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Socio-economic conditions, young men and violence in Cape Town

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Abstract

People in violent neighbourhoods attribute violence in public spaces to, especially, poverty and unemployment, but agree that social disintegration, disrespect, drinking and drugs and the weaknesses of the criminal justice system also contribute substantially. However, data from a panel of young men in Cape Town provide little support for the hypothesis that unemployment and poverty are direct causes of violence against strangers. Growing up in a home where someone drank heavily or took drugs is, however, a strong predictor of violence against strangers in early adulthood. A history of drinking (or taking drugs) correlates with perpetration of violence, and might also serve as a mechanism through which conditions during childhood have indirect effects. Living in a bad neighbourhood and immediate poverty are associated with violence against strangers, but being unemployed is not. Overall, heavy drinking – whether by adults in the childhood home or by young men themselves – seems to be a more important predictor of violence than economic circumstances in childhood or the recent past. Heavy drinking seems to play an important part in explaining why some young men have been more violent than others in circumstances that seem to have been generally conducive to rising violence, for reasons that remain unclear. It seems likely that few young people in South Africa in the early 2000s come from backgrounds that strongly predispose them against the use of violence.

1. Introduction

Democratisation in South Africa has been accompanied by an increase, not a decrease, in levels of everyday violence.[1] South Africa competes with Colombia, Venezuela, and a number of Central American countries for the unwelcome distinction of having among the world's highest homicide rates. Other forms of violence – including domestic and sexual violence – are also appallingly prevalent.[2] Rising violence has been a major concern for privileged white South Africans, many of whom seem to view violence as a racialised reaction by young black men to the inequalities that have outlasted apartheid itself. But violence has been as much of a concern to black South Africans. Even though black South Africans, especially in urban areas, experienced high levels of violence in the past, the perception that personal security was better then has contributed to elements of nostalgia for the apartheid era (Kynoch, 2003).

There are many possible causes of high and rising levels of everyday violence. While the political impetus to violence has been removed or greatly diminished by the transition to democracy, South Africa today continues to be plagued by high unemployment (especially among young people), widespread poverty, racialised inequality, low-quality education and poor opportunities. Family life has fragmented, the ties of kinship have eroded, and social cohesion has weakened at the neighbourhood level. All these socio-economic ills negatively affect the experiences, actions, and outlooks of young people. Furthermore, many young people have grown up amidst ubiquitous violence: at home, at school, and in the streets and neighbourhood. Firearms are readily available. The state's conspicuous failure to convict the perpetrators of most violent crimes both undermines the deterrent of criminal justice and legitimates violent and extra-legal popular action.

Our understanding of the causes of trends in violence remains limited, however, by the paucity of good data. Ideally, we would be able to draw on two kinds of data. First, we would have data on the incidence of violence by neighbourhood and over time, which would be matched to data on varying and changing socio-economic conditions and to the efficacy of the criminal justice system. Variations over time and space would allow us to identify the conditions that drove or permitted varying and changing levels of violence. This approach has been adopted widely in the USA (see, for example, Glaeser, Sacerdote and

[1] See the chapter by Ward and Flisher in this volume.
[2] See the Conflict Crime and Violence (CCV) datasets compiled by the Department of Social Development of the World Bank.

Scheinkman, 1996), and in some countries in the global South (for example, Indonesia; see Tadjoeddin and Murshed, 2007, 2010). In South Africa, Demombynes and Özler (2005) matched social and economic data from the 1996 Population Census to data on crime in police districts during 1996. Their cross-sectional analysis found that, *inter alia*, the relationship between mean household expenditure and violent crime (both serious assault and rape) took the form of an inverted-U: lower rates in poorer and richer districts, and higher rates in between. Both mean expenditure and the square of mean expenditure had very significant relationships with both categories of violent crime, even in a multivariate analysis that controlled for a range of other social, demographic and economic factors. They found also positive and significant correlations between unemployment rates and armed robbery and murder (but not rape). Altbeker (2008: 139-40) matches police data on murder to neighbourhood level variables, for 2001-02, and found no relationship between mean household income and the murder rate.

Unfortunately, official statistics on violence and other crimes are highly suspect. Not only is the reporting of crime variable as well as low (Louw, 2008: 9; Bruce, 2010), but there have also been well-documented cases of police stations discarding records in order to improve their apparent performance (Bruce, 2010: 12-14). Whilst cross-sectional data can be adjusted to take into account differential reporting,[3] the low quality of official data seems to preclude *panel* analysis. The absence of census data since 2001 in any case precludes analysis of the effects of socio-economic factors on recent trends in violent crime.

The second kind of data that would ideally be available are data on individuals collected through a panel study designed from the outset to assess how and why some young people end up with violent careers. An example is the National Youth Survey (NYS) in the USA which began collecting data in the late 1970s on a cohort of young people, then aged 11-17. The study has continued into the 2000s, although the participants in the panel are now middle-aged.[4] Such studies have resulted in important findings with regard to the ages at which young people first perpetrate violence, the sequence of forms of violent behaviour and the ages at which perpetrators cease to perpetrate violence. They have also

[3] Demombynes and Özler show that their general results hold even if crime rates are adjusted for the under-reporting of crime. First, they regress non-reporting of crime by individual respondents in the 1998 National Victims of Crime Survey on a range of individual-level variables. They then use this equation and district-level data on the same variables to adjust the official district-level crime data. They show that their findings are robust in the face of these adjustments.

[4] See http://www.colorado.edu/ibs/NYSFS/.

pointed to the factors and pathways that lead to serious violence, including social class, specific conditions at home and school during childhood, and more proximal predictors such as norms and peer influences (Elliott, 1983, 1994; Heimer, 1997; Brezina *et al*., 2004).

In the absence of any such panel study of individuals focusing on violence and delinquency in South Africa, researchers have turned to cross-sectional surveys. These allow the perpetration of violence (or victimisation) to be linked to the individual characteristics of the perpetrators or victims. Information about the respondents' pasts is collected through retrospective questions (such as 'were you exposed to violence as a child?'). One major shortcoming of these data is the possibility of retrospective information being influenced by subsequent experiences. Another is that the direction of causation might run in either direction between factors such as drinking or employment status, measured at the time of the survey, and the perpetration of violence in the recent past. In one South African study, researchers compared data collected from a sample of young offenders (i.e. young people who had been convicted of crimes, mostly involving violence) with data from a sample of young people who had not been convicted of any crime, in four of South Africa's provinces. There were no significant differences between offenders and non-offenders in terms of household incomes or general neighbourhood conditions However, offenders were more likely to report that they came from households and neighbourhoods where violence was more commonplace, had completed less schooling, were more likely to have engaged in substance abuse, and had delinquent friends (Burton, *et al.*, 2009).

In this contribution we go beyond existing studies by using two new sources of data. First, we draw on semi-structured interviews conducted in 2008 with forty-five residents living in high-violence, African[5] neighbourhoods in Cape Town, to examine local knowledge about the causes of violence. Secondly, we draw on data from a panel study of young people in Cape Town, the Cape Area Panel Study to model the causal pathways to violence.

[5] Under apartheid, individuals were classified as white, African, coloured or Indian. Even fifteen years after the end of apartheid, most neighbourhoods remain racially segregated.

2. Data

In the interview study, our goal was to tap into 'local knowledge' about violence in selected neighbourhoods on the eastern periphery of Cape Town, (Delft and Khayelitsha). The interviewees are people who must navigate through the everyday possibility of violence. It is their neighbours and members of their own families who are the perpetrators as well as the victims of everyday violence. The sample comprised a random sample of residents of selected neighbourhoods supplemented with additional interviews with a smaller convenience sample in the same or similar neighbourhoods. The sample includes men and women, aged from 21 to 54, some working, others not. Interviews from this series are denoted by a number preceded by 'V'.

We pay particular attention to interviewees' views on the involvement in violence of young men. Almost every one of our interviewees identified the perpetrators of violence as young men, as "these boys" or "young guys". Some young women are not innocent, especially if they associate with delinquent boys, but public violence is largely a male preserve.

The second source of data used in this chapter is the Cape Area Panel Study (CAPS) of adolescents in Cape Town. The first 'wave' of CAPS was conducted in 2002, when interviews were conducted with almost 5,000 young men and women, then aged 14 to 22 years old, as well as older members of their households. The panel included many young people who had been born in rural areas and subsequently migrated to the city. In 2009, about 1,420 young men, by then aged between 20 and 29 years, were interviewed as part of the most recent, fifth wave (together with a larger number of young women, who are not discussed in this chapter). The strength of a panel study is that it provides very detailed data on the lives of these young people, allowing us to assess the consequences over time of their living conditions, their attitudes and beliefs, and their choices. The disadvantage of a panel study such as CAPS is that the panel shrinks over time through 'attrition'. After five waves, CAPS has very detailed data on a panel that due to attrition, is no longer representative of the general population of young people in Cape Town in their 20s (Lam *et al*., forthcoming)[6].

[6] The wave 5 data used here are still subject to various quality checks. Results reported in this chapter are not weighted.

CAPS was not specifically designed to examine pathways into delinquency, violence or crime. It was initially focused on adolescents' pathways through education and into the labour market, through changing households, and into and through the world of sexual activity. Questions about the perpetration of violence were not included in the first four waves. CAPS therefore does not provide the kind of detailed data on the actual pathways into delinquency and violence that a survey like the NYS provided in the USA. It does, however, allow us to analyse the predictors of violence with a precision unmatched in once-off surveys. In our analysis of the data, we use the first four waves of the study (i.e. up to and including 2006), wherever possible, to predict what respondents reported (in the fifth wave) about their perpetration of violence over the previous three years. This gives us more confidence that violence really is the dependent variable in our regressions, and our independent variables really are the causes rather than consequences of violence.

In the fifth wave, the measure of the dependent variable was participants' response to being asked whether, in the past three years, they had hit or physically assaulted each of (a) 'a girlfriend, boyfriend, partner or any adult in your family', (b) a friend or neighbour, and (c) a 'stranger or someone you do not know well'. There was no measure of chronicity and the perpetration could have occurred at any time in the period. To reduce the extent to which the perpetration of violence would be under-reported, respondents completed the module about the perpetration of violence themselves without being questioned by the interviewer. In total, about *one in four* young men and *one in eight* young women said that they had hit someone (i.e. in any of these categories) in the previous three years. In each of the three categories, about one in eight men (and a smaller proportion of women) said that they had hit someone. These figures broadly accord with other data on the perpetration of everyday violence. Whilst violence is not ubiquitous, a substantial minority of young men admit to using violence.

In this chapter we focus on the data on violence against strangers. Analysis of the data suggests that violence against strangers and domestic violence have different predictors and correlates. Using a mix of the testimony of people living in high-violence neighbourhoods and quantitative data on perpetrators and non-perpetrators, we now turn to an examination of the roles of various social and economic 'drivers' in the high levels of everyday violence. Our focus is on the causes, not the consequences, of violence. We divide our analysis into three main categories: economic factors, especially poverty and unemployment; social disintegration; and drinking and drug-taking. After considering each of these categories separately, we conduct a multivariate analysis of the quantitative data.

3. Poverty and Unemployment

There are many possible reasons why poverty and unemployment might lead to violence. Poverty means that young men have an incentive to commit crime, especially when poverty coexists with inequality, and crime is likely often to entail violence (especially against strangers, outside of the home). Unemployment means that young men have lots of free time. Unemployment probably also undermines traditional bases of masculinity, resulting in young men resorting to violence – inside as well as outside the home – as an alternative marker of their masculinity (Campbell, 1992). Moreover, the unemployed, and perhaps the poor generally, might either see themselves as outsiders in society or are actually outside of the social networks that sustain norms against violence.

When we asked our respondents in wave 5 of CAPS about the causes of violence in South Africa, almost everyone (89%) agreed that poverty and unemployment were important causes.[7] Similarly, in our semi-structured interviews, interviewees frequently pointed to these economic factors: "What causes violence the most is poverty, people are starving, which is why they go out stealing other people's stuff, they are starving" (V1, male, 38). We were told that violent people themselves justify their actions in terms of poverty:

> "When you asking the person who is committed on violence, when asking that person why, the person would answer by saying, 'Sister, you would not know because you are not living at my home. Because I am doing this because I do not have money, I do not have bus fare, sister, so I changed because of that, and when spending time with my friends we discuss how do we get money and the solution is to go all out and snatch people's belongings or do house breakings'" (V5, female, 33).

Poverty is widely attributed to unemployment and difficulties in securing a job. Interviewees acknowledged that the government has sought to create jobs, but there is a widespread perception that employment opportunities have actually worsened since the end of Apartheid, with permanent and formal employment ever scarcer: "Now there are less jobs; people get employed on a contract basis" (V20, male, 42). With their prospects for employment diminished, young people are said to turn to crime as an alternative source of income. "I think it is because

[7] Agreement that unemployment and poverty lead to violence was stronger among respondents who said that they were poor, sometimes went without food, and faced poor opportunities. Young people who were working at the time of the interview were significantly *less* likely to agree with the statement, whilst those young people who were unemployed at the time of the interview were neither more nor less likely to agree.

of the job scarcity and these children also want money and the jobs are not there so they tell themselves that they will get it from those who are working" (V21, female, 44).

Our interviewees emphasised that employment reduces violence: Among people who have jobs, "waking up and going to work is the only thing they think of, even those that have businesses, they just wake up and think of their businesses; so if one does not have a business they just think of robbing others, even those who do not have work" (V1, male, 38). A resident of Khayelitsha said that in his part of the township, "most of the people who live here in Harare are actually employed, so we have lower crime here" (V6, female, 43).

However, unemployment does not inevitably lead to crime or violence, as a number of interviewees pointed out. "I don't want to say maybe it's unemployment [that causes crime] because I am also not working, I am always here at home; I buy the newspaper and try to read and all that; I never think of going to rob someone, or go and steal because I don't work and I want something to eat" (V13, female, 26).

There is no doubting the scale of the employment crisis in South Africa. Unemployment rates are, particularly high among young men and women, at least in part due to their low levels of qualification. Many young people leave school, either without sitting the public examination sat at the end of the 12th grade or with a poor pass, and spend long periods in unemployment. In September 2007, for example, the official Labour Force Survey found that the unemployment rate (using the 'broad' definition favoured by everyone except the government) was 74% among 15-19 year-olds, 60% among 20-24 year-olds and 43% among 25-29 year-olds.[8].

Among the CAPS panel, we find modest bivariate correlations between some measures of economic conditions and the perpetration of violence against strangers. Young men who report that their household had not had enough to eat sometime in the past month, or who had been living in poor or very poor households in 2006, were about one and a half times more likely to have hit a stranger than young men without these characteristics.

But various measures of unemployment did <u>not</u> predict violence against strangers. Nor was there any significant relationship between whether a young

[8] Our calculations.

man had lived in a poor neighbourhood in 2002 and the subsequent perpetration of violence against strangers. Even together, these conditions have little effect. A young man who reported not having enough to eat in the past month *and* who had been unemployed at the time of the 4th interview (in 2006) *and* who had lived in 2002 in a poor or very poor neighbourhood was *no more* likely to have hit a stranger than a young man with *none* of these characteristics.

These findings mean that young employed men are almost as likely as their unemployed counterparts to have assaulted a stranger. Similarly young men who have graduated from high school are almost as likely to have hit a stranger as those who dropped out of school. They also mean that other factors are causing considerable variance within each of these categories in terms of the perpetration of violence. Evidently some forms of violence are widespread in South African society, rather than being heavily concentrated in particular economic contexts.

Economic variables explain only a small part of the variance in violence among the young men in our panel. Our 'best' multivariate regression model, regressing violence against economic and educational variables, has an r-squared of only 1% for violence against strangers (much less than the 4% for domestic or intimate partner violence). As many of the interviewees in our in-depth study noted, young men from economically disadvantaged backgrounds make choices: some choose to use violence, many choose not to do so.

These findings are broadly consistent with the findings of Burton *et al*. (2009), who compared young offenders and non-offenders. They found that offenders could not be distinguished on the basis of the poverty of their households, the education levels of their household heads, or unemployment rates in their households. They did find that offenders were less likely to have completed school than non-offenders – which was not replicated in our comparison of perpetrators of violence against strangers compared to non-perpetrators. But their finding might be, at least in part, a consequence of arrest and conviction.

Overall, contrary to the 'local knowledge' of residents of high-violence neighbourhoods, unemployment does not seem to be a direct cause of violence, economic conditions appear to have weak effects, and education does not deter young men from violence.

4. Social disintegration and indiscipline

The choices that young men make about the use of violence are likely to be shaped by their social experiences. As discussed elsewhere in this volume, exposure to violence or other forms of social adversity during childhood often has a lasting effect into adulthood. In the original interviews (in 2002) with young men and women in Cape Town, just under one in ten reported that they had occasionally, sometimes or often been hit hard when they were growing up, and one in three said that they had been pushed around. Almost one in four respondents told us that they had grown up in a household with an adult who had either a drinking problem or took street drugs. Almost one in ten reported that, when they were children, some of their kin were in jail.

About one half of adolescent boys and girls in Cape Town do not live with their biological fathers. In high-income neighbourhoods in Cape Town, most children and adolescents live with their fathers. In most poor and many medium-income neighbourhoods, only about one-third of children live with their fathers. Whilst some absent fathers make great efforts to play a role in their children's lives, and in some cases stepfathers or other men assume the roles of a father, in many cases separation from a father results in an important gap in the life of a young person (Bray *et al*., 2010). This is in part because of the shrinkage of the extended family. At the same time as the proportion of young people growing up in nuclear-family households has declined, non-nuclear kin seem to recognize fewer obligations to each other than in the past (see Harper & Seekings, 2010).

We did not ask our CAPS participants whether they saw any relationship between childhood experiences and violence, but we did ask them about the contributions to violence of a lack of respect and discipline. Three out of four of our CAPS respondents agreed that a lack of respect and discipline was an important cause of violence. In our in-depth interviews, most interviewees said that beating a child is wrong, but many expressed consternation that post-apartheid legislation intended to protect children from abuse has had the unintended effect of increasing violence in society.

> "Back in those days there was less violence. But today they [young people] say they have gained freedom and say it is their time now. Back then you could say 'no' to a child and they would listen. But now – you say no and they'll still continue and tell you they are free now… A child will tell you can't beat them and they will have you arrested if you beat them up. So they are unruly now" (V39, female, 54).

The lack of physical discipline is said to result in children "ending up rotten" (V16, male, 43).

In our CAPS data we have no measures for 'discipline' or 'respect', but we have asked young people about aspects of their home environment during childhood (see above). We find a weak statistical relationship between reported exposure to violence during childhood (as reported in 2002) and the perpetration of violence in early adulthood against strangers (as reported in wave 5, in 2009). A young man who reported growing up in a violent household was 1.6 times more likely to have hit a stranger than young men who grew up in non-violent households (although this relationship was significant only at the 10% level).

Paternal absence during childhood clearly matters. A young man who spent little of his childhood living with his biological father was one and a half times as likely to perpetrate violence as a young man than someone who had mostly or always lived, as a child, with his father. The time that a boy spent living with his mother had no such effect: the few young men who did not live with their mothers during their childhood were no more likely to grow up into violent young men than the large majority of young men who had lived with their mothers. The effects of paternal presence during childhood were stronger still with respect to domestic or intimate partner violence.

Exposure during childhood to drinking and drug-taking also correlated with violence during early adulthood (and here the effect was strongest with respect to violence against strangers). A young man who had reported (in 2002) that he had grown up in a household with someone who 'was a problem drinker or alcoholic' or 'used street drugs' was almost twice as likely to say (in 2009) that he had hit a stranger in the previous three years, compared to someone who had not grown up amidst drinking and drug-taking. The effect of exposure to violence during childhood was slightly weaker (a bivariate odds ratio of 1.6) and significant (at the 10% level only).

We also investigated whether marital status, parental status or household headship affected the perpetration of violence. On the one hand, we might expect that young men who are integrated into society would be less likely to perpetrate violence. On the other, however, young men who are both married (or the head of their household) *and* unemployed or poor might be more inclined to violence, as a mechanism of buttressing their masculinity. In bivariate analysis, neither being a household head nor being married (in 2006) had a statistically significant relationship with the perpetration of violence, and the odds ratios were close to 1.

Our findings are consistent with those of Burton *et al*. (2009). They found – using once-off rather than panel data – that some social factors do distinguish young offenders from non-offenders. Young offenders were less likely to have good relationships with their fathers or mothers than non-offenders. They were also more likely to come from households where violence was common, where parents disciplined them violently, or other household members engaged in crime, than non-offenders. Data from the fifth wave of CAPS also show a strong relationship between whether a young man has kin who are in jail, take drugs or steal, and the perpetration of violence against strangers, but because these data are all from the fifth wave there is some uncertainty over whether the direction of causation runs solely from kin to violence. It is possible that perpetrators of violence corrupt their kin as much as vice-versa.

4. Drinking and drugs

Drinking and using drugs are widely seen as behaviours that are associated with violence, in South Africa and elsewhere (e.g. Elliott, 1994: 11-12; Otero-Lopez *et al.*, 1994; Parry *et al*., 2004). Seventy percent of CAPS respondents agreed that excessive drinking by men was an important cause of violence. This was a lower proportion than agreed that poverty and unemployment, and disrespect and ill-discipline were causes, but was nonetheless a substantial majority. Women, and men who reported not consuming alcohol in the past month, were significantly more likely to agree that male drinking was a cause of violence. African people were more likely to agree, while white people were more likely to disagree. This racial difference may be attributable to differences in either drinking cultures or locations. White people are more likely to drink alcohol in licensed establishments with security personnel, while African people are more likely to drink in unlicensed shebeens. Interviewees concurred that shebeens are sites of frequent violence.

South Africa has one of the highest rates of alcohol consumption per drinker in the world, as well as some of the highest rates of hazardous drinking (see Peltzer and Ramlagan 2009). When the country is broken down by province, the Western Cape emerges as having the highest rates of lifetime and previous year alcohol use and 'risky' drinking among both males and females, though with higher rates for males for both variables (Harker *et al*., 2008:7-9).

According to our interviewees, alcohol may increase aggression, prompting violent behaviour. "As you know there many alcohol abusers in our communities who become abusive when they are drunk and if you try to

confront on the day after they always blame what they had done on the alcohol" (V30, female, 42). At shebeens, the high levels of intoxication among customers frequently lead to violence, often over small matters. When asked for an example of a petty fight, an interviewee said, "Let's say I'm in a shebeen and I haven't bought a round of drinks and my friend tells me to buy a round. And then a fight erupts because I haven't contributed drinks." Asked why most shebeen fights start, he replied, "You can even beat someone if they spill your beer by accident. It might seem like that person spilt my drink intentionally. And that is already the beginning of a fight" (V40, male, 39).

Drug use was closely associated by interviewees with alcohol abuse and violence. Robbery is believed to be a means to pay for alcohol and drug habits. When a robbery is committed, "Like when they snatch a purse – they snatch it to get money for liquor and dagga [marijuana] and get drunk" (V41, female, 37). Like drunkenness in shebeens, the influence of drugs is also seen as leading to violence independent of other motivations. "I'd say what leads them into violence – are all these things they eat – such as drugs and tik [methamphetamine]. So when they drink and eat those things and they get high, they become very dangerous and they are led into violence" (V26, male, age unreported). Drug and alcohol abuse is clearly a social ill associated with increased levels of violence, and is an especially great problem in Cape Town, where one study found 46.8% of arrestees for violent offenses to have been under the influence of at least one drug (Parry *et al*., 2004:178). However, as one interviewee aptly highlighted, violence cannot be solely attributed to substance abuse, and reductions in drug and alcohol use would not stop all violence. "People can use violence without much reason; drug users don't think much when they have consumed drugs so sometimes what they do is unintentional. Sober people get violent after having taken considerable time to think about a situation" (V37, female, 35).

Within the CAPS panel, when interviewed in 2009, we find a strikingly bipolar distribution of alcohol consumption. Almost one half of the panel (45%) say that they have never drunk alcohol, and another 10% say they last had a drink more than twelve months earlier. On the other hand, more than one half of young men and more than one quarter of young women reported having consumed some alcohol in the past month. One in ten young men say they drink at least 2-3 times per week, and another 30% say they drink about once per week. When asked how many drinks they typically consumed on one of these drinking days, hardly any young men said 'one or two'. The median consumption was 5 or 6 drinks, and as many as one-third of the young men (who said they had drunk in the past month) said that they typically drink ten or more drinks. Our panel of

young men thus includes a large number of non-drinkers, some moderate drinkers, and a significant minority of heavy, binge drinkers. CAPS respondents were asked about drinking in previous interviews also, allowing us to build up a picture of our respondents' drinking histories.

Young men who drink are approximately twice as likely to report perpetrating violence against strangers (and the odds ratios are similar for violence against girlfriends, family, friends and neighbours). Men who drink heavily are more likely to report violence than men who drink moderately. Men who have reported drinking through successive interviews, and men who say they grew up in households where someone had a drinking problem, are more likely to report perpetrating violence. All of these measures of drinking have sizeable and statistically significant effects on violence even when they are included together in a multivariate model. A young man who had reported drinking in successive interviews and who had been exposed to excessive drinking at home, as a child, was over five times more likely to report perpetrating violence than a young man who never reported drinking or exposure to drinking problems.

Taking drugs, or exposure to drug-taking, also correlates with violent behaviour. Young men who admitted to taking drugs in the 4th wave of CAPS (in 2007) were almost twice as likely as others to report (in the 5th wave) that they had perpetrated violence during the intervening years. Being exposed to drug-taking in childhood, or having kin who take drugs now, also correlate with the perpetration of violence.

Almost all studies that probe the effects of drinking and drugs on violence in South Africa find that they matter. In Burton *et al.*'s (2009) study, offenders reported much higher levels of alcohol and drug abuse than non-offenders. Jewkes *et al*. (2006) found that problem drinking correlated positively and significantly with both intimate partner rape and non-partner rape. Abrahams *et al*. (2006) found that drinking (and drug use) correlated positively with intimate partner violence among working men in Cape Town. Data from urban hospitals and mortuaries show that one half of the victims of fatal injuries and three-quarters of the victims of non-fatal injuries tested positive for alcohol. These proportions were highest in Cape Town, where alcohol-related deaths and injuries peak distinctively over weekends (see Matzopoulos, Mathews and Myers, 2007).

The precise relationship between drinking and violence has not been demonstrated empirically, but the accounts given by our in-depth interviewees above are likely to be accurate. A high proportion of non-domestic violence is

situational in that it occurs in and around bars and shebeens. Returning drunk from bars or shebeens also exposes people to violence. Drunk men also seem more likely to be violent in or around the home.

6. The relative importance of different factors in the perpetration of violence by young men

CAPS data allow us to run a multivariate analysis to examine how different factors are related to the perpetration of different forms of violence. First we conduct the kind of multivariate regression analysis used previously in some South African studies of rape and intimate partner violence (Abrahams *et al*., 2004, 2006; Jewkes *et al*., 2006). Then we present the results of a second set of multivariate regressions, designed to build a model of violence that more fully demonstrates the causal pathways leading to the reported perpetration of violence against strangers. This is the category of violence that is of most concern to ordinary people, but has been largely neglected in the existing South African literature. In this chapter we do *not* model violence against non-strangers; our preliminary analysis suggests that there are important differences between the various categories of violence.

Table 1 reports the results of a series of regression models for the perpetration of violence against strangers by young men, as reported in CAPS. Successive models incorporate selected variables. Variables that are consistently not significant in these multivariate models are not included. The first regression model (model 1.1) considers only four economic and educational variables: whether the respondent said (in 2009) that any household member had gone without food in the past month, whether the respondent had been unemployed in 2006, whether the respondent had lived in a poor neighbourhood in 2002 (i.e. at the time of the first wave of interviews for CAPS), and whether the respondent had passed matric by 2006. (To reduce uncertainty about the direction of causality, we use data for 2006 or earlier whenever possible.) The regressions are logistic regressions, and the table reports odds ratios (with standard errors in brackets) and statistical significance indicated by asterisks. Model 1.1 shows that going without food in 2009 is highly significant in this multivariate model, with an odds ratio of 1.8. Neither unemployment nor educational attainment is significant, and coming from a bad neighbourhood actually has a negative effect when controlling for the other economic and educational variables. The r-squared for this model is low, at only 1%. An equivalent model for domestic violence shows larger coefficients, higher significance, and a larger r-squared.

Adding variables for the home environment during childhood improves the model (see model 1.2). Paternal absence during childhood predicts violence against strangers, even controlling for the economic and educational variables already considered. The presence of someone with a drinking or drugs problem at home during childhood was a stronger predictor of violence against strangers in later life. The economic and educational variables remain significant with the addition of these childhood environment variables. Model 1.3 includes also variables for drinking and drug-taking in early adulthood, showing that they also predict violence against strangers. The economic variables continue to have weak effects with respect to violence against strangers; the presence of a drinker or drug-taker during childhood continues to be significant, even controlling for similar behaviour on the young man's own part later in life.

The final model (1.4) shows the conditional correlations when we add in variables for whether the young man is (self-reportedly) impulsive or short-tempered, has 'bad' kin (i.e. kin who take drugs, do things that could get them into trouble with the police, or are actually in jail) and lives in a 'bad' neighbourhood (i.e. one in which the respondent knows personally people who sell drugs, steal, or are in jail). All of these are variables from wave 5, not from previous waves. Bad kin is not significant, but temper/impulsivity and bad neighbourhood are significant. The one economic variable ('gone without food'), the presence of a drinker or drug-taker in the childhood home, and heavy drinking remain significant. The r-squared for model 1.4 is higher, at 8%. Although this is not shown, adding dummy variables for race does not improve these final models, and the relationships between race and violence are not significant.

In summary, this preliminary multivariate analysis corroborates the picture from bivariate analyses: past poverty and unemployment are not strong predictors of the perpetration of violence by young men against strangers. Drinking, both by others in the childhood home and by the young man in adolescence and early adulthood, is a predictor, and factors linked to the immediate context ('gone without food' and the neighbourhood) also correlate significantly and conditionally with violence against strangers. None of these models include any variables measuring the perceived efficacy of the criminal justice system, 'discipline' or respect, or norms and beliefs.

One problem with this kind of multivariate analysis is that the correlations are conditional on the other variables included in each model. If there are important relationships between independent variables, then the model might serve to disguise both direct and indirect effects between any independent variable and

the dependent variable. Whilst there is no overall problem of multi-collinearity with the regression models reported in Table 1, an alternative approach can more fully set out the causal pathway leading to the outcome of perpetrating violence against strangers. Table 2 shows the correlations between the various variables. For most pairs of variables, the correlation coefficients are less than 0.1. These independent variables measure substantially different phenomena.

Table 3 sets out the models used in this approach, and Figure 1 summarises the causal pathways found. The starting point is the relationship between socio-economic background, measured here in terms of both the poverty of the neighbourhood in which the young man lived in 2002, seven years before we enquired about violence (henceforth 'background') and exposure to adult drinking or drug-taking in the childhood home (henceforth 'CHDD'). Model 3.1 shows that there is no direct, bivariate relationship between background and violence. The relationship might, however, be mediated through other variables that are more proximal to violence perpetrated between 2006 and 2009. Models 3.4 and 3.6 regress unemployment status and educational attainment in 2006 on the initial socio-economic background variable. There is no significant relationship between background and unemployment status – probably because unemployment is so common among young men – but there is a negative relationship between background and educational attainment. Models 3.2, 3.5 and 3.7 repeat this for the CHDD variable. They show that there is a strong bivariate relationship between exposure to drinking or drug-taking in the childhood home and violence against strangers, several years later. Exposure to drinking or drug-taking in the childhood home also predicts both unemployment and low educational attainment later. Model 3.8 regresses violence on all four of these variables, so as to identify the marginal effects of including the unemployment and education variables. It shows that CHDD continues to have a significant relationship with violence, even controlling for the other variables, but none of the other three has a statistically significant conditional association with violence.

Models 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11 repeat this exercise with the variable for drinking heavily (DH). Both background and CHDD predict drinking heavily, but neither unemployment nor educational attainment has a significant marginal effect on drinking heavily. Model 3.12 regresses violence on drinking, background and CHDD, showing all three statistically significant conditional correlations. Drinking heavily has both direct effects on the perpetration of violence, and probably serves as a mechanism through which background and CHDD have indirect effects. Note, however, that the indirect effect of background is *negative*: Poor background reduces the likelihood of violence through the

mediating mechanism of drinking, because young men from poor backgrounds are less likely to drink heavily.

Models 3.12, 3.14 and 3.15 do the same for the variables 'gone without food' (FD) and 'bad neighbourhood' (BN). Poor background and unemployment increase the likelihood of going without food, and education reduces it; these effects are quite large. CHDD and unemployment increase the likelihood of living in a bad neighbourhood, but the effects are small; education reduces the likelihood of living in a bad neighbourhood. Both going without food and living in a bad neighbourhood correlate with violence (in model 3.15). Only CHDD continues to correlate with violence in this model.

The final model (3.16) incorporates all these variables, as well as the variable for being short-tempered or impulsive. This model is very similar to model 1.4 in Table 1, with minor and inconsequential differences because of the omission of some of the variables used in the earlier model.

The results are more easily seen in Figure 1. Socio-economic background has no direct effect on violence, and if there is an indirect positive effect, it is very indirect. Background affects educational attainment but not unemployment status; neither educational attainment nor unemployment status themselves have direct effects on violence, but they do affect whether the young man lived (in 2009) in a 'bad neighbourhood' or in a household where someone has gone without food. Only indirectly, through the latter factors, might socio-economic background, unemployment status in 2006 or educational attainment in 2006 have any effect on subsequent violence against strangers.

Socio-economic background does have an indirect negative effect, however. Drinking predicts violence, and socio-economic background has a significant but negative effect on drinking. We do not know the reason for this relationship, but it is likely to be in part because heavy drinking is not easily afforded by young men in poor neighbourhoods.

Exposure to drinking and drug-taking in the childhood home does have strong direct effects on the perpetration of violence in later life, might have indirect effects through the young men's own drinking histories, and might also have indirect effects through recent and current socio-economic circumstances.

Our results do not necessarily 'corroborate' the finding by Demombynes and Özler (2005), using district-level data from 1996, that the relationship between income and violence in South Africa has the shape of an inverted U. Their data

are national, and at the level of districts, whereas ours are limited to Cape Town, and are at the level of individual young men. But it is striking, nonetheless, that neither study finds that deep poverty is associated with most violence against strangers.

Conclusion

'Local knowledge' in violent neighbourhoods suggests that violence is due to, especially, poverty and unemployment, with social distintegration, disrespect, drinking and drugs also playing important roles. Our panel data provide little support for the hypothesis that a poor background or unemployment is direct causes of violence by young men against strangers, although immediate poverty might be. Experiencing violence during childhood does not predict perpetrating violence later in life, but growing up in a home where someone drank heavily or took drugs does predict subsequent violence. A history of drinking or taking drugs oneself also predicts violence, as does living in a 'bad' neighbourhood. Our multivariate analysis suggests that the evident effects of immediate poverty and neighbourhood are unlikely to reflect the indirect effects of past economic conditions. Overall, deep-rooted social and economic factors are less important, directly or indirectly, than is commonly imagined. We are struck by the importance of behavioural factors (notably drinking and drug-taking) and the immediate context.

Our findings do not mean, however, that socio-economic background has no importance. It might be the case that the inter-individual differences in background simply pale into insignificance in the current context of high levels of everyday violence. Almost everybody in Cape Town is growing up in an environment that is both violent and, to some extent, is normatively tolerant of violence. Good longitudinal data at the district-level would make it easier to identify the macro-determinants of violence. There is neither evidence nor reason to suspect that increased levels of violence in the 1990s can be linked to increased drinking. Rather, it is heavy drinking which explains why some people have been more violent than others in circumstances that seem to have been generally conducive to rising violence. What the micro-level data suggests is that few young people in South Africa in the early 2000s come from backgrounds that strongly predispose them *against* the use of violence. Across society, therefore, young men from diverse backgrounds are making similar choices about the use of violence.

These findings are constrained by the limits of our data and our sample. Whilst the detailed longitudinal data on the lives of individual young people allow us to identify the antecedents of violence for some perpetrators, compared to non-perpetrators, we need to exercise some caution in inferring more general conclusions about the overall population. It is not only likely that a small proportion of young men account for a very high proportion of violence against strangers, but is it also possible that such perpetrators are under-represented in the realized wave 5 CAS sample. More generally, CAPS lacks data on histories of violence: We do not know when young men began to use violence, how often, in what situations or against precisely whom. Thus our findings, while contributing to a better understanding of the drivers of violence in Cape Town, also highlight the need for further research.

Appendices:

Table 1: Predictors of violence against strangers, young men aged 20-29				
	Model 1.1	Model 1.2	Model 1.3	Model 1.4
Gone without food (2009)	1.8 (0.3) ***	1.7 (0.3) ***	1.6 (0.3) **	1.7 (0.3) ***
Unemployed in 2006	1.1 (0.2)	1.0 (0.2)	1.0 (0.2)	1.0 (0.2)
Background in poor neighbourhood (2002)	0.7 (0.1) *	0.7 (0.1) *	0.7 (0.1)	0.8 (0.2)
Passed matric by 2006	0.8 (0.1)	0.9 (0.1)	0.9 (0.2)	1.1 (0.2)
Absent father during childhood		1.3 (0.2) *	1.3 (0.2)	1.3 (0.2)
Childhood home drink or drugs		1.8 (0.3) ***	1.7 (0.3) ***	1.6 (0.3) ***
Takes drugs (2006)			1.4 (0.4) *	1.2 (0.3)
Drink moderately (various waves)			1.4 (0.3)	1.3 (0.3) *
Drink heavily (various waves)			1.7 (0.3) ***	1.6 (0.3) **
Short tempered or impulsive				1.8 (0.3) ***
Bad kin (2009)				1.0 (0.1)
Bad neighbourhood (2009)				1.4 (0.1) ***
Pseudo r2	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.08
n	1420	1420	1264	1264
Logistic regressions, reporting odds ratios (with standard errors in brackets). All variables are dummy variables. Significance: * p<0.1; **p <0.05; *** p<0.01.				

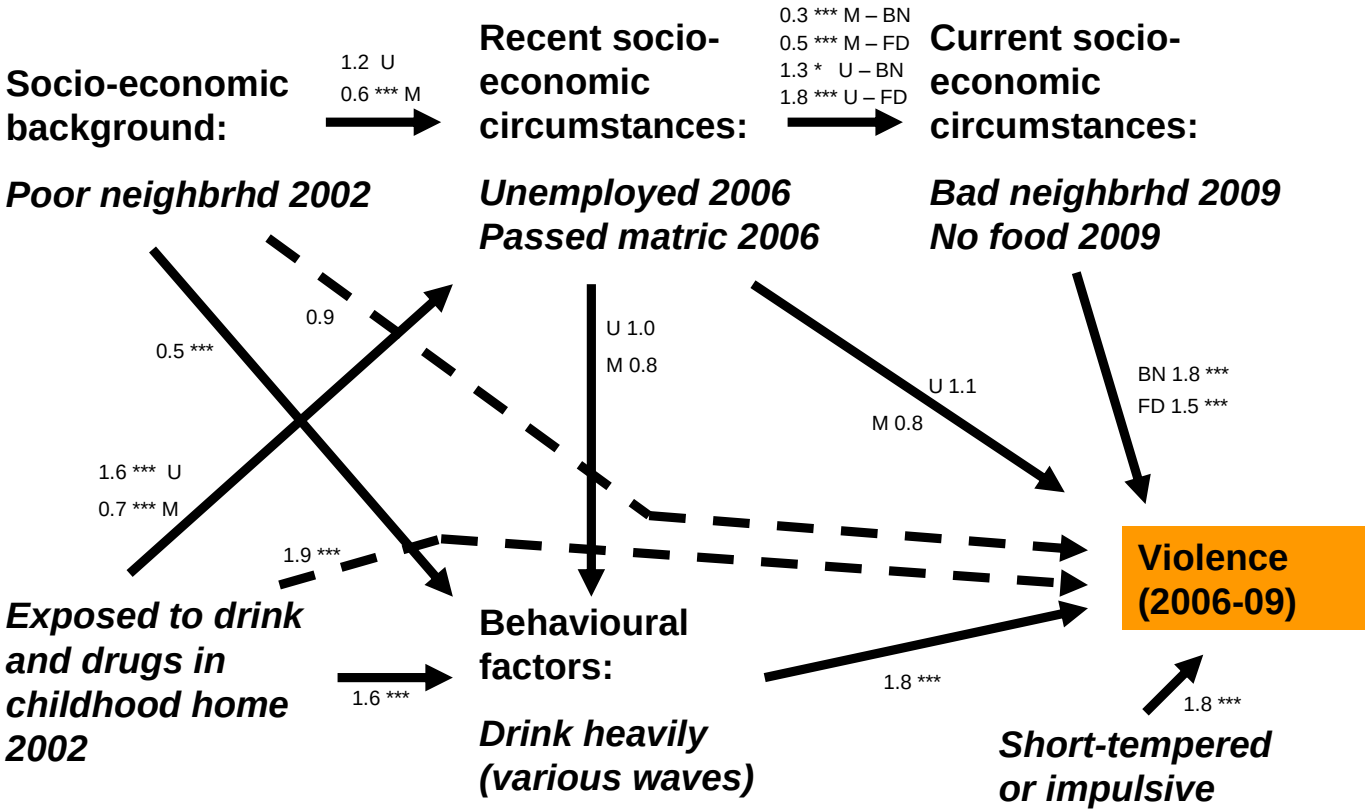
Table 2: Correlation matrix for independent variables									
	V	BG	CDD	U	M	DH	FD	BN	STT
Violence against strangers (V)	1.00								
Background in poor neighbourhood (2002) (BG)	-0.03	1.00							
Childhood home drink or drugs (2002) (CDD)	0.09	-0.05	1.00						
Unemployed in 2006 (U)	0.03	0.01	0.08	1.00					
Passed matric by 2006 (M)	-0.01	0.09	-0.06	-0.06	1.00				
Drink heavily (various waves) (DH)	0.10	0.14	0.10	0.03	0.02	1.00			
Gone without food (2009) (FD)	0.05	0.31	0.03	0.10	-0.10	-0.02	1.00		
Bad neighbourhood (2009) (BN)	0.19	0.06	0.07	0.07	-0.16	0.01	-0.01	1.00	
Short tempered or impulsive (2009) (STT)	0.12	0.04	0.04	0.02	-0.09	0.03	-0.03	0.12	1.00

Table 3: Modeling violence against strangers

Model	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.10	3.11	3.12	3.13	3.14	3.15	3.16
Dependent variable	V	V	BG	U	U	M	M	V	DH	DH	DH	V	FD	BN	V	V
Background in poor neighbourhood (2002) (BG)	0.9 (0.1)			1.2 (0.2)		0.6 (0.1) ***		0.9 (0.2)	0.5 (0.1) ***		0.6 (0.1) ***	0.9 (0.2)	0.3 (0.5) ***	1.2 (0.1)	0.8 (0.1)	1.0 (0.2)
Childhood home drink or drugs (2002) (CDD)		1.9 (0.3) ***	0.8 (0.1)		1.5 (0.2) **		0.7 (0.1) ***	1.8 (0.3) ***		1.6 (0.2) ***	1.6 (0.2) ***	1.7 (0.3) ***	1.1 (0.2)	1.2 (0.2) *	1.7 (0.3) ***	1.5 (0.3) **
Unemployed in 2006 (U)								1.1 (0.2)			0.8 (0.1)		1.8 (0.3) ***	1.3 (0.2) *	0.9 (0.2)	1.1 (0.3)
Passed matric by 2006 (M)								0.8 (0.1)			1.0 (0.1)		0.7 (0.1) ***	0.5 (0.1) ***	1.0 (0.2)	1.3 (0.3)
Drink heavily (various waves) (DH)												1.7 (0.3) ***				1.8 (0.3) ***
Gone without food (2009) (FD)															1.8 (0.3) ***	1.6 (0.3) **
Bad neighbourhood (2009) (BN)															1.5 (0.1) ***	1.6 (0.1) ***
Short tempered or impulsive (2009)																1.8 (0.3) ***
Pseudo r2	<0.01	0.01	<0.01	<0.01	0.01	0.01	<0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.08	0.02	0.07	0.09
n	1420	1420	1420	1420	1420	1420	1420	1420	1153	1153	1153	1153	1420	1420	1420	1153

Logistic regressions, reporting odds ratios (with standard errors in brackets). All variables are dummy variables. Significance: * p<0.1; **p <0.05; *** p<0.01.

Modelling the correlates of the perpetration of violence against strangers



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