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem are visible in the every day arenas in which children live and interact with others. The macrosystem, however, is less tangible but nonetheless influential. The socioeconomic aspects, attitudes and ideologies of a culture exert their influence on all its constituent contexts.

SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

Both poverty and the perceived gap between rich and poor seem to play a role in rates of aggression. As mentioned earlier, children who are raised in poor families and in neighbourhoods where the majority of families are poor, are more likely to engage in violence. Neighbourhood poverty is often associated with community

social disorganisation, and poor families have less opportunity to move to better neighbourhoods.[113]

Poverty at the family and neighbourhood level is, however, more likely in a country where poverty is widespread. Broad socioeconomic factors, such as opportunities for employment, influence whether a family is likely to be poor or not. Unemployment among 15–64 year olds in South Africa tends to hover around 30% (or close to 12 million people).[114] This is a high figure which suggests that jobs are hard to find. Employment levels have increased at a rate of about 500,000 people a year in the three years since this figure was calculated,[115] but unemployment rates are still very high. It is therefore not surprising that measures of household poverty are high. While South Africa does not have a national poverty line, the United Nations Development Programme estimates that one in 10 (10.7%) South Africans live on less than US$1 a day, while one-third (34.1%) live on less than US$2 a day.[116]

The perceived gap between rich and poor may also play a role in violent behaviour. There is often (but not always) a correlation between the Gini coefficient – a measure of income inequality in a country – and violent crime.[117] One study finds that income inequality and level, together with the percentage of the male population aged 15–29 and unemployment rates, especially the unemployment of young men, influence the likelihood of non-state violence.[118]

Although few studies address how individuals perceive the gap between rich and poor, it may well be that perceptions of this gap are used to justify violence and so reduce any internalised moral sanctions.[119] For instance, in a study investigating why young people join gangs in Cape Town, respondents uniformly reported that gang membership gave them access to goods, such as brand-name clothing, that are perceived to be central to their full participation in society.[120] One justification for (often violent) crime was to obtain goods that otherwise only the rich could afford. Such feelings of relative deprivation may also sometimes be used as a reason for violent crime when basic necessities rather than luxury goods are sought, as is evidenced in this quote from a recent newspaper article:

> You whites will never understand anything about living in the sand in a *hok*[121] big enough for a dog. And you will never understand crime. What's crime? Am I a criminal because I eat with robbed money? I don't want to know how my two sons earn the R20, R30 or R100 they bring home most evenings. Of course they've stolen it; or maybe they've mugged somebody; maybe somebody was stabbed with a knife or screwdriver. Maybe somebody is dead now and their money paid for my pap tonight.[122]

Consequences of violent actions are therefore minimised through emphasising what the perpetrator gains, and this gain is justified in terms of what is essential for either physical or social survival. This disengages moral judgement and makes violent behaviour more possible.[123]

ATTITUDES AND IDEOLOGIES OF THE CULTURE

While government policy (as exemplified in the constitution, for example) is manifestly anti-violence, much of the rhetoric of leaders is pro-violence. A case in point is African National Congress Youth League spokesperson Zizi Kodwa's recent call for 'dogs [political opponents] to be hit very hard until their owners and handlers come out into the open'.[124]

Ongoing political violence[125] suggests that violence is frequently used by political factions to resolve disputes. There is thus clearly a rhetoric, at least within political circles, that favours violence as a problem-solving technique. This is likely to add to pro-violence social norms and to weaken anti-violence messages from leaders. These conditions thus imply a standard where violence is a legitimate behaviour.

DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT: THE CHRONOSYSTEM

Finally, it should be acknowledged that violence among young people is not a new phenomenon in South African history. The apartheid state used young people to maintain its oppressive policies, and other young people were actively and integrally involved in the liberation struggle against apartheid, including in its violent aspects, both as perpetrators and as victims.[126]

South Africans have a long history of socially sanctioning the use of violence to solve problems.[127] Such legitimisation of violence provides role models, as well as an implicit standard that the use of violence is acceptable and, perhaps even more, necessary and laudable. In the absence of clear anti-violence standards and norms, it is almost inevitable that children learn violence.

CONCLUSION

Children acquire violent behaviours through the modelling to which they are exposed, through discipline from authority figures, and from information about violence in discussions with parents, friends and teachers.

In terms of why South African youth are so likely to use violence, this chapter has attempted to map out the answer to three questions, namely: to what extent are young people learning and being rewarded for violent behaviour; to what extent are young people learning and being rewarded for non-violent behaviour; and if they have learned moral censure for violent behaviour, under what conditions might they disengage from such censure? The key points are summarised below:

■ *To what extent is violence being learned and rewarded?* Unfortunately, young South African's social contexts are rich in pro-violence models and messages. Children's homes, schools and neighbourhoods are often violent, and these messages are compounded by pro-violence messages from political leaders

and media programmes. A long history of youth violence and of poverty compounds the presence of antisocial norms of many sorts. These norms are communicated to very young children who, if they initiate aggressive behaviour early, are likely to drift towards social contexts that will teach them more violence rather than less. In addition, many children enter the world already compromised by a mother's substance abuse during pregnancy or by the poverty that prevents her from obtaining sufficient nutrition and pre-natal care to ensure healthy foetal development and thus the delivery of a child who will be more able to learn pro-social behaviours.

To a very great extent, therefore, South Africa's young people live in an environment where they learn violent behaviour, where they learn that it is rewarded, and where they learn that violence is likely to solve their problems and make them feel powerful and worthy.

■ *To what extent is non-violence being learned and rewarded?* There is a concomitant dearth of opportunities to learn pro-social attitudes. An environment that is high in violence is naturally low in models of peaceful ways of solving problems. If so many families, schools and neighbourhoods are violent, too few are non-violent. In addition, children report a lack of opportunities in their leisure time to engage in constructive activities. There are too few non-violent programmes in the media, and there is no clear anti-violence message from leaders. There are also too few employment opportunities: families in poverty are unable to access resources (both material and social) to assist them in the task of raising children.

To a very great extent, therefore, children are not being exposed to situations where they are able to learn non-violent behaviours, where they might learn that non-violent behaviours can indeed be used effectively to solve problems, and where they can practise non-violent behaviours and so learn that these behaviours can provide satisfaction and a sense of self-worth.

■ *Under what conditions do children disengage from moral censure?* The conditions under which young people might disengage from any moral censure they might have learned and use violent behaviour have not been directly studied. However, this review suggests several situations where this might occur. First, intoxication with alcohol or drugs interferes with judgement and makes it less likely that people will be able to apply the rules of morality that they have learned. Rates of substance abuse among young people are very high, suggesting that substance abuse may contribute considerably to the levels of youth-perpetrated violence in South Africa. Second, the high rates of abuse and neglect of young children suggests that few children experience warm relationships with their parents in which they are able to learn empathy for others and so develop the guilt that may inhibit violence actions. Finally, conditions of relative deprivation may make it possible for perpetrators to

justify their actions in terms of survival and to minimise the consequences of their actions for the victim.

In short, current conditions in South African society seem on the one hand replete with opportunities for young people to learn violent behaviour and ways of justifying it and, on the other hand, deficient in opportunities for young people to learn non-violent ways of achieving their goals.

ENDNOTES

1   The author thanks Yaw Amoateng, Adam Cooper, Andy Dawes, Nic Dawes, Malibongwe Gwele, Ursula Hoadley and (especially) Khanyisa Phaweni for assistance in compiling the literature reviewed in this chapter. Patrick Burton, Adam Cooper and Andy Dawes made very useful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter, as did other authors whose work appears in this volume. This paper is all the better for their help.

2   Herrenkohl TI, Maguin E, Hill KG, Hawkins JD, Abbott RD & Catalano RF, Developmental risk factors for youth violence, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 26(3), 2000, pp 176-186.

3   Dahlberg LL & Krug EG, Violence – a global public health problem, in Krug EG, Dahlberg LL, Mercy JA, Zwi AB & Lozano R (eds), *World Report on Violence and Health*, World Health Organization, Geneva, 2002, pp 1-21.

4   DeLeo D, Bertolote J & Lester D, Self-directed violence, in Krug et al, pp 183-212.

5   Dahlberg et al, op cit.

6   Tate DC, Reppucci ND & Mulvey EP, Violent juvenile delinquents: Treatment effectiveness and implications for future action, *American Psychologist*, 50(9), 1995, pp 777-781.

7   Anderson CA & Bushman BJ, Human aggression, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 2002, pp 27-51.

8   As the use of gender-neutral language can render sentence constructions complex, examples that call for a singular pronoun will alternate between use of the feminine and the masculine.

9   Anderson et al, op cit.

10 Grusec JE, Social learning theory and developmental psychology: The legacies of Robert Sears and Albert Bandura, *Developmental Psychology*, 28(5), 1992, pp 776-786.

11 Bandura A, Barbaranelli C, Caprara GV & Pastorelli C, Mechanisms of moral disengagement in the exercise of moral agency, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(2), 1996, pp 364-374.

12 Grusec et al, op cit.

13 Bronfenbrenner U, Moen P & Garbarino J, Child, family and community, in Parke R (ed), *Review of Child Development Research*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1984, pp 283-328.

14 Fiese BH & Sameroff AJ, Family context in pediatric psychology: A transactional perspective, *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 14(2), 1989, pp 293-314; Hawkins JD, Herrenkohl TI, Farrington DP, Brewer D, Catalano RF, Harachi TW & Cothern L, Predictors of youth violence, *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, April 2000, pp 1-11.

15   Bronfenbrenner U, *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1979.

16   Huesmann LR & Miller LS, Long-term effects of repeated exposure to media violence in childhood, in Huesmann LR (eds), *Aggressive Behavior: Current Perspectives*, Plenum, New York, 1994, pp 153-186.

17   Sampson RJ & Lauritsen JL, Violent victimization and offending: Individual-, situational-, and community-level risk factors, in Reiss AJ & Roth JA (eds), *Understanding and Preventing Violence, Vol. 3: Social Influences*, National Academy Press, Washington, DC, 1994, pp 1-114; Sampson R J, Family management and child development: Insights from social disorganization theory, in McCord J (ed), *Facts, Frameworks and Forecasts: Advances in Criminological Theory*, Vol 3, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ, 1992, pp 63-93.

18   Aber JL, Gephart MA, Brooks-Gunn J & Connell JP, Development in context: Implications for studying neighborhood effects, in Brooks-Gunn J, Duncan GJ & Aber JL (eds), *Neighborhood Policy. Volume 1: Context and Consequences for Children*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1997, pp 44-61.

19   Anderson et al, op cit.

20   Wood K & Jewkes R, 'Dangerous' love: Reflections on violence among Xhosa township youth, in Morrell R (eds), *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2001, pp 317-336.

21   American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4th ed), American Psychiatric Association, Washington, DC, 1994.

22   Hawkins et al, op cit.

23   Ibid.

24   Stattin H & Magnusson D, The role of early aggressive behavior in the frequency, seriousness, and types of later crime, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 57, 1989, pp 710-718.

25   Chen X, Rubin KH, Li B & Li D, Adolescent outcomes of social functioning in Chinese children, *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 23(1), 1999, pp 199-223.

26   Legget T, Terugskiet (returning fire): Growing up on the street corners of Manenberg, South Africa, in Dowdney L (ed), *Neither War Nor Peace: International Comparisons of Children and Youth in Organised Armed Violence*, 7 Letras, Rio de Janeiro, 2005, pp 296-315.

27   Department of Correctional Services, Statistics. Available at <www.dcs.gov.za> (accessed 9 February 2007).

28   Muntingh L, Monitoring children in conflict with the law, in Dawes A, Bray R & Van der Merwe A (eds), *Monitoring Child Rights and Well-Being: A South African Approach*, HSRC Press, Cape Town, in press.

29   Department of Correctional Services, op cit.

30   Fagan J, 'Annual Report for the Period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006', Judicial Inspectorate of Prisons, Cape Town, 2006.

31   Muntingh et al, op cit.

32   Hawkins et al, op cit; Dawes A & Van der Merwe A, 'Violent behaviour in adolescence: Causal pathways, risk assessment and intervention'. Report to NICRO, Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town, 2004.

33   Kleintjes S, Flisher AJ, Fick M, Railoun A, Lund C, Molteno C & Robertson BA, The prevalence of mental disorders among children, adolescents and adults in the Western Cape, South Africa, *South African Psychiatry Review*, in press.

34   Fischer G, Bitschnau M, Peternell A, Eder H & Topitz A, Pregnancy and substance abuse, *Archives Of Women's Mental Health*, 2, 1999, pp 57-65.

35   Viljoen DL, Gossage JP, Brooke L, Adnams CM, Jones KL, Robinson LK, Hoyme HE,

Snell C, Khaole NCO, Kodituwakku P, Asante KO, Findlay R, Quinton B, Marais A-S, Kalberg WO & May PA, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome epidemiology in a South African community: A second study of a very high prevalence area, *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 66, 2005, pp 593-604.

36   Obot IS, Alcohol use and related problems in sub-Saharan Africa, *African Journal of Drug and Alcohol Studies*, 5(1), 2006, pp 17-26; Parry C, South Africa: Alcohol today, *Addiction*, 100, 2005, pp 426-429.

37   Höök B, Prenatal and postnatal maternal smoking as risk factors for preschool children's mental health, *Acta Paediatrica*, 95(6), 2006, pp 671-677.

38   Sitas F, Urban M, Bradshaw D, Kielkowski D, Bah S & Peto R, Tobacco attributable deaths in South Africa, *Tobacco Control*, 13(4), 2004, pp 396-399.

39   Parry C, Myers B & Plüddeman A, Drug policy for methamphetamine use urgently needed, *South African Medical Journal*, 94(12), 2004, pp 964-965.

40   Cerff P, Treatment centres: Cape Town, in Plüddeman A, Hon S, Bhana A, Harker N, Potgieter H, Gerber W, Johnson C & Parry C (eds), 'South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SACENDU): Monitoring alcohol and drug trends'. SACENDU report back meetings May 2006, Medical Research Council, Cape Town, 2006, pp 2-10.

41   Dawes & Van der Merwe, op cit.

42   Huang B, White HR, Kosterman R, Catalano RF & Hawkins JD, Developmental associations between alcohol and interpersonal aggression during adolescence, *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 38, 2001, pp 64-83.

43   Sussman S, Skara S, Weiner MD & Dent CW, Prediction of violence perpetration among high-risk youth, *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 28, 2004, pp 134-144.

44   Ward CL, '"It feels like it's the end of the world": Cape Town's young people talk about gangs and community violence'. Report to the ISS on the child participation study in support of the COAV Cities Project, HSRC, Cape Town, 2006.

45   Hawkins et al, op cit.

46   Parry C, Plüddeman A, Louw A & Leggett T, The 3-Metros Study of Drugs and Crime in South Africa: Findings and policy implications, *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 30(1), 2004, pp 167-185.

47   Reddy SP, Panday S, Swart D, Jinabhai CC, Amosun SL, James S, Monyeki KD, Stevens G, Morojele NK, Kambaran NS, Omardien RG & Van den Borne HW, *Umthenthe uhlaba usamila – The South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey 2002*, Medical Research Council, Cape Town, 2003.

48   Loeber R, Farrington DP, Stouthamer-Loeber M, Moffitt TE & Caspi A, The development of male offending: Key findings from the first decade of the Pittsburgh Youth Study, *Studies on Crime and Crime Prevention*, 7, 1998, pp 141-171.

49   Bandura et al, op cit.

50   Walter JL & Burnaford SM, Developmental changes in adolescents' guilt and shame: The role of family climate and gender, *North American Journal of Psychology*, 8(1), 2006, pp 321-338; Hoffman ML, Varieties of empathy-based guilt, in Bybee J (ed), Guilt and Children, Academic Press, Boston, MA, 1998, pp 91-112; Kochanska G, Gross JN, Lin M & Nichols KE, Guilt in young children: Development, determinants, and relations with a broader system of standards, *Child Development*, 73(2), 2002, pp 461-482.

51   Burton DL, Male adolescents: Sexual victimization and subsequent sexual abuse, *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 20(4), 2003, pp 277-296.

52   Wood C & Netto L, A profile of young sex offenders in South Africa, Southern African *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 12, 2000, pp 45-58.

53   Leoschut L & Burton P, *How Rich the Rewards: Results of the National Youth Victimisation Study*, Monograph No 1, CJCP, Cape Town, 2006.

54   Shahinfar A, Kupersmidt JB & Matz LS, The relation between exposure to violence and social information processing among incarcerated adolescents, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology,* 110(1), 2001, pp 136-141.

55   Dawes & Van der Merwe, op cit.

56   Koenig HG, Religion and medicine III: Developing a theoretical model, *The International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, 31(2), 2001, pp 199-216; Matthews DA, McCullough ME, Larson DB, Koenig HG, Swyers JP & Milano MG, Religious commitment and health status: A review of the research and implications for family medicine, *Archives of Family Medicine*, 7, 1998, pp 118-124; Pearce MJ, Jones SM, Schwab-Stone M & Ruchkin V, The protective effects of religiousness and parent involvement on the development of conduct problems among youth exposed to violence, *Child Development*, 74(6), 2003, pp 1682-1696.

57   Mathews et al, ibid.

58   Bronfenbrenner, op cit.

59   Bronfenbrenner et al, op cit.

60   Dawes & Van der Merwe, op cit.

61   Dietz TL, Disciplining children: Characteristics associated with the use of corporal punishment, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 24(12), 2000, pp 1529-1542; Ferrari AM, The impact of culture upon child rearing practices and definitions of maltreatment, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 26, 2002, pp 793-813; Straus MA & Kaufman-Kantor G, Corporal punishment of adolescents by parents: A risk factor in the epidemiology of depression, suicide, alcohol abuse, child abuse, and wife beating, *Adolescence*, 29(115), 1994, pp 543-559.

62   Dawes A, Long W, Alexander L & Ward CL, 'A situation analysis of children affected by maltreatment and violence in the Western Cape'. A report for the Research Directorate, Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation, Provincial Government of the Western Cape, Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town, 2006.

63   Dawes A, Kafaar Z, de Sas Kropiwnicki Z, Pather R & Richter L, *Partner Violence, Attitudes to Child Discipline and the use of Corporal Punishment: A South African National Survey, Child, Youth and Family Development*, Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town, South Africa, 2004.

64   Ibid.

65   Leoschut & Burton, op cit.

66   Ibid.

67   Robin MW & Spires RC, *The Consequences of Father Absence: A Cross-Cultural Study*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1989; Wagner ME, Schubert HJ & Schubert DS, Family size effects: A review, *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 146, 1985, pp 65-78.

68   Hawkins et al, op cit.

69   Ibid; Dawes & Van der Merwe, op cit.

70   Amoateng AY & Makiwane M, 'The Situation of Families in the Western Cape Province: A Secondary Analysis.' Research report commissioned by the Western Cape Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation, Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town, 2005.

71   Leoschut & Burton, op cit.

72   McLoyd VC, Socioeconomic disadvantage and child development, *American Psychologist*, 53, 1998, pp 185-204.

73   Elliott DS, Serious violent offenders: Onset, developmental course, and termination. The American Society of Criminology 1993 Presidential Address, *Criminology*, 32, 1994, pp 1-21.

74   Amoateng AY, Richter LM, Makiwane M & Rama S, 'Describing the structure and

needs of families in South Africa: Towards the development of a national policy framework for families'. Report commissioned by the Department of Social Development, Child, Youth and Family Development, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 2004.

75 Pronyk PM, Hargreaves JR, Kim JC, Morison LA, Phetla G, Watts C, Busza J & Porter JDH, Effect of a structural intervention for the prevention of intimate-partner violence and HIV in rural South Africa: A cluster randomised trial, *The Lancet*, 368(2), 2006, pp 1973-1983.

76 Sampson RJ & Laub JH, A life-course theory of cumulative disadvantage and stability of delinquency, in Thornberry TP (ed), *Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency. Advances in Criminological Theory: Vol. 7*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ, 1997, pp 133-161; Catalano RF & Hawkins JD, The social development model: A theory of antisocial behavior, in Hawkins JD (ed), *Delinquency and Crime: Current Theories*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1996, pp 149-197.

77 Dawes & Van der Merwe, op cit.

78 Masten AS & Coastworth JD, The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: Lessons from research on successful children, *American Psychologist*, 53, 1998, pp 205-220.

79 Chisholm L, The state of South Africa's schools, in Daniel J, Southall R & Lutchman J (ed), *State of the Nation: South Africa 2004-2005*, HSRC Press, Cape Town, 2004, pp 177-189.

80 Hoadley U, 'The boundaries of care: Education policy interventions for vulnerable children'. Paper presented at 'Education & Poverty Reduction Strategies: Issues of Policy Coherence' conference, 21-23 February 2007.

81 Department of Education, 'Education Statistics in South Africa at a Glance in 2001', Department of Education, Pretoria, South Africa, 2003.

82 Wegner L, Flisher AJ, Muller M & Lombard C, Leisure boredom and substance use among high school students in Cape Town, *Journal of Leisure Research*, 38, 2006, pp 249-266.

83 Leoschut & Burton, op cit.

84 Ibid.

85 Sampson & Laub, op cit; Catalano et al, op cit.

86 Hawkins et al, op cit; Dawes & Van der Merwe, op cit.

87 Leoschut & Burton, op cit.

88 Standing A, 'The threats of gangs and anti-gangs policy'. Policy discussion paper, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2005.

89 Catalano et al, op cit.

90 Wegner et al, op cit.

91 Ward, op cit.

92 Herrenkohl TI, Hill K, Chung I, Guo J, Abbott R & Hawkins J, Protective factors against serious violent behaviour in adolescence: A prospective study of aggressive children, *Social Work Research*, 27(3), 2003, pp 179-191.

93 Dawes A & Donald D, Improving children's chances: Developmental theory and effective interventions in community contexts, in Donald D, Dawes A & Louw J (eds), *Addressing Childhood Adversity*, David Philip, Cape Town, 2000, pp 1-25.

94 Sampson & Laub, op cit; Furstenburg FF Jr, How families manage risk and opportunity in dangerous neighborhoods, in Wilson WJ (eds), *Sociology and the Public Agenda*, Sage, Newbury Park, 1993, pp 231-258; Furstenburg FF Jr & Hughes ME, The influence of neighborhoods on children's development: A theoretical perspective and a research agenda, in Hauser RM, Brown BV & Prosser WR (eds), *Indicators of Children's Well-Being*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1997, pp 346-371.

95   Hellman DA & Beaton S, The pattern of violence in urban public schools: The influence of school and community, *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 23, 1986, pp 102-127.

96   Sampson & Lauritsen, op cit.

97   Ibid.

98   Leoschut & Burton, op cit.

99   Sampson, op cit; Coulton CJ, Korbin JE, Su M & Chow J, Community level factors and child maltreatment rates, *Child Development*, 66, 1995, pp 1262-1276; Coulton CJ, Korbin JE & Su M, Neighborhoods and child maltreatment: A multi-level study, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 23(11), 1999, pp 1019-1040.

100 Coulton et al, Neighborhoods and child maltreatment, ibid.

101 Simcha-Fagan O & Schwartz JE, Neighbourhood and delinquency: An assessment of contextual effects, *Criminology*, 24(4), 1986, pp 667-703.

102 Leoschut & Burton, op cit.

103 Chase-Lansdale PL, Gordon RA, Brooks-Gunn J & Klebanov PK, Neighborhood and family influences on the intellectual and behavioral competence of preschool and early school-age children, in Brooks-Gunn J, Duncan GJ & Aber JL (eds), *Neighborhood Poverty: Vol 1. Context and Consequences for Children*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1997, pp 79-118.

104 Ensminger ME, Lamkin RP & Jacobson N, School leaving: A longitudinal perspective including neighborhood effects, *Child Development*, 67, 1996, pp 2400-2416.

105 South SJ & Baumer EP, Deciphering community and race effects on adolescent premarital childbearing, *Social Forces*, 78(4), 2000, pp 1379-1408.

106 Stouthamer-Loeber M, Loeber R, Wei E, Farrington DP & Wikström PH, Risk and promotive effects in the explanation of persistent serious delinquency in boys, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 70(1), 2002, pp 111-123.

107 Leventhal T & Brooks-Gunn J, The neighborhoods they live in: The effects of neighborhood residence on child and adolescent outcomes, *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(2), 2000, pp 309-337; Leventhal T & Brooks-Gunn J, Indicators of children's well-being in a community context, in Weissberg RP & Walberg HJ (eds), *Long-Term Trends in the Well-Being of Children and Youth: Issues in Children's and Families' Lives*, Child Welfare League of America, Washington, DC, 2003, pp 231-254.

108 O'Campo PJ, Xue X, Wang M & Caughy MO, Neighborhood risk factors for low birthweight in Baltimore: A multilevel analysis, *American Journal of Public Health*, 87(7), 1997, pp 1113-1118.

109 Coulton et al, Neighborhoods and child maltreatment, op cit.

110 Sampson RJ, Morenoff JD & Earls F, Beyond social capital: Spatial dynamics of collective efficacy for children, *American Sociological Review*, 64, 1999, pp 633-660.

111 Huesmann et al, op cit; Buvinic M & Morrison AR, Living in a more violent world, *Foreign Policy*, 118, 2000, pp 58-72; Sampson RJ, Linking the micro- and macrolevel dimensions of community social organisation, *Social Forces*, 70(1), 1991, pp 43-64.

112 Brookes H, 'A study of parental approaches to children's use of visual media'. Report to the Film and Publication Board, Johannesburg, South Africa, Child, Youth and Family Development, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 2004.

113 Sampson & Lauritsen, op cit; Sampson, Family management and child development, op cit; Sampson RJ, The community context of violent crime, in Wilson WJ (ed), *Sociology and the Public Agenda*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1993, pp 259-285.

114 Amoateng et al, op cit.

115 Mbeki T, State of the Nation Address, South African Parliament, Cape Town, 9 February 2007.

116 United Nations Development Programme, *Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis, Human Development Report, 2006*. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_ZAF.html> (accessed May 2007).

117 Sampson, Linking the micro- and macrolevel dimensions of community social organization, op cit.

118 Wood A, 'Poverty, inequality and violence: The economic, social and cultural root causes of violence, including torture. A human rights perspective'. Paper presented at the conference 'Poverty, inequality and violence: Is there a human rights response?', Geneva, 4-6 October 2005.

119 Bandura et al, op cit.

120 Ward, op cit.

121 A pen for animals.

122 Joubert P, I eat with robbed money, *Mail & Guardian,* 9-15 February 2007, p 13.

123 Bandura et al, op cit.

124 Ndbele N, Let's declare 2007 'The year of the dog', *Mail & Guardian*, 1-7 September 2006.

125 Govender K & Killian BJ, The psychological effects of chronic violence on children living in South African townships, *South African Journal of Psychology*, 31(2), 2001, pp 1-12.

126 Seekings J, The 'lost generation': South Africa's 'youth problem' in the early-1990s, *Transformation*, 29, 1996, pp 103-125; Hamber B, 'Have no doubt it is fear in the land': An exploration of the continuing cycles of violence in South Africa, *Zeitschrift für Politische Psychologie*, 7(1&2,S.), 1999, pp 113-128.

127 Hamber, ibid.

Youth violence: A gendered perspective

Dianne Jefthas and Lillian Artz

INTRODUCTION

The escalation and intensification of violence against young people in democratic South Africa has in recent months made national news headlines.[1] From these media accounts and related research, it seems that the country's youth are in crisis. An alarming characteristic of the violence is that it often occurs in environments typically considered as safe places for youth, namely the home and schools.[2]

South Africa's youth make up a significant proportion of the population. According to Statistics South Africa, young people aged 10–29 account for 18,952,700, or 40%, of the entire population which is estimated at 47,390,900 people.[3]

For the purposes of this chapter youth will encompass all young people between the ages of 14 and 25. The selection of this age cohort is significant in that it represents one that is disproportionately at risk for both offending and victimisation.[4] Research indicates that the levels of victimisation among the youth are significantly higher than those of adults.[5]

Youth violence has taken the form of, among others, gang activities, violence at school, and sexual violence mainly perpetrated by young men and boys against young women and girls. A multitude of causes and contributing factors inextricably linked to South Africa's past of oppression have been identified to explain both the nature and frequency of the violence.[6] Key among these is the culture of violence that continues to be firmly embedded in South Africa's democratic society, structural inequalities brought on by the apartheid government's discriminatory policies and high unemployment rates.

In the midst of the debate on the nature and causes of youth violence, exists the noticeable disparity in the way in which males and females engage in and experience crime and violence. Discourse seeking to provide explanations have

emphasised unequal power relations, strong patriarchal values and rigid notions of masculinity and femininity.[7]

A cursory examination of the existing national and international literature on theories of deviance, delinquency, crime and violence among the youth shows that theoretical frameworks have evolved along gender-specific lines. As Smith and Paternoster note, mainstream theories have focused on explaining the deviant behaviour of young males, while theories to explain female deviance have been peripheral to the main debates.[8] There is general agreement among researchers that males both perpetrate and experience the most violence, and that violence is generally recognised as a problem and a consequence of masculinity.[9] Female violence is considered insignificant in both numeric and statistical terms, and is frequently dismissed as inconsequential in comparison to the violence perpetrated by males.[10] Even where gendered analyses have been conducted, the emphasis has been on young men and the construction of manhood. The social construction of femininity and its impact on female engagement with and participation in crime and violence has for the most part been ignored.[11]

However, a gendered perspective is necessary as it recognises that the balance of power in male–female relationships tends to be grossly unequal. It also acknowledges that manifestations of violence are inevitably gendered in terms of: who commits acts of violence; who is victimised; what type of violence is perpetrated; where the violence occurs; what weapon is used; and the underlying reasons for the violence.[12] As Morrell asserts:

> Violence is gendered in all it aspects, not least because violence is invariably bound up with issues of power – used to enforce power, used to shift power, used to resist power.[13]

This chapter examines youth violence in South Africa from a gendered perspective. In particular, it attempts to shed light on the relationship between the structural inequalities brought on by apartheid, and notions of masculinity and femininity inherent in a society governed largely by patriarchal norms and values. It emphasises that youth violence and victimisation stem not only from political and socioeconomic inequality, but can also be attributed to expressions of gender identity and the manner in which members within society construct and reconstruct such identities.[14]

YOUTH VIOLENCE: THE NEED FOR A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE

The correlates of female crime and criminality have long been a neglected subject area in mainstream criminological literature, theory and research. In 1973 Dorie Klein, in a seminal piece called 'The Etiology of Female Crime' argued that theories on female criminality are often reduced to footnotes of greater works on men, which purport to be works on criminology in general. In a thorough

investigation on the amount of space within criminology textbooks devoted to the study of women as both victims and perpetrators of crime, Wilson and Rigsby concluded that topics on women and crime have been decidedly absent from criminological discourse.[15] They attribute this finding to the dearth of empirical research on the issue.

Three reasons are generally provided for this lack of focus on women and crime.[16] First, there are fewer female victims of crime and female offenders make up a small proportion of all offenders. As Heidensohn points out, 'women commit very little crime'.[17] Women and girls also tend to commit property crime, fraud and forgery, and are infrequently convicted for more noted crimes such as murder and assault. Second, the crimes stereotypically considered 'women's crimes', such as prostitution and shoplifting, are not seen as a threat to society's 'moral fibre' and are seen as warranting less attention. Finally, women in prison are viewed as less interesting to authors and researchers, as it is assumed that female offenders are both less violent and less disruptive than males.

In rare instances where the issue of women as offenders has been explored, the complex units of analysis utilised in explanations of male offending have been discarded in favour of an exclusive focus on women's sexuality, which is rooted in biological characterisations.[18]

It is evident from existing depictions of women and crime that the construction of women's defiance, as well as society's response, is coloured by the lower status generally afforded to women.[19] Early feminist contributors to the criminological debate observed that female criminals in criminological writings were rarely regarded as rational and were seldom accorded agency over their decisions. As Klein explains:

> Women criminals have rarely been accorded even the grudging respect shown male criminals, who are at least seen as a threatening force with which to be reckoned.[20]

Where male perpetrators of crime and violence have been credited with the faculty of reasoning, their female counterparts have been viewed according to popular stereotypes which define women and girls according to domestic and sexual roles, and portray them as irrational, hysterical and incapable of being fully responsible for their actions.[21]

More than three decades after Klein's landmark work, the issue of female criminality remains confined to a small feminist domain within criminological literature, resulting in the continued tradition of 'ungendered' criminological theory. Even with the emergence of powerful feminist critiques of how crime and deviance have been constructed within criminological theory,[22] criminological research struggles to escape the problem of 'fitting women into' dominant discourses on crime and deviance.

According to Kersten, the criminological mainstream is still reluctant to reflect

on obvious traits of the gendered reality of crime, victimisation and crime control.[23] The gender component of criminology is discussed in terms of sex-ration differences in criminality and victimisation, reducing 'gender' to essentialist notions or categories of male and female. In later work, Kersten refers to this as the 'add another variable and stir' phenomenon,[24] although she notes that this ghettoisation of gender is not unique to criminology and traverses a range of social science disciplines.

Davies accurately notes that explanations and motivations for female offending also remain sexist and inadequate.[25] Few of the existing qualitative research studies have examined how violence features in the everyday consciousness of young women or how it might be mobilised in their everyday lives.[26] The implications of this gap are far reaching as it not only renders invisible the violence perpetrated by girls, but signals the absence of an 'informed theoretical and analytical vocabulary to investigate or conceptualise' such violence in a way that is not grounded in male behaviour.[27]

TREATMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE

Critical feminist reflections on criminology in South Africa have begun to extend the boundaries of the criminological discourse, but women and girls remain under-represented in both criminological theory and practice. Despite attempts to bring to the fore concrete illustrations of the ways in which crime affects women and girls and to fill the knowledge gaps in theory and a range of other subject areas – such as methods and ethics, the legal and policy architecture, understanding rape and domestic violence, the criminalisation of women sex work, and the impact of criminal law and criminal justice policies on women – the fundamental question of 'where are the women' remains. Although feminist criminologists and socio-legal scholars have provided a rich, contextual analysis of women and crime, gendered perspectives on crime and victimology, research ethics and practice as well as critical legal perspectives have yet to be integrated into mainstream criminological scholarship.

Empirical and policy-based research on youth violence in South Africa also remains largely male-focused, with young women primarily represented as victims of male violence. Studies on youth gang membership, school violence and young people in conflict with the law largely ignore the role of female youth in contributing to, facilitating or colluding in acts of violence, destruction of property, intimidation, bullying, theft and a range of other criminal or 'antisocial' activities.

This emphasis is understandable given the extraordinarily high level of violence against women and girls in South Africa and the urgent need for violence prevention and safety interventions. However, it raises timeless questions about female involvement in criminal activity. Why are there apparently so few young women involved in crime? What is their role in crime? What are the social, personal and environmental contexts surrounding their involvement? Are female

youths less likely to be 'deviant', to engage in formal criminal activity or to get 'caught'? Are criminal justice processes and other social mechanisms of control managing female participation in crime different to men's participation? These questions have yet to be interrogated in South Africa.

These issues and questions apply equally to the research on the consequences of apartheid. Both genders witnessed the high levels of political violence that characterised the struggle for liberation from the apartheid regime,[28] yet the literature concerning the effects of apartheid-era violence on the youth is wholly slanted. The focus is on black youth, and black males in particular, while the impact of our violent past on white youth, and on young women of any race group, has rarely been examined.

One of the central reasons provided for neglecting white youth is that as beneficiaries of the apartheid government's legislation and policies they were not victims of the oppression, and their experiences of the structural violence it produced are vastly different from those of the black youth. Hirschowitz et al, however, note that white youths have also been brutalised; as the privileges gained during apartheid have been threatened under the new dispensation, they have experienced the fear of losing exclusive access to power. These fears have manifested in increased tension in white homes and a high incidence of family murders.[29]

Hirschowitz et al contend that the upsurge in family murders is only the 'visible tip of the iceberg of violence taking place in white families', and argue that assaults associated with excessive drinking, spouse beating and child abuse may occur frequently but go largely unreported and unquantified.[30] This suggests the need for more research into correlates of crime and violence among white youth.

As in the broader criminological literature, studies focusing on young women and girls tend to examine their victimisation in relation to the exceedingly high levels of violence against women and girls in the country. Few studies have examined the links between female-perpetrated violence and the conditions created by apartheid.

Where the legacy of apartheid has been considered, women's and girls' experiences of and engagement in crime and violence have been viewed through the lens of cultural and societal constructions of manhood; research solely on the constructions of femininity and female identity have been entirely lacking.

THE LEGACY OF APARTHEID

During the apartheid era black youth were exposed to violence strategically orchestrated by the resistance movement to destabilise township life. The ongoing campaign to overthrow the apartheid regime served to make violence a part of everyday life in many communities and created a culture of violence. The policies and legislation of the National Party government also denied those living in black townships the infrastructure afforded to their white counterparts, and townships became sites of severe poverty and overcrowding.

Apartheid's dehumanising effect extended beyond the racial classification of South Africans; it also had a major impact on the construction of gender identities, particularly among black males. During the height of the fight against oppression, young black men were socialised into militaristic versions of manhood. In the course of calling the youth to join the struggle, notions of what it meant to be a man were strongly tied to hero versions of masculinity, which emulated prominent anti-apartheid leaders, among them Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko.[31]

This period also saw masculinity closely linked to culture. Political parties such as the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) urged young men to join the liberation struggle in the name of the Zulu tribe, which had historically resisted white rule in the country.[32] This socialisation of the young men included specific references to weapons and the use of weapons to achieve freedom and overcome the apartheid state. Within the African National Congress (ANC), the AK-47 was strongly associated with liberation, and wielding a gun became not only a symbol for young men but also represented male affluence and power.[33] Violence and masculinity therefore became closely intertwined with the macho culture of resistance.[34]

With the demise of apartheid in the early 1990s and the transition to democracy in 1994, the role of youth needed to be re-defined. The country's young people were no longer required to be at the forefront of the liberation struggle and were instead expected to become functioning members of the new dispensation. The long-standing inequalities of the past were not easily remedied, however, and many of the heroes of the liberation movement had difficulty integrating into a society that preached equality, but within which poverty and a lack of opportunities underscored their continued inferiority.[35] In this context, many turned to criminal activity which often featured violence.

Barker and Ricardo argue that the continued prevalence of violent crime in South Africa constitutes a form of compensatory manhood which sees young men seeking to regain a sense of masculinity through engaging in crime and violence.[36] Simpson and Kraak similarly argue that poor, young men associate the powerlessness and marginalisation experienced under both the apartheid and post-apartheid regimes as a form of emasculation, which when internalised is expressed through violence as a way of reasserting their masculine identity.[37] This linking of masculine identity and criminal violence is played out in hijackings, assaults, gang activities, housebreakings and sexual violence against women and girls.[38]

VIOLENCE WITHIN HOMES AND FAMILIES

The violence of the apartheid years has led to the belief among many South Africans that violence is an acceptable means of resolving conflict. This has encouraged the use of violence within the confines of the home in the settling of domestic disputes. Levels of domestic violence in South Africa are among the highest in the world.[39] While domestic violence is found in all sectors of the

population, including among the privileged classes, research indicates that such violence is most often associated with a lifestyle where poverty and deprivation are endemic.[40] Violence within the home signals a decline in the quality of life within domestic settings and a lack of adequate parental influence and supervision in the socialisation of young people, and is a significant contributing factor to violence among the youth.

As apartheid and capitalism minimised the power of working class men, the tensions that they experienced outside the home were and still are often expressed within the family through violence.[41] In the context of enduring patriarchal traditions, the complex socioeconomic and political inequalities created by apartheid fundamentally undermined men's ability to fulfil the roles conferred on them by a culture of patriarchy. Where their power and influence in the broader community is limited by structural imbalances, many men have attempted to assert their perceived authority in the one arena where they still can – the household.[42] Women and children are most often the victims of the physical and psychological abuse resulting from this crisis. As Hirschowitz and colleagues note:

> Marital discord, spouse beating, discontinuity in parenting, physical or sexual abuse, neglect, and witnessing alcohol abuse by a parent may be relatively common experiences that young people have lived through.[43]

This often has intergenerational consequences. There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that youth who experience violent home lives are more likely than others to engage in violent behaviour and to treat their own families violently in the future. Young children in particular often internalise the violence they experience in the home, ultimately coming to regard it as a normal and acceptable means of resolving conflicts. As they grow up and start their own families, the cycle of violence continues.[44]

Extensive research into the correlation between child abuse and crime also shows that abused children are at higher risk of exhibiting problems in various developmental areas, including social development, relationships with peers and achievement at school, and are more likely to engage in crime, violence and antisocial behaviour.[45]

While investigations into the origins of delinquency focus mainly on boys, there have been some valuable contributions to our knowledge about girls and young women. Girls exposed to abusive domestic environments are, according to Chesney-Lind and Shelden, likely to develop 'unique tactics of self preservation', for example, running away from home, which ultimately makes them vulnerable to criminal exploitation.[46] Their subsequent delinquent behaviours are therefore indirectly a product of their attempts to resist or escape abusive households. Other studies have further highlighted that abused and neglected girls are far more likely than their non-abused counterparts to commit violent offences.[47]

Owing to the large discrepancy in the rates of violent offending for males and females, some like Herrera and McCloskey argue that girls who engage in violence do so in response to their own victimisation.[48] An interesting finding of the research into female aggression is that violent offending among girls predominantly takes the form of domestic violence. Where boys engage in fights with their peers or strangers, girls are far more likely to become violent with a parent or sibling.[49] Boys who have been victims of abuse do become violent within domestic settings, but unlike girls their violence extends beyond the family to the broader community.[50]

UNEMPLOYMENT

Notions of masculinity are also closely linked to employment status. As young men fix much of their identity around their occupations, successful masculinity is perceived to be directly connected to the ability to be, and remain, economic providers.[51] Employment represents a basis for recognition and self-esteem.[52] Conversely, being unemployed impacts on self-perception; it lowers self-esteem, fosters negativity, and elicits feelings of powerlessness and a sense that life may be meaningless.[53]

In the South African context where more than half the country's youth between the ages of 16 and 25 are unemployed, youths often experience high levels of frustration. This is underpinned by feelings of alienation and estrangement from a society in which they are denied the opportunity to be productive citizens.[54] The literature highlights that unemployed youth who feel they lack a stake in society are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour and become involved in criminal activity.[55] Boonzaier argues that young men who are unable to find employment – and are thus unable to fulfil their masculine responsibilities – may use their feelings of powerlessness to justify violence.[56]

Studies have also shown that youth engage in crime in order to obtain money and material goods. This is closely tied to the high levels of deprivation many young people experience in their lives. As one respondent explained in a study conducted by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR):

> My parents don't have a better background so I cannot wait for them to do things for me. They are unemployed and I've got to do things for myself. I have responsibilities – a child and family to look after as well as other things to take care of. When I looked for a job I could only find a temporary job and with a temporary job I could not afford myself sometimes. I then decided to do crime and get more money.[57]

Some of the literature on the linkages between employment and youth violence examines how men's unemployment relates to the victimisation of women and girls. However, the link between unemployment and the experiences of crime and

violence among young girls as a single unit of analysis remains unexplored territory.

GANGSTERISM

In attempting to shed light on the issue of gangs, international researchers in the 1950s and 1960s highlighted the connections between the 'status frustration' experienced by lower-class communities due to their inability to compete with their middle-class counterparts, and a delinquent subculture which emphasises malice and negativism and justifies 'manly' aggression.[58] These researchers also examined the issues stemming from boys' and men's struggle to maintain their autonomy in households dominated by females.[59] A theme underpinning all their studies is the assumption that gangs are a uniquely male response to the pressures and strains of poverty.[60]

Studies on gangs have focused almost exclusively on males. The roles, motivations and experiences of young girls have been largely neglected and distorted and have been mainly from a male gang member's perspective.[61] Joe and Chesney-Lind accurately state that 'the long-standing "gendered habits" of researchers have meant that girls' involvement with gangs has been neglected, sexualized, and oversimplified'.[62] Female gang members have been primarily depicted as playing secondary roles as 'cheerleaders or camp followers' and any violent behaviour they exhibit has been largely ignored.[63] Young women have also been portrayed as instruments of the gang, with their activities mainly related to their sexuality.[64] In this view women have been seen as a source of competition and affirmation for the masculinity of young men, who tend to view young women involved in gangs as sex objects. They are seen to benefit the gang due to their availability as sex partners and their usefulness in entrapping males from rival gangs[65] and concealing weapons and drugs from the police.[66]

More recent research that has included the perspectives of female gang members shows that young women play a considerably more complex and varied role than the stereotypes presented in earlier works.[67] These studies reveal that while there continues to be a high level of dependence on males within the gangs, the status of girls appears to be determined to a large extent by their female peers.[68] Furthermore, while female gang members were thought to commit crimes and violence only occasionally, these studies reveal that young girls are not only fighting in more arenas than previously thought but are using many of the same weapons as the males.[69]

Investigations into South African gangs suggest that gangs are the exclusive domain of young males[70] – although, as internationally, there has been no research specifically on the involvement of women in gangs. The gang subculture in South Africa and the role gangs have played in the lives of the country's youth has received extensive coverage in academic literature.[71] Among the issues emerging from this literature is that gangs frequently fulfil the unmet needs of their

members. In the absence of adequate educational opportunities, where employment levels are high and poverty is endemic, the gang provides young men with 'companionship, support and an alternative source of income and dignity'.[72] Joining a gang helps youngsters to overcome feelings of powerlessness or low self-esteem as they provide a sense of belonging not provided by other social institutions like the family, the broader community, the church, other religious institutions and schools.[73]

Upon joining a gang, members are required to accept gang norms, which often include the use of violence. As Salo explains, the rites and practices of the gang allow young men to create and offer one another alternative ways of asserting their gendered identities as heterosexual males. In a society where they frequently lack the 'dominant material and symbolic capital' to assist in affirming their masculinity through, for example, a good education, permanent employment and the economic means to support families, young men use physical strength, daring and violence as an alternative means of showing their manhood.[74]

In such settings sexual violence often in the form of gang rape is promoted as a form of initiation ritual. A horrific form of township gang violence is known as 'jackrolling'. This sees the young male gangsters abducting and raping young women whom they consider to be above them on the social ladder.[75] Jackrolling is viewed by many of those living in the townships as a sport of tough gangsters and is regarded as nothing more than a game or a popular form of male behaviour indulged in by young boys.[76] Research into people's perceptions of sexual violence, gang rape and jackrolling found that it represents a display of masculinity and is a manifestation of the gang members' loyalty to each other as men on the margins of society.[77]

SCHOOL VIOLENCE

School impacts significantly on a young person's socialisation process. As children and young people spend the majority of the day and most of the year at school, it is imperative that the environment in which learning occurs is safe, trusting and nurturing. However, schools in democratic South Africa are anything but that. Township schools in particular are the sites of much crime and violence. Feeling unsafe at school may make it harder for children to learn and may act as a deterrent to attending classes. The high levels of crime and violence in schools thus suggests that many young South Africans are being denied the opportunity to achieve their optimal educational development.[78] International studies have emphasised the strong correlation between the amount of education a young person receives, their academic success and whether they choose to commit crime or not,[79] suggesting that a lack of safety at schools may serve to perpetuate crime and violence in society at large.

Research and a mounting number of media reports have highlighted the fact that crime and violence are serious concerns in both primary and secondary

schools, across school categories and across age, gender and race groups in South Africa. Studies indicate that young people are most likely to be victimised at school, and the number of deaths on school premises is on the increase.[80]

Crucially, violence at schools is not restricted to township schools, although disadvantaged schools do tend to be worst affected.[81] The perpetrators are usually other children who frequently use weapons such as guns and knives.

Children are exposed to many different kinds of crime and violence at school, including physical and sexual assaults, robberies, intimidation, bullying, shootings, stabbings, gangsterism and drug trafficking.[82] A number of gangs have also infiltrated schools, with gangs actively utilising the school grounds to increase their power and influence.[83] Gangs often recruit new members from among the school population, and schools are increasingly the site of turf wars between competing groups. In some cases the gangs may induce youngsters to sell drugs to their schoolmates on their behalf.[84]

The violence experienced by learners within schools is distinctly different for male and female learners.[85] Girls are the victims of rape, harassment and sexual assault, while boys tend to be the victims of assault and bullying. Male learners suspected of being homosexual are also beaten and abused by their male peers.

The violence perpetrated against boys and girls can be traced to gender identities. As Morrell argues:

> What unites these victims is the existence of violent hegemonic masculinities in school that validate and sometimes promote school violence as an affirmation of a particular masculine identity.[86]

The research on youth violence shows that the levels of sexual violence experienced by girls and young women are alarmingly high.[87] A Human Rights Watch study on the issue of sexual violence within schools found that girls experienced sexual violence and harassment at the hands of both teachers and male students. Male students were found to fondle girls, make aggressive sexual advances and verbally degrade the girls. Worryingly, girls perceived by boys to be arrogant, assertive or who held leadership positions and performed well at school were more likely to be victimised.[88] The study showed that girls were raped in school toilets, empty classrooms, hallways, hostels and dormitories,[89] suggesting that in many schools there are few, if any, safe places for girls.

The high level of gender-based violence against girls is influenced by peer pressure – although as Eaton and Flisher observe, young people's susceptibility to peer pressure differs.[90] As Mathews et al note, the need for power and status among peer groups is considered to be one of the major drivers of crime among youth. They argue that young males' need to be seen to be brave, included in a peer group and to have a girlfriend can lead to criminal incidents.[91] As Leach explains:

> Dominant male and female peer group cultures encourage pupils to conform

to certain stereotypical behaviours, which … make girls particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. In this way pupils learn patterns of gendered behaviour that are likely to remain with them throughout adult life … .[92]

This applies to all South African boys but is aggravated by the structural inequalities that characterise township life.[93] Other studies reveal that while both boys and girls experience considerable same-sex pressure to be sexually active, there are marked differences in the nature of this pressure.[94]

Boys are more likely to be faced with pressure to prove their manliness. Within certain peer groups, having many sexual partners affords a young man special status and admiration from his peers.[95] Girls on the other hand tend to be excluded from peer groups on the basis of their sexual experience, with sexually inexperienced girls excluded from group discussions as they are still seen as children.[96] In research conducted among pregnant Xhosa-speaking adolescent girls in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, many of the respondents stated that sex was a strategy to avoid peer ostracism.[97]

A study by the CSVR among school girls in Gauteng also shows that violence against adolescent girls in South Africa takes place against a backdrop of pervasive gender violence in society and stems in part from unequal power relations and strong patriarchal values. The study found that violence against girls was not confined to disadvantaged schools and was prevalent across socioeconomic groupings.

The impact of such violence is extensive and detrimental, causing damage to adolescent girls' physical and psychological health as well as effecting school attendance and academic achievement. Participants' experiences suggest that violence is normalised within the school environment and in communities.

The study indicates that the way in which girls engage with the issue of violence is to some extent determined by the way gender violence is dealt with in their home communities. Girls coming from communities known for high levels of gender-based violence spoke about the topic in a more matter of fact way than those coming from communities where gender-based violence is shrouded in secrecy.[98]

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS

The level of sexual violence among women and girls is alarmingly high. While most commentators agree that the bulk of rapes go unreported, South Africa holds the dubious distinction of being at the top of international rankings for reported incidences of rape and sexual violence.[99] Young women between the ages of 16 and 30 are more likely than any other group to be the victims of rape.[100]

The vulnerability of women and girls is underpinned by masculine ideologies which encourage multiple sexual partners and increased sexual activity. For many young men, sexual initiation and fatherhood serve as a means of affirming their identity as men. Jewkes and Abrahams argue that rape must be understood within

the context of 'substantial gender power inequalities which pervade society'. They consider rape to be a manifestation of male dominance over women and a deeply embedded social construction of masculinity, and regard both physical and sexual violence against women as part of a 'repertoire of strategies of control'.[101]

Hirschowitz and colleagues similarly argue that gender-based violence reflects the low status of women in society.[102] Cultural beliefs and traditions play an important role in how women and girls are treated both within their personal relationships as well as within the broader society. Investigations into relationship dynamics within African cultures reveal often pervasive, deeply entrenched gender discrimination and oppression of women.[103]

Sexual violence has become a particularly common feature of relationships among young people. Studies show that in certain communities the heterosexual relationships of young people are frequently characterised by the male partner controlling sexual activity and the female partner being physically forced or bullied into sex.[104] This sexual violence is influenced by the societal attitudes toward women and girls. Such attitudes include the belief among young men that women are responsible for causing sexual violence, that they ask for it and that they in fact enjoy being raped.[105]

In one research study nearly 50% of male youth interviewed believed that a girl meant 'yes' when she in fact said 'no' to sex.[106] In other research, nearly a third of both young men and young women said that they did not consider forcing sex on someone to constitute sexual violence.[107] In many cases, young men consider aggression not only as a normal part of dating but also as a means of showing their love for their partner.[108] However, while many young women also interpret their partner's aggression as a way of showing their love, young women are more likely to feel that violence shows their partner does not love them.[109]

Males' often controlling and domineering behaviour reflects society's glorification of strong-arm masculinity and docile femininity, sexist institutions and the perpetuation of gender stereotypes, particularly in the media.[110] Men are essentially taught to define their power in terms of their capacity to enforce their will.

Research also suggests that men rape women primarily to bolster their perceived masculinity and to feed their desire for power. In the South African context where structural inequality makes men feel powerless, rape is frequently a way for men to assert themselves violently.[111]

A worrying consequence of the violence that women and girls experience in South Africa is the risk of HIV infection. In addition to the physical and emotional trauma experienced by rape survivors, many women and girls are infected with HIV during the ordeal. Relationships characterised by violence and coercion present few, if any, opportunities for open discussions about sexual histories or safer sex and condom use.[112] In the context of often abusive relationships, many young women frequently have difficulty in protecting themselves against unwanted sexual intercourse, unwanted pregnancy, HIV and other sexually

transmitted infections. This is perhaps reflected in South Africa's HIV/Aids statistics, which show that the number of new infections each year peak in the 15–24 year age group.[113] Prevalence is higher for young women than for young men in this age group, with more than four young women infected for every infected young man.[114]

Feminist discourse argues that the eradication of violence against women and girls is dependent on a fundamental change in gender relations at every level, and ultimately comes down to dismantling patriarchy within the society.

CONCLUSION

Both the South African and international literature show a gender bias in their assumptions about crime and violence among women and girls and men and boys. It has tended to focus on women and girls as victims of crime, and men and boys as perpetrators and aggressors. This simplistic dichotomy of men as the villains and women as powerless victims, presents an overly negative view of men in general, but African men in particular, and further reinforces good girl–bad boy stereotypes.[115]

However, violence and masculinity are complex issues: not all men are violent, and only some violent men are violent towards women.[116] It also ignores the fact that women and girls perpetrate crime and violence, and that boys and men are victimised by both males and females. These issues receive minimal attention in the literature, and there is a tremendous need for information on women and girls as perpetrators of crime and boys and men as victims, particularly as victims of sexual violence. Research in these areas would make a valuable contribution to both the youth violence and gender debates.

The literature shows that young people who participate in violence do so for a variety of complex, interrelated reasons and that the correlates of criminal and violent behaviour include:

- exposure to conflict and violence in domestic settings;
- a lack of constructive family guidance and social control;
- the socialisation of young men into violent versions of manhood;
- economic need and the desire for material and social goods; and
- peer pressure.

In this context, the inequalities of the past and the present have contributed to the high levels of crime and violence experienced in South Africa today, which both dehumanises and desensitises South African youth to violence.[117] As Hirschowitz et al argue, the violence to which South Africa's youth were exposed in the past, and are still exposed to today, has and will continue to have a negative effect on South Africa's youth. The effects of exposure to high levels of violence include depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, withdrawal, disengagement, terror, rage, brutalisation, anger and the hardening of attitudes.[118]

The picture presented of youth and the violence they experience is disturbing. Without significant intervention to turn the tide and stem the continuing cycle of violence, South Africa's youth face a bleak future. In a country where the majority of citizens continue to live in poverty and where access to counselling and support services is limited, if not non-existent, the trauma of violence experienced by the youth remains with them and hampers their healthy transition from adolescence to adulthood. This has serious implications not only for young people themselves but for society at large. What awaits us is a generation of people who have experienced high levels of crime and violence, who have often suffered physical and psychological damage, whose sense of security has been violated and, in some cases, whose education has suffered.[119] Such youngsters are at high risk of themselves becoming involved in crime and violence, and may also not reach their full potential as productive adults.

It is thus imperative that effective interventions are put in place to help South Africa's youth make a valuable contribution to society. More employment opportunities are needed, as are skills development programmes. Initiatives are needed to empower women and girls to take control of their lives both financially and emotionally, and to equip males and females to renegotiate and redefine existing power imbalances within both the broader society and their personal relationships.

Such initiatives should include activities to promote self-reliance, economic independence and the provision of leadership opportunities for girls, and should start at the primary school level. At present young people in South Africa live in a society where their growth and development as human beings is restricted by cultural, educational, societal and political boundaries. The challenge lies in removing those boundaries and affording all youth, especially women and girls, the opportunity to thrive in a truly equal society.

ENDNOTES

1   Kassiem A & Ka Nzapheza V, Schoolboy stabbed repeatedly in horror attack, *Cape Times*, 15 November 2006; Cembi N, Tau P & Molosankwe B, School violence spiralling out of control, *The Star*, 24 October 2006; Sapa, Third school stabbing in two weeks, *Independent Online*, 20 October 2006; Kassiem A, Have our schools become urban war zones?, *Cape Times*, 29 September 2006; Kobedi P & Sapa, School violence under the spotlight, *Mail & Guardian Online*, 18 October 2006.

2   Leoschut L & Burton P, *How Rich the Rewards? Results of the 2005 National Youth Victimization Study*, Monograph No 1, Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, Cape Town, May 2006.

3   Statistics South Africa, 'Mid-year population estimates, South Africa: 2006'. Available at <http://www.statssa.gov.za> (accessed 21 November 2006).

4   Artz L, Doolan K & Smythe D, 'Youth crime indicators'. Discussion document

prepared for the Alliance for Crime Prevention, 2006, p 6; Palmary I, Youth position paper prepared for the Crime Prevention Alliance, Cape Town, 2003. Available at <http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papalm6.htm> (accessed 8 November 2006).

5   Leoschut and Burton, op cit.

6   See, Hirschowitz R, Milner S & Everatt D, Growing up in a violent society, in Everatt D (ed), *Creating a Future: Youth Policy for South Africa*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1994; Barker G & Ricardo C, *Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict, and Violence*, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction, 26, June 2005.

7   Simpson G & Kraak G, The illusions of sanctuary and the weight of the past: Notes on violence and gender in South Africa, *Development Update*, 2(2), 1998, pp 1-7; Boonzaier F, Woman abuse in South Africa: A brief contextual analysis, *Feminism and Psychology*, 15(1), 2005; Chege J, Interventions linking gender relations and violence with reproductive health and HIV: Rationale, effectiveness and gaps, *Agenda Special Focus*, 2005, pp 114-123.

8   Smith DA & Paternoster R, The gender gap in theories of deviance: Issues and evidence, *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 24(2), 1987, pp 140-172; Klein D, The etiology of female crime: A review of the literature, *Crime and Social Justice: Issues in Criminology*, (Fall), 8, 1983, p 140.

9   Cited in Burman MJ, Batchelor SA & Brown JA, Researching girls and violence: Facing the dilemmas of fieldwork, *British Journal of Criminology*, 41, 2001, pp 443-459. See also Steffensmeier D & Allan A, Gender and crime: Toward a gendered theory of female offending, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22, 1996, pp 459-460.

10   Burman et al, op cit.

11   Barker & Ricardo, op cit.

12   Morrell R, A calm after the storm? Beyond schooling as violence, *Educational Review*, 54(1), 2002, p 38.

13   Ibid, pp 37-38.

14   Simpson & Kraak, op cit.

15   Wilson N & Rigsby C, Is crime a man's world? Issues in the exploration of criminality, *Journal of Criminal Justice,* 3, 1975, pp 131-140, in Wright RA, Are 'sisters in crime' finally being booked? The coverage of women and crime in journals and textbooks, *Teaching Sociology*, 15(4), 1987, pp 418-422.

16   Ibid; See also Heidensohn, F, *Women and Crime*, MacMillan, London, 1985, pp 10-11.

17   Heidensohn, ibid, p 10.

18   Ibid, p 112.

19   Chesney-Lind M, 'Women and crime': The female offender, *Signs*, 12(1), 1986, p 96.

20   Quoted in Davies P, Women, crime and an informal economy: Female offending and crime for gain, in British Society of Criminology, *The British Criminology Conferences: Selected Proceeding*, 2, 1999, p 2.

21   Ibid; Heidensohn, op cit.

22   See, for example, Chesney-Lind M, Rediscovering Lilith: Mysogyny and the new female criminality, in Griffiths CT & Nance M (eds), *The Female Offenders*, Simon Fraser University, Canada, 1980; Gelsthorpe L, Feminism and criminology, in Maguire M, Morgan R & Reiner R, *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1997; Heidensohn, op cit; Klein, op cit; Smart C, *Women, Crime and Criminology: A Feminist Critique*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1976.

23   Kersten J, Culture, masculinities and violence against women, *British Journal of Criminology*, 36(3), 1996, pp 381-395.

24   Ibid, p 382.

25   Davies op cit, pp 1-12.

26   Burman et al, op cit.
27   Ibid.
28   See Hirschowitz et al, op cit.
29   Ibid.
30   Ibid.
31   Barker & Ricardo, op cit.
32   Ibid.
33   Ibid.
34   Campbell C, Learning to kill? Masculinity, the family and violence in Natal, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18(3), 1992, p 624; see also Britton H, Organising against gender violence in South Africa, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 32(1), 2006.
35   Barker & Ricardo, op cit.
36   Ibid.
37   Simpson & Kraak, op cit
38   Ibid.
39   Ibid.
40   Hirschowitz et al, op cit.
41   Campbell, op cit.
42   See Simpson & Kraak, op cit, p 5; Simpson G, 'Jack-asses and jackrollers: Rediscovering gender in understanding violence'. Research report written for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Johannesburg, 1992, p 6.
43   Hirschowitz et al, op cit, p 85.
44   See Jewkes R, Intimate partner violence: Causes and prevention, *The Lancet*, 359, 2002.
45   Cited in Herrera VM & McCloskey LA, Gender differences in the risk for delinquency among youth exposed to family violence, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 25, 2001, pp 1037-1051.
46   Ibid, p 1039.
47   Ibid, p 1048.
48   Ibid (cited in).
49   Ibid.
50   Ibid.
51   Cited in Vogelman L & Lewis S, *Gang Rape and the Culture of Violence in South Africa*, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Johannesburg, 1993, pp 1-7; See also Boonzaier, op cit.
52   See Hirschowitz et al, op cit, p 76.
53   Ibid.
54   Ibid; Artz et al, op cit.
55   Hirschowitz et al, op cit.
56   Boonzaier, op cit.
57   CSVR/CSIR, 'Into the Heart of Darkness: Journeys of the Amagents in Crime, Violence and Death'. Paper prepared as part of research conducted by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 1998. Available at <http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papcsir.htm> (accessed 17 May 2007).
58   See Cohen A, *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang*, Free Press, Glencoe, IL, 1955.
59   See Miller W, Lower class culture as a generating milieu of gang delinquency, *Journal of Social Issues*, 3, 1958.
60   Joe KA & Chesney-Lind M, 'Just every mother's angel': An analysis of gender and ethnic variations in youth gang membership, *Gender and Society*, 9(4), 1995.
61   Ibid.

62   Ibid, p 12.

63   Steffensmeier & Allan, op cit.

64   Deschenes EP & Esbensen F-A, Violence and gangs: Gender differences in perceptions and behaviour, *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 15(1), 1999.

65   Miller J & Brunson RK, Gender dynamics in youth gangs: A comparison of males' and females' accounts, *Justice Quarterly*, 17(3), 2000.

66   Ibid.

67   Ibid.

68   Steffensmeier & Allan, op cit.

69   Ibid.

70   Cited in Vogelman and Lewis, op cit, p 3.

71   For example, see Salo E, *Gangs and Sexuality on the Cape Flats*, December 2000. Available at <http://web.uct.ac.za/org/agi/pubs/newsletters/vol7/elaine.htm> (accessed 8 November 2006); Salo E, 'Mans is Ma Soe: Ganging Practices in Manenberg, South Africa and the Ideologies of Masculinity, Gender and Generational Relations'. Paper presented at the 'Consolidating Transformation' conference, February, 2005. Available at <http://www.csvr.org.za/confpaps/salo.htm> (accessed 7 November 2006); Vogelman and Lewis, op cit; Simpson, op cit.

72   Delius P Glaser C, Sexual socialisation in South Africa: A historical perspective, *African Studies*, 61(1), 2002, p 44.

73   Simpson & Kraak, op cit.

74   Salo, op cit, p 2. Also see Delius & Glaser, op cit.

75   Hirschowitz et al, op cit.

76   Human Rights Watch, *Scared at School: Sexual Violence Against Girls in South African Schools*, Human Rights Watch, London, 2001; Vogelman & Lewis, op cit.

77   See Vogelman & Lewis, op cit; Salo, *Gangs and Sexuality on the Cape Flats*, op cit.

78   Leoschut & Burton, op cit.

79   Cited in Palmary I & Moat C, *Preventing Criminality Among Young People*, *A Resource Book for Local Government*, 2002. Available at <http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/papipcm.htm> (accessed 24 November 2006).

80   Kollapan J, 'School violence'. Report for the Helen Suzman Foundation, South African Human Rights Commission, 2006.

81   Phillip B, *Violence in South African Township Schools – An Exploration*, University of Cape Town Institute of Criminology, 15 January 1999, (abstract).

82   Eliasov N & Frank C, *Crime and Violence in Schools in Transition: A Survey of Crime and Violence in Twenty Schools in the Cape Metropole and Beyond*, Institute of Criminology, University of Cape Town, June 2000.

83   Ibid.

84   See Human Rights Watch, op cit.

85   Leoschut & Burton, op cit.

86   Morrell, op cit, p 41.

87   Human Rights Watch, op cit.

88   Ibid.

89   Ibid.

90   Eaton L, Flisher AJ & Aarø LE, Unsafe sexual behaviour in South African youth, *Social Science and Medicine*, 56, 2003, pp 149-165.

91   Matthews I, Griggs R & Caine G, *The Experience Review of Interventions and Programmes Dealing with Youth Violence in Urban Schools in South Africa*, Independent Projects Trust, 1999.

92   Leach F, Learning to be violent: The role of the school in developing adolescent gendered behaviour, *Compare*, 33, 2003, p 397.

93   Matthews et al, op cit.
94   Eaton et al, op cit.
95   Ibid.
96   Ibid (cited in).
97   Wood K, Maforah F, Jewkes R, *Sex, Violence and Constructions of Love Among Xhosa Adolescents: Putting Violence on the Sexuality Education Agenda*, CERSA-Women's Health Medical Research Council, 1996.
98   Haffejee S, 'Waiting opportunities: Adolescent girls' experiences of gender-based violence at schools'. Research report written for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation's Gender-based Violence programme, September 2006. Available at <http://www.csvr.org.za/papers/paphaff.htm> (accessed 8 November 2006).
99   Britton, op cit.
100   Hirschowitz et al, op cit.
101   Jewkes R & Abrahams N, The epidemiology of rape and sexual coercion in South Africa: An overview, *Social Science and Medicine*, 55, 2002, pp 1238.
102   Hirschowitz et al, op cit.
103   Eaton et al, op cit.
104   Ibid; Wood et al, op cit; Swart L-A, Seedat M, Stevens G & Ricardo I, Violence in adolescents' romantic relationships: Findings from a survey amongst school-going youth in a South African community, *Journal of Adolescence*, 25, 2002.
105   Human Rights Watch, op cit.
106   Ibid.
107   Also see citation in Dunkle KL, Jewkes RK, Brown HC, Yoshihama M, Gray GE, McIntyre JA & Harlow SD, Prevalence and patterns of gender-based violence and revictimization among women attending antenatal clinics in Soweto, South Africa, *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 160(3), 2004, pp 230-239.
108   Swart et al, op cit.
109   Ibid.
110   Vogelman & Lewis, op cit.
111   Hirschowitz, op cit.
112   Pettifor AE, Rees HV, Steffenson A, Hlongwa-Madikizela L, MachPhail C, Vermaak K, Kleinschmidt I, *HIV and Sexual Behaviour Among South Africans: A National Survey of 15-24 Year Olds*, Reproductive Health Research Unit, University of Witwatersrand, 2004.
113   Ibid.
114   Dorrington RE, Johnson LF, Bradshaw D & Daniel T, *The Demographic Impact of HIV/AIDS in South Africa: National and Provincial Indicators for 2006*, Centre for Actuarial Research, South African Medical Research Council and Actuarial Society of Society, Cape Town, 2006. Available at <http://www.mrc.ac.za/bod/Demographic ImpactHIVIndicators.pdf> (accessed 30 November 2006).
115   Barker & Ricardo, op cit.
116   Morrell, op cit.
117   See Phillip, op cit; Hirschowitz et al, op cit.
118   Hirschowitz et al, op cit.
119   Leoschut & Burton, op cit.

To be someone: Status insecurity and violence in South Africa

David Bruce

INTRODUCTION

The maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* ('a person is a person because of other people') speaks to the fact that all of us depend in part on some form of recognition and respect from other people in order to feel that we are human, and to establish social bonds with other people. But what happens if we feel uncertain about whether or not we can achieve acceptance from the people around us?

The concept of 'status' is generally interpreted as one's social position in terms of concerns such as wealth, fame, office or rank. But at a very basic level, it can be seen as referring to the need which we all have to achieve acceptance or respect from other people, including members of our family, peer group or community. Acts of violence can be seen as falling on the opposite end of the spectrum to attitudes of acceptance and respect in our relationships with other people. They may also be seen as an expression of feelings of insecurity and uncertainty about our ability to achieve social acceptance.

The way we perceive ourselves in relation to others is partly linked to individual attributes of our internal psychology and personality. It is also shaped by social and societal influences. In South Africa, a variety of historical and contemporary social factors appear to have simultaneously contributed to creating both a premium on status and a socioeconomic context in which many feel unable to prove or improve their social position. It appears that this accentuated insecurity plays an important role in violence and other crime in South Africa.

This chapter discusses the relationships between violence and questions of status in South Africa. It argues that:

■ considerations of status and 'status insecurity' play a key role in motivating and precipitating violence; and

■ a variety of historical and contemporary social factors accentuate the importance of status and heighten status insecurity, which in turn feeds into the heightened levels of violence and other crime in South Africa.

The chapter examines the gendered relationship between status insecurity and crime, and shows that status insecurity and the violence that accompanies it is an overwhelmingly male phenomenon.

GENDER VIOLENCE IN NGANGELIZWE

In their 2001 study on post-adolescent boys' use of violence and coercion within sexual relationships in Ngangelizwe township in the Eastern Cape, Wood and Jewkes show that violence and threats of violence against prospective or current female sexual partners is intimately bound up with how young men see the world – and how they wish to be seen by others.[1] The young men used violence and threats of violence: in situations of jealousy or suspected infidelity; as a means of obtaining the 'cooperation' of young women who resisted their sexual advances (or desire to become involved in a 'love affair), attempted to end the relationship or resisted male attempts to dictate the terms of the relationship; and where a girl was perceived to be interfering with her boyfriend's relationships with other women. [2]
Young men and women in Ngangelizwe lead their lives in a context where:

> poverty, mind-numbing boredom and the lack of opportunities or prospects for advancement contribute to young people investing substantial personal effort in the few arenas where entertainment and success are achievable, most notably their sexual relationships.[3]

Sexual relationships are not seen as an end in themselves; whether one is involved in relationships and the nature of these relationships are seen as key determinants of whether or not one is able to obtain respect from one's peers.

> Notions of 'successful' masculinity prevailing in the streets were partially constituted through sexual relationships with girls and deployed in struggles for position and status among male peers. Thus, on one level, 'successful' masculinity was defined in dominant peer culture in terms of a young man's number of sexual partners, his choice of main partner (and related to this the sexual desirability of his partner to other men) and his ability to 'control' girlfriends.[4]

Young men spoke 'explicitly about the importance of their sexual relationships in enabling them to access "position" and respect among their male peers'.[5]

> Informants explained that having many girlfriends brought recognition from

other men that they were a 'playboy' and a 'real' man: 'it's to show my status to men … they start respecting you … we say it's the difference between boys and men'.[6]

Violence was not only used as an instrument of authority in relationships but also to ensure that men can present themselves to other men as 'men in control'.[7] Certain forms of violence were seen as legitimate ways to control female partners,[8] but violence against women also took place within a symbolic context where men must be seen to exercise authority in their relationships in order to obtain the respect of others.

> On one level violent practices constituted critical strategies for young men in their attempts to maintain particular self images and social evaluations, in particular those reflecting 'successful' masculinity. Assault was one means of dealing with those aspects of their girlfriend's behaviour which threatened to subvert the young men's living-out of particular notions of successful masculinity.[9]

Wood and Jewkes therefore see considerations of status as being a key factor in understanding gender-based violence in Ngangelizwe. Status is not only the main motivator of violence; it also plays an important role in feeding into violence. While involvement in a sexual relationship with a woman enhances a young man's ability to obtain the respect of his peers, such respect will be undermined if he is not seen by others to be able to exercise control over her.

Poorer young men face greater difficulty in establishing sexual relationships and in maintaining the loyalty of their partners within these relationships.

Poorer boys face particular difficulties in acquiring partners and gaining status with peers. For example, male informants who came from much poorer backgrounds and those who were still at school expressed their feelings of vulnerability in the face of girls' preference for wealthy partners with cars, who were said to enable them to 'boast' and compete with other girls.

Wood and Jewkes suggest that the fact that men who are poorer have greater difficulty in establishing and maintaining relationships is perhaps reflected in their being more ready to resort to violence in relationships. Being more uncertain about their ability to maintain the loyalty and compliance of their partners, they may be more inclined to resort to violence as a way of 'keeping the upper hand'[10] in their relationships.

STATUS AND STATUS INSECURITY

Wood and Jewkes's study illustrates the importance of status and the way in which this feeds into gender-based violence in Ngangelizwe. This chapter extends their analysis and argues that factors to do with status play an important role in

contributing to the high levels of violent crime in South Africa. But how should the term status, as used in this chapter, be understood? The word is best explained using Maslow's hierarchy of needs.[11] After the first level (physiological) and second level (safety) needs, come the third level (love/belonging) and fourth level (esteem) needs.

In general usage, 'status' is comparable to the term 'esteem', which describes Maslow's fourth level. Maslow describes 'esteem' in part as related to 'status, fame, glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity or appreciation'.[12] Thus, the term 'social status' can be understood to refer to social position in terms of concerns such as wealth, fame, office or rank.

However, there is clearly interplay between the third and fourth (as well as other) levels. A person who is uncertain about their ability to achieve 'love/belonging' (third level needs in Maslow's terms) might focus on obtaining respect or esteem from other people (Maslow's fourth level) as a way of achieving love/belonging.[13] This is not to suggest that the concern with status is purely a reflection of an underlying inability to find 'belonging'. As suggested by Maslow, achieving social status is a goal in its own right, but preoccupation with climbing the social ladder often reflects a lack of confidence in one's ability to establish basic social bonds rather than a distinct set of fourth level needs.

As understood here, concerns about 'status' therefore relate to 'beliefs or feelings about one's ability to achieve standing, acceptance or respect among members of one's family, peer group or community'.[14] Implicitly, 'status insecurity' refers to an internal uncertainty or doubt about one's ability to achieve such standing or acceptance. This uncertainty may stem from and feed into uncertainty about being able to meet one's other more basic needs. Some people may also experience a generalised uncertainty and insecurity which is not specifically linked to a particular level of needs.

STATUS, STATUS INSECURITY AND VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The salience of the issue of status in South African society has been acknowledged in official quarters. In his Nelson Mandela memorial lecture on 29 July 2006, President Thabo Mbeki noted that 'personal wealth, and the public communication of the message that we are people of wealth' has in many ways become 'the means by which we communicate the message that we are worthy citizens of our community'.[15] Rather than individual worth being defined by factors such as integrity or the contribution an individual makes to society, the ability of people to flaunt consumer goods seems to be the core means in terms of which many people feel that they can earn the respect of their peers and communities.

The issue was also addressed in the South African government's 'A Nation in the Making' report, released in June 2006. The report highlights the extent to which consumer goods and 'conspicuous consumption' have become

determinants of worth and status in South Africa.[16] Though this is not argued in the report, it is reasonable to suggest that part of what underpins the preoccupation with consumer symbols of status is a pervasive underlying insecurity about the self and about personal worth.

(VIOLENT) PROPERTY CRIME

The 'A Nation in the Making' report also remarks on how the obsession with consumer goods often compels people 'to operate on, and sometimes beyond, the margins of legality'.[17] The factors driving the preoccupation with status symbols provide a motive for acquisitive behaviour, and in the context of widespread poverty may encourage acquisitive crime. According to the 2005/2006 crime statistics released by the South African Police Service, acquisitive property crime makes up 58% of all recorded crime in South Africa. Most of this crime (49%) does not involve violence, but 9% (roughly 15% of all property and acquisitive crime) is 'violent property crime' in the form of robbery.[18]

Research provides support for the idea that some of this crime is fuelled by the materialism underlying perceptions of status in South Africa. A study by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) into young men's reasons for committing crime, for example, shows that money made from crime often supports a particular lifestyle that is hedonistic, glamorous and revered:

> I think my friend and I did crime for similar reasons of our family background but we used our money for useless things like clothes, alcohol, drugs and 'vibe' (groove life). Ladies also demand a lot. They don't want boyfriends who don't have any money. They want you to be mobile and to have cash. If you can't afford it, as is in most cases, then you steal it. Even the ladies, you want to impress them, show them that you are driving your own car and that you've got money. We are the people who know how to live.[19]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

As examined above, Wood and Jewkes's study of gender violence in Ngangelizwe shows that status factors play an important role in shaping gender-based violence. Being involved in sexual relationships and being able to obtain compliance from one's partner in relation to sex is part of how some men evaluate their own worth or status and that of their peers.

Within the existing sexual relationships which Wood and Jewkes describe, many of the men resort to coercion and violence where their attempts to initiate sex are resisted, or where their partners appear to challenge male authority. This is at least in part because non-compliance is incompatible with the image they believe they must sustain in the eyes of other men (as well as perhaps in the eyes of their partners).

More generally, violence by men against their domestic partners is likely frequently to reflect the fact that these men feel insecure about their status in the home and society. Violence serves as a way for them to cope with their feelings of insecurity and threatened self-respect.

Status factors may also feed into sexual violence in other ways. The desire to punish women who are perceived as 'too proud' or who 'think they are too good' for the perpetrators appears to be a contributing factor in some sexual assaults. In these cases, rejection of a young man's sexual advances is interpreted as humiliating and deserving of punishment. As one of the respondents in Mokwena's study of the jackrollers (see Chapter 2 of this monograph) states: 'These women think they are better than anyone else, they look down on us, they prefer men who have money and drive in nice cars.'[20] Referring to the respective demeanours of a man and woman after she has been forced into sex, another respondent states: 'He will be smiling and walking proudly, the girl will be looking on the ground. He will have humbled her.'[21]

INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE BETWEEN MEN

Alongside robbery and gender violence, interpersonal violence between men – often related to an argument of one kind or another – is another major form of violence. According to the 2003 National Victims of Crime Survey carried out by the Institute for Security Studies, 2.2% of respondents indicated that they had been victims of assault, 2% indicated that they had been victims of robbery, and 0.1% indicated that they had been victims of sexual assault.[22]

Among young people, victimisation generally and assault particularly are much higher. According to the 2005 National Youth Victimisation Study, 16.5% of young people in the 12–22 year age bracket indicated that they had been assaulted in the past year.[23] While the statistics show that women are frequently victims of assault (including many in domestic violence–type situations), in the vast majority of the cases where the victim dies (and in many non-fatal assaults) both the victim and perpetrator are men.[24] In the National Youth Victimisation Study, 19.6% of male respondents and 13.4% of female respondents indicated that they had been assaulted.[25]

Data from the National Victims of Crime Survey provides an indication of at least the superficial reasons motivating such attacks. The study shows that 20% of victims of assault attributed the assault to long-term personal anger towards the victim, 15% to sudden personal anger, 13% to money disputes, 12% to jealousy or other romantic motives, and 12% to anger towards the friends or family of the victim.[26] This data is likely to provide only a partial answer to the questions of why violence occurred at a particular point or why there is so much violence in South Africa. Why would an individual react to an insult or slight with violence?

Without much more substantive empirical data on the circumstances of these assaults, it is nevertheless reasonable to assume that, as found elsewhere in the

world, the violence is linked to low self-esteem and 'fragile self-concepts' where 'many acts of violence arise from incidents that are trivial in origin – insult, curse or a jostle – the significance of which is blown out of all proportion'.[27]

It is plausible to think that individuals who are insecure about their ability to maintain the respect of others or who feel that violence is their primary way of garnering respect will be more likely to interpret the words or actions of others as insulting. Perceived insults would also be more likely to trigger internal anxiety or uncertainty about how they are seen by other people, which may lead to aggressive behaviour particularly where individuals lack knowledge and confidence about other ways of earning respect.

This finds support in the psychological analyses that link certain types of violence to individuals with a fragile sense of self respect; individuals who not only easily feel threatened but who tend to interpret other people's actions as insulting or derogatory.[28] In addition to situations where the protagonist sees his own status as being threatened, these studies show that he may also react to a perceived slight to an associate (friend or family member) which is experienced as a personal insult.

Even where the dispute is described as a 'money dispute' – as was the case in 13% of responses in the National Victims of Crime Survey – it may be less the money and more the perceived insult (such as that involved in failing to repay a debt or cheating someone out of money) which enrages the protagonist. As found in a study on prison violence in the UK:

> Material interests were involved in fewer than half of the disputes that led to violence, and drugs were a key factor in fewer than 13% of the incidents. Non-material values such as respect, fairness, or honour, featured in some way in every fight and assault in the study.[29]

OTHER LINKS BETWEEN STATUS CONCERNS AND VIOLENCE

Status factors can also been seen to play a role in promoting other forms of social behaviour which are associated with violence. Insecurities about status may be one factor encouraging gun ownership. For instance, in a discussion of the relationship between gun violence and masculinity, Jackie Cock observes that 'to a diverse number of young South African men guns are a marker of status, and signal a particular style'.[30]

Seekings also identifies the potential to earn respect as a factor contributing to the involvement of young criminals in the political violence of the 1980s and early 1990s. In his words:

> Participation in 'political' struggle provided an opportunity for them to harness their machismo and aggression for a reputable cause, and earn respect from others, both as fighters and as heroes.[31]

In a similar vein Simpson presents the involvement of young people in political violence as an alternative to gang membership, and as part of youngsters' pursuit of belonging that earned them an unprecedented degree of recognition.

> For many, political organisation represented the alternative to the gang as a cohesive subcultural response to the experience of marginalisation. As the shock troops of liberation, fighting guns with stones, many young black South African men established an alternative subculture and place of social cohesion, which simultaneously placed them back on the front page of the daily newspapers – centre stage within the very society which had so rejected them. Indeed political organisation clothed them in a new uniform represented by the colours and banners of the political party. It had its own language in the songs of liberation and its own rituals associated with the politics of protest and the toyi toyi. It represented a truly cohesive alternative subculture which gave young men a key stake in society and in which the rites of passage and the means of acquiring status were often premised on their proving themselves through direct involvement in violence – which was socially approved (and frequently celebrated) in the name of liberation.[32]

In Simpson's analysis, aspects of contemporary gang culture mimic the glorification of youth violence during the era of political struggle.

> What is most powerful and perhaps most significant, however, is the extent to which youth gang subculture in the late 1990s has explicitly entrenched violence as a key means of acquiring status and thus of graduating within its hierarchical structures.[33]

SOCIAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO STATUS INSECURITY

A concern with status is a 'human universal' that is common to all human societies.[34] Nevertheless concerns about status and the influence of status are moulded by social factors. As a result the influence of status – its impact on individual consciousness and on relationships between people in society – may vary substantially from one society to another.

The focus on South Africa's recent transition from apartheid to democracy often conceals the relatively rapid transition from traditional society to market economy which South Africa has also undergone. A full understanding of status in contemporary South Africa needs to consider the broad cultural shifts that have taken place worldwide in response to the expansion of market economies over the past century. This has involved 'the breaking of the threads which in the past had woven human beings in social textures'[35] and a shift towards systems of social order that emphasise the freedom and autonomy of the individual.

This shift has occurred belatedly in South Africa. Despite apartheid's brutality and negative impact on the social fabric of black society, it in some ways

moderated the full impact of modernity on South Africans. Job reservation, which limited upward mobility for black South Africans (and downward mobility for whites), also limited the impact of the market in undermining social solidarity. This was reinforced by the mutual experience of oppression and suffering. The transition to democracy in the 1990s brought with it new aspirations and a greater reliance on market economics. Within a relatively short period of time, South Africans have become part of a new social order in which communal bonds are of uncertain salience.

During apartheid, inequality mirrored the division between black and white. But the post-apartheid period has seen rising inequality within the black community. The term inequality does not, however, fully capture the type of social system that characterises modern market economies. In addition to the instability, uncertainty and flexibility of employment, contemporary societies are also marked by cultural heterogeneity and a high level of sophistication in the styling and marketing of consumer goods, which consumers encounter as part of a barrage of marketing messages aimed at capturing our attention and influencing our opinions, tastes and consumption behaviour.

Conspicuous consumption, such as that increasingly seen in South Africa, heightens the awareness of inequality between groups and provokes internal questions about one's value and worth – particularly where one cannot afford to conform.

Writing in a British context, Young describes contemporary societies as bulimic in the sense that they simultaneously include and exclude people. Many people are excluded structurally through poverty and unemployment, while others face perpetual job insecurity or must work in jobs which they or others regard as demeaning. At the same time people are also included in society in some ways, such as through participation in elections, through mass education as well as mass television. These help to model what is expected of a successful, productive citizen, while exclusionary processes make it difficult or impossible for many to achieve these standards. As Young remarks of television: 'Television drama, news and advertisements contain not only plot, story and product but also a background of expect[ations] and assumptions.'[36]

Analyses of South African society may be inclined to see insecurity as a highly localised phenomenon derived in part from feelings of a lack safety with respect to violence and crime, and political change and transformation. But these factors merely accentuate the more ubiquitous insecurities that characterise the contemporary world.[37]

The ability that individuals have to deal with the complexity and uncertainty of the modern world is affected by their internal sense of worth and degree of psychological integration and balance. In South Africa, the internal uncertainty and doubt that individuals experience is compounded not only by feelings of physical insecurity but also by the legacy of racism as a result of which '[b]lack males of all ages' have had 'to deal with their inferior status, often experienced as

emasculation' and which 'through the creation of powerlessness and impotence … imposes a form of "inferiority complex" upon its victims'.[38] This is reinforced by factors such as high levels of unemployment:

> Psychologists have pointed out that for many men, work is inextricably tied to gender expectations and their experiences of masculinity. Unemployment is thus experienced as a personal, rather than a social failure.[39]

Implicit in contemporary societies which are part of the international market economy is the idea that each of us is potentially able to become an economic actor. Whether this idea is valid or not, as individuals in these societies we tend to internalise the expectation that we should be able to validate ourselves by having careers and operating as consumers within the market economy. Consumption is seen as the means to self-actualisation in which we can fulfil ourselves and lead more satisfying lives. Both social acceptance and survival thus depends on a type of self-actualisation that is qualitatively different from that which was required of the mass of people in societies in the past and which in practice is only available to a limited number of people in the modern world. In this context it is inevitable that many of us will face uncertainty about how to 'be someone' in the world in which we live.

CONCLUSION

Status insecurity appears to contribute to all of the forms of violence highlighted in this chapter, namely, violent property crime, violence against women and interpersonal violence between men.

While the social factors feeding into status insecurity are not restricted to men, the violence which is associated with it is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men. This raises an interesting question about the implications of democratic South Africa's push for greater equality, particularly gender equality, for analyses based on 'status insecurity'. Although it is by no means the only factor, the emphasis on gender equality in South Africa would appear to be an additional factor contributing to male status insecurity.

However, the concept of status insecurity should not be used as an argument against gender equality. Rather it implies that as we pursue formal equality between men and women (and other societal groupings) and attack patriarchal attitudes, we must consider how this will impact on status insecurity – and by extension crime. It also suggests that a holistic, long-term response to crime will require specific attention to ways of nurturing and restoring dignity and self-respect among South African men.

ENDNOTES

1 Wood K & Jewkes, R, 'Dangerous' Love: Reflections on violence amongst Xhosa township youth, in Morrel R (ed), *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg/Zed Books Ltd, London, 2001. The paper presents the findings of research among 16-25 years olds, and hence the terms 'boys' and 'men' are used interchangeably by the authors.

2 Ibid, pp 319, 323-327.

3 Ibid, p 318.

4 Ibid, p 319.

5 Ibid, p 320.

6 Ibid, p 321.

7 Ibid, pp 323-324.

8 The authors note that 'More severe violence against girlfriends was not generally condoned and indeed was often said to be morally unacceptable by young men who recognized the unfairness of the physical "one-sidedness" of beating (as opposed to slapping) women' (Ibid, p 330).

9 Ibid, pp 327-328.

10 Ibid, p 323.

11 Maslow A, *Motivation and Personality* (2nd ed), Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1970.

12 Ibid.

13 This is reflected in discussions of self-esteem which distinguish between two forms of self-esteem. One is a more confident, assured self-esteem which is often related to a more balanced and integrated personality. However, some people who have internal feelings of inadequacy may be more inclined to invest in obtaining special recognition (status) from other people. In other words: people with low self-esteem may seek status (recognition, fame, glory) in order to obtain love/belonging. In the absence of self-assuredness about one's ability to establish basic social bonds (love/belonging), one may be much more likely to emphasise achieving esteem/status based on recognition from others. See, for example, Campbell R & Foddis, W, *Is High Self - Esteem Bad for You?* Available at <http://www.objectivistcenter.org> (accessed 8 August 2006); as well as the Wikipedia entry on 'Self-esteem', <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-esteem> (accessed 8 August 2006).

14 Bruce D, Racism, self-esteem and violence in SA: Gaps in the NCPS explanation, *South African Crime Quarterly*, 17, September 2006, p 34.

15 Mbeki T, Nelson Mandela Memorial Lecture, University of the Witwatersrand, 29 July 2006.

16 Policy Coordination and Advisory Services, 'A Nation in the Making: A Discussion Document on Macro-social Trends in South Africa', Office of the Presidency, 2006, p 88.

17 Ibid, p 89.

18 Louw A, Start of a crime wave? The 2005/06 official crime statistics in context, *South African Crime Quarterly*, 18, December 2006, p 2.

19 Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), 'Into the heart of darkness: Journeys of the Amagents in crime, violence and death'. Paper prepared as part of research conducted by the CSVR for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), 1998. Available at <http://www.csvr.org.za/pubslist/pubscrim.htm> (accessed May 2007).

20 Mokwena S, *The Era of the Jackrollers: Contextualising the Rise of Youth Gangs in Soweto*, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 1991.

21 Ibid.

22 Burton P, Du Plessis A, Leggett T, Louw A, Mistry D & Van Vuuren H, *National Victims of Crime Survey: South Africa 2003*, Monograph No. 101, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2004.

23 Leoschut L & Burton P, *How Rich the Rewards? Results of the 2005 National Youth Victimisation Study*, Monograph No 1, CJCP, Cape Town, 2006. 9.4% of respondents reported being victims of robbery and 4.2% victims of sexual assault.

24 Many of the assault-related murders recorded by the police appear to be related to escalating arguments or fights between two people where, were it not for the fact that one is now living and the other dead, it would be difficult to ascribe the roles of 'victim' and 'perpetrator'. The same presumably applies to assaults more generally. Neither police statistics nor victimisation studies indicate the extent to which incidents which are recorded as acts of assault are in fact in some way related to an argument, and perhaps a physical fight, in which the two parties were active protagonists. Insofar as women are victims of assaults perpetrated by men, it may generally be assumed that they were not involved in physical aggression against the man. But when considering assaults when both the parties involved are male, it seems that the question of the role of the different parties in contributing to the physical conflict is one that cannot be avoided.

25 Leoscht & Burton, op cit, p 53.

26 Burton et al, op cit. In some cases (17%) victims also thought the assault was an attempted robbery.

27 Levi M & Maguire, M, Violent crime, in Maguire M, Morgan R & Reiner R (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, p 818.

28 For examples of literature on the relationship between self-esteem and violence see Bushman B & Baumeister R, Threatened egotism, narcissism, self-esteem, and direct and displaced aggression: Does self-love or self-hate lead to violence?, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75(1), 1998, pp 219-29; and Donnellan M, Trzesniewski K, Robins R, Moffitt T & Caspi, A, Low self-esteem is related to aggression, antisocial behavior, and delinquency, *Psychological Science*, 16, 2005, pp 328-335.

29 Stanko B, *Taking Stock: What Do We Know About Interpersonal Violence*, ESRC Violence Research Programme, 2002, p 25.

30 Cock J, Gun violence and masculinity in contemporary South Africa, in Morrel R (ed), *Changing Men in Southern Africa,* University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg/Zed Books Ltd, London, 2005, p 47.

31 Seekings, cited in Barolsky V, *Transitioning Out of Violence: Snapshots from Kathorus*, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Violence in Transition Series, Cape Town, 2005, p 75.

32 Simpson G, Shock troops and bandits: Youth, crime and politics, in Steinberg J (ed), *Crime Wave – The South African Underworld and its Foes*, Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 2001, p 123.

33 Ibid, p 126.

34 Brown's Human Universals quoted in Pinker S, *The Blank Slate*, Penguin Books, 2002, p 438.

35 Hobsbawm E, *Age of Extremes*, Michael Joseph, London, 1994, p 334.

36 Young, J, Crime and social exclusion, in Maguire, et al op cit, p 477.

37 See for instance Young, op cit. This would help to enable us to make sense of the statement in Cock's analysis of gun violence in South Africa that 'a common theme articulated by many informants who had purchased guns for self-protection was a sense of being powerless; of being victims of social forces beyond their control' (p 48).

38 Mokwena, op cit.

39 Ibid.

The TRC structures and resulting violence

Elise Kipperberg

'TO BE SAFE, TO BE FREE, TO BELONG AND TO BE ME'[1]

New forms of violence – and increasing violence – often develop in the aftermath of peace negotiations and peace agreements, independent of whether the conflict has been intra-state or between states. Violence is a complex problem that is linked to the national policy and structures of a society, as well as inter- and intrapersonal issues. Would it not be reasonable to expect, however, that countries which have gone through a deep and wide national reconciliation process, like South Africa, should be better able to construct a more secure and stable society than those that have not undergone such a process? This does not necessarily appear to be the case. In South Africa, very high rates of crime and violence continue.

What factors influence the likelihood of violence? Why is violence and state insecurity such a dominant feature in the everyday lives of people living in South Africa, particularly the youth? Why has violence from the apartheid era – violence primarily between white and black – now seemingly developed into increased violence within the same ethnic groups, as well as within the family? Could the TRC's theoretical or ideological platform, structures and mechanisms have contributed to a higher level of societal safety?

This chapter focuses on an issue seldom explored in other studies and publications about the TRC, namely: how the TRC dealt with children and youth as victims of gross human rights violations, and whether there are connections between the increasing violence in South Africa today and how young people were included in the reconciliation and reparation process.[2]

These questions are important for two reasons. First, children and youth were the 'footsoldiers of the struggle' and suffered the most human rights violations described in the Promotion of the National Unity and Reconciliation Act[3] and identified by the TRC,[4] which stated that probably two or more children and

young people suffered for almost every adult that was violated. Yet the TRC process failed to address adequately the abuses experienced by young people during the apartheid era, thus denying them the opportunity for debriefing and healing. The exclusion of the youth also cut them off from access to individual reparation grants and individual psychosocial rehabilitation. Second, these 'young lions' from the apartheid era are the parent generation of today.

The chapter focuses on three issues:

■ How did the TRC treat the children and youth who were actively involved in the fight for freedom?

■ What experiences, or 'luggage', do many of today's young parent generation bring with them which affects their interactions with their children, family, friends and society in general, and what are the expected outcomes of this?

■ What challenges do the above pose for South Africa's ongoing reconciliation process? In what way can the new TRC unit in the Department of Justice compensate for the earlier inadequate interventions?

YOUTH UNDER APARTHEID: AGENTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Between 1976 and 1990, thousands of children and youth engaged in the struggle for freedom and equity:[5] they played a crucial role in opposing the apartheid system; they announced meetings and acted as a network for the distribution of pamphlets, organised boycotts, provided advance warning of attacks or raids by the security forces and reconnected services cut off by the government. Schools became centres of community organisation against repression. Sometimes whole schools were taken into custody. At times the detention of schoolchildren as young as seven was fairly common. Children and youth became agents of social change. Despite experiencing violence and risking their lives, participation in the struggle also gave young people new skills, such as the capacity to analyse, develop strategies, organise and mobilise. The liberation struggle nurtured wisdom, tolerance, leadership, responsibility and resilience. Children and youth displayed huge energy and courage during the apartheid period but they also became the prime target group of the apartheid regime.[6]

Riefaat Hattas is an example of one of these youth. He was 15 when he became active in the struggle without any previous political experience and 16 when he was voted on to the Inter-Schools Coordination Committee, whereafter he soon became a member of the executive group and supported the United Democratic Front. A year later Riefaat went into hiding because the police were looking for him.[7] He was arrested, detained and tortured on several occasions for the first time at 17. Testifying at the Hearing on Youth in May 1997 in Athlone, Western Cape, Riefaat described the life of the young combatants. As children they had no

time to develop relationships or to participate in sports. Their lives consisted of meetings and protest marches, he explained. They faced rubber bullets and often live ammunition:

> Our primary goal was to make the country ungovernable so that our leaders could return and lead us into a true democracy – a democracy where everybody would be equal, a culture where young people, especially children, do not have to be on the run from the security forces, where they do not have to jump out of windows in the middle of the night because they were sought for section 51 and the Terrorist Act section 29, where students could go to school and not have to fight a war, where they could enjoy their youth among friends, going to parties, playing sport and just be children.[8]

The TRC report shows that during apartheid, South Africa's children were exposed to oppression, exploitation, deprivation and humiliation, as well as structural violations from the state. The latter included gross inequalities in educational resources, massive poverty, unemployment, homelessness, widespread crime and family breakdown.[9] According to the TRC, children and youth were exposed to and involved in three kinds of violence:

- *State oppression and counter mobilisation:* This included involvement in the protest against pass laws in the 1960s, the student revolt in Soweto in 1976 and the establishment of various student and youth organisations which mobilised schools and communities against state oppression.

- *Counter violence:* Some detained children were taken to rehabilitation camps by the state security forces where it is believed that many were turned into informers and participants in counter mobilisation structures and other security projects organised by the state.

- *Inter- and intra-community violence:* From 1987 violence in the communities escalated as a result of growing vigilantism. In many cases the responsibility for protecting their homes and streets fell on children and youth, who formed self-defence units. Vigilante groups were recruited from conservative, traditional groups, unemployed men and criminal groups, and often targeted children and youth as they were seen as the torchbearers of progressive thinking. Occasionally whole families were targeted by vigilantes because their sons or daughters had joined the self-defence units.

DEATH, DETENTION, TORTURE, HUNGER STRIKES, BANNINGS

The Human Rights Commission of South Africa (HRC) has estimated that there were 7,000 deaths among children and youth between 1960 and 1989, the period

of greatest political unrest.[10] Of these, 4,200 (60%) were under the age of 21 and 1,750 (25%) were under 18. The majority of the killings reported to the TRC commission were of young men between the age of 13 and 24. In addition, 12,000 youth – among them 5,000 children – were injured by the teargas, rubber bullets, live ammunition, sjamboks (whips) and birdshot used by the security forces. A number of babies died in their homes as result of teargas, although few murders of children under the age of 12 were reported to the TRC.

A total number of 20,000 children under 18 years were detained without trial from 1960 to 1990, according to the HRC.[11] Some of these children were extremely young. In a published newspaper letter, the Detainees Parents' Support Committee refers to children as young as four being detained, children of six being removed from their schools and held in police cells, and children from the age of 10 being found in police mortuaries days after disappearing.[12] The HRC submission stated that 2,500 girls under the age of 18 were detained without trial. Several babies were detained with their mothers, and babies were born in detention. Some babies were also separated from their mothers in detention.[13]

According to the HRC, at least one in four detainees was tortured or assaulted before being released. Torture by electric shock, suffocating, beating, kicking, cigarette burns, being kept naked during interrogation, deprivation of sleep and food and being made to stand in an unnatural position were routine. Children and youth undertook numerous hunger strikes to draw attention to their isolation in detention, putting their lives at risk.[14]

In its submission to the TRC, the HRC refers to figures revealed in parliament and to records from human rights monitors such as the Detainees Parents' Support Committee and the HRC itself, and estimates that approximately 100,000 youths under the age of 25 were arrested and prosecuted for their political activities during the 1960–1990 period.[15] About 60,000 were convicted and sentenced to jail, half of whom were children under 18 years old. About 1,000 youths under the age of 25 were served with banning orders or restriction orders. Being banned impacted negatively on young people's family, social life and education. It also made them vulnerable to harassment by the authorities and even assassination. Over a quarter of all banning and restriction orders during the 1950–1989 period were made on youth and student organisations.[16] In addition, the HRC submission comments on the problem of young 'internal refugees': hundreds, perhaps thousands, of young political activists were forced underground into a life on the run in order to escape detention or worse, living in fear of being hunted down by the security police.[17]

END OF APARTHEID 1990–1994: YOUTH THROWN INTO CHAOS AND GANGSTERISM

The character of conflict between the apartheid regime and the struggle activists changed in the period between 1990 and the first democratic elections in 1994. The

government made a fundamentally qualitative switch of strategy from the formal Total Strategy (strategy of apartheid and oppression) to a Destabilisation Strategy directed against townships which used to function as bases for the liberation movement, with the aim of preventing liberation movements from transforming into organised political parties.[18]

The role of children and youth also changed. According to the HRC, the impact on children and youth in the townships and rural communities during these four years was markedly different from the apartheid era. Children and youth were more exposed to what happened in the whole community. Their previous role as proactive political activists was replaced by a more defensive, fire-fighting function.[19] Once portrayed as key social and political agents, they now became increasingly peripheral to crucial political processes. This created a vacuum that was filled by gangsters and criminals.

During this period the self-defence units played an important role protecting local communities mainly in violent townships in the East Rand. In many cases parents left their sons to defend whatever was left of the family home.[20] The relationship between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) (the ruling party in KwaZulu-Natal) developed into a sharp conflict after revelations in 1991 that the IFP had close links with the security police and military intelligence in KwaZulu-Natal.[21] The defence units soon fell into disarray and became sites of fighting and paranoia. Many black youths suspected of being informers were murdered by necklacing.[22] As described by participants in a recent study on former combatants in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape:

> There was a competition between us as self-defence units members – '… how many people have you killed?' If you say 'I've killed 8' it was like you are playing. You know, that thing was a revenge but it felt so bad.[23]

The lines between political actions and criminal activities became blurred. Mistrust and suspicion developed; neighbours turned on each other.

By the day of the first free elections in 1994, 91 major massacres had taken place and 14,000 people had died – double the political death toll of the preceding 40 years.[24] According to the HRC, vigilante-related activities accounted for well over 80% of these deaths. The HRC submission stresses that statistics for this period are somewhat unsure due to the chaos, but points out strongly that the impact on the minds of surviving children and youth witnessing massacres, burnings and tear-gassing is incalculable. In KwaZulu-Natal in particular, young people were forced to flee to the cities in fear for their lives.

IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The negative effects of the apartheid era on children have been recognised for some time. Twenty years ago, Mamphela Ramphele cautioned against the

brutalising impact of violence on the children of South Africa – both as victims and perpetrators, warning of the dehumanising effect.[25]

In a 1985 newspaper article, the Detainees Parents' Support Committee argued that 'the damage arrest has done to the children is almost incalculable'.[26] The parents observed that children who had been detained lived in fear for their lives and were sure that if they were detained again they might not survive. Sometimes this fear was grounded in perceived threats made by the authorities who warned youngsters that they would be held responsible for further arrests. Many younger children became hysterical at the mention of the word 'police' or if they saw an armoured vehicles used by the security forces. The fear that youngsters felt often translated into antisocial behaviour, discipline problems and in some cases clinginess.

Children also experienced guilt towards their friends who may have been punished because of them, and towards their parents to whom they felt they had caused heartache and worry. Therapists working with detainees noted that many of the children were also marked by a deep sense of loneliness. The isolation in detention had damaged them, and in many cases had led to deep depression and a wish to die. As one therapist wrote of a patient:

> He stared at death as one would a long lost friend. He held on to the offer it seemed to make of release of all further suffering – as a newborn child clings to the back of his mother … as far as he was concerned his life had no value. He was no more than a nuisance to all around him … He felt that all dignity had been stripped from him … .[27]

Spraker and Dawes similarly argue that the levels of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and psychosomatic symptoms generated among youth by the struggle are sufficiently high to affect their everyday functioning.[28] Perhaps most important for the topic at hand, children and youth raised in the violent environment of apartheid experience violence as a normal part of life and as an appropriate way of resolving conflict.

THE TRC: ORGANISATION, STRUCTURES AND METHODOLOGY

The mandate of the TRC was established through the May 1995 Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act. After a public process that included public hearings by a multiparty panel in several important towns in South Africa, President Nelson Mandela established a 17-member commission representing all of South Africa's races and major ethnic groups. The members were allocated to three committees: the Human Rights Violation Committee, the Amnesty Committee; and the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee. An investigation unit was established and soon after a research department, which was tasked with assessing and adding value to information brought before the TRC,

contextualising the commission's work in the historical context of the alleged human rights violations and facilitating the writing of the TRC's report for the state president.[29]

The overall goal of the TRC was to promote national unity and reconciliation. The official motto of the TRC was 'Truth – the Road to Reconciliation'. Researchers note that the commission was expected to play a fundamental role in building bridges between people of all races, ethnic groups and political affiliations in post-apartheid South Africa, as well as playing a crucial cathartic role in the transition from the dehumanising past to democracy.[30] This was to be achieved through story telling/truth telling by victims and perpetrators. It was envisaged that uncovering the truth about past crimes would lead to reconciliation and provide a form of restorative justice which would unify the divided South African population.

According to Piet Meiring, who served as a member on one of the subcommittees, the TRC in South Africa was different from truth commissions in other countries in several ways:

- The establishment of the TRC was done as democratically as possible. Many people from different backgrounds provided input before parliament accepted the Act approving the establishment of the commission and its objectives and methods.

- The commissioners were appointed from a variety of interest groups in a transparent way.

- The TRC would make recommendations and policy proposals to the government on reparations to victims and reforms that could advance reconciliation and prevent future human rights abuses.

- The TRC was given the authority to subpoena and confiscate documents, as well as the power to grant perpetrators amnesty.

- In keeping with the goals of transparency and democracy, the TRC hearings were open to the public and the media, and the names of both victims and perpetrators were made public.

- Finally, the TRC examined gross human rights abuses committed by all sides, not just violations perpetrated by the apartheid regime.[31]

It seems that the TRC included elements which provided the platform for a holistic approach to reconciliation in a way that previous truth and reconciliation commissions in other parts of the world had not yet managed to achieve, but it also had its weaknesses.

In trying to understand the levels of violence among children and youth in the aftermath of the TRC, it may be useful to examine in particular:

- the membership of the TRC;
- how information was collected through statement taking, general hearings, institutional hearings and special hearings, particularly what was left out;
- the way the TRC related to children and youth;
- the authority of the Amnesty Committee compared to the authority of the Reparation and the Rehabilitation Committee; and
- the TRC's recommendations on reparations and how these were implemented by the state.

A LACK OF EXPERTISE AND COMPETENCE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Most of the 17 commissioners had a background in religious societies, law and health care; however, none had specific expertise on vulnerable children and youth or the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which South Africa had ratified the same year that the TRC was established. Some of the female commissioners had worked with women's issues, but expertise in this area did not necessarily equip them with the skills to handle children's issues.

The lack of expertise on children and youth and their rights to protection – and to participation – may have contributed to a weak understanding of both children's rights under the CRC and their psychological development. Given the important role of children and youth as agents of social change during apartheid and the impacts on their physical, mental, social and educational situation, it is somewhat surprising that no person with specific knowledge on children's issues and child development was appointed as a commissioner. It can be argued that the TRC's work planned mainly to focus on adults.

STATEMENT TAKING AND PUBLIC HEARINGS ON GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The TRC established regional offices throughout the country in order to increase both victims' and perpetrators' access to statement-takers. Almost 22,000 victims and survivors made individual submissions to the TRC during its life span. Only about 10% of the stories were made public through official public hearings, with only the most 'representative' cases heard before public regional hearings around South Africa.[32] Witnesses, black people in general, critics and members of the TRC have commented that they were disappointed by the absence of the white population at these hearings.[33]

Chapman and Ball reflect about truth commissions and the limitations of hearings and statements on 'truth', arguing that this methodology causes problems.[34] The commission itself had to constitute proper methods and

definitions about how it would claim from massive data that something was 'true'. In this way, they argue, the findings are in fact the product of what the commission decided was the meaning of 'truth'. Chapman and Ball also mention that in South Africa, the TRC commissioners themselves determined who was invited to testify at public hearings and how the testimony was summarised for the record, indicating methodological problems as well as ethical dilemmas.

CHILDREN'S OWN VOICES EXCLUDED FROM THE SPECIAL HEARINGS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

South Africa signed the CRC in 1995, just as the TRC was being established. Article 12 of the CRC gives children the right to express freely their own views regarding all matters concerning them. With this in mind, the TRC organised several hearings for children and youth between 1996 and 1997.[35] Hearings were held during 1997 in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Free State.[36]

The TRC obtained the advice of various groups, including doctors and psychologists working with children, educationalists, trauma centres, youth and student foundations, over 30 children-focused non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), prior to holding these hearings. One of the most controversial issues discussed at the meetings was whether or not children under 18 should appear and testify at the public hearings. The decision was taken that only youth over 18 should be given this opportunity. It was decided that children under the age of 18 should be protected from the public examinations and dialogues, and that professionals who work with children and NGOs dealing with children should testify on their behalf.[37]

This decision was highly controversial and was criticised by children and youth as well as by some international experts. Both Graça Machel and Unicef felt that children should be given the chance to testify themselves.[38] Molo Songololo, a national child rights organisation, protested as well and prepared and sent four of their young members under the age of 18 to the TRC for statement-taking.[39]

The commission did, however, maintain that it was important for children under 18 years old to be given the opportunity to testify, and in-camera hearings were organised where children under the age of 18 could tell their stories with the assistance of trained professionals. According to the TRC report, few children actually approached the TRC with their stories, although it does not give any numbers on this issue. It may be argued though that the limited number of individual statements from children and youth to the TRC could have been a product of the commission's decision to exclude children as active participants from the public hearings. It may also be due to how the hearings were portrayed. Many young people refrained from attending the TRC because they felt that it was primarily victim-oriented, and many young people did not identify themselves as victims but rather saw themselves as freedom fighters.[40]

According to the TRC, considerable effort was made to collect data about children's experiences before the actual hearings. The commission also engaged some children in the hearings: in the Eastern Cape a school choir sang songs; in Gauteng children put on a play; in KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State children contributed with exhibitions of drawings and stories reflecting their experiences prior to the actual hearings; and in the Western Cape high school students read a submission written by two child experts on the impact of apartheid on children and youth.[41] But during the actual hearings, children under 18 were only heard through secondary sources.

Nomfundo Walaza, a pychologist and former director of the Trauma Centre in Cape Town, notes that children aged 12 and over could have testified in public hearings themselves particularly if questioned by someone they trusted, and draws attention to presumptuousness of expert-assisted testimonials. As Walaza observes:

> One finds resilience and strength in young people … If I talk on behalf of a 14-year-old, there is no way I can give meaning to that … We often speak on behalf of others, as teachers, as academics. It is really shocking. … In fact, speaking on behalf of others, unconscious of the things we do, we render their voices silent, perhaps for ever.[42]

Another dilemma was the shortness of time allotted to portraying children's stories and lives. The TRC's report comments that young people's testimony suffered due to time constraints. Except for the hearings in the Western Cape which lasted three days, all other hearings lasted only one day. This time allocation was insufficient and several scheduled speeches had to be shortened or cancelled.[43]

Referring to children's pivotal role in fighting apartheid repression, it is argued in this chapter that limiting children's participation in the public hearings to singing songs, telling stories and exhibiting artwork was a rather superficial act on the part of the TRC. It can be interpreted that the important role and serious responsibility that thousands of children and youth took on in fighting apartheid was in the end not fully acknowledged. It is argued further by the author that the TRC's decision to moderate children's participation in the hearings denied them agency and opportunity to undergo the cathartic processes envisaged by the commission and experienced by many adults. In addition to undermining children's chance to tell their stories in their own words, the author argues that being the dominant victim group of human right violations, the selective involvement of young people thus failed to provide politicians and professionals with a complete picture of the efforts, bravery and suffering of children and youth and how this might have influenced them. Lack of sufficient acknowledgement of this group may also have implications regarding the TRC's recommendations on reparation policy and on the ongoing reconciliation process.

ABSENCE OF EDUCATION SECTOR IN THE INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS

In addition to hearings on gross human rights violations, the TRC organised institutional and special hearings to elucidate on how apartheid was institutionalised in South Africa. Institutional hearings were organised for six sectors: business and labour; the faith community; the legal community; the health sector; the media; and prisons.

Strangely, the education sector was not examined, even though the discrimination of the Bantu education system represented a clear violation of the majority of South African children's right to quality education.

Discussions with the former head of the TRC's Research Unit indicate that this was primarily due to time pressures. He notes that the education sector was not examined because the Department of Education was already carrying out an assessment of the Bantu education system as part of its new curriculum development process – a decision that he strongly regrets.[44]

This failure to examine the structural inequalities in the education sector may be a factor that has contributed to the very high levels of violence experienced in South African schools today. In September 2006, the HRC organised public hearings on violence in schools in South Africa in which it examined both out-of-school factors (such as poverty, electricity at home, space to study, hunger and poor nutrition, scholar transport and learning aids) and in-school factors (such as pedagogy, classroom teaching techniques, resources, staff capacity and competence) in encouraging violence. The testimonies heard during the hearings paint a picture of a sector in crisis where 'weapon-wielding pupils, drug binges during breaks, and pupils inflicting violence' on other learners and teachers are common.[45] The hearings also found that corporal punishment is used frequently in the schools.

The National Youth Victimisation Study undertaken in 2005 by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention documents similar findings. It shows that more than half (51.5%) of the 3,247 children surveyed had been caned or spanked at school.[46] One of the conclusions in the study is that 'young people are at constant threat of danger at school, even from the teachers and the principals'.[47]

While violence at school reflects levels of violence in the broader society and therefore requires a wide range of multifaceted interventions in different areas and at various levels, it is asked in the context of this chapter whether schools would have faced fewer problems if the TRC had explored and sought to address the role of schools in oppression and the violation of human rights.

EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM THE REPARATION PROCESS

Children's access to the reconciliation process was further compromised by the testimony model adopted by the TRC. The principle of individual testimony dominated in the TRC process. Only those who were individually registered and assessed as victims of gross human rights violations by the TRC had the juridical

right to individual reparation and rehabilitation, including monetary compensation.[48]

But as mentioned before, very few children under the age of 18 made statements to the TRC, and few from this age group were therefore identified as victims of gross human rights violations in the TRC register.[49] Thousands of individuals in this age group were therefore deprived of individual reparation and rehabilitation, despite the fact that children and youth 13–24 years old were acknowledged by the TRC as dominating all categories of gross human rights violations described in the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act.[50] This suggests that while the TRC aimed to protect young people during hearings, it failed to address the crucial tension between perceived 'protection' and the individual right to reparation and rehabilitation, and deprived thousands of young people – today's parent generation – access to resources that could have helped them to ensure a better future.

FAILINGS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REPARATION POLICY

Even where young people were eligible for reparations, more general failings of the reparation process, in the author's opinion, undermined the utility of reparations as a tool for correcting past wrongs.[51] The TRC's Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee (RRC) was charged with formulating and making recommendations to the state president regarding the granting of reparations for victims, and identifying other measures to rehabilitate victims and to restore their dignity. The RRC took the position that victims of gross human rights violations had a right to reparation due to their suffering and losses, and saw reparation as a crucial component of reconciliation, stating that:

> Without adequate reparation and rehabilitation measures, there can be no healing and reconciliation, either at an individual or a community level. Comprehensive forms of reparations should also be implemented to restore the physical and mental well being of victims.[52]

The RRC recommended that reparation policy should be guided by the principles of redress, restitution, rehabilitation, restoration of dignity and reassurance of non-repetition. The RRC also recommended that programmes should be designed with the aim of reintegrating perpetrators into society. In general, the RRC recommendations rested heavily on the idea that the growth of a human rights culture in South Africa depended on the country's ability to narrow the gap between rich and poor.

It suggested a comprehensive five-pronged approach to reparations that acknowledged the physical and psychological wounds suffered by adults as well as children and youth during the liberation struggle, and the disillusionment, hatred, bitterness and fear that many felt towards society and its institutions.[53]

This included:

- individual reparation grants (IRGs) for six years for victims of gross human rights violations (to a maximum of R23,023 a year);

- an urgent interim reparation payment for victims in dire need;

- symbolic reparations, legal and administrative interventions;

- community rehabilitation programmes; and

- institutional reform.

The monetary packages were designed to give victims reasonable access to essential basic services and generate opportunities to achieve a dignified standard of living. They gave recipients the freedom to spend grants in the way in which they found most appropriate to redress the injustices they had experienced. The grants were to be provided to victims identified by the TRC, as well as relatives and dependants who were found to be in urgent need. Relatives and dependents of a victim included parents, spouses, children (either in or out of wedlock or adopted) or someone whom the victim had a customary or legal duty to support.[54]

Suggestions from the RRC on community rehabilitation called for, among other things, the establishment of health and social services (such as appropriate local treatment centres) to deal with the complex physical and emotional needs of the general population, including specialised trauma centres, as well as a strategy to integrate perpetrators and their families into normal community life. The TRC also emphasised the need for education reform, assistance to help those whose education was disrupted to continue their studies, the rebuilding of demolished schools and educational support services, as well as housing projects in communities which suffered mass destruction of property.[55]

However, unlike the Amnesty Committee which was mandated to grant amnesty while working with the cases, the RRC had no mandate to implement its recommendations. Implementation fell to the state, which after extensive parliamentary debates presented its policy on reparations in April 2003. In contrast to the TRC recommendations, this included a one-off IRG of R30,000 to survivors of gross human rights violations. More general national reconstruction was prioritised over targeted reparations.[56]

The decision to provide only a limited one-time IRG has caused much distress and frustration among both victims and self-help groups that work with survivors.[57] In some cases, the way the reparation process has been implemented has left victims only marginally better off than they would have been without receiving any grants.

In her research, the author encountered a mother who was detained by the

security police with her 16-month-old baby for several months, both of whom were tortured psychologically. Both mother and child were deemed to be victims of gross human rights violations and were included individually in the victim list drawn up by the TRC. Despite this, mother and son (now 16 years old) received only a total IRG of R30,000. The failure to implement reparations in the spirit envisaged by the RRC not only violates this child's rights and children in general as expressed in the CRC, but conflicts with the state's goal of creating a human rights culture for the new South Africa. No compensation or possibilities of rehabilitation, however minor, may also create a feeling of resignation and a lack of confidence in the new government by many of those who gave up so much in the process of transforming the country.

The curtailed reparation process represents a missed opportunity in terms of healing and the restoration of dignity, as do delays in the provision of reparations. The government postponed initiating the reparation process until the TRC had submitted its final report in 2003.[58] This meant that the nearly 22,000 victims who testified before the commission between 1996 and 1998 and who were acknowledged as victims of gross human rights violations had to wait five to seven years before receiving reparations, which in the author's view is likely to have impacted on young people particularly negatively.

Based on several years of clinical psychological-pedagogical experience and from discussions with many colleagues, the author knows that time is a critical factor in the rehabilitation of vulnerable individuals and groups, especially adolescents and young adults who are already going through a period of transition during which they are completing their education, searching for a job and establishing a family of their own. This perspective is also vital within United Nations operations as well as within NGOs dealing with children and youth in critical and violent situations. In particular, young men seem to be more exposed and drawn into acting-out behaviour than young women, and profit from being employed or taking part in skills training as quickly as possible. In the absence of employment or training, criminal activities may become an option during a long and unforeseeable waiting period.[59] In delaying the reparation process, the new government therefore may have added to the harm inflicted on young people under apartheid and may have undermined the recovery and reconciliation process.

THE CONSEQUENCES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The TRC's failure to fully and meaningfully include and address young people's issues and needs may be one in a range of factors underlying the high levels of youth-perpetrated violence in South Africa today. Despite the complexity of the causes underlying violence, there is no doubt that the reparation and rehabilitation of young victims of gross human rights violations could have helped to combat crime and violence.

Chubb and Van Dijk's interviews with former young political activists some years after the TRC hearings show that many of them suffered physical and psychological trauma, many had missed years of schooling and very few had any realistic prospect of employment. For some the idealism of the past had turned to bitterness, cynicism and anger. They felt marginalised and forgotten, even though they knew that there would not have been a new South Africa without their engagement and sacrifices.[60]

Recent research by the National Peace Accord Trust documents behavioural problems among former combatants. As one young respondent commented:

> … even in the family they say that I am very rude when talking to them. I cannot speak with a person for three minutes. Within a wink of an eye I am throwing a punch. That is my problem. These are some of the things I have to leave behind. I want to become gentle, to be likable and even when things go wrong, I want to be able to ignore them … .[61]

The same study also highlights former combatants' problems with alcohol and drug abuse, as well as their difficulty entering relationships and their lack of trust and isolation. It shows that in addition to emotional and social problems, the insecurities and frustrations associated with a lack of education and skills often contributes to aggression and violent behaviour, including domestic violence. When asked what they felt they needed in order to cope with their pasts, most of the respondents stressed the need for education and skills training as well as psychosocial assistance and rehabilitation.

A NEW PHASE: THE NEW TRC UNIT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Reconciliation is an ongoing process which will take years and generations to complete. The TRC initiated this process, but insisted that its work was only the beginning of a much longer road that would demand engagement from each and every person living in the country.

The RRC recommended to the state to establish a national body headed by a national director of reparation and rehabilitation in order to monitor the implementation of reparation and rehabilitation at the national, provincial and local levels. It also recommended that the national body should be advised by a panel or board of trustees composed of appropriately qualified members from relevant ministries and human rights organisations.[62] In 2005, a new TRC unit was established at the Department of Justice in Pretoria with the aim of monitoring the implementation of the first TRC's recommendations and developing a more holistic reparation policy.[63] The new unit is small, with one leader and two advisers.

It is not clear, however, whether the creation of the unit will significantly forward the reparation and rehabilitation process. Speaking at a national

conference in April 2006 organised by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in Cape Town, the chief director of the new TRC unit reported that as of September 2006, the President's Fund established to pay reparations would contain R712 million. However, much to the consternation of many in the audience he declared that the money in the fund may be transferred to a general disaster fund or used to help in the fight against HIV/Aids.[64]

During an international conference on restorative justice five months later, a representative from the TRC unit informed the delegates that a report on the progress made by each government department in implementing the TRC's recommendations was due to be published by December 2006. The head of the TRC unit explained that there might be a need to evaluate the TRC's recommendations.[65] Participating at both events, the author learned that the TRC unit had so far been unable to present any policy for their work. But representatives from the new TRC unit announced that some guidelines were pending and that they would be made public soon. As of February 2007 neither the report nor the guidelines on reparations and pensions had been published.

Regarding contact between the TRC unit and persons and organisations in the field, the new TRC unit has so far not engaged with NGOs and professionals working on issues related to reparations, reconciliation and the healing of apartheid victims, or of those who committed human rights violations. There is as yet no advisory board or communication structure to facilitate cooperation with South African institutions and organisations, nor any information about whether any such structures would be created in the future.

CONCLUSION

The TRC was conceived as part of a bridge-building process designed to help lead the nation away from a deeply divided past to a future founded on the realisation of human rights and democracy. It has become an international model for dealing with human rights abuses and atrocities by outgoing regimes; however, as shown in this chapter there were weaknesses in the conceptualisation and implementation of the TRC's work and recommendations. Fighting violence and dealing with such a complex problem demands a wide range of interventions, but the commission's failure to include meaningfully children and youth in the reconciliation process constitutes a missed opportunity to make youngsters part of the process. Child experts engaged in the hearings on children and youth a decade ago noted that reconciliation would:

> … require acknowledgement of the wrong done to the young, of the price they have paid, of the achievement they have made in helping to secure a democratic state. And it requires action in securing the basic needs of the young, in providing good education, training and work experience, in building communities that can secure their best interests, especially the

safety and integrity of their bodies, and in tackling the sources of violence in the home and the community.[66]

Yet it is likely that the children of the liberation struggle have and will continue to pay for their contribution. Graça Machel, one of the leading experts on children and armed conflict, reflected on the consequences of the liberation struggle for young people during her opening address of the children and youth hearing in Johannesburg in June 1997:

> South Africa has found a peaceful transition, but the effects of what has happened to our children we will live with us for decades to come. It is no wonder that this country has high rates of criminality with people killing for a car or a cellular telephone. The meaning and value of human life has been destroyed, and one of the most difficult problems we have to address is how to make our youngsters once more understand the value of human life, respect and cherish human life.[67]

The TRC report observes that children and youth exposed to political and community violence will suffer long after the event, and that many of them will carry deep scars into adulthood.[68]

While the high level of violence by and against young people in South Africa undoubtedly has it roots in many aspects of South Africa's past, the general failure to acknowledge the contribution of the youth to the liberation struggle and to provide them with the support and resources needed to ensure them a better future must constitute a key driver of the violence.

Many of the children and youth who participated in the struggle or who were randomly arrested, injured or were witnesses of violence are now parents and role models. Many of today's grown-ups who experienced the legacy of apartheid have the capacity to create 'an ordinary life', but the little research that has been conducted among former combatants suggests that scarred adults may be violent and aggressive, and it is plausible to assume that they provide models of behaviour and parenting that perpetuate violence in today's children and youth.

The establishment of a new Truth and Reconciliation unit may open up the next phase of the truth and reconciliation process in South Africa. It is a positive factor that the government is willing to engage in monitoring the reconciliation process that started more than a decade ago. Unlike its predecessor which focused on reconciliation between victims and perpetrators, the new TRC unit must find ways of helping the government to achieve safety, security and a decent quality of life for all South Africans.

The President's Fund was originally established to support victims of gross human rights violations during the apartheid era. This money needs to be used to assist and support the young victims of apartheid and to create mechanisms to aid reconciliation and healing in the larger society. Such interventions may help to

reduce crime levels and break the chain of violence that permeates many families and communities.

ENDNOTES

1 'Credo for kids' formulated by Christine Mattise, an American educator who has or the past five years brought her anti-bullying programme to South African schools f. Her 'credo for kids' and impressions about schools, pupils and parents in South Africa was published in an interview with her on 1 February 2007 available at <http://www.cabinet.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070201/MILFORD01/70 201004&SearchID=73284733126211> (accessed 2 February 2007).

2 'Children' in this chapter refers to young people of 18 and under, as follows the definition in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Youth follows the definition by most international bodies. This definition was also used by the South African Human Rights Commission in its submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

3 The Promotion of the National Unity and Reconciliation Act, assented to by the President 26 July 1995.

4 TRC, 'The TRC Report', Vol 4, CTP Books, Cape Town, 1998, p 268. The TRC report consists of seven volumes published between the period 1998–2003.

5 Submission 12 June 1997 by the Human Rights Commission of South Africa to the TRC on 'Human Rights Violation by the Apartheid State against Children and Youth'.

6 'TRC Report', op cit, chapter nine.

7 Chubb K & Van Dijk L, *Between Anger and Hope. South Africa's Youth and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Witwaterstrand University Press, Johannesburg, 2001.

8 Ibid, p 43.

9 'TRC Report', op cit.

10 HRC submission, op cit.

11 Ibid, p 4.

12 Our view: The damage arrest has done to our children is almost incalculable – Detainees Parents' Support Committee, *The Star*, 31 October 1985. HRC submission, op cit, Appendix 8B.

13 HRC submission, op cit, p 6.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid, p 8.

16 Ibid, p 7.

17 Ibid, p 5.

18 Ibid, p 13.

19 Ibid.

20 This situation is also illustrated through a testimonial to the TRC during the hearing in Johannesburg, 12 June 1997. Chubb & van Dyjk, op cit, pp 88-98.

21 Ibid, p 247.

22 'TRC Report', op cit.

23 Abrahams B, 'Responding to the Psychosocial skills training needs of former combatants'. Report (unpublished) on research between October 2005 and June 2006 undertaken in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape provinces for the National Peace Accord Trust, Johannesburg, July 2006, p 14.

24 HRC submission, op cit.
25 Wilson F & Ramphele M et al, 1987, 'Children on the frontline', referred to in Asmal K, Chidester D & James W (eds), *South Africa's Nobel Laureates*, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 2004.
26 HRC submission, op cit, Appendix B..
27 Ibid.
28 'TRC Report', Vol 4, op cit, p 269.
29 'TRC Report', Vol 1, op cit.
30 Gloppen S, South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission as an international model, in Kolstad I and Stokke H (eds), *Writing Rights*, Fagbokforlaget, Norway, 2005.
31 Meiring P, *Chronicle of the Truth Commission*, Carpe Diem, Vanderbilpark, 1999.
32 'TRC Report', Vol 1, op cit.
33 This point of view has been reiterated repeatedly in the author's discussions with organisations working with victims, as well as researchers and ordinary citizens, independent of their cultural or racial background. They argue that the relative absence of whites at the hearings presents an obstacle to reconciliation.
34 Chapman A & Ball P, The truth of truth commissions: Comparative lessons from Haiti, South Africa and Guatemala, *Human Rights Quarterly*, 23, 2001.
35 Interview with Glenda Wildshut, a former commissioner, August 2005.
36 Three hearings were held in the Western Cape at the: University of Western Cape, 6 August 1996; Athlone, 22 May 1997; and Cape Town City Centre, 23 July 1997. The remaining hearings took place in the Eastern Cape (Grahamstown, 8 April 1997 and East London, 18 June 1997), KwaZulu-Natal (Durban, 14 May 1997), Gauteng (Johannesburg, 12 June 1997) and the Free State (Bloemfontein, 23 June 1997). See 'TRC Report', Vol 4, op. cit.
37 Chubb & Van Dijk, op cit; 'TRC Report', Vol 4, op cit.
38 Interview with Andrew Dawes, a South African child expert who advised the TRC, June 2006. Chubb & Van Dyjk, op cit; 'TRC Report', Vol 4, op cit.
39 Interview with Molo Songololo director Patrick Solomon and project coordinator Dalla Abbas, November 2006.
40 The commission notes this as an explanation in 'TRC Report', Vol 4, p 249.
41 Dawes A & Reynolds P, 'Truth and Youth. Pain and Blame'. Paper (unpublished) presented by three high school pupils at the TRC hearing in Athlone, 1997.
42 Chubb & Van Dijk, op cit, p 121.
43 'TRC Report', Vol 4, op cit, p 250. In a footnote the TRC remarks that one day for hearings was felt to be insufficient, and that this became particularly evident at the Gauteng hearings which ran very late and at which some who were scheduled to speak were prevented from doing so. The remark does not clarify if the time restraint caused difficulties regarding the amount of testimonials from the youth themselves, or if there was not sufficient time for experts and other adult guest speakers. Judging from the programme for the day announced in the special set of papers prepared for the commissioners and for participants in the sub-committes, it seems that a large part of the agenda was dedicated to ritual greetings and speeches on behalf of children and youth, and that less time was scheduled for youth over 18 to give testimonials. In the same footnote, the TRC remarks that the three days devoted to the Cape Town hearings was more adequate.
44 Phone interview with Charles Villa-Vicencio, February 2007.
45 HRC chairman interviewed by Fouzia van der Fort, *Cape Argus*, 29 September 2006 about the recent report and school hearings. An abstract of the report is available at <http://www.sahrc.org.za/sahrc_cms/downloads/School%20Violence_Hellen%20Suzman%20Foundation.pdf>.

46   Leoschut L & Burton P, *How Rich the Rewards? Results of the 2005 National Youth Victimisation Study*, Monograph No 1, Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, Cape Town, 2006.

47   Ibid, p 73.

48   'TRC Report', Vol 5, op cit, p 176.

49   A preliminary list of names which the TRC by the cut-off date of 30 August 1998 had found to have suffered gross violations of human rights is published in 'TRC Report', Vol 5, op cit, chapter 2.

50   'TRC Report', Vol 4, op cit, p 268. The report presents figures and other forms of information about various types of human rights violations (pp 259-268), like killings of children and youth, detention and imprisonment, torture, police provocation, violence and complicity, police intimidation at schools, intimidation of families, abduction, severe ill treatment and trauma and risks in exile. A definition and coding frame for 'gross violations of human rights' is presented in 'TRC Report', Vol 5, op cit, pp 15-23.

51   The RRC recommended that the reparation and rehabilitation policy should be guided by the following principles: redress; restitution; rehabilitation; restoration of dignity; and reassurance of non-repetition. See the 'TRC Report', Vol 6, op cit.

52   'TRC Report', Vol 5, op cit, p 175.

53   Ibid.

54   Ibid.

55   A specified list of symbolic reparations, legal and administrative interventions and suggestions regarding responsibility and the implementation process is presented by the RRC in 'TRC Report', Vol 5, op cit, pp 188-195. Suggestions regarding reparations include concrete individual, community and national interventions.

56   Matthew M, Reparation, in Doxtader E (ed), *Provoking Questions. An Assessment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Recommendations and their Implementation*, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, 2005.

57   Interviews with members of the Khulumani Victim Support Group, Western Cape, November 2006.

58   Matthew, op cit.

59   Statements from former head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OHCHA), Jan Egeland, confirm this view. Egeland shared his experiences of working with youth in violent conflicts in Colombia, Guatemala, Uganda, Israel, Palestine and other conflict areas at a meeting at the University of Stavanger, June 2007.

60   Chubb & Van Dijk, op cit.

61   Abrahams, op cit, p 26.

62   'TRC Report', Vol 5, op cit, p 194.

63   The author's notes based on her participation at the conference 'The TRC: Ten years on', organised by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, 20-21 April 2006. Information given to the audience by M. Seekoe, Truth and Reconciliation Unit chief director during a plenary discussion about reparations.

64   Ibid.

65   'The Politics of Restorative Justice', international conference organised by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, the University of Cape Town and the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. Author's notes from a presentation by K. de Wee, 'Restorative justice in cases of human rights abuses', TRC round table session.

66   Dawes A & Reynolds P, op cit.

67   Cited in Chubb & Van Dijk, op cit, p 34.

68   'TRC Report', Vol 4, op cit.

Offender perspectives on violent crime

Lezanne Leoschut and Angela Bonora

INTRODUCTION

Crime and violence is commonplace within contemporary South African society, and youth – particularly those between the ages of 12 and 22 years – are most likely to be the victims as well as the perpetrators of crime.[1] Young people constitute a significant proportion of the South African populace, as is evident in the most recent (2006) population estimates available from Statistics South Africa. According to these figures, children between 10 and 14 years of age account for one-tenth (10.7%) of the South African population – the second largest percentage of the overall populace. Furthermore, those in the 15–19 and 20–25 year age cohorts account for the fourth and fifth largest cohorts respectively.[2] This suggests that a great proportion of South Africa's inhabitants are at high risk of either falling prey to crime or perpetrating criminal offences.

Youth criminality is one of the primary challenges facing contemporary South Africa. For this reason, the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) embarked on a research study in 2006 to examine the extent and nature of the problem, and particularly youth resilience to crime. The study aimed to:

■ obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of youth involvement in crime; and

■ explore the reasons why young people choose not to become involved in criminal activities.

The preliminary findings emerging from this data highlighted the need to explore further why young offenders resort to violence when committing crimes. The pertinence of such data was underscored by a series of recent media reports

that have drawn attention to the increasingly violent nature of crimes perpetrated by youth offenders in South Africa. Subsequently, the CJCP was driven to explore this phenomenon to understand the motivations and justifications for this behaviour.

This chapter reports on the findings obtained during the supplementary phase of the National Youth Offending and Resilience Study.

METHODOLOGY

As this study aimed to understand the experiences and perceptions of a sample of youth offenders, a qualitative study was best suited to this task. Qualitative research methodologies enable researchers to explore participants' realities as they experience them, and this is done by drawing attention to the participants' opinions, thoughts, beliefs, feelings and actions.[3]

Since qualitative research is concerned with obtaining an insider's view of the topic of interest to the researcher, the group discussions attempted to make explicit the voices of young people regarding their experiences of crime and violence. This is in contrast to the quantitative approach to research where an outsider's view is emphasised.

A series of focus group discussions were held with youth offenders from two prisons: one each in Gauteng and the Western Cape. Three focus groups were conducted at each prison, making an overall total of six group discussions.

Focus groups are open discussions between a researcher and research participants and expose the researcher to the diverse perceptions held about a particular topic of interest.[4] As with any data collection method, focus groups have both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are as follows:

- Focus groups are cost effective since they allow for the simultaneous interviewing of several participants.

- The facilitator is able to build on a single response in order to develop a thicker description of the data by exploring the participants' perceptions in more detail than would normally be obtained from the use of survey instruments.

- As participants answer the questions posed to them, their responses may spark new ideas from other participants and in this way contribute to the depth and richness that is characteristic of qualitative data.

Regarding the disadvantages, the success of a focus group is largely dependent on the level of interaction between the different participants and their interaction with the facilitator of the focus group discussion. For this reason, care was exercised to ensure an adequate level of interaction between the focus group participants.

A list of questions that addressed various aspects related to youth crime was compiled prior to the data collection. The group discussions commenced with general overview questions and then honed in on the more specific questions that were of critical interest to the research study. Each group discussion lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and took place during times pre-arranged with the relevant prison authorities. Participants were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, the right of each individual to withdraw from the group at any point without penalty, and the right not to respond to any of the questions posed during the discussions.

The groups comprised largely black and coloured youths between the ages of 18 and 26 years. Those who participated in the focus groups were incarcerated for various offences including murder, common and armed robbery, car hijacking, possession of an unlicensed firearm, housebreaking and rape. A total of 30 youths were included in the study, with five to six youths participating in each focus group.

FACTORS INFLUENCING YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME

A number of themes were identified as the young offenders spoke openly about their lives and the factors that had influenced their criminal involvement. This section begins with a description of the factors that were most common across the different participants, whereafter those less frequently identified will be described. Apparent from the onset is the congruency of these factors with those of earlier researchers investigating the causal factors of youth offending.

EXPOSURE TO CRIME AND VIOLENCE

According to developmental psychologists, one of the most salient influences on the development of violent behaviour patterns among children and youth is exposure to violent role models. South African societies have previously been described as 'very violent'[5] and the recent findings of the National Youth Victimisation Study confirm this assertion.

The study, conducted in 2005, found that South African youth are exposed to various forms of violence within the home (21.8%) and their communities (68.6%) at alarmingly high rates, suggesting that for many young people in this country, perpetrators of violence are one of the primary role models in their socialisation processes.

> Also, it [involvement in crime] was because of bad influence and we grew up in corrupt places. *(Interview with 16-year-old youth offender)*

This trend was common across the participants irrespective of their age, race or geographic location of residence. Criminal acts, physical fights and arguments

constituted a normal part of the daily routine of these young males and subsequently had a significant effect on their criminal involvement.

> But what mostly affected me and my family was my father; he liked beating my mother. That disturbed my mind; that's when I started to get into crime. Sometimes I would go out of the house … I didn't want to be at home. *(Interview with 20-year-old youth offender)*

The youth identified two ways in which their exposure to violence influenced their criminal activity. First, it was reported that the prevalence of criminal and violent acts in their homes and residential areas have led to the normalisation of such acts in their socialising contexts, and hence the perception that crime and violence are part of the normal order of things. This perception was intensified by the incidence of adult and other family members who themselves were guilty of unlawful activities.

> I have one old brother and two small brothers. None were involved in crime … but now my brother is. And my father is also a criminal. *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

> I've held a gun once; my older cousin's gun'. *(Interview with 17- year-old youth offender)*

Second, given this prevalence of crime and violence in the youths' social environments, the participants spoke of how these violent perpetrators constituted the primary role models that were available to them in their homes and in the communities in which they lived. More particularly, the apparent 'success' of criminal offenders (who were largely gangsters) served to motivate the youth to emulate the behaviours observed because it appeared to be financially beneficial – a vital benefit when living in conditions of abject poverty.

> In my village, there is gangsterism things, and I can say that I was very interested in this. They were cool, they were my role models … . *(Interview with 16-year-old youth offender)*

> I can say that people who do crime and prosper by doing it, get value. *(Interview with 20-year-old youth offender)*

Exposure to violence has been found to have a negative effect on children's understanding of how the social world works.[6] Parents and caregivers constitute the primary socialising agents for children and young people since the family is the context in which they are first taught about behaviours considered acceptable and unacceptable by their society.[7] For this reason, children who live in homes where

their parents and caregivers adopt violent behaviour patterns are more likely than those not exposed to such behaviour to emulate these patterns later in life. This is because they come to perceive violence as an effective and socially appropriate means of conflict resolution.[8] In addition to the family, other societal establishments including educational, religious and peer groups are known to influence significantly the socialisation of young people.[9] When the values taught within the home are also reflected within these other socialising contexts, it serves to strengthen and reinforce these values and violent behaviour patterns.

Nofziger and Kurtz[10] identified two other ways in which exposure to violence may contribute to youth violent offending. First, young people who are raised in violent communities are likely to interact with delinquent peers. These interactions may provide opportunities for engaging in violent and delinquent activities. As discussed later, this appears to be true of the young people in this study. Second, youths who had fallen victim to crime are more likely than those who were not previously victimised to engage later in violent behaviours.

POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Poverty and unemployment were also identified as salient factors influencing youth crime. These two factors are presented here as a single theme to reflect the tendency of the youth to speak of it as a single social condition rather than as two distinct but related phenomena. May describes poverty as 'the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living'.[11] A small proportion of the male participants reported that they were driven to commit crimes in an attempt to 'maintain their livelihood' and that of their families.

> I did the armed robbery because my mother is not working and so I was trying to find money for her. *(Interview with 19-year-old youth offender)*

Poverty and unemployment are largely interconnected as poverty-stricken households are often characterised by a lack of financial earnings as a result of unemployment or low-paying jobs.[12] Families subjected to such household conditions are unable to meet the basic sustenance requirements of their members.[13] For this reason, youth raised in such homes may come to perceive that they have no other alternative but to resort to criminal activities as a means of providing for the rudimentary needs that remain unmet within their families.

The decision to resort to criminal activities as a means of income is often condoned by the offenders' families who benefit financially from these illegal activities.

> … when I go home and give them money, they showed me a nice face. They were happy with what I was doing. Not crime, but bringing money. That put

pressure on me. It gives me wings to fly and do crime, again and again.
(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)

This tacit approval from parents and caregivers contributes to the normalisation of crime by providing justification for such behaviour within South African societies. Crime therefore comes to be viewed as an easy means to obtain money and an acceptable means to counter the high levels of unemployment in their communities. This perception is strengthened when adult family members and other role models to these young people are also engaged in crime and are financially successful as a result of this. Subsequently, criminal activities were often referred to as 'jobs' by the young males participating in the focus group discussions. To them, crime constituted a means of employment given the perceived lack of alternatives at their disposal.

This finding is not new and has been reported by earlier researchers. In the 1980s, Craine and Coles explored the ways in which young people reacted to the social conditions of unemployment in Manchester.[14] Their study revealed that youth often developed alternative careers, including criminal activities, in response to the lack of conventional employment opportunities available to them.

> There is no other way to get money; you don't find work … . *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

This option is even more enticing given the ability to 'earn' huge amounts of money. According to these youths – some of whom had worked legitimately prior to their crimes – the money earned from employment was meagre compared to the financial benefits associated with criminal activities. Crime was therefore perceived as a more lucrative option as opposed to other legitimate employment opportunities.

ACQUISITION OF MATERIAL GOODS

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in 1998 investigated youth attitudes toward crime. To do this, they interviewed young inmates and youths who were committing crime but had not been apprehended. The researchers found that status, materialism and the desire to lead a particularly revered lifestyle were important to all the young males interviewed and served to motivate their delinquent activities.[15] The data obtained in our study revealed that these values were also of extreme importance to the young inmates interviewed.

When the facilitators further explored poverty as a justification for youth crime, it became apparent that for many of the youths who identified poverty as a causal factor in their criminality, this was often not entirely the case. Instead, the desire to acquire material items was the more dominant motive for their engagement in crime. The youths who described their crimes as a consequence of being raised in

poor homes and communities were asked what they typically spent the money obtained from these activities on. Material goods including designer clothing, modern and expensive cellular phones and motor vehicles were the most common responses, with basic necessities such as food rarely being mentioned.

The acquisition of these goods was extremely important to the young males interviewed. This is largely attributed to young females who reportedly exert tremendous pressure on males to own these items since ownership of these material goods is believed to signify a male's social standing within his peer group as well as his ability to provide monetarily for his female partners.

Evidence of such a revered lifestyle was perceived as fundamental to the initiation and success of romantic relationships with the youths' female peers. There was general consensus that young women failed to acknowledge any male who did not own these items. Highlighted here is the continued adherence to traditional gender norms among contemporary South African youth. Societies have typically taken the male's ability to take care of his family (and female partner) monetarily as an expression of ideal masculinity.[16] Thus, it seems that meeting the gender roles and norms customarily expected by societiy continues to be valued by present-day male and female youth. This perception was common across all the participants regardless of race, age and geographic location of residence.

Characteristic of the developmental stage of these young males is the need to seek the approval of their peers.[17] Evidently, South African youth are willing to resort to criminal behaviour as a means to obtain this peer approval and acceptance. The material rewards and revered lifestyle offered by crime appear to outweigh the negative implications of their criminal behaviour both for themselves and their victims.[18] It seems that many young offenders are actually motivated to commit crime by a desire for flashy goods to impress their peers rather than conditions of poverty.

PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Earlier research studies have drawn attention to the association between delinquent peers and youth criminality.[19] It was mentioned earlier in this chapter that youth who are raised in violent communities are likely to interact with violent and delinquent peers. This then is believed to have an influence on the youths own involvement in crime. In line with this, the male offenders also stressed the influence of friends and peers on their criminal behaviours.

> … there is a lot of peer pressure. *(Interview with 20-year-old youth offender)*

> I wanted to prove myself to them and show them I could also experience crime … I did it to please them so that I could be their friend, so that they would like me. *(Interview with 18-year-old youth offender)*

Youth acquainted with delinquent peers (%)
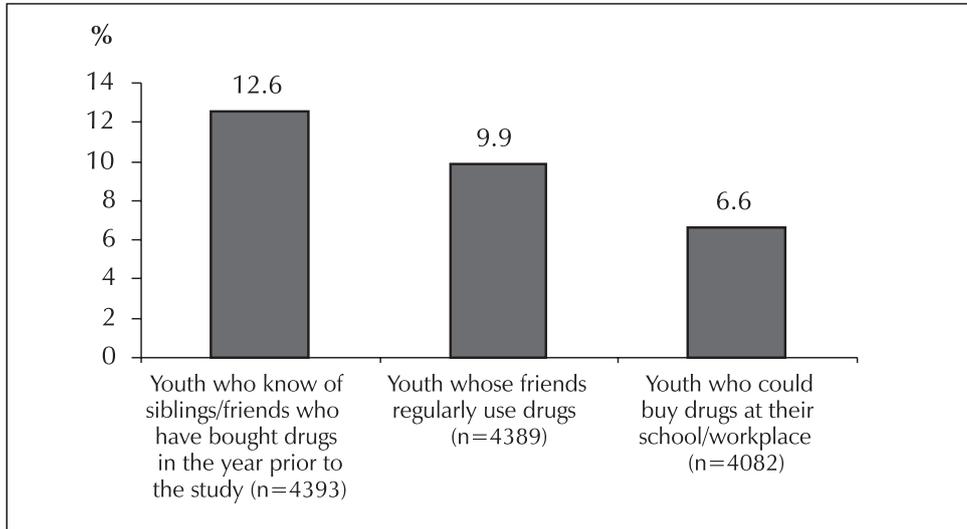
Source: Burton P & Leoschut L, CJCP Resiliency Study 2007, Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, Cape Town, (forthcoming).

I had the things I wanted and the things I needed, my parents gave me, but I just wanted to go with my good friends. *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

They were older, 18 or 19 years old. I used to go and stay with them; they liked me because I would steal money at my uncle's house. I wanted them to like me, I wanted to be like them. *(Interview with 16-year-old youth offender)*

I was taking money from my own parents to give to friends. *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

These excerpts suggest that many young people in South Africa are interacting with peers who engage in criminal and other delinquent activities. The National Youth Victimisation Study similarly found that youth between the ages of 12 and 22 years commonly interact with delinquent peers (*see figure above*).

It seems that young people are often directly and indirectly pressured to emulate the behaviours enacted by their peers in order to gain acceptance and a sense of belonging within their peer group. This is worrying given the importance placed on interpersonal relationships with others of the same age during the developmental stage of these young participants.[20]

While parents constitute the primary socialising agents for children, as children mature their peers become extremely influential in their socialisation since youth tend to spend most of their free time outside of their homes interacting with their male and female peers.

It became apparent from the discussions that it was important for these young males to establish themselves within their peer groups as individuals who warrant the respect of others. In their opinion, an important way to achieve this was to instil fear in their peers and others who live in their community by means of violent behaviours.

> I think youngsters do it because they want their name to be called out loud – you know, that people will know him and be scared of him … . *(Interview with 17-year-old offender)*

The desire to be respected and feared also appeared to serve an additional purpose – that is, the protection of their significant others. It was commonly reported that if young males are not villainous and subsequently respected by others in their communities, it would be difficult for them to protect their girlfriends from criminals. This helplessness often experienced by non-offending youth is clearly depicted in the following quotation:

> We were in a tavern … we started drinking beer. As I was with my friends, two girls and two boys came by. Those two boys were going with those two girls. Two of my friends were in love with those two girls. So they wanted those girls … One of my friends stabbed one of those boys with a knife … the one who was stabbed was trying to fight back, and then he was stabbed again and he died on the same spot … And then my friends took those girls … So we all slept with those girls. It means it was a rape because we took them with force … . *(Interview with 19-year-old youth offender)*

Evidently, youth who do not have a menacing reputation in their communities are unable to defend themselves and their loved ones from criminal elements. While the youths interviewed were mindful that there are other ways of earning the respect of others (such as working, building a successful career, etc.), criminal and violent behaviour patterns were perceived as the 'easier' and most convincing manner to do this.

The information presented here speaks not only of the need experienced by young men to establish their identities within their peer groups but is also reflective of the nature of the communities in which these youths live. Apparently the crime and violence that are widespread in the communities in which these young people reside has led to the need to actively protect themselves and those close to them. Since the individuals who pose a threat to these youths primarily make use of violent tactics, violence is perceived as the best and only way to retaliate.

GENDER

Gender is a pivotal component of an individual's identity.[21] Developmental

psychologists argue that being a female or a male is a fundamental aspect of any individual's identity since women and men essentially define themselves in terms of their feminine or masculine characteristics.[22] Girls and boys come to learn about their masculinity and femininity through socialisation – the process by which children and youth come to learn what is socially expected of them through their interactions with others in their social environments. While each culture creates its own meanings for the terms female and male, notions of gender are constantly in a state of flux. Despite this, there are a number of gender norms that are commonly associated with masculinity within different societies.[23]

During our discussions with the young males, two of the traditional male gender norms were reflected in the motivations provided for their criminal behaviour. First, masculinity has traditionally been, and continues to be, equated with achievement and success. Parents have typically encouraged boys (and expect men) to work continuously towards surpassing others, and other males in particular. Their success in doing this is believed to be an indicator of their masculinity, and hence their superiority.

Doyle and Paludi argue that men's accomplishment can be calculated in various ways.[24] One of the most common measures of a man's achievement, and hence his masculinity, is his income. Simply put, the more money a man earns the more successful and masculine he is believed to be. The youths' desire to acquire material goods that in their opinion symbolises their social standing within their peer group is reflective of this gender norm since such ownership is indicative of their success and hence their masculinity.

Aggression is also a societal expectation for men. Societies have generally encouraged boys and men to fight for what they believe in. As a result, the majority of men have a preference for violent tactics when resolving disagreements. The offenders' belief that they are responsible for protecting their female companions can be linked to societal expectations that men are the protectors, especially within the context of interpersonal male–female relationships. These beliefs are reinforced when children who are raised in homes where they are taught to adhere to traditional gender norms and roles are also exposed to violent role models in the other social environments that they are likely to occupy.

Masculinity is also viewed as the opposite of all that is considered feminine in society. Consequently, young boys and men are cautioned not to conduct themselves in ways that could be considered feminine. In order for men to be considered masculine in the idyllic sense, they would have to embody attributes that were in opposition to those typically associated with women. More specifically, they would have to be energetic, autonomous, rough and tough. This idea has come to be viewed as uncompromising, as evident in the grave repercussions that men are often met with when they behave in ways that society perceives as 'feminine'.

Sexual promiscuity has also been identified as a socially sanctioned attribute that has routinely been coupled with masculinity. In fact the young offenders

interviewed maintain that men may view sexual promiscuity as the most significant indicator of their masculinity.

Men have also normally been encouraged to be autonomous. According to Seifert et al,[25] parents are inclined to reward their sons for being self-reliant since autonomy has been viewed as a character trait central to masculinity. As a result men are pressured to be independent and self-controlled at all times, irrespective of the circumstances surrounding them.

SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

Research studies have long established the link between substance use and criminal behaviour. The use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs were also found to be a salient factors in youth criminality.

> Drugs are also a cause. Drugs force you to do the wrong things. (*Interview with 17-year-old youth offender*)

> I committed other crimes, like robberies. I robbed people in the community because of drugs … but I could not stop because I couldn't leave to smoke – that's the thing that made me decide to keep on with crime. (*Interview with 18-year-old youth offender*)

> My first crime was an armed robbery – I robbed a shop with a friend. I was with my friend and we decided to rob that shop for money to buy something to smoke … I committed other crimes like robberies. I robbed people in the community because of drugs. (*Interview with 18-year-old youth offender*)

The influence of friends on the initial use of addictive substances became apparent during the discussions with the youth offenders.

> The first time I smoked was when I was with friends. I saw them smoking and feeling nice, it *smaaked* they were enjoying it and I wanted to see what it was like. (*Interview with 17-year-old youth offender*)

> I started smoking when I was 16 years old, dagga and pills. My friends started smoking first. They were bad friends because they influenced me … . (*Interview with 20-year-old youth offender*)

According to these participants, young people's initial exposure to alcohol and other drugs often occurs within their circle of friends. This is not surprising given the high levels of interaction with peers who engage in delinquent activities among South African youth (as depicted in the figure on p 96). Generally, after observing their friends' use of drugs and alcohol young people become interested

in 'testing' these substances for themselves. Their initial curiosity, however, often results in drug addictions which in turn may lead to involvement in criminal activities as a means of sustaining their drug habits. This alternative may seem even more enticing when the youths are raised in poor families and communities (as is the case with these young men interviewed) where monetary resources are not readily available.

In addition to committing crimes to sustain their drug addictions, youths reportedly often intentionally consume alcohol and other drugs prior to engaging in delinquent activities in order to provide the necessary courage and motivation to execute their criminal intentions.

> I think things changed for me when I started smoking mandrax. You felt like you can stand for anything in the whole wide world; you can even stand in front of a train and you will survive. *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

Alcohol was also intentionally consumed prior to committing offences for the purpose of providing an 'excuse' rather than serving as a source of valour. Thus, in the event that they were apprehended the youths would blame their actions on the fact that they were intoxicated at the time the crime was committed. While the youths perceived this as a common strategy to avoid imprisonment, some participants admitted that substance use did not qualify as an excuse or justification for crime.

> In my culture a person does not do bad things because of drunkenness, they do it because they want to. Drunkenness is something to hide behind. I was drunk, but that was not the reason … I could stop myself, but I didn't. *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

Instead these youths maintained that an individual consciously decides to commit an offence and has the ability to stop himself from engaging in unlawful activities.

> But I had the mind to do bad things. *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

> … no-one can tell me what I must do. I do what I want to do, even crime. I do crime when I feel like doing crime, you see. *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

These findings confirm theories on the relationship between substance use and delinquency. Leggett asserts that substance use influences crime in several ways.[26] First, individuals who consume alcohol and other drugs often act out of character.

This is because alcohol and drugs tend to distort perceptions, impact the emotional state of the individual and can also lower or remove any inhibitions that the individual might have.

Alcohol has thus long been used by many, including these offending youths, as an excuse for their criminal behaviour. Second, alcohol and other drugs often result in addictions. The maintenance of these dependencies requires large amounts of money – money that is not readily available in the poor homes and communities in which these youths live. This financial need may drive the criminal involvement of young males.

FAMILY VARIABLES

Several factors related to the familial environment in which these youths lived were also highlighted as factors leading to the young offenders' involvement in crime. These findings are consistent with those presented by earlier researchers.[27] The CSVR revealed that broken homes and dysfunctional families were two of the significant influences on youths' decision to become involved in crime.[28]

One of the causal factors identified by the youth in our study was a perceived lack of parental involvement in their lives.

> Parents don't spend too much time with their children. *(Interview with 20-year-old youth offender)*

As a result of this lack of involvement and communication, the youths believed that their parents failed to actively guide and support them within the family context. The youths reported that their parents were not interested in their schooling and other daily activities, and also did not communicate with them about the difficulties that they would be confronted with as they matured. For these youths, their parents' or caregivers' disinterest relayed the message that they were not loved and cared for.

Parents' work also influenced the quality time they had available to spend with their children. Parents often left home early in the morning and returned late in the evening, leaving the youths to their own devices without adult or other supervision throughout the day.

There was consensus among the offenders interviewed that parents or caregivers should take a more active role in guiding their children and should become more interested in the activities that typically occupy their children's time. Additionally, parents should communicate with and educate their children about the difficulties associated with their developmental stages. This would enable parents to provide the youth with positive role models in life. These findings are supported by those of Sullivan who found that familial factors such as a lack of parental supervision, parent–child involvement and parental rejection are important factors predicting delinquency among youth.[29]

STATE OF SECURITY WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

In addition to the aforementioned causal factors, two other factors were highlighted by individual participants. Although these themes were not reflected in the other focus group discussions, they warrant mention in this chapter.

First, one of the participants attributed youth crime to the current state of security in South Africa. This youth was of the opinion that the apartheid government employed security measures that were stringent and visible to the general populace. In contrast, methods employed by the post-apartheid government were less stern and hence less effective. The youth said that the police are sitting in their offices and waiting for crimes to take place before they come out into the communities. The invisibility of the police, he said, provides opportunity for youth to commit crime.

Second was the issue of children's rights and responsibilities. Parents and other authority figures responsible for children have long expressed their dissatisfaction with the focus on children's rights without paying adequate attention to the responsibilities that typically accompany these rights. According to these individuals children now appear to have more constitutional rights than adults. The participants reported that children today are more rebellious and tend to use their rights to compel their parents to give in to their demands (for example, to attend parties where they are likely to consume alcohol and other drugs and interact with delinquent peers) – thus the opportunity to engage in delinquent acts presents itself. In this context, parents are often left with no recourse to respond to their children's demands.

COMMON RISK FACTORS

Youth criminality is evidently a result of the interaction of various factors stemming from the individual, the family and the society in which they live. Many if not all of the issues identified as contributing factors to youth involvement in crime mimic the risk factors of criminality that have long been identified by international and local researchers (*See box*).

Even though many of the risk factors for offending are common across the participants, the exact combination of risk factors that have given rise to the respondents' engagement in crime vary from youth to youth.[30] Even so, the findings suggest that many of these offenders were raised in home environments fraught with the risk factors that heighten the susceptibility of young people to criminality. These include living in a poor family and community, exposure to family violence, poor parental supervision, and a lack of parental involvement in the daily activities of the youth. As these youth matured and became integrated into society, they were exposed to other risk factors stemming from the communities in which they lived, namely, exposure to community violence, association with delinquent peers, living in poverty-stricken communities and access to alcohol and drugs. Clearly, young people in South Africa are being

raised in social environments that are conducive to criminal and violent acts. Thus, attempts aimed at reducing and preventing youth involvement in crime must address the copious factors highlighted in this study.

YOUTHS' MOTIVATIONS AND JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THEIR USE OF VIOLENCE

Given the recent media coverage of the increasingly violent nature of crimes committed by young people in this country, the CJCP was driven to explore the motivations and justifications for this behaviour. After exploring why these offenders became involved in crime in the first place, the youths were probed

RISK FACTORS FOR DELINQUENCY AND VIOLENT OFFENDING

Individual factors

- Pregnancy and delivery complications
- Low resting heart rate
- Internalising disorders
- Hyperactivity, attention deficit, risk taking
- Aggressiveness
- Early initiation of violent behaviour
- Involvement in other forms of antisocial behaviour
- Poor cognitive development
- Low intelligence

Family factors

- Parental criminality
- Child maltreatment
- Poor family management practices
- Low levels of parental involvement
- Poor family bonding and family conflict
- Parental attitudes favourable to substance use and violence
- Parent–child separation
- Teenage parenthood
- Divorce
- Familial antisocial behaviour

School factors

- Academic failure
- Low bonding to school
- Truancy and dropping out of school
- Frequent school transitions

Peer-related factors

- Delinquent peers
- Gang membership
- Peer rejection

Community and neighbourhood factors

- Poverty
- Community disorganisation
- Availability of drugs and firearms
- Neighbourhood adults involved in crime
- Exposure to violence and racial prejudice

Source: Based on Hawkins JD, Herrenkohl TI, Farrington DP, Brewer D, Catalano RF, Harachi TW & L Cothern, Predictors of youth violence, Juvenile Justice Bulletin, April 2000.

about the violent nature of the crimes for which they were incarcerated. The participants initially had some difficulty understanding and responding to this question largely because they were unable to differentiate between crime and violence. Consequently, limited information pertaining to the motivation for the use of violence when committing crimes was obtained in this study.

When asked why they would resort to violence when committing crimes the youths were inclined to reiterate the factors identified when reporting on the causal factors of their criminality. In other words, their use of violence was largely attributed to exposure to violent role models, the need to prove their masculinity within their peer groups, alcohol and drug addictions, and the desire to acquire material goods. In addition, a number of other issues was raised that shed further light on the aforementioned reasons provided.

According to these respondents, violence was often used in committing crimes to communicate the seriousness of the event to the victim. For these youths, the presence of a gun or other weapon was sufficient to convey this message explicitly to the individuals targeted.

Similarly, the CSVR found that weapons are viewed as a fundamental part of committing crimes since they indicate that the perpetrators are 'serious about business'.[31] If the youths were not armed they would often resort to physical violence as a way of expressing their serious intent.

In addition to communicating the seriousness of the event, the offenders also maintained that victims would be less likely to resist or confront the offender if the offender was armed and used violence, as evident in the following quotation:

> Then he saw a lady and told me not to move, he would follow her, but I must come if he shouted. He tried to take the bag, but the lady was fighting. He shouted for me, and I came and he told me to give him the scissors so he could stab her … But then she dropped the bag and ran. *(Interview with 16-year-old youth offender)*

Victims who are less likely to resist are also perceived by these youths as more willing to cooperate with the perpetrator.

> Even when we hear about someone who has a gun, we go at night and to get it. Maybe he doesn't want to give it, but when he gets pain he will give it up, you see. So maybe you shoot him in his little finger, then he will tell you [where the gun is]. *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

Victims who do not grasp the seriousness of the event, who resist and who are uncooperative are viewed as wasting time – something that can ultimately lead to the detainment of the offenders. For this reason perpetrators want to flee from the situation as soon as they possibly can to prevent being identified or caught. To do this, the victim's cooperation becomes a necessity. One of the participants

reported that victims merely need to cooperate and do as they are told because when they fail to do so, they will be harmed.

> Then one day I was with two friends. We decided to rob another person who was coming towards us. We had a knife. I stabbed him, because I was drugged that time and he didn't want to give me his cellphone. *(Interview with 18 year-old-youth offender)*

It was also mentioned that youth offenders often put their own lives in jeopardy when they commit crimes since they can never be certain of how their intended victims will react to the situation that they are confronted with. Violence is thus often used as a pre-emptive method in the event that victims decide to retaliate or later identify them to the police or the community.

One of the participants mentioned that where he grew up, older boys told him that in order to 'be a man' he had to commit crimes to obtain money and to impress girls. He says that he uses crime to prove to friends and other people that he has courage and that he is not scared. He often uses violence when committing crimes simply because the perception held by many males in his community is that 'the more courageous you are, the more violent you are'. The powerful influence that peers exert on young people's thoughts and actions and the need to prove their manhood or masculinity again becomes evident.

The justifications for the use of violence presented here reveal that young offenders commonly use violence as a pre-emptive method to being apprehended. The need to convey their serious intent, to ensure cooperation, and to reduce resistance and confrontation from the victims are all factors that when present allow the crime to take place within a minimal period of time. This is essential to the perpetrator removing himself from the situation as quickly as possible and hence to reduce his chances of being caught. The need to prove their masculinity to their peers also significantly influences youths use of violence when committing crimes.

POLICE AND COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO CRIME

Given the frequency with which these youths engaged in criminal activities and the violent nature of their crimes, the facilitators were interested in ascertaining whether they ever considered the possible consequences of their actions. The participants were asked whether they were more apprehensive of the police's response to their actions or those of their community members. It was commonly reported that they were more fearful of their community's response to their criminal behaviours.

> I was very afraid of being caught by the community, more afraid than I was of the police. *(Interview with 18-year-old youth offender)*

Parents and other adult community members were reportedly known to take the law into their own hands by using weapons such as hammers to beat and often fatally injure individuals who were found guilty or were suspected of criminal activities.

> In 2002, I remember another boy who broke into another person's house and they saw his footprints. They recognised them and went to his shack, and all the things from the housebreaking were now at his house. So they beat him to death … . *(Interview with 18-year-old youth offender)*

> … there are people who beat people and you will die. They will take anything they see – a hammer, an iron pipe – and they will destroy you and you will die … . *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

> When the community is beating you, the intention is to kill. Because they are then rid of you. *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

The youths maintained that community vigilantes do not differentiate between the seriousness of crimes and thus harshly 'punish' all criminals irrespective of the offence. Youths would typically only survive if the police arrived while the community was avenging the crime. According to the youths, Khayelitsha – a Western Cape township – was notorious for such vigilantism where both petty crime offenders and serious violent offenders are punished in the same way. Other townships, such as Gugulethu, were reportedly more lenient and afforded criminals the opportunity to defend their actions before being punished by the community.

Since many of the focus group participants were not first time offenders, they knew that if they were caught they would be sent to prison. As they had prior experience of being in prison, they knew exactly what to expect and were therefore not concerned about being sent there again.

> So I'm not afraid of going back to prison, because I am a 28 (number gang). I am safe in prison, I have earned respect. *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

The youth offenders were of the opinion that the police simply apprehend perpetrators and send them to prison while vigilante groups in the communities sought the lives of these offenders. As a result of their fear of being avenged by their community members, the youths in the focus group reported that they primarily target victims who live outside of their communities.

> Stealing from your own community is risky … . *(Interview with 17-year-old youth offender)*

A finding to emerge from the discussions was the community's selective involvement in the 'punishment' of criminals. It was reported that if the community was aware of an individual's criminal behaviour they would ignore him if his actions did not affect the community directly, that is, if the members of the community in which the youths lived were not at the receiving end of the criminal activities. Similarly parents turned a blind eye to their children's criminal behaviour if it was of benefit to them. The implicit approval received by the silence of family and community members who are aware of criminal behaviour but fail to address it feeds into the normalisation of crime in South African society. This may also lead to the perception that crime and violence is permissible in particular contexts.

IMPLICATIONS

Crime is one of the primary challenges facing contemporary South Africa. The study presented in this chapter provides invaluable insight into the copious factors influencing youth criminality in the South African context. An awareness of these correlates is of paramount importance since effective intervention strategies are reliant on the comprehensive understanding of why young people become involved in such egregious behaviour in the first place. Throughout the discussions it becomes palpable that the causes of youth crime are varied and largely social and situational in nature, as opposed to being a consequence of deviances originating from within a particular individual.[32] For this reason, the findings confirm those of earlier researchers.

South African youth are exposed to various forms of violence within their homes and in the communities in which they live. Clearly, many youth and children in our country are being raised in domestic environments where crime and violence is the norm rather than the exception. Such a scenario may lead to the perception that violence is a socially appropriate and effective means of problem solving. This notion is only reinforced when similar violence is modelled outside of the home, that is, in youths' communities.

These findings thus point to the need for targeted interventions aimed at raising awareness about appropriate conflict resolution techniques, and alternative methods of discipline are also required. Interventions should be targeted at the youth, their families, as well as at members of their community considering the propensity of these individuals to resort to violence in response to the alarmingly high levels of crime in their communities.

Given the influence of exposure to violence on youth offending, as demonstrated in this chapter, one can conclude that an important method by which to reduce youth involvement in crime as perpetrators would be to limit their exposure to violence in their homes and communities.[33] In other words, limit their exposure to and subsequent interactions with delinquent peers, family violence and criminality, as well as exposure to criminal elements in the

communities in which these youths reside. In so doing, their opportunities to engage in delinquent activities would also be diminished.

Families, particularly those residing in poor communities, often condone youth criminality largely because it benefits them financially. This distorted perception feeds into the normalisation of crime and violence and provides justification for the unacceptable behaviour. Awareness thus also needs to be raised among young people in South Africa, their families and members of their communities that violence in ANY context is socially unacceptable and inexcusable. These individuals should also be informed of the negative consequences associated with criminality for the individual, his family and the broader social environment in which he resides. Young people may be deterred from engaging in criminal activities if they understood that the known implications of crime by far outweigh the perceived benefits of such behaviour.

Children are primarily socialised within the home. As they mature and become integrated into society their peers exert a significant influence over their thoughts and actions.[34] To reiterate, one of the most important goals for youth of this age is obtaining the acceptance and approval of their peers. These youths believe they are best able to achieve this goal by engaging in violent and criminal behaviour.

Young people also appear to place great value on trivial items such as motor vehicles, clothes and cellular phones (items which are viewed as necessary for popularity among their male and female peers and are illustrative of their masculinity and success) and will clearly even resort to violence as a means of obtaining them.

Different values seemingly need to be instilled in young people in this country. Youth should be taught and consistently encouraged to value other characteristics such as academic and sporting excellence – values that are within the reach of many young people irrespective of their financial status. Children and youth of school-going age typically spend most of their time away from home at school. Consequently, educational institutions have the potential to exert a considerable influence on the thoughts and behaviours of young people and can therefore play a significant role in emphasising different values and raising awareness about alternative notions of masculinity and means of gaining peer acceptance and approval.[35]

Youth are also exposed to numerous other risk factors for offending stemming from the social environments in which they operate. These include living in impoverished communities and the availability of firearms, alcohol and other drugs.

The 'routine activities' theory by Cohen and Felson identifies three prerequisites for a crime to occur, namely:

- an enthused perpetrator;
- a suitable victim; and
- the absence of guardians.[36]

These three conditions are clearly present in the lives of the young people interviewed. Poverty, alcohol and drug addiction, unemployment, the need to protect oneself and significant others, and the need for acceptance and belonging within peer groups reportedly provide the motivation to engage in criminal behaviour. The motivated offenders also had the opportunity to commit crimes given that they were often left to their own devices without adult supervision for prolonged periods of time while their parents were away at work. Their association with delinquent peers further provided the opportunities to engage in delinquent activities. If an attempt is made to reduce youth criminality, opportunities to engage youth in meaningful and constructive activities should constitute a significant component of such an intervention.

What becomes evident from the information presented in this study is that youth criminality cannot be attributed to any single factor but instead is the result of an interaction of a variety of factors stemming from the individual, family and community levels. Subsequently, a multi-pronged approach is required to diminish and prevent the involvement of young South Africans in criminal activities. All the individuals who play a significant role in the lives of children and youth should be involved in this pre-emptive attempt and should include adult authority figures (parents, educators), the youth themselves and other members of the community in which the youth live.

Also included in this approach should be interventions aimed at equipping the youth with life skills, and particularly skills required to resist pressure from their male and female peers – a factor that has a significant influence on youth involvement in criminal activity. At the same time, parents should become more aware of the potentially negative influence that delinquent peers can have on their children. To do this, parents need to become actively involved in their children's lives and should be aware of how and with whom their children occupy their free time.

Given the role of substance use and abuse in youth criminality, it becomes essential to inform both young people and their caregivers about the negative implications of this. Support structures should also be made available for those youth who are already addicted to alcohol and other drugs.

In short, the alarmingly high rates of youth offending in South Africa necessitate a comprehensive intervention strategy that should focus on preventing youth crime rather than relying solely on law enforcement as a reactionary intervention to this phenomenon.[37] Such an intervention should address the numerous causes of youth criminality identified here, while also bearing in mind the suggestions made by the youths themselves, which they believe can reduce youth involvement in crime. These include:

- alcohol and drug use interventions;
- the provision of recreational opportunities and facilities within South African communities;

■ workshops to facilitate development of the personal and economic skills of youths in this country;

■ workshops aimed at raising awareness on how to resist peer pressure; and

■ allowing children and youth to receive an education at the government's expense given the financial constraints challenging many families in South Africa.

According to the young males interviewed, government interventions along these lines would have a diminishing effect on youth involvement in crime in South Africa.

ENDNOTES

1　Leoschut L & Burton P, *How Rich the Rewards: The Results of the 2005 National Youth Victimisation Study*, Monograph No 1, Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, Cape Town, May 2006; Sherman LW, Gottfredson DC, Mackenzie DL, Eck J, Reuter P & Bushway SD, *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*, National Institute of Justice, 1998.

2　Statistics South Africa. 'Mid-year Population Estimates, South Africa 2006', <http://www.statssa.gov.za>.

3　Davis L & Klopper H, The value of a qualitative methodology in criminological research, *Acta Criminologica*, 16(1), 2003, pp 72-81.

4　Schurink WJ, Schurink EM & Poggenpoel M, Focus group interviewing and audio-visual methodology in qualitative research, in De Vos AS (ed), *Research at Grass Roots: A Primer for the Caring Professions*, Van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria, 1998, pp 313-333.

5　Jewkes R, Levin J & Penn-Kekana L, Risk factors for domestic violence: Findings from a South African Cross-Sectional Study, *Social Science & Medicine*, 55, 2002, pp1603-1617.

6　Salzinger S, Feldman RS, Stockhammer T & Hood J, An ecological framework for understanding risk for exposure to community violence and the effects of exposure on children and adolescents, *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 7, 2002, pp 423-451.

7　Sigelman CK & Shaffer DR, *Lifespan Human Development* (2nd ed.), Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, California, 1995.

8　Ibid.

9　Witt SD, Parental influence on children's socialisation to gender roles, *Adolescence*, 32(126), 1997, pp 253-260.

10　Nofziger S & Kurtz D, Violent lives: A lifestyle model linking exposure to violence to juvenile offending, *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency*, 42(1), 2005, pp 3-26.

11　May J (ed), 'Poverty and Inequality in South Africa'. Report prepared for the Office of the Executive Deputy President and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Poverty and Inequality, 1998. Available at http://www.polity.org.za/html/govdocs/reports/poverty.html?rebookmark=1#2>.

12　Ibid.

13　Reiboldt W, Adolescent interactions with gangs, family and neighbourhoods: An ethnographic investigation, *Journal of Family Issues*, 22(2), 2001, pp 211-242.

14　Craine S & Coles B, Alternative careers: Youth transitions and young people's involvement in crime, *Youth and Policy*, 48, 1995, pp 6-27.

15   Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 'Into the Heart of Darkness: Journeys of the Amagents in Crime, Violence and Death.' Paper prepared as part of research conducted by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), 1998. Available at <http://www.csvr.org.za/pubslist/pubscrim.htm>.

16   Boonzaier F & De la Rey C, Woman abuse: The construction of gender in women and men's narrative of violence, *South African Journal of Psychology*, 34(3), 2004, pp 443-463.

17   Lotz R, *Youth Crime in America: A Modern Synthesis,* Pearson Education, Inc., New Jersey, 2005.

18   Segal L, Pelo J & Rampa P, 'Asicamtheni Magents' Let's talk Magents: Youth attitudes towards crime, *Crime and Conflict*, 15, 1999, pp 23-27.

19   Nofziger & Kurtz, op cit.

20   Head J, *Working with Adolescents: Constructing Identity*, The Falmer Press, London, 1997.

21   Shefer T, The making of the gendered self, in De la Rey C, Duncan N, Shefer T & Van Niekerk A (eds), *Contemporary Issues in Human Development: A South African Focus*, International Thomson Publishing Southern Africa, Johannesburg, 1997, pp 80-98.

22   Seifert KL, Hoffnung RJ & Hoffnung M, *Lifespan Development* (2nd ed), Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 2000.

23   Connell RW, *Gender: Short Introductions*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2002.

24   Doyle JA & Paludi MA, *Sex and Gender: The Human Experience* (4th ed), McGraw-Hill, Boston, 1998.

25   Seifert et al, op cit.

26   Leggett T (ed), *Drugs and Crime in South Africa: A Study in Three Cities*, Monograph No 69, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, March 2002.

27   Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, op cit.

28   Ibid.

29   Sullivan CJ, Early adolescent delinquency: Assessing the role of childhood problems, family environment, and peer pressure, *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 4(4), 2006, pp 291-313.

30   Wasserman GA, Keenan K, Tremblay RE, Coie JD, Herrenkohl TI, Loeber R & Petechuk D, Risk and protective factors of child delinquency, *Child Delinquency Bulletin Series,* Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2003.

31   Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, op cit.

32   Palmary I, 'Social Crime Prevention in South Africa's Major Cities'. Report prepared as part of the City Safety Project, June 2001.

33   Ibid.

34   Lotz, op cit.

35   Ibid.

36   Cohen LE & Felson M, Social change and crime rate trends, *American Sociological Review*, 44(4), 1979, pp 588-608.

37   Department of Safety and Security, 'White Paper on Safety and Security', South Africa, 1998. Available at <http://www.info.gov.za/whitepapers/1998/safety.htm>.

Conclusion

COMPLEX INTERACTION OF RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The chapters in this volume highlight the very high levels of crime and violence to which South Africans – and young South Africans in particular – are exposed, both as perpetrators and as victims. Young people are victims and perpetrators of a wide range of crime and violence, including gang activities, violence at school, and sexual and physical violence mainly perpetrated by young men and boys against young women and girls. The available evidence suggests that young people are most likely to be victimised at school; across the socio-economic spectrum, youngsters increasingly experience physical and sexual assaults, robberies, intimidation, bullying, shootings, stabbings, gangsterism and drug trafficking in or around their schools. The perpetrators are usually other children who frequently use weapons such as guns and knives.

As with crime in general there is no single 'cause' of violent behaviour, and as illustrated in the preceding chapters the correlates of violence among young people in South Africa are varied and complex. At the most basic level, however, violent behaviour has its roots in the complex interaction of risk and protective factors in different environments and over time, which influence what behaviours children learn, how they learn them and how they respond to the behaviour of others. While individual characteristics such as age, race, gender and temperament influence the way children interact with the world around them, it is the risk environment in which children grow up that plays a central role in determining whether they will adopt criminal and violent behaviour. Risk factors are at play in individual children, in their families, peer groups and neighbourhoods, as well as in the broader socio-political context within which all of these are nested.

Ward illustrates these influences in terms of an ecology of contexts: individuals operate within microsystems which involve continuous, face-to-face interactions, such as parent–child relationships, relationships with peers and relationships with teachers. Children who learn through these interactions that violence is an acceptable means of solving a problem are more likely to use violence in their own

interpersonal relationships. The interactions between the different micro-systems – mesosystems – also significantly affect children's development. Children whose home lives are not happy, for instance, may compensate by seeking out peer groups that introduce them to gangs or otherwise socialise them into violent behaviour. There are also areas, referred to as exosystems, to which children have little direct access but which nonetheless influence the world around them. Children who are exposed to high levels of violence on television, for example, are more likely to respond with violence to difficult situations. Finally, children and their families operate within a macrosystem which encompasses more remote influences such as the socioeconomic and policy environment, as well as cultural and societal attitudes towards the use of violence.

In attempting to explain both the high levels of violence in places that should be safe for children – such as schools – and the apparent increase in violent behaviour among children and youth, this monograph has attempted to map out key drivers of risk with a view to developing a comprehensive explanation for the levels of violence experienced and perpetrated by young people in South Africa. This is an ambitious task, but the preceding chapters suggest that a holistic explanation must include several elements. These include the following:

THE CRIMINOGENIC NATURE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

As Ward notes in her chapter, children acquire their behaviours through the models of behaviour they see around them, through the support and discipline they receive from authority figures, and from information about violence they obtain from the media and their interactions and discussions with parents, friends and teachers. The chapters in this monograph show that many young South Africans are growing up in high-risk environments that encourage criminal and violent behaviour. Many live in impoverished communities where there are few economic opportunities or recreational activities. Drugs, firearms and alcohol are highly accessible and crime and violence are an accepted part of daily life. As Leoschut and Bonara observe, many youngsters have family members and friends who commit crime, or at least condone it, and many are exposed to violence in their homes, schools and communities. Media images feed the perception that crime and violence are ubiquitous components of children's day-to-day existence and frequently glorify them.

The flipside of this is that children also often have few positive role models and limited opportunities to learn pro-social ways of engaging with their world. As Ward notes, an environment that is high in models of crime and violence provides few opportunities to learn peaceful ways of solving problems. Many South African children have similarly few opportunities to engage in constructive leisure activities. There are also too few non-violent programmes in the media, and there is no clear anti-violence message from leaders. With limited job opportunities, families are often unable to access material and social resources to

assist them in the task of raising children, and many children lack sufficient support from their families, teachers and other role models, and are left largely unsupervised for much of the day while their caregivers seek to earn a living.

EXPOSURE TO HIGH LEVELS OF VIOLENCE

Many of South Africa's young people have been exposed to violence, both as victims and through social contexts rich in pro-violence models and messages. Children's homes, schools and neighbourhoods are often violent. The National Youth Victimisation Study conducted by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) in 2005 found that one in five youths between the age of 12 and 22 had witnessed or experienced violence in their home, while approximately two out of three had witnessed or experienced violence in their larger communities. One in five had been threatened or hurt at school.

Children who live in homes and communities where parents, caregivers, peers and other authority figures adopt violent and aggressive behaviour are more likely than others to engage in violent behaviour and to treat their own families violently in the future. The family is one of the most, if not *the* most, powerful socialising environment for children. Young children in particular often internalise the violence they experience at home, coming to regard it as a normal and acceptable means of resolving conflict. Abused children are also more likely to encounter problems in various developmental areas, including social development, their relationships with peers and their schooling, and are more likely to engage in crime, violence and antisocial behaviour. Where children are abused or neglected, they are also less likely to learn the empathy and guilt that would prevent them from hurting others.

This suggests the need both for the proper implementation of existing legislation to respond to domestic and gender-based violence and child abuse, as well as social programmes to address the drivers of violent behaviour and build capacity to respond more effectively to and manage conflict. Both gender inequality and poverty, for instance, fuel levels of domestic violence in South Africa. Thus, interventions to reduce poverty may also reduce violence. For example, as mentioned, an initiative in rural Limpopo province that combined a microfinancing programme with a gender and HIV training curriculum reported a reduced incidence of intimate partner violence among programme participants by 55% over the two years of the project.

The normalisation of violence in South Africa is compounded by pro-violence messages from political leaders and media programming. It is also reinforced by the widespread use of violence to address misbehaviour and crime. Many South African parents, who have themselves learned a violent repertoire of behaviours, use violent methods to discipline their children. Schools, too, often directly model violence for learners. Despite being illegal, many schools still use corporal punishment, and as Leoschut and Bonara note, a little over half the youngsters

surveyed in the National Youth Victimisation Study had been caned or smacked at school.

While understandable given the very high levels of crime and violence in South Africa, the growth of vigilantism also feeds into the level of ambient violence and helps to create the perception that crime and violence are permissible in some contexts.

Exposure to violence and the adoption of violent behaviour can create a vicious cycle that bolsters the negative effects of this exposure. Ward observes that children who learn and adopt aggressive behaviour early on are more likely to drift towards social contexts that teach them to use more violence rather than less. It is thus vital that government and other role players work together to promote and enforce adherence to South Africa's laws, both in institutions like schools and in society at large. The Department of Education has a key role to play in eliminating corporal punishment in schools. It can also be instrumental in helping to equip schools to provide children with more pro-social ways of managing conflict, as well as creating a more supportive environment in which children can find alternative conflict resolution skills.

THE LEGACY OF APARTHEID

Much of today's crime and violence is the legacy of apartheid. In addition to laying the foundation for the gross inequalities in educational resources, poverty, unemployment, family breakdown and overcrowding that continue to plague poor communities, the activities of both the apartheid regime and the resistance movement created a culture of violence. They also helped to brutalise a whole generation.

As Kipperberg notes, children actively involved in the conflict missed years of schooling, which limited their ability to find work in the post-apartheid era. Many also suffered – and often continue to suffer – physical and psychological trauma. While few studies have examined the psychological implications for combatants, the research that is available suggests that former combatants may experience ongoing behavioural issues, problems with alcohol and drug abuse, as well as difficulty entering relationships, a lack of trust and feelings of isolation. The research shows that these emotional and social problems, together with the insecurity and frustration associated with a lack of education and skills, often contribute to aggressive and violent behaviour. Such behaviour undoubtedly contributes to the levels of societal violence in South Africa. More importantly, yesterday's youth are now parents; parents who provide models of behaviour and parenting that perpetuate the use of violence by young people.

Kipperberg argues that the ostensible exclusion of youngsters from South Africa's formal reconciliation process represents a missed opportunity to tackle and address the effects of both apartheid and the liberation struggle on young people. She believes that the TRC's failure to address adequately the abuses

experienced by young people during the apartheid era deprived them of the opportunity for debriefing and healing. It also denied them access to individual reparation grants and individual psychosocial rehabilitation offered to those who participated in the reparation process. Kipperberg posits that this has not only had implications for victims, protagonists and their families, but has contributed to the levels of crime and violence in South Africa by failing to address the psychological legacy of the struggle and fostering resentment, bitterness and anger.

Among other recommendations, Kipperberg suggests the need for improving access to debriefing mechanisms, including indigenous sources of healing, story telling to trusted actors as well as mental health support and medical assistance to address the physical, psychological and psychosomatic damage suffered by young victims. As originally proposed by the TRC, she argues that resources should be dedicated to developing projects that aim to promote healing and reconciliation at the community level. Such initiatives should examine and address the issues faced by both victims' and perpetrators' families and children.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IDENTITIES

The chapters in this volume also suggest that the construction of gender identities in South Africa contribute to levels of crime and violence. As the authors of several of the preceding papers note, crime and violence are disproportionately committed by young men – although Jeftas and Artz observe that there is a critical dearth of research into the experiences of women as either victims of crime or as perpetrators, both internationally and in South Africa. They suggest that crime and violence by males is frequently bound up with the construction of masculinity – and femininity – and discord between men's expected and realised roles in the context of ongoing poverty and marginalisation.

Jeftas and Artz believe that crime and violence constitute a way for young men to reclaim and assert their manhood in an environment where masculinity is widely compromised. In a social setting where men are expected to be socially and physically powerful and to provide for their families, they argue that the high levels of poverty, unemployment and powerlessness experienced by men under both the apartheid and post-apartheid regimes have emasculated men, who have reasserted their masculinity through crime and violence. This linking of masculine identity and criminal violence is played out in hijackings, assaults, gang activities, housebreakings, domestic violence, and sexual and physical violence against women and girls. More generally, social norms which construct boys and men as macho, strong, virile and dominant encourage aggression, and when twinned with the prevailing dominance of violent behaviour models, contribute to the use of violence to solve disputes and problems.

This suggests the need for interventions to help South Africa's youth to make a valuable contribution to society. There is a need to create more employment opportunities as well as skills and development programmes. These must target

both young men and women, and must seek in particular to empower financially and emotionally women and girls to take control of their lives. Measures should also be put in place to better equip males and females to renegotiate and redefine existing power imbalances, both within the broader society and in their personal relationships. Such interventions should include the provision of leadership opportunities for girls, and should start at the primary school level.

STATUS INSECURITY

In a closely related argument, Bruce attributes much crime and violence by boys and men to status insecurity. He argues that violence by men reflects men's insecurity about their position in a society that places a premium on status and the trappings of wealth. In the context of rampant poverty, Bruce suggests that the quest for consumer goods encourages acquisitive crime. As he and others in this monograph note, while criminals often attribute their behaviour to poverty, they frequently use the proceeds of crime to obtain designer clothes and goods which are seen as crucial in both attracting women and obtaining the respect of their peers.

Violence against prospective and current sexual partners is similarly bound up with how men obtain the respect of their peers. Bruce maintains that being involved in sexual relationships and being able to obtain the sexual compliance of one's partner constitutes a crucial component of how some men evaluate their own worth or status and that of their peers. These men are measured by their ability to control women and use violence and coercion where their attempts to initiate sex are resisted or where their partners appear to challenge their authority. In the context of male insecurity, many men also use violence as a way to punish women who are perceived as 'too proud' or who see themselves as 'too good' for the perpetrators.

More generally, the high levels of interpersonal violence between men in South Africa may also be linked to male insecurity. Bruce posits that individuals who are insecure about their ability to maintain the respect of others or who feel that violence is their primary way of garnering respect, are more likely to respond violently to situations or statements that they perceive as insulting. Insecurity about status may also encourage gun ownership, since in many communities guns are seen as a marker of status and style.

As with gender identities more broadly, shifting such perceptions will be difficult but necessary if South Africa is to reduce its levels of crime and violence. Government and other opinion leaders have a crucial role to play in diminishing the preoccupation with material status symbols and promoting more moral and behavioural-based measures of personal worth. A holistic, long-term response to crime will also require finding specific ways of nurturing and restoring dignity and self-respect among South African men. While it is important that efforts to establish gender equality must be supported and strengthened, a move towards

gender equality may itself contribute to male status insecurity. This suggests the need for a truly gendered approach that considers the implications of interventions for both men and women and seeks to empower both genders to find new ways of ascribing value and fulfilling their potential.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, violent and criminal behaviour cannot be attributed to any single factor but stems from the interaction of a variety of factors. A comprehensive, multi-pronged approach is required to diminish and prevent the involvement of young South Africans in crime and violence. The emphasis should be on addressing the drivers of crime and violence and building the capacity of all South Africans to prevent violence and crime rather than relying solely on reactionary law enforcement and punitive measures.

A concurrent attempt to identify resiliency or protective factors that inhibit violent and antisocial behaviour, and to design and implement targeted interventions to build resiliency is also required. All the individuals and institutions involved in children and young people's lives have a part to play. Interventions should target and involve parents, principals, teachers and youths themselves, as well as youth organisations and other relevant institutions. Adults, and in particular leaders, whether political or community, should also start taking responsibility for the examples and role models portrayed to young people.