

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND – JOHANNESBURG
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MODELLING THE DIFFERENTIAL INCIDENCE OF CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT
AND EXPLOITATION IN POOR HOUSEHOLDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

PhD THESIS

Za-Mulamba Paulin MBECKE
Student Number: 9910338V

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ABSTRACT

Child abuse is rife and on the increase in South Africa. The review of five theories of child abuse shows that each theory is unitary, limited and isolated and proposes an incomplete understanding of and solution to child abuse. The ineffectiveness of prevention, intervention actions against child abuse and the poor management and control of child abuse cases are the consequence of unfocussed and disintegrated policies and programmes biased towards overestimated poor economic conditions. This research argues that poor economic conditions are not the sole important variables contributing to child abuse. This hypothesis is confirmed by the observation of the Memorial Institute's child abuse database. The purpose of this research is therefore to facilitate a clear understanding of child abuse in order to assist decision making for the prevention of, interventions against and management of child abuse cases. The research proposes the Integrated Modelled Theory that combines variables from different theories to facilitate a clear understanding of child abuse and consequently inform prevention, intervention and management actions through integrated and focused policies and programmes.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Public and Development Management in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Za-Mulamba Paulin MBECKE

9 September 2011

DEDICATION

I dedicate this PhD thesis to the soul of my father Noel Mbecke who encouraged me to study but could unfortunately not see the fruit of my hard work.

I also dedicate this PhD thesis to my beloved wife Olive Mulinda and my children Achilles, Gabriella and John-Diesel (Jody) Mbecke for enduring separation during the course of my studies. A special dedication to my daughter Gracia Mbecke who achieved two grades in one school year. I am proud of you Gracia for being such a bright girl.

Finally and importantly, I dedicate this PhD thesis to all children who fall prey to all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation hoping that no matter the suffering they endure, they will have a good and successful future.

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*"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts, ..."*

William Shakespeare (As You Like It - Act II, Scene VII).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BNS	Bayesian Networks
CJCP	Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CPS	Child Protection System
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRIN	Child Rights Information Network
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CWSA	Child Welfare South Africa
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FD	Fishbone Diagram
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IMD	Income Material Deprivation
IMT	Integrated Modelled Theory
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
MI	Memorial Institute (for Child's Health and Development)
MRC	Medical Research Council
RALC	Rebirth Africa Life on the Continent
PCANY	Prevent Child Abuse New York
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Program
SAIMDC	South African Index of Multiple Deprivation
SAPS	South African Police Service
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
SD	System Dynamics
UCT	University of Cape Town
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organisation

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1.1 BACKGROUND

Global warming, commodity price increase, recessions, political conflicts, ethnic and civil wars, economic cutbacks, financial instabilities, violence and crime are amongst the predicaments that dominate the twenty-first century worldwide. Of all these vices, poverty and crime are the principal enemies of South Africa. The escalating child abuse, neglect and exploitation¹ situation is regrettable in a country where children represent almost 40% (18.7 million) of the population (Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) 2003 – 2009 data and the 2002 – 2008 General Household Survey) and are supposed to be cared for and protected by a multitude of available laws and policies.

South Africa is signatory to the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It has an excellent Constitution and has developed good national laws (such as the Children's Act) and policies (such as the principle of 'children first') to protect the rights of children. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996 protects the fundamental human rights of all its inhabitants. The Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution) clarifies the rights of children under section 28. The Children's Act, No 38 of 2005 gives effect to certain rights of children as contained in the Constitution and sets out principles relating to the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children.

However, regardless of the good laws and policies, many children are a long way from enjoying their rights to a proper and successful transition from an excellent childhood to a responsible and worthy adulthood. The majority of South African children are caught between poverty and crime. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of South African children live in poor households according to Stats SA and the 2004 General Household Survey. Adding to living in poverty, the South African Police Service (SAPS) considers children among the principal victims of frequent contact crimes in the form of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

¹ The term "Child abuse, neglect and exploitation" is interchangeably referred to as child abuse, child maltreatment or crime and violence against children in this research.

The consequences of atrocities perpetrated against children are enormous because they suffer the lack of care, protection, and nurturing and at the same time they are victims of violence and crime. The prevalence of child abuse presumes the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of prevention, intervention and management systems through various laws, policies and programmes. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2005, p. 1) maintains that "whether they live in urban centres or rural outposts, children risk missing out on their childhood – excluded from essential services such as hospital and schools, lacking the protection of family and community, often at risk of exploitation and abuse. For these children, childhood as a time to grow, learn, play and feel safe is, in effect, meaningless". UNICEF acknowledges that adults fail in their responsibility to ensure that children are cared for, protected and safe.

Child abuse is not a new phenomenon in the history of civilisation. Prevent Child Abuse New York (PCANY)² argues that since the beginning of time, no class of people has been subjected to greater abuse and neglect than children. PCANY maintains that according to research during the past twenty years, human and social problems will resist solutions if effective measures are not taken to prevent the abuse and neglect of children. Furthermore, PCANY argues that the focus of many governments has been for too long, to spend billions treating the consequences of child abuse and investing almost nothing in prevention.

This research considers that prevention of and intervention against child abuse is essential and must be based on a clear understanding of the phenomenon. For Newberger, Newberger and Hampton (1983, p. 3) "the lack of knowledge, or, perhaps more accurately, the inadequate understanding of the state of knowledge promoted by the anxiety which child abuse stimulates in all of us, is translated to recommendations for intervention, many of which are heavy-handed, unspecific, and insensitive; and some of which can be downright harmful".

The authors consider that presumptions and fears limit good and effective

² <http://preventchildabuseny.org/>

recommendations for intervention against the prevention and treatment of child abuse. For them only a substantial knowledge base of the impact of the abuse on children can assist in achieving good and effective recommendations for prevention and treatment. They express the need for further researched theory and emphasise the importance of theory for knowledge, prevention and treatment of child abuse.

The development of a theory-based model is therefore necessary to facilitate the understanding of child abuse and to inform the development and successful implementation of policies and programmes to address child abuse responding to the above concern by Newberger, *et al.* (1983) as well as other authors. Newberger, *et al.* (1983) emphasise the importance of an adequate understanding of child abuse to focus the prevention and intervention efforts where they are more appropriate and therefore impactful.

This research is a response to the call for further research by Newberger, *et al.* (1983). Its purpose is to facilitate a clear understanding of child abuse in order to assist the formulation of decisions for the prevention of and interventions against child abuse. The research proposes a theory called the Integrated Modelled Theory (IMT) that combines variables from different theories to provide a clear understanding of child abuse and therefore assist policy and decision making for prevention, intervention and management.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

One morning in October 2001, South Africa awoke to the heartbreaking, shameful and almost unbelievable news headline that six men had allegedly raped a nine-month old infant (later nicknamed Baby Tshepang to protect her identity). Apparently, the accused men were related to Tshepang's mother, one being her boyfriend. Baby Tshepang was allegedly left unattended and importantly, it was alleged that her mother was either intoxicated with or in search of alcohol during the toddler's ordeal.

In this case, observers and analysts considering the circumstances of the incident

blamed poor economic conditions for various reasons. Firstly, Baby Tshepang never enjoyed proper care and protection; her mother lived in a poor physical environment, was unemployed and without sufficient income. Secondly, she lived a promiscuous life characterised by the abuse of alcohol. Thirdly, those responsible for the abuse were said to be poor, drunk and apparently some of them HIV/AIDS positive who believed that sleeping with a 'virgin' child would cure their HIV status.

The sexual abuse case of Baby Tshepang is somewhat linked to the economic situation of her mother and the perpetrators because of the characteristics observed. However, a close analysis of the case by this research shows that social, environmental, cultural and structural variables also contributed to this unfortunate circumstance. The social environment in which the child was sexually abused did not conform to the standard norms of child love, protection and nurturing. The barbaric behaviour of the perpetrators implies their low morality and lack of social responsibility. The physical environment in which the child lived and where the abuse happened was poor, inadequate and crowded. The perpetrators apparently believed in a cultural practice (or just an unjustified belief) that sleeping with a virgin child could cure HIV/AIDS. Finally, the structural elements of this case include the inability of the government system to protect children against any possible harm. The government also failed to provide necessary care to the child considering her socio-economic rights.

Unlike the case of Baby Tshepang, many cases of child abuse are far from being directly linked to the poor economic conditions of parents or caregivers. In November 2007, for instance, three year-old Madeleine McCann vanished from her room in a famous holiday resort in Portugal. This case is different from Baby Tshepang's considering the circumstances of the incident and the economic conditions of Madeleine's family. Madeleine's parents were having dinner in a restaurant fifty (50) yards away when Madeleine disappeared. The family was on holiday, meaning that their economic condition was outstanding. In the United Kingdom, the distressed parents were criticised in Internet chat rooms for allowing their children to be out of their sight. Some Internet bloggers taking part in discussion threads claimed that, as well-paid professionals the couple should have known better than to leave the children unsupervised. Mr. McCann was a consultant cardiologist at Glenfield

Hospital, Leicester, where his wife was a general practitioner. A child, from a well-off family was a victim of neglect, no matter the testimony of the parents.

Far from an impoverished South Africa, in Austria (Europe), Josef Fritzl broke the record for gruesome child abuse. He kept his own daughter captive for over 24 years; fathered seven children with her (incest), and abused all of them for their entire life in the bunker he purposely built to conceal his crimes. Joseph Fritzl might have had a psychological disorder or be insane but poverty was not directly linked to the abuse he imposed on his daughter and the seven children he fathered with her.

As illustrated in the above cases, child abuse is a complex phenomenon to understand because although its consequences are disastrous, the variables contributing to its occurrence remain ignored, misunderstood and sometimes misinterpreted. It is true that many cases of child abuse and neglect, according to Newberger, *et al.* (1983) are believed to be the consequences of an act of omission or commission by parents or caregivers. The act of commission or omission has nothing to do with the economic condition and social position of the parents or caregivers. It is therefore premature to consider that parental acts of commission or omission are influenced only by their economic condition and social position.

Authors on child care and protection such as Doyle (1990) confirm from experience that in its variety of forms, child abuse is not the consequence of only economically poor and socially deprived parents or caregivers. Child abuse cannot therefore be blamed on the economic and social conditions of the households. Child abuse exists both in poor and in non-poor households across the world. Pierce and Bozalek (2004) see child abuse as a social problem and include poor housing, inadequate economic support for families (including the child), and unsafe communities as other variables that contribute to child abuse.

Aware of the fact that the majority of South African children (68%) live in poor households, this research undertakes to demonstrate that poor economic conditions are not the sole syndrome of child abuse. The impact of abuse on children is dire in poor households, yet child abuse does not necessarily happen because of isolated economic conditions only. The overestimation of economic variables contributing to

child abuse over other variables derails prevention and intervention efforts and contributes to their inefficacy and inefficiency.

This research understands that, whilst economic and social conditions appear to be almost identical in poor households, the levels of child abuse differ. The differential incidence of child abuse depends not solely on economic conditions but a combination of economic, social, cultural, environmental and structural contributing variables as considered by this research. A clear understanding of the links and interdependences between different variables in child abuse causation is key to effective planning for appropriate prevention, intervention and management mechanisms. This research shows how non-economic variables contribute equally to child abuse and how the combination of economic with non-economic variables facilitates a clear understanding, and consequently facilitates the policy and decision making for the prevention of and intervention against child abuse.

The IMT is a research-based policy solution to the biased and unclear understanding of child abuse, neglect and exploitation considering poor economic conditions of households. On the one hand, the IMT combines different variables and analyses their links and interdependences in their individual and collective contribution to the incidence of each other and of child abuse. On the other hand, the IMT, considering the contribution of each variable or the combination of many variables (conditional probability) in child abuse causation, assists the policy and decision making process on appropriate and focussed policies and programmes for the prevention, intervention and management of child abuse. In this regard, the users of the IMT have to consider the scenario at hand in reviewing, developing and or implementing policies and programmes that directly correspond to the specific scenario. This research recommends therefore a careful consideration of all variables found in each scenario to inform policy and programme review, development and implementation for the prevention, intervention and management of child abuse. This research provides a process on how to develop different scenarios to understand child abuse and therefore to inform and support policy and programme development and implementation.

Because many variables contribute to child abuse, it is necessary to identify and

define each variable from a theoretical point of view in order to understand its contribution in the incidence of other variables and of child abuse. The IMT using the probability calculations of the Bayesian Networks (BNs) theory facilitates the quantification of each contributing variable and the establishment of links and interdependences between the variables.

The IMT considers contributing variables from a review of economic, social, cultural, environmental and structural theories. The selection of these theories results from an assessment of the contribution of each theory in crime and child abuse causation.

1.3 RESEARCH PROCESS AND SUMMARY

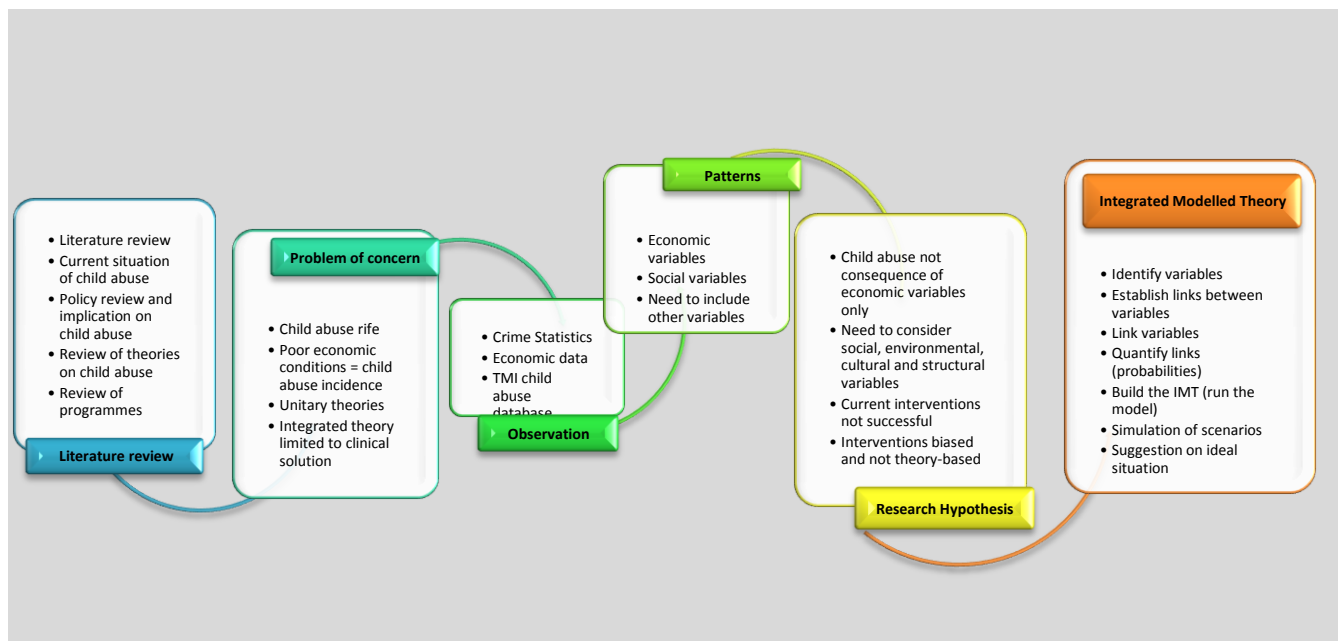
This research is a carefully constructed process leading to the development of the IMT to facilitate the understanding of, prevention, intervention in and management of child abuse cases. The research process includes the definition of child abuse, the overview of child poverty and child abuse in South Africa and the assessment of five theories of child abuse. The theories of child abuse are then interrogated through the observation of the child abuse database of the Memorial Institute (MI)³. The database contains the economic and social conditions of households where child abuse cases happened. Because the observation of the MI database confirms the conclusion of the theories on child abuse, the research uses the BNs theory to develop the IMT that combines variables from different theories to facilitate the understanding of child abuse and assist compile policy and decision making process for the prevention of, intervention against and management of child abuse.

The research approach combines both deductive and inductive approaches as explained earlier in this chapter.

The research process and outcome is summarised in figure 1 below:

³ The child abuse database was compiled by the then Transvaal Memorial Institute for Child Health and Development (TMI). This name has been changed to the Memorial Institute for Child Health and Development, thus the abbreviation (MI).

Figure 1: Summary of research approach



Source: Author

The first chapter of this research provides the background and introduction to the problem statement as well as the process and summary of the research. The second chapter reviews the literature on child abuse and the current situation of children in South Africa (and their abuse), the implication of current policies and programmes to prevent and eradicate child abuse and the review of theories of child abuse. The third chapter explains the problem of concern and the methodology used in collecting and analysing data and developing the IMT. The literature and statistics show that child abuse is rife and on the increase in South Africa. Considering that the majority of children live in poor households there is a tendency to believe that child abuse is the consequence of poverty. This is the problem of concern to this research after the literature review (chapter two). The fourth chapter concerns the observation of the MI database on the impact of the social and economic variables and the need for variables from other theories to facilitate the understanding of child abuse. Chapter five concentrates on the principles of the BNs theory and the development of the IMT. The last chapter sums-up the research and focuses on showing how to use the IMT to understand child abuse and to facilitate the policy and programme development to address variables contributing to child abuse.

1.4 CONCLUSION

Child abuse is not a new phenomenon. However, the violent nature of crime against children in South Africa is alarming and calls for urgent action. This research regards child abuse as a critical social problem in South Africa. It undertakes the development of an integrated theory-based model, the IMT as a catalyst for social change. Social change promoted by this research through the IMT means that firstly, the IMT combines variables from different theories in order to facilitate the understanding of child abuse in South Africa. Secondly, the IMT is a tool that informs policy and decision making processes for an effective and efficient response (prevention, intervention and management) to child abuse.

The SAPS child abuse statistics and the civil society's reports on child abuse show the prevalence and increase of child abuse cases in South Africa. The economic conditions of the households where these children live play a role in the victimisation of children. Nevertheless, on their own, the poor economic conditions of a household do not fully explain the occurrence of child abuse. Consequently, biased economic variables do not provide a clear picture of the scenarios behind child abuse.

The importance of considering non economic variables contributing to child abuse is justified through two dimensions in this research. The first dimension is the review of the literature on child abuse and theories explaining in detail the extent to which child abuse is understood globally and in South Africa. The findings of the literature review give meaning to the perceptions and theories on the variables contributing to child abuse without necessarily providing a practical scenario on each variable, or providing a holistic priority list of contributing variables and their links to each other and to child abuse. The literature is also silent on an approach to integrating various individual variables and theories to provide a clear understanding of their individual or and collective contribution to child abuse.

The second dimension is the observation and interpretation of the MI database to depict the nuances of the relevant economic variables contributing to child abuse. The gap found in the implication of economic variables captured in the MI database prompted the interest in developing the IMT that combines many other variables

from different theories in understanding child abuse. Furthermore, such combinations, links and interdependences are necessary in both facilitating a clear understanding of child abuse and importantly facilitating policy and decision making on the prevention of, interventions against and management of child abuse.

The second chapter of this research focuses on the review of literature on child abuse and theories explaining both crime and child abuse causation. The literature review verifies the claims made by the research's background, introduction and process.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains in detail different terms used in the research and analyses the available and relevant literature on child abuse and the theories of child abuse. The literature covers both the South African and international discourse on child abuse. The most important part of the literature review is the discussion of five critical theories that explain child abuse. The conclusion of the analysis of the five theories on child abuse supports the need for this research and the development of the IMT as a solution to the understanding of child abuse.

2.2 DEFINING CHILD ABUSE

To be circumscribed a research needs to define the concepts it uses and to describe what needs to be covered as essential and the type of general knowledge that is not necessary to be discussed. This research does not attempt to conduct an inventory and critical review of all definitions of child abuse. Rather, it considers the definition of child abuse per se, violence against children and crimes against children in response to the aim of the research.

2.1.1 Child abuse

Defining the term 'child abuse' is a complex task that has been undertaken by various researchers in different domains. Yet, in most definitions, there are elements that speak to particularities making a universal or generally accepted definition difficult to reach. Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) argue that defining child abuse is difficult and the varieties of definitions of child abuse offered contain more ambiguities than clarities to be universally accepted. For this reason, this research adopts a combination of definitions that respond to its purpose with regards to the explanation of variables that contribute to child abuse.

The first consideration of this research in seeking an understanding of 'child abuse' is the review of the definition by the United Nations (UN). Article 19 of the UN

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines child abuse as “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse”. This definition of child abuse includes physical, mental, emotional and sexual abuse, injury, negligence, maltreatment and exploitation of children. It categorises all forms of child abuse as crimes against children and society in general. However, this definition lacks analysis and does not provide enough details on child abuse per se. Furthermore, it is silent on the circumstances in which child abuse occurs, the perpetrators and the environments around child abuse.

To fill the gap observed in the UN CRC definition this research looks at the analysis by Munro (2002) and Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) amongst others, in their attempts to formulate a more generally possible or acceptable definition of child abuse. The conclusion of the analysis by these authors provides a good working definition of child abuse for the purpose of this research.

Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) suggest four elements from the environment in which child abuse occurs. The first element concerns the intention of the actor to commit the act of abuse. The second element is the effect of the act on the child victim. The third element is the observer's value judgement about the act of abuse. The fourth element is the source of the standards for the observer's value judgment on the act of abuse. For the authors the four elements namely intentionality, effect, evaluation and standards, are fundamental in defining and understanding child abuse.

The first two elements of child abuse are the intention of the actor and the harm to the child. The behaviour by a parent or guardian (intention of actor of abuse) that results in injury to a child (harm to the child) covers two elements, the intentionality and the effect. Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) consider that the proof of abuse is found in the effect of parental behaviour upon the child. In considering the intention of the abuser (parent or caregiver), the definition of child abuse is therefore, according to Garbarino and Gilliam (1981, p. 5), “a non-accidental physical injury that results from acts of omissions on the part of parents or guardians”. The authors found a problem with this definition as it still relies upon injury, but only considers physical injury. They however recognise the merit of this definition because one can

be abusive through being ignorant about the possible consequences of his or her behaviour. The definition of child abuse, in the view of Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) is that abuse is intentional and not just an accidental use of force. They argue that many scholars believe that cultural support for the use of force against children (corporal punishment for example) is at the centre of the child abuse problem.

The third and fourth elements in defining child abuse are the effect of the judgement made by an observer and the source of the standards for the value judgment of the observer. On these elements, Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) argue that some investigators rely on community standards as the criteria of child abuse. They define abuse as “no accidental physical injury as a result of acts (or omissions) on the part of parents or guardians that violate the community’s standards concerning the treatment of children” (Garbarino and Gilliam, 1981, p. 6). This view is that members of a community can excellently interpret the norms of such community and decide on certain acts as contrary and violating those norms. The effect of the judgement and the source of the standards on child protection introduce the notion of social and cultural variables that contribute to child abuse. Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) maintain that from an anthropological perspective, child abuse has a cultural characteristic as it will be explained under the cultural theory of child abuse.

Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) prefer the term maltreatment to child abuse. They refer to child maltreatment as acts of omission or commission by a parent or guardian that are judged by a mixture of community values and professional expertise to be either inappropriate and/or damaging. The authors claim that their definition of child maltreatment covers their four critical issues in defining child abuse. For them ‘appropriate’ describes parental action; ‘damaging’ covers the effect of the abuse upon the development of the child victim. The appropriateness and damaging dimensions are defined by a value judgement based upon community standards and professional experience.

The above definition contains three relevant dimensions that contribute to child abuse. The three dimensions are firstly the child, secondly the parent and thirdly the community. On parent or caregiver, this definition is short of one critical element. The abuse of a child is not the result of the action of a parent or caregiver only. Other

members of the household or community can abuse a child. This definition needs to include any other person as a possible child abuser.

This definition is also silent on the environment in which the abuse occurs and the systems within that environment that are conducive to child abuse. In other words, this definition is not complete because it links child abuse to only the parent or guardian's action, omitting that the environment and its systems can also contribute to child abuse without necessarily the involvement of a parent or caregiver.

In her attempt to generate an inclusive or rather general definition of child abuse, Munro (2002) argues that the lack of consensus on the definition of child abuse creates a complexity when conducting research on child abuse. As a result, the ambiguity of the term child abuse leads to contestation and shifting of the definition. However, she emphasises that even when a consensus could be reached, the concept of child abuse will still be problematic because the subject matter is intentional human behaviour. It is therefore not possible to explain child abuse in behavioural terms only. Munro (2002, p. 52) then proposes the following broader definition of child abuse by the 1996 British National Commission of Inquiry into the Prevention of Child Abuse to deal with all the gaps in the definitions of child abuse: "Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions, or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development into adulthood".

This definition uncovers three critical issues missing from an inclusive definition of child abuse. Any individual can be a child abuser, institutions can also abuse children and systems and processes too contribute to child abuse.

Munro (2008, p. 48) considers that "systems abuses occur whenever the operation of legislation, officially sanctioned procedures or operational practices within systems or institutions is avoidably damaging to children and their family".

Child abuse happens in different ways. However, physical, emotional, sexual abuse, child commercial exploitation and child neglect are the commonly known types of child abuse. Following is the short description of each of these types of child abuse.

A physically abused child is a child who receives physical (use of force or corporal punishment) harm as a result of the act of commission (directly) or omission (negligence) by his or her parent (s), caregiver (s) or a member of the community. Munro (2002) understands hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating as different forms of physical abuse causing harm to a child.

Emotional abuse is expressed through insults and negative remarks towards children. Munro (2002, p. 53) considers that “emotional abuse is the persistent ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may also involve causing children to frequently feel frightened or the exploitation or corruption of children”.

Munro (2002, p. 53) concedes that “sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways”.

Fisher and Lab (2010) have a more descriptive definition of child sexual abuse and includes both girls and boys as victims. For Fisher and Lab (2010, p. 1), “sexual child abuse is defined as any intentional touching of the victim’s breasts, buttocks, anus, vagina, or the penis for sexual gratification and is illegal”.

Any discussion of child sexual abuse must include incest. Incest is the sexual abuse of children through abuse of power by parents and relatives. Incest encompasses many forms of sexual activities between a child (often but not only a girl) and an older parent, caregiver or relative (often but not only a man) within a family unit. Tzeng, Jackson and Karlson (1991) argue that father-daughter incest is the result of a patriarchal society or family. They cite amongst other characteristics of a patriarchal family an unequal mother-father power; a dictatorial father system and

oppressed, dependent and subversive mothers. They also consider father-daughter incest to be a consequence of fathers not being involved in childrearing, considering children as their property.

Commercial exploitation of children occurs in many settings and includes mostly child labour and child prostitution (pornography). Trafficking of children for sexual purposes, and bonded labour⁴ is the most usual type of child exploitation, especially for children from poor families. Richter, Dawes and Higson-Smith (2004) consider that a lot of cases of sexual abuse of children are perpetrated for financial gain. They refer to the term commercial sexual exploitation of children (see economic theory of crime and child abuse causation).

Child neglect is the failure of the parent, caregiver or the government system to provide for the basic needs of the child. Neglect may be physical (e.g. lack of appropriate supervision resulting in physical harm to the child); economic (e.g. failure to provide the child with necessary food, shelter or medical care); educational (e.g. failure to educate a child or attend to his or her education needs) or emotional (e.g. inattention to a child's emotional needs or exposure to domestic violence).

Munro (2002, p. 53) understands child neglect as "the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs".

Physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children as well as child commercial exploitation and child neglect happen in the form of either violence or crime against children. This research refers to each incident of violence or each crime committed

⁴ According to 'Anti Slavery International', "bonded labour" - or debt bondage - is probably the least known form of slavery today, and yet it is the most widely used method of enslaving people. A person becomes a bonded labourer when their labour is demanded as a means of repayment for a loan: www.hrea.org/erc/Library/secondary/bonded-labour-factsheet.pdf

against a child as a case of child abuse. The following sections provide clarify the meaning of the concepts violence and crime against children.

2.1.2 Violence against children

According to the United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children, "...violence occurs when someone uses their strength or their position of power to hurt someone else on purpose, not by accident. Violence includes threats of violence, and acts which could possibly cause harm, as well as those that actually do. The harm involved can be to a person's mind and their general health and wellbeing, as well as to their body" (UNICEF, [Sa], p. 17).

The CRC emphasises the rights of children to physical and personal integrity, and outlines the obligations of all State Parties to protect them from 'all forms of physical or mental violence', including sexual and other forms of exploitation, abduction, armed conflict, and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

2.1.3 Crime against children

There is no exclusive classification of offences against children. Generally, the offences committed against children or crimes in which children are the victims are considered as 'crimes against children'. The South African Constitution, the general criminal procedure, the Child Justice Act, the Child Care Act, the Children's Act and various other protective and preventive policies specifically mention the offences wherein children are known to be victims. Such offences are construed as crimes against children for the purpose of this research.

Following are some examples of criminal offences against children according to Chapter 8 of the *South African Child Care Act No 74 of 1983*:

Any parent or guardian of a child or any person having the custody of a child who ill-treats that child or allows it to be ill-treated; or abandons that child, or any other person who ill-treats a child, shall be guilty of an offence.

Any person legally liable to maintain a child, who, while able to do so, fails to provide that child with adequate food, clothing, lodging and medical aid, shall be guilty of an offence. Further, any person who participates or is involved in the commercial sexual

exploitation of a child shall be guilty of an offence.

Any person who is an owner, lessor, manager, tenant or occupier of property on which the commercial sexual exploitation of a child occurs and who, within a reasonable time of gaining information of such occurrence, fails to report such occurrence at a SAPS station, shall be guilty of an offence.

Any person who without the approval of the minister removes a foster child or pupil from the Republic shall be guilty of an offence. Finally, subject to the provision of the Child Care Act or any other law, no person may employ or provide work to any child under the age of 15. The breach of these and other legal provisions contained in various laws and legislation constitute a severe human rights violation (child abuse).

The SAPS collects two categories of statistics on crimes against children. They are the 'Neglect and Ill-Treatment of Children' and 'Crimes against Children under the age of 18'. These statistics include murder, attempted murder, all sexual offenses, common assault and assault GBH. Measures to deal with the causes of the categories of violence and crimes against children as mentioned above are achievable through pro-active and reactive interventions.

This research understands the importance of the combination of and leverage between both pro-active and reactive approaches. However, the research advocates for preventive measures and focuses on pro-active interventions (prevention). Effective and efficient preventive actions are a stepping stone for successful reactive interventions through the CJS. Prevention actions can be possible and achievable through social crime prevention. The understanding of the concepts 'social crime prevention and poor households' is therefore indispensable to this research.

2.2 DEFINITION OF OTHER IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

This research defines five additional key concepts. They are the terms 'child abuse', 'violence against children' and 'crime against children' and the concepts 'social crime prevention' and 'poor households'.

2.2.1 Social crime prevention

According to the White Paper on Safety and Security 1999 – 2004, the task of ‘social crime prevention’ is to reduce the economic and environmental situations that influence people to commit crimes and become persistent offenders. It is about economic interventions to undermine the causes of crime. Broader economic and social conditions such as rapid urbanisation, high levels of unemployment and inequality, social dislocation, family disintegration, alcohol abuse and social exclusion negatively influence the safety and security of poor households thus making them more vulnerable to crime.

Fisher and Lab (2010, p. 284) understand that “social crime prevention effort seeks to improve structural process such as economic and political opportunities that directly affect the environment in which children, families, and schools exist”. They argue that social science research highlights a relationship between poverty (economic variable), community disorganisation (social variable) and crime and anti-social behaviour (including child abuse).

These authors focus more on social crime prevention further than just the economic and environmental interventions to limit the incidence and consequences of crime. They emphasise interventions around the child, the household and the school to reduce and manage violence and crime against children.

Analysing poverty and inequality, Fisher and Lab (2010) are of the view that poverty and income inequality are not the only social crime prevention concerns and therefore the manner in which economic forces shape social life cannot be overestimated. They base this assertion on the fact that research proves that poverty (extreme) and inequality often contribute to the reduction of social supports necessary to control anti-social behaviour. They also acknowledge that poverty reduces the capability of informal social control over the youth and community members by families and other local social structures.

It is therefore important to acknowledge that social and economic dynamics impact on the levels of social problems especially crime and violence with a focus on anti-

social behaviours that result in child abuse. Because economic (poverty) and social (inequality) factors play a pivotal role in social crime prevention in general and child abuse prevention in particular, it is therefore essential to understand the meaning of a poor household from the social and economic perspectives.

2.2.2 Poor households

This research seeks to understand child abuse in poor households in South Africa by considering on the one hand, social and economic variables that impact on child abuse. On the other hand, the research emphasises other variables that similarly influence child abuse. To define a poor household, it is essential to explain the meaning of poverty as measured through the poverty line.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a 'household' as people living in a house especially a family in a house or simply a domestic establishment. A household unit consisting of the head of the house with or without dependants is also considered as a household. Because of the implications of the abuse of children, this research considers households with dependent children.

Van den Bosch's explanation of poverty provides a good definition of a 'poor household'. Van den Bosch (2001) defines poverty as the lack of economic resources by a person to realise some basic 'functionings'. Functionings are, according to the author, what a person does, e.g. being healthy, visiting friends, or living in a decent home. The author emphasises what a person is capable of doing and being, given the resources and circumstances. He points out that the crucial question is what are the basic functionings that people should be able to realise (basic needs) or how can they be determined. Basic needs are important for everyone's survival and access to a decent standard of life.

This is compelling for South Africa with its history of systematic denial of access to basic needs and services to the majority of its people by the former apartheid regime. The Constitution provides, in the Bill of Rights, for the rights of everyone to basic needs such as adequate housing, food, drinking water, health care, electricity and education. These rights lay the foundation for a life of human dignity.

Stats SA (2002) refers to the internationally accepted definition of poverty by the United Nations. According to the United Nations, poverty means the denial of most basic opportunities and choices to human development leading to a long, healthy, creative life and to the enjoyment of a decent standard of life, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and respect from others.

The study on Measuring Poverty in South Africa carried out by Stats SA (2002) considered eleven variables as measures of poverty. The variables are not ranged in priority order. They include the average size of the household and the proportion of children under the age of five years in the household; this determines the level of poverty for such a household. The level of education of the head of the household; the average monthly household expenditure and income and the unemployment rate impact on the poverty level of the household. Poverty is also measured by access to formal housing (brick dwellings, flats, townhouses, backyard rooms etc), electricity for lighting from public authority or supply company, tap water inside dwelling, a flush or chemical toilet, a telephone in the dwelling or cellular phone and refuse removal at least once a week by a local or district authority.

Barnes, Wright, Noble and Dawes (2007) argue that when defining poverty and social exclusion, the definitional stage of the process can be broken down into two stages. Firstly, poverty means to construct a list of possible necessities for full participation in society. The authors support the 1975 definition of poverty by Townsend as the lack of resources for a proper diet, clothing, housing and housing facilities to participate in activities and have customary living conditions that are widely accepted by society. This definition includes both the description and the measurement or estimation of what families and/or individuals need for their full participation in the economic activities within society.

The second stage, on the other hand, is to incorporate the list of possible necessities into a survey to explore which items that members of society define as necessary according to Barnes, *et al.* (2007). This research adopted both stages by reviewing the variables observed from the MI database.

To this debate on the definition of poverty, it is necessary to add the term 'child

poverty'. On 10 January 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted a powerful definition of 'child poverty' during its annual resolution on the rights of the child. The term child poverty was defined to acknowledge that children experience poverty differently than adults.

Child poverty is measured by the deprivation of children to nutrition, water and sanitation facilities, access to basic health-care services, shelter, education, participation and protection according to UNICEF. Child poverty goes beyond the lack of money or economic resources to include the denial of a range of children's rights as per the UN CRC and the South African Constitution.

To calculate a 'poverty line' a household's consumption data from a representative sample survey is required. Currently there is no fixed poverty line figure for South Africa; different figures are used depending on the poverty measure considered. Based on the 1996 Census data, Stats SA calculated that 60.8% of all South African inhabitants are living on less than R250 each per month (absolute poverty).

The 'poverty rate' is the percentage of the population living under the poverty line. The UNDP Human Development Report of 2003 fixes the South African Poverty rate at 48.5%. This means that almost one out of two inhabitants of South Africa subsists under the poverty line. Therefore, it is clear from the definition of poverty that a poor household is a household living under the poverty line.

2.3 CRIME AGAINST CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICA

Crime statistics released by the South African Police Service (SAPS) have always been criticised for not being accurate. The Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) and the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) conducted substantial research on the underreporting of child abuse. The CJCP's 2005 National Youth Victim Survey found that only one out of ten cases of assault against children or youth were reported to SAPS. Young people are reluctant to report crimes to SAPS for various reasons according to Leoschut and Burton (2006). They captured amongst other reasons, the feeling of fear, not being concerned about the crime, the

incompetence of SAPS and the fact that reporting crime to SAPS would not help.

The same survey found that young people in South Africa are twice as likely as adults to be victims of crime and violence and that one in ten young people had experienced more than one crime over a 12-month period. Unfortunately, of all reported child abuse cases, almost 44% are cases of sexual abuse (see SAPS statistics below). HSRC surveys found that one out of three children in South Africa falls victim to sexual abuse before reaching the age of majority (18 years).

Recent statistics from the SAPS between 2007 – 2008 and 2008 – 2009 show a decrease in ‘Crimes against children under the age of 18’ but still these crimes are rife considering the cases of murder and attempted murder of children, sexual offenses against children, common assault and assault GBH⁵.

Table 1: Types, numbers and percentages of crimes against children

Crime Category	2006 – 07	2007 – 08	2008 – 09	Difference 07-08 / 08-09	Increase Decrease
Murder	972	1, 015	843	- 172	- 16. 90%
Attempted Murder	889	852	782	- 70	- 08. 20%
Sexual Offences	25, 428	22, 124	20, 141	- 1, 983	- 09. 00%
Common Assault	16, 871	16, 091	14, 544	- 1, 547	- 09. 60%
Assault GBH	13, 947	13, 625	12, 422	- 1, 203	- 08. 80%
Total	58, 107	53, 707	48, 732	- 4, 975	- 09. 30%

Source: Crime Information Management – SAPS ([Sa]).

Statistics from the SAPS, findings of CJCP and HSRC surveys and the literature review on child abuse in South Africa support the assertion that child abuse is rife and on the increase.

The following statistics from the SAPS on the neglect and ill-treatment of children illustrate the trend of crimes affecting children in South Africa for the period between April to March 2001 – 2002 and 2004 – 2005.

⁵ Grievous Body Harm

Table 2: Reported child-related crime statistics

Province	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
Eastern Cape	278	502	615	471
Free State	201	355	475	412
Gauteng	499	1, 033	1, 560	1, 325
KwaZulu Natal	227	519	680	681
Limpopo	279	340	391	333
Mpumalanga	136	226	301	334
North West	105	187	278	245
Northern Cape	193	378	442	330
Western Cape	730	1, 258	1, 762	1, 437
RSA Total	2, 648	4, 798	6, 504	5, 568
Ratio per 100 000 of the Population				
Province	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
Eastern Cape	04. 30	07. 80	09. 50	06. 60
Free State	07. 40	13. 10	17. 40	14. 00
Gauteng	05. 60	11. 40	16. 60	15. 00
KwaZulu Natal	02. 40	05. 40	07. 00	07. 00
Limpopo	05. 30	06. 40	07. 20	06. 00
Mpumalanga	04. 40	07. 10	09. 30	10. 30
North West	02. 90	05. 00	07. 30	06. 40
Northern Cape	23. 50	46. 00	54. 00	36. 70
Western Cape	16. 10	27. 30	37. 20	31. 40
RSA Total	05. 90	10. 60	14. 00	12. 00
Percentage Increase or Decrease				
Province	2001/2002 // 2002/2003	2002/2003 // 2003/2004	2003/2004 // 2004/2005	2001/2002 // 2004/2005
Eastern Cape	80. 60%	22. 50%	- 23. 40%	69. 40%
Free State	76. 60%	33. 80%	- 13. 30%	105. 00%
Gauteng	107. 00%	51. 00%	- 15. 10%	165. 50%
KwaZulu Natal	128. 60%	31. 00%	00. 10%	200. 00%
Limpopo	21. 90%	15. 00%	- 14. 80%	19. 40%
Mpumalanga	66. 20%	33. 20%	11. 00%	145. 60%
North West	78. 10%	48. 70%	- 11. 90%	133. 30%
Northern Cape	95. 90%	16. 90%	- 25. 30%	71. 00%
Western Cape	72. 30%	40. 10%	- 18. 40%	96. 80%
RSA Total	81. 20%	35. 60%	- 14. 40%	110. 30%

Source: Crime Management System – SAPS ([Sa]).

The above statistics demonstrate a sharp increase in crime and violence against children topping 200% in KZN, 165% in Gauteng and an average of 110% nationally. With such an increase in neglect and ill treatment of children, it is evident that the protection of children is jeopardised. Child abuse is therefore a matter of great concern needing to be addressed as urgently as possible because while child abuse increases, the majority of South African children live in destitute households. The 2004 General Household Survey by Stats SA shows that the majority of South African children (68%) belong to poor households (see tables 3 and 4 below).

Table 3: Numbers* of children living in income poverty households

Year	2002	3003	2004	2005	2006
Province	Numbers	Numbers	Numbers	Numbers	Numbers
Eastern Cape	2, 477, 000	2, 441, 000	2, 534, 000	2, 517, 000	2, 458, 000
Free State	739, 000	732, 000	722, 000	730, 000	806, 000
Gauteng	1, 524, 000	1, 485, 000	1, 171, 000	1, 141, 000	1, 342, 000
KwaZulu Natal	3, 014, 000	2, 890, 000	2, 623, 000	2, 652, 000	2, 678, 000
Limpopo	2, 232, 000	2, 208, 000	2, 118,000	2,169, 000	2, 190, 000
Mpumalanga	1, 028, 000	995, 000	911, 000	938, 000	1, 036, 000
Northern Cape	208, 000	202, 000	213, 000	201, 000	216, 000
North West	1, 143, 000	1, 099, 000	1, 071, 000	1, 056, 000	979, 000
Western Cape	761, 000	744, 000	542, 000	567, 000	636, 000
South Africa	13, 127,000	12, 796, 000	11, 905, 000	11, 972, 000	12, 342, 000
* Numbers have been rounded-off to the nearest thousand					

Source: UCT – South African Child Gauge 2007/2008.

Table 4: Proportion of children living in income poverty households

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Province	%	%	%	%	%
Eastern Cape	87	85	79*	80*	77*
Free State	75*	75*	68*	65*	72*
Gauteng	56*	53*	44*	43*	49*
KwaZulu Natal	79*	75*	69*	69*	70*
Limpopo	89*	87*	81*	83*	82
Mpumalanga	79*	75*	70*	69*	74
Northern Cape	69*	68*	63*	60*	63*
North West	80*	76*	72*	72*	68*
Western Cape	48*	47*	35*	36*	41*
South Africa	75	72	66	66	68
* This proportion should be interpreted with caution, as the confidence interval is relatively wide					

Source: UCT – South African Child Gauge 2007/2008.

Expert reports confirm that child abuse is dire in poor households because the victims suffer both the impact of poverty and that of the abuse. *Sunday Tribune* (10 October 2004) reports that the experience of CHILDLINE in dealing with abused children is that children who live the consequences of poverty have to live the high level of vulnerability to victimisation in addition. This however, does not mean that all

children living in poor households are victims of child abuse, neglect and exploitation. The following table shows the comparison between the level of income poverty per province and the reporting of child neglect and ill-treatment of children for the reporting period 2001 – 2002.

Table 5: Comparison income poverty and reported child neglect cases

Province	Income poverty levels			Child neglect cases	
	Poverty level	Child population	National%	Numbers	National%
Eastern Cape	2, 477, 000	2, 836, 000	18. 90 %	502	10. 50%
Free State	739, 000	990, 000	05. 60%	355	07. 40%
Gauteng	1, 524, 000	2, 741, 000	11. 60%	1, 033	21. 50%
KwaZulu Natal	3, 014, 000	3, 833, 000	23. 00%	519	10. 80%
Limpopo	2, 232, 000	2, 501, 000	17. 00%	340	07. 10%
Mpumalanga	1, 028, 000	1, 306, 000	07. 80%	226	04. 70%
Northern Cape	208, 000	301, 000	01. 60%	187	03. 90%
North West	1, 143, 000	1, 431, 000	08. 70%	378	07. 90%
Western Cape	761, 000	1, 591, 000	05. 80%	1, 258	26.20%
Country Total	13, 127,000	17, 660, 000	100%	4, 798	100%

Source: SAPS – Crime Statistics and UCT – South African Child Gauge 2007/2008.

The above figures show no direct correlation between the high level of income poverty and the reporting of cases of child neglect and ill-treatment of children considering the two sources of information. However, it is very important to separate the incidence of child neglect and ill-treatment and its reporting. Reporting of cases depends mostly on access to SAPS stations and the trust the community has in the Criminal Justice System (CJS). The Western Cape Province for instance has the lowest level of income poverty at 5.8% but the highest percentage of reported cases of child neglect or ill-treatment of children (26.20). This might be because of the high access to facilities and service and therefore a high reporting rate. In the Western Cape Province for instance, one reason for the high level of reporting could be the proliferation of gangs and the culture of violence necessitating a close interaction between the SAPS and the community. The KwaZulu – Natal Province has the highest level of income poverty at 23% but with a lower percentage of reported cases of child neglect and ill-treatment of children (10.80%). The lower reporting in KwaZulu – Natal does not necessarily mean that there are fewer cases of child abuse happening there. Access to different facilities and services may contribute

negatively to the reporting level in poor provinces. Many cases of child abuse go unreported because in many cases the perpetrator is known and related to the family if not the direct parent or caregiver. In some cases, the abused child and the entire family depend on the perpetrator. The level of reporting of cases of child abuse is not the scope of this research.

The growing numbers of institutions and bodies looking after and catering for 'children in need of care' in South Africa explains concerns about the levels of child abuse, neglect and exploitation in the country. One of these organisations is Child Welfare South Africa (CWSA), an umbrella body representing 169 children's organisations (affiliates, branches and developing organisations) in different areas of the country. The branches, affiliates and developing organisation of CWSA provide protection and care to children in need. In 2005 they provided services to 108, 379 children considered and defined by section 14 (4) of the Child Care Act as '*children in need of care*'. Out of this number, there were 5, 000 physically abused children, 6, 637 sexually abused children, 19, 187 neglected children, 10, 830 abandoned children and 1, 280 adopted children. Other children assisted included 34 360 children in foster care, 1, 832 orphaned children, 272 child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and 684 children living on the street. Further to the 108, 379 children assisted, 133, 589 children received services in 63 Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, 10 shelters, 23 places of safety, 13 children's homes, 8 street children projects and various after school centres.

Children living in places of safety or in children's homes suffer the dearth of the warmth of a family life. The sense of belonging and a constructive interaction with a family set-up are the most important parts of child nurturing and effective development to a positive adulthood. An economically stable household is therefore ideal because the care, protection safety and wellbeing that the child receives depend on the household's ability to provide for the child's basic needs. If the household is not able to provide good care, protection, safety and wellbeing the state is required to take over (structural theory). In such a case, the sense of belonging and the positive interaction with the family will minimise the impact of the economic conditions in the place of safety. This is why economic conditions cannot justify child abuse in isolation.

Children interact with their environment in different ways. Besides the household, a child lives in a community, she or he attends a school, she or he has friends, she or he goes to church and is sent to shops, she or he travels to and from school. Briefly, the child is an active member of society and for this reason the child is in constant contact with the environment in which the child lives. Child care, protection, safety and wellbeing depend on the role played by the economic, social, cultural, environmental and structural variables of the child's environment.

Dawes, Long, Alexander and Ward (2006) from the HSRC conducted a situational analysis of children affected by maltreatment and violence in the Western Cape Province in May 2006. The result of the situational analysis, although not accurate or representative of all of South Africa, according to the authors, raises concern about the level of child abuse in the province as well as in the country. Regarding physical abuse of children for instance, the report emphasises that considering their scale and level, the abuse suffered by children in the province is atrocious. More than 50% of male children under-five years needed hospital treatment as a consequence of physical abuse.

The situational analysis found also that children were abused by people known to them and in many cases their direct parents. Most cases of abuse happened in the child's home. The situational analysis discovered through the data from CHILDLINE that the Western Cape Province accounted for the highest proportion of all calls in the country relating to child sexual abuse. No wonder the high reporting rate in the province. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of all calls were made in the Western Cape Province although the child population is lower in that province compared to other provinces.

Table 6 below summarises some studies on the extent of child abuse in the Western Cape Province as part of the situational analysis of children affected by maltreatment and violence in that province.

Table 6: Summary of child abuse studies in the Western Cape Province

Source	Naidoo (2000)
Summary	Location: Children's Hospital in Cape Metropole area Sample: 300 cases of children with non-accidental injuries from 1992-1996
Findings	• 56% of cases involved children aged 0 – 4 years old. Boys accounted for 54% and girls 46% • Abuse happened in the child victims' home • Male perpetrators 79%, 90% of perpetrators known to the child victims • 56% of cases committed by father, step-father, or mother's partner and 12% only by mothers • 35% of perpetrators were said to be under influence of substances when child abuse occurred • 65% of children suffered serious injuries, 49% required hospitalisation, and 4 children died • No weapon or instrument used against children. 56% of abusers used hands, legs, or fists
Source	Fieggen <i>et al.</i> (2004)
Summary	Location: Red Cross Children's Hospital in Cape Town. Sample: Records of children under the age of 13 presenting non-accidental head injury (NAHI) during the period June 1998 – June 2001
Findings	• 53% were intentionally assaulted, with median age of 2 years • 65% of injuries subsequent to direct blows, 24% due to falls or being thrown against a wall • 81% of assault committed by men of which child's father responsible in 44% of cases • Majority of assault cases happened in the child's home (85%)
Source	van As, 2000; van As <i>et al.</i> (2001)
Summary	Location: Red Cross Children's Hospital Trauma Unit in Cape Town Sample: Cases of rape among under-12 patients between 1996 and 1999
Findings	• 66% of children treated for non-accidental injuries found to have been sexually abused • In majority of cases (99%) perpetrators were men • 75% of child victims knew their abusers. Neighbours perpetrated 23% of the cases • Over 50% cases happened near / inside children's own homes, or those of neighbours, friends
Source	Fredericks (2003)
Summary	Location: Farming communities in the Overberg / Western Cape region Sample: A survey of 163 living or working on 35 different farms
Findings	• 9% of surveyed females and 8% of men reported knowing of harassment of children under the age of 16 personally or harassment affecting someone they knew • 10% of respondents aged 10-17 years, reported having experienced sexual harassment • 61% of respondents refused to answer whether they knew of any incidents of child sexual abuse. 50% of those who responded reported being aware of child sexual abuse on the farms • Child sexual abuse in farming communities affects working and non-working children but the majority of child victims were children living but not working on the farms
Source	Parker <i>et al.</i> , (2003)
Summary	Location: Atlantis, an impoverished community in the Cape Metropole area Sample: Statistics and administrative data on child sexual abuse from the DSD, SAPS, Hospital, and an NGO in Atlantis between January - June 2001
Findings	• For service providers, child sexual abuse was related to alcohol abuse, community and domestic violence, poor socio-economic conditions, intimidation of victims and their families... • 8 cases of child rape reported during the six-month period • Research unable to document true extent of child abuse Atlantis The study illustrates difficulties in measuring the prevalence of child abuse because of inconsistencies amongst service providers on recording information on child abuse cases

Source	Moses (2005)
Summary	Location: An ethnographic study of Ocean View, a disadvantaged community in Cape Town designated as a 'coloured' zone during apartheid Sample: 373 children living in Ocean View aged 6 – 18 years
Findings	• Most children experienced their community as an unsafe place, especially at night • They described high levels of community violence including muggings, stabbings, and rape • Major community concern is substance abuse coupled with high levels of conflict and violence • No safe places for children to socialise and play. Spaces often misused by adults and youth for drinking and taking drugs. Children exposed to violence in public spaces • Children living in Ocean View have limited access to positive environments beyond their immediate surroundings. High levels of poverty and the lack of affordable transport system • No adult and peer support to encourage, help build self-esteem, and no trust among children

Source: Dawes, *et al.* (2006).

There are many other studies conducted in South Africa that illustrate the extent of child abuse in the country. A specific study by the HSRC for instance focused on the impact of child abuse poverty on their maltreatment. Table 7 below contains the summary of some of those interesting studies.

Table 7: Summaries of some research on child abuse in South Africa

Author	Waterhouse, S. (2008)
Title	The Impact of Changing Criminal Justice Responses to Child Victims of Sexual Abuse: Good intentions, questionable outcomes
Summary	Waterhouse reviews the current practice in the CJS with regard to child victims of sexual abuse and regrets that although the intentions are good, the outcomes are questionable: • Reporting of cases of incidences of child sexual rape perturbs incentives in SAPS's performance targets of reducing contact crimes by 7% yearly. This discourages SAPS from recording sexual offences • SAPS targeting (discouraging reporting) is therefore an unintended consequence of mandatory reporting as per the current sexual offences legislation that criminalise the no reporting of sexual offences against children • Medico-legal service for victims through One-stop centres (<i>Tutuzela</i> Care Centres) improves care of victims (secondary victimisation) but these centres are not accessible by many. There is also a problem of collaboration between SAPS and the National Prosecuting Authority • Rise and fall of SAPS Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offence (FCS) Units and restructuring of SAPS implied inefficacy in dealing with child sexual abuse cases management • Dedicated sexual offences courts threatened (number of courts, training of prosecutors...) • Confusing court preparation services (poor quality at expense of child witnesses) • Persisting discriminatory rules of evidence (children as unreliable and less worthy of belief) • Critical shortage of social workers • Poor performance of the CJS (of 27, 335 reported sexual offences cases in 2006/7 only 15, 715 (43%) were referred to court. Conviction rates on sexual offences against children: 8.79% out of 22, 785 reported cases in 2002/2003.
Author	Barnes, <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Title	The South African Index of Multiple Deprivation for Children (SAIMDC): Census 2001
Summary	The authors argue that the majority of South African children live in poverty with high rates of mortality and maltreatment: • Children's rights are not realised (deprivations) resulting in their poverty

• Tackling child poverty assists in realising their rights and prevents maltreatment • Four pillars of children's rights (Cassiem): - Survival rights: living standards - Development rights: education, play... - Protection rights: no abuse, exploitation - Participation rights: child to have a say • Monitoring these pillars to deal with child poverty and maltreatment The deprivations are: • Income/material: 81% of children • Employment: 50% live in households with parents not employed • Education: 24% wrong grade, 6% not in schools • Living environment: 77% live in bad living environment • Adequate care: 25% inadequate care In conclusion, all these deprivations contribute to child maltreatment or child abuse. Addressing these deprivations is therefore a solution to child maltreatment in South Africa.	
Author	Ward, Dawes, Willenberg, Gwele and Latief (2007)
Title	Indicators for children, families and the elderly
Summary	
• Family support services: victim empowerment to address child victim and empower families • Family support services not collated or made available more broadly • Children statutory care indispensable for successful rehabilitation and reintegration • Weakness in child protection system: no record of service provided to children and families... • Difficulty of conducting monitoring and evaluation because of the absence of records	
Author	The Presidency Republic of South Africa (2009)
Title	Situational Analysis of Children in South Africa
Summary	
The analysis was child rights based: • Some children better placed to realise their rights than others • Gaps between best off and worst off children • Consideration of extent and cause of deprivations such as: - Child poverty: 68% children live in poor households, racial and rural – urban inequalities - Health service: 85% under 1 year immunised, free health care to pregnant women and under – 6 children, 95% vitamin A supplement to children aged 6 – 11 months - ECD: availability of ECD insufficient for under-5, uneven distribution of ECD, quality of ECD is patchy, 44% enrolment in grade R - Education: no-fee policy applied by 58% schools, decline of children 16 – 18 in schools, many out of school children, uneven chance for meaningful learning and smooth pathway through school, overcrowding in early years of schooling, qualification of teacher uneven especially in rural areas, quality of education is very questionable - Protection from abuse: 73, 767 reported cases of violent crimes against children in 2006/7, approximately 1 million children engaged in child labour • Cross-cutting challenges include: - Allocation of adequate and equitable resources for children - Enhancement of government capacity and collaboration between government departments at national and sub-national levels - Promoting the role of civil society, community participation and child participation - Improving data quality for better informed decision making - Strengthening the research on children (child abuse focussed research)	
Author	Redpath, J. (2007)
Title	Policies relevant to child safety in South Africa, 2007
Summary	
The author conducted analysis of the following: • The South African poverty alleviation policy for children: - Estimates of children living in poverty range from 36% in western Cape to 83% in Limpopo - Policy is aimed at poverty alleviation through income support through cash grants - Lack of appropriate child care, constrained living arrangements, strained relations within the household and financial insecurities are some of factors which contribute to child poverty - Weakness in the child support grant (CSG) policy	

○ not available to children aged 14-18 years ○ primary caregivers who are under 16 years cannot apply for grants ○ CSG has not kept up with inflation - Weakness in the care dependency grant (CDG) ○ only available when the child reaches the age of one ○ it is limited and does not include children with chronic illness • Child Health Policy: Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) policy introduced key aspects of current child health policy such as free treatment for children under the age of six but: - Weakness in the child health policy: - Primary health care not meeting current demand - shortage of nursing staff and medicines - Lack of accessible, affordable transport to and from health care facilities - Child health is not prioritised • Education policy for children: Good schooling is internationally recognised as a protective resilience factor but in South Africa: - Weakness in education funding policy - Requirements to pay fees is significant barrier to public education for many children - Funding policy contributes to continued inequalities in outcomes in school system	
Author	Department of Labour (2007)
Title	Child labour programme of action for South Africa 2008-2012
Summary	
• The number of children involved in child labour in South Africa and especially its worst forms are relatively low, compared to some other developing countries • Four policy directives specifically require SA to take steps to eliminate child labour: the Constitution, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of 1990 • From 1996, the South African government began a process aimed at formulating policies and a national programme of action to combat child labour. • This led to the adoption in 2003 of the first phase of the child Labour Programme of Action (CLPA -1), a national plan of action for addressing child labour, including its worst forms • Worst forms of child labour include: ○ bonded labour (such as children forced to work for the landowner to avoid family eviction) ○ trafficking of children (both within the country and across borders) ○ commercial sexual exploitation: use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution or production of pornography ○ offering a child for illegal activities • Cross cutting action to reduce child labour and the worst forms of child labour must include: ○ Alleviate poverty (eliminate illiteracy, create jobs: Expanded Public Works Programme) ○ Implementation of effective programmes to enforce policy directives ○ Provision of sufficient grants ○ Provision of childcare facilities and home-based care ○ Public awareness raising and community capacity building ○ Monitoring and evaluation of actions taken ○ Effective prosecution of perpetrators of child labour ○ Provision of basic services such as water, electricity ○ Provision of basic municipal infrastructure and services ○ Compulsory schooling, school feeding programmes, school fees exemption	

Source: Different publications on child abuse in South Africa.

Reporting crime incidences and child abuse cases to SAPS has not been a custom in South Africa for various reasons. Current statistics are therefore not reliable, yet the information from the situational analysis of children affected by maltreatment and violence demonstrates that children are exposed to high levels of violence in the Western Cape Province and in South Africa in general. Much of this violence is unfortunately related to the home and household environments.

2.4 UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE

In the foreword to a book titled: “Sexual Abuse of Young Children in Southern Africa”, Graça Machel (Chairperson of the Foundation for Community Development) emotionally observed that “in the African tradition..., any assault on our children is an assault on ourselves – our integrity, our family, our communities, indeed the very essence of our humanity” (Richter, *et al.*, 2004, p. ix). Machel’s observation corroborates the belief of Jones, Picket, Oates and Barbor (1987, p. 2) that, “children are small, defenceless, demanding and dependent and all parents have times of frustration, irritability and anger with their offspring, however loving and caring they are”. It is difficult to know the exact number of child abusers and abused children but the consequences of child abuse are disastrous to society.

Creating a mechanism for prevention and implementing appropriate interventions to fight child abuse underpins the achievement of children’s maximum potential and their nurturing to become worthy citizens. Mechanisms for prevention and intervention depend on the understanding of variables that contribute to child abuse.

This research analyses variables from the economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural theories in developing a theory-based model for a clear understanding of child abuse. The IMT analyses the variables contributing to child abuse and therefore assists the development of appropriate and focused policies and mechanisms for the prevention of and intervention against child abuse.

2.4.1 Child abuse in poor households

Economic data from the recent official Household Survey shows that almost half of South African households are poor and 68% of children live in dire poverty. This implies that the vulnerability of children to abuse is high partly because the majority of children live in poverty. This research does not confirm such anecdotal evidence but questioning the levels of child abuse in households considering their poor economic conditions. To get to a response to such a crucial concern, it is important to firstly understand what the research refers to as child abuse.

This research agrees that children deserve special protection because of their vulnerability. Child abuse means the inadequate, inappropriate or non-provision of basic needs and protection to children. Jones, *et al.* (1987) argue that it is the responsibility of parents to provide the basic but adequate care, protection, safety and wellbeing for their children. This includes the provision of material needs, food, accommodation, protection against cold weather and any other hazards, education, health care and many other types of direct care. Parents are also responsible for the provision of spiritual, emotional support and guidance to their children and to act as their role models. These responsibilities are enormous and can be shared by officially known structures such as churches, schools, social or community structures, yet the influence of the home or household environment is supreme in all circumstances for the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children. It is therefore understandable that, only when parents are not able or fail to provide care, protection, safety and wellbeing to their children that society, the community or the government can take-up the responsibility. This demonstrates the importance of the household in nurturing and protecting children, thus the reason why the household is principal to this research.

Tomison and Wise (1999) explain the African proverb “It takes a village to raise a child” by exemplifying the importance of the role of the wider community in raising children and young people. For this reason, Jones, *et al.* (1987) argues that protection of children from harm by their parents is not considered to be a moral imperative by all cultures. Therefore, society, through the government and especially the Constitution and other relevant policies determine what constitutes good or bad treatment of children. This debate introduces the role of society in the protection of children. This role is played through service delivery, law and policy development, implementation, enforcement and partnerships against child abuse.

Jones, *et al.* (1987) argue that child abuse has always been a feature of human society in common with other forms of violence. By such a statement, the author demonstrates that child abuse is a social phenomenon that exists and can be studied or evaluated. To support the merit of this research, attention is given to the analysis of academics, politicians, human rights activists and researchers in the field of child abuse prevention. Previous studies, books, journals, conference papers and

statements referred to in this research conclude that children are being victimised and consequently their development towards a positive adulthood jeopardised. This means that child abuse is a reality experienced by many children in South Africa.

From a political point of view, Conradie ([Sa]) argues that the then Minister of Social Development, Zola Skweyiya emphasised, at an international conference on child wellbeing, that South Africa is not up-to-date with the delivery of children's rights. The then minister mentioned that: "we are not living up to the standards set by the Constitution concerning women and children" (Conradie, [Sa], p. 1). The Parliamentary Task Group on Sexual Abuse of Children recognised on the 12th June 2002 the destructive social reality faced daily by millions of South Africans, and the reality that children are the most vulnerable under circumstances of social deprivation, resulting in obstacles to the realisation of their rights (Parliament of South Africa, 2002).

The views of politicians as those of activists condemn the level of child abuse in the country. Carol Bower of RAPCAN⁶ for instance, observes that children in South Africa are subjected to relatively high levels of child abuse; they are neglected, affected and infected by HIV/AIDS, homelessness and subject to other forms of violations.

Conradie ([Sa]) observes that children seem to be forgotten as crimes against them are on the increase and become more heinous. In his statement, he associates child abuse with the nature of the human being and regrets the violence suffered by children. To deal with the consequence of such association, solutions to child abuse should derive from an understanding of variables that push the human being to commit crime and violence against vulnerable and defenceless human beings. These variables are found in adults as commented by Conradie that "there is nothing missing in children. Adults are the problem" (Conradie, [Sa], p. 7).

The different views explored above demonstrate that child abuse is a human characteristic (Jones, *et al.*, 1987), it is also a result of the inefficacy of society and the state that forgets the cause of children in terms of programmes, policies for

⁶ www.rapcan.org.za

prevention and intervention as stated by Minister Skweyiya (Conradie ([Sa]), and the Parliamentary Task Group on Sexual Abuse of Children (Parliament of South Africa, 2002). Finally, the NGO sector (such as RAPCAN CHILDLINE) sources deep to identify all unfavourable conditions in which South African children live.

This research considers the assertion that poverty is one of the common features of the abusive household only to mean that economic variables have a role to play in child abuse but many other variables need to be equally considered. The consequences of child abuse might be more adverse in poor households than in non poor ones, yet the implication of other variables needs to be highly considered. Joan van Niekerk of CHILDLINE⁷ has acknowledged, in a response to President Thabo Mbeki's reply to Charlene Smith, that "Your statement that 'crime tends to be concentrated in depressed and poor urban areas' does correlate with CHILDLINE's experience of reported crimes against children. Children who may already be living with the reality and the consequences of poverty also have to live with a higher level of vulnerability to victimisation (*Sunday Tribune*, 10 October 2004).

This research agrees with CHILDLINE's insight that child abuse is an unfortunate experience by children already suffering the consequences of poverty thus making them more vulnerable. An illustrative example is the case of Louisvaleweg where Baby Tshepang was raped in 2001. In the attempts to analyse why the rape happened the media often fell back on the economic profile of Louisvaleweg (Richter, *et al.*, 2004). The findings of the media's community profile included high levels of unemployment, alcoholism, domestic violence, disrupted family life and moral degeneration. The media report concludes that the rape victim, her parent and the perpetrator(s) were all portrayed as victims of poverty – the men were disempowered and emasculated, and the women were struggling to keep their families together. Baby Tshepang and other similar cases compel this research to question the impact of poverty on child abuse.

2.4.2 CSIR crime causation model

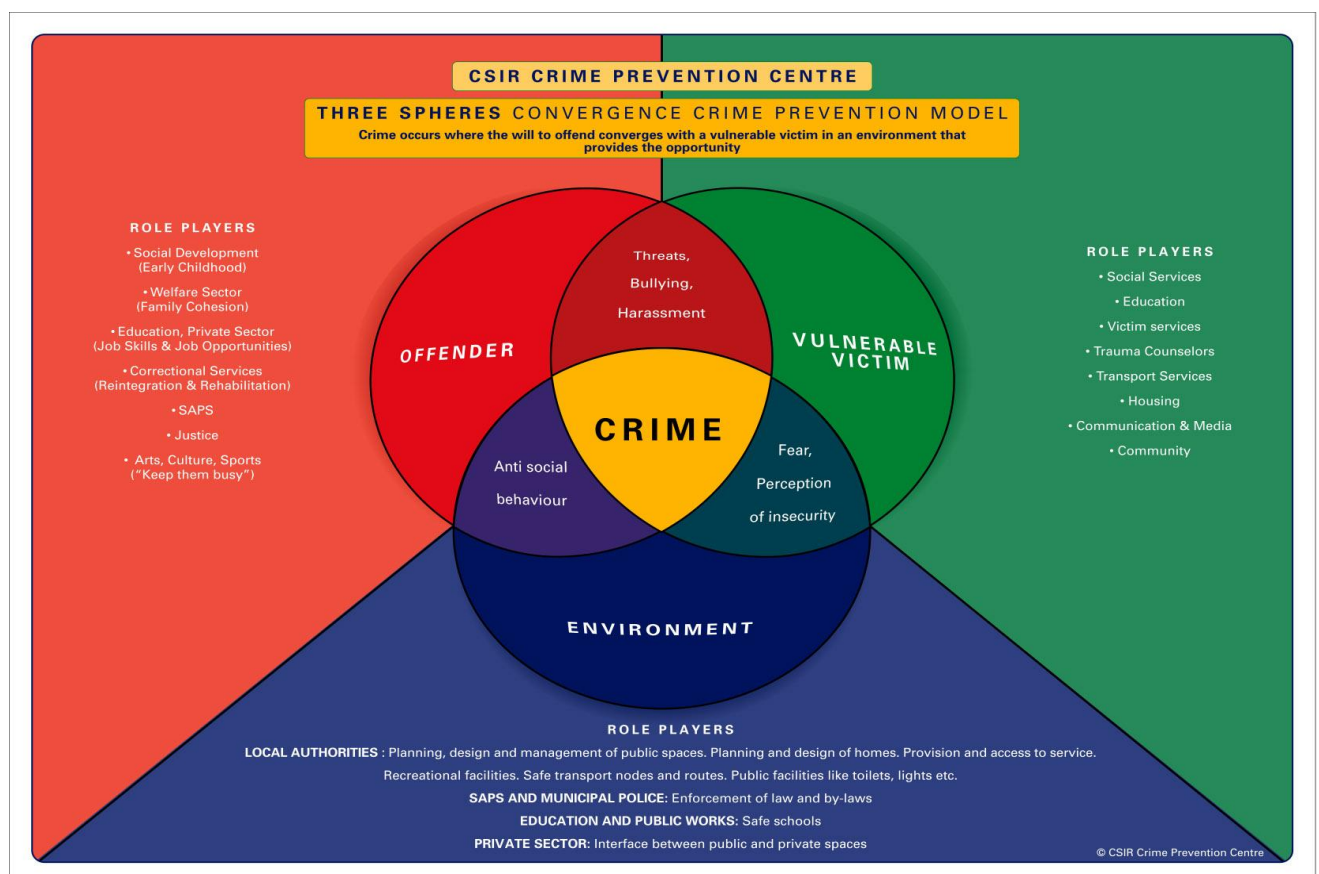
The CSIR model articulates that crime occurs where and when there is a

⁷ www.childline.org.za

convergence of three spheres: a willing offender, a vulnerable victim, and an environment propitious to the offence.

In the unfolding of the case of the rape of baby Tshepang (crime against a child in a poor household/neighbourhood), the victim was a child, the willing offender was (were) allegedly known to the child's mother. The environment was conducive to the crime because the child was under no supervision. The causes of the rape were said to be that the perpetrators were drunk (alcohol abuse), and/or believed they could cure their HIV/AIDS status by raping a virgin (HIV/AIDS myth). The media profiling of the neighbourhood wherein Baby Tshepang was raped questioned the morals of the community (social environment) and deplored the poor living environment and conditions too.

Figure 2: CSIR crime causation & prevention model



Source: Crime Prevention Centre (2003).

The CSIR model is good at contextualising the spheres that contribute to the incidence of crime. The model explains the vulnerability to crime through social,

economic, cultural and environmental variables and refers to policies as well. This model facilitates the understanding of crime causation but is limited in clarifying the links and their strengths in crime causation. The model is also rigid on the definition of crime. It does not consider threats, bullying and other antisocial behaviours as actual crimes. This model although important would not be appropriate to facilitate the understanding of child abuse.

2.4.3 The WHO socio - ecological model on child abuse risk factors

The socio-ecological model on child abuse risk factors is adapted from the first Report on Violence and Health by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The model is about a public health approach to the prevention of child abuse. The model considers the individual, relationship, community and societal factors as contributing to child abuse. Diverse studies have adopted this model and interpreted it differently to respond to various objectives.

Figure 3: The WHO ecological model on child abuse risk factors



Source: World Health Organisation (2004).

The 'individual' level deals with biological variables such as age and sex, together with variables of personal history that can influence the vulnerability to child abuse. Other individual factors include a history of violent behaviour or childhood history of abuse and substance abuse. The 'relationship' level examines an individual's close social relationships that influence the child's risk of suffering abuse. Other relationship factors include unsupportive family units, poor parenting skills and low socio-economic status of households.

Variables at the 'community' level relate to the settings in which relationships take place in the community. These settings are mostly the neighbourhood, workplaces

and schools environments. Other community factors are: high levels of crime in the community; high residential mobility; high unemployment; poverty; a local illicit drug trade. Structural factors such as weak institutional policies, inadequate care services to victims, poor CJS and situational or environmental factors.

‘Societal’ variables involve the underlying conditions of society that influence child abuse such as: social norms that encourage harsh physical punishment of children; economic inequalities; and the absence of social welfare safety nets (structural factors). Other factors include: economic inequality based on gender and sex; race; poverty; cultural norms that support violence; and high firearm availability.

These factors influence child abuse, neglect and exploitation in different but complementary ways. Firstly, the individual risk factors in parents and caregivers increase the risk of child abuse. The following factors found in parents are detrimental to child care, protection, safety and wellbeing. Individual factors include: bonding with a newborn; nurturing the child; parents who were maltreated as children; lack of awareness of child development; inappropriate response to child’s misbehaviour (corporal punishment); alcohol and/or drug abuse; involvement in criminal activity; social isolation; lack of self esteem; poor parenting skills; and financial difficulties. These variables are not cited in hierarchical order and are equally important in contributing to child abuse.

Some risk variables are related to the child. However, such risk variables do not necessarily mean that the child is responsible for the abuse he or she suffers. Rather, these risk variables increase the vulnerability of the child for various reasons. The child might have been unwanted or not fulfilling the expectation of the parent. The child might be problematic or might have constant needs or health or other conditions such as infirmity or malformation. Some children cry and cannot be easily pacified. The child might be in a household with many dependants demanding parental attention. The child might exhibit or be exposed to some dangerous behaviour such as hurting animals.

Relationship risk variables depend on the composition of households and the norms of the local society or community wherein the child live. This includes households with married parents, single parents, and same-sex partners. Some relationship risk

variables are: the lack of parent–child attachment and bonding; the physical or mental health of parents or caregivers; family or marriage breakdowns; culture of violence or domestic violence in household; family isolation in the community; lack of extended family or community support network; and involvement in crime or violence in the community.

Risk variables related to the community include: the culture and tolerance of violence; gender and social inequality; lack of proper housing; lack of support; and services to families. Community risk variables also include: the levels of unemployment; poverty; alcohol and drug abuse; temporary neighbourhoods; and inadequate policies and programmes to address child abuse.

Societal risk variables contributing to child abuse include: poor policies and programmes leading to poor living standards or to socioeconomic inequality or instability; social and cultural norms that promote violence; inequity between men, women and children; dominance relations; and tolerance of child labour and prostitution.

Although these factors are well identified, more research is required to depict the dynamics of the interactions between them (links and interdependences) in order for the betterment of the understanding of child abuse for prevention and intervention. According to the WHO's World Report on Violence and Health "the ecological model is based on evidence that no single factor can explain why some people or groups are at risk of interpersonal violence while others are more protected. Instead, the model views interpersonal violence as the outcome of interaction among many factors" (WHO, 2004, p. 4).

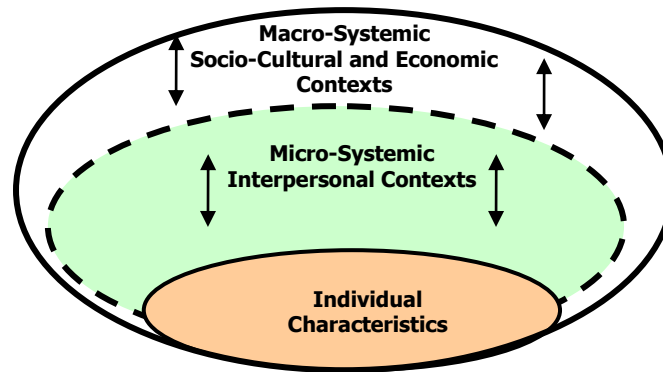
The WHO model refers to economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural variables, and theories to explain child abuse although these are not structured, linked and quantified. This research facilitates the task of clustering and linking the different variables and theories through the IMT.

2.4.4 Multi-level approach of risk variables influencing child abuse

Richter *et al.* (2004) developed a model referred to as a multi-level approach to

understand child sexual abuse. They combined Tolan and Guerra's model to investigate multiple variables that influence the commission of child physical violence with Becker and Kaplan's model on child sexual abuse.

Figure 4: Multi-level model of risk variables of sexual abuse of children



Source: Richter *et al.* (2004).

According to this approach, the multiple influences in child (sexual) abuse can be best understood as levels of influence, each nested within the less proximal level. The 'concentric circles' suggest, according to the authors, that individual characteristics are nested in socio-cultural and economic macro-systems. Instances of individual characteristics may be: poor impulse control; low self-esteem; and lack of empathy for victims and/or sexual dysfunction. Examples of interpersonal relationships at the micro-system level may include: domestic violence; poor attachment patterns; and victim-perpetrator relationships. Variables at macro-systemic level include socio-cultural and economic influence and may range from the effect of poverty to cultural acceptance of violence, and/or patriarchal values.

The HSRC multi-level model of risk variables that influence the sexual abuse of children has been observed in the MI database. Poverty related cases for instance include the education and employment status of parents. The consequence of poor education and unemployment in this case is that, before children become victims, they live in families where their basic needs are not fulfilled. In such situations, their vulnerability to abuse is greater as opposed to children whose basic needs are satisfied and if other contributing factors are eliminated.

The multi-level model emphasises the risk factor associated with child sexual abuse. It includes variables such as: domestic violence; poor attachment patterns; and victim-perpetrator relationships as influenced by the poor economic conditions of the parents. These variables are important in child abuse in general. This research facilitates the connection of these variables with other variables to provide a better picture of child abuse in general.

2.4.5 United Nations study on violence against children

An international study by the UN explains in detail how child abuse happens. The study, based on the experiences of various countries provides a model on child abuse. The UN General-Assembly Resolution 57/90 of 2002 provides a global picture of violence against children and proposes recommendations to prevent and respond to it. Consequently, the General-Secretary appointed Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, to conduct an in-depth study on violence against children. The expert study used a participatory process including: regional; sub-regional; national consultations; expert thematic meetings; and field visits. Many governments including South Africa also provided comprehensive responses to a questionnaire in 2004.

The UN Study on Violence against Children confirms that child abuse exists in every country of the world: cutting across culture; class; education; income; and ethnic origin. The study further acknowledges that child abuse takes a variety of forms and is influenced by a wide range of variables, from the personal characteristics of the victim and perpetrator to their cultural and physical environments.

Child abuse remains hidden because of the fear of children to report violence in particular rape and physical abuse according to the UN Study. Child abuse is under or not reported because people do not trust the SAPS, social services and other authorities in the CJS. Underreporting of child abuse is also caused by the fact that perpetrators are known to children as violence happens in children's parental homes and at schools. Joubert (2007) acknowledges family connections in the incidence of child rape. According to the author, desperate economic conditions force mothers to turn a blind eye when household members or their partners rape their young ones.

Amongst the risk variables of child abuse, the UN Study emphasises the lack of

economic development, status, age, sex and gender. The study reveals that the rate of homicide of children in 2002 was twice the norm in low-income countries as it is in high-income countries according to the WHO. Social and cultural patterns of conduct and stereotyped roles and economic variables such as income and education also play an important role. The study shows that: the growing economic inequality; globalisation; migration; urbanisation; health threats in particular HIV/AIDS; technological advancements and armed conflicts; affect how we treat children.

The UN Study acknowledges the shortage of information on the global economic costs of child abuse in particular from the developing world. It cites additional contributing variables such as: unstable families; family disintegration; violent discipline; lack of parenting skills; bonding between parent-child; and social cohesion.

The UN study is more of an assessment tool than a model to understand child abuse for three main reasons. Firstly, expensive as it may have been and inclusive as it was, the UN study produced a list of factors contributing to child abuse. Secondly, the risk variables from the UN study are not linked to each other to explain child abuse. Finally, the link of variables would have been important if the prediction of each or combination of these variables in child abuse causation was considered.

2.5 POVERTY PROFILING AND CRIME MAPPING

Mapping (also referred to as profiling) is an emerging important tool or an investigative technique that assists in demonstrating details of a determined geographical area. The details of a mapping or profiling exercise can be extensive. In this research, mapping and profiling are limited to poverty profiles and crime maps.

The research questions the impact of poverty on child abuse through poverty profiling and crime mapping. Sketches of both poverty profiling and crime mapping processes establish the review of the economic conditions of households wherein child abuse occurred. The profiles and maps show that the economic characteristics (poverty profiling) of the households and the environment are linked to crime and violence against

children (crime mapping) to indicate the extent of the existing connection.

A detailed discussion on techniques and principles on developing poverty and crime maps is beyond the scope of this research. The importance of using poverty and crime maps is to be able to visualise how poor economic conditions contribute to crime and provide a picture of this important information. Maps enable information to be seen at a glance and can be used as integral tools for exploration and for testing hypothesis.

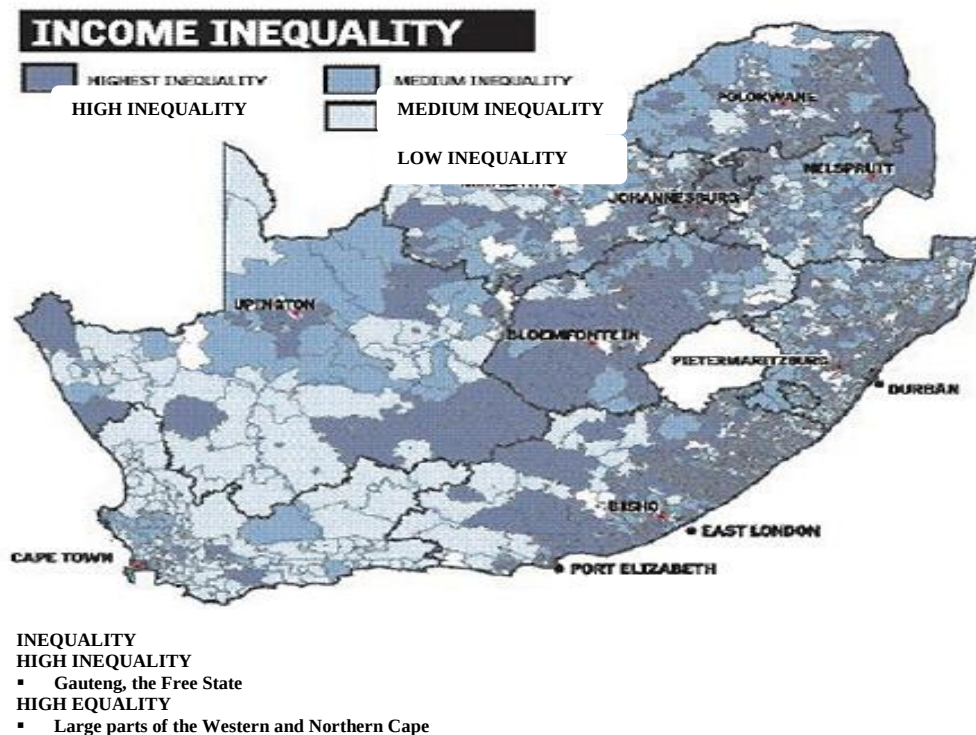
This research does not consider developing new poverty and crime maps but uses the existing ones to highlight the distribution of poverty and crime in some parts of South Africa. The developers of poverty and crime maps emphasise the prevalence of contact crimes in areas with poor economic conditions.

Poverty profiling is, according to the World Bank PovertyNet - a World Bank Website on Poverty Mapping⁸ an important tool that facilitates the analysis of poverty and its determinants. Poverty profiling is useful to display information on the special distribution of welfare and its determinants. It is also useful to display simultaneously, different dimensions of poverty and/or its determinants.

Poverty profiles include the assessment of variables used to measure the poverty levels of households. Income inequality for instance is one of the variables used to measure poverty in a certain area as depicted below. According to the income inequality profile of South Africa, the Gauteng and Free State provinces have the highest levels of inequality in the country followed by a part of the Western and Northern Cape provinces.

⁸ www.worldbank.org/poverty

Figure 5: Income inequality profile of South Africa



Source: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (www.cjcp.org.za).

Other variables such as unemployment, education, skills, training and housing determine the poverty levels of households in determined geographical areas.

In June 2004, the City of Johannesburg commissioned Palmer Development Group (PDG) to develop a profile of urban poverty in the city of Johannesburg. The findings of the PDG are relevant to this research as most of the MI database cases are from the areas surrounding the City of Johannesburg.

The 2004 profile of urban poverty in Johannesburg by PDG considered good practice examples for the identification and understanding of urban poverty, the quantitative profile of poverty in Johannesburg and qualitative case studies. Although the three parameters are not the scope of this research, their quick assessment is interesting.

Three good practice examples considered by PDG in developing the urban profile of Johannesburg are the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), the United Nations

Development programme (UNDP) City Development Index (CDI) Methodology and Variants and the Level of Living Index. These good practice examples were used as long-term analytical capacity to understand and track poverty in the City of Johannesburg.

The IMD is a poverty profiling system used by the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at the University of Oxford. The system was developed on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions (DETR) in England. It is a ward level index made up of six (6) level Domain Indices (Income, Employment, Health Deprivation and Disability, Education, Skills and Training, Housing and Geographical Access to Services). Assessing the six level Domain Indices provides a better picture of poverty for a concerned ward.

The CDI Methodology and variants by UNDP is a project undertaken by the South African Cities Network to explore the role of cities in poverty alleviation. Variables are used as tools to target poverty reduction in cities. The project demonstrated that the CDI could be adapted and extended to fit the particular requirements of South African cities. The Levels of Living Index was published by the Cape Town Metropolitan Council in 1997 to assess the social health and wellbeing of the communities of the metropolitan areas. A set of six indicator categories comprised of income; education; unemployment; welfare; overcrowding; and a composite index were considered.

These three good practice examples are of great importance to this research in the sense that the cases of child abuse and neglect were observed and interpreted according to the economic and social variables of the household where the abuse occurred. The variables might not be exactly the same as sketched in the three examples but they all refer to economic data dealing with poverty.

Three other documents are relevant in understanding the poverty profile of Johannesburg to respond to the purpose of this research. A discussion paper prepared by Ray and Carter (2007) for PLAN themed: Each & Every Child: Understanding and Working with Children in the Poorest and most Difficult Situations, the Study of the Incidence and Nature of Chronic Poverty and Development Policy in South Africa by Aliber (2001) and economic variables collected from Stats SA. These documents

expose both the national and international perspectives on understanding poverty and its impact on crime and violence against children. The review of these documents relate closely to the variables observed in the MI database.

Although the purpose of the discussion paper by PLAN was not to conduct a detailed poverty profiling of the eight concerned countries (India, Nepal, Vietnam, Egypt, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Guatemala), it provides valuable information on understanding the root causes and variables that impact on the lives of children in the poorest and most difficult situations. The case of Guatemala focuses specifically on children affected by crime and violence.

The discussion paper emphasised how poverty, violence, abuse, HIV/AIDS pandemic and discrimination hinder the quality of children's lives and the ability to fulfil their potential. These cases are not isolated for this research as the theme turns around crime and violence against children or child abuse, neglect and exploitation in other words.

The discussion paper argues that growth and inequality led to the increase of numbers of children living in poverty and difficult conditions. Consequently, discrimination, exclusion and poverty directly impact on the high levels of violence and abuse against children. In Guatemala for instance, indigenous groups account for 43% of the population of which 58% are poor and 72% live in extreme poverty. Furthermore, the paper argues that children withdraw from school to work because of poverty. Many of the drop-out children and those in poor families were at risk of exploitation for: labour; trafficking; recruitment into armies; and youth gangs and unsafe migration to urban centres or subjected to violence as a consequence of the stress brought by poverty. The paper observed that many children stayed with their families despite their poor economic conditions. However, because of the inability of their society to care for poor families and their children, many children find themselves living and working in the streets.

The discussion paper, through children's consultations, depicts the following risk variables for children living in the poorest and most difficult economic conditions:

- Children are discriminated against – male children are better treated and cared for than female children

- Children with any form of disability are neglected
- Prevalence of negative traditional practices (for example early marriage)
- There is a prevalence of violence in homes, schools and the community
- Parents are not employed
- There is a lack of arable land
- There are lots of cases of sickness or disability in families
- Death and/or separation of parents is prominent
- Children don't have support and encouragement in homes and/or community
- The quality of schooling is very low

This research translates the above risk variables into a poverty profiling composed of:

- Discrimination and social exclusion
- Negative traditional practices
- Culture of violence
- Unemployment
- No access to basic services
- Community disintegration
- Poor education system and outcomes

The inequality and injustice in the distribution of wealth and the prioritisation of policies as discussed by Aliber (2001) and the lack of prioritisation of children's basic needs and rights in the national budget as demonstrated by Coetzee and Streak (2004) underpin the current child poverty profile. The variables already described illustrate the picture of poverty in the geographical areas concerned by this research.

The MI database contains information on both the abuse cases and the economic and social data of the households where the abuse occurred. Amongst the economic data captured in the MI database, the following are critical:

- Education level of both the father and mother of the abused child
- The employment of both the child's father and mother
- The household's breadwinner and his/her current status

- The number of people supported by the breadwinner
- The status of the child's mother's present relationship
- The housing
- The relationship between the child and the perpetrator

These variables determine the poverty profile of concerned households and assist in establishing how the combination of the various variables impacts on child abuse.

Solutions to crime in general and child abuse particularly depend partly on the location of the crime. Crime mapping is therefore necessary as a tool that facilitates the location of the crime for analysis and development of possible strategies for prevention and interventions.

Maps are used to generate ideas and hypotheses about the problem under investigation. On the incidence of crime for instance, observing a map can assist in discovering a relationship, or correlation, between crime and the physical environment that otherwise might have gone unnoticed. This correlation may be vertical to show connections between different phenomena, such as crime and violence against children for this research. A horizontal relationship focuses on a common variable across a particular crime type (crime and violence against children for this research). This research is therefore concerned with the exploration of a few maps to confirm the incidence of contact crimes including child abuse in relation to the economic conditions of the areas where the abuse occurs.

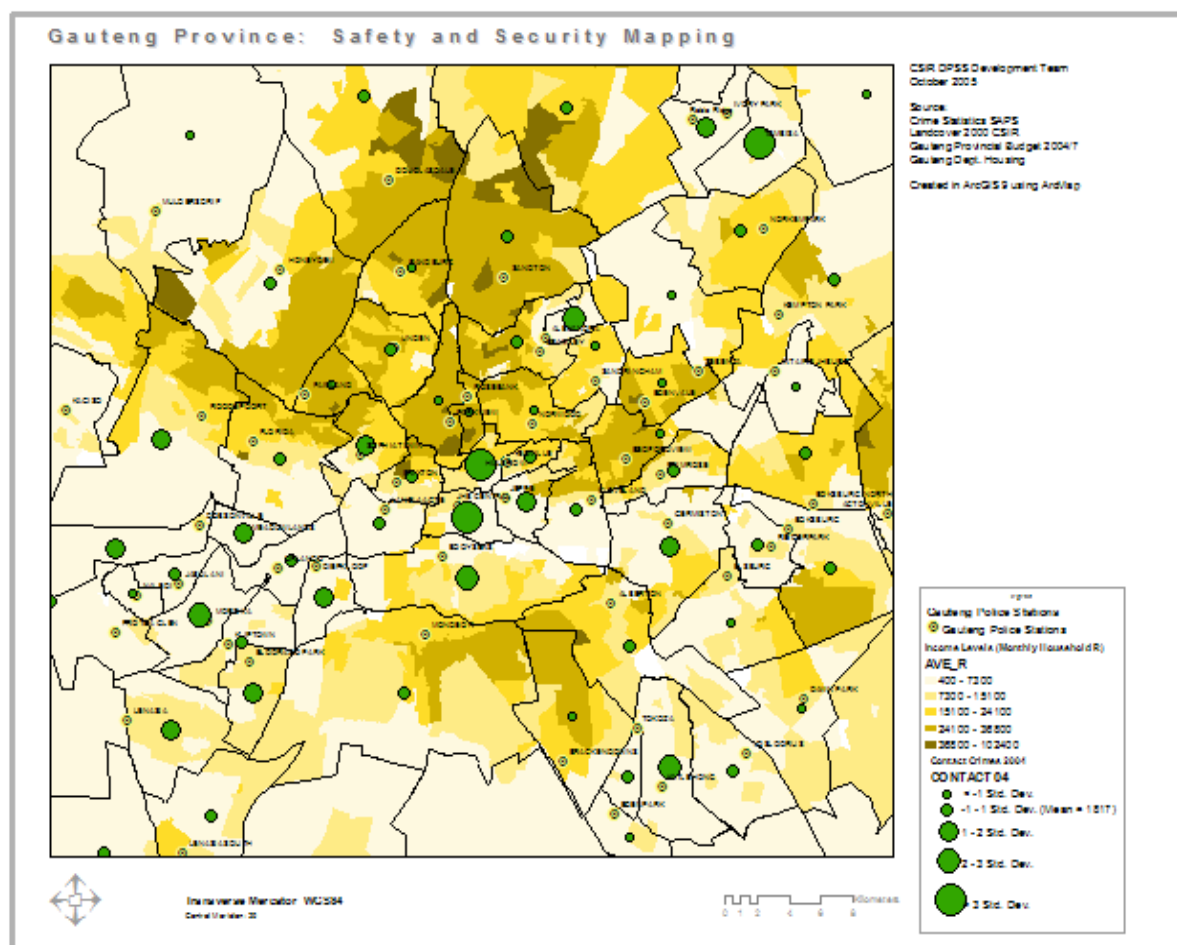
The following GIS maps show the possibility of mapping out crime and economic conditions within a neighbourhood. The first map shows the distribution of poverty and the levels of contact crime in the same geographical area. The strategic interpretation of this map is the prevalence of contact crimes in areas with high levels of poverty.

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The second map shows both the income level of the population and contact crime (violence) levels in the same geographical area. It appears from this map that the level of contact crime is high in areas with low income.

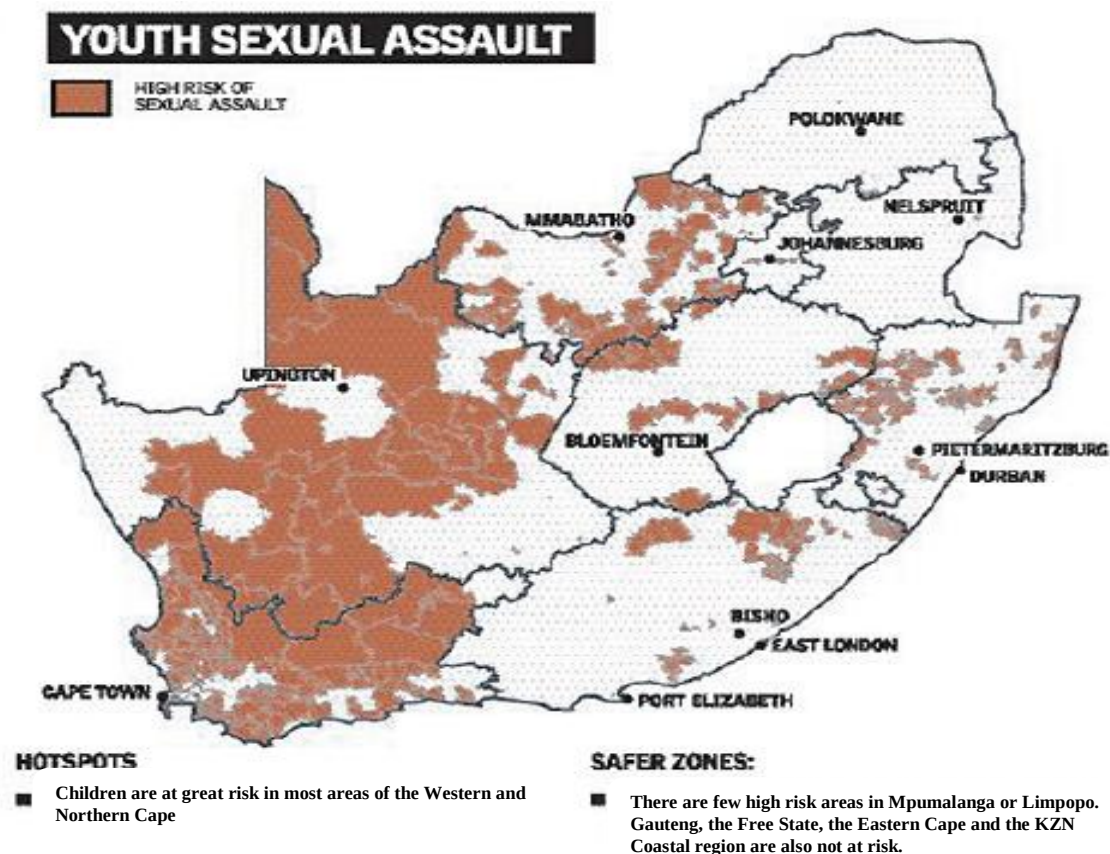
Figure 7: Mapping income level and contact crime in the Gauteng Province



Source: CSIR – Defence, Peace, Safety and Security and SAPS (2005).

The additional map below concentrates on youth sexual assault. The map shows that children are at a higher risk of being sexually abused in the Western and Northern Cape provinces. In other provinces, the map shows portions of areas where children are at risk of sexual abuse. In reading and interpreting this map, it appears clearly that child sexual assault or abuse is rife in the country making children especially girls not safe.

Figure 8: Youth sexual assault



Source: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (www.cjcp.org.za).

2.6 GENERIC CAUSES OF CHILD ABUSE

Understanding the causes of child abuse from the generic point of view is not a process but a collection of perceptions on what people strongly believe are variables contributing to child abuse. These views are most of the time, unfortunately based on economic and social theories.

In a guest preface to “Taking Child Abuse Seriously” – a series by the Violence Against Children Study Group, Linda Gordon argues that child abuse is a social problem, not merely an individual crime (Langan, 1990). She maintains that the causes of child abuse cannot be located simply in particular psychopathologies; rather a number of various social variables such as poverty, isolation, and overwork combined with individual tendencies to produce child abusers.

Although economic and social variables seem to play a key role in child abuse, different other variables contribute equally as explained below. The South African Parliamentary Task Group on the Sexual Abuse of Children (June 12, 2002) attributes child abuse to social disintegration (resulted from the legacy of apartheid) which contributes to a situation whereby violence became a means of exerting and accessing power. Poverty and unemployment very often renders not only the child survivor of abuse powerless, but also those who must protect the child.

The then Minister in the Presidency, Essop Pahad⁹ maintained that the impoverishment of our children and their economic exclusion is the legacy of apartheid and is linked to variables such as race, gender, disability, class and geographical location.

In the case of commercial sexual exploitation of children, Minister Zola Skweyiya¹⁰ indicted poverty, the impact of HIV/AIDS, dysfunctional families and communities, lack of education, drug and alcohol abuse and most importantly the breakdown in moral values. For the minister, addressing poverty especially child poverty, is a major priority in the fight against child abuse.

HIV/AIDS accounts for child abuse in many ways. There are two different ways in which HIV and AIDS causes child abuse. Firstly, HIV/AIDS has created many orphans, child headed families and many HIV infected and affected children whose future is compromised and access to various services such as education denied.

The Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) ([Sa]) remarks that “HIV and AIDS rivals poverty and exceeds war as a threat to the lives of millions of children in the developing world”. For CRIN ([Sa]), “every 14 seconds, another parent dies of AIDS, leaving behind an orphaned child”. For CRIN, the epidemic is spreading, threatening to undermine decades of progress in social and economic development. Unless the world takes urgent account of the specific impact of AIDS on children, warns CRIN,

⁹ Address by Minister Essop Pahad at the First National Children's Rights Advisory Council Meeting, Pretoria 10 March 2006

¹⁰ Statement of the then Minister of the Social Development Zola Skweyiya at the Second World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Japan, 17-20 December 2001

there will be no chance of meeting Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 6 - to halt and begin to reverse the spread of the disease by 2015.

Secondly, there is a myth in Africa that having sex with a virgin child is a cure for HIV/AIDS. This research does not suggest that those who believe in the myth perpetrate all sexual child abuse cases. However, some studies have shown a belief in the Myth. For instance, a study by the University of South Africa (UNISA) at the Daimler Chrysler plant in East London found that 18% of 498 workers questioned believed that having sex with a virgin would cure HIV/AIDS. In 1999, a study by sexual health educators found that 32% of the participants interviewed indicated that they believe in the myth.

Activists in the NGO and research sectors recognise the scourge of crime and violence against children. They share the same sentiment as politicians and members of academia on the root causes of child abuse. Carol Bower from RAPCAN argues for instance that poverty increases children's vulnerability to abuse and neglect. She calls for a social revolution to deal with the scourge of crime and violence against children. CHILDLINE maintains that child abuse is more prevalent in poor households than in rich ones. The experience of CHILDLINE in dealing with abused children confirms that children from poor households live with a higher level of vulnerability to abuse.

In a Review of Child Sexual Abuse and HIV/AIDS in South Africa, The Centre for AIDS Research and Evaluation – CADRE reports that “child sexual abuse has been reported more frequently in contexts where children are economically and socially deprived, where families are dislocated, where children live without one or both of their biological parents, where primary caregivers are inconsistently present, where children are placed in the care of distant relatives or unrelated persons, and where children are placed in foster care” (Kistner, Fox, and Parker, 2004, p. 7).

With this statement, CADRE agrees with the 2002 World Report on Violence and Health that poor people all over the world carry an unequal share of the consequences of crime compared to rich people. This means that conditions of poverty expose children to experiences that make them vulnerable to abuse. CADRE

suggests that children who remain uncared for or unsupervised because their parents have to be at work, or whose primary caregivers do not reside with them, are more vulnerable to sexual abuse. The risk variables or causes of child abuse are multiple. CADRE recognises variables that decrease the quantity and quality of the parental care of children and variables that produce vulnerable, emotionally needy children. In both cases, CADRE implicates the social and economic conditions of childcare. CADRE lists those variables recognised by the SAPS's Child Protection Unit (CPU) as being abject poverty, unfavourable home circumstances or family violence and the breakdown in family and community supports systems. Other causes include: drug and/or alcohol abuse in the household or community; lack of safety and protection services in the community; negative or disempowering societal and cultural attitudes towards women and children, lack of trust of parents; lack of tolerance in the household; lack of access to economic resources; social and health services; and educational and psychological assistance.

Goldman, Salus, Wolcott and Kennedy (2003) divide risk variables associated with child maltreatment into four domains namely parent or caregiver variables, household variables, child variables and environmental variables.

Parent or caregiver variables relate to personality characteristics and psychological wellbeing, history of maltreatment, substance abuse, attitude, knowledge and age. The authors argue that children whose parents abused alcohol and other drugs were almost three times likelier to be abused, and more than four times likelier to be neglected than children of parents who were not substance abusers.

On environmental variables, the authors include poverty and unemployment, social isolation and community characteristics. Social isolation means that parents who maltreat their children report experiencing greater isolation, more loneliness and less social support. Community characteristics mean that children living in dangerous neighbourhoods have been found to be at risk especially when violence is an acceptable response or behaviour to individuals who witness it more frequently.

It is not convincing to expect that there is a direct linear relationship between crime and poor economic conditions such as poverty, unemployment and illiteracy. The National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) argues that historically shaped, poverty

and underdevelopment provide key contextual variables in understanding increasing crime levels. However, it recognises that there is no single cause of crime in South Africa. Different types of crime have different root causes as it has been explained above for crimes and violence against children. This research puts into perspective variables from different appropriate fields as a response to the understanding of child abuse in poor families.

The generic causes of child abuse appear to focus on economic and social perspectives especially the way individuals and society behave vis-à-vis children from the two perspectives. Much of what has been observed is that economic conditions play a critical role in child abuse. The improvement of economic conditions is the responsibility of government. It is therefore essential to review the policy provisions and implications in promoting the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children.

2.7 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Local and international child related laws, regulations and other policy obligations are tools that assist in the achievement of the protection of children against abuse. There are various pieces of legislation and policies that are supposed to affect the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children in South Africa. In measuring the level of care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children, it is important to review the implications of the appropriate laws, regulations and policies.

The Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) stipulates, in Section 28 (1) (d) that "Every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation". Section 28 (2) stipulates that "A child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child". In an attempt to affect the prioritisation of the rights and preference of children's needs, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) adopted the principle of 'first call for children'. According to the principle, children must receive priority in the allocation of national budgets in all areas. Another principle referred to as '*Bantwana Pele*' or 'Children First' (Similar to '*Batho Pele*' or 'People First') was instituted in all departments and service provision

points with the intent of prioritising the rights and needs of children.

On sexual offences against children and their experience with the CJS, Waterhouse (2008) qualifies such experience as appalling. She argues that acknowledging the high rate of sexual offences (including child sexual abuse), the South African government has therefore prioritised the fight against sexual offences. She agrees that the policy and legislative frameworks for addressing sexual offences exist and have resulted in positive developments such as the SAPS national instructions, the increase of specialised FCS services and sexual offences courts and court preparation services. She however regrets that some developments have been plagued by serious problems especially on access to service. She argues that “While policy makes access to services possible, in practice, services are not universally available. Children’s access to services is unequal, and depends on a range of factors. Many children are still exposed to serious victimisation in the very system that should protect them” (Waterhouse, 2008, p. 33).

The author notes a gradually slow and not encouraging progress by the SAPS, the NPA and the Department of Justice to increasing infrastructure and resourcing to meet the needs of children who get in contact with the CJS as victims of sexual offences. The planned progress is unfortunately implemented by what the author calls ‘temporary donor funding’ with no dedicated government plan on increased resources that guarantee easy access to minimum quality service standards for all child victims of sexual offences in the CJS. The author considers the current services provided to child victims of sexual offences as ‘nice to have’ in contradiction to the principle of ‘Children First’.

It is unfortunate to observe that these important laws are not capable of providing better care, protection, safety and wellbeing to South African children. They are the most neglected class as demonstrated by research and critiques from various sources such as the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) budget review and analysis by the University of Cape Town (UCT) amongst others. In actual fact, reports from IDASA (Budget Information Service) and the UCT (Child Gauge) indicate that not enough progress has been made in adhering to all principles advocating the care, protection, safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child.

Consequently, many children are still living in very poor conditions and are subject to abuse, according to the above-mentioned reports.

Internationally, the UN CRC contains prerequisites for the protection of children against abuse. Article 19 states that “States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child”.

By ratifying the UN CRC, South Africa committed itself to the principle of a ‘First call for children’ requiring all state members to ensure that the best interests of the child are paramount in all spheres. This means that the principle should be adhered to in all policies, budgets, actions and programmes. Unfortunately, this principle has not been fully applied. The 2006 State of the World’s Children by UNICEF observes that “it is hard to avoid the conclusion that we, the adults of the world, are failing in our responsibility to ensure that every child enjoys a childhood”. UNICEF affirms that millions of children make their way through life impoverished, abandoned, uneducated, malnourished, discriminated against, neglected and vulnerable. South Africa is not an exception to the UNICEF conclusion according to the report.

Statistics and various reports demonstrate that crime and violence against children are on the increase in South Africa. It is true that the laws, regulations and policies have failed South African children because of not being effectively implemented. Laws, regulations and policies can be effective if they are implemented through well defined, planned and funded programmes. What has been the impact of different government programmes in addressing the principle of ‘Children First’?

2.8 IMPACT OF PROGRAMMES

For several years, poverty eradication and the fight against crime have been part of the stated key priorities of the African National Congress (ANC) led government. Achieving these two priorities, presuppose the accomplishment of the protection and

wellbeing of children. Children form a consistent portion of the South African population and are expected to be automatically the first and important beneficiaries of the actions and programmes of the government.

In focussing on child abuse in South Africa, it is important to evaluate the impact of programmes targeting the improvement of the social and economic conditions of both children and parents or their caregivers. In the meantime, programmes intended to reduce the vulnerability of children to abuse need to be equally considered. The assessment assists in understanding not only child abuse, but also and importantly the prevention of and intervention mechanisms against it. Such understanding assists the policy and decision making process on whether to continue with or to rectify actual laws, policies, strategies and programmes or to completely initiate a new effective legal and policy system. The failure of the actual system means that new laws, policies, regulations, strategies and programmes need to be developed and implemented. The new law and policy provisions must therefore be effective, achievable and impact oriented on the prevention and intervention mechanisms to reduce the impact of child abuse on children and their parents or caregivers.

The Department of Social Development (DSD) is the leading department through which the South government delivers its social responsibilities to children and other vulnerable persons. The vision of DSD is “A caring and integrated system of social development services that facilitates human development and improves the quality of life”. Its mission is “To enable the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded within South African society to secure a better life for themselves, in partnership with them and with all those who are committed to building a caring society”.

In a draft article titled: “Trends in the Service Sector: Scoping of Developmental Social Welfare Service”, September (2005) reviews the entire developmental social welfare services work streams. She acknowledges that South Africa has embarked on a path characterised by brave interventions to address the forces of economic growth and the devastating poverty amongst millions of the people. However, she observes that much more is still needed to break the burden of poverty and exclusion in South Africa in response to the expectation of the population. She came to a significant conclusion reflecting the status quo on service provision to children

with regard to poverty alleviation and implications in the prevention of crime against them. The South African government has failed in many instances to implement programmes that target the improvement of the social and economic conditions of children and their parents. Such lamentable failure hinders the provision of and sustainability of the care, protection and wellbeing of children according to the analysis of September (2005).

The author highlights that the social welfare programmes were not to complement other social services in catering for the needs of children. She cites an evident gap concerning employment opportunities for poor households (usually composed of semi or unskilled labour). September (2005) argues that the government strategy has now emphasised employment opportunity (job creation) as part of the basket of services to poor households. Instead, the government focussed on the provision of insufficient social welfare grants resulting in a high correlation between poverty and joblessness. This observation, September (2005) concludes that the existing safety net is not enough to take poor households out of poverty. An adequate safety net has to provide social independence and social cohesion through employment and job creation according to the author.

Because the safety net is not concerned with pulling poor households out of poverty, the pool of households relying on social grants augments. Consequently, there are limitations regarding access and the size of the grant in its ability to satisfy both the numbers of those requiring it and satisfy the needs of those who receive it.

Focussing on children, September (2005) argues that the links between social welfare services such as prevention, care and protection of children, youth and families on the one hand, and the social security system, on the other, have largely been ignored. The emphasis here is that most children who are in the social welfare system (or in need of care) are children living in poor households with unemployed parents or caregivers. The safety net fails not only the poor and unemployed but the children that are relying on the social welfare system too.

The crucial observation for September (2005) is that grants provided by the social welfare system are focused on specific individuals – children, disabled persons and

the elderly. Because there is no grant that supports poor households, their only income is the child support allowance or occasionally the old person's grant. September (2005) believes in a social development programme aimed at breaking the root causes of poverty. This means that a successful social development strategy must build stronger and independent families. She refers to the 1997 White Paper on Social Welfare Services for the integration and connectedness of intervention programmes. According to the White Paper, social welfare service means a welfare system which facilitates the development of human capacity and self-reliance within a caring and enabling socio-economic environment. The aim of the social welfare services is to create sustainable improvements in the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

The social welfare system fails to address poverty and the inadequateness of the safety net because of the lack of community participation. September (2005) argues that strong states need strong societies. September (2005) argues that national governments are limited in their ability to effect social and economic transformation through vertical, top-down ties to society. For the author, the private and the public sectors are not enough to safeguard development and economic growth. She advocates for the full involvement of a third sector, an organised civil society and community as an essential structure in raising the dynamic and critical voice of grassroots citizens and linking it to social action and economic participation. She emphasises the role of multi-purpose centres in local communities intended to facilitate not only better access to service points but to enable the participation of local communities in the programmes design and delivery policy and decision making process. September (2005) considers that an organised civil society can provide a crucial mechanism for feedback on government policies to ensure greater public accountability.

Another critical element justifying the failures of the government to improve social and economic conditions for children and their parents thus providing and sustaining the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children is monitoring and evaluation. September (2005) argues that delivering welfare services demands sound management, information and performance systems and an effective monitoring and evaluation system.

The Children's Budget Unit of IDASA published a book on monitoring the achievement and challenges with regards to child socio-economic rights in South Africa. The book edited by Coetzee and Streak (2004) reviewed the national budget with regards to the care, protection and wellbeing of children. The findings of the study confirm the conclusions of September on the failure of the government to improve the social and economic conditions of children and their parents thus providing and sustaining the care, protection and wellbeing of children. The book is a result of a critical decision in 2001 to try to base the monitoring methods more on government's legal obligations to deliver child rights and hence to adopt an approach that holds government accountable for its legal obligation.

In reviewing the national children' budget, the Children's Budget Unit of IDASA referred to the preamble of the Constitution. The Preamble states that the people of South Africa recognise the injustices of the past and adopt the Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic that will facilitate the healing of the divisions of the past to establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. The Constitution guarantees all South Africans the improvement of the quality of their lives.

The Constitution stipulates in sections 26, 27 and 29 the rights afforded to everyone relating to housing, health care, food; water, social security and basic and further education. Besides these rights, children are given preference with additional rights as stipulated in section 28 (l) (c) of the Constitution. Coetzee and Streak (2004) remind that the child specific socio-economic rights are the right to, basic nutrition, shelter, basic health services and social services.

The review of the national budget on the socio-economic rights of children considers the responsibilities of both the state and parents or caregivers. Coetzee and Streak (2004) argue that the state and parents are the main players in translating the rights of children into reality with parents having the primary responsibility. They fulfil this responsibility by using their income to buy goods and services for children. When parents are unable to fulfil their primary obligation (when they are for example poor to meet their households' basic needs), the state's role becomes more prominent.

This research focuses on the socio-economic conditions of the parents to provide care, protection, safety and wellbeing to their children and the role of the government to provide basic services according to the Constitution. The review of the Children's Budget Unit of IDASA focuses on the direct service provision to children as per the requirements of the Constitution with regards to their socio-economic rights.

The Children's Budget Unit of IDASA recognises that establishing what government's obligations are in relation to constitutional child socio-economic rights is difficult, but important. It is difficult because there is not yet clarity around the scope and content of children's constitutional rights, nor therefore around the state's obligation to give effect to them. It is important because government cannot be left with the task of defining the scope and content of child rights nor its obligations in relation to them (Coetzee and Streak, 2004). It also believes that the advancement of children's rights in South Africa requires a consensus around the interpretation of the scope and content of children's constitutional socio-economic rights and to hold government accountable (Coetzee and Streak, 2004).

It is important to consider how the government can provide for the socio-economic rights of children if, using the Income and Expenditure Survey of 2000 and the income poverty line of R 430 per month per capita in 2 000 Rands, 74.8% of South Africa's children were found to be living in households where income is less than R 430 per month per capita. This translates into 13 million poor children (aged 0 to seventeen), using Stats SA's Census 2001 (Coetzee and Streak (2004).

The focus of this research is not to profoundly revise the poverty rate. However, the above figures demonstrate that the majority of children live under the poverty line. The point of this research is to highlight the problem and interrogate why this status quo in South Africa considering the provisions of the Constitution, the enactment of various pieces of legislation and the implementation of various policies and programmes targeting the care, protection and wellbeing of children.

The critical aspects reviewed in terms of the satisfaction of socio-economic rights of children for their care, protection and wellbeing (the contrary being child abuse)

include social assistance programmes (transfer of income to caregivers), the primary school feeding programme (right to basic nutrition) and access to health and education (including ECD). The inadequacy of delivery of any of these basic rights because of the poverty level of the parent or caregiver or the inability of the government amounts to the abuse of children.

The critique of the Children's Budget Unit of IDASA on the access of children to basic nutrition is that even a cursory glance at the available figures shows that far too many South Africans, and particularly far too many South African Children, regularly suffer what Constitutional Court Justice Tolakele Madala¹¹ once called the daily terrorism of hunger. Coetzee and Streak (2004) explain that the wide-spread lack of access to sufficient food experienced by South Africans has a clear and debilitating physical effect on children. 16% of South African babies are born underweight and amongst children under nine, 21.6% are stunted, 10.3 are underweight and 3.7% experience wasting. The authors emphasise that the broader impact of malnutrition on children's ability to participate in the processes and privileges of society is more difficult to quantify and trace, but it is potentially devastating. The link for instance, between nutrition on the one hand and children's ability to participate effectively in education and the general cognitive development of the child on the other, is well documented.

The government programme giving effect to all children's rights to basic nutrition is ambiguous and unachievable. The Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa composed of the Departments of Agriculture, Social Development, Health and to a lesser degree Public Works was supposed to deal with access to food and household food security. Unfortunately, the review of the Children's Budget Unit of IDASA reveals that firstly, it is difficult to identify the different programmes and policies that contribute either directly or indirectly to food security in South Africa. No specific government at national, provincial or local government department focuses in the first instance on the right to food in the way that, for instance the Department of Health is dedicated primarily to realising the right to health care services.

¹¹ Address by Constitutional Court Justice Tolakele Madala during the International Right to Food Seminar, Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, 27 – 29 January 2002.

Secondly, the realisation of the right to food requires measures that ensure both the availability of food (creating and maintaining national food security by ensuring that an adequate supply of safe and nutritious food exists nationally) and actual access, or entitlement to food (creating and maintaining household food security).

Thirdly, the extent to which the right to food is realised depends on the fulfilment of a number of other rights. People usually gain access to food by producing it for themselves or by acquiring it through exchange. The right to have access to land, the right to education and to some extent the right to social security are therefore essential here (Coetzee and Streak (2004). If these rights are not afforded and that food security is only limited to what the authors refer to as the food-related policy developed in a 'piece-meal fashion', this basic need is unrealisable with all the consequences on the children as mentioned earlier.

The right of children to health care service has been one of the priorities of the South African government. The review of the national budget by the Children's Budget Unit of IDASA looked at available information on child health in the form of indicators for survival, such as child death and child morbidity rates. Coetzee and Streak (2004) argue that morbidity and mortality indicators provide a crude, albeit incomplete, measure of the extent to which children's health rights are being met. They maintain that these indicators are not able to provide a comprehensive insight into the multiplicity of factors that impact on child health, nor on the many other dimensions of child health and wellbeing. Some aspects of child health are still poorly understood. For example, no regular information exists as to the psycho-social and mental health challenges that children face in the context of poverty and devastating epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, trauma and violence.

The government's response to the requirements of children's right to health is viewed by the Children's Budget Unit of IDASA as not yet satisfactory. On the legislative measures, the review indicates that it is unfortunate that at this crucial point in South African policy and legislative reform, there is as yet no comprehensive legislation on child health. The National Health Act (passed by Parliament in August 2003) gives some recognition to children as a group deserving of special attention.

However, it fails to provide a clear legislative framework for health services, health managers and providers in terms of their responsibilities and roles to ensure that children's health rights are met. In addition, the Act does not include mechanisms to ensure the creation and prioritisation of child health management and statutory service structures such as Maternal, Child and Women's Health Directorates. It does not also include mechanisms to ensure adequate planning and resourcing of key child health priorities and programmes (Coetzee and Streak, 2004).

The implementation of health programmes for children in South Africa has not been successful because of the ambiguity of the laws and policies and the lack of a clear link between political commitment to children's rights and child health outcomes. The Children's Budget Unit of IDASA argues that evaluation and monitoring systems do not allow for following the links between the political commitment to rights, the interpretation of the right, the subsequent policies and programmes that have been developed, the outcomes of such policies and/or programmes and the decisions around resource allocation to child health programmes and services.

On social security, the Children's Budget Unit of IDASA argues that it is critical for the South African government to provide social assistance to poor children and their parents or alternative caregivers because of the high level of poverty, including child poverty. However, the critique of the social security system in South Africa is that the coverage of social security remains a highly controversial area of government's response to extensive poverty and how poverty impacts on child abuse-related problems. The coverage of social security grants is understood to depend not only on who is eligible for social security grants, but also on their ability to access the grants. It is thus a product of both the design and implementation of social security programmes. Social security grants and programmes are implemented by DSD.

The government policies and programmes to alleviate poverty and ensure the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children are not adequate and successful in South Africa. Current implementation strategies and programmes are not effective because the variables contributing to child abuse and influences of their links and interdependences are not well understood. This research believes that a good diagnosis of a problem is half its treatment.

It is therefore essential to recognise the need for the implementation of laws, policies and programmes that alleviate children's poverty and deal directly with the prevention of crime against them. The success of such laws, policies and programmes is conditioned by the clear understanding of the dynamic around the variables that contribute to child abuse. Any action should therefore be directed towards reducing the impact of each variable and its impact on child abuse. It is correct to assume that the unemployment of parents is one of the critical variables that contribute to child abuse. However, instead of creating employment for the parents to be able to respond to the basic needs of their children, the government's emphasis is more on providing insufficient social grants.

A mechanism to facilitate the understanding of crime and violence against children is therefore crucial for any effective prevention and intervention strategy or programme. A direct response to poverty could be the creation of sustainable employment and jobs more than the provision of social grants. Employment and job creation depend on the level of literacy and education. Any intervention in employment and job creation is therefore dependent on the provision of opportunities for literacy and formal education. Hence, the development of the IMT that shapes the understanding of child abuse to guide policies and programmes for prevention and intervention.

2.9 THEORIES OF CRIME AND CHILD ABUSE

This research acknowledges that different theories have been developed to explain and attempt to prevent and/or intervene against child abuse, yet child abuse continues to occur. This means that the different theories developed tend to address particular aspects of child abuse to the expense of other aspects. It also means that although some theories are limited in their scope, they are still incomplete considering that specific scope.

In the 60s mentally challenged adults and/or the poor were considered as principal perpetrators of domestic violence according to Newberger, *et al.* (1983). The same authors argue that in the 70s the trend of research changed to negate that family

violence was the consequence of psychological and/or income related factors. This means that child abuse is a dynamic phenomenon which requires ongoing research into its contributing variables within a specific parameter (within a scope, looking at relationships amongst variables) and outside of that parameter (integration of variables from other scopes).

This research recognises the importance of pertinent questions raised by Garbarino (1981) regarding research issues on child abuse. Those questions are still of concern to date, whereas this research is a response to some of them such as:

- Identification of risks of child abuse remains statistically unpredictable and therefore frustrates prevention and early interventions and prevention thus frustrating attempts. This research looks at different variables that contribute to child abuse.
- Treatment of child abuse is poor, yet successful treatment is improperly understood. This research considers treatment as any intervention in dealing with child abuse.
- Preventive initiatives are largely not explored, despite for instance, the strength of parent-child bonding as a preventive initiative. This research considers that decisions on the prevention of child abuse are biased because they are based on incomplete and/or erroneous understanding.
- The consequences of child abuse are not understood. This research considers that the good understanding of child abuse will lead to effective prevention and intervention mechanisms, thus reducing the consequences of child abuse.

Two facts justify the decision to combine economic and non economic theories in facilitating the understanding of child abuse.

Firstly, this research acknowledges that understanding economic theories in crime causation and child abuse is essential. Munro (2002) acknowledges that a risk variable for abuse is a feature found more in abusive families than in the general population. She argues that it is incorrect to believe that the more frequently a variable is found in abusive families, the stronger it predicts risk. For her, the crucial point is how common it is relative to its general incidence. She then maintains that

poverty is a common feature of abusive families but this, on its own, is not enough information to use as a predictor.

Secondly, the research understands that although there is a connection between poor economic conditions and child abuse, many other variables contribute equally to child abuse although they are silenced or minimised. For this reason, non-economic based elements in the form of social, environmental, cultural and structural theories are of great importance and need to be combined with the economic theory to facilitate the understanding of child abuse.

2.9.1 Economic Theory of crime and child abuse

The poor economic condition of a household is often considered as a key contributing variable in the occurrence of crime in general, and violence and crime against children in particular. Social scientists, economists, activists and researchers attribute crime causation to economic incentives in various ways. The Marxist critique attributes the consequence of social ills to the economy. The critique is also that the economy is responsible for all social structure and ideas (Seiler, [Sa], p. 1). In agreeing with Marx's research, it is important to cautiously understand the association of poverty and child abuse. In limiting the responsibility of poverty in child abuse, the IMT leaves enough room to justify the impact of other variables and the combination of multiple variables in the causation of child abuse.

The economic theory justifies the contribution of poor economic conditions in child abuse and neglect through the inability of poor families to provide for the basic needs of their children. Research also shows that poor economic conditions are conduits through which other variables contribute to child abuse.

In an article entitled Child Abuse and Sexual Exploitation in Africa, Rebirth Africa Life on the Continent (RALC) ([Sa]) suggests three causes for crime causation. The three causes are apartheid based and include the break-down of family structures, the 'Group Areas Act' (social variables) and the 'Bantu Policy' (economic variables). The Bantu Policy emphasised a low education level aimed to direct black or non-white children into the unskilled labour market, commonly known as gutter education, this was to ensure white control and prosperity.

The contributing variables as outlined by RALC ([Sa]) are of a social, economic, environmental and cultural nature. As far as the economic theory is concerned, RALC emphasise that children are forced into prostitution (child prostitution) and to work (child labour) in order to support their families and cater for their own basic needs.

Amongst other methods of child exploitation, RALC is concerned about children being used as drug carriers or being made to work under inappropriate environments and conditions in the agriculture and domestic services.

Richter, *et al.* (2004) give a full account on how a Grade 6 child was sent out by her father to solicit sex in order to bring some income to him. The child would come late every night and would be unable to do her school work. Not only was the child sexual exploited but she was also physically abused by her father for not bringing enough money on one occasion. The authors argue that “the commercial sexual exploitation of children takes many forms but is typically facilitated by adults known to the child who benefit financially from the abuse” (Richter, *et al.*, 2004, p. 31).

Witte and Witt (2000) aver that many scientists argue that crime is closely related to work, education, poverty and truancy, and youth unemployment which are products or even measures of social exclusion. The authors further argue that from the economic theory point of view, a criminal activity is similar to paid employment in that it requires time and produces an income and/or satisfaction.

Considering Witte and Witt’s article, this research agrees that poverty and unemployment are the conduit through which other variables influence crime. Furthermore, poor educational attainment is correlated with crime and violence, as it is the case for the RALC analysis.

The first economic policy of South Africa’s democratic government – the RDP – was meant to focus on reducing poverty and redressing the inequalities and injustices of the apartheid regime. Aliber (2001) noticed that access to water, jobs, land, education and health care, were among the priorities highlighted. He maintained that, the fact that the RDP did not achieve its mandate of redressing the inequalities

and injustices of the past sends an alert that post-apartheid policies are also questionable as far as poverty reduction is concerned.

The reaction of the Children's Budget Unit of IDASA to the 2002 budget is that the social services budget for three years following 2000 was unlikely to improve the social safety net. The budget for health, welfare and education (sectors affecting children) remained roughly constant in real terms over that period.

Arguing that children form an important social group in the country and that a priority in terms of their wellbeing is important, this research is concerned that the government's action is meagre and inadequate to address children's concerns.

September (2005) emphasises ECD programmes in dealing with the 'Bantu Policy'. She argues that ECD programmes have been publicised as a means for addressing societal inequities by providing educational and development opportunities for young children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

A Chicago Longitudinal Study – USA has shown that pre-school attendance can prevent child abuse. According to the study, this type of learning environment does more than strengthen skills – it helps cut the rate at which parents or caregivers will abuse or neglect their enrolled children. The access of children to pre-school is not guaranteed in South Africa if parents cannot afford it. This implies young children are neglected by being left unsupervised during the day resulting in their abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

The economic theory in crime causation clarifies that economic variables play a critical role in child abuse. However, these variables do not have the monopoly of crime causation and child abuse. The economic theory of crime is concerned about the gains and material incentives. The economic theory of child abuse is also about the inability of poor households to provide for the basic needs of their children and their safety resulting in most cases in child neglect. Goldman, *et al.* (2003) argue that theories by Rod Plotnik, Emeritus Professor, Department of Psychology, San Diego State University, describe the association between poverty and maltreatment. Wallace (1998) acknowledges that the economic theory suggests that child neglect is the consequence of the stress resulting from the fact of living in poverty.

The first theory is that low income creates greater family stress leading to higher chance of maltreatment. The majority (68%) of South African children live in poor households which have difficulty in providing sufficient care, protection, safety and wellbeing to their children.

The second theory is that parents with low incomes, despite good intentions, may be unable to provide adequate care while raising children in high-risk neighbourhoods with unsafe or crowded housing and inadequate day care (Goldman, *et al.*, 2003). This theory, not only explains the inability of parents to take care of the needs of their children resulting in neglect but links economic theory to environmental theory because of the negative impact of the environment of child abuse and neglect. This interdependence will be explained further in the IMT.

The third theory is that some other characteristics may make some parents more likely to be both poor and abusive. For example, a parent may have a substance abuse problem that impedes his or her ability to obtain and maintain a job, which also may contribute to abusive behaviour (Goldman, *et al.*, 2003). This theory explains the link between economic and social theories as it will be explained in the IMT.

The final theory by Rod Plotnik is that poor families may experience maltreatment at rates similar to other families, but maltreatment in poor families is reported more frequently, in part because they have more contact with and are under greater scrutiny from individuals who are legally mandated to report suspected child maltreatment. This might not necessarily be the case in South Africa where the rate of reporting is low but two facts are critically important in this theory. Firstly, children from poor families suffer the consequences of child abuse more than those in rich families. Secondly, it is evident that abuse in poor families is more exposed than abuse in well-off families because victims tend to report to public hospitals to seek free medical attention and to social institutions for shelter and other immediate social assistance.

The ratio: children – breadwinner contributes too in child abuse and neglect. It is possible that the greater the number of children per breadwinner the less the care and attention given to each child. Goldman, *et al.* (2003) maintain that studies have found that compared to similar non-neglecting families, neglectful families tend to

have more children or greater numbers of people living in the household. They further argue that, chronically, neglecting families often are characterised by a chaotic household with changing adult and child figures. They provide examples such as a mother and her children who live on and off with various others, such as the mother's mother, the mother's sister or a boyfriend (Goldman, *et al.*, 2003).

It is appropriate to acknowledge that the economic conditions of households impact on the care, protection and wellbeing of the child. However, considering isolated economic conditions does not provide the full picture of variables contributing to child abuse. It is therefore important to explore non-economic variables that also contribute to child abuse. The combination of economic and non-economic variables explains better child abuse as already shown by RALC.

2.9.2 Social Theory of child abuse

From the economic theory point of view, crime is incentive oriented. In contrast, social theorists argue that crime causation and child abuse is the consequence of the way children are brought up in their families and the impact of social interactions on their abuse. Social interactions mean relations that a child has with the family and the community members.

Giddens (1989) maintains that the social environment in which we exist do not just consist of random assortments of events. There are underlying regularities, or patterns in how people behave and in the relationships in which they interact with one another. Giddens (1989) maintains that the actions of all human beings depend on the way the society where they are brought up is structured. He further underlines that from time to time, through their actions, human beings rebuild (and also to some extent alter) the structural characteristics of society.

The lesson from Giddens is that social structures play an important role in children's lives and their interaction with society as the main caregiver. From this view, many social trends affecting parenting directly contribute to child abuse (Jones, *et al.*, 1987). For the authors, the more books written and advice provided on how to bring up children, the more parents and caregivers are confused and lose their self-esteem. The authors emphasise the uniqueness of each household in contributing to

the easiness of bringing up its children. Amongst other social causes of child abuse, Jones, *et al.* (1987) cite the mobility of families and marriage break-ups as contributing to child abuse.

RALC argues that the breakdown of family structures resulted from measures put in place by the past apartheid government that forced parents to travel long distances to get to work or to work away from home. The “Group Areas Act” stipulated locations where non-whites could live and dictated the resources available to them (social exclusion). Jones, *et al.* (1987) are of the same view, they emphasises that the mobility of families implies on less intense contact with extended families. It therefore becomes difficult for parents to learn about child and baby care by observation at close quarters (Jones, *et al.*, 1987).

Harden (2004) considers family stability as crucial in the healthy development of children. She defines family stability as a process and practice of providing care that can greatly facilitate the positive healthy development of the child. The author observes that children in foster care undergo a challenging childhood journey. She maintains that the challenges faced by children in foster care are the combination of the troubling circumstances in their families and the difficulties within the welfare system. These challenges compromise foster children’s healthy development.

Marriage break-ups cause single parent families and social acceptance of unmarried parenthood. Jones, *et al.* (1987) acknowledges that there is no authoritative study on the impact of marital breakdown on children, but clinical experience suggests that arguments, bitterness and eventual separation frequently cause deep harm. Many children feel torn by powerful divided loyalties and these children feature disproportionately in referrals to social and psychiatric agencies.

The most crucial variables from the social theory include amongst others substance abuse, parental history and cycle of abuse, marital conflict, domestic violence and single parenthood according to Goldman, *et al.* (2003).

On parental histories and the cycle of abuse Goldman, *et al.* (2003) argue that a parent’s childhood history plays a large part in how he or she may behave as a parent. Individuals with poor parental role models or those who did not have their

own needs met may find it very difficult to meet the needs of their children. They further maintain that while the estimated number varies, child maltreatment literature commonly supports the finding that some maltreating parents or caregivers were victims of abuse and neglect themselves as children. The authors support one review of the relevant research suggesting that about one-third of all individuals who were maltreated will subject their children to a certain form of maltreatment. This assertion sustains the discourse of the perpetuation of crime against children because of the normalisation of violence that instils violent behaviour in children.

Goldman, *et al.* (2003) caution that an incorrect conclusion from this finding, however, is that a maltreated child will always grow up to become a maltreating parent. There are individuals who have not been abused as children but who become abusive, as well as individuals who have been abused as children and do not subsequently abuse their own children. In the research review noted above, approximately two-thirds of all individuals who were maltreated did not subject their children to abuse or neglect (Goldman, *et al.*, 2003).

Parental substance abuse is reported to be a contributing factor in between one-and two-thirds of maltreated children in the USA welfare system (Goldman, *et al.*, 2003). In South Africa, the prevalence of alcohol use and abuse (add statistics) is not different. Research supports the association between substance abuse and child maltreatment according to the authors.

Social variables seem to be directly related and influenced by economic variables. This means that when economic variables are negative, they negatively affect social variables too. Social variables contribute directly to child abuse because of the interactions between the parents, caregivers and other members of society with children. These interactions are sometimes characterised by domination and class struggles. Children are abused or neglected because they are classless and not considered by those who are supposed to protect them. Social variables are therefore considered equally in the modelling of child abuse in poor households. Following is the explanation of each selected variable from social theory.

Wulczyn (2009) focuses on the contribution of social context in the causation of child

abuse. For the author, the social context places children and families within a series of 'nested contexts' that extend out from the family to include the neighbourhood, the community and wider society. This approach suggests that the attributes of the neighbourhood, the community and society – contextual effects – influence the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children.

Amoateng, Richter, Makiwane and Rama (2004) argue that, from a contemporary perspective, the household is seen as the most important source of social capital. Family relationships are the most important sources of social support for the majority of people and, for many individuals, a family remains the main element of the social and material support system throughout life according to the authors.

Amoateng, *et al.* (2004) consider that strong, stable and supportive families are acknowledged to provide the optimum framework for children's wellbeing and the foundation for becoming responsible adults. They conclude that migration, colonisation, urbanisation and globalisation have not only caused people to move away from their families, but have also resulted in value reorientation which contributed to the formation of non-traditional families. South Africa is one of the most urbanised countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Yet, urbanisation affects family life, including sexual partnerships, household formation rules and patterns, the care of children, and the maintenance of kin networks according to the authors. Moreover, they believe that, in South Africa, the migrant labour system had the most dramatic impact on family life, particularly among Africans (blacks) who predominate in the migratory labour system.

In modern society, most of the income activities are performed away from home. The rapid urbanisation, the rural exodus and the concentration of opportunities in towns favour the massive rural exodus and the crowding of towns and cities. In many cases, such activities happen even far away. Household and family interactions diminish because in most cases, household members commute to and from their employment or activity places on a daily basis. In other cases, working parents or caregivers work and live far away from their families. This contributes to the abuse and exploitation of children and in most cases the neglect of children.

For Goldman, *et al.* (2003), substance abuse can interfere with the mental

functioning, judgement, inhibitions, and protective capacity of a parent. Parents who are affected by the use or abuse of drugs and alcohol are capable of neglecting to fulfil the basic needs of their children. In most cases, parents or caregivers abusing substances, spend money on drugs and alcohol instead of household necessities. Some parents or caregivers who abuse drugs and alcohol get easily involved in criminal activities that jeopardise their children's health or safety. Also, studies suggest that substance abuse can influence parental discipline choices and childrearing styles according to Goldman, *et al.* (2003).

A critical consequence of substance abuse is the prenatal exposure of children to drugs and alcohol during their mother's pregnancy. In the Western Cape and Northern Cape provinces, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome is higher than in other provinces because of easy access and the abuse of alcohol and other substances.

Marital conflict, domestic violence, single parenthood may increase the likelihood of maltreatment according to Goldman, *et al.* (2003). They acknowledge that while these factors by themselves may not cause maltreatment, they frequently contribute to negative patterns of family functioning (or dysfunctioning in this case).

Children living with single parents may be at higher risk of experiencing physical and sexual abuse and neglect than children living with two biological parents. A strong, positive relationship between the child and the father whether he resides in the home or not, contributes to the child's development and may reduce the risk of abuse according to Goldman, *et al.* (2003).

Domestic violence is a major contributing factor in child abuse. The authors recall that according to published studies in the United States, in 30% to 60% of families where spouse abuse take place, child abuse also prevails. Children in violent homes may witness parental violence, may be victims of physical abuse themselves, and may be neglected by parents who are focused on their partners or unresponsive to their children due to their own fears. A child who witnesses parental violence is at risk of also being maltreated, but even if the child is not maltreated, he or she may experience harmful emotional consequences from witnessing parental violence.

Other social variables are not explained here but the version provided draws a picture of how social variables contribute to child abuse. Variables from social theory are therefore very important in understanding child abuse because they represent the physical relations of children with their caregivers and the government social system meant to provide for their basic needs.

The economic theory has pointed out that poor economic conditions result in some families living in a poor environment propitious to child abuse. Still this theory does not have the exclusivity of explaining child abuse. Similar to economic theory, variables from social theory are not exhaustive so as to justify child abuse. It is therefore necessary to proceed with the exploration of other theories.

2.9.3 Environmental Theory of child abuse

Environmental justice has been one of the critical debates of post-apartheid South Africa. The right to a harmful environment is a priority of the South African Constitution as other basic rights contained in the Bill of Rights. Section 24 of the Constitution stipulates that “everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing and to secure ecologically sustainable development”. McDonald (2002) argues that the environmental policy of South Africa is a cruel and perverse one. Under colonial and apartheid governments, thousands of black South Africans were forcibly removed from their ancestral lands to make way for game parks, and billions of Rands were spent on preserving wildlife and protecting wild flowers while people in ‘townships’ and ‘homelands’ lived without food, shelter and clean water. He further acknowledges that, at best, the environment was seen to be a white, suburban issue of little relevance to the anti-apartheid struggle. At worse, environmental policy was seen as an explicit tool of racially based oppression.

Even though the colonial and apartheid governments have surely passed, the outcomes of environmental injustice are still contributing to crime in general and child abuse, neglect and exploitation in particular. An example provided by McDonald (2002) about the location of a toxic waste site next to a poor, black community simply because it is a poor black community, is an environmental injustice that violates basic human rights and democratic accountability and demands remediation and compensation.

Environmental injustice speaks to many variables that facilitate crime in general and particularly child abuse, neglect and exploitation. The CSIR Crime Prevention Centre (2003) developed a model called 'Three Spheres Convergence Crime Prevention Model' which classifies environment as one of the three variables in explaining crime. The Model articulates that crime occurs where and when there is a convergence of three important spheres. They are the will to offend, a victim vulnerable to the offence, and an environment that enables the offence or crime to occur.

The model demonstrates that, if there is an offender and a victim but the environment is not conducive, crime will not happen. The environment is understood to be the situational, physical or built environment. This includes the type of housing, the environmental infrastructures such as proper lighting, house numbers, street names, clean environment (no bushy areas or dilapidated and abandoned buildings serving as safe heavens for criminals).

The model maintains that in order to prevent crime, interventions must occur to transform the convergences by converting the converging spheres. This means that the potential offenders must be changed to constructive and contributing citizens and the vulnerable victims to resilient and well supported members of the community. Environments must be manipulated to reduce opportunities for crime or disallow crime to occur.

Jones, *et al.* (1987) believe that it is difficult to provide and maintain high standards of child care, protection, safety, hygiene, warmth and wellbeing in poor households and areas. The authors argue that, if they could afford living in better, clean and safe environments, many parents would provide and maintain a better standard of care to their children.

The built or physical environment is also known as the situational environment meaning the type and quality of infrastructures within which households live. The quality of care, protection, safety and wellbeing of a child is in part the result of the physical environment in which the child lives according to Jones, *et al.* (1987). The authors argue that "inner-city studies show that parents have the same moral standards and aspirations for their children as others, yet the inner-city environment

inhibits them from providing the care and control they believe to be right. If there are no open spaces, for example, children play on the street or stay at home. If at home, proximity generates conflict; if on the street, children are at risk in many ways, including contact with SAPS over some prank or misdemeanour which would have gone unnoticed in a more spacious suburb” (Jones, *et al.*, 1987, pp. 10 – 11).

A poor neighbourhood is a critical variable contributing to child abuse. A poor neighbourhood means an unsafe environment, an informal settlement or a squatter compound. Goldman, *et al.* (2003) consider a poor neighbourhood as a dangerous neighbourhood. They argue that children living in dangerous neighbourhoods are at higher risk than children from safer neighbourhoods in terms of severe neglect, physical abuse and child sexual victimisation. Some risk factors may be associated with poverty of neighbourhoods, however, concerns remain that violence may seem an acceptable response or behaviour to individuals who witness it more frequently.

The ecological theory of family violence by Wallace (1999) assumes that family violence occurs when the parent, child and family are mismatched with the neighbourhood and community. The ecological theory is based on an analysis of the organism and the environment, the interacting systems in which family development occurs, and the environment in which the household resides. Wallace (1999) supports the stance of Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) on the implications of ecological theory of family violence and child abuse. Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) establish two conditions that must be present under the ecological theory for child abuse to occur. Firstly, an environment in which the household lives must accept the use of force against children, and secondly, the household must be isolated from supporting community services or systems.

There are lots of environmental or situational variables that directly contribute to child abuse. Van der Hoven (2001) refers to poor street lighting, dense bush and hidden alleys. She argues that these variables may be attractive for offenders to commit contact crime. To these, it is essential to add other environmental contributing variables that are also detrimental to child safety and interventions for prevention. They include street names and house numbers, proper signage, etc.

Gangs always proliferate in poor and dangerous neighbourhoods where many children live with abusive and violent parents, caregivers or members of the household or the community. A typical example is the Cape Flats district in Western Cape Province. The operations of these dangerous and rival groups have put children under a risk of abuse. Children have been found unwittingly in the middle of fights between rival gang groups.

All the authors that have discussed the environmental theory of crime causation and child abuse have highlighted the link and interdependence between poor economic conditions and poor environments. They have also articulated the negative impact of a poor economy on a poor physical environment with a negative or hostile social environment. The authors imply that bad environment variables contribute directly to child abuse. Similarly, a bad environment neighbourhood contributes to a bad social life where crime and violence are the norms of that society. The links and interdependences between the economic, environmental and social theories on crime causation and child abuse are factual in the South African context looking at crime and poverty maps. Crime and maps in South Africa show a concentration of contact crime (under which child abuse falls) in areas with poor economic conditions.

2.9.4 Cultural Theory of child abuse

The understanding of child abuse is an unfinished debate consisting of various theories with complementary explanations. Economic, social and environmental theories have assisted in providing a partial understanding of child abuse. Cultural theory is an essential and critical addition to the understanding of child abuse.

Cultural theory provides supplementary meaning to the understanding of child abuse. In considering the impact of culture in child abuse, Korbin (2002) warns that culture does not work on its own or in a vacuum, but in transactions with other factors at other ecological levels. Culture can bring with it both risk and protective factors, whose impact varies only between cultures but also within any culture argues the author. Tzeng, *et al.* (1991) argue that cultural norms based on masculinity contribute to the translation of male sexuality into sexual harassment, violence, rape and sexual abuse. Factors contributing to child sexual abuse according to the authors include male domination or a patriarchal family structure, or

the erosion of sexual norms (such as child pornography).

Because of their exposure to and the influence of a variety of cultural beliefs and practices and their influence, children sometimes experience the clash between parental expectation derived from their original cultural background, belief and the cultural environment of the contemporary children. Amongst other elements, peer pressure and the influence and impact of media programmes (mostly westernised) contribute to tensions between children and their parents. Such tensions are likely to generate conflicts thus resulting in child abuse or neglect.

The age of the child plays a role in child abuse. Goldman, *et al.* (2003) maintain that infants and young children, due to their small size, early developmental status, and need for constant care, can be particularly vulnerable to child maltreatment. They assert that very young children are more likely to experience certain forms of maltreatment, such as shaken baby syndrome and nonorganic failure to thrive. Teenagers, on the other hand, are at great risk of sexual abuse.

The sex of the child contributes to her or his vulnerability to abuse. Munro (2002) links abuse or neglect of children with their sex illustrating that many societies value boys more than girls. Such beliefs link male children with the heritage of families and female children as unnecessary for the families when resources are limited.

The section on understanding child abuse has shown that not only economic and social theories imply to child abuse. Although economic and social variables might seem to appear more influencing, the debate has demonstrated that environmental and cultural theories equally influence child abuse. In developing a model to understand child abuse, this research questions the levels of the impact of each contributing variable and of the combination of different contributing variables related to the five theories considered by this research.

The 2007 United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) and the 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic estimate that there were 1.4 million AIDS orphans in South Africa in 2007. The 2007 UNGASS estimated that the HIV/AIDS epidemic has created half of the South Africa's orphans. Another estimation of the proportion of maternal orphans –

those who have lost their mothers – orphaned by AIDS is over 70%. Consequences of the HIV/AIDS deaths include orphans putting pressure on older relatives who become their primary caregivers; orphans relocating from their familiar neighbourhood; siblings being separated, all of which can harm their development. In South Africa, the proportion of orphaned 10 – 14 year olds attending school is only 80% of the level of non-orphaned children of the same age.

The 2007 UNGASS and the 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic conclude that HIV/AIDS pandemic has held back development and economic growth in many of the poorest communities across the world including in South Africa. The consequences of the pandemic are so disastrous and consequently cause emotional distress to large networks of families, communities and societies. The effects of HIV/AIDS on a child include acting as caregiver for unemployed sick parents. In other cases children who have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS become heads of households and therefore principal bread winners.

Child abuse is the consequence of variables from a variety of theories. Different variables from different theories contribute to child abuse not in a co-ordinated but complementary way. The IMT initiated by this research assists in establishing and quantifying the links and interdependences between the contributing variables.

The review of the literature, the observation of the MI database and interactions with field experts have helped identify key variables contributing to child abuse. All those variables have the same level of importance as they all contribute to child abuse. However, the links and interdependences among them and the conditional probabilities of a combination of the variables contributing to child abuse is what the IMT is interested to show.

2.9.5 Structural Theory of child abuse

Structural child abuse is a much more recent addition to the definition of child abuse according to RAPCAN¹². While RAPCAN considers structural child abuse as a different form of abuse, this research regards structural child abuse as more of a

¹² RAPCAN Child Abuse Awareness Training Manual

theory than just a form of abuse. For this reason, this research understands and introduces the structural theory of child abuse as a theory that reviews the impact of different policies and the legislative framework of government in response to the achievement of the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children through the provision of their basic needs.

In South Africa, the structural theory of child abuse has its roots in the apartheid regime that systematically favoured the abuse of the majority of children. The apartheid-era children grew up without proper education and with few opportunities leading to the current crisis of child abuse and neglect. This research does not focus on a historical account of apartheid but explains how its laws and policies influenced child abuse and contributed to the current child abuse situation.

The apartheid regime instituted laws and policies that were detrimental to the advancement of the majority of the children (black) and this has impacted on the current social and economic situations. This explains the link between the structural, economic and social theories. According to Millet (1994), the 'Bantu Education' was instrumental in the promotion of racial myth and facilitated a deliberate inferiority of blacks who were prepared by their education system to become a class of servants.

The author remembers that the issue of education, specifically the language of instruction triggered a historic anti-apartheid uprising in 1976, when the Department of Education (Bantu Education) decreed that Afrikaans instead of English should be the language of instruction. Not only had Afrikaans deprived black youth of a world language but also imprisoned them in using the language of their oppressors according to Millet (1994).

Hazlett ([Sa]) argues that the apartheid government operated a systematically biased spending regime in education favouring white learners and students. He states that in 1952 for instance, the spending on a black school child was approximately only 5 percent of the spending on a white school child. Physical abuse of children was also a weapon used by the apartheid regime to establish fear amongst the youth and children. Straker (1988) argues that many black children were subjected to violence orchestrated by the apartheid system. She refers to the 1986 report by the Lawyers

Committee for Human Rights that 2,000 children under the age of sixteen were detained for a four-month period. These children suffered torture and other inhuman treatment by the South African Defence Force and the Police during their detention. The author regrets that the apartheid regime fostered hostilities, conflict and violent clashes between different sectors of the community which impacted on children's experience and being victims of such atrocities. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and Physicians for Human Rights (1998) maintain that one of the most insidious legacies of apartheid is the turning of South Africa into a violent society. Considering the interviews with victims of the apartheid regime through research commissioned by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, AAAS and Physicians for Human Rights consider that the apartheid system enthusiastically manoeuvred violence in the form of crime, child abuse, and violence against women.

Although the apartheid regime has gone, its legacies are still impacting on the levels of violence and child abuse to date. Meier (2002) argues that the apartheid system has a great impact on violence and child abuse in South Africa. She considers that many apartheid laws contributed to violence and abuse and the legacy of those laws are still influencing violence and child abuse today. She cites amongst others, *the Separate Amenities Act of 1948* (created separate building entrances, schools, public restrooms, public benches for blacks); *the Population Registration Act of 1950* (created the 'pass laws'); *the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951* enabled the government to force blacks and to live in designated areas. Services were not provided in the designated facilities and areas used by blacks and visible policing for instance (to prevent crime and violence) was not provided in those areas.

It is essential to acknowledge the eagerness of the post-apartheid regime to address the imbalances of the past apartheid regime. On the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children the government not only ratified international treaties on children's rights but developed local policies and pieces of legislation to deal specifically with children. This effort however needs to be proven through a positive response to the provisions of the Constitution on the rights of the children. Any failure on the part of the government or its partners to implement the prescriptions of the Constitution constitutes a serious damage to children's care, protection, safety and wellbeing.

Tzeng, *et al.* (1991) classify social- economic-political system (structural theory for this research) as a primary source of child abuse. The authors argue that social-economic-political systems thwart basic human rights and therefore result in child abuse. They further emphasise the disparities between the system and human needs across the strata of society as inciting inequality resulting in a constant source of child abuse. The inequality situation created by the apartheid system is still in existence in the form of rural – urban or poor – rich divide in South Africa.

To differentiate structural variables from other variables, this research considers amongst other variables, the response of the child protection system, the action of the CJS and children's access to different services (such as ECD, education, health and social grants). Structural theory also includes child friendly policies and practices encouraging the participation of children in decisions affecting their wellbeing.

The structural theory of child abuse, looking at the experience of child victims of sexual offences for instance is that children's rights are not given adequate weight (Waterhouse, 2008). The author praises the commitment of South Africa to protect the rights of children through the Constitution and the Children's Act. She cites the basic rights, "to equal protection and benefit of the law, human dignity, freedom and security of the person, which includes the right to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources and the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman and degrading way" (Waterhouse, 2008, p. 34).

The author, however, understands that these rights, although fundamental and important for the wellbeing and protection of children, are generally undermined by the practice within the CJS. For her, "these rights are also often in competition with the rights of accused persons. In practice, the dignity of child victims is rarely a consideration in the CJS. Children are humiliated through processes such as cross examination and repeatedly exposed to psychological harm through the processes and by the individuals within the system. Yet these infringements on the child's rights are seldom even noticed, let alone considered, in decisions taken by police detectives and prosecutors" (Waterhouse, 2008, p. 38).

Waterhouse (2008) argues that there are no practices that promote the participation of children in decisions on matters affecting their lives and wellbeing in South Africa. She gives the example of excluding children, on the basis of their age, to give evidence as a typical illustration of this unfortunate situation. Waterhouse's research maintains that the decisions of the CJS regularly give priority to the interests of the organs of the CJS over those of the child. The rights of perpetrators are often accepted in courts without being balanced with due consideration against the rights of the victim (Waterhouse, 2008). The experience of children in the CJS cited as an example of the review of the structural theory concludes that the famous national and international principle that the best interests of the child are of paramount importance in any matter concerning the child is a farce.

2.10 INTEGRATED THEORIES OF CHILD ABUSE

This research acknowledges the usefulness of other research thus far conducted on child abuse. The complexity of child abuse indicates the difficulty inherent in expecting a single research to focus on the integration of different theories and at the same time providing a tool that facilitates a policy and decision making process for the prevention of, the intervention against and the management of child abuse.

Most child abuse models such as the clinical model and approaches to child abuse, as confirmed by Newberger, *et al.* (1983) are unitary, remain limited and inadequate in theory and knowledge and therefore justify the need for the development of integrated theories. The reviewed integrated theories include:

2.10.1 The Integrated Theory of Sexual Offending (ITSO)

Integrated Theory of Sexual Offending (ITSO) by Tony Ward and Antony Beech (2005) is the outcome of Ward's critique of the Marshall and Barbaree's Integrated Theory of Child Sexual Abuse. Marshall and Barbaree's Integrated Theory of Child Sexual Abuse was developed to explain the incidence of child sexual abuse. This theory provides clinicians with an understanding of the mechanisms that generate sexual abuse and directly influence the assessment and treatment process (from a clinical perspective only) according to Ward (2002).

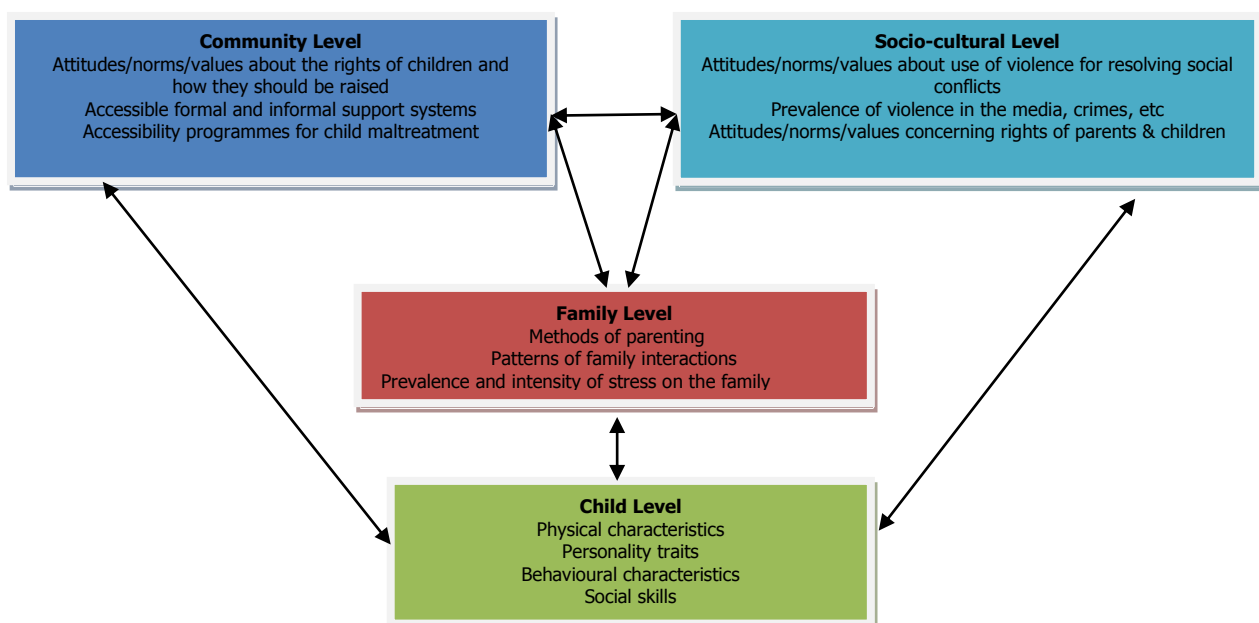
ITSO provides a framework to explain the onset, development, and maintenance of sexual offending. The theory's principle is that sexual abuse occurs as a consequence of a number of interacting causal variables. ITSO focuses on explaining how clinical symptoms arise from the interaction between neurological and ecological factors. The theory is not interested in other variables that contribute to child abuse in general and child sexual abuse in particular.

2.10.2 Multilevel Theory of child physical abuse

The multilevel theory of child abuse focuses on social environment through social influence, cultural attitude and family norms according to Tzeng, *et al.* (1991).

Social influence means that normal parents learn abusive child care patterns through their interactions with the culture, community and family factors, rather than through parental personality variables. Cultural attitudes mean that the social influence promotes violence towards children. Family norms mean child-rearing practices, stress on family members, interactions with the family and the characteristics of the child. The theory is represented in the figure below:

Figure 9: Multilevel Theory of Child Physical Abuse



Source: Adapted from Tzeng, *et al.* (1991, p. 109).

2.10.3 The Three-Factor Model

The three factor model of child abuse has three components. They are the high level of parental aggressive feelings, low parental inhibition of overt aggressive acts; and the focusing of parental aggression on the child. These three factors contribute to child abuse and neglect according to Tzeng, *et al.* (1991).

The three-factor model of child abuse concentrates more on explaining the aetiology and forms of child abuse and neglect. It is an important model because it provides a determinant of child abuse with regard to the child-parent or caregiver relationship. Tzeng, *et al.* (1991) argue that this model is based on the fact that parents experiencing a high level of aggressive feeling and a low level of inhibition of overt aggressive acts, plus the focus on the child, are the basic cause of child abuse.

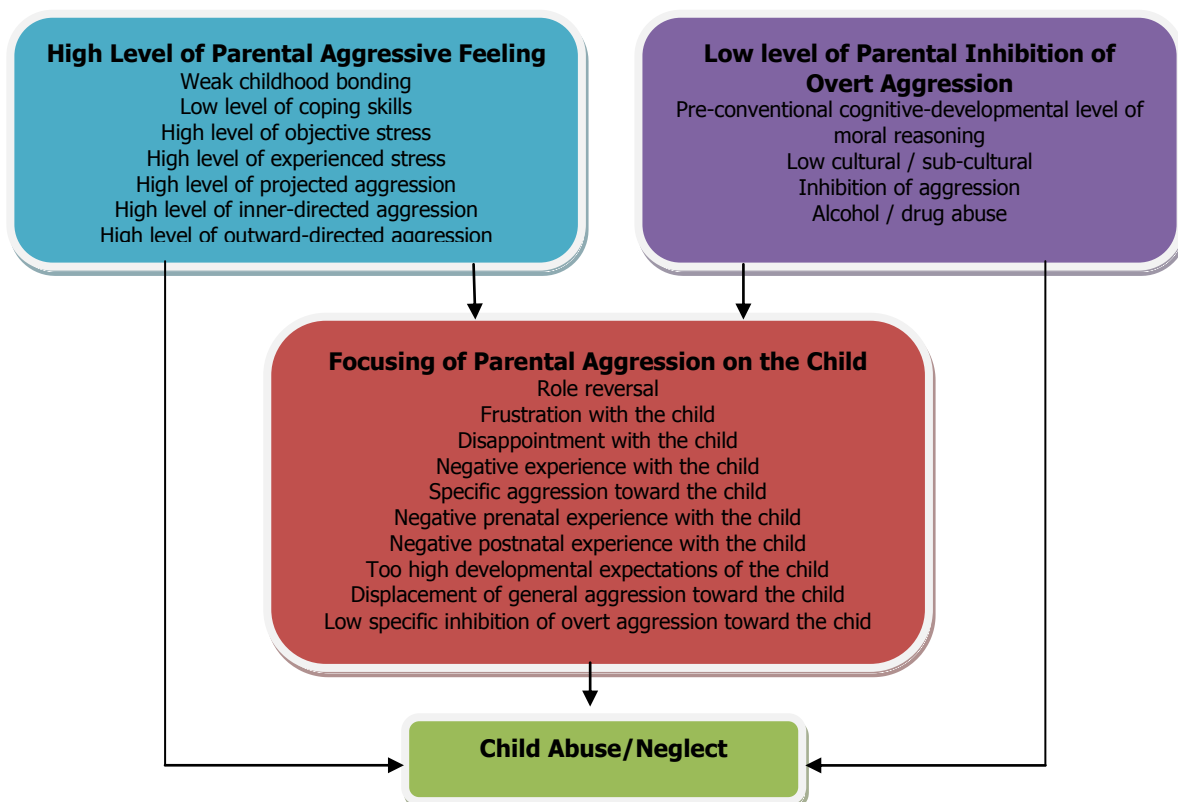
The three factors contain different sub-factors. The first factor, the high level of parental aggressive feelings is the result of the combination of (1) low levels of coping skills (e.g., low marital adjustment), (2) high level of objective stress (e.g., great socio-economic change), (3) high level of experienced stress (e.g., social isolation), (4) weak bonding in childhood (e.g., the feeling of being unloved by one or both parents), (5) high level of outward aggression (e.g., greater use of violent tactics to deal with marital conflicts), (6) high level of projected aggression (e.g., paranoid hostility), and (7) high level of inner-directed aggression (e.g., frustration).

The second factor, the low parental inhibition of overt aggressive acts is the result of the combination of (1) pre-conventional cognitive-developmental level of moral reasoning (social and moral rules experienced as external to the self (parent or caregiver), (2) low cultural/sub-cultural inhibition of overt aggression (e.g., more autocratic child-rearing practices; and (3) substance abuse (e.g., alcohol and psychoactive drug use).

The third factor, the focusing of parental aggression on the child involves two circumstances: (1) aggression from other sources displaced on the child, and (2) aggression brought on by the child him/herself when, for example, the parent or caregiver's expectation of the child is frustrated.

The model is represented in the figure below:

Figure 10: Three Factor Model



Source: Adapted from Tzeng, *et al.* (1991, p. 198).

The three above-mentioned integrated theories are important in understanding the types of child abuse, the psychological and clinical considerations on child abuse; the last two focusing on sexual abuse. The merit of these theories lies in facilitating the understanding of the types of child abuse and for clinical and psychological treatment. These theories do not integrate the contributing factors from other domains to facilitate the broad understanding of child abuse required for other prevention and interventions mechanisms.

2.11 CONCLUSION

The CSIR crime causation model, the HSRC and the UN models on violence against children reveal different variables that contribute to child abuse. The HSRC and UN models are approach-based and consider the levels of the risk factors as per the individual, family, society and community. Tzeng, *et al.* (1991); Garbarino and Gilliam

(1981); Newberger, *et al.* (1983) and Starr (1982) argue that many studies conceptualise child abuse as a multi-level phenomenon. These levels are: the individual, the family and society or eco-cultural environment. Theories explaining these levels must be considered to guide prevention of and interventions against child abuse. Because the risks factors may be the same at different levels as explained in the variables contributing to child abuse, this research concentrates rather on exploring the various theories that explain the contributing variables.

The review of the literature on child abuse started from the assumption that economic variables play the essential role in child abuse in poor households. To this assumption, it was clearly established that poor economic variables are not the sole drivers of crime and violence against children, many other variables from social, environmental, cultural and structural theories play a significant role in the causation of child abuse. This research explains five crucial theories in understanding child abuse. The economic theory blames poor economic conditions as contributing highly to child abuse. The social theory considers breakdown of family structures, family mobility, substance abuse and other social variables as crucial in contributing to child abuse. The environmental theory considers that the quality of the physical environment significantly affects the quality of childcare. The cultural theory argues that cultural norms such as patriarchy and masculinity and the clash between parental expectations and the cultural environment in which children now live contribute to child abuse. Structural theory maintains that child abuse is the result of the legacy of apartheid, current ineffective policies and practices and the fact that children do not participate in decisions affecting their wellbeing.

This research suggests the use of a theory-based model, the IMT to clarify the links between economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural variables and consequently the policy and decision making processes for the prevention of, intervention against and management of child abuse.

3.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research on child abuse is still insufficient and existing theories of child abuse are not integrated enough to prevent, intervene against and manage child abuse. Pierce and Bozalek (2004) for instance, stress that over many years of research, many theoretical explanations for child abuse have been single-domain oriented (such as clinical, psychological, and social) and consequently each produced an incomplete picture of the understanding of child abuse.

Discussing the prospects for developing integrated theories on child abuse, Tzeng, *et al.* (1991) argue that most of the theories on child abuse have been designed with the objective of explaining a particular type of child abuse or a particular aetiology about a specific type of maltreatment. As a consequence, the authors regret significant discrepancies between knowledge and performance in societal efforts for intervention, prevention, and treatment of child abuse.

After reviewing various theories on child abuse, Newberger, *et al.* (1983) conclude that each theory of child abuse could be described as a 'unitary theory' and for this reason each theory offers an explanation of child abuse only from a single perspective related to and limited to the scope of a particular domain. Unitary theories have comparable limitations in their ability to generally and inclusively explain child abuse and therefore to guide policy and decision making for effective prevention of and intervention actions. There is therefore a need for integrated theories that look at the combination of various theories and scopes to facilitate the understanding of child abuse.

This research is concerned about the proliferation of child abuse in South Africa. It undertakes to respond to research gaps on child abuse and the need for an integrated theory to facilitate the understanding of child abuse as mentioned above by Pierce and Bozalek (2004); Tzeng, *et al.* (1991) and Newberger, *et al.* (1983).

The problem statement is therefore explained below:

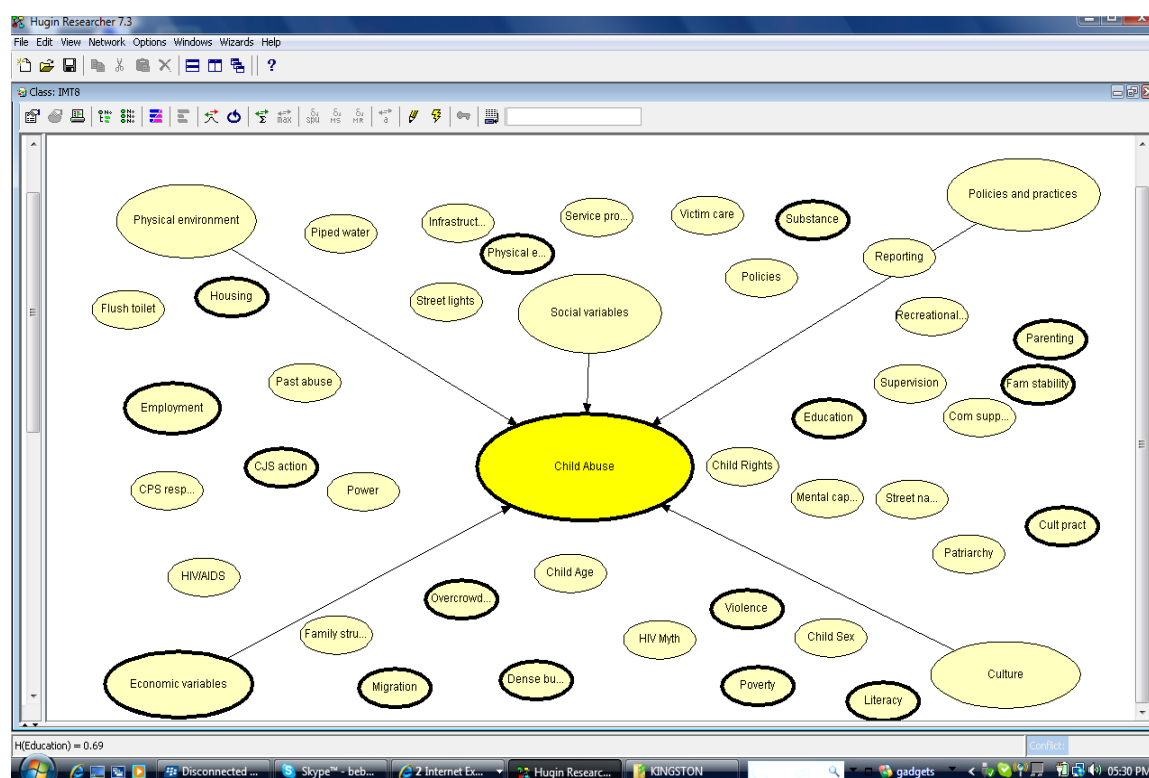
Firstly, SAPS statistics and the outcome of research on child abuse reveal that child abuse is rife and has been on the increase in South Africa for many years.

Secondly, child abuse is biased towards the economic conditions of the children's parents or caregivers and their households. In other words, there is an overestimation of economic variables over other variables in understanding child abuse. Literature shows that children from poor households suffer more the consequences of both poverty and abuse than children from non-poor households. This does not necessarily mean that economic variables are the exclusive contributing factors of child abuse. The extent of child abuse, neglect and exploitation is not similar in all poor households because there are poor households where children are taken care of, protected and safe. In such cases, child abuse is the combination of poor economic conditions with other variables.

Thirdly, existing theories of child abuse are unitary as they don't consider the integration of multiple variables from different theories in the bid to provide a clear understanding of child abuse. Where reference is made about the relationships between theories in child abuse causation, the variables from those theories are not quantified and the links not established. Existing theories have not also suggested practical tools that facilitate the understanding of links between contributing variables and theories and consequently the development of integrated and focussed policy and decisions to prevent, intervene against and manage child abuse.

The problem of concern for this research is summarised in figure 1 below:

Figure 11: Understanding of child abuse in isolation



Source: Author

Figure 1 shows child abuse in the middle of five theories with different contributing variables. These theories explain and are linked to child abuse. However, variables from each of these theories are not defined, quantified and linked to each other within the theories and between other theories to clearly explain child abuse.

Understanding the influence of each theory and each variable contributing to child abuse is critical in designing and implementing an effective and focused policy and programmes for prevention, intervention and management.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

This research covers three major components: the review of literature and theories on child abuse; the observation and interpretation of the MI database and interactions with field experts to facilitate the development of the IMT. Three methodology processes assist to explain in detail these research components.

The first methodology process forms the theoretical framework of the research and focuses on critical theory and conflict theory. The critical theory process justifies the need for research in social science and child abuse in this case. This part of the methodology concerns mostly the background and introduction to the research and the literature review.

The second methodology process, the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) is useful in the observation and interpretation of the distribution and importance of economic and social variables found in the MI database (see Chapter 3). SAS facilitates the observation and interpretation of the MI database through the frequencies of each variable separately and combined (cross tabulations).

The third methodology process is the development of the IMT using the BNs theory. The IMT development process includes the definition, quantification and link of variables contributing to child abuse. The process also incorporates the simulation of the IMT to analyse how the combination of variables impact of child abuse and to inform possible policy and decision direction on addressing each simulated scenario.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

Methods are used by social researchers to describe, explore and understand social life or the way the world functions. Based on the IMT development process, this research applies a mixed methods approach (both quantitative and qualitative).

Creswell (2003) proposes a mixed methods approach as one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds by collecting relevant data to best understand the research problem (statistics and the MI database). After establishing the research problem, the researcher uses qualitative methods to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants. This part of the mixed methods approach uses the experience of field experts and their reaction to the variables identified as contributing to child abuse.

Creswell's approach informs the methodology of this research. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to justify the choice and validation of child abuse contributing used in the development of the IMT. The BNs theory employs both quantitative data as well as quantified qualitative information. Quantitative method includes the graphic modelling, meaning the establishment of graphs and causal networks using the identified variables and the quantification of the causal relationship between the variables. Qualitative method includes the establishment of relationships between variables through facilitated work sessions with field experts.

3.3.1 Quantitative data

Quantitative data means numerical and statistical information. Quantitative data for this research was sourced mainly from crime statistics of the SAPS, economic data and demographic statistics from Stats SA and the MI database. The quantitative information is expressed in absolute numbers (1, 829 children abuse cases observed and interpreted from the MI database), percentages (68% of South African children live in poor households), ratio (1 to 4 dependents per breadwinner).

The research utilised the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) technique to observe and interpret the frequencies of variables from the MI database. This technique is further explained in the chapter on the observation of the MI database.

3.3.2 Qualitative data

Qualitative measurements assess the implications of different variables and their extent in the incidence of child abuse. Qualitative research enables the researcher to study and understand social phenomena and to question how people feel about a situation or about how things are done thus facilitating the move from assumptions to research design, data gathering, analysis and interpretation.

The variables used in the development of the IMT were selected from the findings of the literature review and the observation of the MI database and confirmed through the interaction with field experts during facilitated work sessions to develop the IMT. Content analysis is a technique used to examine information, or content, in written or symbolic material according to Neuman (1994). Content analysis technique assisted in determining different facts, trends, phenomena and events around child abuse

including the views and opinions of field experts.

However, the research referred prudently to the views and opinions of field experts considering that most of the time experts have different and conflicting opinions. In order to prevent biasing the research findings and the modelling of the IMT, the views and opinions of field experts were guided through facilitated work sessions. These views and opinions were verified as not contrary to but supporting both the literature review and the observation of the MI database. No formal questionnaire was developed for this purpose.

The qualitative research technique for this research includes also the researcher's familiarity in the field of social and economic policies, crime prevention in general and child abuse prevention in particular, being a senior researcher in the Crime Prevention research group at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). The mandate of the research group is to contribute, through research, technology and innovation, in efforts leading to making South Africa safe.

This research was conducted outside of normal CSIR business although at times, venues and resources of the CSIR were used and are therefore acknowledged.

3.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS, AIM, OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Social science in general and this research in particular considers a hypothesis as an important empirically testable statement about a relationship between two or more variables. Taking into account the economic conditions of the children's parents or caregivers, the hypothesis of this research is that although there is a connection between child abuse and the poor economic conditions of children's parents or caregivers, isolated poor economic conditions do not justify child abuse.

The research argues that a mixture of contributing variables (economic, social, cultural, environmental and structural) facilitates a clear understanding of child abuse. This means that, even within the confines of poor households, a clear explanation of child abuse, neglect and exploitation needs to take into account other contributing variables additional to the economic ones.

The aim of the research is therefore to seek a clear understanding of child abuse and therefore facilitate the policy and decision making for integrated but focussed actions for the prevention of, intervention against and management of child abuse. This aim is possible through the development of the IMT.

Three research objectives speaking to the aim of the research and linked to the research questions justify the above-mentioned hypothesis. The first objective is to investigate the extent to which economic variables contribute to child abuse, thus disputing their absolute link to child abuse. In doing this, the research observed the MI database consisting of recorded social and economic conditions of the households where children lived when they were abused.

The second objective of the research is to demonstrate the importance of non economic variables in facilitating the understanding of child abuse. These non economic variables are linked with the economic variables to provide a clear picture of child abuse. Variables from the economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural theories are therefore used in the development of the IMT.

The third objective is to simulate the IMT in order to show, through different scenarios, how different variables are linked and depend on each other. In creating different scenarios the IMT assists policy and decision making process in addressing the contributing variables to create children's care, protection, safety and wellbeing.

Two major questions guide the process of this research. The primary research question is to test the implication of poor economic conditions of parents or caregivers on child abuse. In doing so, a review of additional non-economic variables contributing to child abuse is a given. The findings of the literature review on child abuse, the observation and interpretation of the MI database and interactions with field experts provide responses to the first research question.

Considering that child abuse is the result of the combination of links and interdependences between different contributing variables, the second research question is to examine the importance of different theories in understanding child abuse. The response to this question is the identification of variables from the social,

economic, cultural, environmental and structural theories and the relevance of their combination in understanding child abuse through the development of the IMT.

3.5 RESEARCH CONTEXT

The term 'child abuse' is wide and needs to be circumscribed to give a clear meaning of its use in this research. It is therefore necessary to determine the context in which this research is developed and to discuss how different it is when compared to other studies undertaken in the field of child care, protection, safety and wellbeing.

This research is of a scientific nature, meaning that it uses scientific methods to seek solutions to real life problems. Scholes (2003) argues that a scientific method is a systematic approach to solving problems and gaining knowledge. According to Scholes's approach, predictive and falsified processes are important to contextualise scientific research. He maintains that a research is scientific if it is both **predictive**, meaning that it makes a more general statement than the particular observations, thus ultimately concerned with the underlying causes and pattern of the phenomena, and **falsifiable**, meaning that it can potentially be disproved.

This research considers the **predictive process** in referring to some general statements on the levels of child abuse, neglect and exploitation in poor households. An example of a general affirmation is "there is a link between economic conditions and child abuse". Scientifically, such a general affirmation must be based on proven arguments, not just on anecdotal evidence.

The **falsifiable process**, on the other hand, provides meaning to the differential levels of child abuse in households with similar economic (poor) conditions. At this stage, the research shows that although households might share the same poor economic conditions, the levels and impacts of child abuse, neglect and exploitation will always differ. The differential levels of child abuse, neglect and exploitation depend on the combination of links between and interdependences of the variables that contribute to each child abuse case. To falsify scientific facts, this research aims to probe, through the IMT, that child abuse is the consequence of the combination

(considering links and interdependences) of contributing variables from the social, economic, cultural, environmental and structural theories.

The IMT therefore responds to the ecological model of child development that considers that the child affects and is affected by where and how she or he lives. The ecology of child development focuses on the individual (and the household), the relationships, the community and society as the most important settings for the child's nurturing or abuse. This research combines and simulates variables from the economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural theories around many settings in the IMT to explain child abuse beyond just economic variables and to facilitate the development of policies and programmes for the prevention of, intervention against and management of child abuse.

3.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The principal aim of social research is to generate new knowledge about the way the social world functions. Mouton (2002) suggests that the overall objective of all social research is to enhance the understanding of phenomena in the social world through descriptions, explanations and evaluations. There are therefore, many ways of interpreting the nature of the world in which people socially live. These interpretations affect the manner in which the social world should be studied and in such cases, interventions are geared toward social change according to the author.

This research responds to Mouton's perspective on the notion of social change by proposing the IMT as a tool that facilitates the understanding of child abuse. The development of the IMT confirms the fundamental principle of the BNs theory as a problem solving mechanism: "Usually, we do not have complete knowledge about the state of the world, i.e. there are some things that we do not know for certain. An observation is a piece of knowledge about the exact state of the world. When we make observations or in some other way obtain additional knowledge about the state of the world, we use this knowledge to update our belief about the state of the world" (Hugin Expert A/S, 2002, p. 5).

This principle is enforced by the use of probability and uncertainty in problem solving. A probability is the chance that something is likely to happen. The BNs probability theory is used to draw conclusions about the likelihood of the combination of different variables to contribute to child abuse. Uncertainty is the specification about the field experts' belief that the strengths of the links between the variables will result in child abuse. The uncertainty principle is represented by conditional probabilities in most cases. Conditional probability means the probability of combined variables in the causation of child abuse. This principle accommodates the addition and/or subtraction of a variable or variables and a theory or theories to the IMT in the search for a clear understanding of child abuse. The IMT confirms the argument of Kjaenrulff and Madsen (2006) that the BNs theory has become one of the most promising technologies in artificial intelligence because, probabilistic networks (BNs) and influence diagrams offer intuitive, efficient and reliable technique to diagnose, predict and decide on phenomena under uncertainty.

Neuman (1994, p. 35) defines 'theory' as "...a system of interconnected abstractions or ideas that condenses and/organises knowledge about the social world. It is a compact way to think of the functioning of the social world. People are always creating new theories and ideas about how the world works". The author emphasises the use of theory not only to situate the research within the existing thinking but also to contrast the researcher's thinking and findings with evidence thus developing new theories or models.

Newberger, *et al.* (1983) recognise the importance of the theory of understanding, preventing and treating child abuse. The authors argue that insufficient attention has been given in the literature on theoretical construction of the understanding of child abuse. They maintain that it is essential to evaluate the development and use of theories before considering the major theoretical approaches and their consequences on prevention and treatment of child abuse. They further state that developing a scientific theory is a process of using experience to search for pathways explaining the cause and effect relationship of a phenomenon.

This research is theory-based given that it suggests the development of a new theory-based model that combines different variables from different theories to

facilitate the understanding of child abuse. For Newberger, *et al.* (1983, p. 4), "...a good theory must, first of all, make sense. It must account reasonably for a good part of the data or experience, and it must account for that data better than rival theories". He further argues that "a good theory must be plausible to other people searching for pathways through the same terrain. And it must be useful. It must enable one to operate more effectively in the world".

This research uses social change theory to understand the variables contributing to crime and violence against children. A simple example is to find out how poverty, race, gender or class relationships influence child abuse. The IMT considers on the one hand, the economic and social conditions of the households (as per the MI database) and on the other hand, the impact of other variables as sourced through the literature review and the interactions with field experts.

3.6.1 Critical Theory

Criticism is defined by Seiler ([Sa], p. 1) as "the application of principles or values to make judgements for the purpose of bringing about change". Critical social science, the concern of this research, is defined by Seiler ([Sa]) as the critique of basic social structure. The author suggests that critical social science has a variety of features that inform the methodological approach to research. This research borrows the following features from Seiler's work.

Firstly the research understands the importance of understanding the 'lived experience of real people (abused or children at risk of being abused) using the methodology of 'interpretive theories'. Interpretive theories mean the reviews of different theories that explain child abuse in the case of this research.

Secondly, critical social science methodology assists the researcher to interpret the acts and symbols of society with the objective of discovering how and why various social groups experience oppression. This research analyses how and why children suffer abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Thirdly, critical social science methodology reviews social conditions to uncover hidden structures. The simplification of this principle is: "knowledge is power", meaning that "understanding the way one is oppressed enables to take action to

change the oppressing power” (Seiler, [Sa], p. 1). This research intends to change oppressing power in the sense of children being cared for, protected and safe.

Finally, critical social science methodology suggests the application of theory and action to bring about change affecting day-to-day life. The crux of this research is the development of the IMT that assists in understanding child abuse on the one hand. On the other hand the IMT facilitates policy and decision making on intervention mechanisms for child abuse prevention, intervention and management.

3.6.2 Conflict Theory

This research applies ‘conflict theory’ to emphasise the notion of power, exploitation and inequality around child abuse. Three assumptions describe conflict theory according to Neuman (1994). The first assumption of conflict theory is the assumption that people or a group of people who form a society have opposing interests. Child abuse is the consequence of children being opposed to their parents, caregivers or community members. The parents, caregivers and community members have or expect a direct or indirect benefit in their act of commission or omission resulting in abuse, neglect and exploitation of children.

The second assumption is that coercion and attempts to gain power are ever-present aspects of relations between human beings (Neuman, 1994). Child abuse happens because the perpetrator exercises and maintains a position of power and domination on the defenceless child victim.

The third assumption is that, those in power attempt to hold onto their power by spreading myths or by using violence if necessary (Neuman, 1994). In every child abuse case, children are subjected to terror, violence, intimidation, neglect or the combination of all of these.

Conflict theory in this research determines the impact of social, economic, environmental, cultural and structural variables on the levels of crime and violence against children considering poor economic conditions of households. This research agrees with the explanation of conflict theory by Neuman (1994) and uses conflict theory to facilitate the unpacking of issues related to privilege and access. The

research attempts to verify if it is apparent that the abuse of children is, at some stage, the consequence of domination in the social relationship between children and their parents or caregivers. Because of their age and place in society, children form a group vulnerable to abuse in various ways. They consequently suffer the consequences of economic, social, cultural, environmental and structural deficiencies of those who are supposed to protect and provide for them (parents, caregivers, community, state's systems and services as well as other institutions).

However, while conflict theory rightly analyses the power imbalances between parents and/or caregivers and children, this broad context does not, in itself, explain why particular incidences of abuse occur in particular circumstances. The IMT, through the links and interdependences and the strengths between contributing variables, depicts the trends and implications of the conflict theory of child abuse.

The multitude of variables contributing to child abuse suggests the sourcing of information from various sources. The most important sources of information are the SAPS statistics on child related crimes, economic and demographic data from Stats SA, observation and interpretation of the MI database, the literature review and the views and opinions of field experts. The BNs theory facilitates the analysis and integration of various types of information and arguments within a system.

3.7 RESEARCH SCOPE

Literature on crime and violence against children hints that variables contributing to child abuse differ from one theory to another. Economic theory focuses on poverty, unemployment, the ability to respond to the child's needs whereas social theory interrogates the relationship between the child and the abusive parent, caregiver, community members, family friends and relations, associates predators etc. Environmental theory reviews how the physical built environment facilitates crime and violence against children. Cultural theory identifies traditional behaviour and practices that contribute to crime and violence against children. Structural theory explains the extent to which policies, practices and the lack of access to the basic rights and needs of children contribute to child abuse.

In the explanation of these different theories, this research identifies the need for an inclusive approach that facilitates the understanding of crime and violence against children. The debate confirms the conclusion of Jones, *et al.* (1987) that, despite all that has been written, the state of knowledge of child abuse is not good and sufficient. By this statement, the authors stress the need for further research. They argue that many publications on child abuse are very limited in scope (covering some aspects in detriment to others) and subject and few seem to cover general principles thus saying anything new. This statement strongly implies the scoping and importance of new studies in the field of child abuse.

Jones, *et al.* (1987) assists new researchers by classifying child abuse studies into five categories. All these categories of studies have different outcomes as per the need for additional and continuous research. This research considers parts of four of the five categories in the search for a clear understanding of child abuse. The categories are:

Firstly, studies defining the problem focus on the identification of acts of child abuse. Using this category, this research reviews information concerning the reasons why children are abused, neglected and exploited. The category also looks at what types of abuse children are subjected to. Further, the category questions the origin of the contributing variables and the theory applicable to each variable and the links to other contributing variables from different theories.

Secondly, epidemiological studies describe the extent of the problem and socio-demographic characteristics. For this research, the review of the literature explores the extent of child abuse in South Africa. The observation of the MI database provides an image of child abuse considering key economic variables.

Thirdly, typological studies divide abusive families into types according to common characteristics. Typological studies permit this research to focus on the impact of poor socio-economic variables in child abuse without necessarily meaning that all households were poor. The use of 'poor households' as a category of concern is to emphasise the impact of economic conditions on child abuse. In other words, how economic variables contribute to child abuse.

Fourthly, therapeutic studies describe work with families. Since there was no direct work with families, therapeutic studies are not considered in detail in this research.

Finally, management studies describe the law, service delivery systems and inter-agency co-ordination. For this research, the development of IMT is about understanding the links and interdependences between variables from different theories and their contribution in child abuse. This category considers the central role played by structural cluster variables on the policies and practices propitious to create children's care, protection, safety and wellbeing.

Scoping the research determines the methodology it uses and its approach to facilitate the understanding of the said methodology. The following section explores the approach to this research leading to the development of the IMT.

3.8 RESEARCH APPROACH

This research is a cross-sectional research. A cross-sectional approach means an observation at one point in time. Cross-sectional research, according to Neuman (1994), can be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory but is most consistent with a descriptive approach to research. In cross-sectional research, a researcher examines many people or groups at one time period argues Neuman (1994).

To be descriptive and exploratory at the same time, this research applies both positivist and post-positivist paradigms. O'Leary (2005) considers social research as a creative and strategic thinking process. For her, research "is a creative and strategic process that involves constantly assessing reassessing, and making decisions about the best possible means for obtaining trustworthy information, carrying out appropriate analysis, and drawing credible conclusions" (O'Leary, 2005, p. 1). She states that for positivists, the goal of research is to accurately describe what is experienced throughout observation and measurement.

The experience gained through observation and measurement assists researchers

to predict and control forces that exist in the social world according to the author. In this research, positivism means the understanding of variables that contribute to crime and violence against children and the development of a theory-based model that demonstrates links among contributing variables and how to address them for the betterment of children's care, protection, safety and wellbeing.

Variables used in the development underwent an assessment through two approaches. The first approach satisfies the positivist belief in empiricism and therefore covers the literature review and the observation of the MI database. The second approach responds to the principles of the BNs theory and consists of the interactions with field experts in the development of the IMT.

Trochim (2006) maintains that positivists believe in empiricism. The author explains that empiricism implies that observation and measurement are central to research; this means that the purpose of science is simply to stick to what can be observed and measured. This research applied empiricism in the observation of variables from the MI database. The trends of the observed variables were considered in justifying that child abuse is not a direct consequence of isolated economic variables only. This motivated the development of the IMT on understanding the contribution of economic and non economic variables in child abuse.

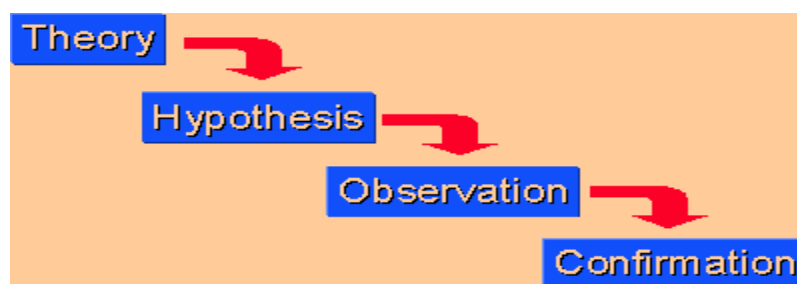
This research is exploratory and includes the collection, analysis and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative information thus, the necessity to consider the subjectivity of the researcher as suggested by the post-positivist paradigm. Trochim (2006, p. 1) believes that "...the post-positivist critical realist recognises that all observation is fallible and has error and that all theory is revisable. In other words, the critical realist is concerned about our ability to know reality with certainty". This research understands limitations in terms of the certainty and completeness of information in dealing with child abuse. The IMT fills the gap by using artificial intelligence to deal with the computation of the uncertainties and working out the probabilities. He maintains that "the post-positivist also believes that all observations are theory-laden and that scientists (and everyone else, for that matter) are inherently biased by their cultural experiences, world views, and so on" (Trochim, 2006, p. 1).

Owing to the combination of positivist and post-positivist research approaches and agreeing with Trochim (2006) on the notion of deductive and inductive thinking, this research uses both deductive and inductive thinking. Trochim (2006) understands that deduction means working from what is more general to what is the more specific or a 'top-down' approach. This means firstly thinking up a theory about a topic, then narrowing down the topic into a more specific and testable hypotheses. The topic can be narrowed down further to address the hypotheses during observations. For the author: "This ultimately leads us to be able to test the hypotheses with specific data – a confirmation (or not) of our original theories" (Trochim (2006, p. 1).

Deductive thinking for this research includes the process of reviewing the literature to understand what child abuse is and how it occurs, thus informing the research hypothesis that the levels of crime and violence against children differ, influenced by not only economic variables but the combination of economic and other non economic contributing variables. Deductive thinking for this research includes firstly, the review of five theories of child abuse to argue (hypothesis) that child abuse is not the direct consequence of isolated poor economic conditions. The research hypothesis prompts the observation of the MI database to interpret the extent to which poor economic conditions impact on the observed child abuse cases. The confirmation was that not only poor economic conditions contributed to child abuse but the combination of other variables.

The following figure shows the deductive thinking process used by this research.

Figure 12: Deductive thinking

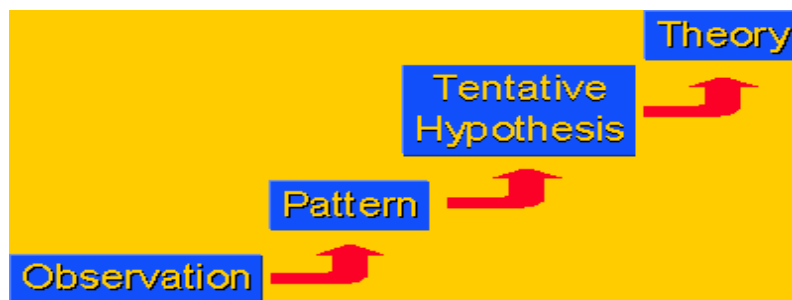


Source: Trochim (2006).

Trochim (2006) considers that inductive reasoning is the opposite of deductive thinking. Induction moves from an observation to a broader generalisation and theories. He refers to induction as a 'bottom up' approach. Inductive reasoning begins with a specific observation and measures, to the detection of patterns and regularities, followed by the formulation of tentative hypotheses that can be explored and finally end up by developing general conclusions or theories.

The inductive process is a complement to the deductive approach in the search for a clear understanding of child abuse. In this regard, the patterns observed in the MI child abuse cases form a hypothesis that all variables should be considered equally and their links and interdependences highlighted in the search for a clear understanding of child abuse. This research is finally summarised through the IMT.

Figure 13: Inductive thinking



Source: Trochim (2006).

This research combines the deductive approach with the inductive approach in the search for a clear understanding of a social phenomenon (child abuse). The research uses different sources of data and combining limited human capacity with artificial intelligence through the BNs theory to develop the IMT on child abuse.

3.9 DATA COLLECTION, MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

A mixture of qualitative information (identification of variables and establishment of their links) and quantitative information (quantification of the links between the variables

through the work sessions with field experts) constitutes the data collection, management and analysis strategy of this research. In other words, the process leading to the development of the IMT uses data from existing literature, legislation, statistics from the SAPS and Stats SA and the MI databases to determine and link the contributing variables whereas the quantification of the variables and their links happened through the facilitated work session with field experts.

Collection of data is not sufficient for scientific research unless a thorough analysis and interpretation are undertaken. Critical to this research was the observation and interpretation of existing data on crime and violence against children (the MI database) to elucidate the different variables that contributed to crime and violence against children. The MI database is briefly explained below:

3.9.1 The MI database

The MI database contains 1, 829 cases of child abuse recorded between 2002 and 2005 in Johannesburg and its surrounding areas in the Gauteng Province. The database is currently managed by the Teddy Bear Clinic.

The Teddy Bear Clinic started in 1986 and was attached to the paediatric department of the Johannesburg Hospital. The clinic is specialised in medico-legal examination on sexually and physically abused children and to provide testimony in court. The Teddy Bear Clinic became a non-governmental organisation in 1994 with the mandate of protecting and rehabilitating children victims of abuse. Currently, the Teddy Bear Clinic is a medico-legal institution servicing three courts of the Greater Johannesburg area, namely the Johannesburg Court, the Soweto Court and the Krugersdorp Court. As a specialised child abuse institution, the Teddy Bear Clinic aims to identify abuse in South Africa and assist the judicial process for the abused children (court testimony).

The MI database contains information on the economic and social variables or conditions of the households where child abuse cases occurred. The MI database is the principal source of empirical data or prior knowledge for this research.

The database is the result of a systematic intake process at the Teddy Bear Clinic. Each child abuse case referred to the clinic is recorded once admitted with a case file opened to contain the required information through a questionnaire completed by professionals.

The questionnaire includes questions related to the incidence of the abuse. Each child undergoes a series of investigations from interviews to medical examinations to establish his or her case. The parent or caregiver who accompanies the child is also interviewed to clarify the facts as related by the child or provide supplementary information especially when the child is not able to speak on his or her own.

The first part of the questionnaire completed by different professional nurses addresses questions relating to the type of abuse and the surrounding circumstances and information about the history of the abuse. The second part completed by a social worker reviews the social and economic conditions of the abused child and his/her parents or caregivers. This part is critical as it provides detailed information on the social and economic variables considered by this research. The third part completed by the medical doctor includes questions relating to the type of abuse (physical, sexual or neglect) and technical issues of the case. The last part of the questionnaire covers information on the court procedure and the outcomes thereof.

The MI database shows cases of child abuse at all levels in the society and not only from poor households. The focus on poverty by this research is in response to its purpose, to dissociate child abuse with poor economic conditions and to propose an integrated and theory-based model that facilitates a clear understanding of child abuse and thus assists policy and decision making to prevent, intervene in and manage child abuse cases.

3.9.2 Interaction with field experts

One of the key principles of the BNs theory is the involvement of field experts in the identification, definition, linking and quantification of the links between different variables contributing to child abuse. For this reason, six different work sessions were facilitated to capture the contribution of field experts.

The first work session took place on the 11th February 2010 and was attended by the Crime Prevention, Systems Modelling and GIS Mapping divisions of the CSIR, the HSRC and the Medical Research Council (MRC). This work session was the follow up of internal individual consultation sessions within the CSIR and between the CSIR and the HSRC and the MRC. The aim of the first work session was to discuss the need for the research and evaluate its exclusivity in the fight against child abuse. The

objective of the first work session was to discuss the use of the BNs theory and the focus of the research on variables from the economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural theories in explaining child abuse.

The second work session took place on the 22nd April 2010 and included the three divisions of the CSIR, representatives from Johannesburg Child Welfare, the Refugee Children's Project and the Department of Social Development. A representative of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs was separately consulted and provided inputs on the choice and definition of the contributing variables. During each work session, participants were introduced to the BNs theory and how it functions. With a basic understanding of the BNs process, participants assisted in identifying, defining and clustering the variables contributing to child abuse. After defining the variables, participating field experts decided on and defined the states of each variable. This information was then used to link and quantify the links between the variables.

It must be highlighted that the variables identified through the facilitated work sessions with field experts were not different from those identified in the literature review and the observation of the MI database.

With the information from the first three work sessions, the initial development of the IMT took place. Six networks were developed with the information collected thus far. They are the economic theory (cluster) network, the social cluster network, the environmental cluster network, the cultural cluster network and the structural cluster network. The sixth network is the high level model that included the relationships, links and interdependences among the five clusters and between them and the outcome variable – child abuse.

The six networks were put through a second test and validity process through interactions with different specialised structures and/or organisations in four additional work sessions. These organisations are the Employment Standards Division of the Department of Labour, the Johannesburg Child Welfare, the Children's Rights and Responsibility Branch of the Ministry of Women, Children and Persons with

Disabilities and the Refugee Children Project. The information verified through the work sessions was used in the development and validation of the final IMT.

The first additional work session concentrated on the economic theory (cluster) network. Experts from the Department of Labour assisted in establishing and quantifying (probabilities) the links and interdependences between variables from the economic theory (cluster). The work session took place at the National Department of Labour on 23 August 2010. Mr Virgil Seafeld, Executive Manager of Employment Standards led the team of experts from his division. After discussing and reviewing the links and interdependences among variables from the economic theory in detail, the social, cultural and structural cluster networks were also briefly reviewed. Finally the review of the overall IMT took place. All the links and probabilities were discussed and adjusted where possible after debates. The outcome of this workshop was a finalised economic cluster network and reviewed overall IMT, social, cultural and structural cluster networks.

The second additional work session took place on 30 August 2010 at Johannesburg Child Welfare (JCW). The assistant director of JCW (Aileen Langley) led the group of 9 staff members of Child Abuse Treatment & Training Service (CATTS) including their programme manager. During this workshop the economic, social, environmental, structural cluster networks as well as the overall IMT were discussed. During the discussions the links and probabilities were reviewed and modified according to the expertise and experience of JCW and particularly CATTS. The outcome of this workshop was the reviewed and improved social, economic, environmental, cultural and structural cluster network as well as a reviewed overall IMT.

The two other additional work sessions were held at the Children's Rights and Responsibilities Branch of the Department for Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities. The participants included three experts from the CSIR and the staff members of Branch led by the head of the Branch, Mr David Chabalala. The first work session on 7 September 2010 introduced participants to the BNs theory and the process that led to the development of the IMT. After a brief explanation of the current understanding of child abuse in South Africa, the experts together with the three CSIR researchers discussed, reviewed and where possible modified the links and interdependences between the social cluster variables as well as their quantification (probabilities).

Because of time constraints and the interest of the Branch in being fully engaged, it was decided to organise a half day work session on Tuesday 14 September 2010.

During the second work session, the social cluster network was thoroughly discussed with all links and interdependences and their quantification (probabilities) reviewed. The other networks were looked at but not in detail. The Branch decided to form a partnership with the CSIR in order to complete the development of the IMT (decision tool) in the future. The Director of the Branch felt that the IMT was an excellent tool that could facilitate the understanding of child abuse in South Africa and therefore assist not only in sourcing ways and means to prevent and intervene against child abuse but to involve other departments for policy and programme development and implementation and at the same time to use the IMT as a monitoring and evaluation tool on the progress made in the prevention, intervention and management of child abuse nationally.

The participation of the field experts from different organisations and departments in the development process of the IMT contributed to the validation of the model. The interest by the participating organisations and departments in the model shows the importance and the validity of this research and the importance of an integrated theory-based model to facilitate the understanding of child abuse in South Africa.

3.10 MODELLING TOOLS: WHY BAYESIAN NETWORKS THEORY?

The data management and assessment process of this research is model oriented, meaning that the key outcome of the research is to develop the IMT that facilitates the understanding of the combination of different variables and their links to child abuse. Modelling is something that human beings do for a variety of reasons. Models are simplifications of reality and (usually) help people to clarify their thinking and improve their understanding of the world.

Modelling for this research is based on ‘belief networks’¹³. Belief networks are used to model uncertainty in a domain. They constitute a range of different but related techniques

¹³ www.aiai.ed.ac.uk/links/bn.html

dealing with reasoning under uncertainty. Belief networks approach for this research combines both quantitative techniques (BNs theory to develop the IMT) and qualitative techniques (literature and statistics on child abuse).

Two notions are critical for the modelling process of this research, namely the causation and the probability. Causation means a relationship that describes and analyses causes and effects between two or more variables. Probability on the other hand, is the chance that something is likely to happen. The probability theory is used in statistics, mathematics and different science domains to demonstrate the likelihood of events to happen and to explain the circumstances around the happening of that event. In this case, it is the likelihood of one variable to influence another variable.

It is important to recognise that the BNs theory is based on probability calculus and considers uncertainties in some cases. Previous research on child abuse prediction has not been in favour of the use of probabilities. Munro (2002) for instance understands that “a risk assessment makes a prediction about what might happen to the child. Given the limited knowledge base, these predictions are always couched in terms of probabilities: there is a certain degree of some even happening” (Munro, 2002, p. 63). The author is therefore concerned about the capacity of human beings to deal with probabilities. She assumes that human beings are not good at dealing with probabilities. For her, “Risk assessment, therefore involves computing and combining probabilities. The formal laws for doing this are expressed in probability theory. Unfortunately, humans are not good at dealing with probabilities intuitively. People’s instinctive understanding of how probabilities should behave is wildly wrong, resulting in persistent and fundamental mistakes” (Munro, 2002, p. 63).

Starr (1982) is of the same view as Munro (2002). His pessimism about the use of probabilities in predicting violence is based on the failure of prior attempts at the prediction of violence. For him prior attempts have not been ‘accurately’ successful in predicting violence. This author is negative on the issue of prediction through probabilities and believes that studies of violence prediction are likely to produce over-prediction. He argues that “the problem of prediction in the area of child abuse has a conceptual and statistical parallel in another area that shares the common characteristics of being low in frequency among population, and multiply

determined... the final problem is the most serious one, namely, the error rate in detection" (Starr, 1982, p. 50).

In response to the concerns and the negative and pessimistic consideration of the two above mentioned authors as well as many others about the use of probabilities and the prediction of violence and child abuse, this research addresses any reluctance on the use of the BNs theory through two simple explanations.

Firstly, the BNs theory is an artificial intelligence tool that supports, facilitates and complements the intuition of human beings on understanding how probabilities work. This means that predictions resulting from the BNs probabilities combine both the limited capacity of the human being and the artificial intelligence of BNs theory.

Secondly, the BNs theory is an appropriate system that can easily determine, analyse and support the interpretation of links and interdependences between variables (from different domains with multiple scopes) that contribute to child abuse in this case. For research, the accuracy, the errors and the over-predictions that could result from the work of the human being alone is complemented by the artificial intelligence of BNs theory.

The BNs theory was therefore selected after review and consideration of other modelling tools including the following:

3.10.1 Fishbone Diagram

The Fishbone Diagram (FD) technique¹⁴ was invented by Dr. Kaoru Ishikawa, a Japanese quality control statistician. It is therefore referred to as the Ishikawa diagram. FD is a decision tool that facilitates the identification of the likely causes of problems. The technique uses a box and lines that look like the head and spine of a fish, thus the appellation fishbone diagram. The technique analyses cause and effect to help in thoroughly thinking through the causes of a problem. Its major benefit is to push the user to consider all possible causes of a problem, rather than just the most obvious ones.

The FD technique consists of four (4) steps to solve a problem with using a cause and

¹⁴Fishbone Diagram: A Problem-Analysis Tool: <http://quality.enr.state.nc.us/tools/fishbone.htm>

effect strategy. The first step is to identify the problem in detail taking into account who is involved, what the problem is, and when and where it occurred. Then develop ideas around all the variables involved in the problem causation. The second step is to work out the major variables involved in the problem causation. These may be people involved with the problem, systems, policies, materials etc. During this step, the researcher must try to draw out as many possible contributing variables as possible.

The third step is to identify possible causes by brainstorming possible causes of the problem that may be related to each causal variable identified in step two. These causes are then shown as the bones of the fish. Where a cause is larger, it must be broken into sub-causes. The last step is to analyse the diagram showing all the possible causes of the problem. Depending on the complexity and importance of the problem, the researcher can now investigate the most likely causes further.

Tague (2004) views the FD as a technique that assists in identifying many possible causes for a problem and an important tool to structure a brainstorming session. The author supports the use of FD technique to identify the possible causes of a problem and to assist a team in the thinking process. The advantage of FD technique is that it is cost-effective and easy to implement. The technique does not require additional expertise or sophisticated software but simple techniques using mere sheets of paper and markers.

The disadvantage of FD technique is that it is not a complete process that produces concrete results from the analysis. The findings or results of the process are not scientific and it is quasi-impossible to determine the level and importance of contributing variables that are considered. This gap is addressed by the BNs theory which uses probabilities and may consider contributing variables that are not known to the researcher or situations where there are uncertainties.

3.10.2 System Dynamics Approach

The System Dynamics Society¹⁵ ([Sa]) defines System Dynamics (SD) as a computer-based policy analysis and design technique applicable to dynamic problems in complex social, managerial, economic, or ecological systems. The SD

¹⁵The System Dynamics Society is an international, non-profit organisation devoted to encouraging the development and use of system dynamics and systems thinking around the world.

approach is based on interdependence, mutual interaction, information feedback, and circular causality to address complex social, economic and other policy and decision-making problems. The SD approach consists of a dynamic problem definition, the mapping and modelling of the problem and the building of model and its policy implication.

The SD approach is currently being used throughout the public and private sector for policy analysis and design. It is a methodology for studying and managing complex feedback systems in social science. Feedback refers to the situation of X affecting Y and Y in turn affecting X or Z perhaps through a chain of causes and effects. One cannot study the link between X and Y and, independently, the link between Y and X and predict how the system behaves. Only the study of the whole system as a feedback structure leads to correct results.

The advantage of the SD approach is that it is a technique that allows the understanding and modelling of complex systems (such as an organisation of people or processes and capabilities that work together to achieve common goals). A key element of the SD approach is the representation of the behaviour of the system as it evolves through time, giving a dynamic rather than a static view of the system.

The disadvantages of the SD approach according to Coyle (1975) include the difficulty to start and on a dynamic model and even to stop and the methodology is weak and the scarcity of examples to guide new users. For this research is that it cannot easily allow the use of uncertainties in the theory development process. In the same way, the approach does not allow probabilities, thus making it difficult to determine the extent of each causal variable considered in the development of the IMT.

3.10.3 Bayesian Networks Theory

The BNs theory is a complex tool that analyses the cause-effect relationship between predetermined contributing variables. The BNs theory derives from the Artificial Intelligence approach. Artificial Intelligence (such as BNs theory) can be understood, as a device or service made by man that can perform the following tasks:

Firstly, the BNs theory efficiently solves problems or provides 'reasoning' and decision making under uncertainty. Secondly, the BNs theory acquires and extracts knowledge

from data, experience, and field experts. Thirdly, the BNs theory adjusts the tendency to change in the surrounding environment and efficiently responds to new situations.

The BNs theory is based on the normative expert systems principle. The normative expert system is intended to support the user of the system in reasoning or decision making. The system observes three fundamental design issues. Firstly, the BNs theory models the problem domain, not the expert. Secondly, the BNs theory supports the expert, does not substitute the expert. Thirdly, the BNs theory uses classical probability calculus and decision theory to handle uncertainty, not a non-coherent calculus developed for rules.

The BNs theory is therefore an intelligent and capable tool for describing the link between contributing variables by means of probabilities and the extent to which a contributing variable can influence or depend on another. The tool can also determine how maximal, partial or minimal achievement of one or more contributing variable(s) can cause or influence the solution to social problems.

The BNs theory has three major characteristics: the causal structure to establish links between different variables; the conditional independence amongst contributing variables and the prediction of quantities (contributing variables) that are difficult, expensive or unethical to measure based on other contributing variables that are easier to obtain.

Before analysing examples of the application of the BNs theory, it is essential to review the theory as to motivate its use over other modelling tools explored in this research. The causal theory in general and the BNs theory in particular, received positive as well as negative criticism depending on different schools of thoughts.

Opponents to the BNs theory argue that since expert systems have to reason within and about uncertain environments, the ability to reason both correctly and expeditiously with probabilities has long been a concern within artificial intelligence. They maintain that artificial intelligence researchers satisfy themselves with uncertainties and formalisms which were demonstrably inadequate across a wide range of applications (Korb and Wallace, 1997). This observation is important. However, it is not that each Bayesian Network has to deal with uncertainties. This remark is therefore not applicable to the

development of the IMT where all variables are known and defined and the quantification of their links explained through various sources of information.

Cooper and Herskovits (1992) are uncomfortable with what they refer to as a 'preference bias' for BNs structures. They define a preference bias as "the set of all factors that collectively influence hypothesis selection" (Cooper and Herskovits, 1992, p. 314). For the authors, a preference bias is when a computer-based system uses any prior knowledge and methods at its disposal to determine the direction or value of the network. They consider this situation as a capability that provides considerable flexibility in integrating diverse belief construction methods in artificial intelligence (AI). The concern here is generally that BNs theory permits the use of prediction before the collection of data. This observation is critical. However, with the prediction of child abuse, there is enough information that assists in building and quantifying links between variables contributing to child abuse, not a simple prediction before data collection.

Proponents of the theory argue that what the developments of the 1980s now allow is correct reasoning with probabilities in a practical, time-efficient way. This has led to a growing use and interest in the BNs theory and to a growing interest in the development of techniques for automating the process of building BNs – that is, in automating the induction of causal models (Korb and Wallace, 1997).

Another good critique of causal modelling is by Shimizu, Hyvarinen, Hoyer, and Kano (2005) who argue that an effective way to examine causality is to conduct an experiment with random assignment. However, there are many situations that pose some difficulties to conducting experiments according to the authors. One of the difficulties is that the direction of causality is often unknown. It is necessary to develop useful methods for finding a good initial model of causal orders between observed variables from non-experimental data (Shimizu, *et al.*, 2005).

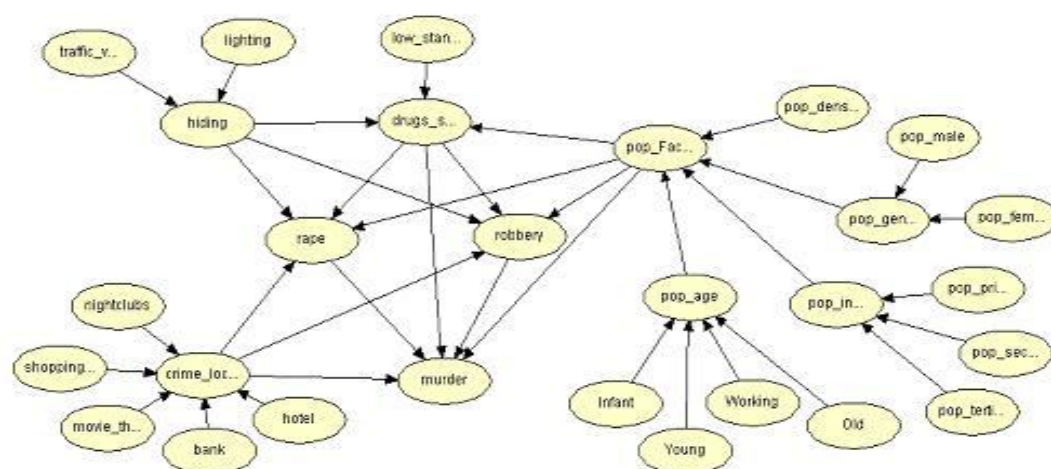
Riccomagno and Smith (2005) understand that with a valid assumption, it is possible to estimate the complete causal structure even if there is no prior information on the causal links and the order of those links between variables. Shimizu, *et al.* (2005) suggest Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) as a powerful tool for causal analysis. SEM is, according to the authors, of confirmatory nature and researchers have to model the true

causal relationships based on background knowledge before collecting or analysing data. This is emphasised by the principle of the BNs theory that the expertise of the field experts and the researcher on the problem researched is essential in building causality. This research used the learning from the literature review, the statistics and the observation of the MI database and the interactions with field experts.

Considering the above debate on the BNs approach, the following two examples illustrates a successful application of the BNs theory. The first example is about what is called the BayesNetCrime, a system for analysis of the variables causing and affecting crime risk, especially, murder cases in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area in Thailand from 2000 to 2003. The results from the analysis were expected to be used for crime control planning. The whole approach to the model in Bangkok was to use expert elicitation and crime theory to build the network using Hugin Researcher Software.

The contributing variables considered in the Bangkok research were classified into five main groups: variables describing population, crime location, types of crime, traffic, and the environment. Due to the uncertainty and the incomplete nature of the variables, BNs theory was used to analyse the data since it is well suited to dealing with noisy and incomplete crime data.

Figure 14: BayesNetCrime: Variables contributing to crime in Bangkok



Source: <http://www.hugin.com/case-stories/academic/232-bayesnetcrime-system-for-analysis-of-the-factors-affecting-crime>

Results from the BayesNetCrime helped in crime planning and environmental design to prevent crime in Bangkok. Based on the data from the study, the environmental contributing variables and the number of drug-sales areas in a district had the most powerful influence on the expected murder rate in Bangkok. The BayesNetCrime suggested that the elimination of the drug trade by the government could greatly reduce the murder rate in Bangkok.

The second example is about football prediction by Joseph, Fenton and Neil (2006). In 1995, Fenton learned from the proponents of BNs that if the development of the model is based on real knowledge and expertise of experts in the matter of concern, the best results are guaranteed. With expertise in Tottenham Hotspur Football Team, Fenton decided to develop a simple BNs model to predict the results of his team. The key factors for Fenton were the combination of certain players and positions, the quality of the opposition, and the venue. According to Joseph, *et al.* (2006) the uniqueness of BNs theory is that rather than making firm predictions, they produce probabilities for everything that is uncertain or unknown.

In this example, Fenton used his knowledge of football and Tottenham Hotspur to develop the model. He found that the predictions were more than just accurate but also provided enough information to win against the opposing teams. The predictions also allowed for the 'mark-up' of Tottenham Hotspur according to the authors. This is because probabilities enable the determination of situations where the odds might be in favour of the predictions (predictors – experts) according to Joseph, *et al.* (2006).

The BNs theory is an elegant way to graphically represent cause-and-effect relationships in a system as is shown in the two above examples. In this research, the results of the links and interdependences between variables from different theories assist in understanding the probabilities of child abuse to occur. Such predictions are important in the search for prevention, intervention and management mechanisms to reduce opportunities for crime and violence against children in South Africa. The strengths of relationships between the contributing variables, their links and interdependences are represented by probabilities in the causal relationships within each theory and between the five theories.

To develop, populate and simulate the IMT, variables were identified through the literature review on child abuse, the observation of the MI database and the interaction with field experts through facilitated work sessions.

The IMT was developed through the following steps:

1. Identification of variables (e.g. unemployment, income level, alcohol abuse) that contribute to child abuse
2. Identification of the links and interdependences between those variables (e.g. alcohol abuse contributes to family instability)
3. Definition of strength of links between contributing variables (causal model or probabilistic networks: design nodes and acyclic arcs)
4. Establishment of influences and interdependences of contributing variables
5. The interpretation of the levels of the links of contributing variables
6. Integration of contributing variables to build the IMT
7. Finalisation, confirmation, and use of the IMT

The BNs theory is based on the basics of graphical models, also known as causal diagrams, focusing on directed acyclic graphs. The BNs theory uses graphical models to inform the decision making processes. Diagrams are often used to express belief about the relationships between variables in complex problems. By formulating such diagrams as graphical models and in particular directed acyclic graphs (DAGs) it is possible to formalise these diagrams and use them for statistical and causal inference purposes.

3.11 VALIDITY AND ETHICAL ISSUES

The qualitative methodology approach requests this research to assess the validity of assumptions inherent in the theoretical understanding of child abuse through the IMT. The validity process includes also the interaction with the field experts in the identification and quantification of variables and the development of the IMT.

Validity is not synonymous with verification of the repetition of the research findings. Barbie and Mouton (2001) suggest that researchers should not focus on the attainment of the same results from the use of collected data, but rather need to focus on remaining consistent with the collected data.

This research considers validity as a possible approximation to the truth on a clear understanding of child abuse through a theory-based model, the IMT. The validity of this research can also be considered as the possibility for repeatability of the process in the quest to facilitate the understanding of other specific social problems.

A variety of data sources in the form of the literature review, statistics, the observation of the MI database and the interaction with field experts contributed to the development of the IMT. The validity (and credibility) of this research is therefore expressed by the different processes used in the collection and verification of data and the development of the IMT.

Trochim (2006) subdivides validity in four types: conclusion, internal, construct and external validity. The author argues that each of the four types addresses a different methodological concern. He sets the context of validity in research using the case of causal studies and considers two spheres involved in such studies. The terrain of the research or what goes on in the head of the researcher and the terrain of observation or the world where the researcher translates his or her ideas. He then argues that “when we conduct research, we are continually flitting back and forth between ... what we think about the world and what is going on in it” (Trochim, 2006, p. 2).

The four types of validity are observed in this research considering Trochim’s thinking. Conclusion validity means that the research focuses on demonstrating the relationship between two and/or more variables in the understanding of the causation of child abuse. In other words, conclusion validity facilitates the consideration and explanation of variables that contribute to child abuse and therefore used to develop the IMT.

Internal validity means, according to Trochim (2006) the assumption that there is a relationship in a study and that such relationship is causal. Conclusion validity considers the relationships between variables that contribute to child abuse.

Because the four types of validity are cumulative, internal validity explains that the relations between the variables used in the development of the IMT are causal. The causality amongst variables is explained through the links and interdependences between the variables and the outcome variables (child abuse).

Construct validity builds from the internal and conclusion validities and assumes that the existence of causal relationships among variables contributing to child abuse and that this research, the research reflects the construct of the understanding of child abuse through the development of the IMT.

External validity means the assumption that the causal relationship among variables and between combined variables and child abuse can be generalised in effect of persons and/or places with the same characteristics. For Trochim (2006, p. 3) “we are likely to make some claims that our research findings have implications for other groups and individuals in other settings and at other times. When we do, we can examine the external validity of these claims”.

The choice of the BNs theory in seeking a clear understanding of child abuse through the IMT is influenced by its ability to resolve problems using prior knowledge and experience of field experts. It is therefore important to verify the validity of such process.

The validity of this research was therefore achieved through a process known as triangulation. Golafshani (2003) understands triangulation as a perspective that eliminates bias and increases the reliability of a research in proposing solutions to social problems. Bryman ([Sa]) explains validity through triangulation. He views triangulation as the use of various approaches in the investigation of a research question to improve confidence in the ensuing findings. The validation processes used by this research are mostly the presentation and publication of the research methodology and outcomes to verify its validity.

The validation of the BNs theory includes the participation to a training course

offered by Hugin Expert A/S¹⁶ in Denmark Copenhagen from 26th February to 1st March 2007 to gain firsthand knowledge of the BNS system. A constant contact with the institution was also maintained during the development of the IMT for technical assistance.

The other validation processes include the presentation and discussion of the theoretical framework of the research at the Annual Conference of the European Sociological Association - Research Network (ESA – RN29), in Innsbruck, Austria on the 12th September 2008. The title of the paper presented was: “Child Abuse in Theoretical Debates: Towards an Integrated Modelled Theory”. The paper tested the theoretical basis of the research with scholars and social theorists present at the conference. The foundation of this research and particularly the paper is social science and social theory methodologies. The paper argued that the basic principle and central goal of social science research is to facilitate the understanding of and to explain, predict and provide solutions to human behaviour. The goal of a particular research becomes more significant when that research focuses on a topic identified as a major social problem as is the case for child abuse in South Africa. Understanding, explaining and predicting child abuse is a social, scientific and advocacy exercise – it has implications for the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children who are abused or who are at risk of being abused. Furthermore, the paper demonstrated that social theory was apposite in situating research with existing thinking and comparing current thinking and findings with evidence. Finally, the paper argued that social theory guides empirical study on child abuse in South Africa and therefore facilitates the development of the IMT as a practical model in understanding, preventing and intervening against child abuse.

Following the presentation and discussion of the research methodology at the Innsbruck, a paper titled: “Modelling child abuse, Neglect and Exploitation: Towards the Integrated Modelled Theory” was published in the International Sociological Association (ISA) E-

¹⁶ HUGIN EXPERT A/S is a world-leading developer of advanced decision support software designed to handle uncertain or missing information. It was established in 1989 and is strategically located in Aalborg, Denmark, where the company works in close collaboration with Aalborg University. HUGIN EXPERT technology is based on complex statistical models called Bayesian Networks that can be used in various applications, including predictive analytics, risk management and data mining.

Bulletin, Number 14, November 2009. This as well as other published papers are attached to this thesis.

The outcome of the research was presented to different national and international forums discussing development issues including children's rights. The knowledge on the use of and the importance of the BNs theory was explained to participants at the 6th African Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect with Focus on ECD and Education on the 4th May 2009 in Addis-Ababa. Although not yet finalised, the IMT was applauded by the organisers and participants to the Addis-Ababa conference. The conference proceedings report¹⁷ notes that "...Mr. Paulin Mbecke introduced the conference to the Integrated Modelling (understand Modelled) Theory which seeks to scientifically explore the link between the factors contributing to child abuse as well as the strength between these links".

The IMT process was also presented at the Annual Conference of the South African Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (SAPSAC) 2009 on the 5th May 2009 in Pretoria. The focus of the Pretoria presentation was on child trafficking. Following the conference an article titled: "Modelling the Differential Incidence of Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation in Poor Households in South Africa: Focus on Child Trafficking" was published in Volume 4, Number 1, Spring 2010, African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies.

The final IMT was presented and discussed at the Ontario International Development Agency (OIDA) in Sudbury – Canada in June 2010 and an article titled "The Integrated Modelled Theory on Understanding and Preventing the Incidence of Child Abuse in South Africa" was published in Volume 01, Number 07, September 2010, the OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development.

During these presentations, discussions and publication processes the validity and credibility of the research were verified and at the same time the contribution of field experts, theorists and academics in the form of their views, opinions and comments

¹⁷ Part III, Annexure IX, Report on the Proceedings of the 6th African Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect with focus on ECD and Education.

considered to enrich the research.

The field of crime and specifically child abuse is sensitive. The process of this research did not include direct interviews with either abused children or child abuse perpetrators. During the interactions and work sessions with field experts, the ethical standards and rules for this research field and the University requirements were adhered to strictly with due consideration for the sensitivity of the topic. Ethical standards included discussing with participants on the confidentiality of their identity and seeking their permission to include their names and organisations in the research report. The purpose and intended outcome of the research were also explained to field experts prior to their participation.

3.12 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This research reviews the variables contributing to child abuse, neglect and exploitation in South Africa. The IMT facilitates the understanding of the dynamics between the variables contributing to child abuse and consequently assists a policy and decision making process on prevention and intervention mechanisms in dealing with the scourge of child abuse in the country. The research critically considers the limitations of economic, geographical, time and strategic nature as explained below.

The research notes that child abuse is classless as it happens across all the social classes of the community. The reference to poor households does not imply in any case whatsoever, that child abuse happens only in poor households. Similarly, this research does not attempt to analyse child abuse cases from poor households only. The reference of this research to poor households is primarily aimed at discussing child abuse by reviewing the economic conditions of households contained in the MI database. This assists in dissociating child abuse incidence with the poor economic conditions of children's households. The research emphasises therefore the importance of non variables from different theories and their links and interdependences in child abuse causation.

The IMT was developed using the learning from the analysis of different theories explaining crime causation in general and child abuse in particular. However, the

focus on social, economic, cultural, environmental and structural theories is purposefully to demonstrate the importance of variables other than economic in painting a clear picture of child abuse, neglect and exploitation. The research proves that child abuse is not the direct consequence of isolated economic conditions only but the combination of a mixture of contributing variables. The economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural theories have no particular importance over other theories. These can be added to the theory at any stage provided that the process of BNs theory is followed.

Geographically, this research covers all of South Africa. Quantitative data with regards to statistics, surveys and SAPS statistics are national. Only the recorded child abuse cases from the MI database are limited to the Gauteng area. However, the qualitative data contains a review of the literature and the views and opinions of experts in different fields related to children's care, protection, safety and wellbeing. The views and opinions of field experts are rationally informed by their areas of expertise. They therefore differ from one expert to another. These views are used in the identification of variables contributing to child abuse and more importantly in probing, suggesting and confirming the links, and interdependences between the contributing variables and their probabilities.

This research is not a longitudinal study but a once-off assessment that reviews the differential child abuse situations considering some characteristics of poor households in South Africa. However, demographic, statistics and other documented data collected are not limited in time.

Strategic limitations include the profile of child abuse perpetrators and the links between contributing variables and a household's economic conditions (poverty). Although a certain number of perpetrators of child abuse are children themselves, the focus of this research is on the households where the abuse occurred not on the perpetrators. Because of the difficulty of directly linking crime and violence against a particular child to the economic conditions (poverty) of his/her household, this research considered the overall observation of all variables as per the database, the literature review and the interaction with field experts.

This research is based on the premises that the majority of South African children live in poor households. The observation of the MI database verified to what extent poor economic conditions could be directly associated with child abuse and the importance of the combination of other contributing variables to achieve a clear understanding of child abuse.

Finally, the intention of this research is not to expand on all prevention and intervention policies, strategies and programmes against child abuse. Rather, the focus is to suggest the IMT as a tool that facilitates the understanding of the variables contributing to child abuse, neglect and exploitation and consequently to inform the policy and decision making process for prevention and intervention mechanisms in dealing with contributing variables considering different scenarios. Some recommendations on prevention and intervention mechanisms provided in this research are for the purpose of demonstrating how to use the IMT to address different scenarios.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses in detail the findings of the observation of the MI database and the interpretation in relation to the purpose of this research. The importance of the observation of the MI database is to verify that poor economic conditions were not the only variables contributing to child abuse. The outcome from the observation of the MI database assists in supporting the hypothesis of this research that child abuse is not the result of isolated poor economic conditions of households. Information on the frequencies of socio-economic data from the database is also critical in the selection of variables used in the development of the IMT.

The observation and interpretation of the MI database identified 18 social and economic variables present in the recorded cases. Of the 18 variables, none happened to be the principal variable that caused child abuse in all the recorded cases. The second source of information for the research was therefore the review of the literature to identify other variables that could equally contribute to child abuse thus complementing the social and economic variables. From the review of the literature, it was established that economic, social, cultural, environmental and structural variables equally contributed to child abuse. The core of this research therefore becomes clear as to use of the BNs theory in the development of the IMT on the understanding, the prevention of, and intervention against child abuse.

The first part of this chapter explains the socio-economic conditions of the households where child abuse occurred. The second part of the chapter highlights the frequencies of the variables from the recorded child abuse cases. The observation emphasised the establishment of links between the variables and child abuse thus measuring the impact of poor economic conditions in child abuse.

The MI database has its own dynamics making it non-representative of the overall reality in South Africa considering the limited geographic areas from where data was captured. However, the review of the frequencies of child abuse cases firstly assisted in providing an indication of the extent to which poor economic variables could justify child abuse.

Secondly, the development of the IMT considers some of these variables, not the values attached to their frequencies. The research argues therefore that in the attempt to reach a clear understanding of child abuse, emphasis must be put not only on isolated economic conditions but on a combination of economic, social, cultural, environmental and structural variables.

4.2 VARIABLES AND CODIFICATION

A variable, indicator, factor or node is a chosen unit of measure that is used to determine the extent, frequency, or percentage to establish the impact in response to the purpose of this research. Codification means the symbolic representation of variables to facilitate their quantification. The collection, auditing, observation and interpretation of the MI database used Arwen and Nicole's coding. This simple coding uses numbers to identify the distribution of variables. The TMI used for example 0 (zero) for a boy and 1 (one) for a girl or 1 (one) for employed and 2 (two) for unemployed.

4.3 DATA BASE OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION TECHNIQUE

The research used two methodological approaches to observe and interpret the MI database. The Statistical Analysis System (SAS) was used to observe, to structure and to interpret the database categorised as nonparametric. As a nonparametric data, the observation did not make an assumption about the distribution of scores underlying the sample. In the instance of this research, the dependent variables were scaled on either a nominal (e.g. 'yes', 'no') or ordinal scale ('low', 'medium', 'high'). The research looked at the relationship between two discrete variables and/or a combination of different variables. In all cases of the development of the IMT, the research hypothesised that variable 'A' is related to variable 'B'. This means that the review of literature, the observation of the MI database and the interactions with field experts converged to mean that one or some variables fluctuated depending on (a) different variable(s) as per the link (s) and interdependence (s). The development of the IMT used the BNs theory to facilitate the combination and links between variables contributing to child abuse.

The quick process for observation and interpretation of the MI database consisted of the assessment of the quantitative information. After the quantitative data has been assessed, SAS programming language was used in formatting the quantitative data, to identify and classify the variables, and to use functions to create and recode data values according to the variables of interest such as age of the child, gender... The categorised data was then structured using descriptive statistics (means, totals...) to produce two important reports. The frequency counts and tables for all the variables, and the cross tabulation counts and tables for some combined variables.

4.4 DATA AUDITING: FREQUENCY OF VARIABLES

The data auditing concerned the quantification of the frequencies of all the different variables from the MI database. The important variables considered were included but are not limited to the age of the child; the economic conditions of the mother, the father and/or the caregiver and the circumstances around the abuse cases.

Following is the account of the observation of the different social and economic variables from the MI database. The observation did not question the importance of each single variable in contributing to child abuse. The MI database was used not to determine the percentage of each variable in child abuse cases. Statistics from the MI database are parametric. A parametric statistic makes a key assumption that the sample was drawn from a normally distributed population. For this reason, there was no need to conduct an analysis of test technique.

This observation used information from the MI database, thus the acknowledgement of MI as the source of raw data. However, the frequencies and cross tabulations are the result of the classification organised by this research and therefore fully credited to it. The frequencies represented concern only known cases, the totals are different and not necessarily the overall 1,829 cases recorded in the database.

4.4.1 Age of the child

Age group	Observed	Percentage
Younger than a Year	3	0%
Between 1 and 5	299	31%
Between 6 and 10	343	35%
Between 11 and 15	276	28%
Between 16 and 20	51	5%
Older than 20	1	0%
Total	973	100%

Table 8: Age of the child

Source: Author

The age group with the highest number of child abuse cases is six to 10 years (35%) followed by children aged between one and five years (31%) and between 11 and 15 (28%). There were only three cases of children younger than one year and 5% of children between 16 and 20 years. The majority of children who were abused were under the age of 16 years (94%). These distributions corroborate the literature that age is a factor that contributes to the vulnerability of children to abuse. This will be discussed in the definition and explanation of the variable age of the child.

4.4.2 Gender of the child

Gender	Observed	Percentage
Female	1 461	81%
Male	347	19%
Total	1 808	100%

Table 9: Gender of the child

Source: Author

The gender of the child is significant in understanding the circumstances around child abuse. The recorded cases from the MI database show that the majority of abused children were female. Out of the 1, 808 cases, 1, 461 children were female or 81%. Boys accounted for only 19%. It is interesting to discover that child abuse affects more girls than boys. This does not necessarily mean that abuse of children is always of a sexual nature. This inference rings a bell considering the various causes of child abuse. The

literature also shows that girls are more vulnerable to child abuse than boys as it is explained in the definition and explanation of the variable gender of the child.

4.4.3 Racial groups

Racial group	Observed	Percentage
Black	809	46%
White	731	41%
Coloured	186	11%
Asian	40	2%
Total	1 766	100%

Table 10: Racial groups

Source: Author

Through observation of the cases, child abuse happens across all four racial groups represented. The database shows a good distribution of races for the recorded cases. It is curious to discover that out of 1, 766 cases, 46% were black whereas 41% were white. Coloured accounted for 11% and 2% of the children were Asian. These distributions demonstrate that Child abuse does not only happen in black families.

4.4.4 Mothers' level of education

Level of education	Observed	Percentage
None	18	1%
Grade 1 – 7	363	26%
Grade 8 – 12	685	49%
Additional Training/University/ Tech/ College	386	21%
Others (special schools, ...)	27	2%
Total	1 389	100%

Table 11: Mothers' level of education

Source: Author

The education level of parents is an important indicator in understanding child abuse. The MI database shows that the majority of mothers of abused children had a significant level of education. Out of the 1, 389 cases, 49% of mothers had between grade 8 and 12, 26% between grade 1 and 7 and 21% a University, College or Technikon level.

These distributions do not necessarily imply that children were abused by their educated mothers. The frequencies however, indicate that some parents had a significant level of education from which it is assumed that they knew the consequences of child abuse.

4.4.5 Fathers' level of education

Level of education	Observed	Percentage
None	12	1%
Grade 1 – 7	197	18%
Grade 8 – 12	573	54%
Additional Training/University/Tech/College	252	24%
Others (special schools...)	29	3%
Total	1 063	100%

Table 12: Fathers' level of education

Source: Author

The majority of fathers had appropriate levels of education. Fifty-four percent (54%) had a grade 8 to 12, 24% a University, College or Technikon level and 18% had a grade one to seven. This variable is important in looking at child nurturing and the care an educated parent or caregiver is supposed to give to children.

This research considers that it is not appropriate to directly link the abuse with the education level of the parents or caregivers. However, the argument is to disconnect child abuse with low levels of education. It is also important to consider that the level of education can contribute to neglect when parents delegate, almost permanently, the care of their children to a person or institution because of pressing job demands.

4.4.6 Mothers' employment

Employment	Observed	Percentage
Employed	857	59%
Unemployed	603	41%
Total	1 460	100%

Table 13: Mothers' employment

Source: Author

The majority of the mothers of the abused children were employed (with no reference to the type of employment) when child abuse happened. Out of the 1, 460 cases, 59% of the mothers were employed. Similarly, a significant number of mothers were unemployed (41%). It would have been good to review the status of the mothers and the circumstances of the abuse. This is unfortunately outside of the scope of this research, but the IMT facilitates matching this variable to another one to understand the dynamic around child abuse in a household with employed parents or caregivers.

One important assertion might be that although the mothers are employed, their income is not sufficient to support a certain number of children, thus neglect. It can also be argued that because of the dynamics of being employed, some mothers give over the care of their children from themselves to other people resulting in neglect or abuse. The lessons from this database are that child abuse happens whether parents or caregivers are employed or not.

4.4.7 Fathers' employment

Fathers employment	Observed	Percentage
Employed	914	90%
Unemployed	104	10%
Total	1 018	100%

Table 14: Fathers' employment

Source: Author

The frequencies above show that out of 1, 018 cases, the vast majority of children's fathers were employed (90%) and only 10% were not. To understand child abuse here, it would have been better to establish whether the child lived with both parents or not during the abuse. This will assist in understanding the circumstance around the abuse without necessarily implying that the parent was responsible for the abuse. It is also improbable that all of these children were under the care of persons other than their fathers or mothers during their ordeal. The justification that, although these fathers were employed (and because they were employed), their children were abused is the implication of other variables that the IMT undertakes to demonstrate. This applies to the case of the mothers as well.

4.4.8 Marital status of mothers

Marital status	Observed	Percentage
Married/Cohabiting	673	42%
Single/Separated/Divorced/Widowed	934	58%
Total	1 607	100%

Table 15: Marital status of mothers

Source: Author

The literature argues that a dysfunctional family is one of the key factors contributing to child abuse. The Database shows a tendency towards the argument of the literature with 58% of mothers being single, separated, divorced or widowed. It is interesting to see that in 42% of the cases where the mothers were either married or cohabiting, child abuse occurred. This means that child abuse was observed in all circumstances although the structure of the household, especially the presence of both parents in a household can reduce or prevent child abuse.

This is to say that there are other variables that added to the structure of the household or the marital status of the mother contributed to the abuse of children in these cases. It can also be said that the structure did not play a role in the cases of abuse or only played a minor role. The IMT is a tool that assists in measuring the links and interdependences between two or more variables in the quest to clarify child abuse.

4.4.9 Types of dwelling

House	Observed	Percentage
Formal Settlements (brick, flats, place of safety, town house)	1476	84%
Informal Settlement (back room, domestic quarters room at School)	274	16%
Total	1 750	100%

Table 16: Types of dwelling

Source: Author

The living conditions of a household play a significant role in the wellbeing of its children. Promiscuity and poor housing contribute to child abuse as explained in the environmental theory of crime causation and child abuse. The frequencies of the MI database show that type of housing was not the key contributing variable in the recorded child abuse cases.

The MI database shows that the majority of children lived in formal settlements such as brick layered houses, flats, town houses or places of safety (84%) and only 16% of children lived in informal settlements. This observation means that although poor housing contributes to child abuse, there are some other variables that can contribute to child abuse in households with good living conditions.

4.4.10 Primary breadwinner

Primary breadwinner	Observed	Percentage
Mother or father or father and mother	1 281	76%
Grand-parents and other relatives	204	12%
Other (institutions, welfare, place of safety, children's home, shelter)	192	11%
Total	1 677	100%

Table 17: Primary breadwinner

Source: Author

In most of the cases, either the father or the mother or both the father and the mother were the principal household breadwinners (76%). Other relatives and grand-parents played the role of principal breadwinners in 12% of cases and the welfare services provided for children in 11% of the cases.

These frequencies indicate that child abuse did not depend on children being under the direct care of their parents (fathers or mothers). The interpretation is again that other variables could contribute to child abuse in each case irrespective of being under the care of their parents. This indication questions the frequencies on the employment of children's fathers and mothers.

4.4.11 Number of dependents per breadwinner

Dependents	Observed	Percentage
4 or less	1 039	67%
5 to 8	472	30%
9 or more	51	3%
Total	1 562	100%

Table 18: Number of dependants per breadwinner

Source: Author

It is assumed that when the size of a household is big, the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children become negatively affected as a direct consequence. In others words, the ability of a household to provide for the needs of its members depends on the resources available to the household divided by the number of the household members. A simple calculation shows that the greater the number of the household members the less the satisfaction of basic needs of each of them. It is also likely that the more dependents a household has, the less the time allocated for care of each dependent resulting in either abuse itself or pure neglect.

However, from this database, the majority of breadwinners supported four or fewer dependents to conclude that the ratio breadwinner – dependents was not an exceptional contributing variable in child abuse cases from this database.

4.4.12 Current child's placement

Current placement	Observed	Percentage
Parents	1 086	62%
Alternative Care	177	10%
Other	321	18%
Other Relatives	158	9%
Total	1 742	100%

Table 19: Current child's placement

Source: Author

It is often believed that children will fall prey to crime and violence because they are not placed with their own parents. The MI database shows a different scenario. Out of the 1, 742 cases, 62% of the children lived with their parents. Ten percent of them lived in

alternative care facilities and 9% lived with other relatives. These frequencies show that irrespective of the placement of the children, their abuse or neglect occurs because of the multitude of variables that contribute to child abuse.

4.4.13 Time elapsed before reporting abuse

Time elapsed	Observed	Percentage
Within 72 Hours	78	7%
Within last 3 Months	616	59%
4 to 12 Months	201	19%
12 Months and over	152	15%
Total	1 047	100%

Table 20: Child abuse reporting

Source: Author

Research argues that many cases of child abuse go unreported in South Africa for various reasons. One of the reasons is that, in most cases, the perpetrator is the principal breadwinner of the household. Furthermore, research argues that the abused child is always either intimidated or bribed to not reveal the incidence.

The MI database depicts a low timeous reporting of child abuse cases. Only 7% of cases were reported within 72 hours. Most of the cases were reported within the last 3 months (59%), after and over a year (15%) and between four and twelve months (19%). The database is silent on the persons who reported the cases. It is important to stress that the slow reporting is due to a variety of reasons beyond the fact that the perpetrator was the direct parent or breadwinner in the household.

4.4.14 Abuse period

Abuse Period	Observed	Percentage
Single Incident	419	51%
Over 6 Months	156	19%
7 - 12 Months	79	10%
Over a year	172	21%
Total	826	100%

Table 21: Abuse period

Source: Author

The majority of child abuse cases happened once (51%). A total of 21% of the children suffered abuse, neglect and/or exploitation for over a year, 19% for more than six months and 10% between six and 12 months. Whether child abuse occurred once or many times, it is a harmful experience to the child and should be eradicated.

4.4.15 Place of abuse

Place	Observed	Percentage
Victims Home	395	32%
Perpetrators Home	328	27%
Place of Safety	228	19%
Various places	138	11%
Institution/School	71	6%
Public Places	48	4%
From/to School (including in motorcar)	12	1%
Total	1 220	100%

Table 22: Place of abuse

Source: Author

Child abuse happens everywhere. However, the MI database shows that a slight majority of cases happened in the child's home (32%). A significant number of cases happened in the perpetrator's home (27%) and the place of safety (19%). Other cases happened in public institutions and schools (6%) and public places (4%).

These frequencies mean the probability of children being abuse on their way to and from school if the road is bushy and unsafe and children are not accompanied. This highlights the impact of environmental theory variables.

4.4.16 Parent's response to abuse

Response	Observed	Percentage
Believed and Supported	943	76%
No Disclosure	142	11%
Aggressive to Child	42	3%
Believe and don't Support	40	3%

Collude with Perpetrator	37	3%
Don't Believe	29	2%
Unsure	3	0%
Dad Believes, Mom Colludes	1	0%
Don't Believe, Collude, Aggressive	1	0%
Total	1 238	100%

Table 23: Parents' response to abuse

Source: Author

In most of the cases, parents believed and supported their children who have been abused (76%). In some instances (11%), the parents did not disclose their response to the abuse and for various reasons other parents either became aggressive to the child (3%), believed but did not support the child (3%) or colluded with the perpetrator (3%).

These frequencies confirm that a majority of these cases were perpetrated by people other than parents. It can also be that the support could have been from one parent, this information is not provided in the database. The frequencies also emphasise the support of the parents which is critical in the healing process of abuse children.

4.4.17 Number of perpetrators per abuse case

Perpetrator(s)	Observed	Percentage
Single	950	84%
Two	3	0%
Many/Multiple	128	11%
None (Neglect)	51	5%
Total	1 132	100%

Table 24: Number of perpetrators per abuse

Source: Author

In the majority of the cases (84%), one perpetrator abused the child and in 11% of the cases, there were many perpetrators. The fact that 11% of the children were abused by more than one person implies the extent of the cruelty of child abuse in South Africa.

4.4.18 Perpetrator – child relationship

Relationship	Observed	Percentage
Male Relative	145	14%
Brother/Sister/Half Sibling	138	14%
Stranger	133	13%
Family Friend/Acquaintances/ Neighbour	126	13%
Relatives	118	12%
Instructor/Coach/Teacher	86	9%
Step Parent	86	9%
Mother	80	8%
Father	38	4%
Transport Worker/Domestic/Gardening Helper/others	65	6%
Foster Parent	10	1%
Total	1 005	100%

Table 25: Perpetrator – child relationship

Source: Author

Children knew and were related to the majority of the perpetrators with only 13% being strangers to the victims. These frequencies confirm the literature that the majority of child abuse perpetrators are known and related to children.

The 18 variables observed in the MI database impacted differently on child abuse, yet the SAS could not determine the level of the impact of each variable. Similarly, from the observation (frequencies), SAS could not measure the extent to which the 18 variables impacted on each other because such information was not captured and the SAS is not the appropriate system to calculate the links and interdependences among variables.

One important task that SAS could perform as shown in the following tables, was to combine some variables, using their current frequencies to determine the influence of the combined variables on the recorded child abuse cases.

4.5 INTERPRETATION OF CROSS-TABULATED FREQUENCIES

The cross-tabulation account below demonstrates the impact and level of more than one

variable in explaining child abuse as observed in the MI recorded child abuse database. The observation through the cross-tabulation implies that variables are interlinked and therefore could influence each other as well as child abuse. To facilitate a clear understanding of child abuse and to detach child abuse from the economic conditions of parents and/or caregivers, it is vital to observe how, by linking more than one variable, there is likelihood of the frequencies changing, thus minimising/maximising child abuse.

Even though the variables considered in the MI database are mostly social and economic, the combination of such variables did not change much the scenario involving the frequencies of the contributing variables observed individually. The variables race, education and employment were important to illustrate the case of the combination of different variables in explaining child abuse. Another lesson from the cross tabulation below is that as long as the variables are from the same theory (economic theory) or limited theories (economic and social theories), the probabilities of child abuse do not significantly change. The research, through the IMT, will show change in the likelihood of child abuse to occur once variables from different theories are linked and their probabilities estimated.

4.5.1 Mothers' education and race

Linking education with race and considering the legacy of the apartheid regime and its consequences in South Africa, it is simple to presume that abuse happens in poor households because of the race (majority black) or the level of education of the parents or caregivers. The literature has proved such suppositions when analysing the inequalities and inequities of the past including lack of access to education by certain race groups during apartheid.

The findings of the cross-tabulation of the MI database demonstrate that child abuse was distributed equally amongst all racial groups in the observed cases. Considering the race ratio in the country, the MI database shows that child abuse has happened more in white households than in black households.

Caution however, is indicated in understanding that the number of cases from white households might be high because of the high levels of reporting and the location of the MI (Teddy Bear) clinic where the cases were recorded. The first reason may be a

paradox and does not impact on the conclusion of the observation because there is no evidence that reporting is higher in white communities than in black communities.

A crucial lesson from the observation of the MI database is that child abuse happens across the race line. An important score for this research is also that the good economic conditions of households did not stop the incidence and perpetuation of child abuse.

Tables 26 and 27 below explain child abuse considering the combination of the education levels and the racial groups of the mothers.

Education	Race					
	Asian	Black	Coloured	White	Total	%
None	0	16	1	0	17	1%
Grade 1 – 7	4	208	51	94	357	27%
Grade 8 – 12	19	254	69	326	668	49%
University/Tech/College...	9	95	20	163	287	21%
Other (Special School)	1	6	3	17	27	2%
Total	33	579	144	600	1 356	
Percentage	2%	43%	11%	44%		

Table 26: Mothers' education and race

Source: Author

The majority of mothers had sufficient levels of education. Out of 579 black mothers, 140 had grade one to seven whereas 254 had between grade eight and 12. 74 mothers had a University, Technikon or College level. White mothers had sufficient level of education with 326 out of 600 having between grade eight and 12. 105 white mothers had a University, Technikon or College level and 89 had between grade one and seven. This same proportion applied to Asian and Coloured races. In total, the majority of mothers had between grade five and 12 and University, Technikon or College levels of education.

The frequencies of the combination of the level of education of the mothers and their race are not different from the frequencies of the education level or the race alone. The combination of these two variables proves that child abuse happened irrespective of the race of the mother and whether she was educated or not.

4.5.2 Fathers' education and race

Parents, both the father and the mother play a critical role in their children's lives. Generally, mothers are considered to be the primary caregivers of children, however, fathers are slowly moving towards providing care and protection for their children as much as mothers do. In the same way that the father and the mother provide care and protection to their children, in the same way they can also be perpetrators of child abuse.

The observation of the MI database reveals that the majority of white fathers (281 out of 499) had a grade eight to 12. Similarly, 203 out of 401 fathers of black children had the same level of education as well as 57 out of 105 coloured fathers. University, Technikon and College levels accounted for respectively 97 white fathers, 68 black fathers and 16 coloured fathers. The following tables portray the distribution as discussed above.

Education	Race					
	Asian	Black	Coloured	White	Total	%
None	0	9	0	3	12	1%
Grade 1 – 7	4	99	27	63	193	19%
Grade 8 – 12	18	203	57	281	559	54%
Other/Special Schools	1	8	1	18	28	3%
Univ/ Tech/ College	7	82	20	134	243	23
Total	30	401	105	499	1 035	
Percentages	3%	39%	10%	48%		

Table 27: Fathers' education and race

Source: Author

In percentage terms, 48% of fathers of abused children were white, 39% black, 10% coloured and 3% Asian. Out of the total, 54% of the fathers had between grade 8 and 12, 19% had a University, Technikon or College level and 19% had between grade 1 and 8.

The literature review, especially the RALC analysis demonstrates that poor educational attainment might be highly correlated with crime and violence. However, the MI database frequencies show that the level of education did not exclusively contribute to child abuse as most parents had an adequate level of education.

4.5.3 Mother's race, education and employment

The literature review and theories on the causes of crime and violence against children such as Witte and Witt (2000) argue that crime is closely related to work, education, poverty and truancy, and youth unemployment. These are understood by the authors to be the products or measures of social exclusion. This research agrees that poverty and unemployment are the conduits through which other variables influence crime. This means that other variables play a critical role in child abuse.

The following table compares both the level of education and employment and their impact on child abuse. Because the level of education has already been explored, emphasis is on the employment status of parents and child abuse. This research acknowledges that child abuse is not necessarily caused by the parent but considers the parent as the principal person responsible for the wellbeing and protection of the child wherever the child lives.

It has been demonstrated in the previous frequencies that race is not a key determinant of child abuse. The frequencies also showed that the majority of mothers had sufficient levels of education and were employed. The figures show that 300 out of 533 black mothers were employed, out of the total of 300 employed mothers, 120 had between grade eight and 12, 98 had between grade one and seven and 70 had a University, Technikon or College level. It is necessary to also emphasise that 228 mothers were unemployed of which 106 had between grade eight and 12, 98 mothers had between grade one and seven and 16 had a University, Technikon or College level.

Unemployment was distributed more or less equally for both black and white mothers. In total 338 white mothers were employed compared to 197 who were not employed. Of the 338 employed mothers, 174 had between grade eight and 12, 36 had between grade one and seven and 124 had a University, Technikon or College level. Of the 197 unemployed mothers, 112 had between grade eight and 12, 52 had between grade one and seven and 23 had a University, Technikon or College level. The proportions are similar for Asian and coloured mothers. Out of 33 Asian mothers, 22 were employed of which 13 had between grade eight and 12, three had between grade one and seven and six had a University, Technikon or College level.

Coloured mothers were not an exception. Out of 78 employed coloured mothers, 41 had between grade eight and 12, 20 had between grade one and seven and 17 had a University, Technikon or College level. A total of 54 coloured mothers were unemployed. Twenty-one out of the 51 unemployed mothers had between grade eight and 12, 28 coloured mothers had between grade one and seven and two unemployed mothers had a University, Technikon or College level.

Race	Education	Employment			Total
		Deceased	Employed	Unemployed	
Asian	Grade 1 – 7		3	1	4
	Grade 8 – 12		13	6	19
	Others/Special School			1	1
	Univ/ Tech/ College		6	3	9
Asian Total			22	11	33
Black	None		7	7	14
	Grade 1 – 7	3	98	98	196
	Grade 8 – 12	2	120	106	228
	Other/Special School		5	1	5
	Univ/ Tech/ College		70	16	86
Black Total		5	300	228	533
	None			1	1
	Grade 1 – 7	2	20	28	50
Coloured	Grade 8 – 12		41	21	62
	Other/Special School			2	2
	Univ/ Tech/ College		17	2	19
Coloured Total		2	78	54	134
White	Grade 1 – 7	1	36	52	89
	Grade 8 – 12		174	112	286
	Other/Special School		4	10	14
	Univ/ Tech/ College	1	124	23	148
White Total		2	338	197	537
Grand Total		9	730	490	1 235

Table 28: Mothers' race, education and employment

Source: Author

This cross-table 28 above demonstrates that the race, the level of education of the mother and her employment status were not necessarily the exact combination of variables that could have contributed to child abuse. The distributions above show that the majority of mothers were employed and had a sufficient level of education.

Considering the above cross-tabulation on the race, employment status and education level of the mothers of the abused children and for the purpose of this

research, the contribution of the variables to child abuse cases can be understood in different ways and circumstances.

The variable race has no direct impact on the abuse of children. All four races are therefore given equal probability in child abuse incidence and perpetuation. This means that child abuse occurred irrespective of the parent's race as it was equally observed across all four racial groups.

The cross tabulation shows that the probability of a child being abused was not correlated with the race, level of education, and employment status of the mother. There were as many cases of child abuse in households with educated and employed mothers as in those where mothers were uneducated and unemployed. Considering this observation, combined or in isolation, variables 'not educated' and 'unemployed' were not a major contributing variable of child abuse.

The cross-tabulation shows that the low level of parents' education was not a direct justification of child abuse. In most cases, parents had sufficient levels of education. An interesting paradox here is that educated parents might have a job in the middle or low-income job market that might demand long working hours, long distances to and from work, incapacity to afford alternative care for their children resulting in child neglect, a critical aspect of child abuse. This is not a valid reason for the abuse of children to happen because, regardless of whatever it might take, parents are responsible for the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of their children.

4.5.4 Father's race, education and employment

As demonstrated, the employment, education and race of the fathers of abused children are distributed similarly as in the case of the mothers. The conclusion of these distributions demonstrates that there is no direct correlation between either one variable or the combination of race, employment and education of parents and child abuse.

The following table contains the frequencies of the race distribution, level of education and employment status of the fathers of abused children, as per the MI database. It must be highlighted that fathers had higher education levels and higher employment prospects than mothers but the racial distribution remained almost the same. Fewer cases were observed for fathers as there were for mothers. The reason is that there were fewer

known cases for the fathers as it was for the mothers. Nevertheless, this has no impact on the results of the observation since the aim of the observation was neither to show the trend nor to focus on the number of known cases.

Race	Education	Employment			Total
		Deceased	Employed	Unemployed	
Asian	Grade 1 – 7		4		4
	Grade 8 – 12	3	12	3	18
	Other/Special School		1		1
	Univ/ Tech/ College		6	1	7
Asian Total		3	23	4	30
	None	3	3		6
Black	Grade 1 – 7	24	59	1	84
	Grade 8 – 12	39	132	3	174
	Other/Special School	2	5		7
	Univ/ Tech/ College	6	60	2	68
Black Total		74	259	6	339
Coloured	Grade 1 – 7	12	11		23
	Grade 8 – 12	7	36	1	44
	Other/Special School		1		1
	Univ/ Tech/ College	4	16		20
Coloured Total		23	64	1	88
	None		2	1	3
White	Grade 5 – 8	11	44	2	57
	Grade 9 – 12	31	213	3	247
	Other/Special School	3	15		18
	Univ/ Tech/ College	10	101	2	101
White Total		55	375	8	438
Grand Total		155	721	15	891

Table 29: Fathers' race, education and employment

Source: Author

Table 29 can be interpreted as table 28 showing no difference in the frequencies although the variables are combined. This means that the combination of the variables

from the same theory did not change the trend of child abuse. It is therefore important to include other variables that have not been highlighted in the database.

4.6 CONCLUSION

The data auditing and cross tabulation of the MI database reveal that child abuse is not influenced by poor economic conditions only. The observation is that child abuse happened no matter the race, education, employment and marital status of the parents and/or caregivers. Considering the four racial groups and the South African population index, every child has the same chance of being abused, neglected and exploited no matter his/her racial group.

Similarly, more children with educated and employed parents were abused than children with uneducated and unemployed parents. This means that children stand the same chance of being abused whether living in households with high income or in poor households. Child abuse is therefore not directly associated with only isolated economic conditions of parents and/or caregivers.

It was observed that the size of the household did not count in child abuse. In most cases, the fathers and the mothers were the principal breadwinners in the households. Considering the ratio breadwinner to numbers of dependents, the observation revealed that the majority of breadwinners had between zero and 4 dependents. This meant that the size of the household was not an important contributing variable in child abuse.

The observation of the conditions of households, the types of houses and the current placement of children revealed that the majority of children lived in brick houses and flats during the abuse. Again, the chance of a child being abused, neglected or exploited was equal for a child living in a formal housing structure or in an informal settlement.

Other critical considerations of child abuse disputed the oversimplification of the literature review on child abuse. The perpetrators of child abuse were from all the walks of society. Curiously, fathers accounted for only 4% of the cases as perpetrators, whereas mothers were responsible for 8% of the cases. In most cases the perpetrators were known and related to the children.

In view of the above, the observation of the MI database dismisses the hypothesis that child abuse is solely caused by the poor economic conditions of the households. This research concedes that child abuse is dependent on a combination of many variables, not only isolated economic conditions. To understand, prevent and curb child abuse this research suggests the use of the IMT that consider the combination of many variables.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The observation of the MI child database shows that there is no single variable that can be considered as the main cause of child abuse. The review of the literature has explained crime and child abuse through different theories of which the economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural theories interested this research. The reviewed theories on the understanding of child abuse have limitations as they explain child abuse in a unitary way. This means that each theory focuses on one dimension or domain without necessarily making reference to other dimensions. At the same time the relationships between variables from one theory have not been established or quantified to reflect the impact of those variables on each other and between them and variables from other theories. Importantly, the relationships among theories and between those theories and child abuse have not received attention other than speculations on the individual contribution of isolated unitary theories in child abuse.

This research undertakes to deal with all the gaps identified above by proposing the use of the IMT. The IMT uses variables depicted from the literature review, the observation of the MI database and the inputs from the field experts.

This chapter explains in detail the development of the IMT and exemplifies the importance of the use of the model to understand crime and violence against children in poor households. The research proposes the IMT as a catalyst for prevention of and intervention against child abuse considering the understanding of contributing variables.

The most critical role players in the prevention of and intervention against child abuse are policy makers, public servants, research and academic institutions, law enforcement agencies, direct service providers, community and religious leaders, schools and parents. The IMT is meant to be used by the above key role players as it assists them to understanding the dynamics around what contributes to child abuse and how to address those contributing variables. This is an application of a common knowledge adage that: “a problem well stated is a problem half solved” (Charles F. Kettering – 1876-1958).

The choice of the BNs theory in modelling child abuse considering poor economic

conditions in households is motivated by three critical annotations in this research:

- Firstly, the review of different theories and models of crime and child abuse has emphasised the role played by economic variables in crime causation and child abuse in particular. This observation tends to link child abuse with poverty or poor economic conditions of households.
- Secondly, the observation and interpretation of the MI database show that isolated poor economic variables are not exclusively responsible for child abuse in poor households.
- Lastly, and considering the two above annotations, this research argues that variables from the social, cultural, environmental and structural theories play the same role as variables from the economic theory in child abuse. Moreover, all these variables and subsequently the theories are linked to each other and influence each other before contributing directly to child abuse.

The use of the BNs theory is thus motivated by its capacity to explain child abuse through the links and interdependences between variables and theories. At the same time the BNs theory is able to deal with uncertainty involving variables where there is no detailed information or where it is difficult to determine probabilities.

The observation and interpretation of the MI database, the review of literature (including theories and models of crime and child abuse) provide a natural and principled method of combining prior information with data, within a solid decision-theoretical framework. The BNs theory provides tools for the interpretation of the variables from the MI database, the literature review and interactions with field experts. The IMT defines and combines interactions between these variables and theories to show how combined variables from the five theories (clusters) provides a much better picture of child abuse and thus assists in policy and decision making to prevent, intervene and manage child abuse.

5.2 ABOUT THE INTEGRATED MODELLED THEORY (IMT)

The IMT is an application of the BNs theory in modelling a social problem, namely child

abuse. The IMT exploits important basic functionalities of the BNs theory with emphasis on the links and interdependences between the states of the economic, social, cultural, environmental and structural conditions and their impact and implication in the incidence of each other and of child abuse.

The IMT is developed using the basic level of the BNs process to demonstrate the links and interdependences between variables contributing to child abuse. For the above reason, the research capitalises on three main advantages of the BNs theory as described by Heckerman (1996).

Heckerman (1996) acknowledges that BNs theory is a graphical model that encodes probabilistic relationships among variables of interest. He further maintains that, when used in conjunction with statistical techniques, the graphical model has the various advantages for data analysis. Firstly, because the model encodes dependencies among all variables, it readily handles situations where some data entries are missing. Secondly, BNs elucidate the causal relationships, hence assisting to gain understanding about a problem domain and to predict the consequences of interventions. Thirdly, because the model has both causal and probabilistic semantics, it is an ideal representation for combining prior knowledge (which often comes in causal form) and data (Heckerman, 1996).

This research capitalises on these advantages that are not possible through the decision reviewed modelling tools. Firstly, the BNs theory offers the opportunity to mix different variables and theories in order to separate child abuse from isolated poor economic conditions. This has not been done in any other system with clarity on quantified causal links to reflect probabilities of the occurrence of different situations leading to child abuse.

Secondly, the BNs theory allows the collection of information from different sources such as the SAPS and Stats SA statistics, the summary of crime and child abuse theories and models, the conclusions of the observation of the MI database and the inputs of field experts in painting a better picture of how child abuse happens. This information is then used by the IMT to facilitate the policy and decision making process for effective and focused prevention of and intervention against child abuse.

It is not the intention of this research to develop a complex BNs model with all the decision boxes. The IMT focuses the process of linking variables and theories in facilitating the understanding of child abuse and consequently assisting the development of prevention and intervention mechanisms.

5.3 DEFINITION AND STATES OF CONTRIBUTING VARIABLES

Pierce and Bozalek (2004) conducted an examination of how child abuse and child neglect are defined in South Africa. The objective of their study was to explore which of 17 categories of child maltreatment South Africans evaluated as most serious. The categories were child beggary, child labour, child marriage, child prostitution, physical abuse, selective neglect, medical neglect, lack of cleanliness, poor housing conditions, nutritional neglect, lack of supervision, physical violation of a child's body, exposure to sexually inappropriate stimuli, fostering delinquency, parental sexual mores, alcohol and drug abuse by parents, emotional maltreatment and educational neglect.

The result of the study showed that respondents ranked sexual abuse and child prostitution as most serious and housing and child labour as least serious of the 17 categories. These results say nothing important that the seriousness of child sexual abuse and child prostitution. This does not qualify child sexual abuse and child prostitution as more important than other forms of child abuse and neglect. Similarly, the results do not show that child sexual abuse and child prostitution are more prevalent than other forms of child abuse and neglect.

A critical finding of the study was that the results meant that there were concerns that the differences in the evaluation of child abuse will lead to difficulty in the implementation of a protocol for identifying and responding to incidents of child abuse and neglect. The ITM offers a solution to such difficulty by combining different variables and theories contributing to child abuse and modelling links and interdependences among the variables and theories. The IMT facilitates consequently, a policy and decision making process in dealing globally with child abuse by individually and collectively addressing the variables contributing to child abuse.

All variables and theories considered in the development of the IMT contribute directly or indirectly (through other variables or theories) to child abuse. The choice of the selected variables and theories is explained by the evidence of their contribution to child abuse without necessarily attempting to measure the extent of such contribution before the development of the IMT. Beside the agreement on a working definition of each variable to provide clarity, the probabilities were estimated and agreed upon based on the literature review, the observation of the MI database and the views of the field experts.

The variables were classified into economic, social, cultural, environmental and structural theories or clusters. The variables from the structural theory are mostly important in analysing policy, legislation and different practices essential in fostering child care, protection, safety and wellbeing.

Each theory contains key variables that contribute to child abuse as observed in the MI database, the literature review and the views and opinions of field experts. Each theory has discrete random variables with two states: YES or good or any other positive connotation and NO or bad or any other negative connotation. An example is the variable education which has two states: Educated or YES and Not educated or NO.

To simplify the modelling of the IMT without compromising the principle of the BNs theory, each theory needed to be unpacked and each variable defined and explained accordingly. These definitions and explanations encompass the literature review and the field understanding of the meaning of the variables by the experts. The working definitions agreed upon during the work sessions with field experts were considered as reflecting the reality of South Africa and therefore took preference over the definitions from the literature.

It must however be stressed that the working definitions are not different or contrary to the definitions from the literature but contextualise and explain the South African reality. The definitions of these variables from the literature review are contained in the attached appendix.

5.3.1 Child abuse (outcome variable)

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Outcome variable: Child Abuse		
<u>Working Definition:</u> All forms of physical, mental, sexual, psychological, economic abuse of children by parents, community or the policies and practices of the government. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Children are subjected to abuse, neglected and/or exploited because of various variables making them vulnerable to violence and crime.	Yes Child abuse	There are incidences of child abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. Children are not loved, cared for or nurtured.
	No Child abuse	There are no incidences of child abuse, neglect and exploitation. Children are loved, cared for and protected.

5.3.2 Substance abuse

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Substance abuse		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Substance abuse means the uncontrolled intake or consumption of alcohol, drugs and other illegal substances. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Alcohol and drug reduce the ability to take responsibility for own actions resulting in the lack of ability to reason and increasing the likelihood of child abuse. Parents or caregivers who smoke next to children expose them to health problems.	Substance abuse	Parent or caregiver does abuse substance.
	No substance abuse	Parent or caregiver does not abuse alcohol.

5.3.3 Patriarchy

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Patriarchy		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Patriarchy means the culture whereby men consider themselves as superior to women and children in the household. The father considers his wife and children as his subjects. <u>Research Assumption:</u> In a patriarchal relationship, children are subjected to violence. They are treated unfairly and their rights are not respected.	Yes patriarchy	The male parent dominates the female parent and children resulting in domestic violence and child abuse.
	No patriarchy	The male parent does not dominate the female parent and children resulting in a harmonious and respectful family life.

5.3.4 Culture of violence

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Culture of violence		
<u>Working Definition:</u> A culture of violence means that children are exposed to violence. Violence is normalised in the community or households. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Children exposed to the culture of violence are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect.	Culture of violence	Children live in families or community where violence is normalised.
	Culture of joy and peace	Children live in families or community with culture of joy and peace.

5.3.5 Community or social support system

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Community support system		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Community support system means a community with facilities that cater for the child (natural community oversight). The child trusts neighbours and community members. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Community social support system decreases the opportunity for child abuse.	No social support	There is no social support in the community
	Community support	Social support exists and functions in the community.

5.3.6 Service delivery

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Service delivery		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Service delivery means delivery of basic needs and services to children by different institutions. The most basic services include access to education, health, food and social grants. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Poor service delivery to children increases their vulnerability to abuse and neglect. If the basic needs of children are not met, they are neglected and consequently abused by the government system.	Poor service delivery to children	Children don't receive services responding to their basic needs.
	Good service delivery to children	Children receive good services to satisfy their basic needs.

5.3.7 Understanding of the rights of children (perception)

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Understanding of child rights (perception)		
<u>Working Definition:</u> The overriding of the rights of children creates a gap between the parents' expectations and the behaviour of children. <u>Research Assumption:</u> A correct understanding of children's rights will result in appropriate sets of parental behaviours. Parent's authority undermined by the rights of the child results in aggressive behaviour (unintended consequences of good policies).	Child rights Misunderstood	Children's rights are not understood by either parent or child or both parent and children. There is a clash between parents' authority and children's behaviour.
	Child rights Understood	Rights of children are understood by either parent or child or both parents and children. There is no clash between parents' authority and children's behaviour.

5.3.8 Parenting skills

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Parenting skills		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Parenting skills means the ability of the child's mother, father (or to some extent caregiver) to care for and bond with the child. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Where there is no parenting skills, the child is not nurtured, protected and supported, thus neglected or abused.	No parenting	Parent who has no attachment and does not bond with the child.
	Good parenting	Parent who bonds with the child. Parent who nurtures, protects, guides, supports and teach the child.

5.3.9 Poverty

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Poverty		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Poverty means lack of sufficient income, assets and economic opportunities. It also means no satisfaction of basic needs, exclusion, and marginalisation. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Poor economic conditions of a household result in incapacity to provide for the basic needs of children). Stress leads to lower levels of tolerance which will increase abuse.	Poor household	Households with no or insufficient income, assets and economic opportunities to satisfy basic needs.
	Non-poor household	Households with sufficient income, assets and economic opportunities to satisfy basic needs.

5.3.10 Adequate housing

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Adequate housing		
<u>Working Definition:</u> An adequate house is a formal house which fits the standards of spatial development and environmental design. It has running water, electricity, and a toilet indoors or in the vicinity. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Poor or no housing increases the vulnerability of children to abuse and neglect.	Adequate Housing	Formal and semi-formal housing of brick walls with necessary facilities indoors
	Inadequate Housing or no Housing	Informal housing without necessary facilities indoor or in the vicinity. No housing resulting in people (including children) living on street.

5.3.11 Overcrowding

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Overcrowding in households		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Overcrowding means that children live in houses where there is not enough space for their privacy and good living conditions. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Overcrowding in a house increases the vulnerability to child abuse and neglect. Increased number of people in a house results in lack of privacy (bed sharing). Overcrowding impacts on social relations resulting in arguments and conflicts leading to abuse.	Overcrowded house	Living space of the house not proportional to its occupants. Children share beds, sometimes with adults (no privacy).
	Not Overcrowded house	There is enough space for all people living in a house. Children enjoy privacy. They are less or not vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

5.3.12 Ratio breadwinner – children

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Ratio breadwinner – children		
<u>Working Definition:</u> The size of the household determines the quality of the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of the children. <u>Research Assumption:</u> A parent or caregiver might not be able to provide personal attention and care to each of more than four children in a household.	5 or more dependents	Parents or caregivers look after more than four children in the same household.
	0 – 4 dependents	Parents or caregivers look after one to four children in the same household.

5.3.13 Safe environment

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Clean and safe environment		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Clean environment means an environment that is not polluted but well designed and maintained. <u>Research Assumption:</u> An unclean and unsafe environment is conducive to child abuse. Bushy/dark areas for example are used as a hotspot for child rape.	Unclean, unsafe environment	The environment is filthy, not maintained and unsafe.
	Clean and safe environment	Environment is clean and safe.

5.3.14 Past abuse of parents

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Past abuse of parents		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Past abuse of parents or caregivers means abuse they endured themselves as children. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Past abusive experience of parents or caregivers increases the likelihood of abusive behaviour resulting in child abuse or neglect.	Past abuse	The parent or caregiver was abused, neglected or exploited as a child.
	No past abuse	The parent or caregiver was not abused neglect or exploited as a child.

5.3.15 Cultural and religious practices and beliefs

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Cultural and religious practices and beliefs		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Cultural and religious practices and beliefs mean tradition, customs and/or ethnicity practices that infringe children's rights. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Some cultural and religious practices increase the vulnerability of children to abuse, neglect and exploitation.	Good culture	Acceptable practices that do not infringe the rights, protection and wellbeing of children.
	Degeneration	Cultural practices that infringe the right, protection and wellbeing of children.

5.3.16 Abuse of economic power

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Abuse of economic power		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Abuse of economic power means abusive behaviour (violence and child abuse) by the parent who controls the household resources. <u>Research Assumption:</u> The economic abuse of power contributes to domestic violence and child abuse.	Abuse of economic Power	The parent abuses her or his economic power to dominate and abuse her of his dependents.
	No abuse of economic power	The parent does not dominate and abuse her or his dependents.

5.3.17 Employment of parents

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Employment of parents		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Employment means an income generating activity. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Unemployment leads to frustration/stress because of lack of earnings. Some stressed parents tend to abuse or neglect their children.	Unemployed	Parent or caregiver does not have an income generating activity.
	Employed	Parent or caregiver has an income generating activity.

5.3.18 Domestic violence

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Domestic violence		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Domestic violence means household where violence towards women and children prevails. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Children who live in households where domestic violence regularly occurs are at high risk of being abused or neglected.	Violent home	Parents or caregivers abuse each other and/or their children.
	Safe home	Parents or caregivers do not abuse each other or their children.

5.3.19 Level of education of parents

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Level of education of parents		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Level of education means the highest level of education attained by parents or caregiver.	Uneducated parents or caregivers	Parents or caregivers are not educated.

<u>Research Assumption:</u> The low level of education impacts negatively on opportunities and creation of enough revenue for the household resulting in neglect. Children leaving with uneducated parents are at high risk of abuse and neglect.	Educated parents or caregivers	Parents or caregivers are educated.
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5.3.20 HIV/AIDS prevalence

WORKING DEFINITION OF NODE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
HIV/AIDS prevalence		
<u>Working Definition:</u> HIV/AIDS prevalence means the existence and impact of the pandemic in the household or the community. <u>Research Assumption:</u> HIV/AIDS impacts on the inability of infected parents or caregivers to take good care of their children resulting in child abuse or neglect.	HIV/AIDS Prevalence	Parents or caregivers are infected by the virus. High prevalence of HIV/AIDS in community.
	No HIV/AIDS Prevalence	Parents or caregivers are not infected by the virus. Little or no prevalence of HIV/AIDS in community.

5.3.21 HIV/AIDS myth

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
HIV/AIDS myth		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Myth of HIV/AIDS means that men infected by the virus believe on curing their HIV/AIDS status by having sex with a virgin girl. <u>Research Assumption:</u> The myth of curing HIV/AIDS by having intimate relations with a virgin increases the vulnerability of girl children to sexual abuse.	HIV/AIDS Myth	Majority of community members believe in the HIV/AIDS myth to cure HIV/AIDS status.
	No HIV/AIDS Myth	Majority of community members do not believe in the HIV/AIDS myth to cure HIV/AIDS status.

5.3.22 Coping with the Criminal Justice System

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Action of the CJS		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Actions of the CJS include investigation, arrest and prosecution of perpetrators of child abuse. <u>Research Assumption:</u> With a weak CJS, there is a probability of more cases of child abuse because potential perpetrators are not afraid of the system.	Ineffective CJS	The CJS is not effective in the investigation, arrest and prosecution of child abusers.
	Effective CJS	Good investigation and arrest of perpetrators and speedy and strong prosecution of child abusers.

5.3.23 Participation of children in decision making processes

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Participation of children in policy and decision making processes		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Children's participation means that children are consulted and contribute to decisions affecting their lives and wellbeing. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Isolating children in policy and decision making on issues affecting their lives and wellbeing equals to abuse.	Child participation	Children actively participate in decisions affecting their lives through representation and active participation.
	No Child participation	Children do not participate in decisions affecting their wellbeing.

5.3.24 Access of children to Social Grants

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Access of children to social grants		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Access of children to social grants means that all qualified children have easy access to sufficient social grants provided by the government. <u>Research Assumption:</u> No access to sufficient social grants increases children's vulnerability to abuse and neglect.	Access to grants	Children have access to social grants.
	No access to grants	Children have no access to social grants.

5.3.25 Intra and inter country family migration

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Intra and inter country family migration		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Intra and inter country family migration means the displacements or movements of the household within or outside of the country. <u>Research Assumption:</u> The migration of a household has an impact on the child's expectations and support system. The more the household migrates the more the child is anxious about the new environment and its support system.	Unsuccessful migration	Children move to a new environment where their expectations of the a new good environment and its support system are neither met nor improved.
	Successful or no migration	Children move to a new environment where their expectations of a good new environment and its support systems are met or exceeded.

5.3.26 Literacy of parents or caregivers

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Literacy of caregivers (parents, ...)		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Literacy means ability to read, write and count. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Illiterate caregivers cannot assist children with learning process. Illiteracy impacts on the ability of parents to claim and access services.	Illiterate	Cannot read, write and count.
	Literate	Can read, write and/or count.

5.3.27 Family stability

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Family stability		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Child interact with and benefits from stable and friendly household and social environments. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Children who live in stable households and friendly social environments know whom they are related to and where to get assistance.	Unstable family	Child lives in an unstable household or a changing social environment not always friendly.
	Stable family	Child lives in a steady, regular and friendly household and a good and friendly social environment.

5.3.28 Family structure

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Family structure		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Household where the child lives in terms of living with or without parents or caregivers. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Children who live with parents or caregivers are less vulnerable to abuse and neglect.	Child-Headed Household	Children live without parents or caregivers. The head of the household is a child.
	Children living with parents	Children live with parents or caregivers.

5.3.29 Mental capacity

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Mental capacity		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Mental capacity refers to the capability of a parent or caregiver to take sound decisions. <u>Research Assumption:</u> A parent or caregiver with limited mental capacity is unable to differentiate between what is right and wrong for the child.	Mentally incapable	Inability to decide what is right for child's wellbeing.
	Mentally capable	Ability to know what is right for the child's wellbeing.

5.3.30 Reporting of child abuse

Reporting of child abuse		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Reporting child abuse by parents, caregivers, children or community members. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Reporting child abuse will result in fewer cases being committed and will contribute to prevention. It also facilitates CJS work	No reporting of cases	Caregivers, children and/or community members do not report child abuse cases.
	Reporting of cases	Caregivers, children and/or community members report cases of child abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

5.3.31 Response of Child Protection System (CPS)

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Response of Child Protection System (CPS)		
<u>Working Definition:</u> The CPS, led by DSD is tasked with protecting the interests of the child. <u>Research Assumption:</u> A quick and effective response of the CPS reduces the impact of secondary victimisation.	Ineffective or no Child Protection System	No CPS or CPS has no good resources, policies and processes to protect children.
	Effective Child Protection System	CPS exists has good resources, policies and processes to protect

5.3.32 Child supervision

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Child supervision		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Child supervision means that children are looked after (discipline, care and oversight). <u>Research Assumption:</u> Supervision decreases vulnerability of children to abuse, neglect by themselves/ adults.	No supervision	Children are not under constant and direct supervision of an adult.
	Supervision	Children are under constant and direct supervision of an adult.

5.3.33 Care of victims by institutions

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Care of victims by institutions (secondary victimisation)		
<u>Working Definition:</u> The incidence of abuse through the practices of institutions that deal with abused children. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Poor and insufficient service provision by institutions dealing with abused children increases their vulnerability to abuse.	Bad care of victims (secondary victimisation)	Institutions do not take good care of child victims of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.
	Good care of victims	Institutions take good care of child victims of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

5.3.34 Age of the child

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Age of the child		
<u>Working Definition:</u> The age of the child means the process of his or her development from birth to age 18 years. <u>Research Assumption:</u> The younger the child the more vulnerable to abuse by parents or caregivers. The older a child gets the less vulnerable to abuse.	0 – 13 years	These children dependent on their parents or caregivers. They are more vulnerable to abuse.
	14 – 18 years	These children are more responsible. Their relations with parents or caregivers have more of a dialogue.

5.3.35 Gender of the child

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Gender of the child		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Gender of the child means the sex of the child (male or female). <u>Research Assumption:</u> The gender of the child increases the vulnerability to abuse, neglect and exploitation.	Girls	Girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse than boys are.
	Boys	Boys are less vulnerable to sexual abuse.

5.3.36 Recreational facilities

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Recreational facilities		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Recreational facilities mean structured places for children to play and get entertained. <u>Research Assumption:</u> The absence of recreational facilities contributes to child vagrancy leading to child abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.	No recreational facilities	There are no facilities for cultural and sport activities.
	Available recreational facilities	There are facilities for cultural and sport activities.

5.3.37 Infrastructures

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Infrastructures (roads, schools, hospitals, lights)		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Good infrastructure refers to the presence of good roads, schools, hospitals, SAPS stations. <u>Research Assumption:</u> The availability of good infrastructure decreases child abuse.	Bad or no infrastructural facilities	No infrastructural facilities in the area or facilities exist but are in bad condition.
	Good and accessible infrastructural facilities	Good and accessible infrastructural facilities in the area.

5.3.38 Piped (tap) water inside dwelling or yard

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Piped (tap) water inside dwelling or yard		
<u>Working Definition:</u> The household has running water for domestic use inside the house or in the vicinity. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Running water in a household increases the quality and life standard of children's living in it.	No Piped water	The household has no running water in the house or in 200 metres vicinity.
	Piped water	Running water in the house or has access to running water in a 200 metres vicinity

5.3.39 Flush toilet or ventilated latrine

WORKING DEFINITION OF VARIABLE	STATES	DEFINITION OF STATE
Flush toilet or ventilated pit latrine		
<u>Working Definition:</u> Flush toilet and ventilated pit toilet respond to hygiene and health condition of children. <u>Research Assumption:</u> Access to a flush toilet or ventilated pit latrine impacts positively on children's wellbeing.	Flush toilet or ventilated latrine	Household has a flush toilet or a ventilated pit latrine.
	No flush toilet or ventilated latrine	The household does not have a flush toilet or a ventilated pit latrine.

5.4 CLUSTERING OF VARIABLES

This research considers the economic; social; environmental; cultural; and structural theories (clusters). The following table contains the list of all variables per each cluster.

Economic cluster	Social cluster	Environment	Cultural cluster	Structural cluster
Overcrowding	Mental capacity	Housing	Cultural & religion	Response of CPS
Abuse of economic power	Community support	Clean and safe environment	Patriarchy	Action of CJS
Poverty	Family stability	Recreational facilities	Culture of violence	Care of victims
Literacy	Past abuse	Infrastructures	HIV/AIDS myth	Service delivery
Unemployment	Substance abuse	Piped water	Age of child	
Family migration	Child supervision	Flush toilet or Ventilated latrine	Gender of child	
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Parenting skills		Reporting of child abuse cases	
Level of education	Family structure		Child rights	

Table 30: Clustering of variables

Source: Author

5.5 DEVELOPING AND POPULATING THE IMT

The IMT is a process model based on the BNs theory and consequently adhering to all the principles of the Hugin Graphical User Interface and the BNs theory. The basic principles as well as the design and development processes of the BNs theory are contained in the Reference Manual of Hugin API version 7.3. Information contained in this research on developing and populating the IMT using the BNs theory is directly extracted from the user manual and the BN software. This information does not require further referencing and is therefore credited to this research. The IMT is the adapted version of BNs, detailed information on the variables used is attached as an annexure.

5.5.1 The Hugin Graphical User Interface

The Hugin Graphical User Interface (GUI) is an interactive tool that enables one to use the facilities of the Hugin Decision Engine. It helps construct models that can be used in other applications. The Hugin GUI is a component of the Hugin Development Environment. The main components are the Hugin Decision Engine and Application Programming Interfaces. The extension of BNs with decision and utility nodes, known as influence diagrams allows the modelling of decision scenarios explicitly, this is however not part of the application of the BNs theory in this research.

5.5.2 Definition of Bayesian Networks

A Bayesian Network is a network of nodes connected by directed links with a probability function attached to each node (variable). The network (or graph) is a directed acyclic graph (DAG), i.e., there is no directed path starting and ending at the same node. For example, illiteracy contributes to (causes) child neglect. This relationship is acyclic because it cannot be interpreted the other way around. This means that child neglect does not contribute to (cause) illiteracy as per this network.

5.5.3 Conditional Independence

An important concept for BNs theory is the conditional independence. Two sets of variables, A and B , are said to be (conditionally) independent given a third set C of variables if when the values of the variables C are known, knowledge about the values of the variables B provides no further information about the values of the variables A : $P(A|B,C) = P(A|C)$

5.5.4 Causal networks

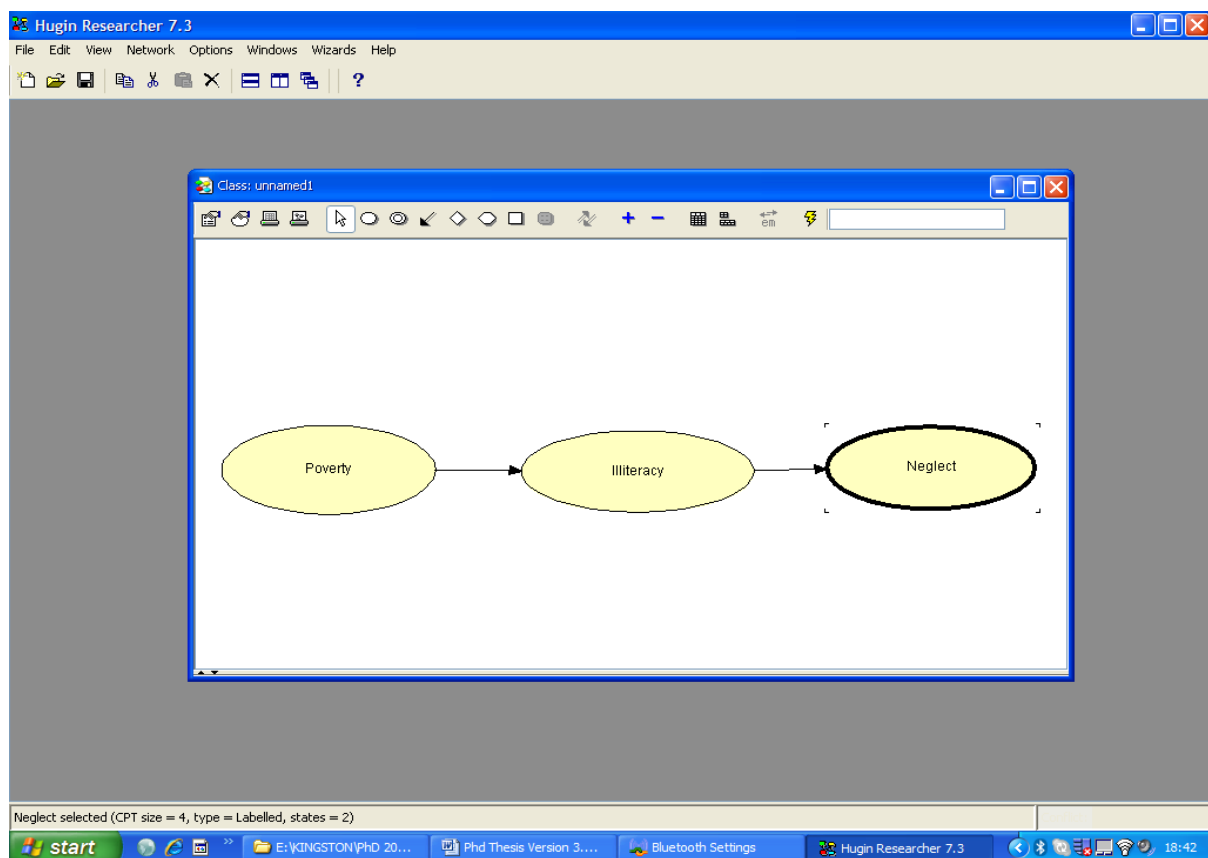
The influence diagrams of the BNs theory are normative and have the following characteristics:

- The graphs represent causal relationships.
- Strength of relations are emphasised by probabilities.
- Preferences are represented by utilities (decision).
- Recommendations (decisions) are based on maximising the expected utility.
- Causal networks are acyclic through directed graphs.

5.5.5 Serial connections

Serial connection means that variable X contributes to the incidence of variable Y which in turn contributes to the incidence of variable Z as in the example below:

Figure 15: A serial Bayesian Networks connection

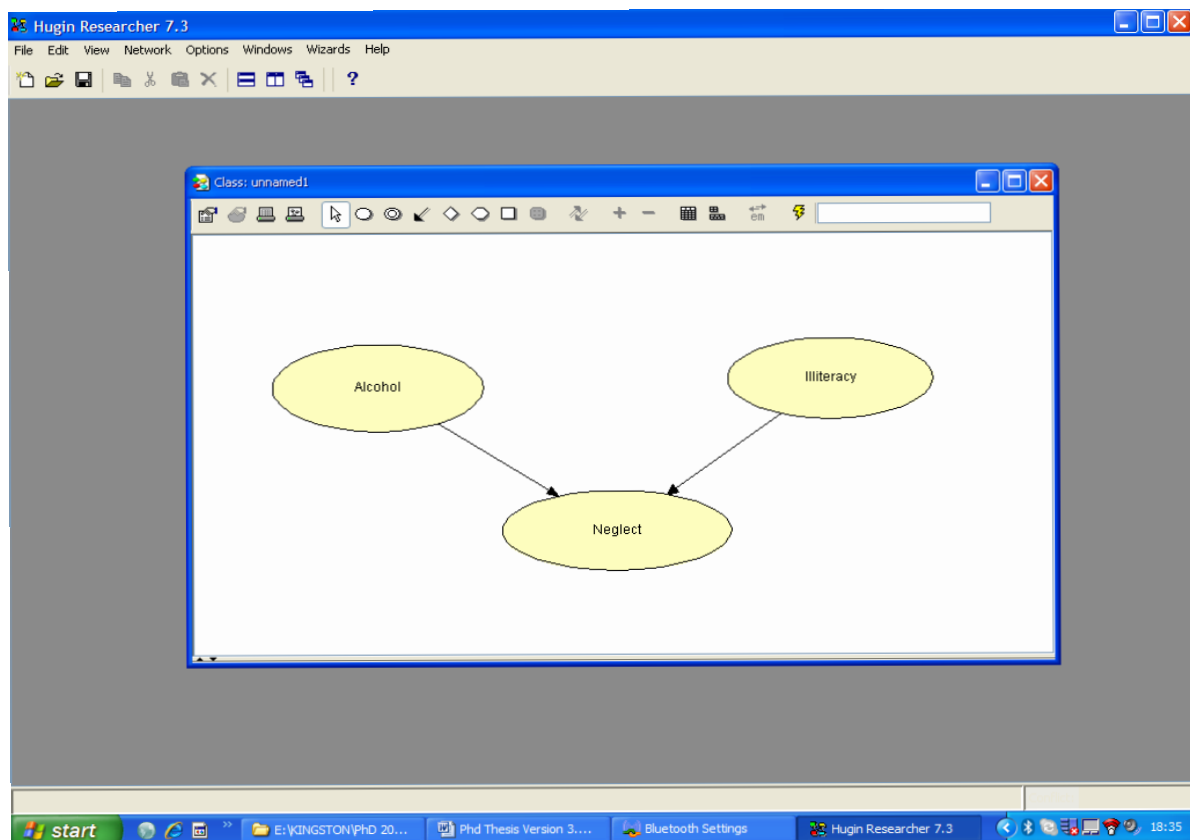


In the above case, the serial connection explains that poverty contributes to illiteracy. Illiteracy on the other hand contributes to child neglect. Poverty can directly contribute to child neglect through other factors such as nutrition or the non satisfaction of basic needs but this serial connection emphasises the impact of poverty on illiteracy and how illiteracy directly contributes to child neglect.

5.5.6 Converging connections

A connection is a converging connection when two or more different variables contribute to the incidence of one variable. For example:

Figure 16: A converging Bayesian Networks connection



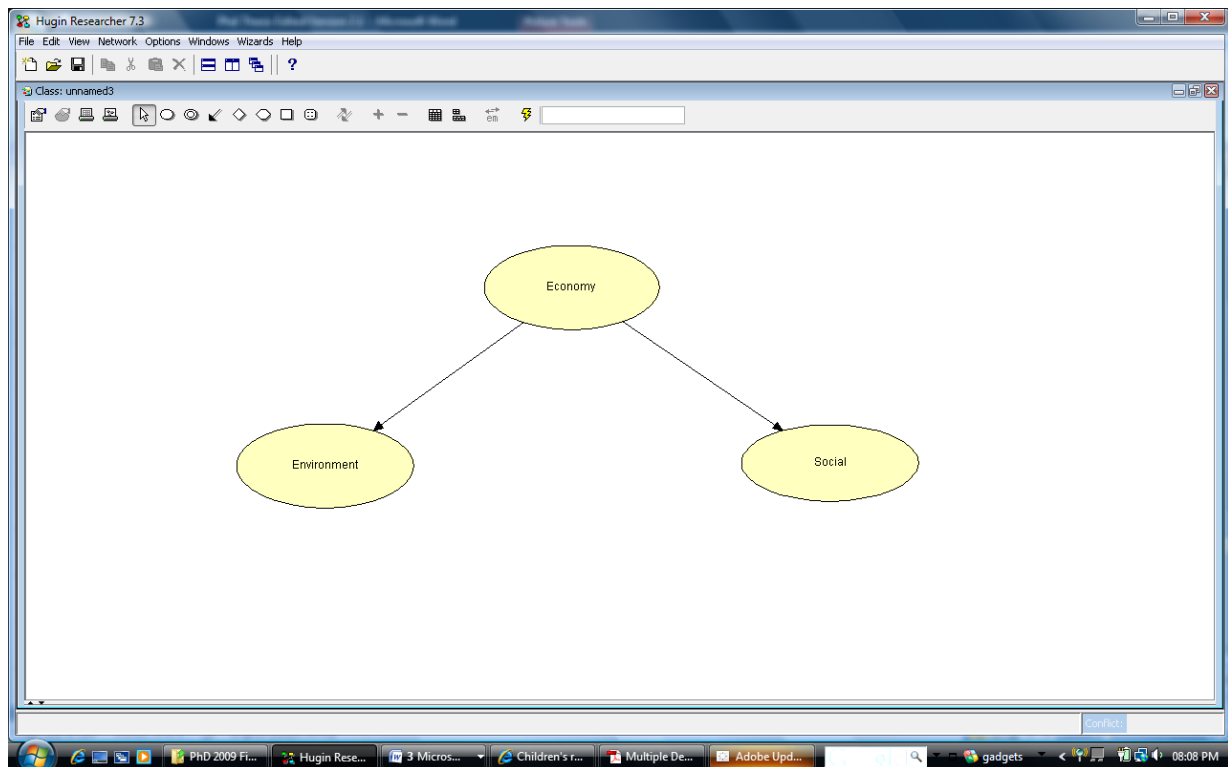
In this example, two different and independent variables contribute to child abuse: alcohol abuse and illiteracy. The network says that alcohol abuse directly contributes to child neglect and at the same time illiteracy directly contributes to child neglect.

5.5.7 Diverging connections

A connection is a diverging connection when one variable contributes to the incidence of

two or more other variables as in the following example:

Figure 17: A diverging Bayesian Networks connection



In this example, the economic condition contributes directly to the state of the physical environment and that of the social environment too. This means for instance that the poor economic condition of a household or area has a negative impact on its physical environment. In the same way, a good economic condition has a good impact on the social environment of a household or community.

5.5.8 Reflective analysis

In addition to the BNs principles, the design of the IMT applies the reflective analysis process. O'Leary (2005) suggests that reflective analysis involves staying as close to the data as possible – from initial data gathering to the research conclusion.

Three key steps of the reflexive analysis are reflected in the development process of the IMT. The first step of reflexive analysis is to establish the links and interdependences between variables contributing to child abuse. The research establishes the links and interdependences between contributing variables as well as the quantification (probabilities) of those links. The probabilities demonstrate the level and impact of each

individual contributing variable or the combination of two or more variables in the incidence of another variable or other variables and of child abuse. Secondly, the meaning of each contributing variable consists of the consideration of a working definition based on the expert knowledge and not contradictory to the meaning of the literature. Thirdly, to use the collected data, in order to develop the IMT. The IMT is the outcome (conclusion) of the research. After all the links and interdependences between the variables were established and the full IMT developed, the hypothesis of the research was confirmed to show the importance of the combination of different variables in understanding, preventing and intervening against child abuse.

5.6 LINKS AND INTERDEPENDENCES WITHIN CLUSTERS

Although all variables are linked to child abuse, it is important to review the links among variables from each theory. This means that variables are linked and impact on each other before being directly linked to child abuse. In performing this task, the research responds to the limitation of the reviewed models and theory of child abuse that minimise the importance of establishing the causal relationships among variables from the same theory (cluster).

5.6.1 Economic cluster

The economic theory includes variables with economic characteristics. Economic variables refer to the economic conditions of the household or community where the child lives or receives primary care. According to the economic theory of crime causation, crime is perpetrated as a source of income. In other words, crime is committed for gain and/or a certain degree of satisfaction. The economic theory of child exploitation implies that children are used as cheap labour, drug carriers, or prostitutes to generate income for their parents or caregivers. The economic theory of child abuse also means that poor families have not sufficient means to satisfy the basic needs of children resulting in child neglect. The lack of sufficient income leads to a high degree of stress and in some cases the use of substances resulting in the incapacity to take care of children.

The economic contributing factors are those that respond to the direct material needs of the child. These are the level of income of the parents or caregivers, their employment, their level of education, the ratio: breadwinner-number of children among others as reflected in table 31 below.

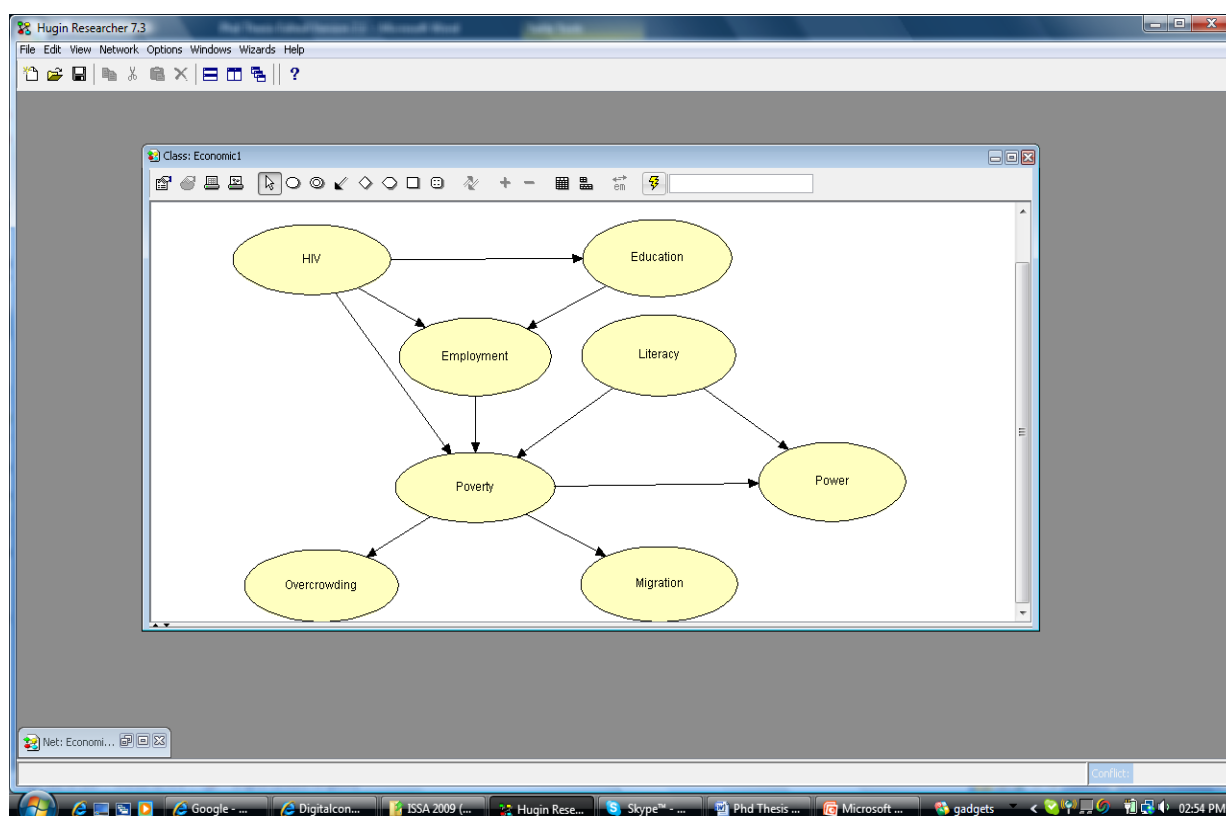
Variable ...	Linked to variable ...
Overcrowding	
Abuse of economic power	
Poverty	Family migration / Overcrowding
Unemployment	Poverty
Literacy	Poverty, Abuse of economic power
Family migration	
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Level of education / Employment / Poverty
Level of education	Unemployment

Table 31: Links and interdependences among economic cluster variables

Source: Author

Network 1 shows the links and interdependences among economic cluster variables.

Network 1: Links and interdependences among economic cluster variables



Economic variables influence each other as demonstrated in the following table and network. The variable poverty for instance, influences family migration. This means that,

when a family is poor, there is a high probability that they opt for migration to look for employment or opportunities elsewhere. The other links and interdependences are included in table 32 below:

Variable....	States	Variable...: State 1	P *	Variable...: State 2	P *
		Employment: conditional probability			
Education _ HIV prevalence	Not educated _ HIV	Unemployment	0.80	Employment	0.20
	Educated _ HIV	Unemployment	0.35	Employment	0.65
	Not Educated _ No HIV	Unemployment	0.60	Employment	0.40
	Educated _ No HIV	Unemployment	0.35	Employment	0.65
		Economic Power			
Literacy _ Poverty	Illiterate _ Poor household	Abuse of economic power	0.75	Economic power balance	0.25
	Literate _ Poor household	Abuse of economic power	0.35	Economic power balance	0.65
	Illiterate _ Non-poor household	Abuse of economic power	0.75	Economic power balance	0.25
	Literate _ Non-poor household	Abuse of economic power	0.35	Economic power balance	0.65
		Poverty: conditional probability			
HIV _ Literacy _ Employment	HIV _ Illiterate _ Unemployment	Poor household	0.85	Non-poor household	0.15
	HIV _ Illiterate _ Employment	Poor household	0.75	Non-poor household	0.25
	HIV _ Literate _ Unemployment	Poor household	0.80	Non-poor household	0.20
	HIV _ Literate _ Employment	Poor household	0.75	Non-poor household	0.25
	No HIV _ Illiterate _ Unemployment	Poor household	0.75	Non-poor household	0.25
	No HIV _ Illiterate _ Employment	Poor household	0.70	Non-poor household	0.30
	No HIV _ Literate _ Unemployment	Poor household	0.70	Non-poor household	0.30
	No HIV _ Literate _ Employment	Poor household	0.30	Non-poor household	0.70
		Overcrowding			
Poverty	Poor household	Overcrowded	0.75	Not overcrowded	0.25
	Non-poor household	Overcrowded	0.20	Not overcrowded	0.80
		Family Migration			
Poverty	Poor household	Family migration	0.60	No family migration	0.40
	Non-poor household	Family migration	0.35	No family migration	0.65
		Education			
HIV / AIDS	HIV prevalence	Not educated	0.65	Educated	0.35
	No HIV Prevalence	Not educated	0.25	Educated	0.75
* Probability					

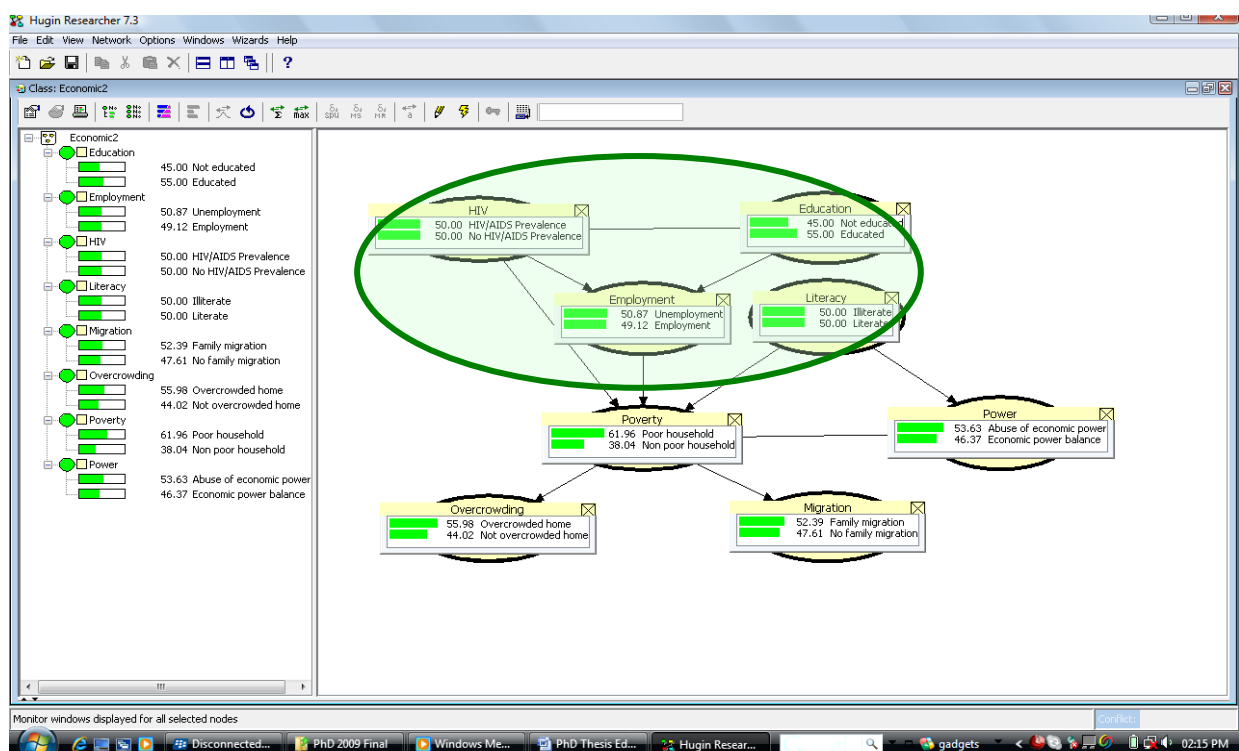
Table 32: Quantification of economy cluster variables

Source: Author

This table contains the estimations of the probability of one variable to contribute to the incidence of another variable. The interpretation for $P(\text{Unemployment} \mid \text{HIV} \mid \text{No Education})$: 0.80 can be read as that the probability of Unemployment considering the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and No Education is 0.80 or 80%. Meaning that there is an 80% chance of Unemployment for a person who is HIV/AIDS and is Not educated. The other probabilities are contained in the above table 32.

The probabilities of the above links and interdependences are shown in network 2:

Network 2: Quantification of economic cluster variables



The above network shows the links and interdependences among economic variables. According to the network, the variable employment for instance, is influenced by education and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. The links and interdependences between these three variables mean that when the states of one or all of these variables change, the states of employment change too. Because two different variables (Education and HIV/AIDS) contribute to Employment, the probability is a 'conditional probability'.

Unemployment and Poverty variables are at the centre of the economic network. In South Africa, the principal source of income for many households is formal and informal

employment. For this reason, unemployment contributes to poverty and poverty has a great impact on family migration and overcrowding. Overcrowding and family migration are two crucial economic variables that contribute to the causation of child abuse.

The other focus of the economic network is around literacy. Illiteracy directly contributes to poverty and to the abuse of economic power according to this network. The network says that promoting literacy will contribute to poverty alleviation and the balance of economic power. Poverty and domination of economic power are also two crucial variables in the causation of child abuse.

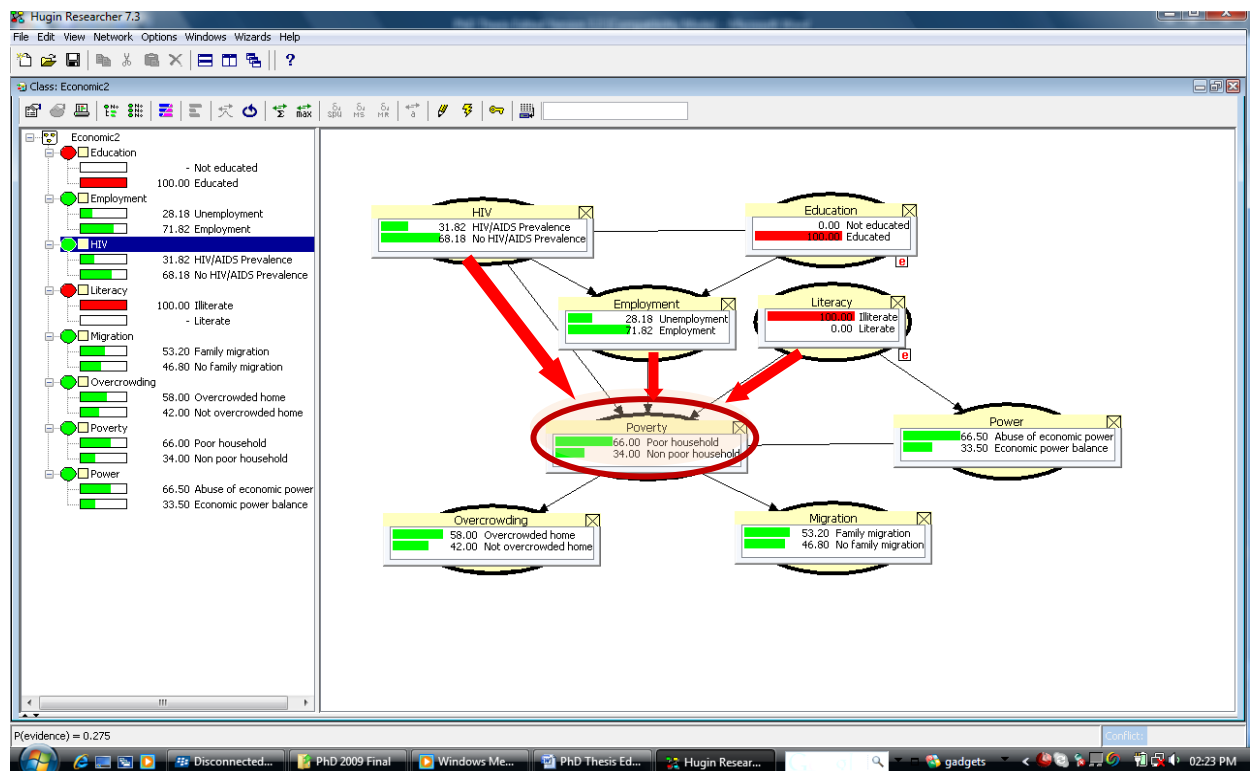
This economic theory network means that, under the circumstance whereby independent variables are 50% good and 50% bad (HIV and Literacy), considering the links and interdependences among variables the following probabilities are possible:

- Education, Employment and Power are slightly below and above the 50/50 mark or 45/55 for Education and 51/49 for Employment and 54/46 for Power.
- Poverty is at 62/38, Migration at 52/48 and Overcrowding at 56/44.

Other different scenarios are possible (see the networks below). These scenarios are very important when considering addressing the variables that contribute to negative circumstances or conditions in the network.

Scenario 1: Majority of children live in poor households

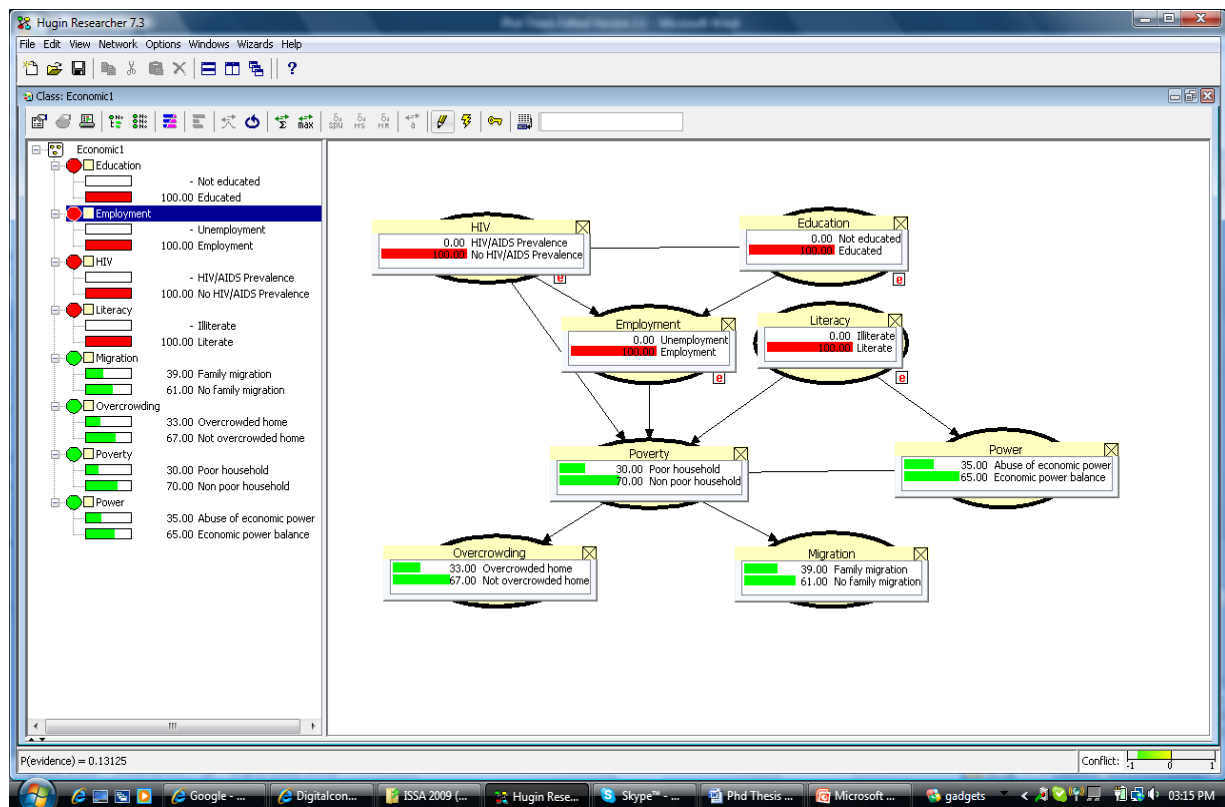
Network 3: Majority of children live in poor households



The above network shows a scenario almost the same as the current economic situation in South Africa. The majority of children live in poor households (66% in this network). The network concentrates on the high level of education and illiteracy. This case might be because of the high level of illiteracy in rural and under resourced areas. The links among variables result in 28% of unemployment and 31% of HIV/AIDS prevalence. In such a scenario there is a prevalence of abuse of economic power (66.50% and overcrowding (58%). Migration is slightly high at 53%. This means that children are at high risk of being abused considering the prevalence of poverty. Poverty is therefore translated into the environmental household situation (overcrowding), family migration and the abuse of economic power.

Scenario 2: Ideal situation

Network 4: Positive impact of Employment, Literacy and Education



To prioritise the interventions, the network suggests that, to create and sustain employment, policies and programmes should be developed and implemented to address the three variables that contribute to unemployment. Policies and programmes should focus on the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and, at the same time, prioritise easy access to good quality education. Good policies and programmes to create jobs and to sustain employment will have a direct impact on poverty and indirectly on overcrowding and migration. In maximising efforts in creating jobs, sustaining employment and improving literacy, the level of poverty will certainly drop. Consequently, there will be less overcrowding and family migration as direct contributing variables to child abuse.

5.6.2 Social cluster

The social theory of child abuse says that the social environment where the child lives contributes to her or his care, protection, safety and wellbeing. The social theory consists of variables observed in the daily life of children and their interactions with their family, the community and society. These variables are of a societal

characteristic because they affect the way society functions. They include but are not limited to substance abuse, mobility of families and parenting skills.

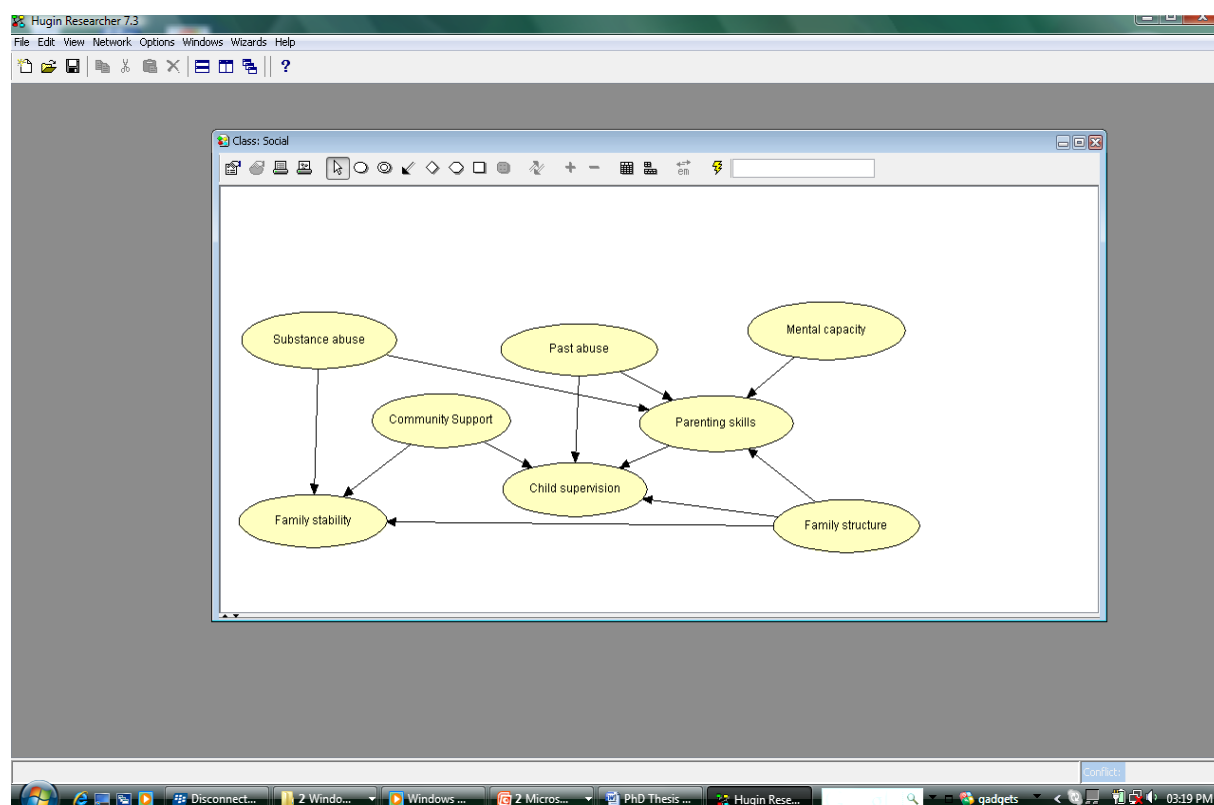
Table 33 shows the links and interdependences among social cluster variables.

Table 33: Links and interdependences among social cluster variables

Variable...	Variable...
Mental capacity	Parenting skills
Community support	Family stability / Child supervision
Family stability	
Past abuse	Parenting skills / Child supervision
Substance abuse	Parenting Skills / Family stability
Child supervision	
Parenting skills	Child supervision
Family structure	Family stability / Parenting / Child supervision

The links and interdependences among social cluster variables are demonstrated in network 5 below.

Network 5: Links and interdependences among social cluster variables



The following table shows how the variables from the social cluster are quantified. The quantification as depicted in the table below is the result of the summary of literature on the social theory of crime causation and child abuse. The observation of the MI database and the views of field experts have also contributed in the quantification of the links between these variables (probabilities).

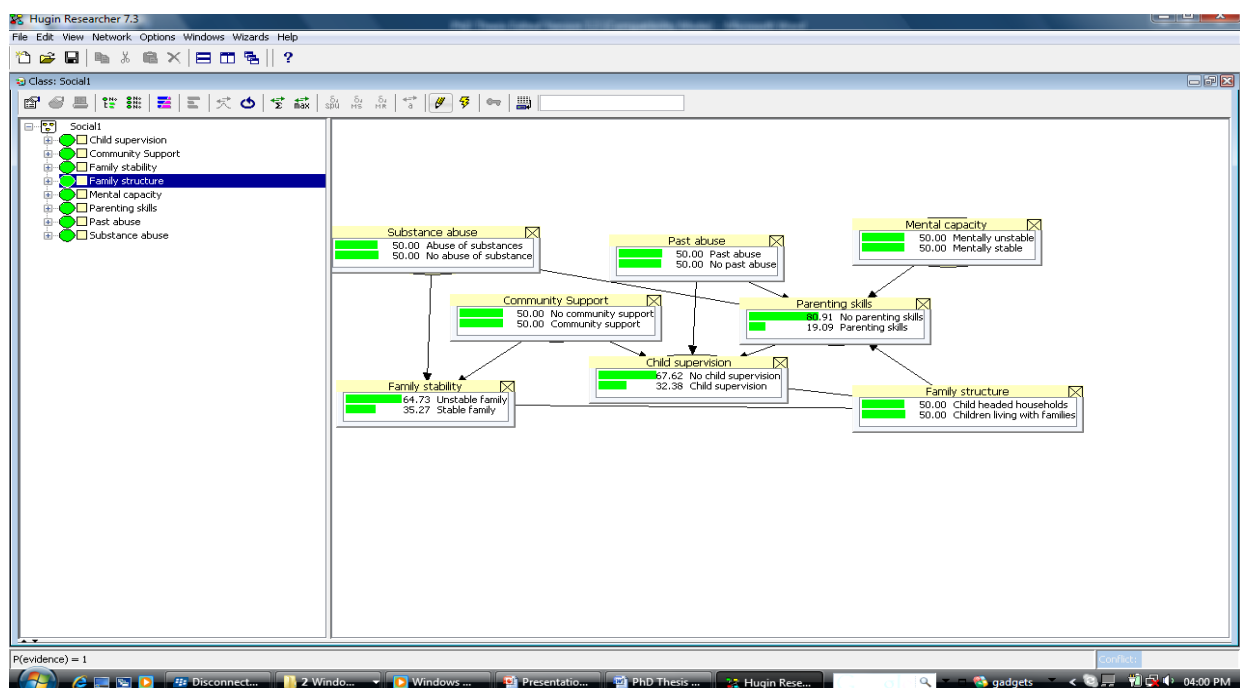
Table 34: Quantification of social cluster variables

Variable...	States	Variable: State 1	P *	Variable: State 2	P *
Mental capacity _ Past abuse _ Substance abuse		Parenting skills: conditional probability			
	Mentally incapable _ Past abuse _ Substance abuse	No Parenting skills	0.98	Parenting skills	0.02
	Mentally capable _ Past abuse _ Substance abuse	No Parenting skills	0.70	Parenting skills	0.30
	Mentally incapable _ No Past abuse _ Substance abuse	No parenting skills	0.95	Parenting skills	0.05
	Mentally capable _ No past abuse _ Substance abuse	No parenting skills	0.65	Parenting skills	0.35
	Mentally incapable _ Past abuse _ No Substance abuse	No parenting skills	0.90	Parenting skills	0.10
	Mentally capable _ Past abuse _ No Substance abuse	No parenting skills	0.65	Parenting skills	0.35
	Mentally incapable _ No Past abuse _ No Substance abuse	No parenting skills	0.85	Parenting skills	0.15
	Mentally capable _ No Past abuse _ No Substance abuse	No parenting skills	0.25	Parenting skills	0.75
		Child supervision: conditional probability			
Parenting skills _ Past abuse _ Community support	No parenting skills – Past abuse – No community support	No child supervision	0.85	Child supervision	0.15
	No parenting skills – Past abuse – Community support	No child supervision	0.75	Child supervision	0.25
	No parenting skills – No Past abuse – No community support	No child supervision	0.70	Child supervision	0.30
	No parenting skills – Past abuse – Community support	No child supervision	0.55	Child supervision	0.45
	Parenting skills – Past abuse – No community support	No child supervision	0.70	Child supervision	0.30
	Parenting skills – Past abuse – Community support	No child supervision	0.40	Child supervision	0.60

	Parenting skills – No Past abuse – No Community support	No child supervision	0.45	Child supervision	0.55
	Parenting skills – No Past abuse – Community support	No child supervision	0.15	Child supervision	0.85
		Family Stability: conditional probability			
Substance abuse – Community support	Substance abuse _ No Community Support	No family stability	0.80	Family stability	0.20
	Substance abuse _ Community Support	No family stability	0.55	Family stability	0.45
	No Substance abuse _ No Community Support	No family stability	0.60	Family stability	0.40
	No Substance abuse _ Community Support	No family stability	0.15	Family stability	0.85
* Probability					

Network 6 below depicts the probabilities of links and interdependences among social cluster variables.

Network 6: Quantification of social cluster variables



From the above social network, Parenting skills, Past abuse of the parent and Community support are three important variables that contribute to Child supervision. The variable Parenting skills depends on four variables: mental capacity; past abuse; substance abuse; and the structure of the household. The variable Family stability is

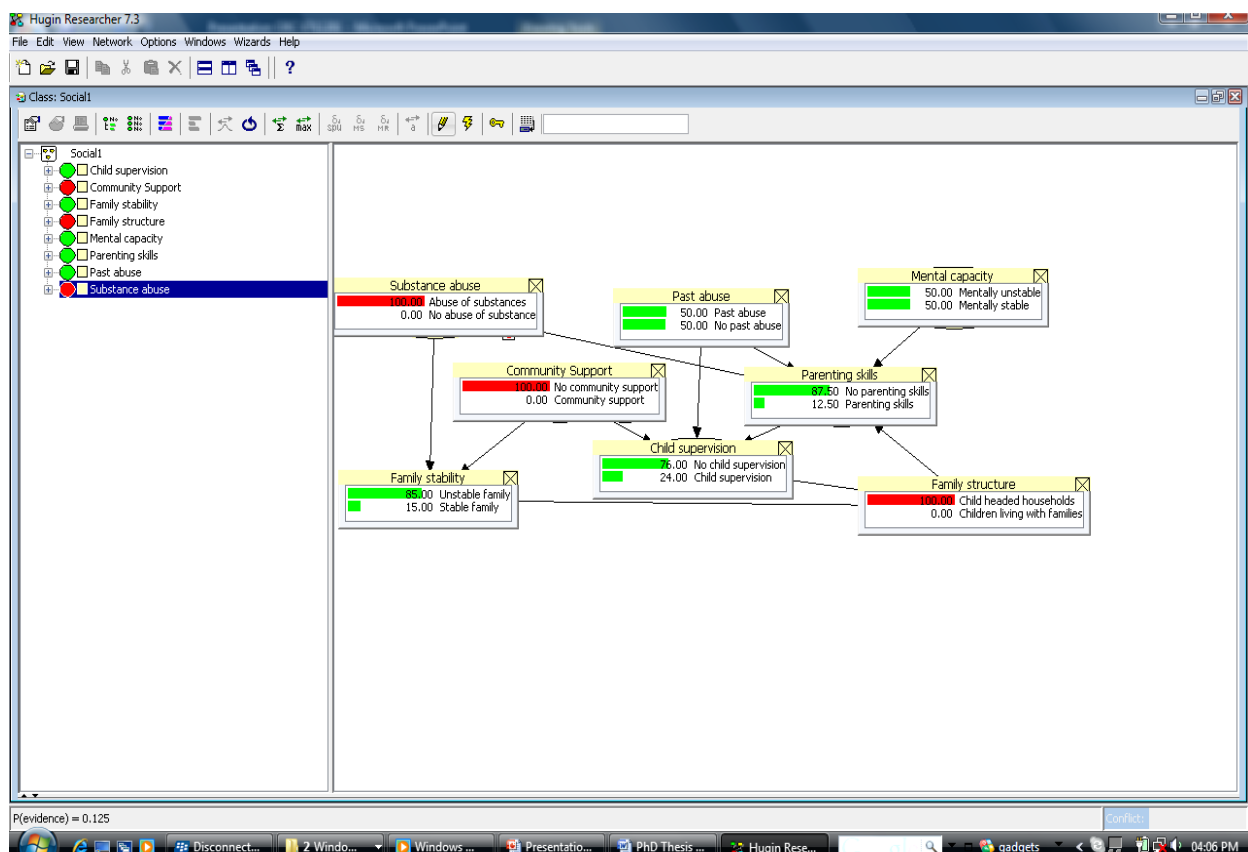
also critical in contributing to child abuse. This variable depends on Substance abuse, Community support and Family structure. The Mental capacity of parents or plays a central role in Parenting skills. The views and opinions of field experts converged that when parents or caregivers are Mentally incapable there is a very slim, almost no chance of Parenting skills.

The variables contributing to Parenting skills, if considered at normal probability of 50/50 are heavily influenced by the mental stability of parents or caregivers. This means that, if 50% of parents or caregivers are considered to be either mentally capable or incapable, with past abuse experience or not or abusing alcohol or not and if 50% of children live either with or without parents, the probability of parenting skills is only 19% because of the impact of the mental capacity of the parents or caregivers.

There are other possible scenarios such as the following:

Scenario 1: Negative social environment

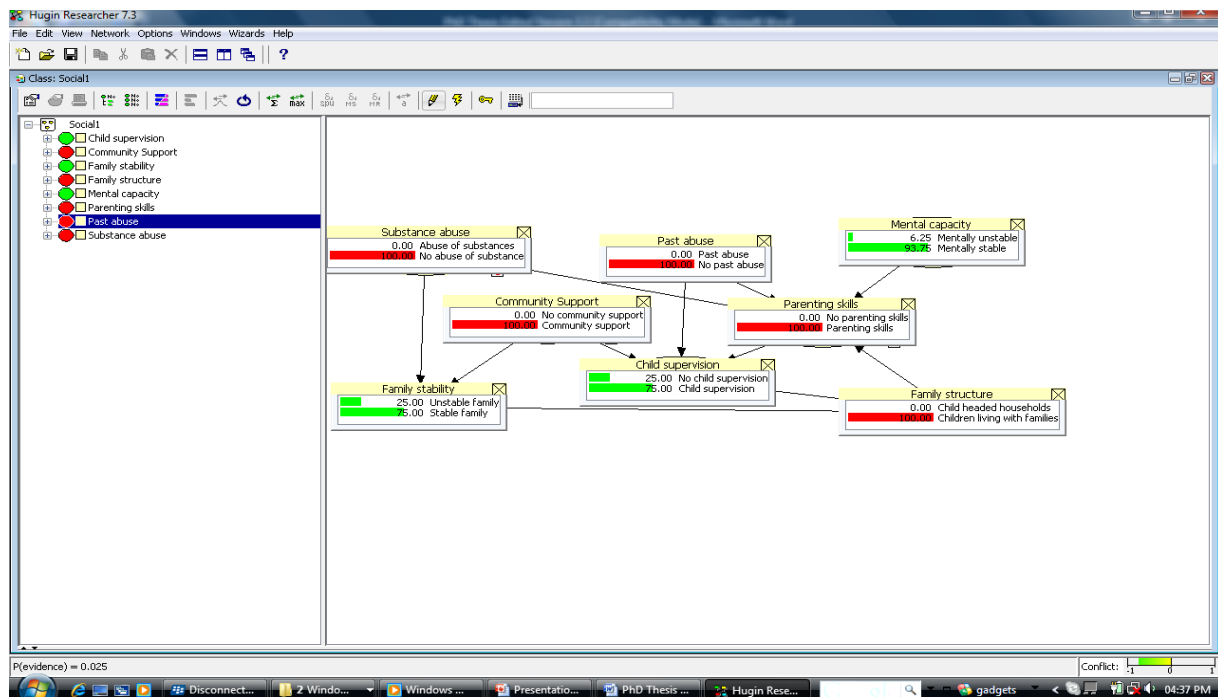
Network 7: Negative social environment scenario



Network 7 above explains that a prevalence of substance abuse, no community support and a majority of children living without parents implies less child supervision (24%), less parenting skills (12.50%) and less stable families (15%).

Scenario 2: Ideal situation in the social network

Network 8: Good social environment scenario



An ideal situation whereby Family stability and Child supervision are prioritised is a result of a change in the states of five variables within the social network. Firstly, action is needed to deal with Substance abuse. Secondly, parents or caregivers who were abused as children must receive proper assistance in order to minimise their probability of being abusive. Thirdly, Parenting skills should be prioritised. Fourthly, Community support should be promoted and sustained. Finally, children should be placed in households where they will be under the responsibility of parents or legal caregivers. These variables are known as protective variables.

Protective variables offer a shield to children against abuse and neglect. It is however, unfortunate that available research fails to systematically identify and

document enough protective variables to be used as best practices to lessen the impact of child abuse on victims or to restrain child abuse. Some social variables that appear to facilitate resilience towards child abuse include: attachment and bonding child – parent or caregiver; parenting skills (including the paternal role); no alcohol and/or drug abuse; and positive relationship with non-offending parents or caregivers. Studies have also shown that communities with strong social cohesion have a protective effect and can reduce the risk of child abuse. Stable household units can be a powerful source of protection for children.

5.6.3 Environmental cluster

The physical environmental cluster plays a crucial role in the causation of crime in general and child abuse in particular. This research agrees with the environmental theory of child abuse. According to the environmental theory, the physical environment in which children grow contribute (or not) to their care, protection, safety and wellbeing. Proper housing, clean and safe environment, access to piped water and a flush toilet or a ventilated latrine, proper infrastructures and recreational facilities are among the most important environmental variables that contribute to child care, protection, safety and wellbeing.

Highlighting the importance of access to piped water within the dwelling, a study undertaken in four villages in Limpopo concluded that the negative impact on the educational achievement of school-going children fetching water is seriously negative. According to the Department of Labour (2007), many children in rural areas have less time to concentrate on their school work because of fetching water regularly.

Department of Labour observes that “the TECL survey also found that a large proportion of children involved in the task for relatively long hours complained of often being late for school, being unable to concentrate in class, having poor morale, and needing to leave school as early as possible to fetch water” (Department of Labour, 2007, p. 52).

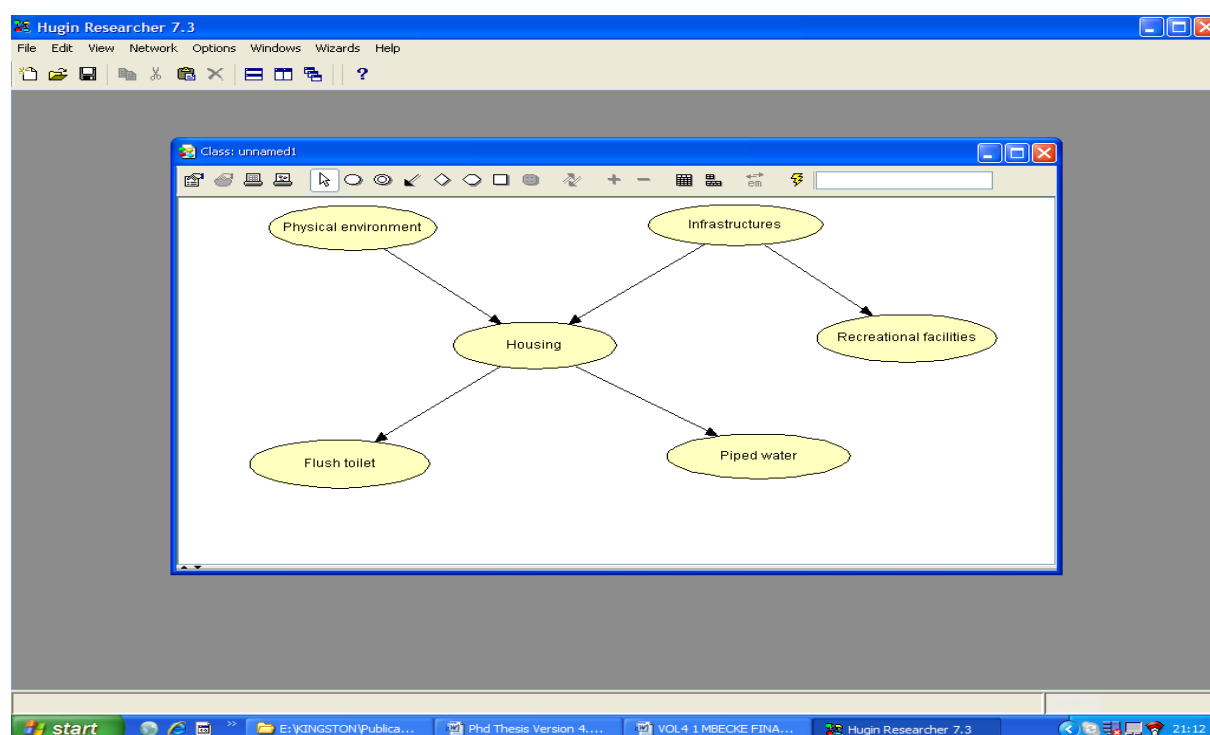
Table 35 below shows the links and interdependences among environmental cluster variables.

Table 35: Links and interdependences among environment cluster variables

Variable....	Variable...
Proper housing	Piped water, flush toilets
Physical environment (lights...)	Proper housing
Recreational facilities (parks, sports facilities, ...)	
Infrastructures (roads, schools, clinics, ...)	Recreational facilities / Proper Housing
Piped water	
Flush toilet or ventilated pit latrine	

The links and interdependences between environmental cluster variables are demonstrated in network 9 below:

Network 9: Links and interdependences among environmental cluster variables



The six important variables from the environment cluster are linked and impact on each other as per table 36 below. The links and interdependences below as well as their quantification explain the environmental theory of crime causation and child abuse. According to environmental theory, children who live in a poor physical environment (house or area) are more at risk of abuse and neglect.

The links and probabilities below show how variables from the environmental cluster contribute to the incidence of each other.

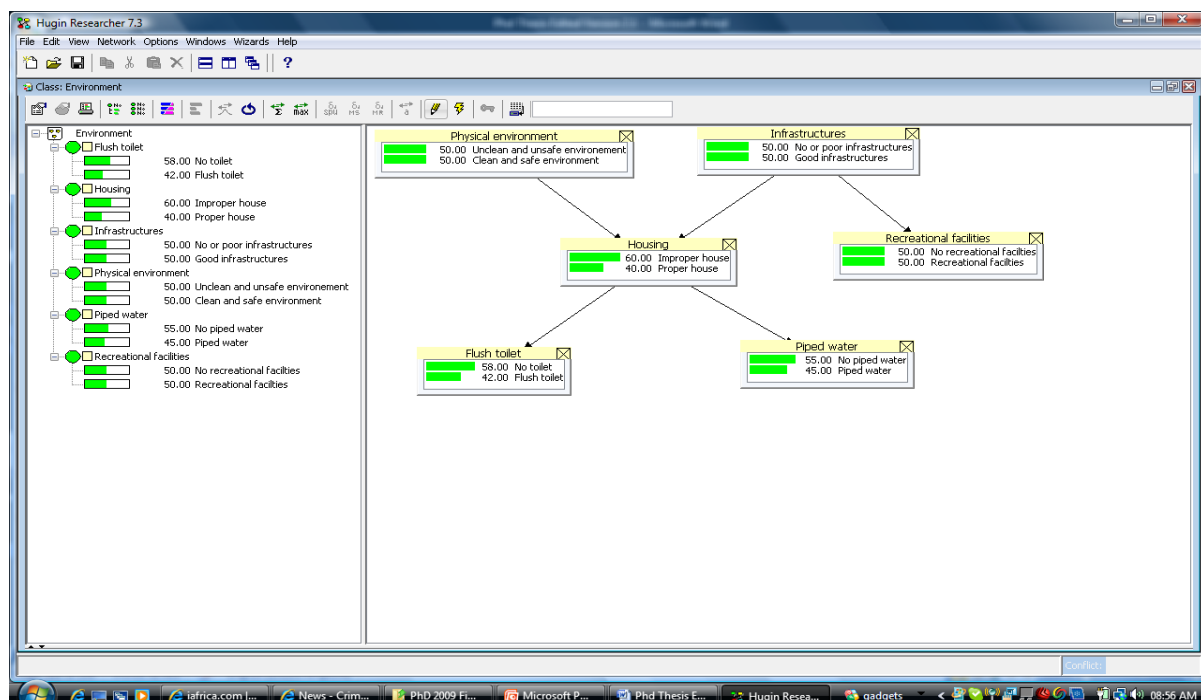
Table 36: Quantification of environmental cluster variables

Variable...	States	Variable: State 1	P *	Variable: State 2	P *
Environment _ Infrastructure		Housing: Conditional probability			
	Unclean environment _ No Infrastructure	Improper housing	0.80	Proper housing	0.20
	Clean environment _ No Infrastructure	Improper housing	0.70	Proper housing	0.30
	Unclean environment _ Good Infrastructure	Improper housing	0.70	Proper housing	0.30
	Clean environment _ Good Infrastructures	Improper housing	0.20	Proper housing	0.80
Infrastructure		Recreational facilities			
	No / bad infrastructure	No recreational facilities	0.75	Recreational facilities	0.25
	Good infrastructure	No recreational facilities	0.25	Recreational facilities	0.75
Housing		Piped water			
	No substance abuse	No piped water	0.25	Piped water	0.75
	Substance abuse	No piped water	0.75	Piped water	0.25
Housing		Flush toilet			
		No flush toilet	0.80	Flush toilet	0.20
	Community support	No flush toilet	0.25	Flush toilet	0.75

*Probability

The links and interdependences among environmental cluster variables and their probabilities are demonstrated in network 10 below:

Network 10: Quantification of environmental cluster variables

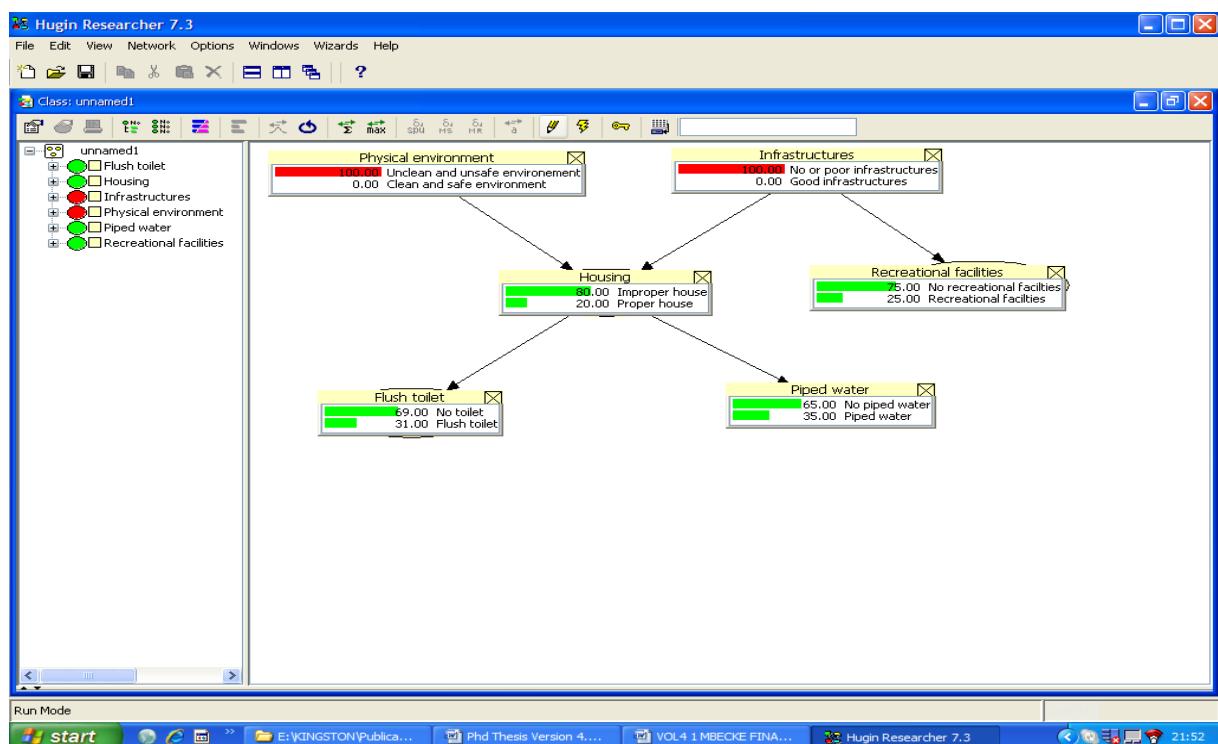


The above environmental network shows that the variable Housing is influenced by both the Physical environment of the area and the Infrastructural state of the area. The variable Infrastructure, contributes to the availability of Recreational facilities. The variable Housing, contributes to both the access to Flush toilet and Piped water. The variable Housing, is where most of the cases of child abuse happen according to the literature and the views of field experts.

Considering the quantification (probabilities) of the links amongst the environmental cluster variables, the following scenarios are possible:

Scenario 1: Unclean/unsafe environment and No or poor infrastructure

Network 11: Unclean/unsafe environment and No or poor infrastructure

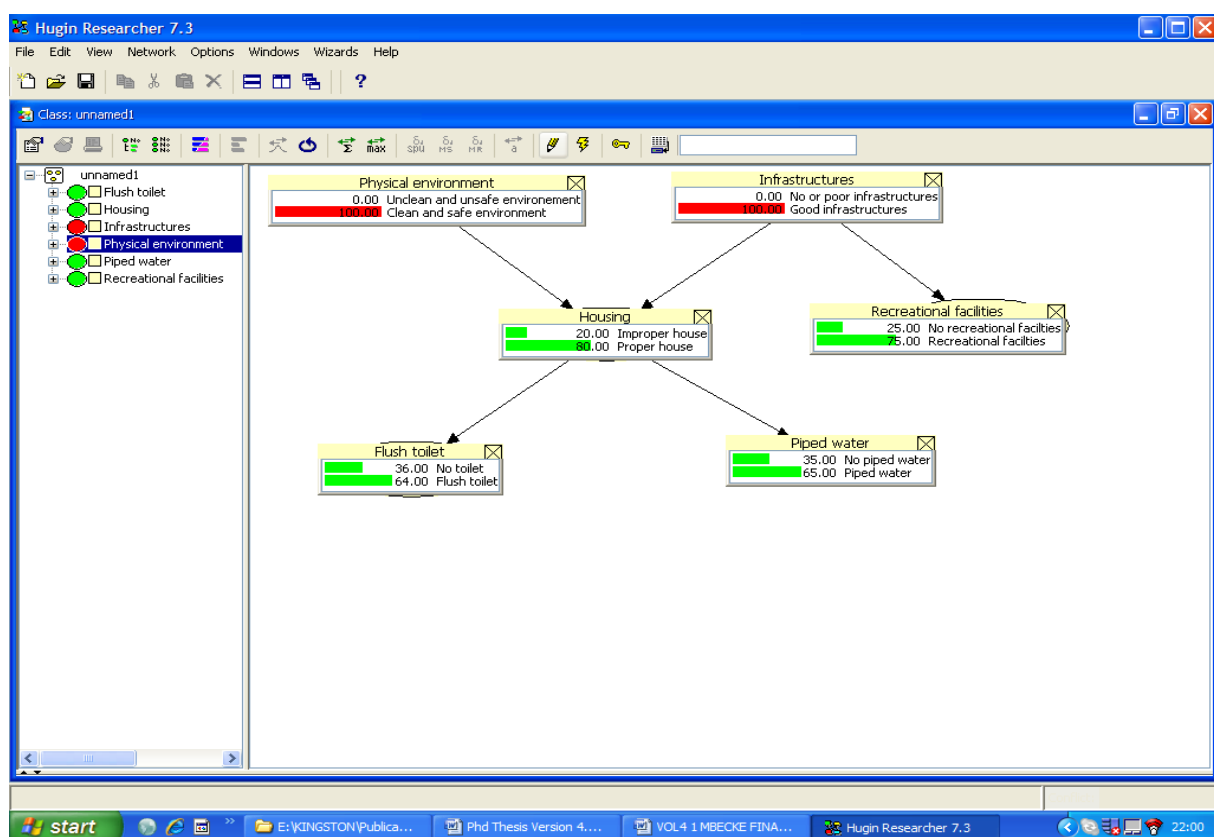


In the above scenario the prevalence of the variable Unclean and unsafe environment combined with No or poor infrastructure results in the predominance of improper Housing. With 80% improper Housing, there is a probability of 69% of no access to a Flush toilet or Ventilated pit latrine and 65% of no access to Piped water. The two variables Flush toilet or Ventilated pit latrine and Piped water contribute to child abuse (mostly in the form of neglect).

Scenario 2: Proper housing

Actions in terms of policies and programmes to facilitate access to a Flush toilet (or Ventilated pit latrine), Piped water as well as Recreational facilities depend on redesigning and managing the physical Environment and providing and maintaining good and quality Infrastructures. Maximising on the two variables will have a positive return in terms of Proper housing (80%). Proper housing will positively impact on the access to a Flush toilet (or Ventilated pit latrine) by 64% and Piped water at 65% (see network 12).

Network 12: Clean/safe environment and Good infrastructure



5.6.4 Cultural cluster

The cultural theory of child abuse suggests that the way children interact with their parents, caregivers and society and the traditions and customs observed in the households and society where children live have an impact (positive or negative) on their care, protection, safety and wellbeing. Variables from the cultural contributing to child abuse include practices such as patriarchy, domestic violence, culture of violence, HIV myth (or belief) and child-parent relationship. Other cultural and

religious practices are genital mutilation of girls, circumcision of boys, marrying young children to older men etc.

In addition to the variables cited above, there is a certain degree of legacy of violence as inherited from the oppression of the apartheid regime which impacted negatively on child's care, protection, safety and wellbeing. The cultural variables considered by the IMT are represented in table 36 below:

Table 36: Links and interdependences among cultural cluster variables

Variable...	Variable ...
Cultural practices	Child age / Child gender
Patriarchy	Reporting of cases / Culture of violence
Culture of violence	
HIV/AIDS myth	
Gender of the child	HIV/AIDS myth
Age of the child	HIV/AIDS myth
Reporting of child abuse	
Child rights	Patriarchy / Child age

Network 13 shows the links and interdependences between cultural cluster variables.

Network 13: Links/interdependences among cultural cluster variables

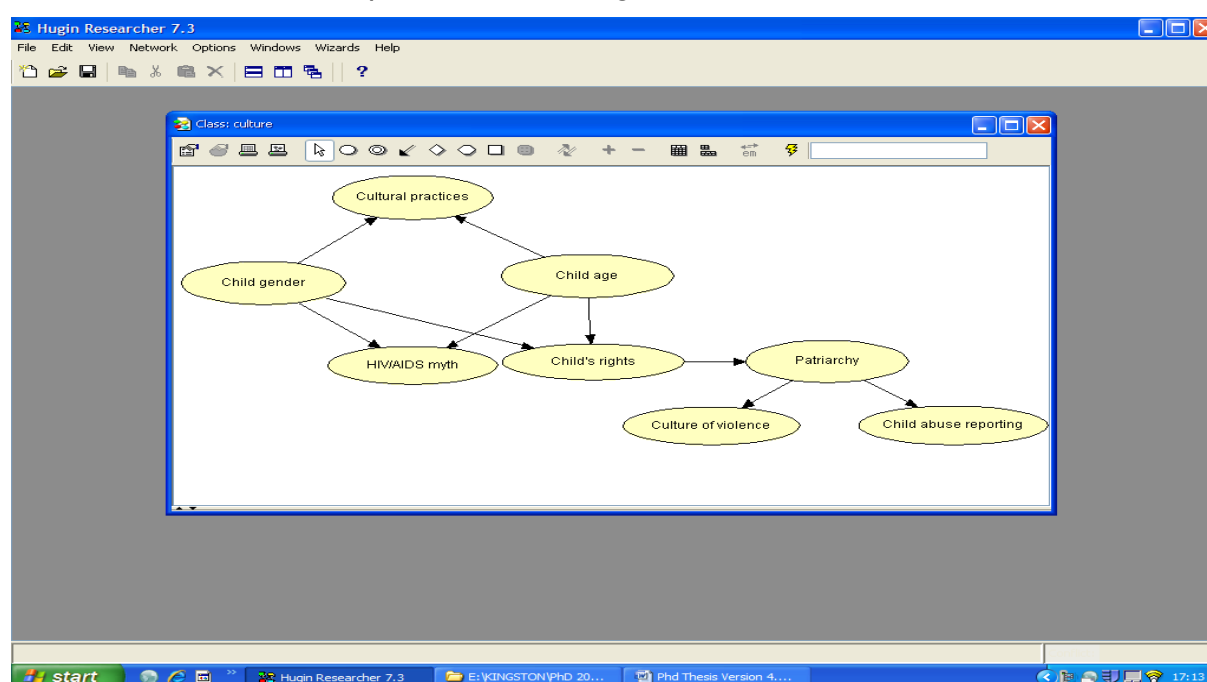


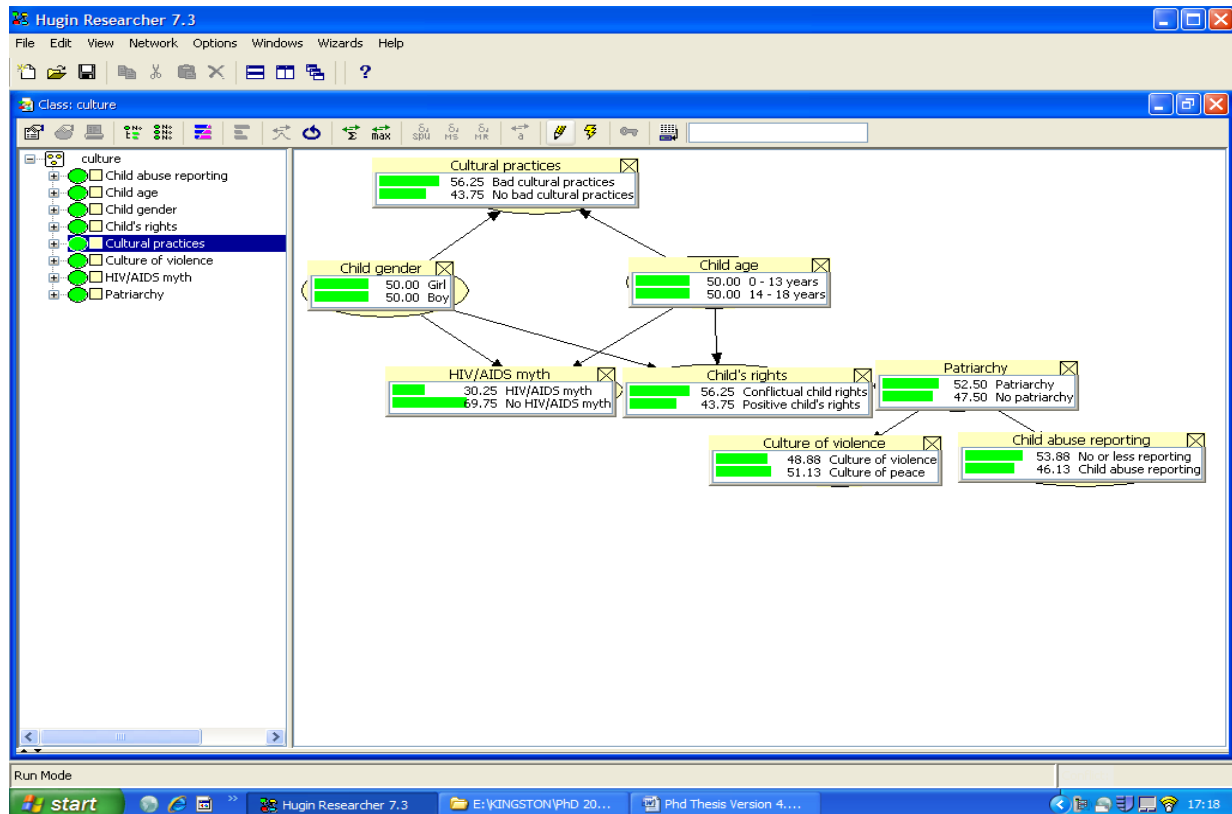
Table 37 shows how cultural cluster variables are quantified. As for the other clusters, the quantification below is the result of the summary of the literature on cultural theory of crime causation and child abuse. The views of field experts and the observation of the MI database also contributed to this quantification.

Table 37: Quantification of cultural cluster variables

Variable...	States	Variable: State 1	P *	Variable: State 2	P *
Child's age _ Child's gender		Cultural practices: conditional probability			
	Girl _ 0 – 13 years	Bad cultural practices	0.80	No bad cultural practices	0.20
	Girl _ 14 – 18 years	Bad cultural practices	0.40	No bad cultural practices	0.60
	Boy _ 0 – 13 years	Bad cultural practices	0.70	No bad cultural practices	0.30
	Boy _ 14 – 18 years	Bad cultural practices	0.35	No bad cultural practices	0.65
Child's age _ Child's gender		Child's rights			
	Girl _ 0 – 13 years	Conflict child's rights	0.75	Positive child's right	0.25
	Girl _ 14 – 18 years	Conflict child's rights	0.45	Positive child's right	0.55
	Boy _ 0 – 13 years	Conflict child's rights	0.70	Positive child's right	0.30
	Boy _ 14 – 18 years	Conflict child's rights	0.35	Positive child's right	0.65
Child's rights		Patriarchy			
	Conflict child's rights	Patriarchy	0.70	No patriarchy	0.30
	Positive child's right	Patriarchy	0.30	No patriarchy	0.70
Child's age _ Child's gender		HIV/AIDS myth: conditional probability			
	Girl _ 0 – 13 years	HIV/AIDS myth	0.90	No HIV/AIDS myth	0.10
	Girl _ 14 – 18 years	HIV/AIDS myth	0.20	No HIV/AIDS myth	0.80
	Boy _ 0 – 13 years	HIV/AIDS myth	0.10	No HIV/AIDS myth	0.90
	Boy _ 14 – 18 years	HIV/AIDS myth	0.01	No HIV/AIDS myth	0.99
Patriarchy		Culture of violence			
	Patriarchy	Culture of violence	0.70	No Culture of peace	0.30
	No Patriarchy	Culture of violence	0.30	No Culture of peace	0.70
Patriarchy		Child abuse reporting			
	Patriarchy	No/less reporting	0.80	Child abuse reporting	0.20
	No Patriarchy	No/less reporting	0.25	Child abuse reporting	0.75

The above probabilities are represented in network 14 below:

Network 14: Quantification of cultural cluster variables



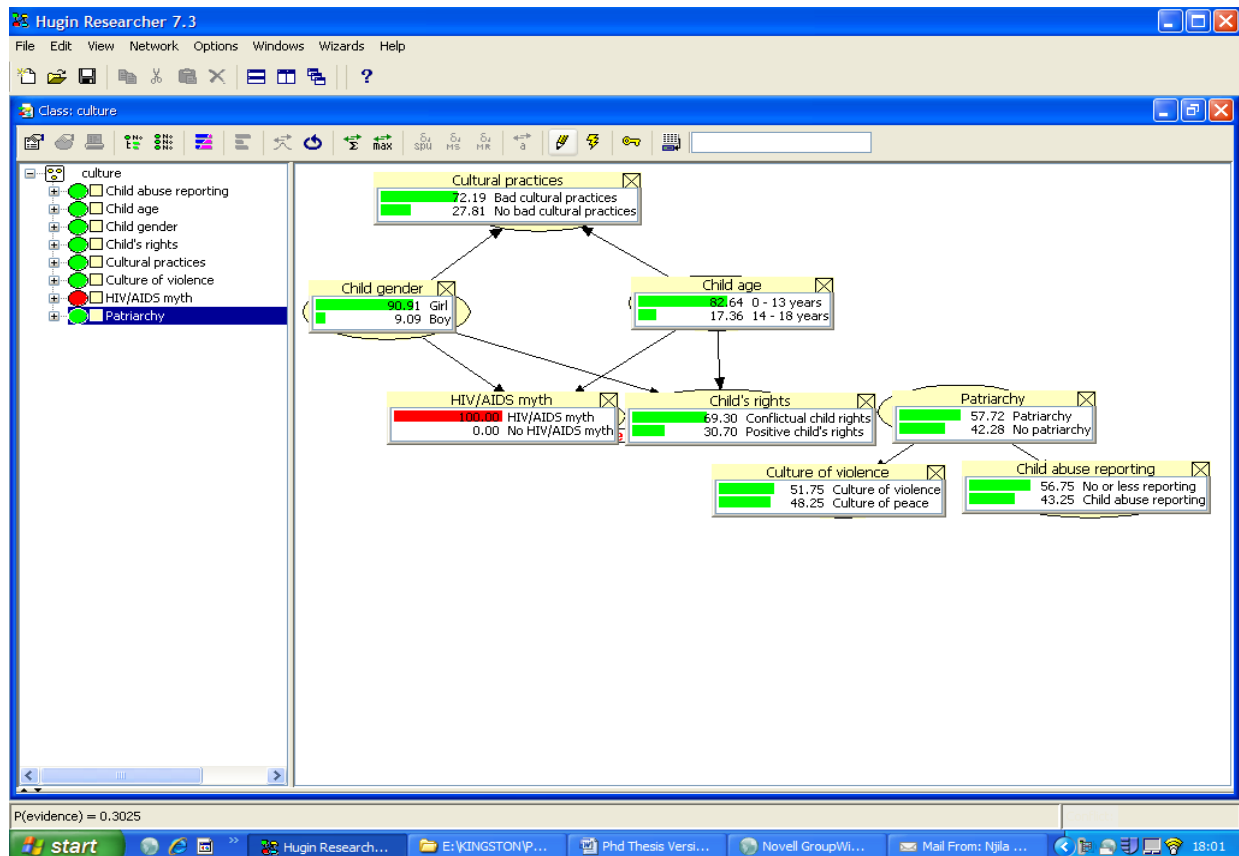
The above network shows that most variables from the cultural cluster depend heavily on the gender and the age of the child. The gender and age of the child influence the culture imposed on the child, the respect for their rights and the impact of the HIV/AIDS myth on child sexual abuse. Because of the nuances of the links between the variables and considering equal probability for the two states of each variable, the network shows the prevalence of bad cultural practices and disrespect or conflictual children's rights (both at 56%) and a slight prevalence of child abuse reporting and patriarchy. The network shows that the variable HIV/AIDS myth has a weak but significant prevalence of 30%).

Unlike other theories, the cultural theory is a bit tricky in its computation because there is no way the state of the gender and the age of the child can be changed in order to neutralise the effect of contributing variables on children's care, protection, safety and wellbeing. The computation assists however in showing how in a society with certain cultural beliefs, young children and girls endure the consequences of cultural practices more than older children and boys. The interpretation of the network starts therefore from the variables gender and age to see their impact on the four combined variables (Girl _ 0

– 13, and Girl _ 14 – 18, Boy 0 – 13 and Boy _ 14 – 18, Girl and Boy _ 0 – 13, Girl and Boy _ 14 – 18) as shown in network 15 below:

Scenario 1: Prevalence of HIV/AIDS myth

Network 15: High prevalence of HIV/AIDS myth

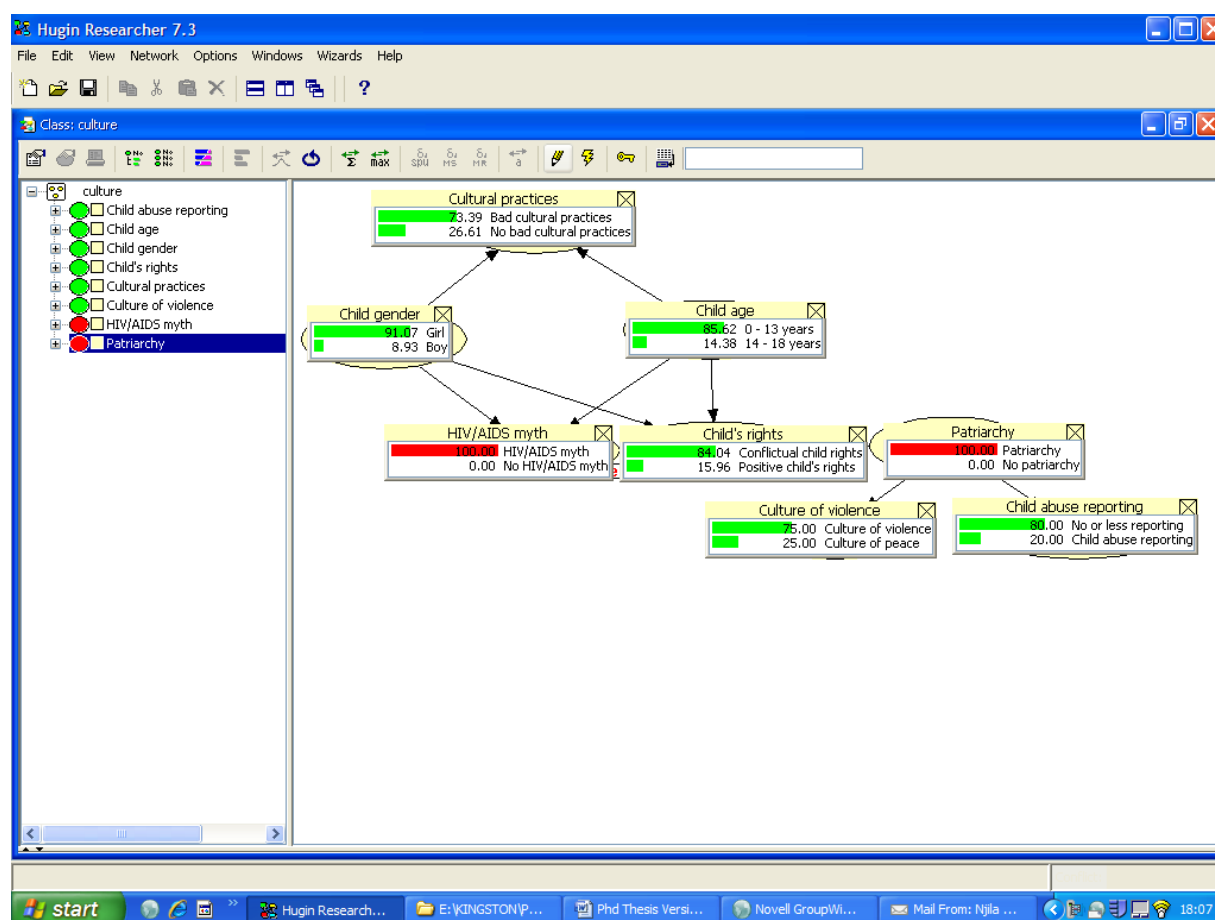


Network 15 above, considering the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS myth, shows that 91% of girls and 82% of children aged between zero and 13 are at high risk. The network shows that these categories of children are vulnerable to other cultural variables such as bad cultural practices (72%), conflictual child's rights (69%) and patriarchy (58%).

Scenario 2: Prevalence of HIV/AIDS myth and Patriarchy

Adding the prevalence of patriarchy to the network 15, the following scenario arises:

Network 16: Prevalence of HIV/AIDS myth and Patriarchy

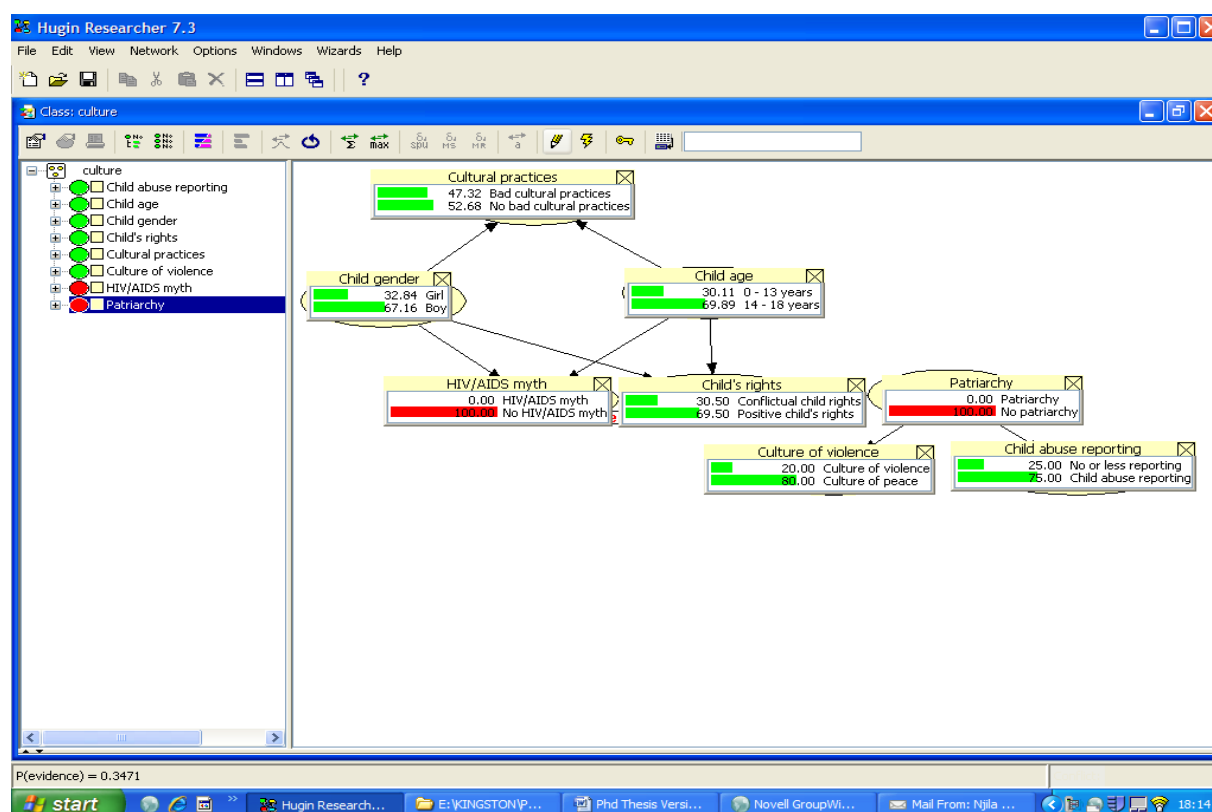


In network 16, the percentage of girls stabilises but that of children under 14 years rises to 86%. All other variables change positively. Bad cultural practices increase to 73%, Conflictual children's rights to 85%, Culture of violence to 75% and No or less child abuse reporting to 80%.

Action for prevention and intervention of the impact of cultural practices on child abuse should focus on a strong public education and awareness campaign on cracking the HIV/AIDS myth and on addressing the issues of patriarchy within the households as well as the community and society in general.

Scenario 3: No HIV/AIDS myth and No patriarchy

Network 17: No HIV/AIDS myth and No patriarchy



Because of the contribution of other variables, it is necessary that all actions look at addressing each of the variables individually but considering both girls and boys equally as well as considering the age groups equally will assist greatly in reducing the impact of culture and limiting the incidence of some cultural practices that are mostly influenced by the gender and age of the child.

5.6.6 Structural cluster

Structural cluster comprises variables related to policies and practices that facilitate or hinder the access to relevant goods and services by children. This research is interested in understanding how children become vulnerable to abuse because policies and practices that are supposed to promote their access to relevant public goods and services are either not available, not implemented or just ineffective.

The relevant social services and constitutional rights of children include the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services. Children as well as everyone else have a right to basic education and to have access to adequate housing, sufficient food and water, health care services and social security.

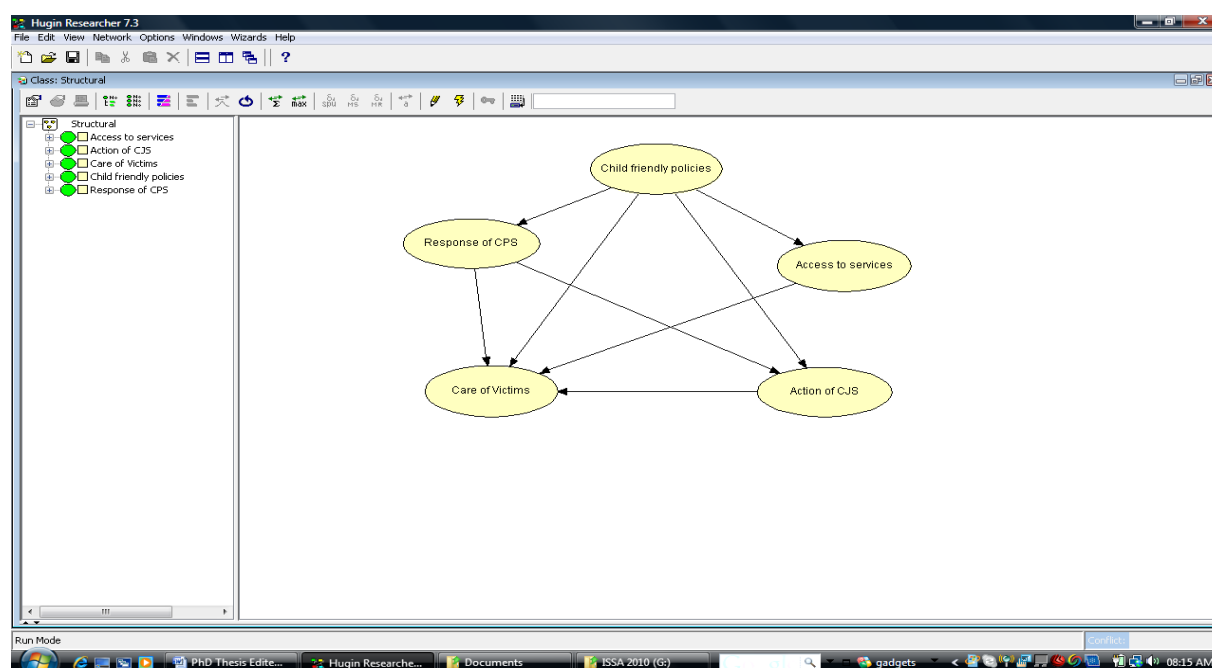
The links and interdependences among structural cluster variables are depicted in table 37 below:

Table 37: Links and interdependences among structural cluster variables

Variable...	Variable...
Response of CPS	Action of CJS
Action of CJS	
Policies	Access to services / Action of CJS / Response of CPS
Access to services	
Child participation	
Good enough practices	
Victim care	

Network 18 below shows links and interdependences among structural cluster variables:

Network 18: Links/interdependences among structural cluster variables



The following table shows how variables from the structural cluster are linked. The quantification below is the result of the review of policies and practices with regard to the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children. The quantification was confirmed by experts from Johannesburg Child Welfare as well as the Office on the Rights of the Child in the Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities. Child participation

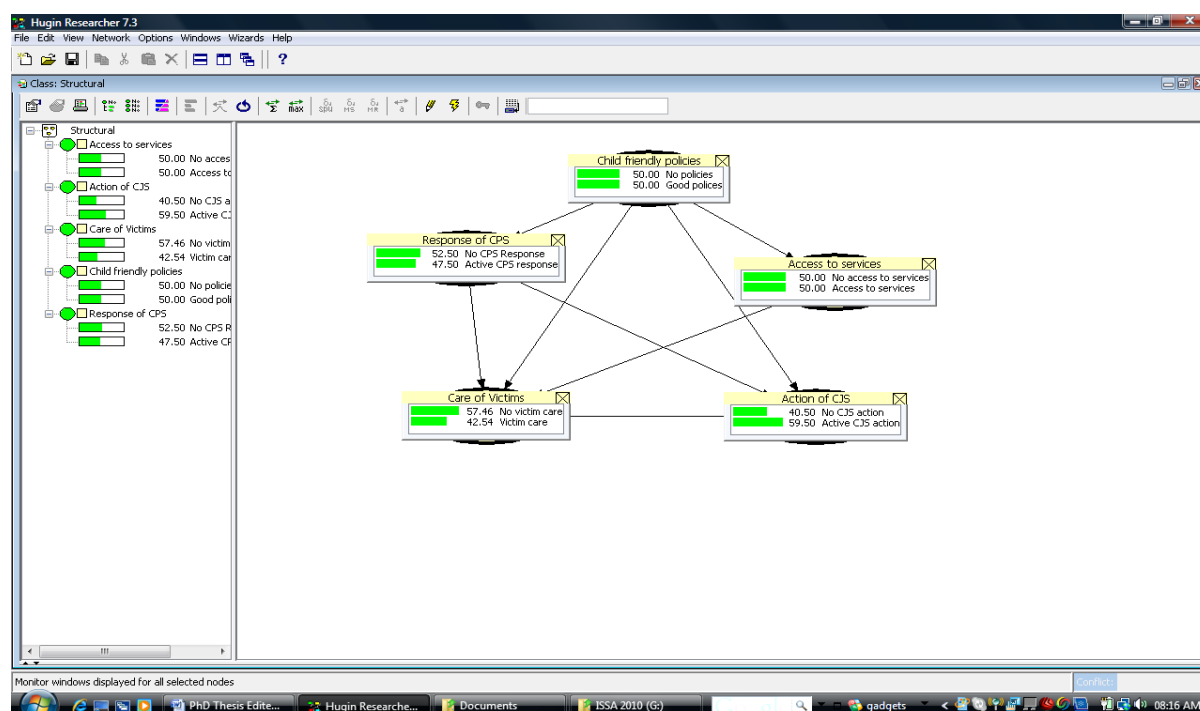
and Good enough practices were not linked because of minimal evidence in their direct impact on other structural variables.

Table 38: Quantification of structural theory variables

Variable...	States	Variable: State 1	P *	Variable: State 2	P *
Child friendly policies Response of CPS		Action of CJS: conditional probability			
	No policies _ No response of CPS	No CJS action	0.85	Active CJS action	0.15
	Good policies _ No response of CPS	No CJS action	0.45	Active CJS action	0.55
	No policies _ Active CPS response	No CJS action	0.55	Active CJS action	0.45
Child friendly policies		Access to service			
	No policies	No access to services	0.80	Access to services	0.20
Child friendly policies		Response of CPS			
	No policies	No CPS response	0.80	Active CPS response	0.20
Child friendly policies		Access to service			
	Good policies	No access to services	0.15	Access to services	0.80
Child friendly policies		Response of CPS			
	No policies	No CPS response	0.80	Active CPS response	0.20
Child friendly policies		Access to service			
	Good policies	No CPS response	0.25	Active CPS response	0.75

Network 19 shows the probabilities among structural cluster variables:

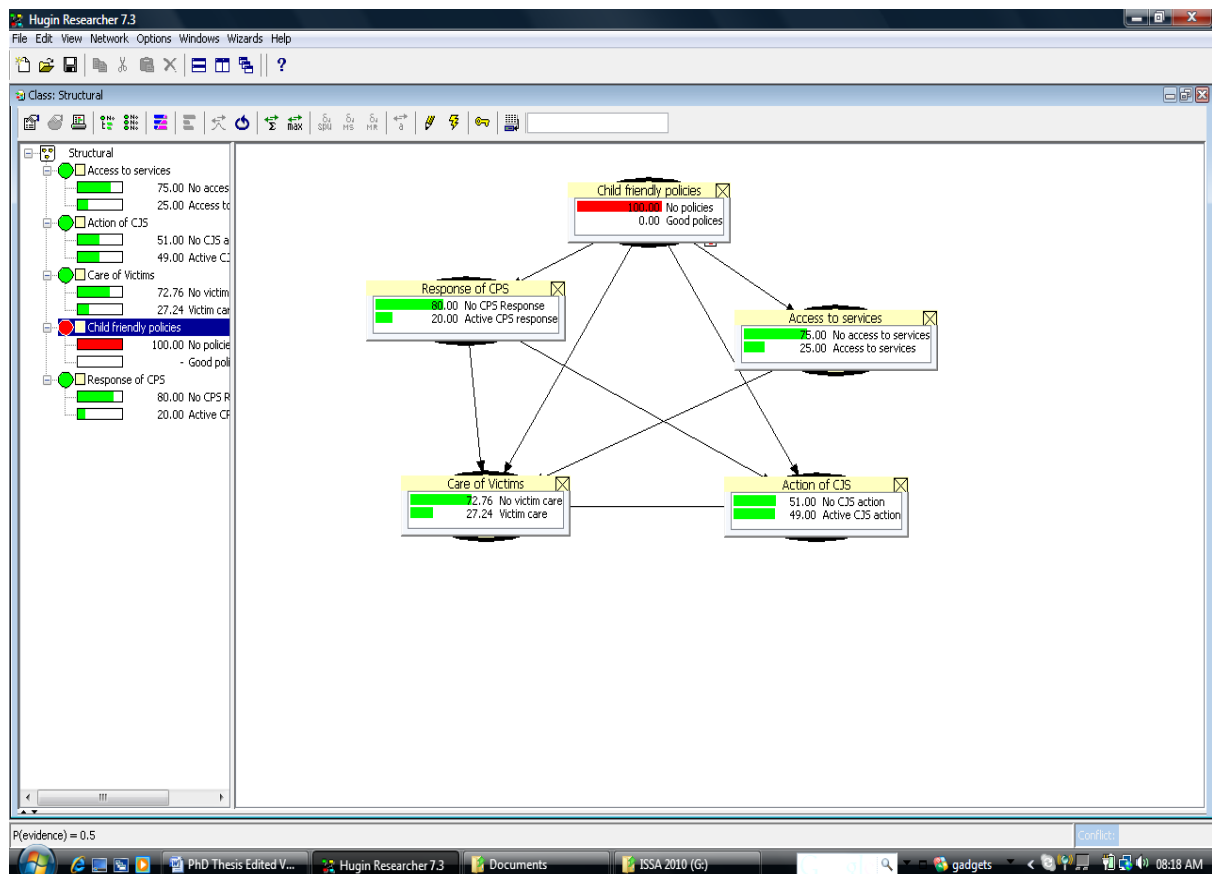
Network 19: Quantification of structural cluster variables



Network 19 shows that Child friendly policies are at the centre of the structural cluster network. This means that Good (Child friendly) policies will impact on the other variables namely Access to services, Action of the CJS and Response of the CPS. Under normal circumstance and considering the probabilities among the structural cluster variables there is a balance that needs to be verified with the simulation of the variable through the following different scenarios:

Scenario 1: No child friendly policies

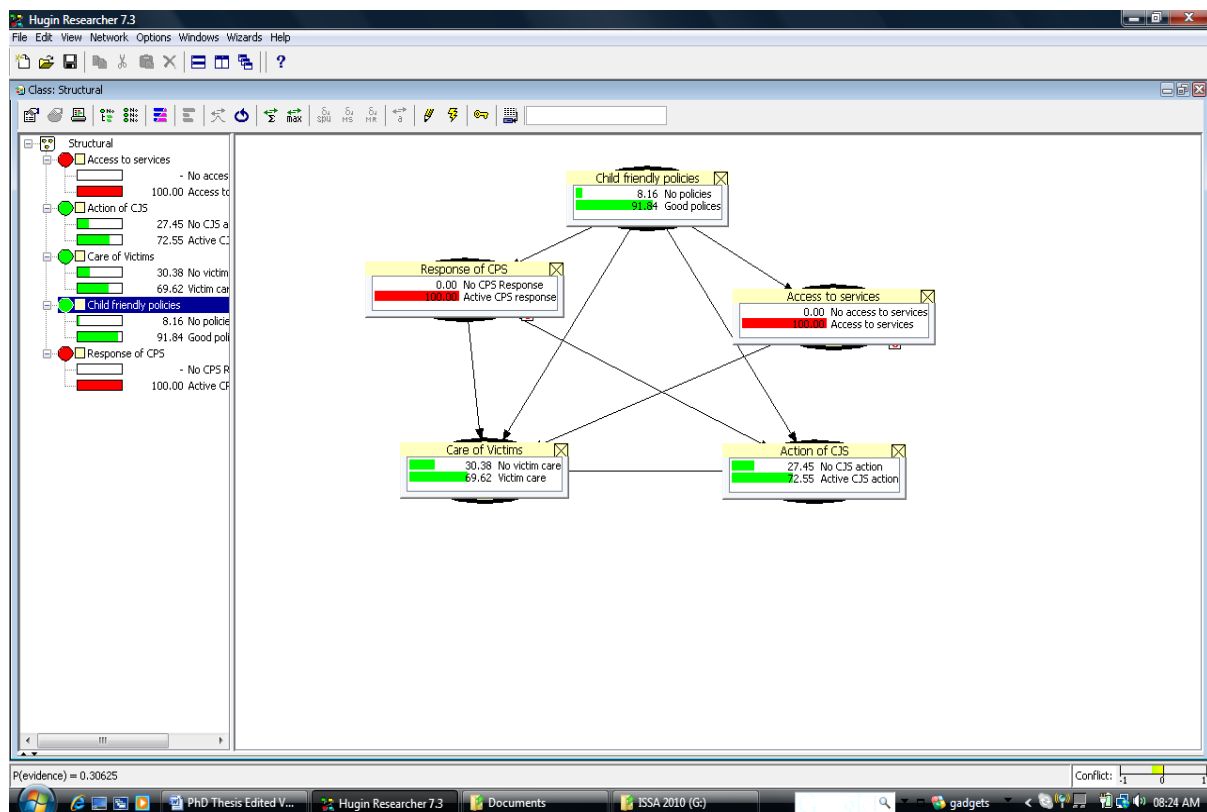
Network 20: No child friendly policies



Network 20 demonstrates a worst case scenario with No child friendly policies. In such a case, the probabilities are high that there is No access to services (75%), No active response of the CPS (80%), the Action of the CJS is not good enough (51%) and Victim care is not adequate (73%).

Scenario 2: Active CPS response and Access to services

Network 21: Active CPS response and Access to service



Network 21 represents an ideal scenario whereby an active CPS response and maximisation of service provision to children mean the existence of Good or child friendly policies (92%). In such a situation, the action of CJS is active at 73% and there is good Care of victims at 70%.

5.7 OUTLINE MODEL

The IMT is the adapted BNs model to facilitate the understanding of child abuse, neglect and exploitation. All principles of the BNs theory are observed and enhanced by the outcomes of the observation of the MI database, the summary of the literature review and the interaction with field experts through facilitated work sessions.

The outline (high level) model represented below includes contributing variables from the economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural theories (clusters). The outline

model shows that variables from the economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural theories contribute to the incidence of each other as well as, combined, to child abuse, neglect and exploitation. The model summarises the links and interdependences between all the variables by equally considering the five clusters. This means that when (a) variable (s) from one theory contribute (s) to the incidence of (a) variable (s) from another theory, the high-level model considers the theories, not the individual variables.

5.7.1 Links and interdependences between the five clusters

Table 39: Links and interdependences between the five clusters

Variable 1	Variable 2
Child abuse	Economic Cluster / Social Cluster / Environmental Cluster / Cultural Cluster / Structural Cluster
Economic Cluster	Structural Cluster
Social Cluster	Structural Cluster / Economic Cluster / Cultural Cluster
Environmental Cluster	Structural Cluster / Economic Cluster
Cultural Cluster	Structural Cluster
Structural Cluster	-

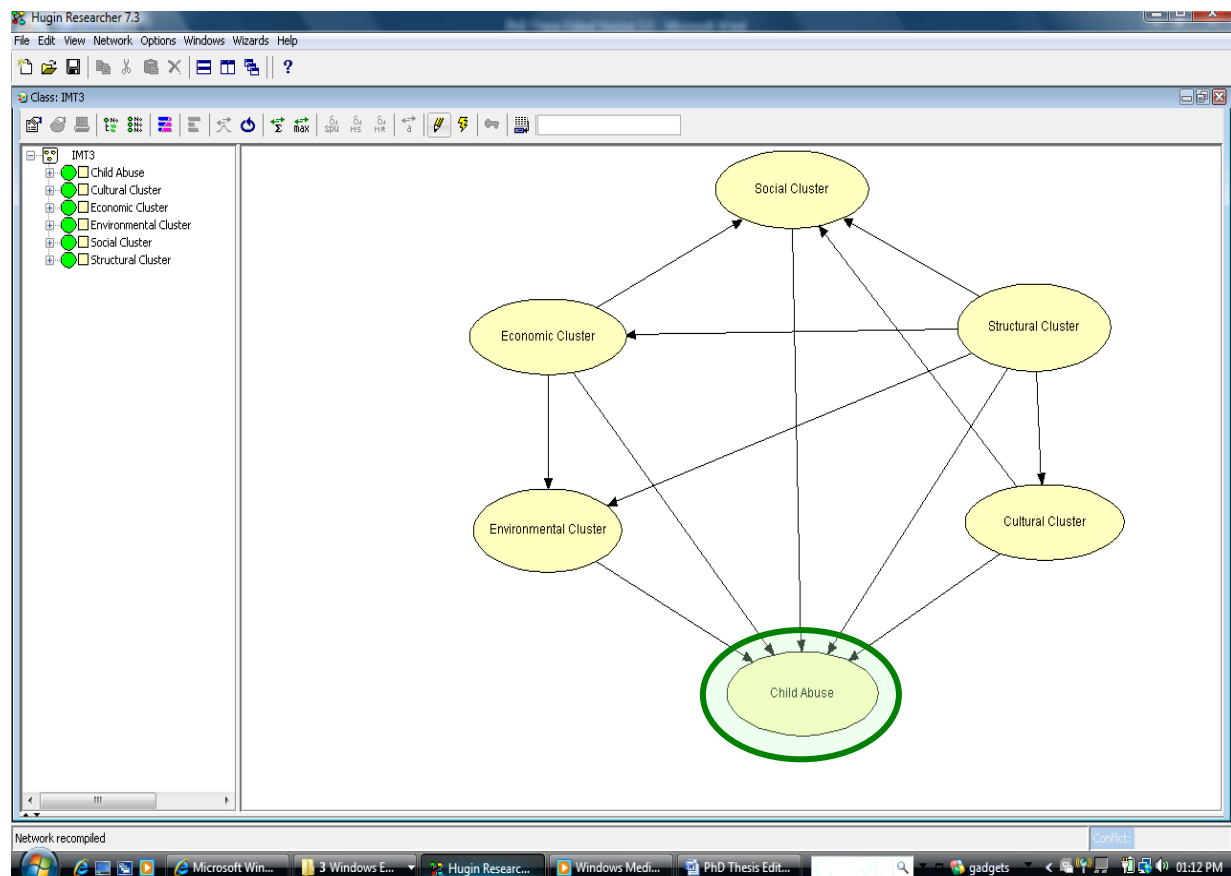
The links and interdependences as demonstrated above denote the importance of the BNs theory. The quantification of sub-models explains the impact of such links and interdependences.

According to the IMT, variables from the social cluster depend on and are influenced by variables from the economic cluster, and the high level model considers the links and interdependences between the social and economic clusters. As a consequence, the states of the economic cluster affect the states of the social cluster. Variables from the environmental cluster depend on and are influenced by variables from the economic cluster. In this case, if the economic condition is not good, the environmental condition will also be negatively affected. Finally, variables from the social cluster depend on and are influenced by variables from the cultural cluster. This interdependence means that negative cultural practices and beliefs will always result in negative or anti-social behaviour and therefore contribute to child abuse in the household and society. The

structural theory (or policies and practices) influences the other four theories plus the outcome variable (child abuse). This means that good policies and practices impact positively on the economic condition, the social environment, the cultural practices and beliefs and the environmental condition, thus positively contributing to child care, protection, safety and wellbeing. Bad policies and practices in the contrary will negatively contribute to the economic condition, social environment, cultural practices and beliefs and the environmental condition, thus resulting in child abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Network 22 below shows the links and interdependences between all clusters:

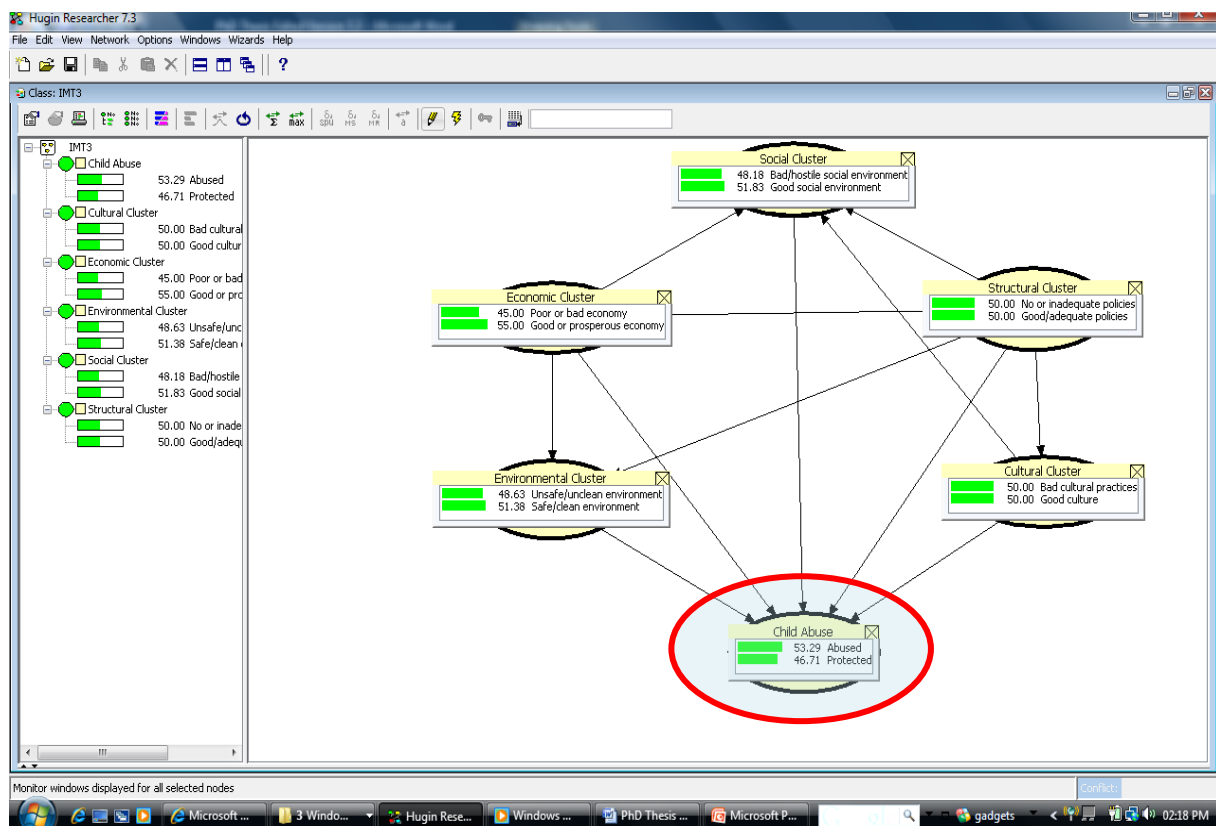
Network 22: High level IMT



5.7.2 Sub-models and quantified clusters

The links and interdependences represented by the acyclic arrows above were quantified and interpreted in the following manner, considering the states of the five theories (clusters) and their equal impact on child abuse (outcome variable).

Network 23: Quantification of all clusters



Network 23 considers a normal distribution of all the variables, meaning that all clusters have equal chance or probability of being good or effective (50%) or bad or ineffective (50%). The implication of such normal equal distribution is that, because the social cluster has three parents (in the BNs language) or depends on the economic, cultural and structural theories, the states of the social cluster are already unequal and tending towards a bad or hostile social condition.

Under this normal distribution, the following is observed:

- The structural and cultural theories remain unchanged. Meaning that the two states are proportionally equal for these theories: 'Good economy' and 'Poor economy' and 'Good culture' and 'Bad culture'.

Because of the quantification of the links and interdependences the rest of the clusters change as follows:

- The economic cluster is influenced by the structural cluster and changes to 45% good and 55% bad.
- The environmental cluster is influenced by both economic and structural clusters and

changes to 49% unsafe/unclean environment and 51% safe/clean environment.

- The social cluster which is influenced by the economic, structural and cultural clusters changes to 52% bad social situation and 48% good social situation.

The above links and interdependences result in a slightly higher child abuse (53%).

5.7.3 What-if scenarios

According to the BNs theory, algebras for combining variables are not mathematically coherent and can lead to incorrect conclusions. For this reason, the BNs theory uses probabilities and uncertainties (if any) to untie the knot. The what-if scenario means that:

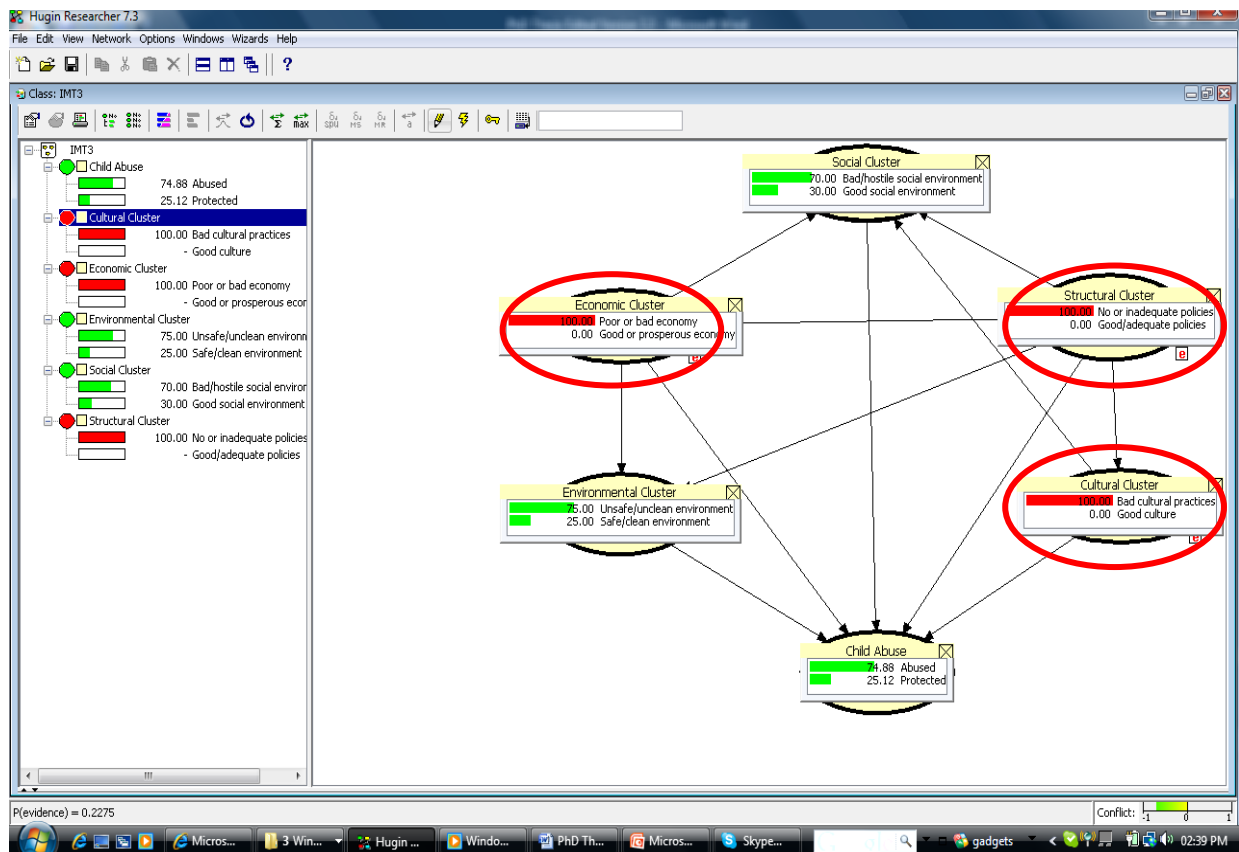
- If ... condition, then ... fact
- If ... condition, then action or decision
- If ... condition with certainty x , then fact with certainty $f(x)$
- The certainty of "A and B" is a function of the certainty of A and the certainty of B.

In changing the states of the above clusters to either maximum good or bad, the states of child abuse will also definitely change. The changes are also affected by the previous probabilities between parent and child clusters and the direct or indirect connections to the outcome variable – child abuse.

Scenario 1: Poor economy, Bad culture and No child friendly policies

In a situation where there are no child friendly policies, the economy is poor and there is a prevalence of bad cultural practices and beliefs, the social environment is hostile (70%) and the environment unsafe (75%) because of the links and interdependences between these variables. A consequence of the links and interdependences between these clusters is that child abuse becomes prevalent at almost 75% (see network 24 below).

Network 24: Poor economy, Bad culture and No child friendly policies and practices

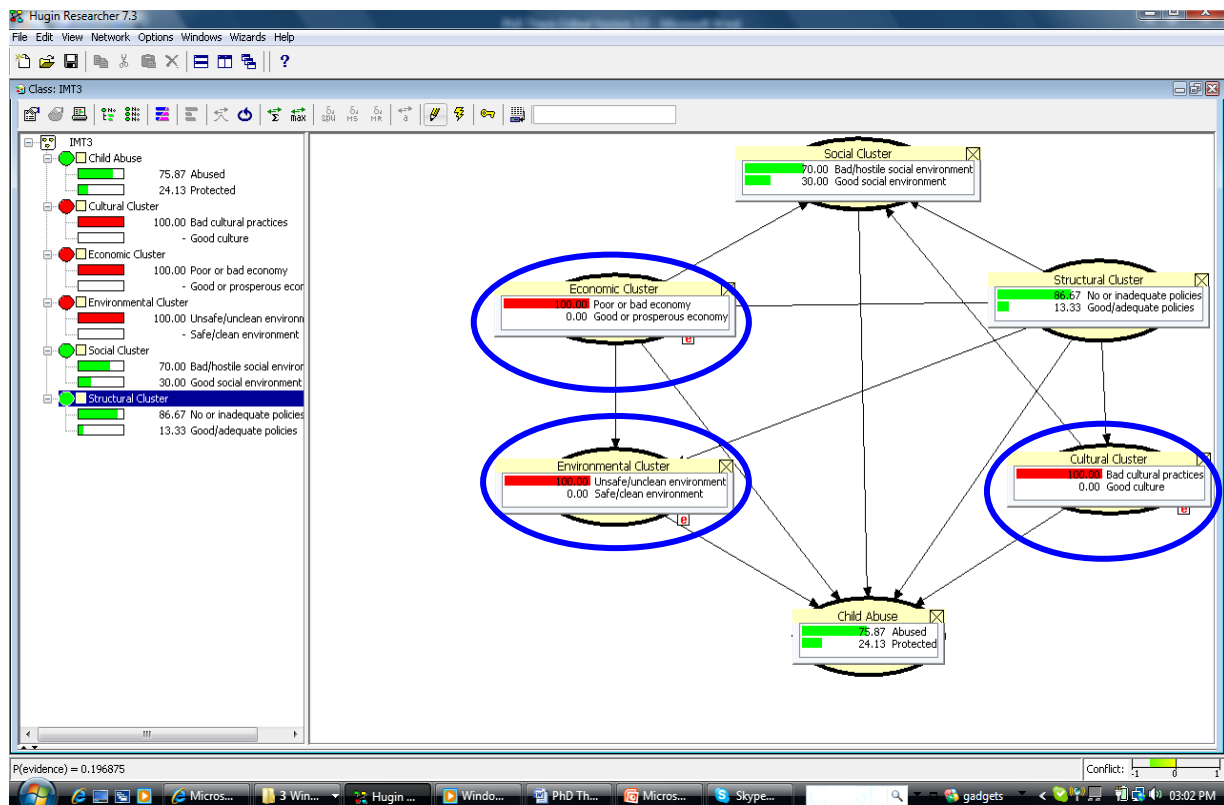


Scenario 2: Poor economy, Unsafe environment and Bad culture

If the economic cluster is poor, the environment unsafe and the cultural cluster is bad, the network shows the following situation:

- The structural cluster is at 87% bad meaning that there are no good policies and practices to redress the economic situation and create a safe environment.
- With 87% of no policies, the social cluster becomes predominantly bad (70%).
- These negative probabilities imply the prevalence of child abuse at almost 76%.

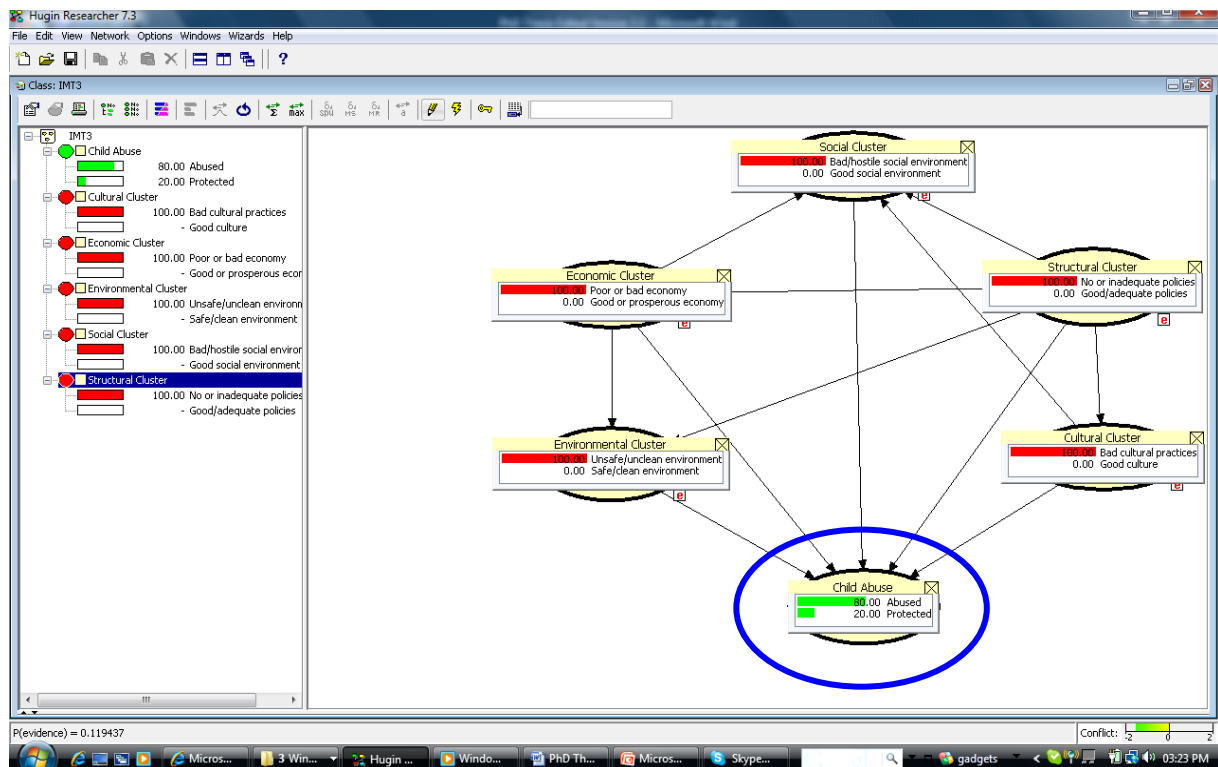
Network 25: Poor economy, Unsafe environment and Bad culture



Scenario 3: Worst case scenario whereby all theories are negative

The worst case scenario is when the economy is poor, bad cultural practices and beliefs are prevalent, the environment is unsafe, the social environment is hostile and there are no good policies and practices. In such an instance, the probability of child abuse, neglect and exploitation occurring escalates to a maximum of 80% (see network 26).

Network 26: Worst case scenario



The task of changing the contributing theory to get to a normal or acceptable situation scenario depends more on the building of decision modelling. The decision modelling explores how to address the variables that contribute to the incidence of each other and at the same time child abuse, neglect and exploitation.

5.8 DECISION MODELLING

The IMT demonstrates how child abuse happens by linking the variables and clusters to each other and to child abuse. The second important function of the IMT is to assist in the orientation of decisions to prevent child abuse and to intervene and manage the cases that have already occurred.

The decision modelling part of the IMT is not just changing the states of the contributing clusters. The task of the decision tool is to assist decision makers in looking at how variables from the contributing theories (clusters) must be addressed in order to rectify child abuse. By changing the states of the clusters, the IMT supposes the

implementation of policies and programmes that address or rectify the states of the variables from particular clusters in order to bring positive change in other clusters as well as in the variable child abuse. Discussing and developing policies and programmes to address all variables and the different clusters contributing to child abuse is not within the scope of this research. The research proposes some ideas about the importance of some interventions without going into detail.

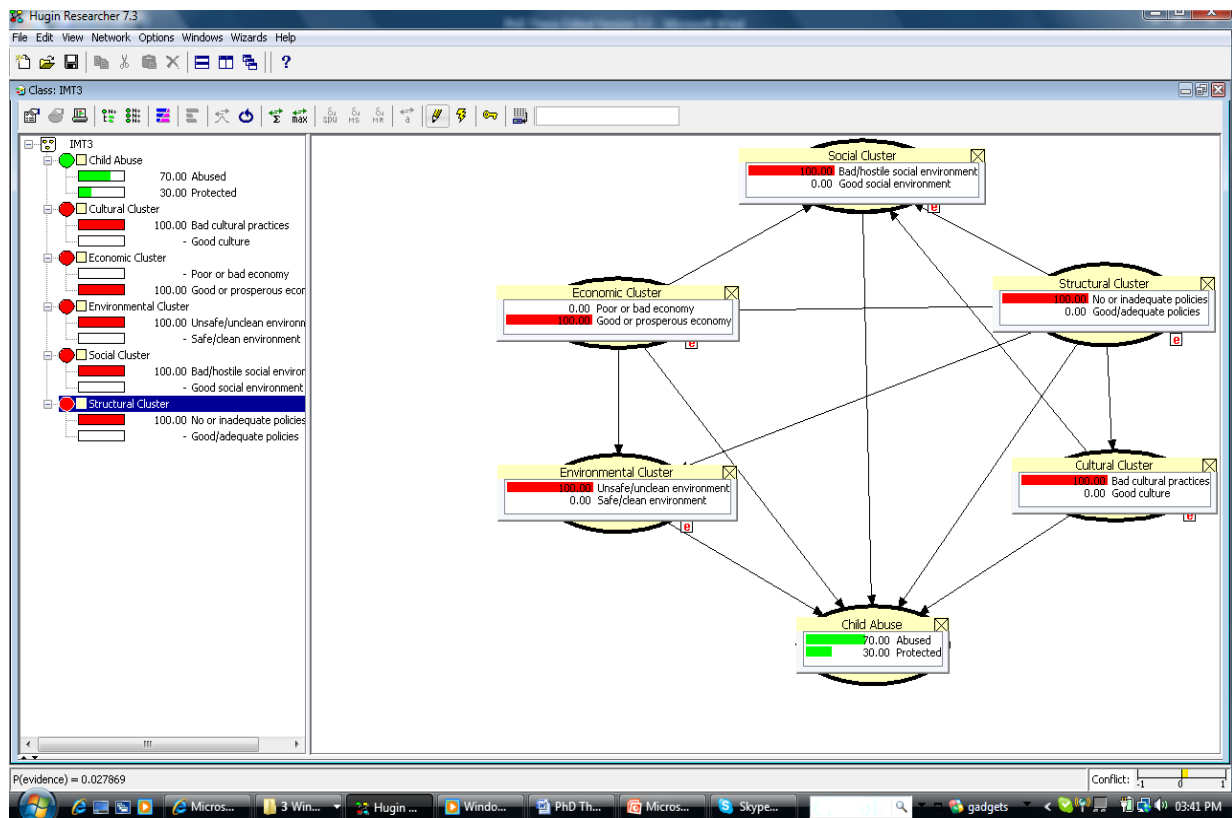
The ideal situation or scenario that the IMT seeks is the prevention of child abuse and interventions for the reduction and management of the cases of child abuse. The following networks show different interesting scenarios.

Scenario 1: Good economy is not synonymous with child protection

In this scenario, all the clusters are bad in converse to the economic cluster which is predominantly prosperous. The IMT shows that economic prosperity is not synonymous with child protection and safety when other clusters are negative and there are no good or adequate policies and practices. Although child abuse is reduced from 80% in the worst case scenario to 70% with good economic conditions, it is imperative to address the other clusters in order to achieve an equilibrium that will contribute to the achievement of child care, protection, safety and wellbeing.

The scenario is depicted in the network 27 below:

Network 27: Isolated Good economic situation



Addressing poverty alone is not a solution to child abuse. There are two ways of looking at the prevention of and intervention against child abuse using the IMT. The first way is to look at the situation whereby child protection prevails (opposite of child abuse).

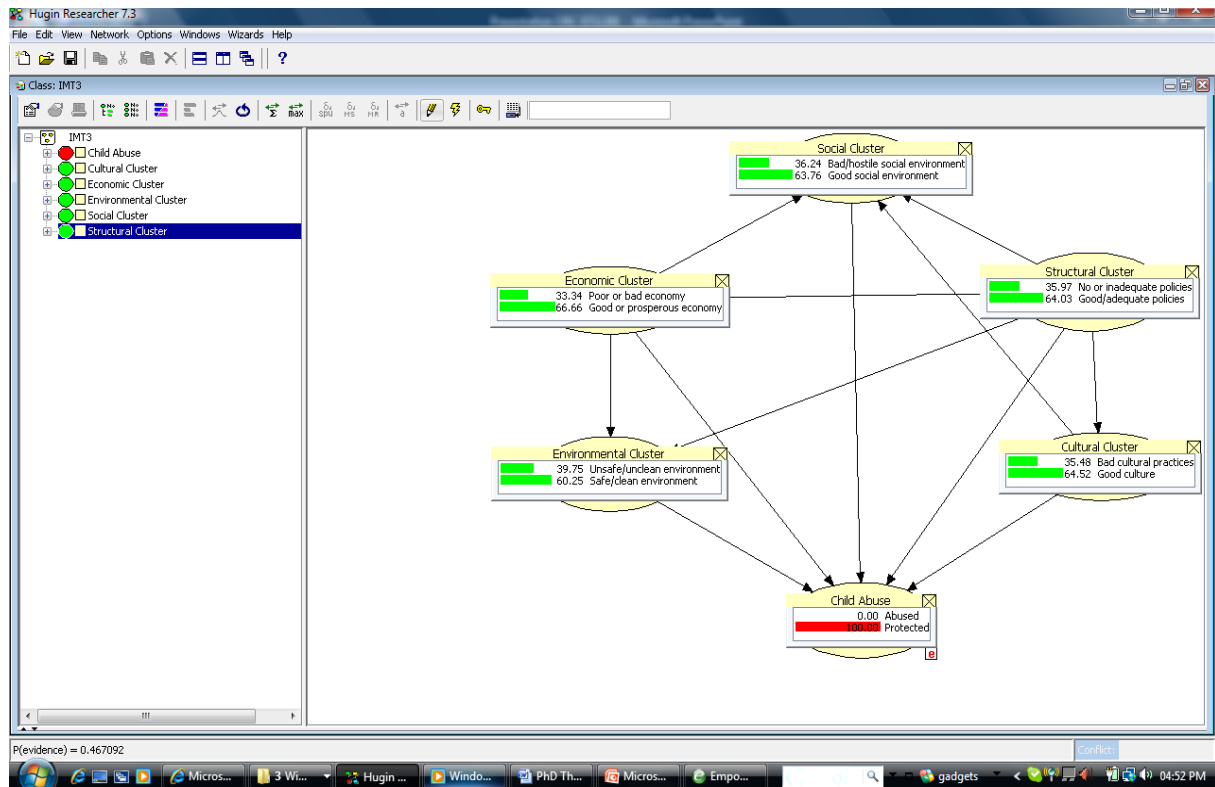
Scenario 2: Addressing a worst case situation

This scenario capitalises on child protection and observes the recommendations of the IMT for the probabilities of the contributing clusters. This means that the IMT shows the probabilities that must be reached in order to achieve child protection. This model is more integrative and works better in a situation whereby all the clusters receive appropriate attention at the same time. This means that policy and decision makers and institutions in charge of child care, protection, safety and wellbeing should implement policies and intervention programmes addressing variables from all clusters in order to create a situation of child care, protection, safety and wellbeing.

The recommendation of the IMT is that all the clusters must be positive for at least 60%. This means that the combination of positive probabilities from all clusters will guarantee

child care, protection, safety and wellbeing. It must be understood however that the 100% probability does not mean total eradication of child abuse. The IMT means by this high percentage the prevalence of a positive outcome.

Network 28: Addressing worst case scenario through integrative intervention



Addressing different theories or their combination

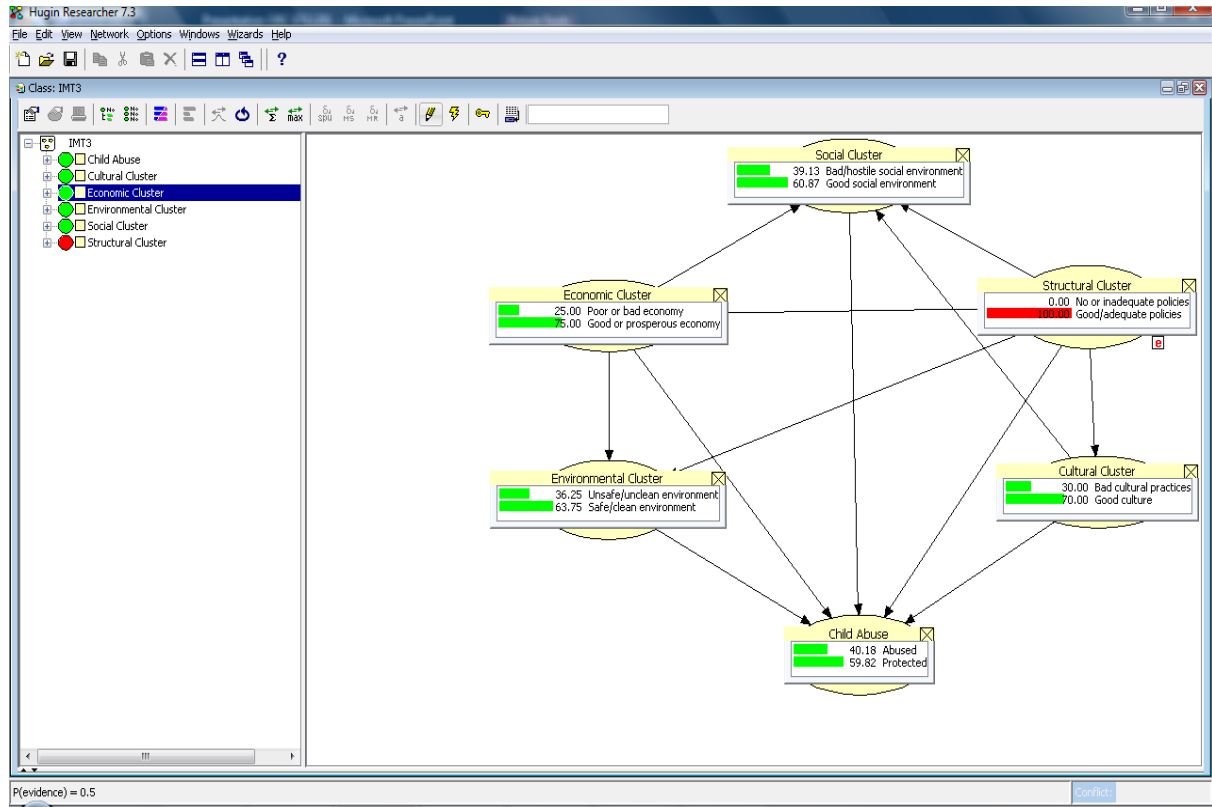
The second way of addressing the worst case scenario is to look at individual clusters or the combination of clusters in creating situations that favour positive outcomes. This approach is a complementary strategy to apply when for instance some clusters are not a problem and where focus needs to be concentrated on the problematic clusters.

Scenario 3: Focus on good policies to address all the theories

Network 29 shows the importance of good policies and practices to address the clusters that contribute to child abuse. According to network 29, if there are good and adequate policies that are developed and implemented to address child abuse, it is probable that although each variable and cluster will not be addressed fully, there will be a reduction of

child abuse to around 40%. This means that good policies will put 60% of children on the child care, protection, safety and wellbeing side.

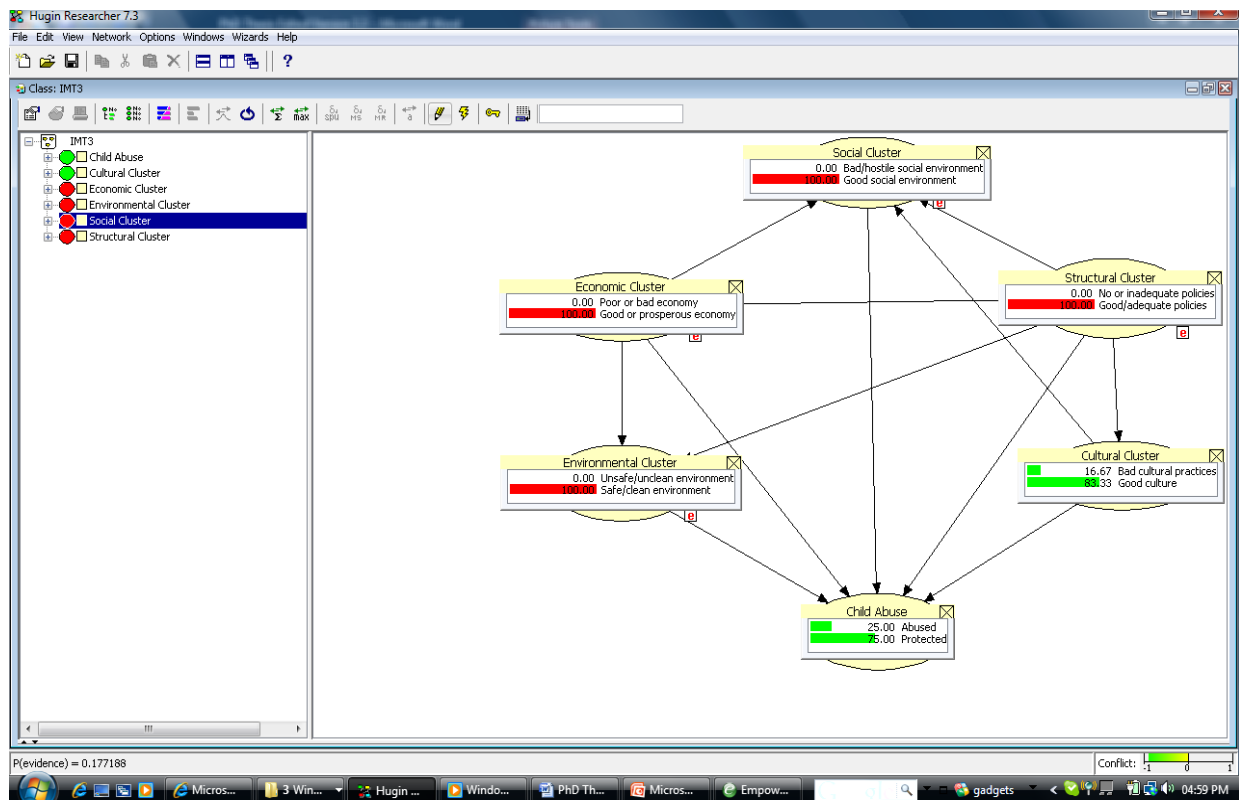
Network 29: Good policies and practices



Policy development and implementation should not happen in a vacuum but within the different clusters where different variables need particular attention more than others. It is therefore important to focus on addressing the variables from each cluster and at the same time emphasising policies that must support prevention and intervention mechanisms as in the following scenario.

Scenario 4: Good economic, social, environmental and structural clusters

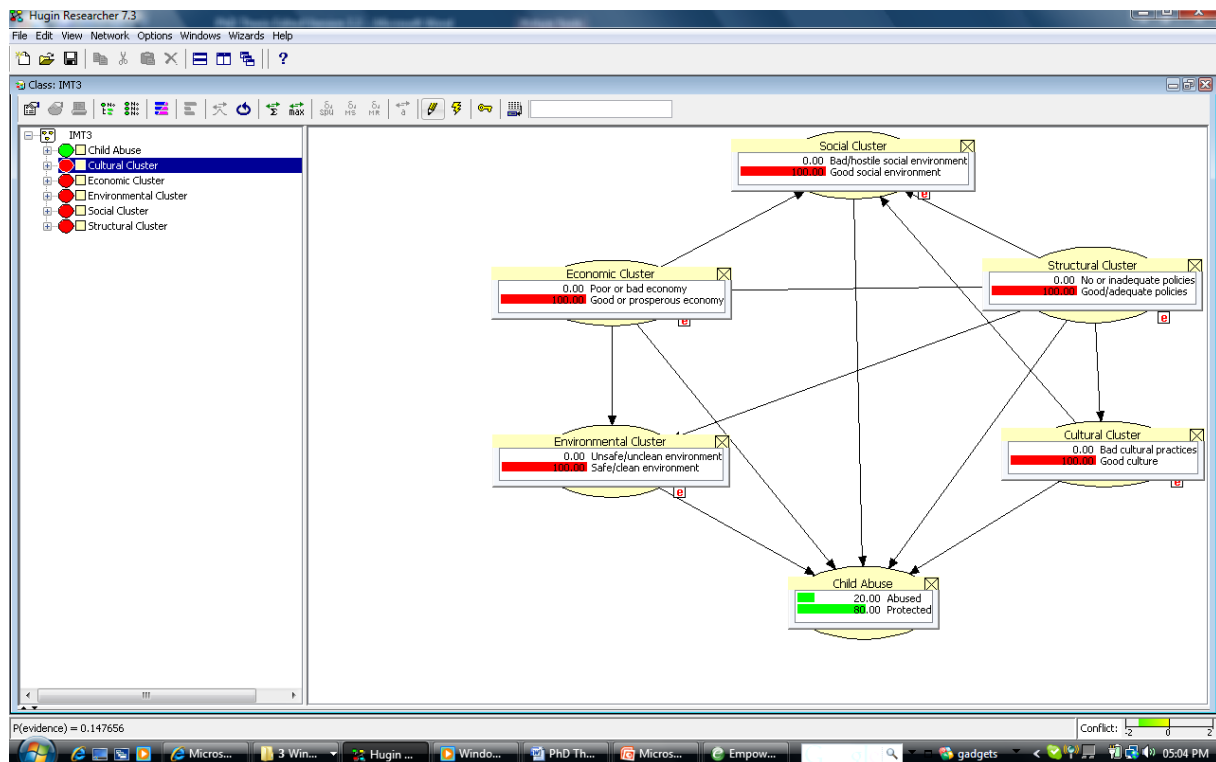
Network 30: Good economic, social, environmental and structural clusters



Network 30 supposes that interventions are happening to change the states of the variables from the economic cluster to achieve prosperity. At the same time, it is supposed that environmental cluster variables are addressed to create a clean and safe environment and work is done to positively change the states of social cultural cluster variables. Policies and practices in this network are also said to be child friendly and benefiting children. In such a situation, the IMT forecasts that there is a prevalence of good cultural and religious practices (83%) and consequently 75% of children are protected and safe.

Scenario 6: All clusters are good

Network 31: All clusters are good.



Network 31 is the ideal scenario that the IMT advocates. The literature review and the views of field experts is that it is impossible to reach a full eradication of child abuse, neglect and exploitation. However, the achievement of care, protection, safety and the wellbeing of 80% of children is ideal as this accommodates the work of effective interventions to manage the isolated cases that could not be curbed within the 80%.

5.9 CONCLUSION

The IMT facilitates the understanding of how different variables contribute individually or collectively to child abuse. On the one hand, understanding how variables contribute to the incidence of each other assists policy and decision makers to address the causal links between the variables and therefore create a good situation within a cluster. On the other hand, understanding how variables from different clusters contribute individually or collectively to child abuse assists policy and decision makers to address the causal links among the clusters and between the clusters and child abuse. This novelty of the IMT is explained in the last chapter below on the summary of the research outcome.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children suggested that stopping violence against children requires not only harsh sanctions against perpetrators, but also the transformation of the 'mind set' of societies and communities and to address the underlying economic and social conditions that contribute to child abuse.

In South Africa, child poverty and child abuse have been two matters of concern that unfortunately still need a solution. Every year during the commemorations of the Child Protection Week, the International Children's Day and the 16 Days of Activism of No Violence against Women and Children Campaign, alarms are set off to highlight the plight of children. Headline messages such as 'Department to hold symposium to tackle child poverty', 'Northern Cape vows to protect children', 'Community urged to protect children', 'Strong partnership needed to protect children', are sent out in order to motivate everyone to tackle child poverty and child abuse.

As South Africa commemorates its 12th annual session of the 16 Days of Activism of No Violence against Women and Children Campaign, Mamphela Ramphele reminds South Africans that the quality of every nation is measured by the way in which it treats its children. She pleads that "No society can succeed while being deaf to the cries of its abused children" (*Sunday Times*, 28 November 2010). Referring to the White Ribbon Campaign (an advocacy group against child abuse) she estimates that, out of South Africa's 18.5 million children, nine million have been abused. She therefore proposes that South Africa recognises a national crisis relating to society's moral and ethical foundations. This proposition is the conclusion of Ramphele that South Africa has a fantastic human rights Constitution that is unfortunately undermined by the social practices and authoritarian culture on a daily basis.

During the commemoration of the 2007 Child Protection Week, the then Deputy Minister of Social Development, Jean Swanson-Jacobs emphasised the importance of confronting child abuse and child poverty challenges such as children living or working on the street, child headed households, HIV and AIDS, poverty and unemployment (*BuaNews Online*, 04 July 2007). She listed among useful interventions, meeting

children's basic needs, allocation of resources and skills development. The then Minister of Social Development, Zola Skweyiya, using a different platform, underlined the need for a collective protective environment against child abuse. He argued that strong partnership between the government and all sectors was necessary to confront challenges of poverty, unemployment, child abuse, loss of support systems within families and other conditions which increase the vulnerability of children to abuse. He further called for the contribution of all South Africans to raise awareness and to work with the government to fight poverty and other conditions that contribute to the vulnerability of children to abuse (*BuaNews Online*, 17 May 2007).

Available research specifies scores of variables contributing to child abuse. The DSD for example, through the then Minister, Zola Skweyiya, cites some crucial variables associated with child abuse. They are: social issues; gender discrepancies; economic inequality and poverty; the structures and functionings of families; abuse of substances; domestic violence; the impact of HIV and AIDS; and the increase in numbers of child-headed households (*BuaNews Online*, 17 May 2007).

The UN Study, Ramphole's outcry as well as all the above commentaries on child abuse in South Africa are not new. Although the call for action is important, it is necessary to stress that a theory-based action is needed to facilitate a clear understanding of child abuse and to guide policies and programmes that prevent, reduce and manage child abuse. Policies and programmes need therefore to address the critical variables that contribute to the scourge of the phenomenon according to this research.

The literature review on child abuse, the observation of the MI database and interactions with field experts conclude that child abuse is a multifaceted phenomenon caused by different variables. This research agrees with Tzeng, *et al.* (1991) that child abuse is an extremely complicated and complex problem because it is not just a problem of victimised children and perpetrators, rather a problem of the family, the community and the whole society. The authors as well as others such as Newberger, *et al.* (1983); Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) and Garbarino (1981), argue that different theories on child abuse are unitary, inconclusive, thus a desperate need to develop a comprehensive integrated theory to address the aetiology and dynamics of child abuse.

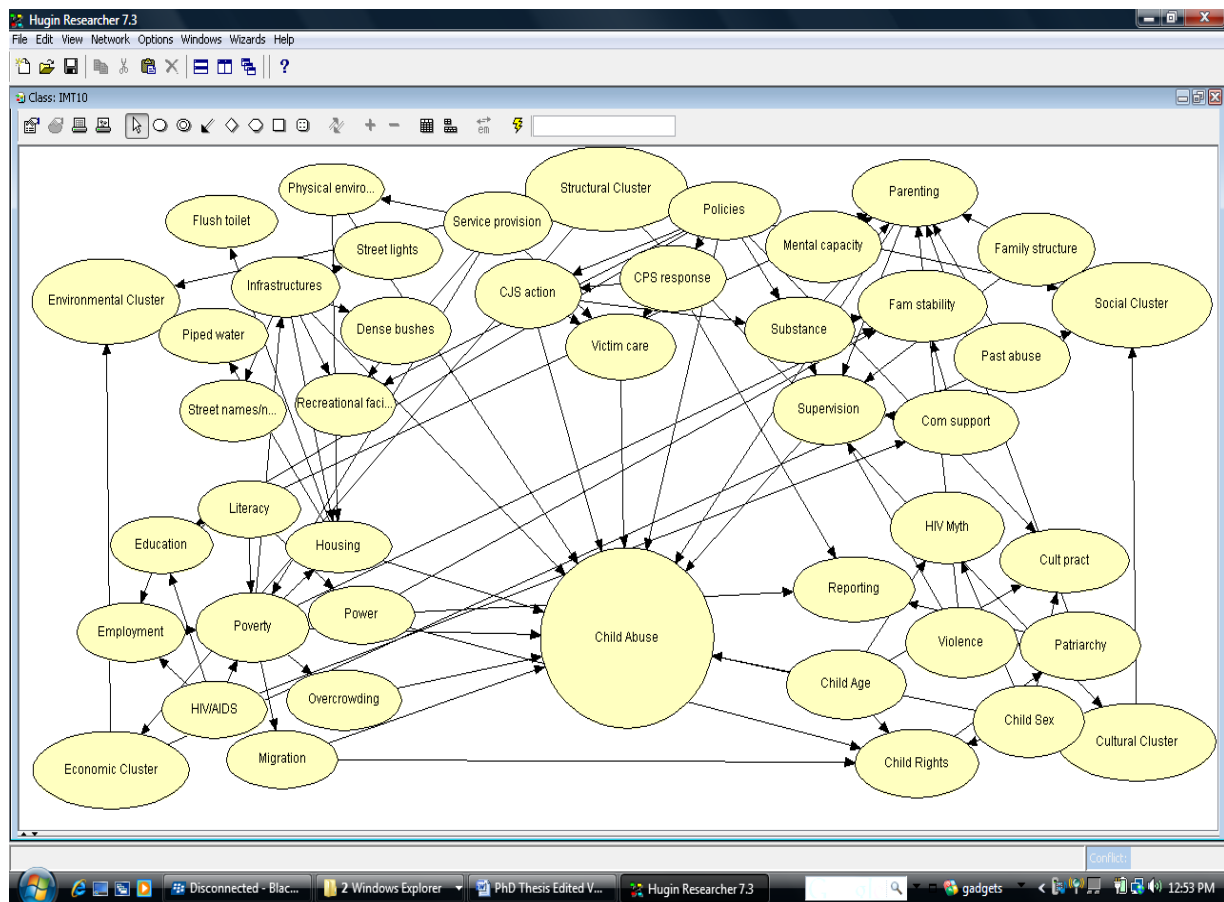
This research is an answer to the call for further research on child abuse and the need for a theory-based approach to facilitate the understanding of child abuse. The research demonstrates that different variables from different theories contribute to the incidence and perpetuation of child abuse. The variables contributing to child abuse are linked and interdependent. They cause one another and contribute to child abuse individually and collectively. Because there is no single contributing variable (or theory) that is more important than others in the causation of child abuse, this research considers the combination of five theories in the development of a comprehensive and theory-based integrated model, the IMT.

The functions of the IMT, the support basis for its development and the summary of the outcomes of this research in general and the IMT in particular are explained in this chapter. A synopsis on how to direct policies and programmes for the prevention of, intervention against and management of child abuse wraps up this research.

6.2 THE INTEGRATED MODELLED THEORY

The IMT (network 32) demonstrates how variables from different theories contribute to child abuse. The IMT links the theories and variables to provide a clear picture of how child abuse happens and is perpetuated and consequently to inform policy and programmes development and implementation to achieve the care, protection, safety, and wellbeing of children.

Network 32: The Integrated Modelled Theory

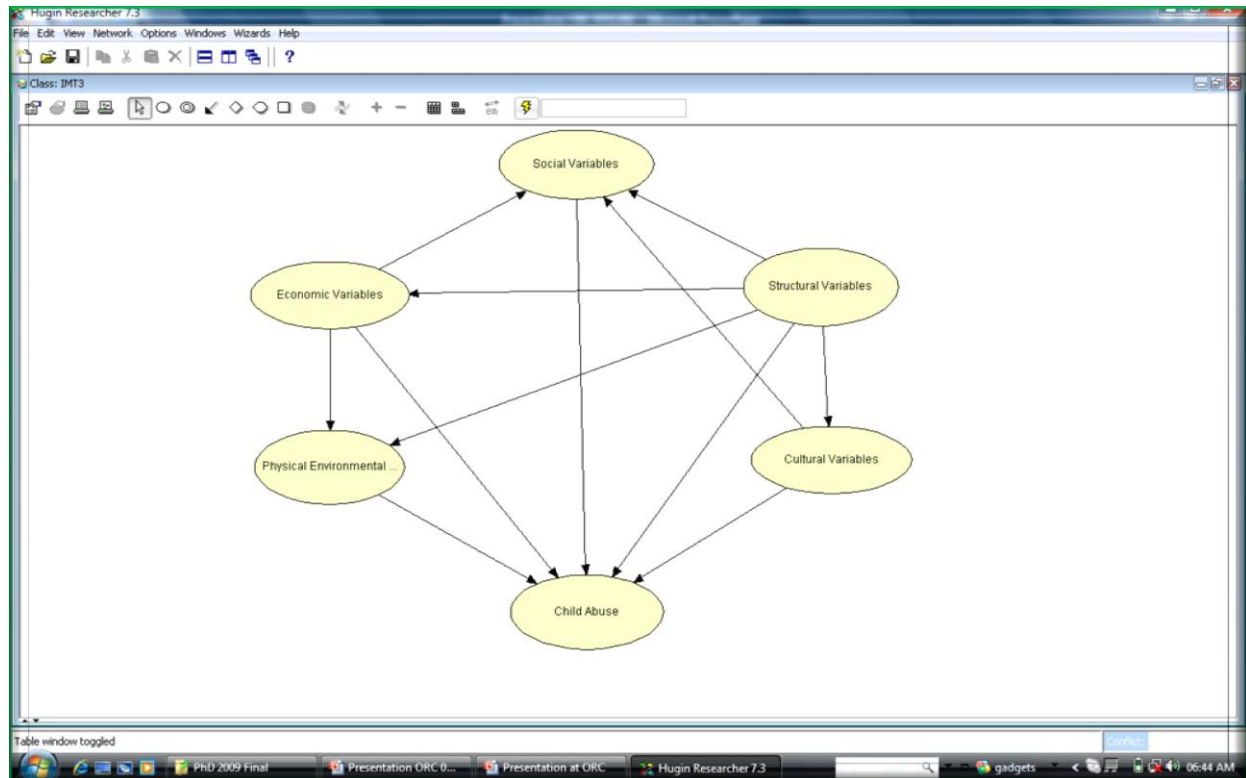


Network 32 above shows how variables from the five clusters contribute to the incidence of one another on the one hand. On the other hand, the network shows how variables from the five theories contribute directly to child abuse.

6.2.1 The High Level Integrated Modelled Theory (IMT)

The links and interdependences between theories and variables as represented in network 32 are summarised in the high level or outcome IMT that focuses on the links between contributing theories (clusters). It is essential to highlight that the IMT is developed using the BN theory. According to the BN theory, the links between variables are acyclical. This means that a link between two variables takes only one direction. In other words, when variable X causes Y variable, it is not possible for variable Y to cause variable X in return and directly. This is one major limitation of the BNs theory and the IMT. It is therefore important, when linking two variables, to consider available evidence and expertise to decide on the direction of the link.

Network 33: The High Level Integrated Modelled Theory of Child Abuse



6.2.2 The IMT Framework

The above high level IMT is translated in the figure 18 to show how the clusters and their variables are linked to contribute to child abuse. The IMT framework explains that the structural cluster is at the centre of any action for prevention of, intervention against and management of child abuse. This means that good and adequate policies, good practices, child participation and other structural cluster variables impact positively on all other variables from the different clusters.

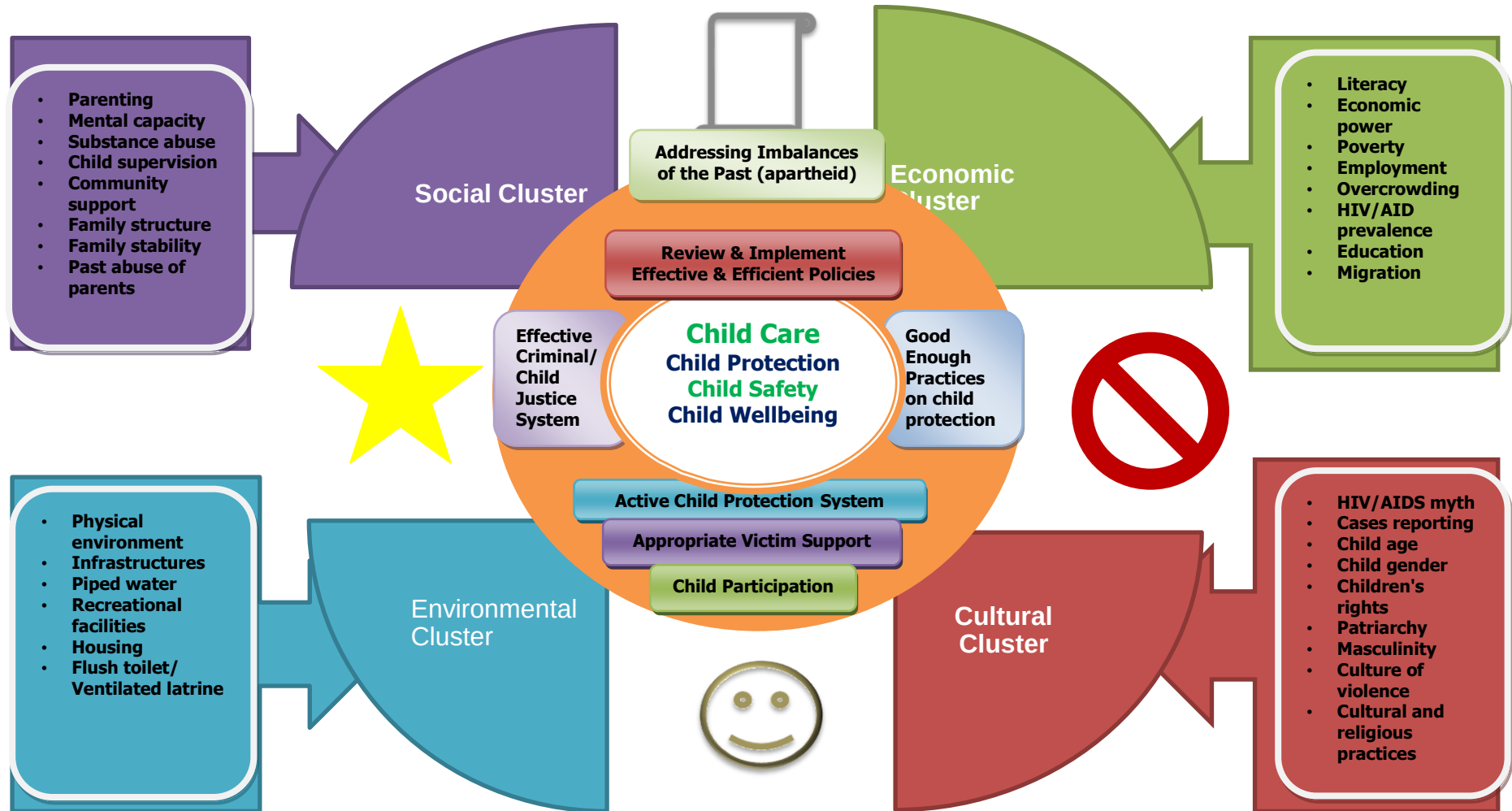
Variables from the economic, social, environmental and cultural clusters feed into their respective clusters which in turn contribute equally to child abuse. At the same time, variables from the five clusters contribute to the incidence of each other and individually to child abuse. This is clearly demonstrated in the BNs system generated networks.

The economic, social, environmental and cultural clusters are represented in the form of slices of a pie. When combined they form a pie that explains child abuse (in a negative situation) or child care, protection, safety and wellbeing (in a positive situation). The structural cluster is the top layer of the pie. It is negative in the case of child abuse. When positive, it implies child care, protection, safety and wellbeing.

The Summary Integrated Modelled Theory of Child Abuse

Figure 18: The Summary Integrated Modelled Theory of Child Abuse

Source: Author



6.3 FUNCTIONS, PRINCIPLES AND SUPPORT BASIS OF THE IMT

The IMT is based on a set of principles and on the WHO's support basis to guide action for the prevention of and intervention against child abuse. These principles and the guide inform the key functions of the IMT and how the IMT addresses the incompleteness of previous integrated theories of child abuse.

6.3.1 Basic principles of the IMT

The use of the IMT is facilitated by four basic principles. They are: (1) Public knowledge and understanding of child abuse and its solution. (2) Sound policies and good enough practices. (3) Child participation and (4) Parents or caregivers and community abstinence.

Public knowledge and understanding of child abuse and its solution principle is represented by a star in the IMT framework. This principle means that children, parents or caregivers and the community need to be empowered with knowledge and understanding about what child abuse is and how to achieve child care, protection, safety and wellbeing. Such knowledge must be availed through different means of communication such as media, school curriculum, local forums and public places. The fight against child abuse must be a common fight the same way as the HIV/AIDS prevention campaign.

Sound policies and good enough practices are key to the prevention and eradication of child abuse. This principle is represented by a book on the IMT framework. The structural theory occupies the centre of the IMT to mean good policies and practices and service provision will assist in addressing all variables and clusters contributing to child abuse. Adequate policies need to be developed or reviewed and implemented and good enough practices documented and replicated in order to facilitate child care, protection, safety and wellbeing.

Child participation is essential in preventing and curbing child abuse. This principle is represented by a child face in the IMT framework. If the principle of children first needs to be promoted, the voice of children must be heard. In order to prioritise the

best interests of the child, children need to take part in decisions affecting their lives. For this reason, children's forums and other structures that promote the active participation of children must be prioritised. Starr (1982) argues that the rights of children should not be claimed from family settings only. Children's rights must be embodied in the legal systems to be recognised and guaranteed by all according to the author. He cautions that children need to participate in the judicial processes, in policy and in decision making processes affecting their wellbeing. This research agrees with the author that rights and responsibilities should be linked to benefits and burdens. These should be the result of good interaction between children, their parents and institutions responsible for their care, protection, safety and wellbeing.

Parents or caregivers and community abstinence (represented by a no entry symbol in the IMT framework) means that the negative social and cultural actions of parents or caregivers, the community and society at large must be eradicated. Such variables include cultural practices, the normalisation of violence or acceptance of violence and crime against children by the community. These variables must be considered as shameful and therefore labelled as such in the home, community and the society. One example is the assertion by Tzeng, *et al.* (1991, p. 156) that "altering cultural notions of masculinity should significantly reduce the prevalence of child sexual abuse". Ramphele refers to an urgent need for South Africa to invest in education programmes on the day-to-day social and cultural practices contributing to child abuse and the respect for human rights principles of the Constitution (*Sunday Times*, 28 November 2010).

6.3.2 Support basis of the IMT

The IMT is a practical response to the guide on the prevention of child maltreatment by the WHO. The guide is called "Preventing Child Maltreatment: a guide to taking action and generating evidence". According to the guide, for any prevention and response work to be effective, four vital processes need to be observed when designing interventions against child maltreatment. These processes include defining the problem, identifying the causes and risk variables, designing intervention and programmes to minimise risk factors and disseminating information on the effectiveness of the interventions against child

maltreatment. This research follows the WHO's guidelines by adopting these four vital processes.

Firstly, the research **defined the problem of child abuse** in South Africa conceptually and numerically. The review of statistics and reports assisted in describing the scale of child abuse in the country and the characteristics of children who are mostly affected by child abuse – poor children. The research used available numerical and statistical data to describe the extent of child abuse in South Africa and to motivate the need for a comprehensive theory that facilitates understanding of the phenomenon.

Secondly, based on a problem of concern which was to achieve a clear understanding of child abuse, the research undertook to **identify the causes and the risk variables** that appear to affect the vulnerability of children to abuse. This means, to identify for example, the variables that increase the risk of a child being abused physically, sexually, economically or to be neglected or exploited. These variables are from the economic, social, environmental and cultural theories. The other causes and risks determine obstacles to effective policies, practices and service provision to achieve child care, protection, safety and wellbeing. These categories of variables for the structural theory that looks at service provision, policies and practices. The literature review, the observation of the MI database and the interaction with field experts provided the source of information for the identification of these variables.

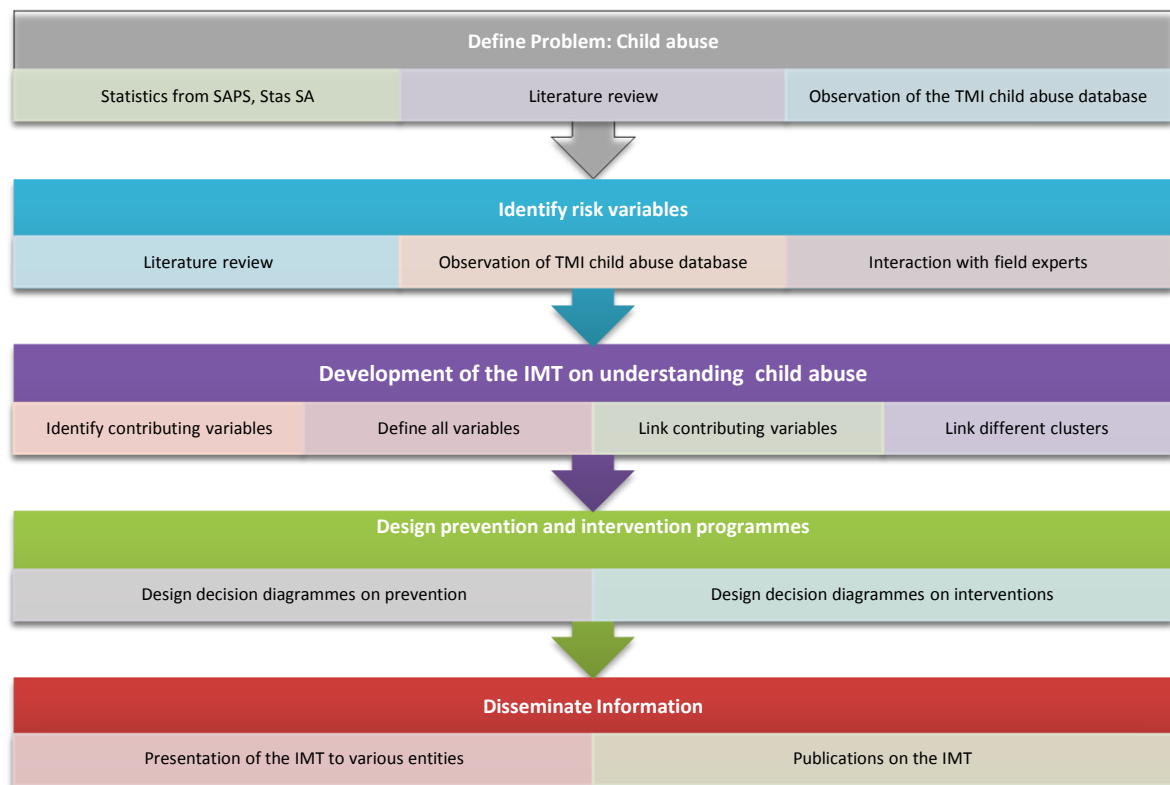
To understand how these variables individually and/or collectively, independently or interdependently contribute to child abuse, the first part of the IMT looks at the links and interdependences between all contributing variables. This exercise facilitated the establishment of the dynamics around child abuse in combining the contributing variables. In the end, the IMT undertakes to facilitate the understanding of the implications of the combination of variables from the economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural theories in the incidence and perpetuation of child abuse. Thus, refuting the exclusivity of poor economic conditions for child abuse causation.

Thirdly, with knowledge of the causal and risk variables and the dynamics around their links and interdependences, it became feasible to suggest the **design of prevention and interventions programmes** that have a high probability of being effective in minimising the causal links among risk variables and between them and child abuse. This is done in the second part of the IMT wherein the decision tool assists in looking at possible policies and practices and intervention programmes that facilitate the prevention of and interventions against child abuse by addressing the contributing variables.

Finally, after having a new theory at hand as a solution to the understanding of, interventions against and management of child abuse, the research finalised the model to **disseminate information**. The IMT is a theory that emphasises the importance of a clear understanding of a phenomenon (child abuse in this case) in order to propose effective mechanisms for prevention of and of interventions against the said phenomenon. The IMT is a practical theory that can be disseminated because it facilitates the analysis and prioritisation of variables that contribute to child abuse. The IMT facilitates the development of appropriate and focused mechanisms for the prevention of and interventions against child abuse by considering how variables contribute directly or indirectly to the incidence of each other and of child abuse.

Figure 19 below illustrates the application of the WHO guide in the development of the IMT.

Figure 19: Guide in preventing child abuse



Source: Adapted from WHO and ISPCAN (2006).

6.3.3 Functions of the IMT

Advocating a comprehensive integrated theory of child abuse, Tzeng, *et al.* (1991) propose four important functions of an integrated theory in combating child abuse. The IMT developed by this research responds to those functions.

The first function is to link diverse disciplines: the IMT links variables from economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural theories to facilitate the understanding of child abuse. The second function is to organise and evaluate existing and incoming empirical data: the IMT uses a variety of data sources such as the MI database, statistics and interaction with field experts in linking and quantifying the links between the variables. The third function is to develop and implement interventions, treatment and prevention strategies: the IMT creates different scenarios that assist decision and policy making for the prevention, intervention and management of child abuse. The fourth function is the use of the integrated theory as a foundation for the continuation of scientific research and

follow-up: the IMT accommodates the addition of other theories (and variables) and facilitates further research in specific types of child abuse.

The four functions above, respond to the suggestion of Tzeng, *et al.*, (1991) that the ideal integrated theory should also emphasise the importance of multiple variables and their subjective and objective interactions at all ecological levels.

6.4 ADDRESSING THE LIMITATIONS OF INTEGRATED THEORIES

Different theories of child abuse and the reviewed integrated theories prove to be limited in addressing five essential questions by Tzeng, *et al.* (1991, p. 310) on working with child abuse and neglect cases. The authors argue that to work with child abuse and neglect cases, a professional in clinical or academic capacity will face the following issues: (1) what domains or services will be needed? (2) What theoretical perspective or perspectives will have the most accurate and useful knowledge? (3) Which professionals will have most experience and skills in applying different theories? (4) How will other service domains be coordinated to provide communitywide service system? (5) How can different, and possibly conflicting, theories be used, either separately or jointly, to maximise the effort of various professionals? For the authors, responses to these questions are important in handling child abuse cases on a daily basis. Such responses can be possible through a complete understanding of empirical and theoretical issues surrounding child abuse.

The IMT responds to the above-mentioned fundamental questions as follows. Firstly, on the domains or services needed, the IMT focuses on the economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural domains. The IMT explains the links between variables from these five theories and allows the inclusion of other theories contributing to child abuse. The structural domain is central to service provision because it covers the policy framework and the legal consideration around the prevention, intervention and management of child abuse.

Secondly, the domains considered in the development of the IMT are based on key theoretical perspectives that provide useful knowledge on child abuse. Each of these theories provides a useful knowledge base on the variables that contribute to child abuse. The IMT, using its quantified links assists in combining the variables from the theories to provide a clear picture of child abuse.

Thirdly, variables contributing to child abuse in South Africa are known. However, the interpretation of those variables, the strength of their individual and collective contribution in the incidence of each other and of child abuse are misunderstood or misinterpreted in some instances. As a consequence, isolated prevention and intervention actions are precipitated and therefore not effectively addressing child abuse. The IMT is an answer to the gap on understanding child abuse and directing prevention and intervention mechanisms. This assists professionals and institutions to focus on addressing variables linked to their expertise, practice, and mandates in the bid to contribute to the total prevention, intervention and management of child abuse.

Fourthly, the IMT explains the implication of different variables in the causation and perpetuation of child abuse. It also assists the policy and decision making process with regards to suggestions on focussed and theory-based prevention, intervention and management mechanisms against child abuse. Because the IMT is a theory-based model, it facilitates the co-ordination of different service domains with an emphasis on the participation of children and the community.

Finally, the IMT has proven, through the application of probabilities, linking and quantification of links between variables, that it is possible to combine different theories in order to facilitate the understanding of and the solving of a social problem, child abuse in this case. The IMT facilitates the maximisation of effort in preventing, intervening and managing child abuse. The combination of variables from different theories assists in addressing the effort where they will be more effective thus minimising resources and time for best result in the prevention of, intervention against and management of child abuse.

6.5 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Most theories explaining crime causation and child abuse in particular are incomplete and unitary. These theories concentrate on contributing variables from particular domains ignoring the causal relations between different domains or theories. This means that social theory for instance, discusses social variables contributing to crime causation and child abuse without exploring how cultural or economic theories impact on social theories and contribute to child abuse. Where there are references to causal relations between two theories in the causation of crime and child abuse in particular, the causal relations are not quantified, leading to either overestimation or underestimation of the links between those theories. Social theorists on crime causation and child abuse recognise that the social environment most propitious to crime is influenced by the economic conditions. The quantification of such links or causal relations is however neither correctly estimated, nor emphasised, leading to anecdotal assumptions that might mislead the understanding of crime or child abuse and consequently policy development or intervention programmes.

The IMT is a response to the incompleteness of theories of child abuse in general and the over-estimation of economic variables over other variables in child abuse causation and perpetuation. This research observes that solutions to child abuse in South Africa are not appropriate because child abuse is not clearly understood. Thus, the need for the IMT and the contribution it provides in understanding, preventing, intervening and managing child abuse.

The IMT, developed for the first time, is unique to this research and in the field of child care, protection, safety and wellbeing. It provides a new and integrated paradigm in understanding, preventing, intervening and managing child abuse using modern technology.

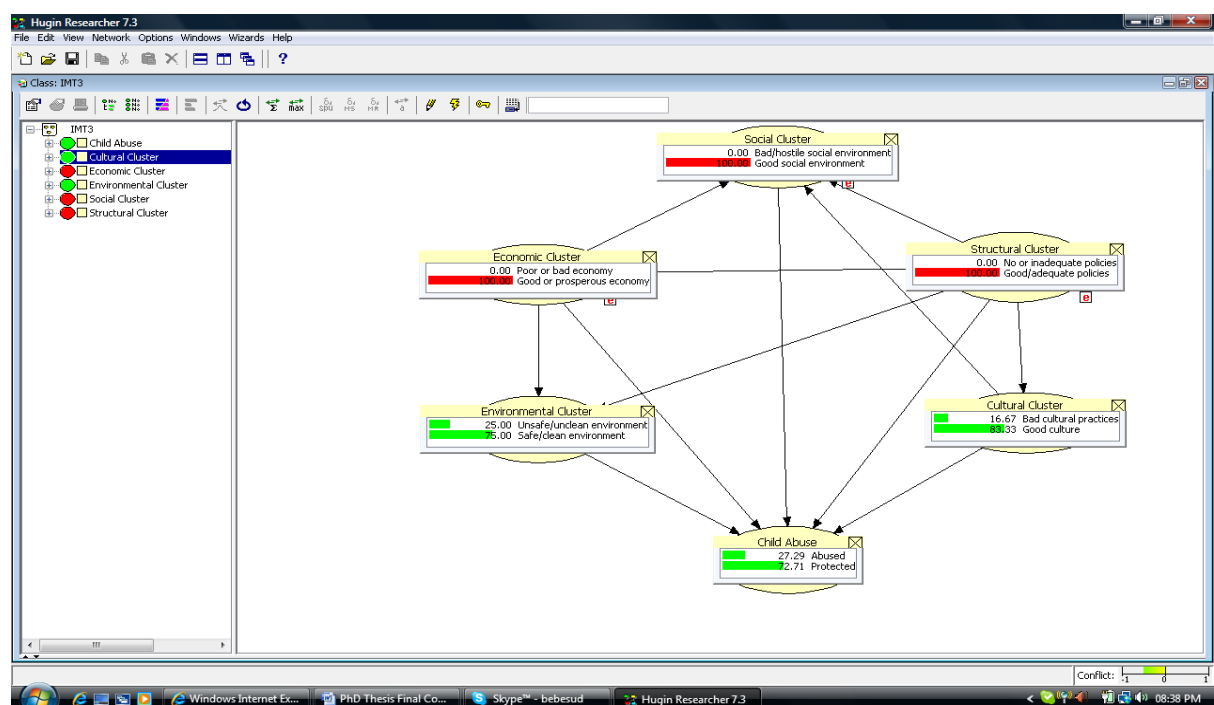
The IMT quantifies links and interdependences between contributing variables to justify child abuse and to support appropriate prevention, intervention and management policies and decisions. It is a useful tool for a range of role-players in the field of child care, protection, safety and wellbeing. By explaining the links

between different variables and theories contributing to child abuse, the IMT facilitates the development and implementation of policies and programme for an appropriate, theory-based and integrated prevention and intervention mechanisms. Because of the explanation of clear links between economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural variables, policy makers will be able to decide on policies, strategies and practices that cut across the indentified variables. Direct service providers on the other hand, will be able to develop and implement service delivery programmes that address variables from the five theories considered.

The IMT facilitates the simulation into different possible scenarios that are important in the search for multifaceted solutions to child abuse. These scenarios are useful to plan for policies and programmes that address specific cases of child abuse. It is therefore essential to emphasise the maximisation of resources and time in focussing on addressing variables that have greater impact on each other and on child abuse.

The network 34 below represents a scenario that focuses on the economic cluster, the social cluster and the structural cluster to address child abuse.

Network 34: Addressing the economic, social and structural clusters



Network 34 shows that the combination of Good and adequate policies, Good or prosperous economy and Good social environment increases the probability of good care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children. Following is a brief explanation of the impact of this combination.

On the social cluster, Starr (1982) advocates the recognition of the community as a modifier of family interaction patterns. He proposes two strategies in involving communities in the prevention of and management of child abuse. Firstly he acknowledges the role of informal and formal community support systems in the alleviation of stress amongst household members. Secondly, he notes the educational role of the community to modulate child abuse levels and to modify negative parents' child-rearing tactics. He further explains that in the past, informal support systems consisted of the extended household members (this is still possible in rural and some peri-urban areas), in modern society (especially in urban areas) the structure of living arrangements has changed to self-contained nuclear families. Informal support systems include a neighbourhood or community-based structures or groupings with no informal control but sometimes funded by local authorities.

Informal organisations are mainly based on ethnic, recreational or religious interests. They use the assistance household or community members to alleviate the stress associated with child care through of other. Starr (1982) believes that a novice mother would, for instance, learn mothering skills from an experienced role model available through a good community support system. At the same time, an older caretaker could help modify inappropriate behaviours before they escalate to abuse.

Formal community support systems are a response to the isolation of abusive families. Starr (1982) argues that since abusive families are isolated from informal social support networks, formal community support systems in law, health, education, and welfare play an increasingly important role. He suggests the prioritisation of both the general and the abuse-specific community support systems.

General support systems refer to the types of formal support systems that are

available to all members of the community. These are considered by this research as part of service delivery. Child abuse-specific community support systems refer to a variety of programmes that are aimed specifically at reducing stress on families and/or providing education for child rearing according to Starr (1982). Such support mechanisms include family and group day care facilities, babysitting services, mothers' helpers, housekeeping services, drop-off centres and crisis nurseries. They provide relief from child care for parents and thereby reduce household stress. Hotlines, for parents and children, serve as both a stress reduction system as well as an opportunity to provide an alternative to child care management (Starr, 1982).

Improving parenting is one of the most important goals of child abuse prevention and management from a social perspective according to Barth (2009). Parents maltreat their children for many reasons and a combination of reasons. For the author, in the past three decades, researchers have identified four common co-occurring issues. They substance abuse by parents or caregivers, parental mental illness, domestic violence and child conduct problems. These social theory variables are related to parenting and lead to child maltreatment. Reducing or eradicating these variables contributes to child care, protection, safety and wellbeing. This include for instance the regulation of alcohol sale and use, the placement of children living with mentally ill parents and addressing issues relating to domestic violence. Parental education programmes are crucial for understanding and responding to social issues and in designing effective intervention programmes to prevent and manage child abuse. For Barth (2009), parental education refers not to the formal education that addresses poverty in terms of access to employment. Parental education here means that parents or caregivers are thought to understand the issues that contribute to the vulnerability of their children to abuse.

Good and adequate policies and practices are essential for a good economy, a good social environment, a good physical environment and good cultural practices. Good policies and practices include general support systems and facilities to children, their parents or caregivers and all members of the community. Health care facilities for both adults and children include prenatal care and family planning services. Counselling services provide all types of therapy to children and families.

Employment services include job counselling and placement services. Educational supports include adult continuing education, job training and apprenticeship programmes. Social work services facilitate the adoption and placement of infants and children. Housing assistance services facilitate access to housing and shelter. Welfare assistance includes income provision and maintenance programmes. Recreational facilities include parks, sports grounds and other infrastructure. All these facilities and services contribute to child abuse prevention and management.

A good and prosperous economic condition linked to a good social environment (in this scenario), contributes to the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children. Economic theorists argue that unemployment and poverty variables are the conduit through which other variables contribute to crime and to child abuse in the case of this research. Such causal relations are unfortunately not quantified in order to inform policy and programmes. Many more causal relations although very important, are either overlooked or underestimated. It is crucial for instance, to establish and quantify the link between education and formal employment. Efforts to address unemployment for instance must be based on the advancement of the education system in terms of easy access and good quality. September (2005), after reviewing the anti-poverty strategy of the social welfare system, concludes that it is essential to pull the poor out of the poverty cycle and dependency through employment opportunities and job creation. Employment opportunities and job creation rely on the education level of the community.

Aliber (2001) and Robison (2003) are critical of how to develop a poverty profile that establishes a baseline on national development policy. Aliber (2001) focuses on the government's responsibility and commitment to redressing inequalities and injustices of the past. He argues that access to water, jobs, land, education and health care are supposed to be accomplished as priorities to achieve equality and justice. On the other hand, Robison (2003), focussing on a child rights perspective and considering international debate, argues that poverty is of not only a developmental concern but also a human rights problem.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) can contribute to reducing child

poverty according to Robison (2003). He suggests the following recommendations for the reduction of child poverty to contribute to child care and wellbeing:

- locate children and child poverty within the demographic and poverty profiles of the PRSPs
- balance economic policy choices to stimulate higher levels of economic growth and to focus on poverty reduction and development
- prioritise child-focussed social service and support programmes that promote children's right to development
- provide support and recognition for particularly vulnerable and discriminated groups of children
- implement reforms of public expenditure management to prioritise resources for child focused social services and development interventions.

Robison's recommendations speak to the economic and structural clusters of the IMT. He refers to the social cluster of which September (2005) emphasises the involvement of the community and society at large in anti-poverty strategies and programmes. By creating a good synergy between economic and social improvement, there is a high probability of a successful anti-poverty strategy, she maintains. This shows the importance of the combination of the economic, social and structural clusters as proposed by the IMT.

On the link between economic and social theory, September (2005) emphasises the core elements that could inform an integrated typology of anti-poverty measures. Amongst those elements, the most important aspect of anti-poverty intervention is to facilitate the autonomy and empowerment of poor households and/organisations for the poor, thus fostering community management.

Strengthening community management through its own initiatives and external programmes as well as the ability to self-organise is therefore critical. Here, the author highlights the importance of linking the improvement of the economic conditions to a strong social responsibility within the community and society in general. This is the notion supported by the IMT on the link between economic and social variables.

In real terms, and focussing on poor economic conditions of households, the IMT expects that by addressing variables from the economic cluster, there is high probability of addressing variables from other clusters (social and environmental clusters) that are linked to economic cluster. Economic growth can prevent and intervene against child abuse only if poor economic variables are identified as directly linked and contributing to child abuse. Because of poverty in general and child poverty in particular, initiatives targeting employment opportunities and job creation are to be prioritised.

The improvement of the social conditions of children and their families is then essential to support a good economy. Partnerships and participation (especially children participation), sound policies and practices are equally important to contribute to the realisation of the ideal situation of children's care, protection, safety and wellbeing in poor households.

The IMT assists in understanding child abuse in different realities and set-ups through the applicable scenarios. Such scenarios are therefore used to facilitate policy and programmes design, review and implementation for child abuse prevention, intervention and management.

6.6 QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The IMT in its current phase has assisted in explaining child abuse through the combination of different variables considering the economic, social, environmental, cultural and structural theories. The choice to concentrate on these theories does not exclude the importance of variables from other theories (such as psychological or medical) in the causation and perpetuation of child abuse. It is therefore important to recognise that as an integrated theory, the IMT accommodates the inclusion of other theories as long as their variables are identified, linked and quantified within the theories before being linked to other theories. An interesting question for further research is the inclusion of other theories in the IMT.

It must also be highlighted that the IMT is a model that can be adapted to different types of child abuse. This means that another research question of interest could be to apply the IMT in understanding the incidence and directing prevention and intervention against specific types of child abuse (physical abuse, emotional abuse, child sexual abuse, child labour and child neglect).

Finally, the IMT brings a new paradigm in the search for the understanding of and formulation of solutions to socio-economic issues of society. This means that another question for further research is to replicate the process of the IMT in dealing with other socio-economic matters of concern in society.

6.7 FINAL REMARKS

Experts and scholars have argued that child abuse is not the consequence of poverty alone. Wallace (1999) for instance, poses the following question: Are poor children neglected (or abused) and rich children well cared for? He regrets that unfortunately, a substantial number of people in society equate poverty with child neglect (abuse), but simply being poor does not make a neglectful parent. He maintains that many live at the edge of poverty or below the acceptable poverty levels but are loved and nurtured. On the other hand, many children live in very rich homes but are neglected or psychologically abused on a daily basis. For this author and many others, the causes of child abuse are varied and wide ranging and dependant on many circumstances or variables.

This research understands that poor economic conditions have a negative impact on and influence on other variables in the causation of child abuse. Similarly, between them, social, environmental, cultural and structural variables influence or impact on each other as demonstrated through the simulation of the IMT. The clear understanding of the links and interdependences between various contributing variables assist in suggesting policies and programmes for appropriate prevention of, intervention against and management of child abuse.

The IMT is ‘integrated’ because it considers different variables and theories in explaining child abuse. It is a ‘model’ because it represents the complex reality of how child abuse (neglect and exploitation) happens and how to prevent and intervene in addressing the contributing variables. More than this, it is a ‘theory’ because it generates new knowledge in understanding child abuse – by describing, explaining and evaluating variables and theories that contribute to child abuse in poor households or considering the poor economic conditions of households.

The IMT is an advocacy tool. It demonstrates that successful actions for the prevention, intervention and management of child abuse must be based on and supported by a clear understanding of the child abuse scenarios at hand. The IMT facilitates the understanding of child abuse by combining theories and variables that contribute to the incidence of child abuse. Achieving the understanding of child abuse through the IMT compels informed and theory based decision making process. The IMT provides decision makers with information on variables and theories that need to be addressed in order to achieve child care, protection, safety and wellbeing considering different scenarios observed instead of current “one size fits all” interventions.

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APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS OF VARIABLES FROM THE LITERATURE

4.3.1 Child abuse (outcome variable)

Child abuse is the principal or outcome variable of the IMT. This variable is directly linked to most or all the contributing variables.

4.3.2 Substance abuse

According to Wallace (1999), many lay persons and non professionals believe that alcohol or (and) drugs cause family violence. A review of alcohol abuse in South Africa by Frontline Fellowship¹⁸ shows that it is estimated that up to 30% of general hospital admissions in South Africa are directly or indirectly related to alcohol use. A clinical assessment of general hospital admissions found alcohol to be a contributing factor in general trauma cases: in 38% of the admissions in the Cape Metropolitan Area and 49% in rural communities, alcohol was found to be a contributing factor. The MRC has found that alcohol has a negative effect on the business community due to absenteeism, poor productivity, high job turnover, interpersonal conflicts, injuries and damage to property. One study in the Orange Free State found that 20% of gold mine workers involved in occupational injuries had high concentrations of alcohol in their blood streams.

Barth (2009) argues that substance abuse by a child's parent or guardian is commonly considered to be responsible for a substantial proportion of child maltreatment reported to the child welfare services. Considering the case of USA, he highlights that studies examining the prevalence of substance abuse among caregivers who have maltreated their children have found rates ranging from 19% to 79% or higher.

Another allusion regarding substance abuse and child abuse is that one widely quoted estimate of the prevalence of substance abuse among caregivers involved in child welfare is 40% to 80%. Similarly, an epidemiological study published in the American Journal of Public Health in 1994 found 40% of parents who had physically

¹⁸ www.frontline.org.za

abused their child and 56% who had neglected their child met lifetime criteria for an alcohol or drug disorder Barth (2009).

According to Wallace (1999), the substance abuse theory is based on the concept that these substances impair judgment and lessen inhibitions and thereby allow violent acts to occur. Some authorities believe that these substances do not cause family violence. Rather, they are used as an excuse for violent acts. The theory accepts the proposition that drugs or (and) alcohol cause or contribute to family violence (Wallace, 1999). Numerous studies, concludes the author, have linked alcohol or (and) drugs to violent behaviour, but no concrete evidence establishes that these substances directly cause family violence (and child abuse).

By linking alcohol abuse to family violence, Wallace (1999) provides an example of how variables are linked and contribute to child abuse on the one hand and to the incidence of other variables from same or different theories on the other hand. Family violence results in many instances in family instability. This means that substance abuse contributes to family instability. There are other links that can be demonstrated here but the BNs theory emphasises the strength of the links and the importance of such links in understanding and resolving the problem of concern.

It is not necessary to highlight all these links through the definition and explanation of the variables, this task is well undertaken in an appropriate section of the IMT development process.

The MRC's National Trauma Research Programme reports that 67% of domestic violence in the Cape Metropolitan Area was alcohol related. In a study of women abused by their spouses, 69% identified alcohol/drug abuse as the main cause of conflict leading to the abuse according to the same reports. Domestic violence includes the abuse, neglect and exploitation of children.

The 2004 WHO's Global Status Report on Alcohol shows that alcohol consumption during pregnancy is related to various risks to the foetus, which include gross congenital anomalies and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), which include conditions such as Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). The

prenatal 'teratogenic' effects of alcohol also include lethal consequences. They comprise spontaneous abortion, low birth weight, foetal damage, prematurity and intrauterine growth retardation according to the WHO.

Barth (2009) argues that caregivers who abuse substances also may place a higher priority on their drug use than on caring for their children, which can lead them to neglect their children's needs for such things as food, clothing, hygiene, and medical care. He acknowledges that the interplay between substance abuse and child maltreatment within family dynamics and across children's developmental periods is gradually becoming clearer.

Barth (2009) shows that prenatal maternal alcohol and substance abuse and postnatal paternal alcohol and substance abuse are most highly associated with child maltreatment. Mothers most often maltreat infants or very young children. Similarly, fathers involved with alcohol and other substances are more likely to maltreat non-infants. These findings can help in developing parent education programs aimed at preventing child abuse according to the authors.

4.3.3 Patriarchy

Wallace (1999) uses Dobash and Dobash's patriarchy theory to explain violence towards women. The patriarchy theory views society as dominated by males, with women in subordinate positions who are treated by men as possessions and things. According to the feminist perspective argues Wallace (1999), social and economic norms directly and indirectly support a patriarchal structure within our society.

The patriarchy theory concludes the author, implies that laws and customs combined uphold this difference in power between men and women and legitimise their different status. This approach views male domination as explaining the historical pattern of violence towards women (and children) throughout the ages.

4.3.4 Culture of violence

Wallace (1999) argues that the culture of violence theory means that violence is unevenly distributed within society and that violence is more prevalent in the lower

socio-economic sector of society who use force as a response. This theory assumes that violence is a learned response and reflects a socialisation or acceptance of violence as appropriate behaviour. The 2002 World Report on Violence and Health states that violence in general and child abuse in particular is a consequence of cultural norms that support violence as an acceptable way to resolve conflicts.

McQuoid-Mason, Pillemer, Friedman and Dada (2002) acknowledge that the oppression of the apartheid era caused communities to lose respect not only for investigative and enforcement agencies such as the SAPS, but also for the law of South Africa. As a consequence, violence became for most communities in South Africa, the accepted method of resolving conflicts. This violence, together with the influence of the strong patriarchal systems that exists in most cultures and religions in South Africa, was extended to, and used against, vulnerable groups in society, such as women and children according to the authors.

4.3.5 Community or social support system

Starr (1982) argues that social stress is a contributor to family-centred child abuse. The occurrence of child abuse is a consequence of mounting stress in normal families according to the author. He also argues that stress-elicited abuse is not limited to lower class families; therefore, a better theory of social stress would be a major contribution to a clear understanding of child abuse. Because of the impact of social stress on child abuse and the role played by society or the community in abusing children, it is essential to use the same society or community in preventing crime and violence against children. Such involvement can be referred to as a community support system.

Thompson (1995) maintains that it is believed that social support can combat the social isolation of potentially abusive families by enlisting the assistance of their normal or 'natural' helpers in the neighbourhood who can provide affirmation, information, and instrumental aid that can benefit troubled families in many ways besides aiding in abuse prevention. He continues that there is research evidence that some social support interventions can reduce child abuse.

Starr (1982) warns that, abusive families generally make poor use of the community support systems and that abusive parents are often socially isolated and only have few personal or community-based relationships. Social isolation is determined by an interaction between individuals and the environment according to Garbarino and Gilliam (1981). They argue that child maltreatment can occur only when a household is isolated from the community and therefore is not given proper feedback and support. For the authors, this isolation may be structural (no social network) or cultural (a network that tolerates or even condones maltreatment).

4.3.6 Service delivery

Child abuse rates are related to the availability of formal socio-economic support systems according to Starr (1982). The author examined variations in abuse as a function of a number of socio-economic and demographic variables. He concluded that where support systems are better and where the household has more human resources, the rate of child abuse is lower and vice-versa.

4.3.7 Understanding of the rights of children (perception)

Discussing the rights of children, Munro (2002) argues that the pressures on child protection seems irrational and conflicting in Britain and other English speaking countries. She is concerned that the rights of children are more strongly recognised today but society is hesitant to address the complexity of how to respond when children's rights conflict with the rights of parents. The 2002 World Report on Violence and Health points out that one of the larger societal factors that contributes to child abuse is the customs that give priority to parental rights over child welfare. Similarly, Starr (1982) concludes that the attitude towards children's rights contributes to the violence perpetrated against them.

Many authors, such as Munro (2002) and Starr (1982) explain that understanding the rights of children contributes to the care and wellbeing of children and the contrary leads to their abuse. Starr (1982) argues that the historical culture of considering children as private property has set the stage for child abuse. For this reason, preventing or controlling child abuse as a cultural phenomenon can only be possible if individuals in society reconceptualise and redefine the status and rights of children.

Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) consider that indulgence causes parents to expect excessive dependency and compliance from their children. The excessive parental expectation in turn results in children's frustration, resistance, and anger because as they grow up, they have solid feelings about their past 'infantilised' status. The enragement of the indulgent parent is consequently the result of the reaction of a child (teenager who is striving for consideration and autonomy). This research refers to a conflict between parental expectation and the child's battle for independence.

4.3.8 Parenting skills

Doyle (1990) argues that child abuse occurs because parents lack knowledge or ignore what will enable them to understand the needs of their children. Child abuse is also the consequence of how parents respond to such needs not because they decide to be cruel or uncaring. The author suggests that 'unrealistic expectations' means the attitude of abusive parents to their children. However, the author remarks that the unrealism of parents' expectations is often due to ignorance rather than malice. She provides a good example of a mother and a nine-month old infant to illustrate the case. A mother who becomes angry when she is not able to toilet train her nine-month old infant needs to learn that babies aged under eighteen months do not have muscular capacity to correctly use a potty.

Parents' ability to respond and react to the needs of their children is critical in preventing abuse and neglect of children. This ability is a combination of various skills that parents need to have or to be taught (especially the first time and young parents). Hofmann-Engl (2006) defines parenting skills by cautioning that patience and empathy are mental health factors and should not be considered as part of parenting skills. For the author, parenting skills refers to the intellectual and practical knowledge a parent or caregiver has about child care. Adding to the above definition, it is important to mention the assertion by Helpguide that some parents or caregivers never learned the skills necessary for good parenting. Teen parents for instance, might have unrealistic expectations about how much care babies and small children need. Similarly, parents who were themselves victims of child abuse may only know how to raise their children the way they were raised, meaning in an abusive way. In

such cases, parenting classes, therapy, and caregiver support groups are great resources for learning better parenting skills.

Bonding and attachment between the parent and the child (especially at an early age) are very important in child nurturing and in preventing abuse and neglect. For Doyle (1990) bonding usually refers to the process from parent to child that starts in pregnancy and reaches a peak in the first hours and days after birth. She acknowledges that successful bonding helps parents respond positively to their new infant and meet the very many demands that their baby makes. Attachment refers to the reciprocal relationship between parent and child particularly in the first year.

4.3.9 Poverty

McQuoid-Mason, Pillemer, Firedman and Dada (2002) argue that poverty is as abject as ever and this situation creates a good opportunity for children not to benefit from the economic growth, thus not being well fed and their basic needs not fully met. The authors insinuate that crime is high in poverty stricken areas as people push for limited and scarce resources. Unfortunately tolerance levels become low in the full view of ineffective SAPS services that are supposed to protect people and create a safe community. This means, according to the authors, that broken homes and broken cultural ties mean that children grow up with insecurity, with unclear patterns of behaviour and a lack of consistent rules. Poverty is also referred to as insufficient or inadequate income and material possessions considering the South African Index of Multiple Deprivation for Children (Barnes, *et al.*, 2007). The authors show that 81% of children in South Africa live in income and materially deprived households.

The 2002 World Report on Violence and Health emphasises that rates of abuse are high in communities with high levels of unemployment and concentrated poverty. Such communities, according to the report, are also characterised by high levels of population turnover and overcrowded housing. The report confirms that research shows that chronic poverty adversely affects children through its impact on parental behaviour and the unavailability of community resources. In addition, communities with high levels of poverty tend to have deteriorating physical and social infrastructures and fewer of the resources and amenities found in wealthier

communities according to the 2002 World Report. The report shows a link between poor economic conditions and environmental as well as infrastructural conditions.

Barth (2009) argues that poverty is one of the critical variables contributing to child abuse. Considering cases of child maltreatment in the USA, he stresses that every national study of child abuse and neglect has shown that poor families are disproportionately involved with child welfare services.

Wulczyn (2009) is of the same view as Korbin (2002), that poverty (for example, concentrated urban poverty) is one interesting contributing variable from researchers examining child abuse. Wulczyn (2009) looking at child abuse and neglect in the USA, argues that state poverty rates are one reason that some states may have a higher victimisation rate than others, although the dynamics of poverty and maltreatment are complicated when measured at the state level. More than half the families in the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System sample had incomes below the federal poverty line adjusted for household size according to the author.

4.3.10 Adequate housing

Townships, squatter camps and informal settlements are places where proper housing structures, design and management are not respected. McQuoid-Mason, *et al.* (2002) acknowledge that the overcrowding in urban squatter settlements means that privacy and safety are compromised.

The fate of children is intimately linked with the domestic scene in which women are commonly raped, abused and mistreated according to the authors. Promiscuity in inadequate houses exposes children to witnessing violence and being brutalised. Their privacy of children is undermined because of a lack of adequate facilities. Their care and wellbeing are compromised because of a lack of services such as running water and electricity. Overcrowding is also a feature of inadequate housing.

4.3.11 Overcrowding

Overcrowding means the proportion between the household size or household composition and the number of people living in that household. The 2002 World

Report on Violence and Health highlights a connection between household size, overcrowding and child abuse. According to the report, data from a range of countries indicate that household overcrowding increases the risk of child abuse. Barnes, *et al.* (2007) point out that according to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard there should be no more than two people in a bedroom.

The Canadian National Occupancy Standard tolerates children less than five years of age and of different sexes to share a bedroom but children over five years of age and of different sexes should not share a bedroom. Only children less than 18 years of the same age and sex may share a bedroom. Household members over 18 years of age should have separate rooms no matter their sexes. The Canadian National Occupancy Standard considers a household as overcrowded when the number of rooms needed is greater than the number of rooms available in the house. Children in such households are therefore considered as living in crowded households (Barnes, *et al.*, 2007). These authors consider the numbers of children living in crowded households as living in an environmentally deprived domain.

4.3.12 Ratio breadwinner – children

The ratio between the breadwinner and children is determined by the number of children under the care of one parent or caregiver (breadwinner). This variable is very important in determining the care and supervision that the parent or caregiver provides to each child. It is assumed that the more children under the care of one parent or caregiver the less attention and care is provided to each child. The 2002 World Report on Violence and Health found that the size of the household can also increase the risk of abuse for children. According to the 2002 World Report on Violence and Health, a study of parent – child ratio in Chile found that in families with four or more children parents were three times more likely to be violent towards their children than in families with fewer children the report confirmed.

4.3.13 Safe environment

McQuoid-Mason, *et al.* (2002, p. 187) summarise the link between an unsafe environment and child abuse in the following township lament:

“When you leave your child alone in the home, she is not safe.
And in the street, she is not safe.
And in the school, she is not safe.
There is nowhere that she can walk and be safe.
Girls are afraid somebody in a car will stop them and say ‘get in’.
When they walk in the street they are raped by men with guns.
Sexual abuse happens so much that some students stop going to school”.

Barnes, *et al.* (2007) considers the living environment as a contributing factor to child abuse. The living environment deprivation domain considers environmental aspects in which children live. These environmental aspects impact on the wellbeing of children. Amongst the environmental aspects the authors highlight the living space, the quality of housing and the amenities within (and surrounding) the dwelling.

Wallace (1999) refers to the term ‘dirty homes’ as a form of neglect in lieu of the term “unsafe home environment”. For the author, “Dirty homes are those living situations that expose the child to injury or life threatening illness... Examples of dirty homes include those living arrangements that have exposed wiring, shattered or broken glass, animal faeces, lice or rodents, and other situations where children might injure themselves” (Wallace, 1999, p. 98).

Other environmental variables that directly contribute to child abuse according to the living environment deprivation from the Index of Multiple Deprivation for Children include living in a shack (quality of housing), no piped water in the household and no pit latrine with ventilation or flush toilet (amenities within or surrounding the dwelling) and living in crowded households (living space) (Barnes, *et al.*, 2007).

4.3.14 Past abuse of parents

McQuoid-Mason, *et al.* (2002) are of the view that the prevalence of violence in South Africa has a particularly devastating effect on children. They remark that the young adults of today grew up in the worst of the political violence of the late apartheid period, during which state violence brutalised them from an early age at the same time as the adults. Because of apartheid, the youth were themselves involved

actively in the struggle, and became accustomed to the use of violence to resolve political conflict in South Africa.

The politically established violence of the apartheid regime contributed to child abuse. Many children were neglected and abused because of the difficult social and economic conditions created by apartheid. The contemporary adults learned during apartheid that violence was the appropriate way of dealing with conflict but were at the same time victims of violence from their parents and the regime of that time. Although it is not every abused child that transforms into an abusive adult, a great number of those abused while children tend to portray abusive behaviours in their adulthood. McQuoid-Mason, *et al.* (2002) comments that most of the brutalised young people of the apartheid era are the young offenders of today, perpetuating the climate of violence and abuse learned from their young age.

Perry, Mohr, Noone Lutz & Fantuzzo (2000), asserts that a society functions as a reflection of its childrearing practices. The authors believe that neglect and negligence of children in the form of poor or no education, children being not protected from violence and other aspects of children's rearing contribute to the making of abusive and violent adults.

4.3.15 Cultural and religious practices and beliefs

Culture and religion play a crucial role in child abuse. Yet, it is extremely difficult to draw a line on what cultural practices can be defined as acceptable. Munro (2002) warns that the increasing ethnic diversity in modern societies creates dilemmas on deciding on what is culturally correct. She argues that when the broad cultural contexts of behaviour are not understood, people or society lose the game. This is when detrimental cultural behaviours contributing to child abuse arise.

Munro (2002) persists that in family life, cultural beliefs, values and attitudes are extremely important in that they can influence the role and relationships between the members of society and the outside world. She then questions the type of behaviour that can be tolerated. This is when it becomes difficult to have an exhaustive list of good and bad cultural practices. The South African constitution condemns any practice that infringes the child's right and wellbeing.

One dimension of the impact of culture on child abuse is the acceptance of some forms of abuse on religious and cultural grounds. Starr (1982) argues that the level of violence in society appears to be reflected in the amount of violence in the household. Support for the above assertion comes from cultures where physical punishment is not sanctioned as a child-rearing tactic. Garbarino and Gilliam (1981) refer to cultural isolation as a network that tolerates or even condones child abuse.

Many cultures are gender biased; the love of a child, the privilege, care and protection depend on the child's gender. In such cultures, some parents value boys while others give preference to girls. This belief limits the interaction between the parents and their children, thus the impact on their abuse and neglect.

McQuoid-Mason, *et al.* (2002) maintain that broken homes and broken cultural ties mean that family relationships tend to be confused and children may not learn the early bonding and emotional attachments that foster awareness of the pain of others. Cultural traditions including early marriages, compensation offered to families of raped children, forced marriages between abusers and victims of rape and marriages between children and adults contribute to and perpetuate child abuse.

4.3.16 Power and powerlessness

Power is critical in the causation of violence in a household. Wallace (1999) argues that violence is sometimes the result of power. For the author, this characteristic occurs when a person perceives a lack of power or control in the social environment but has power in relationship to other persons in his household. The person has power over powerless individuals he or she can dominate. Power in this context is defined as the ability to control the behaviour of others, with or without their consent.

Wallace (1999), remarks that the majority of men work in jobs outside the home where they perceive and believe themselves to be powerless. After being powerless all day at work, a man can return home and dominate the household members. This control and power may take the form of abuse (of women and children). When a mother needlessly disciplines her child, she may be reacting to the fact that her

spouse and others are controlling her. By disciplining the child, she can exert power or control over another person concludes Wallace (1999).

4.3.17 Abuse of economic power

Kayongo-Male and Oyango (1984) establish that in general family theory; family power processes include both power and authority. They discuss that power refers to the ability of a person to change or exploit the behaviour of others. Authority is an abuse of power whereas the norms are established to legitimise the position of the power abuser and to oblige absolute deference of others to that person. Both power and authority play a big role in family relation and contribute to child abuse.

Wallace (1999) sees abuse of economic power as the resource theory and the power differentials. The resource theory is based on the proposition that the one who controls resources, such as money, property, or prestige, is in the dominant position in a relationship. The resource theory argues that the use of violence within a relationship depends on the resources a household member controls. The more resources one commands, the more force or power that person possesses.

The resource theory explains that, because men hold higher-paying jobs with more prestige, they will have more power in relationship than women. This might not necessarily be the ultimate case in South Africa where many women hold very good and well-paying positions in government and the private sector. The theory therefore cautions that those males who have no resources such as high-paying jobs or status tend to resort to violence more often as a way of controlling their spouses.

Power differentials theory means that the persons with the most power or resources have the ability to impose their will on other members of the household (Wallace, 1999). This difference in power allows the spouse to use force on the other spouse or/and children. It does not matter what the sex of the power abuser is, what counts is the resources that such persons control.

The attribute of power differentials is present in both spousal and child abuse. The power differentials theory applies to both men and women. According to Wallace

(1999), more women are taking positions in government and industry, and as a result, they are slowly beginning to raise their power level to that of men.

4.3.18 Employment of parents

Employment means any formal or informal legal lucrative activity that constitutes the primary source of income for the child's parent or caregiver. This research is not concerned about the quality of employment nor the quantity in terms of hours spent at work or salary earned. There are different ways of considering the way unemployment contributes to violence and child abuse particularly. Wallace (1999) assumes that the concept of frustration and aggression is based on the principle that human beings display aggression when some of their goals are not achieved. Being employed and earning an income from a job forms part of the dignity of an individual, an important goal that many are willing to achieve. Failure to attain such a desired goal can lead to aggression within the household by the frustrated parents according to Wallace (1999).

Barnes, *et al.* (2007) consider employment as a key variable of the South African Index of Multiple Deprivation of Children (SAIMDC). Employment deprivation of children means that children live in workless households or households where the parent or caregiver is not employed. According to the authors, this deprivation contributes to the vulnerability of children to abuse, neglect and exploitation. On employment deprivation they show that 50% of children in South Africa experience 'employment deprivation' or live in workless households.

4.3.19 Domestic violence

The South African Government has a pile of legislation, policies and guidelines to deal with domestic violence. Many studies have been conducted on domestic violence, yet the phenomenon is still prevalent in many households.

The Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 defines Domestic Violence as "any controlling or abusive behaviour that harms the health, safety or wellbeing of the applicant (meaning, in the case of a nuclear family, a parent) or any child in the care of the applicant. This includes but is not limited to physical or (threat) of

physical abuse, sexual or threat of sexual, emotional, verbal and psychological abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to or destruction of property; or entry into the applicant's residence without consent, where the parties do not share the same residence".

The definition of domestic violence demonstrates it contributes a lot to the incidence of and perpetuation of child abuse. A proper solution to domestic violence will have a good return in the prevention of and intervention against child abuse.

Helpline¹⁹ believes that children who witness domestic violence are terrified and consequently become emotionally abused. Emotional abuse is the most damaging type of child abuse according to Helpline. Emotional abuse destroys the child's psyche and has long-term consequences that are difficult or impossible to remove from the child's brain, especially when the emotional abuse is repetitive.

Perry *et al.* (2000) argue that children who witness domestic violence exhibit health and behaviour problems, including problems with their weight, their eating and their sleep patterns. They may also have difficulty at school and find it hard to develop close and positive friendships with other children and/or adults.

The CSIR – Crime Prevention conducted an impact assessment study of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign against Violence against Women and Children on behalf of the then Department of Provincial and Local Government, the convener of the Campaign. Interactions between Mbecke, Chiguvho and Bosilong (2009) and members of the communities, most of them victims of domestic violence, were that the causes of domestic violence in South Africa were cultural, economic, legal and political. The assessment study found that cultural causes included domination by male partners as part of tradition and cultural values and violence was used as a means to resolve conflict. This happens not only to

¹⁹ www.helpline.org

women but to children as well. The following cultural and social factors were revealed as contributing to domestic violence in South Africa:

- Cultural definitions of appropriate sex roles
- Expectations of roles within relationships
- Belief in the inherent superiority of males
- Values that give men proprietary rights over women and girls
- Notion of the family as the private sphere and under male control
- Customs of marriage (bride price/dowry)
- Acceptability of violence as a means to resolve conflict

Economic factors included:

- Women's economic dependence on men
- Limited access to cash and credit
- Discriminatory laws regarding inheritance, property rights, use of communal lands and maintenance after divorce or widowhood
- Limited access to employment in formal and informal sectors
- Limited access to education and training for women

Legal and political contributing factors included:

- Lesser legal status of women either by written law and/or by practice
- Laws regarding divorce, child custody, maintenance and inheritance
- Legal definitions of rape and domestic abuse
- Low levels of legal literacy among women
- Insensitive treatment of women and girls by SAPS and judiciary
- Under-representation of women in power, politics, the media and in the legal and medical professions
- Domestic violence not taken seriously
- Notions of family matters being private and beyond control of the state
- Risk of challenge to status quo/religious laws
- Limited organisation of women as a political force
- Limited participation of women in organised political system

The assessment study confirmed the results of various surveys – such as the 2002 National Survey on Violence against Women – that domestic violence contributed significantly to all violent crimes in South Africa. In 46% of cases of domestic violence, children were also victims of domestic violence as were women. There are other frightening figures on domestic violence in South Africa that are not the concern of this research.

The high levels of domestic violence in South Africa call for a greater consideration on the effect of the exposure of children to violence. Such exposure contributes to the cycle of violence whereby children who were not well nurtured and loved turn out to become abusive and violent as adults.

4.3.20 Level of education of parents

The level of education of parents or caregivers is an important variable in child abuse for two reasons. Firstly, employment depends largely on the level of formal education. Secondly, this research is interested in establishing how the education level of parents is a contributing variable in nurturing and educating children on the one hand and being abusive as a matter of ignorance on the another hand.

Wallace (1999) argues that lack of knowledge contributes to child neglect. He considers that parents or caregivers who are not educated have little or no knowledge about children's needs. They might also lack judgment resulting for instance in leaving a child alone and unsupervised. In some instances argues Wallace (1999), uneducated parents or caregivers lack motivation. They lack energy, have little desire to learn, and no other standard of comparison. These parents or caregivers are apathetic-futile because they are introvert and feel that nothing is worth doing argues the author.

4.3.21 HIV/AIDS prevalence

HIV/AIDS contributes to child abuse in different ways. PLAN's discussion paper argues that the impact of HIV/AIDS is contra-development and prosperity in East and Southern Africa. The negative impact of HIV/AIDS includes the growing numbers of orphaned children. These orphaned children, in many instances are left under the

care of the elderly or the extended families that might not be able to exercise full parental responsibilities. In other instances children look after themselves in family structures called child-headed households (Ray and Carter, 2007).

HIV/AIDS prevalence impacts on the possibility of infected parents benefiting from developmental opportunities such as education and employment. This results in the incapacity to care for children as explained above.

4.3.22 HIV/AIDS myth

In its HIV/AIDS Weekly of the 25th April 2002, Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) reported on the existence of a theory that explains the phenomenon of child sexual rape in South Africa. The theory (or belief) is an apparently accepted myth, that having sex with a virgin cleanses the perpetrator of his HIV/AIDS status.

It is certain that the myth is not responsible for all cases of child rape. Such belief however cannot just be ignored as its impact might contribute to the cases incidence even at a low percentage. IRIN cites the findings of a survey in East London, as conducted by the University of South Africa which slightly supports the theory. According to the survey, 18% of 498 workers believed that sex with a virgin could cure AIDS. In Gauteng Province, 32% of those interviewed believed in the myth. Interviewed by IRIN Barbara Kenyon, director of the Greater Nelspruit Rape Intervention Project in the Mpumalanga Province stated that the myth is accepted in the community even by educated people. She argued that it was found through follow-up visits, that many child victims of sexual abuse become HIV positive.

The IMT is interested in complicated variables such as this and therefore undertakes to interrogate their impact through the interaction with field experts. The IMT assumes, in this instance that the myth plays a certain role as a contributing variable in combination with other variables.

4.3.23 Coping with the Criminal Justice System

Joan van Niekerk of CHILDLINE has always stressed that children regularly complain that coping with the CJS is worse than the sexual abuse itself because it is

sluggish and mostly stressful. This is referred to as secondary victimisation.

Waterhouse (2008) is concerned that the thought of children being victims of sexual offences is often difficult to accept. Yet, children represent about half of South Africa's victims of sexual offences victims – and, no matter their particular vulnerability, children face the same processes as adults in the administration of justice. Waterhouse (2008) explains that children who are victims of sexual abuse have to report the crime and face the trauma of telling and retelling their traumatic experience. They also have to stand as witnesses in court against the offender (if apprehended) and thereafter find some sort of normalisation on their own and their family without the assistance of the government in most cases.

The nuances of this experience are, for Waterhouse (2008), more difficult to appreciate. Like adult victims of sexual offences, child victims are subjected to the community's misconceptions and prejudices including the community members and the CJS officials blaming victims for being the cause of the sexual violence they endured. In many SAPS stations there are no child-friendly facilities for child victims of child abuse, especially rape cases to calmly and privately report their ordeal. The sad reality is also that in many instances a girl child has to report the case to a male SAPS officer with no experience or training in handling such sensitive cases.

Waterhouse (2008) blames the low levels of capacity as worsening the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the CJS to address the special needs of child victims. The author also refers to poor service delivery and poor coordination and collaboration between role-players in the CJS. The members of the CJS are the Departments of Justice, Correctional Services and the SAPS seconded by the Department of Health and the Department of Social Development.

4.3.24 Participation of children in decision making processes

It is sad to observe that in many forums where children's issues are discussed, reference has always been made to the role to be played by children in decisions affecting their lives. Yet, no proper mechanism has been set-up, piloted and implemented on how to facilitate the active engagement of children in policy formulation or policy and decision making around issues affecting their care,

protection, safety and wellbeing. The provisions of the UN CRC, ratified by South Africa are more ambitious than practical when it comes to the participation of children in decisions affecting their lives.

Article 12 (1) for instance, stipulates that States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. This provision is neither possible to implement nor practical for two reasons. Firstly, the capacity of the child to form his or her own views is debatable. What is the appropriate age at which a child can be considered as capable of forming his or her own views? Secondly, considering the cultural set-up in which the child lives and the respect required to be given to his or her parents and caregivers, to what extent will that child be in a position to freely express those views, let alone those views being the best options for his/her wellbeing?

The other provisions of the UN CRC on the participation of children in decisions affecting their lives are similarly debatable because their implementation is not possible and practical. The Inter-Agency Working Group on Children's Participation (IAWGCP) (2007) highlights two critical limitations for the implementation of the articles on the participation of children in policy and decision making. Firstly, the IAWGCP is of the view that the UN CRC does not establish a minimum age for children's participation. Rather, it refers to children's 'evolving capacities' to interact in decisions that affect them. Secondly, the UN CRC does not give children the right to veto decisions made by adults, but it does require adults to seek out children's views, and to take them into account.

With the ambiguous provisions of the UN CRC and a broken South African CJS, children are still far from enjoying their right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. This unfortunate situation is observed within the households where children are subjected to domination by their parents, in the communities where they have no say and in the CJS where their views are not sought.

4.3.25 Access of children to Social Grants

Section 28 (1) (a) and (b) of the South African Constitution acknowledges that every child has the right to family care or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment. Every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, health care and social services. Article 26 (1) of the Convention on the Right of the Child stipulates that State Parties shall recognise for every child the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance, and shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realisation of this in accordance with their national law.

Article 26 (2) of the UN CRC emphasises the access of children to social grants. The grants should take into consideration the resources and circumstances of the child and persons having responsibility for the maintenance of the child, as well as any other considerations relevant to an application for benefits made by or on behalf of the child. Unfortunately, the grants provided to children in South Africa are either insufficient or not accessible to all qualified children for various reasons. In many instances especially in rural areas, children do not have access to social grants because they do not have birth certificates and in some cases, their caregivers do not have South African identity documents.

4.3.26 Intra and inter country family migration

Kayongo-Male and Onyango (1984) view urban-rural migration as one of the cultural features of African families. They argue that having the father in the town and the mother and children at the rural home creates grave problems in bringing up children in Africa. They maintain that discipline may be difficult, since in Africa the father symbolises authority in the household, and his prolonged absence from home may be felt deeply by household members. The mother, being overburdened by her many roles, may fail to play some, to the detriment of the development of the children. Urban-rural migration amounts therefore to child neglect and abuse to some extent. The authors warn that the fact that the wife might have taken over some of his roles in his absence makes adjustments for the family rather difficult.

In celebrating the 2010 International Day for Families, the National DSD used the theme: “The Impact of Migration on Families around the World”. This theme was

purposely chosen to highlight the challenges that migrant families encounter when relocating either from one country to another, or from one province to another.

A pamphlet developed by DSD on migration underlines that migration creates a psycho-social stress for relocating families. Families lose the familiarity of their surroundings and they often find themselves without the support systems that existed in their previous environments. The pamphlet further stresses that migrant families could also experience tension between the primary values of the old and new cultures. Looking at international migration, DSD is of the view that the arrival of immigrant families in the country often entails the movement of people whose social, cultural, ethnic background and characteristics differ from those of most people in the society they are joining.

Another aspect of family life that can be easily influenced by family transitions through migration is social cohesion according to DSD. The leaving behind of family and community and the breaking of these bonds, can easily lead to feelings of loneliness, isolation and hopelessness.

4.3.27 Literacy of parents or caregivers

South-DeRose ([Sa]) emphasises illiteracy as a vicious net that traps the entire family. Because of illiteracy, parents 'hide behind the walls' of humiliation as they cannot express themselves freely in some circumstances according to the author. She argues that illiterate parents miss out on opportunities to meet people and interact with them. Isolation and loneliness may lead to the loss of self-esteem and to depression. The consequence of such depression is easily passed to children in the form of abuse. South-DeRose ([Sa]) argues that illiterate parents lack reading or comprehension skills, they don't have verbal and written skills and consequently cannot effectively advocate their children's rights.

South-DeRose ([Sa]) explains that parents with poor literacy and reading skills have difficulty to communicate with their children or to read to them, as they fear to be labelled as stupid by their children. When children with illiterate parents enter early education system, they lack the necessary assistance and monitoring

of school work. This contributes negatively to their educational development. Parental participation in a child's learning process is critical as a parent is the child's first and most influential teacher and role model. This research considers the inability of parents to assist their children in their learning life as neglect.

4.3.28 Family stability

The stability of a household is a result of different elements. The most crucial elements considering the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children include: good parenting; family structure; and the relationship between the child and the parents or caregivers. Harden (2004) put a strong emphasis on the impact of family stability on child development, meaning: the physical; cognitive; social; and emotional maturation of children from conception to adulthood. She cites: parental mental health; stable relationships among parents or caregivers; and positive parenting as indicators of family stability. The author explains the relationship between family stability through good parenting, nurturing and positive child development. She argues that children who experience family stability have parents or caregivers who remain constant, consistent, and connected to them over time. For this reason, caregivers who are mentally healthy and engage in: appropriate parenting practices; a cohesive; supportive; a flexible family system; and a nurturing and stimulating home environment; promote family stability. She also believes that children are more likely to have trusting relationships with caregivers who are consistent and nurturing, which leads to a number of positive developmental outcomes. The opposite of good parenting, nurturing, healthy mental capacity of the parents or caregivers, as is demonstrated in this research is child abuse or nothing less than child neglect.

4.3.29 Family structure

Tomison (1996) agrees that family structure contributes to the identification of factors contributing to child abuse but warns that no single factor can fully explain child abuse. The author emphasises the importance of both-parents-type of family in securing the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children. He highlights the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in single-parent headed families and families with step-parents.

This research acknowledges that both-parent families assume more responsibility towards children. However the variable 'Family structure' is divided into two categories for the purpose of this research. Child-headed households (or children living with no direct responsibility and care from parents or caregivers) – and not living in a place of safety or a children's home, and children living with parents or caregivers. This subdivision takes into account the role played by expanded families in providing care and protection to children and the increase of child-headed households in the South Africa.

4.3.30 Mental capacity

Although this research is not interested in psychological, medical or clinical theories on child abuse, it is imperative to acknowledge that the mental capacity of parents and caregivers contributes to child abuse. During the expert work session on identifying and defining variables contributing to child abuse, participants insisted that the mental capacity of a parent or caregiver is crucial to the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of the child.

Wallace (1999) maintains that the mental illness model sets forth the proportion that a parent's mental illness is one of the primary causes of child abuse. This is a readily accepted theory according to the author because it is easy to believe that anyone who would repeatedly beat or torture a child must be mentally ill.

Barth (2009) understands that relatively little has been written about the effect of serious and persistent parental mental illness on child abuse, although many studies show that substantial proportions of mentally ill mothers are living away from their children. Much of the discussion about the effect of maternal mental illness on child abuse focuses on the poverty and homelessness of mothers who are mentally ill, as well as on the behaviour problems of their children in response to their mental illness according to the author. It was however discussed during the expert's work session that there is a very limited probability of a mother, through intuition, to take basic care of her child. However, field experts believed that society will not accept leaving the care of a child under the responsibility of mentally ill person no matter the level of instinct that person might have.

Barth (2009) emphasises the relationship between maternal depression and parenting in designing parental programmes for child abuse prevention. Helpguide is of the view that parents who suffer from depression, anxiety and bipolar disorders or other mental illnesses cannot take care of themselves, consequently that of their children. Mental illness or parents' trauma contribute to their withdrawal from their children. Most mentally ill parents are quick to anger without understanding why according to Helpguide.org. The suggestion from Helpguide is to treat the affected parents or caregivers, and if treatment is not possible or during such treatment, children should be in the care of a mentally fit person.

4.3.31 Reporting of child abuse

The reality around the reporting of child abuse is alarming in South Africa. Reporting of abuse, neglect and exploitation in any form is difficult by children themselves. In its recent briefing paper on the aspects of the sexual abuse of children in South Africa, the Parliamentary Liaison Office of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) notes that "it is extremely difficult for a child to tell anyone of the sexual abuse they may have experienced. Children are small, trusting and impressionable. They may be frightened or ashamed, and often lack the vocabulary to describe their abuse. They may be related to the abuser and/or live in the same house. Furthermore, they may not be believed; worse, they may themselves be blamed. And since sexual abuse of children is frequently accompanied by physical abuse or threats of punishment, they are vulnerable at every turn" (Law, 2010, p. 3).

The observation of the MI database has also shown that lots of cases were either not reported or only reported after a long period. This experience corroborates the reality of the crime reporting characteristic of South Africans.

4.3.32 Response of Child Protection System (CPS)

The most difficult and stressful period for child victims of abuse is the time they have to spend as state witnesses to face their perpetrators in court. Adding to the trauma of reporting cases at the SAPS (for those few who do so), children are usually left on their own when it comes to testifying in court. Not only do they have to recall the

event that happened months or years ago, but this is done with no direct support from the CPS in most of the cases.

Children are made to remember the stressful experience of the abuse (sexual abuse in most cases) they suffered. The consequences of recalling stressful events are not considered by the CPS as an unnecessary secondary victimisation. It is also crucial to highlight the scarcity of social workers to deal with such cases.

4.3.33 Child supervision

The supervision of children at all times is very important for their care, protection, safety and wellbeing. Children who are always left on their own are at risk of being abused. Not providing regular supervision to children constitutes neglect.

4.3.34 Care of victims by institutions

The care of child victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation by official institutions is always limited in different ways in South Africa. For Law (2010, p. 3) "...the government continues to rely on the chronically under-funded and under-staffed NGO sector for the provision of services for children in need of care and protection. Follow-up services for these children and their families are similarly overtaxed".

The children's home care institutions and places of safety where children are kept are in most cases overcrowded and with a limited number of professional social workers. As a consequence, children in such institutions learn anti-social behaviour because in most cases, they are not followed-up by an adult in their education and other developmental tasks. Not only is the transition from the home care and place of safety back to the child's home or a foster home difficult but the time spent in these institutions contributes negatively to the future of such children.

4.3.35 Age of the child

Jones, *et al.* (1987) understand that parents have to ensure that their children grow-up in a safe and secure environment. This responsibility begins from pregnancy and continues to the end of childhood. The process of the child moving from pregnancy to the first day on earth and from day one to day 6, 571 (18th year) requires good

parenting practices and ongoing behaviour that is harmless to the children but provides appropriate physical, emotional and intellectual maturity for the child.

Jones, *et al.* (1987) subdivide the age of the child into five groups. The first group is pregnancy and child birth, the second group is the first year, the third group is one to five, the fourth group is five to eleven and the fifth group is adolescence. They identify the behaviour and practices that are conducive to good child development and those that are harmful.

This research considers only two age groups that cover all the variables explained by the authors. They are the child age 0 – 13 and the adolescence to maturity age or 14 – 18 years. It is however important to note that all children are not the same. Some children reach adolescence earlier than others through their excellent physical and intellectual development, others remain at the child age because of physical and especially mental retardation.

The first group (pregnancy to child birth) is not explained as such in this research. This age group is under the group child age (0 – 13) and it is important to mention a few variables that are harmful to good child development considering the pregnancy stage. Jones, *et al.* (1987) argue that pregnancy is a time for physical, emotional and social change, especially for first-time parents. Besides the mother-to-be experiencing sickness, discomfort and physical change, both parents- to-be live a transitional period that is a joy for some. For other parents- to-be, it is an absurd moment that sometimes leads to ideas of abortion. The responsibility of the mother-to-be to consider another human life within her is also a critical condition that opposes her to herself. There are important guidelines that she needs to adhere to such as ante-natal visits, restrictions on drinking and/or smoking. Some have to be under constant medication. The use or abuse of alcohol or any controlled substances during pregnancy could constitute significant harm to an unborn child (FAS for example).

The child age (0 – 13) is characterised by the dependency of the child to the parents. Bonding is very important during the first years of the child's development. Wallace

(1999) argues that premature, low birth-weight, mentally or physically handicapped children are at a greater risk of abuse than normal children. He emphasises that children who are difficult to manage are at great risk of abuse.

Jones, *et al.* (1987) warn that children's needs are numerous at an early age and these are expressed by crying. They further argue that "many parents feel that responding immediately to his demands will produce a naughty, 'spoilt' child and for some the fear of spoiling is central to their problems with their children" (Jones, *et al.*, 1987, p. 18). Other behaviour and practices associated with the abuse of young children include dealing with the temper tantrum of an eight month to three years old child, choice of food. The response of the parents is mostly smacking the child (Jones, *et al.*, 1987).

After 13 years, the child seems to be more independent and understanding but relies on his parents or caregivers for assistance with school work. The child experiences physical change and the quest for identity (gender, beauty, attraction to opposite sex...). At adolescence "parental attitudes to punishment change, at this time, probably because the children are too big for the parents to threaten, but parents are also more aware, conscious or not, of the sexual dimension of hitting" (Jones, *et al.*, 1987, p. 25). Punishment is given in the form of verbal abuse such as insults or parents tend to use persuasion and dialogue for mutual respect. This means that the levels of corporal punishment and abuse in general decrease.

4.3.36 Gender of the child

Munro (2002) understands that "in many societies, male babies are more highly valued because they will remain within the family group as adults and look after their parents in old age. The birth of female babies, therefore, can be a disappointment and they are vulnerable to social killings" (Munro, 2002, p. 50). In the case of South Africa, 'family' killings might be exaggerating in many cases, but it is true that in many cultures boys are given extra preference and are more privileged because they are seen as customary successors of the family legacy. In cases where the family is not able to provide for the educational needs of all its children, priority is given to the boys. Girls are reduced to domestic work in the household because of a belief that girls must be prepared to do domestic work.

4.3.37 Recreational facilities

According to Article 31 of the UN- CRC, the right of children to play is one of their basic human rights. The CRC links the right to play with their protection and wellbeing. Children's play affords them the opportunity and freedom to explore, to discover and to interact with the physical and social environments around them.

This right can only be effective if there is infrastructure and facilities that can be used by children to play safely. Recreational services such as: gardens; parks; sports grounds; and schools with available facilities are therefore essential to facilitate the fulfilment of this basic right of children.

4.3.38 Infrastructures

The enforcement of the right of children to play can also be facilitated by a safe environment with appropriate basic infrastructures such as: hospitals; playgrounds or parks; and schools. Good roads, lights and other infrastructural necessities are also important for the care, protection, safety and wellbeing of children.

4.3.39 Piped (tap) water inside dwelling or yard

Access to water is one of the basic rights of children as protected by the Constitution of South Africa. The SAIMDC classifies the access to piped water in the dwelling or within 200 metres as a variable for a child to be classified as trapped in the Income and Material Deprivation (IMD). The economic theory of child abuse argues that many children in poor households spend their precious time fetching water which interferes with their schooling and homework.

4.3.40 Flush toilet or ventilated latrine

A flush toilet or ventilated latrine is one of the variables of the SAIMDC. Children who live in a household without a flush toilet or ventilated latrine are classified as trapped in IMD.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

The following articles were written and published as part of this PhD thesis. They are available on Internet or can be provided upon request to the author.

1. "Modelling Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation: Towards the Integrated Modelled Theory": published in E-Bulletin No 14, November 2009, the International Sociological Association (ISA).
2. "Modelling the Differential Incidence of Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation in Poor Households in South Africa. Focus on Child Trafficking": published in Vol. 4, No. 1, Spring 2010, African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies.
3. "The Integrated Modelled Theory on Understanding and Preventing the Incidence of Child Abuse in South Africa": published in Vol. 01, No. 07, September 2010, the OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development.