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Minds, Objects, and Persons – Narratives of Perpetrators of Violent Crime

By

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Submitted in accordance with the partial requirements for the degree of Masters in Community Based Counselling Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Witwatersrand.

Supervised by: Professor Brett Bowman

2017/09/26

Declaration of Originality

I, *Angelo Dias (Student number: 419020)*, am a student registered for *Masters in Community Based Counselling Psychology*, hereby declare the following:

- That this is my own original unaided work.
- I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong.
- Any part of this study that does not reflect my own ideas has been fully acknowledged in the form of citations. No part of this thesis has been submitted in the past, or is being submitted, or is to be submitted for a degree at any other university. I have followed the required conventions in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others.
- I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.

Student Signature: _____ Date: 2017/09/26

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Dedication

To my brother, Dean Dias (1984-2006).

Abstract

Although research on violence has gained momentum over the last 3 decades, very little work on situational factors involved in violent enactments has been undertaken in South Africa. As a means to address this limitation, the aim of this project was to better understand the phenomenology of violence. Embedded in a psychosocial approach, the study subjected data collected through three staggered semi-structured interviews with nineteen incarcerated perpetrators of violent crime to a two-stage secondary data analysis using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The first phase, aimed to provide a broad general phenomenological reading of these fifty-seven interviews. Thereafter, a more strategic and theory driven analysis was performed, building on the broader reports of the phenomenology of violence and the perceived situational factors. The evidence suggests that neoliberal policies and ideology may have a significant role in production of violent crime in the South African context, informing not only the behavioural repertoire of its constituency, but, also coming to shape the way in which perpetrators make meaning of their lifeworld and perpetration of violent crime. The analysis also found that impairments in mentalization appeared to play a role as a situational determinant in violent enactments, and interestingly it appeared to be influenced by a number of other relevant situational factors (e.g. the presence and use of illicit substances, peer and social presence and pressure, indicators of a possible threat to their wellbeing, the presence of gangsters, the presence of indicators of conspicuous consumption, as well as, indicators of the presence of moral disengagement). As such, this study provides strong support for further research aimed at understanding the ways in which violence comes to be produced by the structural processes of neoliberalism, it's influence on the subjectivity of individuals in neoliberalized contexts, and its arguably corrosive effect on marginalized communities by way of its divestment, as well as, its arguably negative sociocultural impact. The project's overall contribution to psychosocial approaches to violence lies in its demonstration of the value of bridging theories that span work on moral disengagement, conspicuous consumption, neoliberalism, mentalization theory, phenomenology, and violence.

Key words: mentalization; interpretative phenomenological analysis; violence; neoliberalism; moral disengagement; secondary data analysis; psychosocial; South Africa; phenomenology; conspicuous consumption; qualitative research.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Recent theoretical and empirical work on violence has suggested the need to investigate the role of violent crime perpetrators and particular situational factors which arise in their enactments of violence, in order to further understand the phenomena of violence and its enactments in the South African context (Bowman *et al*., 2015; Bruce, 2014; Nell, 2006; Schinkel, 2004; D. L. Wilkinson & Carr, 2008; D. L. Wilkinson & Hamerschlag, 2005). In a recent study focused on perpetrators of violent crime in South Africa, Barolsky (2008) suggested that the scope of the report did not allow for the consideration of a deeper psychological analysis of these perpetrators' narratives, even though she insisted that this was necessary for better understanding their violent enactments. The violent nature of crime and its prevalence is a major concern for South Africa and one that is voiced by media forums, the public, as well as the government (Barolsky, Ward, Pillay, & Sanger, 2008; Bruce, Dissel, & Menziwa, 2007; David Bruce, 2014; Fry, 2014; Seedat, Van Niekerk, Suffla, & Ratele, 2014; Swartz & Scott, 2014).

On the other hand, recent theorizing concerning mentalization, theory of mind, and cruelty may also be useful in understanding the perpetration of violence (Baron-Cohen, 2011; Brown, 2008; Fonagy, 2003; Nell, 2006). In order to appropriately prevent such violence, this research aims to provide a psychological analysis of the aforementioned narratives, whilst interrogating and using recent psychological, economic, sociological, criminological, philosophical, and neuroscientific evidence which could aid in understanding the situational triggers for violence in the narratives of the perpetrators. In order to appropriately balance the vast scope of the literature with the evidence presented in the narratives, interpretative phenomenological analysis is used, given its focus on balancing the perspective of the participants of the study, whilst also being epistemologically open to varying interpretations of current literature (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006).

Chapter 2 serves as a widespread review of the literature. This formulates a larger argument which posits that: violence is a major public health issue globally and locally; that the study of violence will benefit from a more psychosocial approach which focuses on ways in which the perpetrators make sense of violence, perceived situational factors at play during an enactment, whilst integrating the knowledge on upstream risk factors, and psychological

theory on violence, in order to interpret the phenomenon of violence; that the history of South Africa is particularly violent partially as a function of the structural inequities and oppression of Apartheid regime policies, resulting in the presence of numerous material and social factors which are associated with high incidences of violence by way of its corrosive impact on the traditional forms of socialization of the black youth of South Africa; that, inequality by large plays a significant role in understanding the prevalence of violence as this is likely related to the recent shift towards neoliberal or late capitalistic polices, and the various ways in which it has resulted in the social and financial divestment from the social institutions which typically provide social control and social support for marginalized communities and aid them in upward mobility. It is argued that this has likely had a substantial impact on these communities' material conditions and quality of life with the literature suggesting that they are more susceptible to physical and mental illness. This is based on the continuous chronic stress they endure, and often results in the youth pursuing alternative strategies to cope with their adversity, which is commonly associated with the use of violence and an emphasis on "hardness", status, and the unfettered pursuit of conspicuous consumption and capital accumulation. This is argued to be a function of neoliberal discourses influence on the communities' moral economies, shifting their values towards an emphasis on individualism and capital accumulation. As such conspicuous consumption is argued to likely be a significant situational factor in the perpetration of interpersonal violence by the way of their identification with neoliberal discourse, as it serves a key piece of information in determining the perpetration of crime. Thereafter it explores ways in which perpetrators come to account for their violent enactments in relation to morality and the mechanisms of moral disengagement, as considering this would be beneficial to understanding the processual factors at play in violent enactments. Finally, the chapter moves towards arguing that mentalization may play a key role in understanding the enactment of violence as it provides a theoretically useful and compatible means of making sense of the perpetrators' reports of violence and would aid in providing a better understanding of the processual factors at play in enactments of violence.

Chapter 3, provides a brief description of the methodology of the study. It is a secondary data analysis which utilizes a phased interpretative phenomenological analysis on the interviews of 19 perpetrators of violent crime. These interviews were acquired from the Centre of

Violence and Reconciliation. This chapter provides a brief argument on the conceptual framework of the study to foreground the chosen methodological approach.

Chapter 4 constitutes the data analysis and interpretation of the interviews. Four primary themes were discovered with eight subthemes, the results of which are discussed in said segment. The first phase of the analysis served as a broad purview into the phenomenology of violence for these perpetrators, this builds up to the second phase of the analysis and supplements the breadth of the first phase with a more strategic and granular interpretative analysis - with more of an emphasis on the interpretative component of the double hermeneutic of IPA - of the violent enactments utilizing mentalization and the event-based framework in order tease out the processual factors at play in a violent enactment, whilst in part integrating and building on the first phases insights.

Chapter 5, outlines some of the conclusions, limitations, and recommendations of the study. In summary, the primary conclusions include that the evidence suggests that the failure of impairment of the functioning of mentalization is likely at play in some interpersonal enactments of violence, and this is partially related to, or exasperated by, a number of other situational factors (i.e. the presence of a gun, alcohol, gangsters, significant others, markers of race and class, and the presence of coevals) however, the most interesting of which are, arguably, the presence of conspicuous commodities (given the perpetrators clear identification with neoliberal discourse) and mechanisms of moral disengagement (which likely are related to impairments in mentalization) in the perpetrators accounts of violent crime.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 - Violence as a major public health issue

Violence is a major social epidemic and public health burden both nationally and internationally (Bowman *et al*., 2015; Fry, 2014; Lee, 2015a; Seedat *et al*., 2014; Swartz & Scott, 2014). On an international scale, across 133 countries, the World Health Organization (2014) estimated that approximately 6 million people have died as a consequence of interpersonal violence between the period of 2000 and 2014. This morality rate is higher than all the wars which occurred simultaneously during that period. Indeed, according to Lee (2015a) a worldwide estimate of 1.5 million people die from violence annually, while millions more experience non-fatal injuries, as well as, the non-injury health consequences and the psychological trauma associated with it. In South Africa, violence is the leading cause of injury with an annual estimate of 1.7 million people seeking healthcare for violence-related injuries. This has a substantial negative impact on the South African economy with approximately 4.7 billion rands spent annually on police enforcement and health care for victims (Fry, 2014; Seedat *et al*., 2014). South Africa, with a history of an exceptionally high homicide rate[1], has rates for various forms of homicide that are substantially higher than the international trends with averages of two[2], six[3], seven[4] and eight times[5] more than the global average (Breetzke, 2012; Fry, 2014; Seedat *et al*., 2014). This is particularly alarmingly, given that most states with similar rates of homicide to South Africa tend to have populations which are 5 to 6 times larger. To provide a point of contrast, between 2003 and 2012, there were 4282 reported fatalities in the United States' invasion of Iraq and 120 000 murders in South Africa (Breetzke, 2012) - this appears to support a case for exceptionalism in terms of violence in South Africa (Kynoch, 2008). This is particularly

[1] The murder rate has been reported to be 60 per 100 000 in the late nineties, lowering to 39 per 100 000 in 2007-2008. In South Africa between the years 2000-2004, violence accounted for the majority of non-natural deaths with a 43% proportion, as opposed to transport accidents (27%), Non-transport accidents (10%), suicide (10%) and those with undetermined causes (9%) (CSVR, 2007; Records, 2009)

[2] Child homicide rates of 14 per 100 000 for boys under 5 & 11, 7 for girls under five (Seedat, Van Niekerk *et al*. 2014).

[3] Rate of female homicide including intimate partners (Seedat, Van Niekerk *et al*. 2014).

[4] According to a 2007 study on violence in South Africa (Fry, 2014).

[5] The homicide rate was 184 per 100 000 deaths from interpersonal violence between and on young men between 15-29 years old (Seedat, Van Niekerk *et al*. 2014)

pertinent given the public perception of violence in South Africa as being exceptional; particularly in terms of it being characterized by its gratuitous and sadistic nature of crime (Bruce, 2007; Kynoch, 2013). To some extent, the function of the focus on violence may be ideological, with instances of violence, particularly those considered gratuitous or spectacular in nature, being utilized by the media and political and public figures in order to gain traction, provoke the public imagination, and thus influence public opinion and policy, as well as legitimize the use and transfer of power in socio-political contexts (Collins, 2014; Cottrell-Boyce, 2013a; Kramer, 2000; Sen, 2008). However, this reporting and political rhetoric is often not representative of the actual prevalence, nature, and risk of violence in South Africa (Barolsky *et al*., 2008; Bruce, 2014). Indeed, there is a disparity between recent official statistics, which indicate a decrease in crime, and the public perception of crime, which has continued to increase (Fry, 2014). This difference between perceptions and the actual incidence is further divided by racial and class lines, with recent research suggesting that South Africans identified as Asian (51%) and White (74%) were almost twice as worried about being a victim of violent crime as opposed to Black South Africans (34%) (Fry, 2014). This was despite the fact that the official statistics on the risk of being a victim of violent crime indicated these groups to be least at risk for homicide. In fact, the majority of violence is most prevalent in lower income communities – that is part of the ordinary relations amongst individuals acquainted with each other within their community (Barolsky *et al*., 2008; Breetzke, 2012; Collins, 2014; Fry, 2014; Parkes, 2007; Seedat *et al*., 2014; Swartz & Scott, 2014; Violence & Reconciliation, 2009). This is arguably, in part, a historical consequence of racist apartheid discourses proliferating an association between violent crime and race, in order to justify discrimination and enforce structural inequities (Bruce, 2014; Kramer, 2000; Kynoch, 2008; Kynoch, 2013). One permutation of this discourse is a narrative of a high prevalence of cruelty and violence targeted against white people as function of resentment, envy, and a desire for revenge in response to their complicity and association with the oppressive apartheid regime (Kynoch, 2013). This suggests that an analysis of violence is not only relevant in the context of South Africa, but should be critical and reflexive of the various ideological discourses that may be at play when interpreting violence to avoid perpetuating the very scapegoating and structural violence associated with creating the conditions for such interpersonal violence (Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Žižek, 2008).

2.2 - (Re) Defining violence - Towards a Psychosocial Conception of Violence

There are numerous definitions of violence based on divergent assumptions, depending on the type of violence being investigated, and the disciplinary perspective of which it is an object of investigation. This conceptual variability around the definition of violence, suggests that violence is such a polymorphous concept, which is so variegated, that various different conceptualizations of it appear and seem incommensurable. Thus, it leaves little consensus on how to operationalize the phenomenon of violence. Cconsequently, interdisciplinary integration and engagement is limited; this arguably results in a degree of inconsistency and incoherence within the field of violence (Bowman *et al*., 2015; De Haan, 2008; Lee, 2015a). Some have argued that violence is essentially an ambiguous concept, due attempts to naturalize what is contended to be essentially a socially constructed concept (Bowman, Stevens, Eagle, & Matzopoulos, 2014; De Haan, 2008; Schinkel, 2004) In the past 25 years, however, a global and almost paradigmatic shift occurred in the conceptualization and engagement with violence. This has involved conceptualizing interpersonal violence as a bio-psycho-social-environmental phenomenon that is a complex outcome of multiple intersecting and interacting factors spread over an individual's development within various interdependent ecological systems which are irreducible to, and beyond (blaming) the individual (Bowman *et al*., 2015, 2014; Lee, 2015a).

Indeed, in order to address these theoretical difficulties, it is interesting to consider that recent critiques of contemporary violence research and theory have accused researchers concerned with violence with circumventing the subject of debate (Bruce, 2014; Schinkel, 2004). Schinkel (2004) argues that the majority of these approaches fail to engage with the phenomenon of violence itself and its various intersubjective and situational dimensions, with their focus fixated on the upstream risk factors, or conditionals, associated with the perpetration of violence. Following this, Bowman *et al*. (2014) emphasizes the fact that the social subject or agent often appears to be absent or discounted in specific violent interactions; arguing that the focus should be on the specific processual mechanisms that translate risk into violent enactments in specific contexts, whilst integrating relevant contextual information to ground these enactments in order to address and synthesize the inordinately complex causal pathways associated with violent enactments that are mostly

dominated in the scholarship, both theoretically and empirically, by risk factor research (Bowman *et al*., 2015, 2014; D. L. Wilkinson & Carr, 2008). The key dilemma is to negotiate a conception of violence which is inclusive of situational, contextual, social-cultural, and historical determinants, while at the same time integrating the subject as an individual possessing a certain degree of agency. As often in scholarship, the individual subject or the social determinants of the phenomenon serve to either exclude each other or implicitly downplay their respective role and influence in the enactment of violence (Bowman *et al*., 2015, 2014).

A serious consequence of this logic - which maintains a divide between the subject and the ecology in which the subject is embedded - as suggested earlier, is "the loss of the violence itself" as suggested by Schinkel (2004), or the "black box" effect, where risk factors are equated with outcomes. Thus, an event-based perspective which focuses on the situational determinants from the agents' perspective, and which attempts to speculate on the ways in which risk factors intersect in these events, has been suggested as a means of dealing with this difficulty, and finally, developing a psychosocial account of violence (Bowman *et al*., 2015, 2014; Ganpat, van der Leun, & Nieuwbeerta, 2015; D. L. Wilkinson & Carr, 2008). In order to appropriately pursue such an account, it has been suggested that the use of fine grained strategic case analyses, which attempt the complex theorisation of violence using multiple perspectives, in order to enhance our understanding of violence in a way which attempts to both interrogate, and integrate, variable epidemiological factors within an enactment of violence and additionally promotes a more interdisciplinary engagement with violence. Additionally, it is suggested that the use of either "typical" or "extreme"/"deviant" cases of violence enactments would generate a more layered understanding of the etiology of violence as well as the limits of the human experience of violence (Bowman *et al*., 2015, 2014; Schinkel, 2004). One promising thread in line with this has been the recent concern with various instances of gratuitous, cruel, or sadistic acts of violence. A number of theorists have argued that these kinds of acts need to be partially understood to be a function of an absence of, or at the very least, a breakdown in the functioning of empathy (Baron-Cohen, 2011; Bruce, 2014; Fonagy, 2003; Nell, 2006), or as this thesis argues, it would clearer to understand violence as a failure, or impairment of mentalization (as empathy is argued to be subsumed under this broad concept) (Brown, 2008; Fonagy, 2003; Möller, Falkenström,

Holmqvist Larsson, & Holmqvist, 2014; Taubner, White, Zimmermann, Fonagy, & Nolte, 2012).

2.3 - Historical antecedents of violent crime in South Africa

The prevalence and severity of violence in South Africa are intractably linked to the various versions or discourses of its history. It is broadly argued that the oppressive and brutal policies and actions of the apartheid government had a major influence on the development and normalization of violence (Bowman *et al*., 2014; Daniels & Adams, 2010; Pillay, 2008; Kynoch, 2008; Glaser, 2008; Collins, 2014). The development of violence in South Africa is in part a function of the apartheid state's negligence in engaging with the high prevalence of serious crime – e.g. murder, rape, and extortion – in favour of a narrow focus on the implementation and maintenance of segregation and as such, stifling any attempts towards political resistance. Moreover, attempts at informal policing in the areas most fraught with violent crime were undermined by the apartheid government, which not only outlawed these efforts, but sometimes assisted and valorised criminal gangs involved in conflicts with community policing organizations; given their alleged affiliation to the liberation nationalist movements, and their very existence being indicative of an implicit critique of the competence of state policing. Effectively, state policing not only undermined the instantiation of the community's own enforcement of informal control, but it also actively appeared to promote, sponsor and even be party to violence in these communities (Breetzke, 2012; Glaser, 2008; Kynoch, 2008). Indeed, gangsterism in mine compounds and in townships was rampant; one estimate approximates 100 different gangs that were significant enough to be reported between the periods of 1940-1960, not to mention the numerous small-time "tsotsi" crews and numerous gangs and mafias operating in Western Cape communities in the 1960s. A large part of the presence and development of these gangs was likely due to the brutal enforcement of pass laws, with the criminalization of urban life on racial lines being so widespread that an estimate of 17 250 000 black South Africans were arrested for pass law violations between 1916-1981 (Kynoch, 2008). Once imprisoned, many otherwise law-abiding youths, who were seeking employment, were victimized and sexually abused by gang members. As such, large numbers of migrant youths were socialized in prison and mining environments dominated by violent gangs which were hardly policed and sometimes even

supported by the state apparatus (Kynoch, 2008; Steinberg, 2004). As such, the migrants' socialization was typically associated with gang members who themselves were characterized as lacking moral concern, as well as exhibiting ruthlessness and violent behaviour. Significantly, evidence suggests that various other colonial cities (including Maputo, Bulawayo, Kinshasa Nairobi, Dar Es Salaam) which had undergone manifold structural conditions akin to South Africa, that are commonly associated with risk for criminality and had high rates of crime, hardly had the scale of violence associated with crime that South Africa has endured. As such this appears to partially been a by-product of the negligent and brutal systemic racism at play (Kynoch, 2008).

Adding to this the colonial capitalist order afforded the youth alternatives to transcend or avoid the stringent structures of mobility enforced by their communities' elders, employment and capital accumulation, as well as resorting to a Christian form of marriage, allowed for men to undermine the informal social structures which ensured the regulation of marriage via the elders, and beyond that, begin challenging the authority of elders. Accordingly, Glaser (2008) argues that all of this had a detrimental effect on the traditional processes of socialization that historically provided youths with a subjective position from which to understand their sexuality and gender, and thus form behavioural repertoires, to aid in ensuring the stability within the communities of the indigenous populations. Yet the alternative of establishing an urban African family, and its efficacy to serve as an effective means of youth socialization was particularly pernicious given the structural factors which undermined the stability of such institutions, leaving little incentive to concede to parental authority. Indeed, Glaser (2008) suggests that the only substantial alternatives for youths between the 1930s and 1970s were gangs and school. Thereafter, between 1980s and 1990s schooling lost much of its credibility - due to overcrowding, the poor conditions of its facilities, and inadequate curriculum – and was usurped by political organizations and the national liberation efforts, and urban gangs. Urban gangs afforded young men a subjective position or sense of identity on the basis of age, gender, and territory. With this identity members of urban gangs were afforded, primarily through fear, a degree of social respect. However, gangs generally disdained the elder generation. As such, gangs often did not offer a structured means of transitioning into adulthood. Adulthood appeared to have little prestige, power, or dignity, and appeared to offer the youth with little opportunity for social mobility, as the elder generation were blunted by poverty and institutional racism. From the late 1970s

to 1980s, where youth political organizations gained traction, much of the authority on the basis of age was undermined as the older generation was viewed as complicit and passive in the face of its systematic oppression, and who, thus endured intimidation and violence as a reactive consequence. Once these forms of political organization were dismantled or no longer necessary, that is in the post-apartheid era, politicized youth often found themselves marginalized. With little faith in the institution and process of education, which has lost much of its credibility, the obstinate presence of urban gangs remains an attractive alternative to what could otherwise be considered normative institutions of socialization (Glaser, 2008). This suggests that South Africa has a long history of violence which was particularly determined by the apartheid government's oppressive policies which undermined the functioning of mechanisms of social control and social support, partially as a function of institutional racism, and partially as a function of its colonial and capitalist ideology displacing traditional and arguably prosocial institutions of socialization. This is in part arguably reflective of the ways in which apartheid and its nationalist capitalist project served as one of the aggravating factors in the production and reinforcement of violent perpetrators in South Africa. This is significant for the current project given that it provides an outline of these likely historical and material conditions, and thus provides a framework in which to understand the perpetrators under scrutiny in this analysis, who likely were shaped by the very processes outlined above. This serves to support the arguments that follow in this thesis, as well as provide a substantial contextual background to aid towards a more critical interpretative approach to the analysis of the perpetrators account. It provides a substantial background which complements but need not necessarily actively promote arguments which suggest that the primary upstream casual factors of violence typically observed in the literature resulted in the culture of violence which has appeared to stabilize in the recent history of South Africa. As will be elaborated below, this section suggests that many of the perpetrators were likely much more liable to the possible influence of other cultural discourses, such as neoliberalism and consumerist images of masculinity, as has been observed in other violent criminals, which may have provided a subject position for themselves beyond the disavowed, damaged, and divested traditional social identities available to them. The next sections provide a more detailed review of the literature of what some of the international perspectives from multiple disciplines suggest the aetiology of violence is. This will attempt to proceed from an ecological perspective accounting for the broader upstream risk factors associated with violence, and narrowing it down to the

psychological and situational dimensions associated with the process of the enactment of violence.

2.4 - Late Capitalism, Inequality, and Social Stratification

A substantial portion of research concerning violence, and particularly violent crime, is predicated on the claim that poverty and inequality are significant variables which influence the prevalence of violence and specifically interpersonal violence in society (Altbeker, 2008; Bruce, 2007; Christoffersen, Francis, & Soothill, 2003; Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Kramer, 2000; Lee, Marotta, Blay-Tofey, Wang, & de Bourmont, 2014; Mampane, Ebersöhn, Cherrington, & Moen, 2014; Ouimet, 2012; Parkes, 2007; Swartz & Scott, 2014; Violence & Reconciliation, 2009; R. Wilkinson, 2004). Numerous international epidemiological studies based on large samples (the largest of which considered spanned 169 nations (Wolf, Gray, & Fazel, 2014)), have found that measures of economic development, particularly related to inequality and poverty, as well as structural factors commonly associated with them - such as lack of education and unemployment rates - were significant predictors of violent crime and violence. Although these studies utilized different methodologies and approaches, the convergent evidence from these large epidemiological studies suggests that this relationship has appeared consistent for approximately the past 50 years. Most importantly, in all these studies structural and income inequality were the strongest predictors of interpersonal violent crime, and this relationship was particularly strong in low to middle income countries, despite the inclusion of other variables (e.g. negative familial factors, cultural, & politic factors) commonly associated with violence (Asal & Brown, 2010; Christoffersen *et al*., 2003; Lee *et al*., 2014; Ouimet, 2012; Wolf *et al*., 2014). As such there is strong empirical support for a link between relative deprivation and violence, and this thesis will attempt to demonstrate how these structural factors may be related to the production of violence.

Relative deprivation and poverty is argued to be typically accompanied by deficits in, and sometimes, the breakdown of the mechanisms and institutions which typically ensure and produce social cohesion, social support, and social control in poorer communities. Serving as a means to aid community members to cope with various developmental transitions and life difficulties they may face due to the emotional stress and scarcity of resources entailed by

inequality (Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Kramer, 2000; Rocque, Posick, & Felix, 2015; R. Wilkinson, 2004). This is reflected in part by well-established research on the various associated effects of relative deprivation or inequality on many communities, including - low levels of social affiliation, low levels of trust, maternal stress, poor attachment, lack of stimulation, the presence of domestic conflict, neglect, child abuse, lack of nutrition, lack of parental guidance and obstructed educational performance. These are important, as they are all directly and/or indirectly associated as risk factors for interpersonal violence (Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Kramer, 2000; McAra & McVie, 2016; R. Wilkinson, 2004).

Indeed, the evidence suggests that one of the primary links between the socio-environmental determinants shaped by structural inequality and interpersonal violence is chronic stress, as there is significant evidence to suggest it has a major influence on our physiological and psychological health. This is because it is associated with an substantially increased vulnerability to contracting a wide range of diseases, as well as, generally compromising the homeostasis of individuals (Dhabhar, 2014; Pickett & Wilkinson, 2015; R. Wilkinson, 2004). Chronic stress has a number of effects on the cardiovascular, immune, and endocrine systems. Chronic stress is associated with the downregulation of many of the body's regenerative and maintenance processes (e.g. tissue repair, digestion, and reproduction) (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2015; R. Wilkinson, 2004), the suppression of immuno-protective responses, and the aggravation of immuno-pathological responses that can exacerbate the course of a number of diseases - e.g. dermatitis, cardiovascular disease, gingivitis, psoriasis, arthritis, multiple sclerosis (Dhabhar, 2014). In terms of mental health and wellbeing, evidence suggests inequality tends to be a predictor of higher levels of depression, anxiety, and psychosis – or rather general mental health (Burns, 2015; Chiavegatto Filho, Kawachi, Wang, Viana, & Andrade, 2013; Pickett & Wilkinson, 2015). As inequality has been found to be inversely associated with individual happiness levels (Oishi, Kesebir, & Diener, 2011; Wang, Pan, & Luo, 2015). On a public health level, recent evidence suggests that income inequality is negatively related to increases in teenage births, violence, childhood wellbeing, obesity and more (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2015). Indeed, individuals in inner city contexts (that are often impoverished) tend to have higher allostatic loads which is a biological marker of stress (Rocque *et al*., 2015). Caretakers in impoverished communities are often faced with multiple stressors arising from having lower wages that lead to the relative economic insecurity they experience, undercutting their availability to provide quality care for children.

Indeed, it significantly impedes the capacity of parents' to provide expressive support, as well as, actively monitor and supervise their children (Kramer, 2000). Moreover, caretakers in these contexts tend to lack social and cultural capital which would enable them to provision additional resources and support for the children in their communities (Kramer, 2000). Cottrell-Boyce (2013) goes further to suggest that these circumstances can lead to the intergenerational transmission of violence, neglect and abuse; all of which tend to be key risk factors of violence, thus putting those most vulnerable in these circumstances at risk of becoming violent (Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; McAra & McVie, 2016). This relative deprivation is additionally associated with the breakdown of social support and social control structures which normally serve to aid in the regulation of the population's behaviour and proclivity to transgress taboos through the proliferation and institution of social norms. The ability of adults to discipline, monitor, and supervise youth via direct interaction within social institutions, such as the neighbourhood, workplace, school, social networks, and family, is important in terms of delinquency prevention. Thus, integration of individuals into these social systems which promote formal and informal social control is important in shaping both the quantity and quality of decisions made by an individual and the bonds of attachment they will form within their social context (Kramer, 2000). However, this economic and social strain on these communities serves to disrupt and diminish the proliferation of normative values usually provided by these social and institutional controls (e.g. cultural customs, community members, familial members, teachers, police officers, social workers and etc.) which would typically regulate and guide the behavioural repertoire of individuals – providing the youth with a distinctive means of socialization - in their communities. This undercuts the efficacy of these social and institutional controls, and the normative values which underlie them, as protective factors against involvement in alternative adaptive strategies to adversity, namely, substance use and interpersonal violence (Bruce, 2007; Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Kramer, 2000; R. Wilkinson, 2004).

This breakdown in these mechanisms of social control have arguably been aggravated by stifling processes of capital divestment and the implementation and shifts of political and economic policies associated with the currently functioning globalized capitalism, or neoliberalism, which has simultaneously resulted in, major economic growth, alongside a rise in political corruption, criminal activity, unemployment, and income equality, given the unequal distribution of this economic growth (Khan, 2015; Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016).

This shift towards limited state intervention and deregulation, consequently results in either the discontinuation or reduction of aid via state welfare and intervention policies and programmes. These policies and programmes would serve to facilitate upward mobility, as well as, provide additional support and access to basic service delivery and healthcare for individuals in struggling and impoverished communities which lack financial, social, and cultural capital (Khan, 2015; Kramer, 2000; Turner, 2008; Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016).

This is further exacerbated by the gradual assimilation of market and economic norms into the sociocultural background which frames, and filters social interactions, thus undermining the use of interpersonal co-operation and collective social welfare (Geoghegan & Powell, 2009; Kramer, 2000; Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016). In line with this, recent experimental evidence has demonstrated that merely exposing individuals to money and the concept of money appeared to result in their endorsement of free market systems and principles which promote social inequality. This result was particularly evident in American participants, whose national endorsement of free market principles is generally understood as being high (Caruso, Vohs, Baxter, & Waytz, 2013). Furthermore, another study found a major increase in neoliberal discourse in Norwegian media between 1984-2004 (Nafstad, Blakar, Carlquist, Phelps, & Rand-Hendriksen, 2009). This discourse has entailed the increased use of language that focuses on individual rights, freedoms, entitlements, competition, consumption, and production, as opposed to discourses on community, care, solidarity, responsibility, and concern (which have decreased). Interestingly, Nafstad *et al*. (2009) noted in particular, that the Norwegian word for burnout – "utbrenthet" – had an extreme (approximately 540%) rise in use between these periods. Indeed, this ideological shift is a by-product of the adoption of policies and values associated with neoliberalism and arguably comes to effect the moral, social, and cultural fabric of many societies, where market values have come to supersede the local norms of society and thus shape and dictate the behaviour and ideas that individuals have (Geoghegan & Powell, 2009; Khan, 2015; Kramer, 2000; Lemke, 2002; Scharff, 2015; Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016). This influence by the neoliberal discourse arguably results in the actions of the agents who have been influenced by it becoming consistent with the end goals of capital accumulation via the strategies associated with neoliberal discourse (Carr & Batlle, 2015; Lemke, 2002; Scharff, 2015). Indeed, in a free market which is governed by random fluxes in the market, and thus uncertainty and precarity, self-interest is understood as

a core and rational principle of action, and the accumulation of capital as the primary means to guard self-interest (Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016).

This ideological framework, as explicated by Kramer (2000), does not prescribe nor uphold rigorous ethical prescriptions which offer a strong principle of differentiating between legitimate and illegitimate means of efficiently achieving monetary success. Thus, the structural effect of the economy tends to overpower social institutions and local cultural systems and norms whose values, beliefs, and obligations are substantially devalued in the interest of economic considerations (Kramer, 2000; Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016). A recent study by Weigratz & Cesnulyte (2016) reflects this, as it found amongst neoliberalised[6] traders in Uganda & sex workers in Kenya that the perception of material factors associated with poverty, job scarcity, economic insecurity, social status, and upward mobility were the key drivers of behaviour in their local moral economies and contributed significantly to their moral decision making. Having a stable income or access to resources was valued over the "traditional morality" (Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016, p. 16) - or the inherited moral economies – of most participants, such that prescriptions against typically transgressive and selfish behaviour in that context, were superseded in favour of the moral dominance of monetary incentives (Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016). As such, short-termism, individualism, and money appeared to predominate the minds of these participants and the members of their respective communities in this study – therefore, the raison d'être of these neoliberalized subjects in these contexts is the accumulation of capital. They are money-minded, as it were, and typically principally conceptualized themselves as entrepreneurial agents (Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016).

The literature on neoliberal subjects suggests that such subjects are characterized by their disavowal of vulnerability which manifests as intense individualism (Scharff, 2015). Thus, neoliberal subjects are simultaneously characterized by persistent self-doubt, insecurity, and anxiety (given the precarious nature of a deregulated market), and a continual self-conscious ethical injunction towards self-improvement (Scharff, 2015). Typically, there is little

[6] Neoliberalization refers to variegated contextually contingent politically facilitated process of transforming a territory and its community members towards an emphasis on the dominance of the market and commodification(Brenner, Peck, & Theodore, 2010). This process is mediated through individual agents/collectives who are actively involved in attempting to shift the political and social dynamics of the context towards policies associated with neoliberalism. These dynamics are always a part of "the self" or the identity of the agent, which is constituted by a variety of internal conflicts and epistemic propositions, – that is, constituted by neoliberal discourse(Springer, 2012b).

empathy for the hardship of others as they are characterized as deserving their circumstances. Therefore, this emphasis on individualism, and thus autonomy and personal responsibility appears to significantly displace the consideration and valuation of circumstantial and contextual factors dictating an individual's difficult situation. Those who are not successful are thereby seen as the "Other"(Scharff, 2015).

In this system, Cottrell-Boyce (2013) suggests the poorer classes are understood as the stigmatized "Precariat" whose status is stereotypically understood as that of a failure, which is reflected by their limited access to a range of social, political, and economic rights compared to the rest of society. Indeed, the youth in these contexts are often alienated from their contextual roots; often ashamed of their relative deprivation as a consequence of the lack of incentives, and/or cultural relevance to identify with their community (Altbeker, 2008; Bruce, 2007; Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Kramer, 2000; R. Wilkinson, 2004). As such, the consequences of relative deprivation appear to result in community members, and in particular the youth, engaging in alternative forms of status seeking. These alternative forms range from adopting subcultural deviant or delinquent behaviour to the use of dominance behaviours as a social strategy to adapt, and this is typically accompanied with an identification with "hardness" or "toughness". Each of these alternative forms of behavioural adaptation are associated with an increased proclivity towards the use of violent means and thus often appear to result in violent enactments (Bruce, 2014; Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Kramer, 2000; R. Wilkinson, 2004).

In line with this, psychoanalytic theorization of the influence of late capitalism suggests that it is likely that its downstream structural impact has come to stimulate the development of individuals with personality structures with a sparse sense of internal worth, which as consequence, requires constant affirmation from others in order to experience value or being valued. Individuals, under these conditions, are prone to develop a false self, or persona, for the social world in order to garner recognition and affirmation; which serves as a compensatory mechanism for feelings of fear, loneliness, worthlessness, resentment, and anger incubated in their development (Jones, 2013). Another shift, associated with late capitalistic policies, which has arguably exasperated this for young men in such contexts, was the slow disappearance of decent paying heavy industry jobs, alongside a general paucity of jobs on the labour market, and lack of educational opportunity. Thus, given that, most young men in such contexts are typically represented as "breadwinners" in discourses of

masculinity, it is clear that many men have been displaced from their normative means of formulating and constructing their identities as men (Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Jones, 2013; McAra & McVie, 2016).

One way this process of imaginary compensation is arguably facilitated in marginalized communities is via a tendency towards an intense identification with conspicuous commodities and wealth accumulation (Bruce, 2007; Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Crosby, 2012; Dean, 2008). In men in particular, this identification is more likely to be associated with cultures of machismo (based on physical prowess and "respect") as well as consumerist images of masculinity (Jones, 2013). Following this, Wilkinson (2004) argues that in our society, status competition and impression management are important factors which are fundamental to the desire that we have to consume, whereby the capacity to consume and the value of the goods which one consumes come to reflect, or imply, the value of the respective individual, such that "second rate goods" are equated with "second rate people". In unequal societies, driven by this subjective conception of value being equal to access to scarce resources and consumer products, those who experience relative deprivation are more prone to experiencing the humiliation associated with this in the current sociocultural climate, and as such, are particularly sensitive to being shamed or disrespected, which is commonly considered as one of the most prominent and common triggers of violence (Kramer, 2000; R. Wilkinson, 2004). This is all arguably consistent with the argument that perpetrators of violence often have deep seated desires for recognition and acceptance, and are deeply ashamed of this dependency on others. This is particularly discernible in males who have strong identifications to a masculine gender role, and who utilize violence in order to maintain their sense of masculinity. The use of violence symbolically comes to represent a means of restoring a sense of (masculine) power or independence. Murder is, thus understood, effectively as a defence against the ego's disintegration related to feelings of shame. It is argued that this defensive manifestation exhibited through a behavioural enactment is paranoid in nature, as it is a consequence of a lack of differentiation between emotions, cognitions, and external reality. Often, this breakdown leads to the inability to experience guilt and empathy (Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Gilligan, 2003; King, 2012).

One particularly interesting theoretical thread which emerges from mentalization theory based from the French psychosomatic school, and which is of interest and adds to this argument, is that of "operative thinking" or "mechanical thinking", which has been linked

with the shift towards neoliberal capitalism. This refers to a kind of conscious cognition that appears to lack a somatic link to fantasy and unconscious signification. It is characterized by an overinvestment in facts and reality, where personal experience is a succession of events without any significant affective valence (Crosby, 2012; G. J. Taylor & Bagby, 2013; Vanheule, Verhaeghe, & Desmet, 2011). It implies a profound disconnect from internal reality, with the world of emotions being experienced as excessive. As such, individuals who function under "operational thinking" come to focus on material, concrete goods and external appearances, as opposed to the dynamic and transitory nature of cognition and affect. Subjects who function this way have been - somewhat pejoratively - labelled "slaves of quantity" given that these subjects are motivated by the basic, but almost limitless urge to relieve tension at any cost, given that they lack an integrated and vital sense of subjectivity, and struggle to process, link, and bind the quantities of excitation, or levels of arousal, they experience. This is associated with a unstable sense of identity, difficulty regulating affect, and the use of action as an alternative means of reducing the tension they cannot mentalize (Crosby, 2012; G. J. Taylor & Bagby, 2013; Vanheule *et al*., 2011) .

Typically, violent perpetrators, according to Gilligan (2003) and Rocque *et al*. (2015), have a limited cognitive landscape to flexibly entertain alternative possibilities, such as non-violent responses, as well as, a limited emotional reserve to regulate and inhibit their impulses to respond violently, when experiencing shame. Supplementing this point, Zizek (2008) argues that some violence can be perhaps understood as a function of the perpetrators lack of "cognitive mapping", which is reflective of both the perpetrator's sense of impotence, and the analogous Lacanian concept of "*passage à l'acte* – an impulsive movement into action which can't be translated into speech or thought and carries with it an intolerable weight of frustration" (Žižek, 2008, p. 65). Indeed, following this logic, a large portion of homicides are argued to be related to "trivial" disputes or perceived threats to status, which are typically common in highly unequal contexts, where actors's tactics (often those considered to be placed in a "low social position") escalate in order to compensate for the extreme differences in status, or in turn, as a means of displaying or proving their own social status and power (Goetz, 2010; Nell, 2006; Rocque *et al.*, 2015). Thus, given the high levels of poverty and discrimination in marginalized communities, it is likely that some enactments of violence are related to heightened physiological responses or higher rates of stress, and thus higher allostatic loads; and this may predict a tendency to respond to perceived threats defensively

or in a disproportionate manner (Lee, 2015b; Rocque *et al*., 2015). Thus, the perpetration of violence on an individual level is argued to be in many ways inextricably related to the structural effects of inequality. Indeed, it can be understood as a by-product of, neoliberalism, that is reflective and constitutive of the symbolic and structural violence entailed by neoliberalism itself (Springer, 2012a) - or at the very least, a symptom of it (Žižek, 2008). That is to say, these structural policies arguably trickle down into the sociocultural realm of individuals, influencing the structure and social relationships of these perpetrators communities, and as such, influencing individual subjects and how they behave.

2.5 - Conspicuous Consumption & Identity

In contemporary societies which participate in the globalized market-based economy, individuals tend to internalize the expectation of being a participating economic agent, where the fundamental value and means of realizing one's potential as an economic agent is predicated on employment & consumption; both of which, as economic agents, give us varying degrees of freedom in determining our lives (Bruce, 2007; Buccellato & Reid, 2014; R. Wilkinson, 2004). As such, the commodities you own and what you consume are given to be reflective of your status in society, and this is particularly evident in unequal societies, where differences in wealth are more discernible and relevant (Bruce, 2007; Hicks & Hicks, 2014; Jaikumar & Sarin, 2015; R. Wilkinson, 2004). Indeed, evidence suggests that "status seeking" and thus, "status anxiety" appear to positively increase as a function of inequality (Paskov, Gërxhani, & Van de Werfhorst, 2013). Thus, the notion of "status insecurity" is arguably significant in understanding how inequality translates to violence in South Africa, and particularly when understood in the context of the cultural shift which has occurred in post-apartheid South Africa. Bruce (2007) argues that the post-apartheid South Africa is driven by a cultural shift which has come to equate personal wealth and the public exhibition of wealth as a means of signifying worth in a community. This has resulted in the valorisation of conspicuous consumption versus values associated with social solidarity and cohesion. This cultural shift, on the one hand, was probably aggravated by the aforementioned historical legacy of violence in South Africa that displaced the traditional institutions of socialization, arguably leaving the youth particularly susceptible to neoliberal discourse. On the other hand, Posel (2010) argues it was likely also a by-product of the apartheid ideology

and government, which proliferated a racist discourse which served to ratify and justify the distinction of racial groups in terms of socioeconomic status, wherein which, whiteness was represented as an entitlement to relative wealth and privilege, and blackness was restricted from lines of consumption considered conspicuous and luxurious, such that for some men, in the post-apartheid context, "material mimicry" was conceived as a means of purchasing freedom from the undercutting humiliation of structural racism (Posel, 2010, p. 171).

In contexts of high inequality, lower status households tend to spend more of their incomes on conspicuous consumption and typically on services and goods such as vehicles, clothing, jewellery, personal care and more; or in short, luxury items for the sole purpose of status seeking and thus conveying information about one's wealth, and therefore social standing (Hicks & Hicks, 2014; Jaikumar & Sarin, 2015; Paskov *et al*., 2013). Conspicuous consumption serves as a means of signalling information about one's relative wealth and thus rank in society'; as such visible displays of expenditure in lower income groups serve as a "cost effective" means of preserving status (Jaikumar & Sarin, 2015). Interestingly, evidence not only confirms this trend in developing and established economies (Bruce, 2007; Jaikumar & Sarin, 2015; Paskov *et al*., 2013), but, is further reinforced by both international experimental, and local qualitative research, which suggests that conspicuous consumption is found to be perceived as a mating strategy adopted by males in signalling and attracting the interest of females (Bruce, 2007; Sundie *et al*., 2011)[7]. Significantly, some research suggested that visible expenditure inequality – or the visible display of material wealth differences – was a more robust factor in predicting violence than income inequality. This suggests that the socio-evaluative significance of income inequality on violence is influenced significantly by the information available to actors in a situation (Hicks & Hicks, 2014). As such, this research posits that indicators of inequality via the reference to visible conspicuous consumption, or the desire to engage in it, particularly in service of "status seeking" or indicating socio-evaluative significance, may serve as a useful situational predictor of violence. In line with this theorizing it is interesting to consider Crosby's (2012) proposal that the current cultural environment climate which is associated with neoliberalism or late capitalism serves as a barrier which impedes the development of the ability to mentalize in

[7] Although in the one study, these were admittedly limited to short term investment, the fact that such consumption has a significant role on the perception of both parties, suggests conspicuous consumption has socioevaluative symbolic weight(Sundie *et al*., 2011).

our civilization. This is because the context in which people are brought up is one in which identity is necessarily in flux, where the consumerist drive for capital (as advocated by neoliberalism) treats identity, culture, and customs as commodities. As a consequence, commodities are held in lieu of the relationships and the cultural and communal values which would have formerly provided a sense of identity and worth (Billig, 1999; Crosby, 2012; Geoghegan & Powell, 2009). These commodities, which provide a means of displaying status, can arguably be operationalized as observable if they are understood in line with the theorization concerning conspicuous consumption, which provides a basis for the relevance of concrete situational cues to individuals in highly unequal contexts, which is typical in a neoliberal context. Therefore, understanding neoliberalism is a key strand towards weaving a critical psychosocial account of violence.

2.6 - Morality, Motivation, and Violence

The interpretation of what constitutes a legitimate use of violence (e.g. a police officer using force to arrest a criminal) and whether it is justified is inextricably tied to the context wherein which the enactment of violence occurs. Violence often indicates an agent's or a group's deficient capacity to engage in rational communication and negotiation, and thus, a deficit in their capacity to adhere and internalize moral injunctions of their local moral systems (and these systems respective rationalities). On the other hand, in certain contexts, particularly those riddled with high rates of violence, violence appears to be a normative means of negotiating social interactions and enforcing the local moral order (Bennett & Brookman, 2008; D. Bruce *et al.*, 2007; Collins, 2014; King, 2012; Mampane *et al.*, 2014; Nell, 2006; Parkes, 2007). Indeed, it is argued that particularly in South Africa, the use of violence is widely endorsed in various circumstances, as a normative means of asserting both individual and collective interests. Many communities in South Africa are considered to exist within a "culture of violence", which may be a function of being desensitized to the constant exposure of said violence (Bruce *et al.*, 2007; Collins, 2014), as well as, the various deviant subcultures, which incentivize and sanction the use of violence via a kind of "code of the street". In line with this, a "deviant" ("Ikasi", "rider" or "gangster") cultural and moral order

is also attributed as being a facilitating factor in the perpetrators' enactments of violence (Bennett & Brookman, 2008; Bowman *et al*., 2015; Karandinos, Hart, Castrillo, & Bourgois, 2014; Rocque *et al.*, 2015; Swartz & Scott, 2014). These accounts suggest that in some contexts and situations, the use of violence could be conceived as a rational means of negotiating a given situation. Indeed, research on accounts of teenagers and children exposed to violence in South Africa suggest that such distinctions do exist, with legitimate and normative figures of authority of formal and informal social control (for example: teachers, caregivers and the police) being perceived as permitted to utilize aggression and violence to maintain or restore social order, while the others who make use of it are seen as deviant, weak, or immoral (Mampane *et al*., 2014; Parkes, 2007) Indeed, in another study in the Western Cape, violence was considered as a legitimate reaction to defending one's honour or to serve as a punishment for social transgressions (Swartz & Scott, 2014). As such, there is a selective kind of morality at play which is dependent on the social and situational context, and is also central to understanding how criminal enactments depend on the various motivations and competing prescriptive and proscriptive norms at play which may enable the possibility of these enactments in the first place. This is particularly important in relation to understanding how the perpetrator's embeddedness in his/her social context may foster the absence of reflection on his/her actions (Swartz & Scott, 2014). Yet, the perpetration of violence is also facilitated by crucial processes of moral disengagement which involve various discursive strategies and complex sets of rationalizations to aid the denial and disavowal of the perpetrators' authentic involvement in "inhumanities" as representative of their actual self and thus serves as an attempt to mitigate or undercut the responsibility for the harm they have caused in their perpetration of crime and violence (Bandura, 1999; Hochstetler, Copes, & Williams, 2010; Presser, 2004). Often, perpetrators rely on framing their enactments as being based on situational contingencies, using mitigating circumstances to displace and diffuse their involvement, responsibility, and agency in their enactments of violence. It thus is relevant to consider what kinds of situational factors are reported by perpetrators, as these contingencies provide the basis for their rationalizations, and these rationalizations provide a purview into the possible mental processes involved in their enactments (Bandura, 1999; Hochstetler *et al.*, 2010; Presser, 2004). As such, the perpetrators' own cited causes may not necessarily be taken as representative - although they may be - of the actual causes of their violent enactments; rather, their narrative of the event and the situational characteristics will serve as the basis of investigating a more fundamental

process that is being postulated as functioning at the centre of enactments of violence. In the case of the current project, mentalization is posited to be that fundamental process.

2.7 - Situational factors and moral disengagement

Research on interpersonal violence is often divided by either a focus on developing a historical profile of the perpetrator, or a situational/event based analysis. Both these strands have strong empirical bases for understanding and predicting violent enactments. However, recent empirical research has found that although criminal history plays a significant role in understanding a violent enactment, situational factors play a more important role in explaining lethal outcomes (Ganpat *et al*., 2015). Ideally, Ganpat *et al*. (2015) argues that both historical and situational factors should be considered simultaneously. Unfortunately, given the limited scope of this project, which aims to focus more closely on the psychological mechanisms at play, the present study will primarily focus on situational factors, only utilizing the history of the perpetrator to contextualize the events and conversational tropes utilized by narrators when it is necessary to further understand it. As the primary concern is with the processual mechanisms at play in an enactment of violence.

Studying violence from a situational or event based perspective is argued to yield a more complete explanation of the aetiology of violence, because it aims to integrate the investigation or analysis in relation to the offender, the victim, and the social context (Anderson & Meier, 2004; Ganpat *et al*., 2015; D. L. Wilkinson & Carr, 2008; D. L. Wilkinson & Hamerschlag, 2005). The situational perspective emphasizes the violent event as a process which emerges via the interaction between an individual's characteristics, motivations, internalization of violent social scripts (e.g. identification of self as a "rider"/"ikasi", "violence is an appropriate reaction to attacks/insults on my status" and etc), situational factors (e.g. presence of a firearm, time, location, substance use, presence of third parties and etc.) and the interpersonal dynamics (between victim, offender and possible third parties) or behaviour of the relevant agents in the violent experience. This perspective considers the precursors of the event, the surrounding circumstances as well as the aftermath of an occurrence of violence, whilst integrating relevant aspects of the physical and social setting to understand the violent event (Anderson & Meier, 2004; Ganpat *et al*., 2015; Karandinos *et al*., 2014; D. L. Wilkinson & Carr, 2008; D. L. Wilkinson & Hamerschlag,

2005). The occurrence of the violence is understood as a confluence of motivation, perceptions of risk, and attributes of social control. This viewpoint allows us to begin addressing the processual and proximate mechanisms involved in violent events, and it is argued to be ideal in considering the schemas or social scripts which individuals bring into or modify during violent events (D. L. Wilkinson & Carr, 2008).

Social scripts are organizing frameworks which filter a person's understanding of typical events, allowing the individual to integrate information about events from the experience. These scripts serve as the basis of the types of expectations and predictions an individual will make of a series of events, and thus inform and shape the kinds of choices, and thus behaviours, that may be activated as a response to an event or situation. How significantly these social scripts determine an individual's behaviour is predicated upon the strength of its reinforcement. The development of violent social scripts is a function of (a usually continuous) exposure to violence, which results in systemic desensitization in some of the population, as well as, is an arguably foundational element to the formation of "deviant" subcultures and gangs whom are often defined by their "cold" demeanour and ruthlessness (Parkes, 2007; D. L. Wilkinson & Carr, 2008). In addition to this, evidence has shown that such exposure usually results in individuals who have particularly high allostatic loads (i.e. lower stress thresholds) which also increase the likelihood of activating and reinforcing a violent social script (Rocque *et al*., 2015; D. L. Wilkinson & Carr, 2008). Moreover, Wilkinson and Carr (2009) argue that moral disengagement - and the various mechanisms which enable the neutralization of the emotional impact of being exposed to violence - serves as a crucial mediating mechanism between exposure to violence and its affective, physiological, and behavioural outcomes. The notion of moral disengagement arguably provides a potential bridge between sociological and psychological literature, as it engages both with psychological processes involved in the techniques of neutralization, as well as the social origins which come to normalize violent behaviour and thus facilitate it. However, the analysis so far of the psychosocial determinants of violent enactments still arguably leave a "black box" between all these factors and the violence itself. Thus, the following section argues that utilizing the theory of mentalization will fill this gap and aid in the analysis of the processual mechanisms at play in a violent enactment.

2.8 – Mentalization and its role in violent enactments

Contemporary work on mentalization is grounded in developmental research concerned with 'theory of mind'. It integrates aspects of psychoanalytic and psychodynamic theory, without it necessarily being reducible to psychoanalytic thinking. Mentalization is a multidimensional construct which refers to the imaginative mental processes which allow us to recognise and make sense of the behaviours of the self and other as linked to subjective intentional mental states. It is a "meta-cognitive" mechanism and a form of social cognition, which is concerned with thinking about thinking, and thus entails higher order beliefs, and the representation of them. Thence, it is understood as a fundamental organizing activity which is intentional in nature, that is, the attribution and interpretation of mental states in this process are constitutively about something (Allen, 2006; Bateman & Fonagy, 2013; Brown, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009). The process of mentalization can be utilized to refer to a specific kind of casual attribution or inference we construct in an automatic manner to predict and understand action within everyday interactions (Brown, 2008). Mentalization can be understood in terms of a framework of the self and the other, where two agents or minds are interacting in a dynamic way, wherein which the mental states of each are continually shifting in response to the interpersonal situation (Choi-Kain & Gunderson, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009). It is a capacity which refers to the activity of meaningfully interpreting and being aware of cognitive and affective processes. Concepts such as empathy and insight are incorporated into the concept of mentalization. It is a developmentally acquired capacity and is primarily dependent on the quality of childhood, particularly infantile, relationships with attachment figures (Allen, 2006; Bateman & Fonagy, 2013; Brown, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009). It can be understood as both a trait and state, the quality of which varies in relation to emotional arousal and contextual factors. As such, the loss of mentalization and thus re-emergence of antecedent or basic modes of thinking about subjectivity, which are usually covered by the associated capacities of mentalization, like, affect representation, affective regulation, and attentional control, can be elicited by emotionally intense relationship contexts and situational factors - e.g. the experience of shame, a traumatic event, guilt, feelings of inadequacy, conflict with a spouse, or intoxication (Fonagy & Luyten, 2009). Thus, mentalization is a capacity which is considerably conditioned by the contextual and environmental cues of an interpersonal situation (Brown, 2008).

Mentalization provides an excellent framework to understand both the processes which underlie the emotional and cognitive development of an individual's sense of self, as well as, how this development is crucially related to how individuals make sense of others. I will elaborate below how the older and new theorization and research on the process provides a strong framework for the purposes of this thesis. Historically, in the French Psychosomatic School (as well as what is reflected in the work of Freud, Winnicott, and Bion – although the term was not used), mentalization refers to the process of forming mental representations, that is, the conversion of somatic/affective impulses or drives into a representable or recognizable form; into symbolized mental content. Under this framework, psychopathology is understood on a spectrum from somatic/concrete to psychic/symbolic, or between, the actual neuroses – which are constituted by symptoms based on raw unmediated stress or anxiety, that is somatic processes, overwhelming the body – and the psychoneuroses – which are constituted by symptoms which are symbolic in nature, and are based on defensive processes, repressive processes, related to inner conflicts which arise in psychosexual development (Crosby, 2012; Dauphin, Lecomte, Bouchard, Cyr, & David, 2013; Verhaeghe, Vanheule, & Rick, 2007). In this model, the actual neuroses, that is to say the drive impulses, can be understood as the kernel or foundation of all pathological manifestations, which occur when the psychic system is unable to convert or symbolize, or, in a word, cope, with the raw excitations which are derived from the drive impulses (Crosby, 2012; Verhaeghe *et al*., 2007). The notion of trauma is utilized to describe the failure of the psychic processes to convert these excessive or intense excitations into meaningful or symbolic mental representations. Thus, the work of "working through" the mental processes underlying mentalization is considered a crucial factor in tolerating negative affect, and regulating impulsive and excessive discharges of psychic energy, which prototypically manifest through acting-out (e.g. compulsive sexual activity, drug abuse, aggressive behaviour, and psychosomatic symptoms)(Crosby, 2012; Dauphin, Lecomte, Bouchard, Cyr, & David, 2013; Verhaeghe, Vanheule, & Rick, 2007)

In more modern theorization and empirical research, the process of mentalization has further developed and can be utilized to refer to a specific kind of casual attribution or inference we construct in an automatic manner to predict and understand action within everyday interactions (Brown, 2008). This work serves to extend mentalization further theoretically, and provides a nuanced account of the intersubjective development of mentalization as a

capacity. It is based on four dimensions, 1) with two modes of functioning (implicit and explicit); 2) two object relationships (self and other); 3) two foci on features (external or internal) and 4)two aspects (cognitive and affective) of the content and process of mentalizing (Choi-Kain & Gunderson, 2008; Fonagy, Bateman, & Bateman, 2011; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009). Mentalization can be understood in terms of a framework of the self and the other, where two agents or minds are interacting in a dynamic way, wherein which the mental states of each are continually shifting in response to the interpersonal situation (Choi-Kain & Gunderson, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009). Neuroimaging studies have found a commonality between the developmental and neurobiological processes and systems underpinning mentalization of the self and other. There are two distinct neural systems related to knowledge of the self and other. There is the physiological embodied mirror neuron system, which fosters understanding through reflexive immediate neural motor-simulation processes of others which are activated merely by observing and experiencing others' actions and behaviours. Sometimes, this kind of process of virtually automatic simulation and possible basic physiological imitation of the other, can result in the misattribution and mixing up of the other's experience with one's own, and vice versa. The second system is more based on abstract and symbolic information processing of the self and other, and it is shaped through interpersonal relationships. Differentiation between the self and other is achieved via the inhibition of imitative behaviour and the use of belief-desire reasoning, both of which have overlapping brain areas, but involve integration of the processes of the separate neural systems – between the more symbolic reflective self-other system and the mirror neuron self-other system. Thus, by attributing and contemplating the intention of the other, or by the process of mentalization, a discrete distinction is created between the experience of self and the other, allowing for the inhibition, reduction and partial dissociation of the physiological processes underlying this basic identification with the other which is automated by the mirror neuron system (Fonagy & Luyten, 2009). Indeed, according to Fonagy and Luyten (2009) reflective of this required distinction is a phenomenon such as "identity diffusion", where one's identity is indistinct and can be blurred with the other. This is an indicator of a general failure of mentalization) given that the lack of a sense of agency reveals a breakdown in the link concerning the connection between intentional mental states and actions, which usually is at the foundation of a sense of self.

Within this framework, two modes of mentalization can occur. Firstly, there is, Implicit-Automatic mentalization, which is the unconscious procedural mental operations involved in the ability to imagine the mental states of the self and other. It is a quick and parallel process, which is based on primarily on mirroring and intuitive non-effortful responses. Secondly, there is Explicit-Controlled mentalization, which is characterized by the deliberate and conscious activity of imagining the mental states of the self and other. It is usually a slow and serial process, which requires effortful and reflective attention, and typically manifests verbally. These modes can function separately, alternatively, and simultaneously (Choi-Kain & Gunderson, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009).

Thirdly, there is a difference between the focus of attention on either external or internal features during the process of constructing inferences concerning the mental states of others'. The focus of external features in mentalization, is based on focusing on the physical and visible features of behaviours and actions of others to make inferences about the mental state of the self, or other. The focus on internal features means focusing directly on the emotions, cognitions and experiences of the self, and/or other, and although it can be discrete from an external focus, it can also be considered a second-order representation of the exterior, when utilized as such. This means that one can functionally have successful externally orientated inferences, whilst struggling with tasks which require purely interiorly orientated inferences (Choi-Kain & Gunderson, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009). Finally, this interpersonal framework which facilitates two primary modes of mentalizing can be understood in terms of two fundamental aspects related to the process and content of a given interpersonal situation. The content and process of mentalizing can be cognitively focused and affectively loaded in varying gradations. As the mental states being represented in the process of mentalization draw on a variety of cognitive operations to aid with imagining mental states in flexible, credible, and nuanced ways, as well as, integrate these cognitions with the affective processes at play in the self and/or other (Choi-Kain & Gunderson, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009). In terms of content, a distinction is made between the affective and cognitive aspects of mentalization, on the basis of a) these processes functioning on two different neuropsychological systems, and b) these processes being distinctively characterized by the kinds of propositions involved in each system. In the "cognitive perspective taking" or "theory of mind" mechanism, it can be said to focus on agent-attitude propositions, such as "Mark believes Sam took the belt". In the "emotional contagion" or "emphasizing system", it

focuses on self-affective state-propositions like “I am grateful – that you are happy – about what I said.” These propositions are considered to be limited by the fact that it is “constrained always to create representations where emotion in the other is consistent with the self-affective state. Thus, it will not create “I am pleased that you are in pain” because it has to be a state that the self can generate in relation to the presumed state in the other.” (Fonagy& Luyten, 2009, p. 1360). Interestingly, dysfunction in one system may lead to overcompensation in the other system, impacting an individual’s capacity for genuine empathy, leading to inappropriate emotional reactions and cognitive inferences being extended to the other (Fonagy & Luyten, 2009).

2.8.1 - Mentalization and violence

Fonagy (2003) argues that theoretical models of violence and aggression have been inclined to focus on the acquisition of aggression, whereas it is apparent that aggressive impulses and the tendency towards violent behaviours are present from early childhood. These are incrementally regulated through normal developmental processes where mechanisms of self-control are acquired through developing attachments and progressive socialisation (Fonagy, 2003). Accordingly, given the increasing complex social systems humans adapted in, and the various group living selective pressures which arose as such, our evolutionary progress has been argued to be substantially predicated on the emergence of the capacity to perceive, understand, and evaluate the affective and cognitive mental states of conspecifics - that is to say our evolutionary progress is substantially predicated on our social cognitive capacities, and the capacity to invest in the welfare our conspecifics (Brüne & Brüne-Cohrs, 2006; Fonagy, 2003; Seyfarth & Cheney, 2013). One outcome of this is that the natural urge to control other less powerful members of the group via the threat of violence becomes maladaptive (except in particularly precarious social environments), as the threat interferes with the functioning of mentalization (Fonagy, 2003). As such, the conflicting demands of retaining the potential for violence for precarious environments, and the need to inhibit it in context of the social group, resulted in violence becoming largely incompatible with the process of mentalizing the other (Fonagy, 2003).

It is crucial to understand that the process of mentalization is facilitated through its link to attachment, where we come to learn about others' subjective states via the experience of being understood by other minds. As such, physical aggression generally fades from an individual's behavioural repertoire during development and eventually becomes a taboo or morally reprehensible; this in part, has been associated, with the development of mentalization, as it serves as a protective factor in the emergence of aggression (Fonagy, 2003; Kokkinos, Voulgaridou, Mandrali, & Parousidou, 2016; Taubner *et al*., 2012). As a consequence, individuals who may have had their socialization and attachment formation processes disrupted, or experienced negative and anxious attachment experiences, would avoid or struggle to recognize and form representations of the subjective states of other minds (e.g. through the interpretation of facial expressions or vocal tones) and will have difficulties inhibiting their natural propensity towards aggression and violence (Fonagy, 2003). Those individuals whose attachment experiences were particularly laden with anxiety, may adapt by developing a callous disposition in order to avoid the anxiety their formative experiences may have reinforced concerning thinking about the minds of others. Threats to self-esteem also have the potential to trigger violent reactions in those whose self-concepts are insecure given their overstatement of their own worth, and the inability to recognize the meaning behind the threats in the mind of the other. As such, violence is the momentary inhibition of the capacity to communicate and interpret - in a word, a failure to mentalize (Fonagy, 2003).

Indeed, a focus on the psychological processes which constitute mentalization, and its failures, allows a clear focus on the psychological mechanisms underlying a violent enactment, which would be clearly distinguishable from risk factors associated with violence. This form of analysis is taken up in an effort to avoid reifying a profile, or statistical composite of variables, which often does not fit many perpetrators in actuality, without excluding their possible influence (Moller, 2014). Thus, regardless of the possible attachment experiences a perpetrator may have had, instances of temporary failures to mentalize can be accounted for. As such failures to mentalize could easily be a consequence of the contingencies of particular circumstances, where some emotions, relationships, or situational factors may negatively influence, or impede, a particular individual's capacity to mentalize. Decreased capacity for mentalization reduces the quality and possibility of effective interpersonal communication and increases the likelihood of a physiological and psychological distance to others making it easier to imagine and enact harm to other persons.

Indeed, this is reflected in a study which found that the mentalizing ability of violent criminal offenders was significantly lower than non-violent offenders, psychiatric personality disordered patients, and control subjects without an official criminal records (Moller, 2014).

2.8.2 - Understanding failures to mentalize

The absence of mentalization in an individual is most apparent when observing the return of pre-mentalizing modes of representing subjectivity. Thus, when considering enactments of violence, indicators of these forms of subjectivity would entail a failure to mentalize (Fonagy & Luyten, 2009). This will be the primary point of analysis in the current study, which will come to focus on the signs of such failures in the self-reports of perpetrators of violence, as it argues that this model may provide a fruitful engagement with the process of a violent enactment. This section will first consider the three fundamental pre-mentalistic modes which are indicative of a disrupted capacity for mentalization, then it will consider other indicators and instances of non-mentalizing. The focus of the discussion will move away from attachment related indicators of mentalization, as although they may be relevant to understanding failures to mentalize, they may detract from the focus on the process of a violent enactment.

The first kind of prementalizing mode of subjectivity is called "*psychic equivalence*" which refers to a level of mental functioning where the distinction between psychic representation and objective and external reality is blurred. This results in an impairment in the capacity for abstract thinking, and the ability to entertain alternative possibilities and views. This can result in a kind of concrete understanding, where there is little appreciation of the mental states of self/other and little comprehension of the relationship between cognition, affect, and behaviour. In this mode, what is thought becomes equivocated with what is happening in reality and as such, the thought is somewhat concrete in character. Sometimes the vividness of the experience of these thoughts can be compelling enough to justify exaggerated responses in subjects, such that dangerous or unwanted thoughts need to be intensely avoided by the subject functioning in this mode (Fonagy, 2006; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009; Galgut, 2010; Luyten, 2012)

"Pretend mode" is the next prementalistic mode, and it is a mode which is characterized by a process of consciously separating or detaching internal experience from external reality,

allowing a partial degree of flexibility in severing representations from the things which they refer to (Fonagy, 2006; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009; Galgut, 2010; Luyten, 2012). However, to some extent, the individual may have difficulty conceiving of internal experience as being mental, and hence, struggle to simultaneously engage with pretend, or contrived internal representations and reality. In its more extreme instances it can lead to dissociative thought, where it is difficult to link anything to a real reference, and the fantasies or cognitions which arise, appear experientially to have little consequence or relevance – this may manifest in intense feelings of emptiness and detachment. Sometimes this can result in hyperactive mentalization, where an individual continually engages in an obsessive search for meaning – typically, individuals may often discuss experiences with little context and content that refers or links the discussion to physical or material reality (Fonagy, 2006; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009; Galgut, 2010; Luyten, 2012). In this mode, individuals can also utilize forms of pseudomentalization, Luyten (2012) provides a useful list of types of pseudomentalization which is detailed below.

Intrusive pseudomentalizing, as characterized by the fact that there is little respect for the opaque nature of mental states, and that when thoughts and feelings are spoken about, even though they may be somewhat accurate and plausible, they are taken for granted to be true. In overactive-inaccurate pseudomentalizing, the individual takes great strides to understand mental states, but often misses the essence of them and lacks curiosity about them, despite the apparent preoccupation. Finally, there is the destructively inaccurate pseudomentalizing, which entails the disavowal of objective reality, whilst positing very psychologically unlikely mental states of the other (Luyten, 2012).

The third primary mode of pre-mentalistic subjectivity, known as the *"teleological mode"*, is understood as a form of thinking that comes to equate the other agent's mental `states, and thus motivations, feelings and desires, with the agent's directly observable behaviour. The validity of an experience is only considered viable when it is consequences are clearly demonstrated – interaction on a psychic level is supplanted by attempts to alter thoughts and emotions through action (Fonagy, 2006; Luyten, 2012; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009) Then, related to this mode but not reducible to it, is the misuse of mentalization, where individuals engage in self-serving empathy and distortions of the other's feelings. This is such that, the others' feelings are distorted in the service of an ulterior motive. This may also come in the form of deliberate manipulation and undercutting of others as a form of coercion to attain

their own goals – e.g. use of humiliation or inducing guilt to undermine one's capacity to think (Luyten, 2012).

In addition to this Luyten (2012, pg. 27) also points out some indicators of non-mentalizing and poor mentalizing that can be utilized in the clinical assessment of mentalization – these are discussed below. Non-mentalizing is characterized by a focus on 1) detail at the expense of emotions, feelings and thoughts, 2) external social factors (e.g. school or neighbours), and 3) physical or structural labels (e.g. tired, lazy, depressed, clever). Non-mentalizing is sometimes characterized by a focus on rules and obligations, which sometimes is accompanied by an unwavering certainty about the content being discussed. Subjects may deny responsibility, and seek to blame others when problems are confronted, often nit picking at others faults as a means of doing so (Luyten, 2012, p. 28). Poor mentalizers are often non-verbal, hostile, evasive, overly literal, and inappropriate when discussing relevant interpersonal events. They sometimes lack adequate integration in their narratives, and often fail to provide fully formed explanations of the situation (Luyten, 2012, p. 31).

2.9 - Mentalization and its growing scope

This typology of failures to mentalize arguably provides a substantial framework to interpret interpersonal situations, and thus the perpetrators narration of their enactments of violence. It also arguably provides a uniquely compatible framework to interpret several other types of research on empathy, morality, and violence, in that, mentalization is a very broad concept which arguably has been demonstrated to be compatible with very different attempts to conceptualize the processes which are at play in the subjects coming to understand the self and other. It theoretically overlaps with, and often integrates findings from research on attachment, social cognition, theory of mind, mindfulness, metacognition, empathy, emotional intelligence, psychological mindfulness, and imagination (Allen, 2006; Choi-Kain & Gunderson, 2008; Ensink & Mayes, 2010; Fonagy *et al.*, 2011; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009; Liljenfors & Lundh, 2015). Although these overlaps should not be overemphasized, it is also notable and useful that it is compatible with so many theoretical backgrounds, utilizing cognitive science, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and neuroscientific perspectives, whilst still keeping a degree of intersubjective and situational relevance, such that it is not easily

reducible to an individualistic account of the subject (Allen, 2006; Choi-Kain & Gunderson, 2008). A common thread is postulated in this review concerning explanations of violence. That is, it may be useful to attempt to utilize mentalization as a concept to aid in integrating various findings and perspectives concerning the aetiology of violence, which suggests it is a kind of empathic deficit noted by Bruce (2014) & Baron-Cohen (2011); the absence of reflection in moral decision making noted by Swartz & Scott (2014); a limited "cognitive landscape" as indicated by Rocque, Posick and Felix (2015); the process of moral disengagement as noted by Bandura (1999) & Wilkinson & Carr (2014); a failure of self-regulation as suggested by King (2012) in the cognitive-behavioural implicit theory approach; an extreme defensive reaction against ego disintegration as suggested by Gilligan (2003), or kind of exceptional abandonment of the other as posited by (Springer, 2012a). All of these considerations suggest either a failure to engage and regulate the self, or come to interpret and understand the other, which mentalization provides an excellent means of conceptualizing, whilst being thoroughly backed by empirical research.

Mentalization is also useful as it is compatible with attempting to interpret violent enactments in terms of situational or event based determinants, as well as provides a means of coherently approximating the history of the perpetrators psychological functioning if need be. Thus, arguably, the use of mentalization allows the possibility of engaging on the processual level of enactments of violence, while simultaneously, it is hypothesized to be a relevant situational process in the enactment of violence. Such a theory allows the possibility of engaging with the interpretation of other possible situational determinants and how they may come to impact, if they do indeed have any indication of an effect at all, the enactments of violence narrated by the perpetrators. This will allow some possibility of understanding how relative inequality and conspicuous consumption may manifest themselves, if at all, in the situations being narrated. It will also arguably allow some ground to make sense of the theorized effects of inequality and neoliberalism on the psychology of subjects – for example, the disavowal of vulnerability, may be related to a failure to adequately mentalize (Scharff, 2015) (for example, one could speculate that the subject is engaged in the process of pretend mode). It may also be useful in interpreting the various strategies which perpetrators utilized to morally disengage and split themselves off from their enactments of violence (Bandura, 1999; Presser, 2004). This suggests that mentalization does provide a powerful theoretical lens to begin to speculate and form a clearer understanding of the process of violent

enactments. It also arguably provides a very compatible means of integrating the wide and divergent research and theory related to violence. Furthermore, it is well-suited to integrating and understanding the broader ecological factors involved in determining violent enactments, and has the theoretical scope to also enable a critical account of its aetiology. As such, this thesis will pursue a psychosocial analysis of violence on the basis of mentalization theory, whilst accommodating the various insights of detailed in this literature, particularly, those related to conspicuous consumption and neoliberalism, given its potential of producing valuable insights into the nature of violence in the South Africa context.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1 - Research Design:

A nested qualitative secondary data analysis of 19 interviews already collected and transcribed in a government project in association with the Centre of the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

3.2 - Research Questions:

1) What do perpetrators' report as perceived situational triggers in their narratives of violent crime?
2) Are these reported triggers linked to markers of failures to mentalize?
3) Are there any other indications of failures to mentalize?
4) What meaning do the perpetrators make of the phenomenon of violence?

3.3 - Sample and Sampling:

The transcriptions that will form the data for the analysis were generated through semi-structured interviews with 20 male inmates between the ages of 23-24 who were perpetrators of violent crime as part of a larger study (Barolsky *et al*., 2008). Permission to access and analyse this existing data set was provided by the CSVR's research manager and the lead researcher on the project. Given some difficulties explained in section below, one of these participants was excluded, leaving a sample of 19 (See Appendix B). It was decided that the participant be removed from the analysis given the interviews under his name appeared to be exact duplicates of another participant with a different name in the data received, and the one interview which appeared to be the uniquely the participants had very little data relevant to the aims of this study – that is, it had very little reference to violence and factors which appeared associated with violence.

The project was also approved by the CSVR/HSRC's ethics committee (see appendix C). The sample was a purposeful, non-random convenience sample. The participants were originally approached and recruited on a voluntary basis, through the help of the Department of Correctional Services. Half of the participants were sampled from Pollsmoor Prison located in the Western Cape, and half of them were sampled from Johannesburg Prison in Gauteng. Selection to be approached and possibly included into the sample was based on a rigorous search, where all of which had committed the following crimes: murder, attempted murder, assault with grievous bodily harm and aggravated robbery (Barolsky *et al*., 2008). The participants were originally divided up according to their criminal offences for which they were incarcerated, and this was based on information from the Department of Correctional Services. However, most offenders during the interview admitted to being involved in multiple other crimes, some of which were violent in nature, and some of which resulted in their prior arrests and incarceration (although the latter was less common in the sample) (Barolsky *et al*., 2008).

In an attempt to consider contemporary violent crime at the time of the data collection, the principal investigators chose to investigate criminals who were incarcerated for crimes committed between 2000-2005. This was also done with the hope that the recency of the events would ensure the quality of information recalled, given that fewer details would be lost to memory over time. Finally, it was pursued with the hope that the participants' willingness to honestly disclose information about the crimes they were convicted for, would be higher (Barolsky *et al*., 2008). In addition to these processes, a selection interview was performed prior to the start of the study on the basis of the judgement of an experienced and trained interviewer's perception of the prisoner's suitability to engage and understand the interview process. Participants were excluded if their conviction was based on sexual violence, although many participants did recall being involved in different forms of it. This is because another study of the overall project that this study was involved in, was interested in sexual violence exclusively. Finally, participants were also excluded on the basis of having a disability or serious mental disorder (Barolsky *et al*., 2008).

3.4 - Original Procedure:

A brief summary of the original collection process is detailed here. A three-part interview (See Appendix A for interview schedule) was conducted by each of the number of trained interviewers involved in the research project[8]. Each part of the interview was concentrated on a different aspect of the perpetrator of interest's life, based on three different overarching themes of interest: 1) life story; 2) involvement with violence, and 3) incarceration. In total each of these interviews took 90 minutes (Barolsky *et al*., 2008). All the questions were translated and transcribed in the language of choice for the participant, and the participant was advised to speak in their language of choice. These interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and then cross checked for potential inaccuracies in translation and transcription. The participants were primarily guided through a narrative process which is clearly elucidated in the appendix, which contains the interview schedule (Barolsky *et al*., 2008). Given the relative complexity of gaining rapport with this population and the potential for harm via the recall of possibly traumatic content for the perpetrators, these interviews were conducted by experienced interviewers with some basic clinical training. In addition to this, three debriefing sessions were offered to those who participated in the study in order to aid them in coping with the difficult and emotionally intense nature of the interview (Barolsky *et al*., 2008).

3.5 - Conceptual Framework:

3.5.1 - A phenomenological based psychosocial approach to violence

Recently in the social sciences there has been a growing interest in psychosocial studies as an inter- or trans-disciplinary enterprise whose focus is on the way in which the psychological and social are mutually constituted or entwined. That is, a psychosocial conception focuses on the interaction between sociocultural and political discourses and subjectivity, arguably representing the latest attempt to transcend the individual-social dualistic conception of the

[8] "In Gauteng, interviews were conducted by two interviewers, one a trained counsellor and another a psychologist who were subcontracted from the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and conducted the interviews over a fairly extended period of time of several months. In Western Cape, the initial selection interviews were conducted by a psychologist from the Centre for Victims of Violence and Torture. The actual interviews were conducted by a group of 10 trained field interviewers from Providence Holdings Ltd. All interviewers were given in-depth training on the interview schedule by the team of researchers from the HSRC who conducted with study, namely, Vanessa Barolsky, Catherine L. Ward, Suren Pillay and Nadia Sanger" (Barolsky, Ward, Pillay, & Sanger, 2008, p. 19)

subject to provide a more comprehensive account of a "person-in-context", where the personal and social are inextricable (Gadd & Corr, 2015; Kaposi, 2013; Langdridge, 2008; Larkin *et al*., 2006; McAvoy, 2015; S. Taylor, 2015; S. Taylor & McAvoy, 2015; Wetherell, 2015). As this dualism is a particularly pertinent issue in the study of violent enactments, a psychosocial lens may afford particular utility in the interpretation of enactments of violence, including those which are otherwise considered senseless or gratuitous (Bowman *et al.*, 2014; Gadd & Corr, 2015).

Phenomenological theory arguably is a theoretical tradition that allows the possibility of an agent being partially determined by their physical, psychological, historical, social, and cultural constraints, that is, what, Heidegger calls the *facticity* of their existence or being-in-the-world; and that this determination is unlikely to be reflective or conscious, whilst retaining the fundamental capacity for freedom and the idiosyncrasies of an agent's perception (Langdridge, 2007, p. 30). Indeed, phenomenology is theoretically bound to the notion that language serves to constitute individuals, or rather individuals come into being through language, and thus are deeply embedded into their social and cultural contexts whilst still being thoroughly embodied persons. Furthermore, phenomenologists typically stress the fact that discourse and conversation are important, and are epistemologically open to a more fine grained analysis of the conversation and discourse (Langdridge, 2007, 2008; Larkin *et al*., 2006; Shinebourne, 2011). This is important because many have strongly argued the importance of integrating the insights gained in this linguistic turn which emphasized understanding the ways in which discourse is utilized actively as a resource in everyday interactions and contexts (Gadd & Corr, 2015; McAvoy, 2015; S. Taylor, 2015; Wetherell, 2015), without undermining the relevance of affect, intentionality, and embodiment - that is, the irreducible, extra-discursive qualia of subjectivity and the value of agency in analysis (Davidsen & Fosgerau, 2015; Gadd & Corr, 2015; McAvoy, 2015; S. Taylor, 2015). In line with this and this thesis' aims, Habermas (2006), Davidsen & Fosgerau (2015), and Saville-Young & Jearey Graham (2016) have demonstrated the compatibility of utilizing mentalization as an analytic concept in the analysis of conversation and text, particularly given that it is an intersubjective construct that provides an effective means of investigating the non-verbal, that is, the affective and cognitive processes alongside discourse. That is to say that, the use of mentalization also allows for inferences about the internal processes of an agent to be made, which are typically excluded in discursive accounts of the subject, without

necessarily excluding the way in which discourse and contextual dynamics may come to shape the agent's subjectivity. This is because mentalization is based on the notion that human beings are inherently intersubjective beings, whose subjectivity is structured by the way in which the individual or agent is related to persons, symbols, as well as, structures within their interpersonal milieu (Allen, 2006; Davidsen & Fosgerau, 2015; Young & Jearey-Graham, 2015).

Interpretative phenomenological analysis is one approach which accommodates for more nuanced analyses of language use, but are typically more interested in the content and meaning than the function of language in interaction (Langdridge, 2007, 2008; Larkin *et al*., 2006; Shinebourne, 2011), thus, avoiding issues of evacuating the subject of agency. Importantly, it is a situated account which refuses to easily divorce the social and psychological even though it has a serious account of intentional structure. Interpretative phenomenological analysis is useful given its double hermeneutic approach, that is concerned with providing a detailed and rigorous analysis of the nuances and idiosyncrasies of the experience of, or as reported by, particular individuals in particular events or situations in their lives (Langdridge, 2007; Larkin *et al*., 2006; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith, 2011). On one level, IPA attempts to achieve empathic immersion into the subject's life and provide a coherent and psychologically informed third-person description which is as close as possible to quality of the individual's experience. On a second level, IPA aims to develop an interpretative analysis of the initial description which is meant to position the description in a sociocultural context, whilst providing a critical commentary of the individual's meaning-making processes. Thus, the second component is speculative in nature, and attempts to postulate what it may mean that an individual expressed certain emotions or cognition in a particular situation. In IPA, unlike some other varieties of phenomenology, this interpretative process may be facilitated by engagement with existing theoretical constructs from the literature (Langdridge, 2007, 2008; Larkin *et al*., 2006; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Shinebourne, 2011). In both of these levels of analysis, the primary interest is in the consciousness (imaginings, perceptions, memories, judgements and etc.) of the individual as it appears to them, which in this framework, always has an intentional structure. That is to say, their consciousness always about, or of something – with reference to the world, whether it is a belief they possess, the physical environment, or some social or cultural, construct or artefact (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2013; Langdridge, 2007, 2008; Larkin *et al*., 2006;

Shinebourne, 2011). Thus, perception in this account should be understood to be embodied, and shaped by experience and the routine or habitual ways of experiencing things. In this line of thought, perception is already embedded in a particular social, historical, and cultural context, and thus permeated with meaning (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2013; Larkin *et al*., 2006; Shinebourne, 2011). It may be further supplemented and formed by the contingent properties or circumstances (e.g. the objects, arrangements, or events) and possibilities encountered in experience. Central to this understanding of perception is that these meanings are imbued in perception without there necessarily being a cognition or thought with regard to how this perception is filtered (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2013; Larkin *et al*., 2006; Shinebourne, 2011). We are fundamentally constituted by our relationships with the variety of semantic and somatic objects which are part of the way in which we are beings, being-in-the-world. Thus, thought is not necessarily the central focus of phenomenology, and to some theoretical proponents (i.e. Heidegger) it may be considered as a transient derivative of the overall intentionality involved in our engagement with the world (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2013; Larkin *et al*., 2006; Shinebourne, 2011). Thus, the phenomenologist is concerned with the way in which the - situated and embodied agent as - perceiver - the person-in-context, or being-in-the-world - undergoes particular experiences and the way in which these experiences are structured in perception. Therefore, it attempts to generate a descriptive account of the experiential structure of our conscious life (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2013; Larkin *et al*., 2006; Shinebourne, 2011).

It is useful to consider that the phenomenological method, specifically interpretative phenomenological analysis, is particularly open and flexible epistemically, and encourages engagement with the relevant literature during the process of interpreting or making sense of the data of interest (Larkin *et al*., 2006). As such, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is epistemologically well suited to engage with the current literature in its analytic interpretative component (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith, 2011), which suits this project's attempt to maintain an analysis which is deeply grounded in the empirical and theoretical literature on mentalization and violence. Moreover, interpretative phenomenological analysis is theoretically suited to engage in situational factors, and a situational analysis, as well as, is consistent with a psychosocial conception of the subject, as it conceives of the subject as being-in-the-world, or as each individual concerned as a person-in-context. This is why this will be utilized in the current study as a means of augmenting the

situational or event based analysis of violent enactments (Schinkel, 2004). Furthermore, given that empathy, and in particular mentalization is based heavily on the notion of intentionality, and derives its conceptualization from phenomenological philosophy, IPA's focus on the structure of experience and intentionality is particularly useful for this project (Allen, 2006; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2013; Langdridge, 2007, 2008; Larkin *et al*., 2006). Indeed the phenomenological approach is also open to engaging with a narrative based focus, which the secondary data collection was based upon (Langdridge, 2007, 2008). Following the work of Saville Young & Jearey-Graham (2015), I will utilize mentalization, which is intersubjective in essence and rejects an a priori separation between the individual and his social world.

The current study will attempt to broach a psychosocial theoretical background by integrating an interpretative phenomenological analysis with mentalization theory, serving to systematically scrutinize the individual account, whilst referring to situational factors in order to take into consideration linguistic indicators and concrete factors which may be casually relevant in their accounts of violent enactments. Simultaneously, it will attempt to continually refer to the research literature and thus aid in interrogating and evaluating the assumptions and theoretical claims made so far in the literature when relevant.

3.5.2 - Secondary data analysis

According to Heaton (2008), there are two primary uses of secondary data analysis: to investigate novel or supplementary research questions, or to validate the results of the previous research. This thesis focuses on the former. This analysis is based on content which was obtained through what is considered formal data sharing. Thus this analysis does not include any of the primary researchers in the secondary data analysis and included an ethical review by the University of Witwatersrand psychology department's ethics board, and approval from the principal investigator of the original data, to ensure the feasibility of its use (Heaton, 2008).This research will serve as a supplementary analysis of the original aim of the CSVR study**,** as it serves to focus more directly on the psychological processes underlying violent enactments in South Africa, as it was suggested that this may be useful within the CSVR report by the original principal investigator (Barolsky *et al*., 2008; Heaton, 2008).

Several legitimate methodological concerns need to be addressed when conducting a secondary analysis in order to justify its use. Firstly, the current project's purpose arguably is consistent to Long-Sutehall, Suqe & Addington-Hall's (2010) suggestion that a secondary data analysis should maintain a focus as close to the original purpose of the study as possible, as it aims to extend the analysis of the original study's aim to make sense of violent crime in South Africa based on the perspectives of perpetrators of violent crime in South Africa. Secondly, this study is not hampered by the methodological concern common to secondary data analysis, the claim that the presence of the researcher during data collection is essential to the understanding and analysis of the data (Heaton, 2008). As it is argued that the production and interpretation of qualitative data is fundamentally based on the contextual contingencies and relationship dynamics established between the researcher and the sample during the collection process. This suggests that the lack of accumulated background knowledge and implicit formulations established by the original investigator serves as a significant barrier to a secondary data analysis (Corti & Thompson, 2006). However, the original study itself was primarily conducted by data collectors in the language of choice of the prisoner, and then were translated and transcribed into English. As such, although the principal investigator likely had contact with the data collectors, creating a means of referral and clarification, it is likely that the original study implied similar barriers (Barolsky *et al*., 2008). Moreover, given that the report of the original study and the notes of methodology and its analyses are available as a reference to further refine and assess the possible interpretations that could arise; this study arguably has a strong background of the original study to refer back to, in order to avoid misinterpretations where possible. Furthermore, even without reference to the previous report, it is arguable that given the extensive breadth and depth of the interviews, which cover the perpetrators' a) background life story, b) narratives of violent enactments and, c) prison life, it is arguable that these narratives may provide a sufficiently rich resource to contextualize and make sense of the data (Barolsky *et al*., 2008). Finally, given that this is a sensitive and hard to reach population, secondary data analysis was an appropriate strategy for answering the research question. (Corti & Thompson, 2006). This project utilizes an interpretative phenomenological analysis to supplement the original narrative based approach, and given the aforementioned claim that IPA is compatible with this approach (Van den Berg, 2008). This is important given that the methodological approach in qualitative research can have a significant impact on the research process and thus, what kind of data is produced. Despite this limitation, Van der Berg (2008) argues that

the influence of a methodological paradigm on the data it produces is sometimes overstated, as it overemphasizes the role of the investigator - and the assumptions held by said investigator - may have in producing data, at the expense of acknowledging the way in which the participants' own intentional and spontaneous responses contribute to the data collection processes, regardless of whatever methodology is used. In this sense, although the interactional and contextual contingencies the researcher may encounter in an interview are very useful, the end product still arguably is data which can be dissociated from its original paradigm (Van den Berg, 2008). In secondary data analysis, context still plays a very significant role, but needs to be conceptualized carefully in order to yield a coherent analysis. Indeed, Van den Berg (2005) argues that the interpretation of contextual data in a secondary data analysis needs to strike a balance between conception of context which focuses on microlevel fine grained textual cues and, on textual cues as inscriptions of macrolevel level structural factors. In order to ensure the rigour of the analysis, it is argued that a focus on the concrete circumstances, or situational factors, at play which may come to determine the production of speech/text in the interview, as this tends to be neglected in many analyses. Inclusion of such, arguably should serve as a barrier of the possible regress involved in such analyses, which entails the continuous inclusion of additional information related to the social context, which may be irrelevant, in order to accommodate interpretations by the researcher (Van den Berg, 2008). This will ensure that both non-discursive (concrete situational factors and cognition and affective processes) and discursive elements are included in the analysis of the data – allowing interpretations of what the text may signify on both a micro- & macro-level, whilst using concrete features of the situation or environment as a means to limit the scope of interpretations made. This should be based on a principle of parsimony – that is, the researcher should limit him/her-self to the aspects of context assumed to be most relevant in text, whilst acknowledging that complete contextualization of the text is in all likelihood unattainable and impractical (Van den Berg, 2008). This is arguably in line with the use of interpretation phenomenological analysis with a focus on situational factors, and thus is consistent with the aim of this thesis. All of which suggest that the use of secondary data analysis is appropriate and justified in this thesis, as the limitations related to the secondary data arguably can be overcome in this study, and an analysis of the data may produce fruitful insights.

3.6 - Current Procedure:

The current study, according to the limits set by the Witwatersrand University Ethics Board, and the aims of the project, focused on the talk and reports of violence by participants in the transcripts; referring to contextual and historical factors that were not directly related to this discourse only when necessary to supplement the analysis. The study was spilt into two phases. In the first phase of the analysis, the interviews were coded in Atlas TI according to various types of reports of violence identified by the researcher, and double checked and approved by the supervisor of this project. The different codes only appeared to aid the creation of a loose organization of the data for the researcher's understanding, and for the sake of transparency and rigour they will be detailed and explained here briefly. Enactment_V (n = 67) was used each time it appeared a participant narrated a violent enactment. Talk_V (n = 132) was used each time it appeared a participant may be speaking about violence in general. Vicarious_V (n = 20) was utilized when it appeared participants were narrating a story about a violent enactment that they heard, but did not experience personally. Victim_V (n = 16) referred to incidents where a participant appeared to narrate being a victim of violence. Witness_V (n = 21) refers to incidents of violence the participant narrated witnessing. In total, (n = 256) quotes were coded and were subject to the interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Once these quotes were acquired, the interpretative phenomenological analysis began. In the first phase of the analysis, each of these quotes were commented upon in Atlas TI, reflecting the stage one of the IPA methods described by Langdridge (2007) and Larkin (2006), where the participants were given "voice", or the hermeneutic of empathy was applied, by providing comments which attempt to reflect what is going on, that is to say, the meaning being reflected in the text about the participants' relation to the phenomenon of violence. According to Larkin (2006), generally, in this analysis, the descriptive coding aims to capture the "objects of concern" in the participant's world, and the "experiential claims" made by the participant. Although, Langdridge (2007) explicitly states that comments may also concern associations, summaries or interpretations (based on the psychological literature). This first stage of the IPA utilized both these authors' principles in its process, as they appeared more or less consistent in their aims. Once this was done, a Word document with the relevant quotes and their comments reflecting the first stage of IPA was generated from AtlasTI, in

order to separate the first stage of IPA, from the second stage. As it was unclear how this could be done transparently in AtlasTI. This document was edited to distinguish between each set of quotations from each participant, by providing titles for each participant's array of quotations. The second stage of IPA sought to generate a set of themes for each participant individually, and then integrate them into a set of themes concerning the phenomena which appeared consistent throughout the participants. Each of these draft themes were refined and generated firstly, by using the comments function in Microsoft Word for each of the relevant segments in this document, where the refined themes are comments upon the comments made in the first step in the IPA process. Then a separate document was created which listed the themes in chronological order for each participant. Thereafter, these individual themes were re-ordered in a way which makes logical, analytical, and theoretical sense for each participant for the process of generating final themes for each participant, and the analysis limited the main theme generation to 5 themes, following the typical procedure. In this process, to limit spurious inferences and avoid missing crucial information in the analysis each of the participants' interviews were read several times. Thereafter, the researcher read the quotes several times. From that point, a draft diary entry for each participant was made with a short vignette of the researcher's impressions of the participant's violence alongside an unorganized free association attempting to best capture the meaning the participant conveyed. Thereafter themes were generated for that participant on the basis of the quotes and the rest of the process. This process occurred recursively until all the participants were analysed. This was done to retain the rigour and idiographic nature of IPA (Langdridge, 2007; Larkin *et al*., 2006; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith, 2011). Although the analysis did try to capture the idiosyncratic details of each participant, it also aimed to generate themes which reflected the literature – attempting to balance the perspective of the participant with the perspective of the researcher. Thereafter, all of this was integrated into a larger thematic section which arguably reflects the themes which appeared consistent and relevant in most, if not all, participants. All these steps were carried out to ensure the methodological rigour of the analysis, as well as enhance transparency. These themes were integrated with the existent psychological literature where relevant. This phase of the analysis aims to create a broad picture of what violence may mean to the violent perpetrators involved and broadly what they perceive to be the various triggers, including what they perceived to be situational variables which result in their own, and others' enactments of violence. In the last phase of the analysis, some cases were strategically chosen for a more in depth theoretically driven analysis of perpetrators'

narration of events where they enacted violence, and the relevant talk which may aid to understand these events. This phase of analysis is more targeted and granular in nature, aiming towards a fine-grained analysis of the situational and processual mechanisms at play in particular violent events. This is aimed towards supplementing the first phase of analyses broad phenomenological account of the violence, which provide a number of thematic threads with which to understand the phenomena of violence from the perpetrators, but which to some extent end up providing an overdetermined conception of the violence, insofar as much of the talk concerning their violence and crime constituted talk about violence and violent crime independent of their actual enactment of them. Thus, this segment strategically selected a sample of violent events narrated by the perpetrators in order to more appropriately tease out the ways in which the previous phase's themes and other situational factors may play out in violent enactments. To this end, mentalization theory is applied in line with some of the insights of the literature in order to understand whether failures to mentalize can be linked to some of these violent enactments, and what other situational triggers may be related to these enactments, and whether they interact with the processes of mentalization involved (or lacking) in these enactments. After all of this was performed my supervisor reviewed all the analyses and helped refine them, serving partially as a co-rater to ensure the rigour and clarity of my interpretations.

3.7 - Ethical Considerations:

Approval for the interviews has already been granted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), as well as Vanessa Barolsky, the principal author of the study from which the interviews were derived.

Chapter 4 - Data Analysis & Interpretation

4.1 - Phase 1 - Themes Generated by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The following section elaborates in detail on three primary themes derived from the IPA of the selected quotes from the interviews, and the table below presents a summary of these themes, their related subthemes, the number of participants quoted, and the number of quotations cited. Each of these themes and their subthemes are thoroughly considered with close textual references to support their claims[9]. Thereafter, a strategic event based analysis is performed utilizing mentalization theory as its foundation whilst considering the different possible situational triggers which may be involved in the enactments of violence analysed.

Themes	Subthemes	Number of quotations cited	N
Structural, Social, and Community Factors	Violence as a normative interpersonal framework	P1, P2, P4, P7, P8, P14, P17	(n = 7)
	Race, Political Resistance, and Violence	P2, P3, P8, P9, P12, P15, P17, P19	(n=8)
	Violent Subjects – Criminality and Gangsterism	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P11, P14, P15, P18, P19	(n = 12)
	Wealth Accumulation, Conspicuous Consumption, and Predatory Capitalism	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P14, P15, P16, P19	(n = 14)
Instrumental factors in the perpetration of violence	The Power and Presence of Guns	P2, P3, P5, P12, P17, P19	(n = 6)

[9] Please note that not all quotes were included in the analysis, as an attempt to ensure the thesis' brevity.

	Substance Use and Violent Crime	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, P15, P18	(n = 9)
	Significant Others, and the presence of social control figures	P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P11, P12, P16	(n = 9)
	Perceived threat to self	P3, P6, P8, P9, P17	(n = 5)
Morality, Agency, and Violence	Violence as a sociomoral mediator	P1, P2, P6, P7, P11	(n = 6)
	Violence as a form of agency	P7, P9, P14	(n =3)
	The role of group dynamics	P3, P7, P12, P15	(n = 4)
	Moral disengagement in the perpetration of violence	P1, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P10, P11, P14	(n = 10)

4.1.1 - Structural, Social, and Community factors in violence

4.1.1.1 - Violence as a normative interpersonal framework

P1: Interview 1 - 1:3 (142:155)[10]

> "Yes there was a lot of violence and drugs going on there. In every neighborhood it is like that, madam knows how things are."

In the above quote the perpetrators not only explicitly notes on the normalization of violence, but too attempts to nudge the interviewer to be complicit with this specific point, with a suggestive remark implying that violence being normative is something that is shared and possibly established knowledge that extends beyond his and her experience, even, into every neighbourhood. Indeed, in numerous instances in the narratives, violence is described as prevalent in the perpetrators communities, whether as, the political violence associated with the enforcement or resistance to apartheid (P17: Interview 2 - 52:4 (141:151) – see below), the violence associated with the resistance to, and presence of, criminals and gangs (e.g. - P8: Interview 2 - 23:2 (154:168); P14: Interview 2 - 43:5 (279:292) & P14: Interview 2 - 43:5 (279:292)), or the use of violence in the prison system (P14 (Interview 3 - 44:1 (70:92) – see below), where the use of violence is tacitly accepted as a part and parcel of their conduct and survival as criminals.

P17: Interview 2 - 52:4 (141:151)

> "**And the violence that you did experience was the violence you saw, was political violence.**
>
> Yes.
>
> **And the worse thing that you saw was someone being necklaced?**
>
> Yes.
>
> **How did that make you feel when you saw that?**
>
> It was bad but unfortunately that time, it was reasonable for everybody, because they burned people because they can come back and say this and that. So you could say he died for his sin.
>
> **And how old were you when you saw that?**
>
> Round about 10 or 13. 10 or 11, round about there."

P14: Interview 3 - 44:1 (70:92)

[10] To clarify this reference, indicates the participant number (P1), the specific interview that this quote was derived from (Interview 1), and the code number (1:3) and the line numbers (142:155) of the quote in Atlas TI.

"**With what kind of people have you stayed with at medium A?**

It was a place filled with violent people, therefore I became violent as well and I did not want anyone to control my life, I wanted to control myself.

What was happening there?

Stabbings fights etc."

With violence being fairly common for many of the perpetrators - from them witnessing acquaintances and/or friends being murdered relatively often, as well as, many of the perpetrators being victimized or witnessing others become victims of violence and crime. Violence is portrayed as integrated into their upbringing and the daily life of their communities and in some ways, indicates the tacit acceptance of themselves and community members to this danger in their lives. Consider the following quote:

P4: Interview 2 - 11:3 (136:136)

"**What violence have you witnessed?**

So many things have happened in front of me. I have seen shooting and people being killed, the reasons are gangs fighting over territory. Because they have shebeens, they fight over customers. If someone crosses over to the wrong one, there is fighting amongst them. There was jealousy amongst them, as one of them may have a nice car while another has a nice wife and the thoughts amongst them turn ugly. They kill each other and their families suffer. They may have children and they get killed due to their stupidity. They try and be macho. Everyday when we left school, there were shots and people being killed. Two or 3 people get hit. They fight amongst gangs about territory. At the end of the day its just worldly things that they fight over. They don't want to be told what to do, they do what they want. Sometimes people are threatened by gangsters to do it or their families will be hurt. Sometimes they must do it or they will get hurt. They must do it."

The next quotes add to this, as they arguably serve as a broad representation of the various ways in which violence comes to intersect in the perpetrators lives - participants have lost friends to violence, participants continuously witness or experience indicators of (e.g. gunshots), if not acts of, violence (e.g. P7: Interview 2 21:3 (161:163) – see below), witnessing assault by a panga) and figures of social control seek means to different means to secure the wellbeing of their significant others (e.g. P2, buying a phone to monitor the safety of a participant – see below), In addition to this, there are reported violent fights in the community over tensions, jealousy, territory, access to consumers, demonstrations of masculinity, commodities, authority, and everyday tussles (e.g. P4: Interview 2 - 11:3 (136:136) – see above).

P2: interview 1 - 4:1 (85:86)

"My mom would make sure that when I didn't sleep at home she sent people to find me until I am found. My mom, when she knows I am not going to sleep at home...like for instance, she ended up buying me a phone, you see? For the fact that I am often not at home so they can call me and find out how I am doing and they tell me about things that are happening, because I lost a lot of my friends in shoot outs etc. So, they bought me a phone."

P7: Interview 2 21:3 (161:163)

"**Interviewer: You told me about incidences where you saw a person being hit by a panga [knife], some were shot…ehm…how was the conflict in your community? Was there a lot of tension?**

Prisoner: Yes, I can say there was a lot of tension. People used to work then get drunk, and when they were drunk that was when they would fight with each other. This happened mostly on weekends."

Indeed, in line with this, many suggest that violence has arguably become normative in variegated ways in the context of many South African communities. In fact, many authors have extended on this by arguing that violence is effectively utilized as a social tool in a variety of contexts and that it is a means of regulating everyday interpersonal interactions (between families, partners, and social groups), as well as the implementation of disciplinary measures (by parents, educational institutions, and or law enforcement); political mobilization; and lastly, effective social struggle (e.g. rioting for fair wages) (Barolsky *et al*., 2008; Bennett & Brookman, 2008; Collins, 2014; Fisher & Hall, 2011; Mampane *et al*., 2014; Nell, 2006; Parkes, 2007; Swartz & Scott, 2014; D. L. Wilkinson & Carr, 2008).

4.1.1.2 - Race, Political Resistance, and Violence

Race appeared to be a relevant consideration and factor in some of the perpetrators involvement in crime and experience of violence in these narratives. Some perpetrators refer to the use of violence in opposition to the apartheid regime and to police and severely punish people who appeared to undermine, or be against, the struggle against apartheid. Here individuals were murdered, burnt, or forced to consume soap in service of these goals, reinforcing the authority of the struggle and in some ways, brutally, enforcing solidarity, or at least silence of any deviation, towards it (P17: Interview 2 - 52:5 (69:94) – see below).

P17: Interview 2 - 52:5 (69:94)

"**So then, when you got to Cape Town? What was your experience then of violence in Cape Town?**

I saw a lot of things like, like it wasn't there, like at the time of the strike, they used to strike and sing and burn each other. So we saw such things. People who are burnt.

So you saw someone who was burnt?

Yes, many times, people being murdered and people being made to drink like a 5L of soap. They had to drink it because they were being forced. There were reasons for doing that, some people who were trying to change this country who did those things and you could not point fingers. There you would find things different because of cultures. So that was the way things started happening at that time."

On the other hand, P18 (Interview 1 - 54:3 (390:436) – see below) notes on how the apartheid system, the political struggle and the violence associated with it as well as the relative deprivation as a function of it, unsettled and angered him, given the suffering and adversity he experienced, and this served to motivate his turn towards crime.

P18: Interview 1 - 54:3 (390:436)

"**You said what did you do about finding a job?**

When you looked for a job at that time, during apartheid, couldn't find one. You end up doing something you never thought you'd do. Maybe pick pockets out of hunger or ask for money and not get any. Then you'd decide that instead of not getting money, let me steal wallets and run. If I get caught, then I get caught.

The reason for you to steal wallets was because you couldn't find a job?

Yes, as well as the apartheid system.

Please explain further?

Because during that time of apartheid, if you can still remember, things that were done …

Did it affect you?

Yes it affected me very hard because my mind…

What happened to you that affected you in a way that you couldn't find a job?

It was because, like I was telling you, the reason why I couldn't find a job was the Boers.

What did they do?

They took our land, they took our food. We were hungry because of them you see.

So, all in all, you are angry?

Yes I got that anger…

You angry at what you think is not true?

.That isn't true because you think it's true but it's not?

You got mentally disturbed?

You got mentally disturbed, because of all those toi toi's (protests) and cars being stoned, that messed us up as the youth."

Separate from the politically associated violence, race in some of the perpetrators narratives has significance in their decision-making during crime, where it appears apparent that white people are sometimes considered more justifiable targets to rob and perhaps harm, and this is

directly and indirectly connected with reports of concrete indicators of their wealth and assumptions about their class, equivocating their race to access to wealth, and thus, with class. Consider the following quote:

P3: 2nd interview - 8:3 (145:183)

> **"**Eish we had believed that you don't harm or stole from him, but when you see a white person you see money…Yes, because obviously we thought white people have money, they have cars and nice houses...Eish, a black person's car you steal it unaware. You will just see a car parked at the mall and think eish such a brand new car it must be a white man's. So you will steal it…Yes by mistake not directly or intentionally because it is very easy to see a black man's car… Maybe by a sticker or inside. But a white man's car is always clean and expensive."

The above quote serves to represent a viewpoint predicated on the notion that white people are more legitimate targets for violent given their strong association with wealth (e.g. P15: Interview 2 - 46:3 (334:335)) as opposed to black people, whom are avoided given that they are associated with relative deprivation and a lower class, and it is assumed that they would unlikely possess conspicuous commodities (P9: Interview 1 - 24:1 (79:223)). From this, it is clear that race serves as an influential factor in the decision-making processes of some perpetrators. Indeed, there is an implication of a retrospective insight into the possibility of dehumanizing white people on the basis of race, at least for P12, and that was based on their association with capital in some way. That is, in some way less moral consideration is entitled to them based on race and this intersects with information about their wealth and consumption, as seen below in the quote:

P12: 2nd interview - 36:5 (113:131)

> "**Interviewer: Does your regrets make you feel stressed or depressed?**
>
> **Prisoner:** Yes it does, although I was robbing white people but the truth is that they are also people just like any humans. So going to them and hurting them like that was not right.
>
> **Interviewer: What was the reason for robbing white people?**
>
> **Prisoner:** Well it was a stupid one because money is all the same, it doesn't matter who is the owner black or white, and it is all the same."

Additionally, some evidence from the perpetrators suggested that being associated with being a foreigner also served as a motivating situational factor for violent crime, with P2 basing his shooting of a victim on an attribution of his victim being a foreigner and therefore stubborn (P2: Interview 3 - 6:4 (129:144) – see below), and another, P8 (Interview 2 - 23:6 (346:372))

suggesting that foreigners were targeted given their vulnerability, as they could not seek protection from the police, being illegal immigrants.

P2: Interview 3 - 6:4 (129:144)

"What happened?

He came from the bank and I was mugging him and he did not want to give me the phone. I thought the gun did not have bullets and he was a foreigner. Foreigners are very stubborn. So I shot him.

Where did you shoot him?

I shot him in the stomach. We searched him and found R8000.00 and 25 phones."

This is line with some qualitative evidence that suggests that some black criminals may harbour resentments and bitterness about the racial inequalities that exist in South Africa, and have expressed that they may differ in their initiation and treatment of a crime on the basis of race (Kynoch, 2013), with some prison and street gangs having framed their involvement in crime as a form anticolonial resistance (Steinberg, 2004). This is consistent with the problematic historical and present consequences of oppressive social engineering and the reinforcement of racial inequities in terms of class in South Africa, with whiteness being associated with affluence and education, and blackness with the inverse (Posel, 2010). This section is also reflective of the propensity towards xenophobic violence and discrimination against black foreign nationals in South Africa (Duncan, 2011; Young & Jearey-Graham, 2015).

4.1.1.3 - Violent Subjects – Criminality and Gangsters

P18 Interview 1 - 54:3 (390:436)

"I had favourites, like gangs

And you would stand and watch these gangs fight, you were not involved in any of these gangs?

No I was not involved in any gang because at that time I was young.

And you thought it a good thing, when there were different gangs?

See the thing is, I thought it was a good thing as you say, because there was no one who thought that they could stop this and everyone thought who ever can stop it will stop it, and it just carried on."

In several of the interviews, the notion of being or identifying as a criminal, or a gangster is represented as having a considerable role in the prevalence of violence and crime in their communities. Gangsters are portrayed as a dominating and coercive force in the community using intimidation, the threat of violence, and their status to achieve their aims. The notoriety

and power associated with these criminals, whom sometimes appeared unstoppable (P18: Interview 1 - 54:3 (390:436) – see above), also conferred them a degree of popularity amongst some in the community, and they were represented often in the narratives as a distinct type of person, particularly for being fashionable, tempting and coercing community members, including many of the perpetrators. This was particularly emphasized by their association with a high standard of living and thus their access to desirable and conspicuous goods, for example:

P4: Interview 2.doc - 11:6 (136:136)

> "Many young people run into gangsterism for the fun as they buy them things, cars to drive and girls. They then do what they want as the kids are scared of him. He is powerful and they do what they can to keep these things coming for themselves."

P7: Interview 2 - 21:1 (38:80)

> "Yes, there were gangs; they were people popular for clothes, fashion you see"

P8: Interview 2 - 23:14 (402:412)

> "Well they were alright; they were nice girls even now I know well that they got tempted because I know that as people we are after high standard of living and style."

In their respective communities, gangsters were portrayed as ambivalent figures, whose presence garners admiration from the youth and disapproval from the elders (P15: Interview 1 - 45:2 (137:144); although some perpetrators suggested tacit complicity of some community members in supporting the criminals by purchasing stolen commodities and commissioning the perpetrators for goods (e.g. P15: Interview 2 - 46:2 (277:323); P3: Interview 1 - 7:3 (301:311)). This is perhaps reflective of a kind of selective morality at play, where some community members overlook or implicitly sanction violent crime insofar as they, receive the appropriate resource sharing or benefit from it (Karandinos *et al*., 2014; Kynoch, 2013; Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016) Numerous perpetrators expressed their own experience of and concern over the youth being prone to the negative influence of these gangsters and criminals, whose presence which appears simultaneously seductive and oppressive, as they simultaneously appear to represent an alternative form of upward mobility and success, given their enticement of the many disenfranchised youth with their access to conspicuous commodities (e.g. takkies, clothes, and cars), and their notoriety for violence, intimidation, and coercion. This is arguably reflected in Parkes (2007) study on children's' perspectives of violent crime in SA, finding that there is explicitly negative stigma associated with the gangs, they are simultaneously repulsive and immoral, and yet attractive and powerful. The perpetrators suggest that young children identify with and mimic the behaviour

of gangsters which they observe in their communities with little understanding of the meaning or consequences of their behaviour (e.g. - (P1: Interview 1.doc - 1:2 (104:114); P4: Interview 2 - 11:3 (136:136) - 11:6 (136:136); P12: Interview 3 - 38:6 (452:466); P14: Interview 2 - 43:6 (303:304) – please see the quotes below).

P1: Interview 1 - 1:2 (104:114)

"Ok, Madam, I dropped out of school when I was in standard 3. I left school because I was busy with wrong activities outside.

What were you busy with?

With gangster activities.

The what?

The gangster activities, the "skollies". I was involved with that type of people. I was involved with drugs.

So you smoked or sold?

Both, I smoked it and I sold it. It was at the time when I was about 14 years old, when I was indoctrinated by people who came out of prison, they played with my mind and gave me a gun and told me to kill this and that person. Yes, that was when I was 14 years old and that is why I missed out on school"

P4: interview 2 - 11:3 (136:136)

"He puts fear into the people around him and this is how many of the youngsters got involved in drugs. He puts fear into the people around him and this is how many of the youngsters got involved in drugs. The older ones influence the younger ones. After that they get tattoos and then the choice is to have a normal life or get involved with this. This place is like hell. Jail is like hell and at the time when the owner is offering clothes and takkies, the young guy is not thinking about going to jail… Young guys that join gangs at 13 or 15 don't know what they are doing. In time they have killed people and then they land up in jail"

P12: Interview 3 - 38:6 (452:466)

"And will find school kids stabbing and shooting each other at schools, you see? It's because this thing are happening in locations in which they grew up in (slang 59:26-59:28) and you find that older guys are doing bad things in front of these kids and that can make this very same kid to copy this behaviour and go and practice it at school or for this kid to shoot the same older guy and not even realize that what he did was wrong or realize later when he is at home or maybe when he is now arrested that what he did was wrong and was at the wrong place."

P14: Interview 2 - 43:6 (303:304)

"What I'm seeing is that its the youth are doing bad things. And they know that I'm here in prison and they say "Spicho is in prison" and so on, and so on" and they are taking that and making me into a role model."

This identification with these figures, in part, may function as an alternative means of status seeking, given their clear access to conspicuous commodities, and powerful status in the community (David Bruce, 2007; Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Kramer, 2000; R. Wilkinson, 2004), as well as, in some cases, arguably a function of psychological mechanism called identification with the aggressor, where, according to Howell (2014), the child becomes

unconsciously and hypnotically transfixed by the behaviour and desires of the aggressor, in response to overwhelming effect of the aggressor, resulting in the automatic identification and mimicry, rather than an intentional identification with the aggressors position (Howell, 2014). One quote from P4 arguably is strongly suggestive of such an identification:

P4: Interview 2 - 11:3 (136:136)

> "They try and copy another guy that has done it. The older guys are negative. They think if they do things like this, their name would improve in the community, but in actual fact, they are destroying their lives. I have seen people get stabbed. I once saw 4 guys cut out someone's throat in the field next to the hospital. They stuck the knife in his throat and pulled out his throat...We came afterwards and saw that his throat was cut out and his eyes were gouged out and his ears cut off. He was killed in a gruesome manner and this frightened me… He wanted to be evil and show he could be evil."

In relation to this gruesome violence, many of the perpetrators expressed feelings of entrapment related to their association with gangsters, typically characterized by an inevitable sense of their own demise, whether in the form of death, incarceration, or social exclusion. With multiple accounts of the hazardous consequences of seceding involvement, including their own experiences of witnessing and perpetrating violence, and the perceived risk of, denigration, injury, or death (e.g. P1 (Interview 1 - 1:6 (246:257); Interview 1 - 1:9 (347:354)); P7 (Interview 1 - 20:4 (286:288); P11 (Interview 1 - 33:6 (225:235) & P15(Interview 2 - 46:1(238:266)). Indeed, P1 (Interview 2 - 2:4 (157:167) – seen below) suggests that "If you're a gangster you always live in fear".

P1: Interview 2 - 2:4 (157:167)

> "It started with stone throwing and stabbing…But then it became evil and they started to shoot guns. It got crazy. As I said to you, that I even became afraid to walk around. I never knew when they would shoot me next. I actually lived in fear. If you're a gangster you always live in fear"

This experience of continuous threat, which is likely a by-product of the normalization of violence, has been linked to the development of appetitive aggression, where an individual adapts to the continual risk of being a victim by becoming attracted and fascinated – and sometimes enjoying – cruelty (Hinsberger *et al*., 2016; Nell, 2006). Indeed, this is likely exasperated by the fact the use of violence is a means of garnering respect and status for many gangs (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014; Lindegaard & Jacques, 2014).

P4: interview 2 - 11:3 (136:136)

> **"**He decides this as he is making a lot of money. Money makes him do it. These owners are prepared to kill for what is theirs and anyone that talks to the law about what he is doing must

be killed. He puts fear into the people around him and this is how many of the youngsters got involved in drugs. The older ones influence the younger ones. After that they get tattoos and then the choice is to have a normal life or get involved with this. This place is like hell. Jail is like hell and at the time when the owner is offering clothes and takkies, the young guy is not thinking about going to jail… Young guys that join gangs at 13 or 15 don't know what they are doing. In time they have killed people and then they land up in jail"

The above quote serves to reflect the extent to which, in service of their own pursuit of status and power, criminals and gangsters are represented as subjects which appear entitled to special privileges and are in some way exceptional, or distinct from other people. In order to enforce these entitlements, gang members, including perpetrators will act violently, going so far as to assault, mutilate, and murder others, with various examples of conflict, violence against their coevals, other prisoners, the police, prison staff, teachers, innocent civilians, and familial authority (e.g. - P1: Interview 1.doc - 1:2 (104:114); P2: interview 2 - 5:3 (71:81); P4: interview 2 - 11:3 (136:136); P5: 2nd interview 14:3 (66:90)) – appearing to undermine any social institution and social control which limits their agency, most often, represented by their pursuit of capital accumulation and status. In a few narratives, this subculture appears to have a very clear hierarchal structure between gangsters and other prisoners ("franse") in prison which confers very particular rights to gangsters which others do not have, suggesting that it is the duty of gangsters to be masters over "impatha", this is consistent with the literature on the numbers gang, and gangs in prison in South Africa (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014; Steinberg, 2004). The quote below is reflective of this:

P14: Interview 3 – 44:1 (70:92)

"If you are not a gangster what would happen with you?

You would be treated badly. There are 2 groups in prison namely "intsizwa"(boss gangster) and "impatha"(knows nothing/stupid). The "intsizwa duty is to give orders to the "impatha" on what needs to be done. For instance ordering him to wash his clothes. The "intsizwa does it not to hurt or humiliate the "impthata" but to train him to be a better "intsizwa" tomorrow."

This is further elaborated and substantiated by the quote below, as it appears that ownership in prison is particularly difficult unless you are gangster, suggesting that it is primarily via the membership and protection of the gang, that prisoners are allowed to maintain the institution of private property.

P19: Interview 1– 55:3 (149:162)

"When you are in the number, you have more rights than someone who is not in the number. You can have your own things and no-one will rob you. But if you are not in the number people will take advantage and rob you. But if you are a gangster it is hard for people to rob you or take your things."

This entitlement and exceptionalism even appears to further extend over others' lives and to who has the right to enact violence or kill another person. This is reflected most substantially in the description of rites involved in joining some gangs, where new recruits are required to kill other people in order to receive recognition from the gang (e.g. P7: Interview 1 - 20:4 (286:288))) Notably, this quote also serves to reinforce the continuous sense of threat mentioned earlier.

P7: Interview 1 - 20:4 (286:288)

> **"**Well you would find that people were cutting others with razors and some stabbing, others were hitting each other with their lockers and such events made one to realise that yes its true I am in prison for sure. There were also gangs as I've said before where you find that a person is required to go and stab any one as a ritual for his gang. So such things would make you feel like you will be a victim"

As such, violence appears deeply integrated into this subculture, and appears to be their primary source of sustaining their power and sense of recognition – that is, violence is the primary currency in this moral order. In addition, it also seems that these individuals expect to be treated as subjects beyond the law (including the various kinds of formal and informal social control which exist in their communities) and will very willingly utilize violence in order to protect their own sovereignty and property (P4: interview 2 - 11:3 (136:136)). This is consistent with both the earlier claims that violence is a by-product of divestment from normative forms of social control as well as, recent research which suggests that the narcissistic traits of exploitativeness and entitlement were predictors of aggressive behaviour (Reidy, Zeichner, Foster, & Martinez, 2008). Of particular interest is the fact that an inflated sense of entitlement was found to be significantly associated with violent criminals (Fisher & Hall, 2011). This sense of entitlement appears fuelled by the diminution and dehumanization of non-gangsters, - particularly present in the Numbers gang moral order (Steinberg, 2004) - via processes of moral disengagement and moral exclusion, where non-gangsters are stripped of any right towards moral consideration, ownership, agency, and identity – reducing them to mere objects (Alleyne, Fernandes, & Pritchard, 2014; Haslam, 2006)**.** It is interesting to consider how the monopoly on property ownership via the use of violence is consistent with the claim that prison and criminal gangs overidentify with the late capitalist ideology (Buccellato & Reid, 2014)**.** Springer (2012) argues that such is reflective of the inextricably violent nature of neoliberalism which encourages the kind of entitlement and othering processes evident in these narratives and which ultimately result in the normalization of

violence. The "hardness" and appetitive aggression some criminals may take on, may also be one means of adapting to the precarity and hazardous conditions in which they live - that is, it may be a by-product of the intensely traumatizing nature of their experience of the continuous threat of violence, and their use of violence. One quote to end this segment is reflective of what the psychological costs of coping with such violence can result in – it is particularly reflective of the difficulties of making meaning of it:

P5: 2nd and 3rd interview - 14:4 (97:113)

> "Now I regret, but at the same time I can say I have cost too much of myself by doing that. Now I have blood on my hands, I have to do some cleansing rituals to wash away all the bad luck I have invited, so I regret a lot…Yes because I was too involved and I was not thinking about the consequences of my actions. So now I advice young people and I encourage young people to stop crime…No I only did the rituals to help me sleep at night because I couldn't sleep I had nightmares. I must still do the detailed one where I should ask for forgiveness."

4.1.1.4 - Wealth Accumulation, Conspicuous Consumption, and Predatory Capitalism

This shift in individuals and gangs towards violence is partially a function of the divestment in traditional and local sociomoral systems and normative institutions of social control, due to an overidentification with late capitalism, and as such, the pursuit of wealth accumulation and conspicuous consumption manifests as a motive frequently, and in variegated ways, in order to garner status in the perpetrators' accounts of violence (e.g. - P8: Interview 2 - 23:8 (546:568) & P9: Interview 2 - 25:1 (11:11)). Indeed, some perpetrators report considering criminal and violent means of accumulating wealth as far more beneficial than conforming and relying on the local norms and mechanisms of social support and social control. This arguably is also consistent with the claims that neoliberal values tend to supersede local moral orders for the primacy of capital accumulation (Geoghegan & Powell, 2009; Khan, 2015; Kramer, 2000; Lemke, 2002; Scharff, 2015; Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016) and result in the use of violence and illicit means as an alternative strategy to accumulate said capital (Bruce, 2014; Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Kramer, 2000; R. Wilkinson, 2004)**.** The quote below serves as a good example of this issue, as the perpetrator directly concedes, his conflicts with his mother, absence from school, and his involvement in crime, were by-product of his desire for access to, and possession of, conspicuous commodities.

P9: Interview 2 - 25:1 (11:11)

> **"**I used to like clothes, so I can say the reason why I started to do crime is because I like clothes and fashion. So although my mother bought me clothes I would say I wanted more. So when I started smoking dagga, I started skipping school and just concentrating on clothes and money. So that caused me and my mother to fight a lot. So every time we had a fight she would take away all the fancy clothes she bought me and lock them away and claim that it's her money and her clothes. So I decided that it is better that I buy my own clothes, so I did crime to get money for that."

In the narratives, numerous perpetrators partook in violent crime as a means to garner their "fashion style", and to become "grand", all of which is affiliated with the possession of conspicuous commodities and capital (e.g. "nice cars", "nice shoes and t-shirts", "other nice things", "two boxes of full of money") (e.g. P3: interview 1 - 7:5 (241:279); P14 : Interview 1 - 42:1 (210:212); P16: Interview 1 - 47:1 (111:141)) – and this would afford them recognition from their peers (e.g. P3: interview 1 - 7:5 (241:279); P8: Interview 2 - 23:8 (546:568) & P9: Interview 2 - 25:1 (11:11)), as well as, increase their chances of sexual/mate selection – as such, increasing their status (e.g. P5: 2nd and 3rd interview combined - 14:1 (33:39)) & P7: Interview 2 - 23:10 (658:664)). Please see the quotes below for some examples:

P8: Interview 2 - 23:8 (546:568)

> "**Interviewer: But at that time what made you to think that crime pays?**
>
> **Prisoner:** Well it depends on what background you come from. Like you see in my background my mother was maintaining and providing for us, but I joined crime to impress the guys and my girlfriends. I was also after fashion style."

P7: Interview 2 - 23:10 (658:664)

> "Yes I thought so because you know when money is available, it is very nice but when it is not there is not so nice because even the lady I was with. When I had the money she would be very excited you see."

This point can be further reinforced by some of the perpetrators identifications with the wealth of a famous celebrity and local figures with nice cars and houses, whom on the basis of their conspicuous consumption appear to have "everything". Interestingly in the narratives, it is particularly because these conspicuous commodities are vastly incongruent and limited amongst the relative deprivation of their familial and community context, that they both

served as both a motivating and situational factor which sometimes provoked violent conflicts given what these commodities appear to signal about their status in the community, and as such, aggravated some of the perpetrators involvement in violent enactments. (e.g. P16: Interview 1 - 47:1 (111:141) & P3: interview 1 - 7:5 (241:279)).

P16: Interview 1 - 47:1 (111:141)

> "I realized that I cannot afford these things, even though I used to get pocket money from my father but it would happen that for 2 days I would not get any, I would even have to walk from school to my house to eat lunch and then go back to school again. Sometimes he would tell me that, 'man today we need to pay this and that with money' and I would understand and go to school. Okay, so things like that, I would realise that my friends had money, I would keep asking myself if they get it from their homes, eventually I realised that they don't get it from home…Okay, sometimes I would pay no attention to many things but as time went by I saw that things are changing at school, the shoes and they wore their uniforms with other nice things, had nice shoes and t-shirts and I also wanted to have what they had and next thing I saw I was following them asking them where do they get this."

This suggests, consistent with the claims of the literature review, that, for many perpetrators conspicuous consumption serves as a key determinant, or piece of information in determining the evaluation of their economic status which serves as a proxy of their competence and the capability of them as relationship partners, economic agents, and arguably by implication, as individuals in general (Bruce, 2007; Hicks & Hicks, 2014; Jaikumar & Sarin, 2015; Sundie *et al*., 2011; R. Wilkinson, 2004). This evidence also partially supports the claim the conspicuous consumption may serve as a potent predictor of violence, as it serves a concrete source of information for actors in a given situation (Hicks & Hicks, 2014)(e.g. P2: interview 1 - 4:3 (97:104); P2: Interview 3 - 6:4 (129:144); P7: Interview 1 - 20:2 (185:225); P10: Interview 1 - 27:4 (415:423)). These points are reflected in the following quotes:

P5: 2nd and 3rd interview combined - 14:1 (33:39)

> "**Interviewer: How would you feel if you didn't get what your friends had?**
>
> Eish you see we were a group of best friends and we couldn't allow that to happen because even the girls will look at you and compare and if you didn't wear what was in it indicated that you are poor and that you won't be able to provide for her if you fail to provide for yourself."

P19: Interview 2 - 56:8 (334:345)

> "**If I was a guy and didn't have a story or a gun or a knife or anything, what would happen to me? Would I get beaten up?**
>
> You'd be beaten up and get robbed if you had nice clothes or nice takkies."

With perpetrators reporting how many violent criminals are willing to murder and sacrifice legal and moral prohibitions, and divest from, and undercut, the value of informal and formal social institutions (e.g. education, religion and familial structure) in order to protect their interest in accumulating wealth (e.g. P4: Interview 2 - 11:3 (106:133)); P11 (P11: Interview 3 - 35:4 (106:107); (P10: Interview 2 - 28:5 (252:262)). Interestingly reflecting this sentiment, in the quote below, the perpetrator devalues school, while instead, appraising wealth accumulation as the most valuable pursuit; identifying with being an independent businessman, or entrepreneur, as a more valuable alternative to pursue.

P10: Interview 2 - 28:5 (252:262)

> "It wasted a lot of time, well school was not giving me anything…Because you can do things yourself and maybe do business**...**That was a decision I took to leave school. I wanted to make money…I have been observing for a long time that money is more important. So maybe to do a business and make money was much better."

Particularly interesting is the fact that many of the perpetrators recounted their own re-distribution of the commodities they had stolen in their crimes to make capital, effectively, in a weak sense, becoming illicit entrepreneurs for their communities. Which would also incentivize their pursuit of conspicuous or "eye-catching" goods which would appeal to other community members who have capital to purchase these goods (e.g. P15: Interview 2 - 46:2 (277:323) – see below).

P15: Interview 2 - 46:2 (277:323)

> "We brought the car to the township and sold it to them…We did house breaking…In the mornings, but if we got nothing from that house we would go again at night, around 6 or 7pm, and sell the items to the township community…Anything that is eye catching we grab it, such as, hi fi's, TV etc."

Indeed, some perpetrators even note receiving orders from "crooked citizens" to steal targeted brands of cars as a kind of illicit service (e.g. P3: interview 1 - 7:3 (301:311)). One

perpetrator's report is particularly interesting due to its comparison to the gangs' prison economy to "life outside prison", and his observation of the presence of principles reflective of the capitalist market order, particularly competition over private property and wealth accumulation:

P6: Interview 3 - 17:4 (373:416)

> "**Interviewer: Like money get circulated in cells from one prisoner to another**.
>
> Yes it does move to from one person to the other. You can say is like life outside prison, I mean here is competition to accumulate and have things; I know they don't allow private clothes but things like tekkies… I mean it depend on what kind of shoes or tekkies you are wearing…yes things like that there is a lot of casual clothing in here like t-shirts."

This entrepreneurial bent arguably comes to its perhaps most extreme manifestation in these narratives in an example concerned with violent gangsters in prison, where the participant reports on the fact that murder allegedly has a (remarkably low) price put on it.

P3: Interview 3 - 9:4 (259:261)

> "So I said how can I survive in prison and that is by staying out of trouble and that is what I have been doing, so for me gangsterism is a waste of time. They can come to you and say that here is a knife, go and stab a specific person for a fee of R500 or R1000. "

The last three points arguably are consistent with the claims that neoliberalisation results in the shift of individual subjects towards conceptualizing themselves as entrepreneurs, to the extent that their participation in violent crime served an alternative way of them rendering services and as a means of capital accumulation. This is also reflective of the fact that some moral economies, including neoliberalism, consider that human life, particular those considered "other", are no more valuable than objects, and as such expendable in the face of opportunities for resource accumulation and increasing status (Bowman *et al*., 2015; Scharff, 2015; Springer, 2012a).

4.1.2 - Instrumental factors in the perpetration of violent crime

4.1.2.1 - The Power and Presence of Guns

P5: Interview 1 - 13:2 (25:27)

> "So I started looking for the gun in my mother's wardrobe and I found it in one of her bags. And it was full of bullets. Even though I had never used a gun before I knew that when I have it everything will be ok…So I called my aunt's young child; Thabang and I showed him the gun and he got very excited and he started persuading me to use the gun to rob and we will return it safely where we found it. So he kept insisting and convincing me of what great things we could achieve if we can borrow ourselves this gun for few hours."

In a number of the narratives, the gun, and its presence seems to play a significant role in the decision-making of some of the perpetrator's and their peers involvement in crime and violence, and this sometimes served to escalate conflicts which may not have otherwise become lethal in nature. This suggests that guns have in part, an instrumental character to many of the perpetrators, particularly in terms of their involvement in violent crime. The gun appears to partially serve, and be experienced as, a symbol of power, endowing the user of it, with a perceived sense of security, control, and confidence; sometimes serving experientially to reassure the user that things will work out, but also enabling them with the courage to take further risks. For example, two instances in above quote reveal this - the participant recalls "even though I had never used a gun before I knew that when I have it everything will be ok" and "he kept insisting and convincing me of what great things we could achieve if we can borrow ourselves this gun for few hours". This arguably reveals the perceived power of this object to result in an experience of feeling secure, and signalling the possibility of achieving status, or beneficial outcomes, as opposed to fear, or the negative consequences possessing a gun could result in. Indeed, to some of the perpetrators, it appeared primarily to represent the potential to accumulate wealth. This influence of a gun as a psychosocial object, which is experienced as endowing power, is palpable in many of the perpetrators accounts from a young age. Arguably, it is clear that the gun, as a weapon, has a particular appeal which may confer status (revealed by instances of children using them to "show off") or come to represent a means of pursuing success in the form appropriating desirable goods by using the gun to coerce and force others to waiver their possessions. Consider the following examples:

P5: Interview 1 - 13:3 (31:37)

"So what gave us courage was that we had a gun handy and his gun was in his bag. So we approached them and the gun was in my possession. So I pointed the gun at him and Jeffrey pulled his bag and threw it on the ground so we took the ring and everything that was in the bag."

P2: Interview 2 - 5:3 (71:81)

"So we used to fight physically and I pushed him off a railing and he got bruises. I was called into the office. That was one of the reasons I was expelled. I went to school for a week and my classmates knew I had a gun, so they were intimidated by me and they wouldn't tell on me."

P19: Interview 2 - 56:7 (322:329)

"But the room I was put into, I didn't know anyone, well, I could say there was no one I knew but in juvenile it's all about your story outside…If you are known outside, that you carry a gun, there are people who know you. When you get in you are safe. No one will rob you inside here."

In these narratives, one can observe not only the way in which that possession of a gun may give an individual confidence to rob ("what gave us courage was that we had a gun handy" - (e.g. P5: Interview 1 - 13:3 (31:37)), but, also, how being known or observed to have possessed a gun also confers status and power in the community that affords the perpetrators the complicity and silence of their peers (P2: interview 2 - 5:3 (71:81)), or affords the privilege of safety in prison, where gun possession appears to garner respect from other prisoners and gang members (e.g. P19: Interview 2 - 56:7 (322:329)). This is reflected in research on gun ownership that suggests it is a form of impression management and socialization in gangs (Stretesky & Pogrebin, 2007) - a cultural symbol, as it were. As such, the presence of a gun in a situation appears to have a major influence on how an individual will act, and seems to incentivize and represent a certain degree of perceived criminal intent.

P12: interview 2 - 36:3(41:67)

"**Interviewer: Why crime has to be so violent?**

It's because people don't know crime, they just get too excited by having a gun. They do not have experience and they do not understand the nature of crime properly."

P12 (interview 2 - 36:3(41:67)) speculates that the combination of the experience of the excitement of having a gun, and naivety in committing crimes, often is what results in violence in crime. Indeed, in one extract P12 (interview 2- 36:4 (93:93)), seems to suggest that merely polishing his gun may begin to inspire him towards considering receding back into the criminal lifestyle, furthering the earlier point about the gun as a psychosocial object and its perceived relationship to criminal intent.

P12: interview 2- 36:4 (93:93)

> "…Because when you don't do anything, I might just start thinking about where my gun is and then go and fetch it start polishing it and then my mind gets tempted and then I go back to my olden days and once you get back you do crime again it will be impossible to stop, so when I go out I must be careful about bad friends"

Interestingly this object, which is seemingly imbued with such power and status (Bruce, 2007; Stretesky, Pogrebin, Unnithan, & Venor, 2007), also becomes a valuable commodity which becomes a source of conflict in some of the perpetrators narratives. This was particularly evident in P5s narrative, whom details numerous incidents of behaving violently over guns, and in one example P5 (2nd and 3rd interview - 14:3 (66:90)) explicitly states he shot his friend for stealing his gun, and he did it, because he had a gun on him at the time. Lastly, guns are often present as a means of protection against a possible threat on the perpetrators mortality, and as such, in situations when such a threat is perceptible, a gun seems to escalate the defensive reaction of participants and evoke existential anxiety in some participants, whom perceive the gun as representing the threat of their possible death, which in turn provokes a violent reaction (e.g. P17: Interview 2 - 52:2 (226:284) & P3: interview 2 - 8:2 (73:135)).

P17: Interview 2 - 52:2 (226:284)

> "**When you shot him, how did you feel?**
>
> I was in shock because he nearly killed me. If I didn't have that firearm, then I wouldn't be alive right now."

P3: interview 2 - 8:2 (73:135)

> "Eish most of these thoughts come when we chat about our past that I am reminded a lot about my crime. So when I don't talk about it, it gets better, because sometimes I would worry about what could have happened. For example: what if we were fighting for a gun and then the bullet went of and killed me…you see?"

The presence of a gun, arguably does serve as a symbol of power and confers status to many of the perpetrators. The gun seems to be an incentive to act illicitly as it is perceived as providing a sense of safety and authority to the holder of it, and this appears observable in the behavior of others towards said individual. As such, the gun also becomes a conspicuous good of sorts, which in some cases became a source of conflict because of what was implied by its presence. That is first, as a good or weapon that enables or allows the capacity or possibility – or serves as a condition of possibility which allows an individual - to force others to submit themselves and their property with the threat of its use, and second, by the its

lethal capacity to seriously injure or kill an individual. As it so easily enables a person to engage in the latter it is a salient situational factor in violent crime.

4.1.2.2 - Substance Use and violent crime

It was found that alcohol and other drugs may be situational factors which result in crime and violent enactments, with the perpetrators often utilizing substances to commit violent crime, whether by its distribution, or by the effect of the substance on the perpetrators. In some of the narratives, some of the perpetrators explicitly state that alcohol and drug use is part and parcel of the preparation process, as it were, or a "routine" part of their criminal pursuits (e.g. P5 Interview 1 - 13:6 (67:72); P8 Interview 2 - 23:3 (174:192) & P15 Interview 2 - 46:1 (238:266)).

P5: Interview 1 - 13:6 (67:72)

> "So we spent a lot of time there, we were not attending school. We gambled and drank alcohol then we planned to go rob somewhere. "

P8: Interview 2 - 23:3 (174:192)

> "I met friends at taverns or clubs. We would drink and then go and do crime. They told me that the routine is that we first go out and drink alcohol then go to steal cars or rob somewhere."

P15: Interview 2 - 46:1 (238:266)

> "**When you do car hijacking and house breaking, at the time you do these things, are you normal or you are on drugs?**
>
> Obviously, I was on drugs…Yes, I mixed alcohol with dagga…I went to do it after I have smoked my dagga."

This intersection with drugs and alcohol was a common thread amongst many of the participants' narratives of violent crime, with numerous and recurrent references to their use and their accomplices' use of alcohol and/or drugs, their own and others' intoxication by these substances, to their presence in taverns and "shebeens", and their involvement in crime partially being a function of their pursuit of substance based conspicuous leisure. Indeed, P2 , P4 (Interview 2 - 11:2 (83:105)), and P5 (Interview 1 - 13:3 (31:37)) link their own and others' substance use, to getting a sense of courage or strength, or feeling it pushed them to "get more" which helped motivate their involvement in violent crime.

P2: interview 1 - 4:5 (112:113)

"Tik damaged me. It kept me up all night like with Gastro. I don't sleep. I have a gun on me, I am going to rob, it pushed me, so I satisfied (certified) it and it pushed me to get more. It was challenges like those that pushed me into crime."

P5: Interview 1 - 13:3 (31:37)

"…So I progressed from smoking dagga to smoking pills and when I have smoked the pills eish I had so much courage to do anything."

Indeed, this can be further established by the accounts of P1 (Interview 2.doc - 2:5 (169:229)), P6 (Interview 1 - 15:1 (324:394)), & P18 (Interview 1 - 54:1 (149:154)) who report their own and others violent behaviour in their families and community being connected to the use of, and involvement with, alcohol and drugs.

P1: Interview 2.doc - 2:5 (169:229)

"Yes, I have shot at people especially during gang fights…Yes I was heavily on drugs. I was on Rocks, which was my drug of choice. I used Mandrax but Rocks was my drug…Yes because I worked with it. All the little bits and crumbs that were left over were mine."

P6: Interview 1 - 15:1 (324:394)

"**What kind of assaults were they?**

Harming others

Like what?

Stabbing others with bottles or any other harmful objects

Was it people that you knew or strangers?

People I knew

Why were you fighting and for what?

It was influenced by alcohol mostly…"

P18: Interview 1 - 54:1 (149:154)

"When they came in December, there would be a lot of drinking and so on and there would be fights…It started as verbal punches then they got physical… I remember my step father fighting with my uncle."

This is likely partially as a function of the illicit alcohol and drug trade which permeates in the background of many of these participants' experiences, with these commodities also serving as sources of conflict (e.g. between gangs), separate from their intoxicating effects on the participants (e.g. P4 Interview 2 - 11:3 (106:133) & P1 Interview 2.doc - 2:5 (169:229)). Interestingly, few perpetrators explicitly (e.g. P3 interview 2 - 8:6 (213:243)) abstained from substances during robberies in order to avoid detrimental decisions based on its negative influence on decision making during crime or, in the words of the participant they may "make

you weak". As such, alcohol and other substances also seem to play a significant situational role in violent crime both directly (via its influence on the mental and physical state of individuals) and indirectly (via it being a common good used and exchanged in illicit trade), and this is supported by the literature which suggests substance use is commonly associated with violence, although it suggests the relationship is reciprocal, suggesting that aggressive, violent, and antisocial individuals too, are more likely to engage in substance use (DeLisi, Vaughn, Salas-Wright, & Jennings, 2015; White, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Farrington, 1999) and that some of this is reflected in the common use of violence in underground drug economies (Barolsky *et al*., 2008; Karandinos *et al*., 2014).

4.1.2.3 - Significant Others, and the presence of social control figures

In the narratives, significant others, some of which may be considered social control or support figures (e.g. parents, teachers, social workers, police officers, wardens) play somewhat of an influential role in the perpetration of violent crime. Their presence, in part, acted partially as a deterrent. Although the perpetrators often ignored or disrespected them in specific instances, these figures were generally respected in their community and this was reflected in the perpetrators accounts (albeit mostly in retrospect). In a number of instances significant figures in the lives of the perpetrators attempt to dissuade the perpetrators, although, unfortunately, their attempts are not successful in deterring these perpetrators enough in the long run (e.g. P11 Interview 1.doc - 33:3 (145:156) & P8 Interview 2 - 23:2 (154:168) – see below).

P11: Interview 1 - 33:3 (145:156)

> "I met my uncle outside and explained what was happening, but while he was still listening I could not control my anger. I looked for a stone to throw at the guy I was having a fight with. I asked my uncle to step aside, but he refused and I threw the stone to him but I missed. It broke the window. I left. I went home to fetch a gun. I had one, but it was not in a good condition, it was mine, I picked it up from the township. ..I did not take the gun but when I got home, my mother was still at her sister's place, on her way back, she met my uncle and he told him what was happening. My mother asked how much the window would cost to replace, she was told that it cost R100, but she should not worry about it. When she got home she asked her sister to call me and I went to her, I told her my side of the story and she advised me not to go there again."

P8: Interview 2 - 23:2 (154:168)

> "Yes I was in a Juvenile centre and tried to escape, but we got caught. The social worker told us that we must not steal or do crime. From there I focussed until I completed school. I stayed in three (3) boarding schools."

These significant others appear to really try go out of their way to dissuade the perpetrators from persisting with crime. From blocking the way, calling family members to intervene, threats to burn their coevals, threats to end their relationship to simply telling them to not go on given the consequences. Yet in the perpetrator's accounts, they continued with their crime and violence even if they were deterred in that particular situation. As such, these figures appear to be situationally relevant in deterring crime, but their influence is limited on the perpetrators who have other vested interests, for example, P2 went on to rob the vehicle he saw - despite the protests of his girlfriend and mother in the moment.

P2: interview 2 - 5:6 (129:154)

> "My friends came and I asked told my mother that so and so is here to take me out. She shouted at them and told them she did not want to see them again. So she boiled hot water (*to pour the unwelcomed friends*). Then came this car filled with people…it had washing machines, microwaves and TV to deliver…So, I saw this car and I ran in the house and I found the girl I was dating, so I told her what I saw and she told me if I don't control myself, I am going to lose her."

In some of the narratives, there was a contrast that emerged between individuals whom get involved in crime and violence, and those who don't, despite the presence of negligent parental figures or parental figures which actively take drugs and encourage crime (e.g. P4: Interview 2.doc - 11:6 (136:136)).

P4: Interview 2.doc - 11:6 (136:136)

> "Their parents are there. Many of their parents drink and neglect them. Many of them do Tik. Few of them work. The biggest problem is the people that do drugs in the community. If there can just be a stop put to this use of drugs. Young guys that join gangs at 13 or 15 don't know what they are doing. In time they have killed people and then they land up in jail."

P8 (Interview 2 - 23:4 (194:224)), for example, feels his father's lack of involvement in his life is a key factor in his continued involvement in crime, even evoking the idea that if his father were there to discipline him, he would likely have acted differently.

P8: Interview 2 - 23:4 (194:224)

> "**Interviewer: So you feel that your father if he was around you wouldn't have chosen the path you have chosen?**
>
> **Prisoner:** Yes, I wouldn't be here, I am sure I would not be in prison, I would be working somewhere.
>
> **Interviewer: So where do you think things went wrong? What led you to this path?**
>
> **Prisoner:** I didn't know my father, because if he was around he would have coached me and if I do wrong he would ask me what is happening, so he would discipline me."

P12: interview 2 - 36:5 (113:131)

> "My family never encouraged me about crime; my mother would show me that she didn't want anything to do with crime. She hated it, unlike my co-accuser's mother, that lady encouraged her son to do crime. She will hide our guns when police come to look for them. I don't know what type of a mother she was. She once gave her last born a gun to go her own grandmother because she wanted to occupy the grandmother's house…There are many families that I know where there are no father figures but the boys there are living decent lives and they do not have any trouble with their lives."

P12 (interview 2 - 36:5 (113:131)) and P7 (Interview 2 - 21:4 (180:221)), on the other hand, notes on how they still persisted in crime despite the presence of familial figures actively dissuading them. Indeed, P12 contrasts this by noting on the fact that many individuals without father figures appear to live decent lives too. This contrast is perhaps, a function of the variability in what the participants' value, and in terms of this segment, it reveals that many of perpetrators valued the recognition and perspectives of their peers more. Indeed, the perpetrators (e.g. – P9 (Interview 2_summarised - 25:5 (157:196)) & P5 (2nd and 3rd interview.doc - 14:3 (66:90)) often appear to report that they felt that the pressure they perceived from their peers. It is quite evident that through the perpetrators perceived desire to maintain the respect of their peers, thereby wanting to maintain the appearance of being - brave, strong, in control, sure of themselves, that is, in a position of power - like (what they associated with being) a man, they were motivated in some situations to get involved in crime and sometimes act violently. The quote below is an example of this.

P16: Interview 1 - 47:4 (291:309)

> "There were 3 of us now and we were marked here in the location, like robbing stores, spaza shops but I didn't really like it but I guess it was just to please my friends. I didn't want them to think I was a coward...Yes that also pushed me because I wanted to show them that I could also do what they could do and more..."

Indeed, the perpetrators behaved violently and got further involved in crime in order to please their friends, and thus maintain their sense of status amongst their peers. This drive to maintain their status appears to overstep alternative considerations, suggesting that peer influence and peer perception, even if imagined, is significantly influential in the perpetrators decision to utilize violence. Moreover, it also appears that the perpetrators appeared to divest from the influence of these social control figures in the interest of pursuing their desire to accumulate wealth and conspicuous consumption – a interested shared by many of their peers in these accounts (e.g. P7: Interview 1 - 20:1 (149:175)).

This is significant for it gives insight into the ways in which the perpetrators values and attachments came to influence their decision-making and how they made meaning of their

involvement in violence. Beyond referring to the literature which suggests the presence of social control and social support figures serve as preventative factors (at least in the short term), evidence also suggests that the presence of attachment figures, and thus significant others in individuals' lives are capable of either fostering or impeding, an individual's capacity to mentalize. In addition to this, the capacity to mentalize is influenced depending on the social mentality of the interpersonal context (e.g. caregiving & co-operative), which would likely be a competitive social mentality in the case of many of the perpetrators, as a function of their identification with neoliberalism (Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Liotti & Gilbert, 2011; Twemlow, Fonagy, & Sacco, 2005). This is useful as an explanatory point, as it's likely that their mentalization may be impaired when around their accomplices in crime, although it may still function with their families and communities, wherein which, the social mentality is probably more co-operative, or based on caregiving. That is to say some of their violence may have been facilitated indirectly by the social mentality of their peers, which more often than not, was based on a competitive conception of the world. Their social mentality appeared based on coercive power dynamics which was earlier argued to be associated with neoliberalism, and as such, this likely played a role in the mentalization capacity of the perpetrators involved in violent crimes (Liotti & Gilbert, 2011; Twemlow *et al*., 2005).

4.1.2.4 - Perceived threat to self

In these accounts, as well as is reflected in much of the literature on violence, a perceived slight or threat to the reputation of perpetrator sometimes appeared to trigger a violent reaction from some of the perpetrators in a given situation (Gadd & Corr, 2015; Gilligan, 2003; Rocque *et al*., 2015; D. L. Wilkinson & Carr, 2008)**.** Some examples will be discussed to demonstrate this point.

P6: Interview 2.doc - 16:2 (92:106)

> "It was at a tavern, we were drinking. So I gave this guy money to go drinks, but he did not come back to drink with me or give me my change, I got angry and I felt insulted. So we fought over that…He hit me, so I hit him back with a bottle over his head. So he fell and I left him there …bleeding."

In the quote above it can be observed that P6 also reacts aggressively to a perceived insult, although, it seems more intuitively clear that he is slightly more warranted to react aggressively on the basis of clearly being short changed and treated rudely, with the anger

resulting from a more seemingly justified experience of being cheated. In other instances, P8 (Interview 2 - 23:5 (318:340)) and P9 (Interview 2 - 25:5 (157:196) – see below), for example, both react to perceived challenges on their status aggressively and violently, with the former retaliating to direct teasing with pure violence, and the latter, also reacting aggressively. However, P9's reaction is also partially a function of his reputation being slighted in front of his peers, that is more publicly, and as such this appeared to create more pressure of risking humiliation if he did not meet the challenge in the situation. While P8 appears to see it as a more personal event, P9's reaction appears partially mediated by how he may be perceived and how it may affect his social standing. This all arguably suggests that perceived threats to the reputation of some perpetrators may be a situational trigger for a violent enactment.

P8: Interview 2 - 23:5 (318:340)

> "No, I am the one who stabbed a person… No, some people like to tease you and they want to see what you will do."

P9: Interview 2 - 25:5 (157:196)

> "So I asked him how do I look at him and he said you look at me like shit, and I was armed at that time and he knew me, but he I didn't know him... So those people wanted us to fight but some said we should fight outside if we wanted to fight… They said this guy is insulting you…I got angry and I shot him."

In some instances, the perception of a threat to the mortality of a perpetrator may trigger a violent reaction. For example, P3's expectation of the threat of a victim retaliating and defending themselves during a robbery is seen as a clear possible threat to his mortality, insofar as he speculates on the possibility of the victims having a gun to shoot him.

P3: interview 2 - 8:3 (145:183)

> "During the hijack, maybe the person wants to fight back…Sometimes when a person retaliates you are not sure if the person has a gun or what so you shoot him for your own safety."

In another case, P17 (interview 1 - 51:1 (50:50)), the perpetrator is directly faced with a tangible threat to his life when his adversary tries to stab him, and thus he reacts violently.

P17: Interview 1 - 51:1 (50:50)

> "When I was on my way out one of them tried to stab me. He was about 2m away from me. I pulled out my gun and shot him in the head. It happened so fast and that is where my case started."

Finally, in the case of P9 (Interview 1.doc - 24:1 (79:223)), it is clear that although he does not perceive a threat in terms of dying, he desperately wishes to evade the possibility of being arrested and being imprisoned. This arguably does pose a significant threat to his life in that it

will result in a substantial loss of agency and degradation of his quality of life – his life as a free individual will be lost – and for this, he was willing to resort to violence.

4.1.3 - Morality, Agency, and Violence

4.1.3.1 - Violence as a sociomoral mediator

The normalization of violence is not merely limited to the passive acceptance of communities of its continued presence and threat, but also appears to take an active role in the perpetrators perceptions of how to mediate interpersonal interactions and sociomoral conflicts (Barolsky *et al*., 2008; Collins, 2014; Hinsberger *et al*., 2016; Parkes, 2007). Violence is not only utilized as a normative disciplinary mechanism for "naughty" children (P1: Interview 1 - 1:5 (215:222) – seen below), but also is extended to adults, where this form of punishment is utilized in by community members, overstepping legal processes, to pursue their own justice (e.g. P19: Interview 1 - 55:4 (247:248) – seen below).

P1: Interview 1 - 1:5 (215:222)

"**How did you feel when you were hit with the belt?**

As madam knows, every naughty child must get a beating. At the school, I got hit a lot more, sometimes with a cane "rottang", then they would pull my pants tight over my bum and hit me with the cane "rottang". The teachers' would always hit me like that. In other words, I would get a worse hiding at school than what I would have gotten at home."

P19: Interview 1 - 55:4 (247:248)

"And if they catch a thief, they beat him up. It is unusual for them to call the police in the township. They take the law into their own hands. They beat you up."

In the narratives, in a variety of instances the perpetrators utilized violence to mediate interpersonal conflicts and disagreements as opposed to any attempt of extended communication and engagement – they quickly escalated and utilized physical violence as the primary means to - "show them", that is - demonstrate their authority or displeasure (P2 (interview 1 - 4:3 (97:104)); P6 (Interview 2 - 16:2 (92:106))). In other examples participants follow a more brutal logic. Consider this:

P7: Interview 2 - 21:4 (180:221)

"Yes, there were those who could cooperate by just seeing a gun, but other would first need to see/ feel a gunshot wound first before they cooperated."

P7 is more brutal suggesting that if the victim of a robbery did not take the presence of a gun as a cue that they should become submissive and co-operative with him in the interaction, the other would need to experience a gunshot. This is also seen P11's (interview 3 – 35:1 (44:51)) where it is explicit that a beating serves as a moral lesson and warning for prisoners which should be proliferated to others.

P11: Interview 3 - 35:1 (44:51)

> "He gets kicked with the sole of the shoe, so that he won't come back to prison, so that he can know that prison is a bad place and warn others outside."

This is logic is similarly reflected by P1 (Interview 3 - 3:3 (168:193) – seen below) where prisoners are reported to resort to the use of violence, emphasizing the desire that a guard should bleed, or suffer, for treatment perceived as incorrect or unfair. In this way violence is utilized symbolically as a symbol of disapproval, but also, possibly utilized to reconstitute the power relations between the robber and victim, or the prisoner and guard, via a physically violent display or injury, where the perpetrator's other in the interaction is made to understand this on a perhaps more fundamental and embodied level - that they feel a "gunshot wound" or see that he "bleeds".

P1: Interview 3 - 3:3 (168:193)

> "They are a gang in prison. They make sure that we are treated right. And if we are not treated correctly then they will take a knife and stab a guard so that he bleeds. And we can see that his bleeding. The guards need to know that we not happy with the way they treat us. They also smuggle drugs."

In many of these accounts, it appears that it is important that people "see" the consequences of their apparent imprudence, suggesting that, in at least these violent enactments, the meaning conveyed should extend beyond the interpersonal interaction into the social space. This is also interesting insofar as this type of reasoning appears to be reflective of the pre-mentalistic functioning typified by teleological thinking (Möller *et al*., 2014). That is to say, the logic of the interpersonal communication is based on the condition that behaviours and actions, such as the visceral experience of seeing blood and feeling pain, are the primary means of communicating and serve to convey the intention and meaning of the perpetrators in these instances.

4.1.3.2 - *Violence as form of agency*

Crime and the use of violence were portrayed in some of the narratives as a means of defending or expanding the perpetrators agency. This is consistent with Lindegaard and Jacques (2014) argument that in many cases violent crime cannot be understood without considering the perpetrators own agency in their violent enactments. Their violent crime serves as a strategic (long term) and/or tactical (short term) intentional action which is meant to allow the perpetrator to consciously increase and redefine their social status and self-esteem despite the harsh material conditions and structural inequalities constraining them (Lindegaard & Jacques, 2014). This is reflected potently in the following quote by P7:

P7: Interview 1 - 20:1 (149:175)

> "Well I was involved in crime, but more so my whole life had changed. I had more freedom of movement, freedom of expression, I could express myself better, the way I felt, and my clothes had changed tremendously. My attitude had also changed in a big way. My behaviour towards people had changed. If we were going out to rob or steal somewhere with my friends we would make sure that what ever we wanted to take we get it no matter what. We were always looking out on possibilities to steal and get money. So my life was totally different from the one I used to live while I was staying with my father and my stepmother…Well that time I was under guidance of my stepmother I couldn't express myself or talk freely about what I didn't like or what I wanted. But when I was with my friends I could clearly talk about my wishes and no one was telling me what was wrong and what was right you see…And that is what made a difference."

This appears to capture the way in which involvement in crime and the use of violence is experienced as broadening many of the perpetrators horizons in comparison to the constraints of their familial and social circumstances, increasing, in the case of this perpetrator, his sense, or capacity to express himself (particularly via his apparel), and dictate his own moral constraints. In the narratives, it was evident that some of the perpetrators turn to crime and violence was a strategic decision which served to transform their lives and increase their status, which was most often represented by financial independence, access to conspicuous "fancy" goods (P9 (Interview 2 - 25:1 (11:11)) for example) and the capacity to transcend familial authority. In the prison context, P14 (Interview 3 - 44:1 (70:92)) explicitly reports having felt compelled to become violent in order to safeguard a sense of agency in a hazardous prison environment. Indeed, recent research suggests that violence in South African prisons is often utilized by prisoners as a means of avoiding being subjugated to physical and sexual abuse, as well as, extreme constraints on their agency (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014; Steinberg, 2004). These examples suggest that some perpetrators considered their use of violence and involvement in crime were utilized in order to safeguard - their own

independence and freedom - or extend it beyond the constraints of their immediate social context. This is also arguably partially reflected in many of the perpetrators aforementioned reports concerning their involvement in violent crime as a means to accumulate wealth, acquire conspicuous commodities, and garner status amongst their peers. That is to say, their violence effectively served as a means to mediate interpersonal interactions by the exercise of physical force.

4.1.3.3 - The role of group dynamics

P3: interview 1 - 7:4 (349:355)

"**Interviewer: How were you feeling at that time about your life?**

Prisoner: Eish, even though I was doing wrong, I was alone I would regret. But somewhere somehow I enjoyed it. Yes we would chat and laugh about it as if there was no wrong."

In some of the accounts, a tension is expressed between the perpetrators' (e.g. P3 (interview 1 - 7:4 (349:355)) & P12 (interview 2 -36:2-36:3 (33:39-41:67))) personal feelings and attitudes towards the violent crime they were involved in, and, the experience they had when they were with "the boys", the group they affiliated with in violent crime. Indeed, when the group reflected upon their enactments, they were framed in an enjoyable way - which was disengaged from the negative implications, shame, and guilt associated with their enactments in their personal capacity. That is, for the some of the perpetrators, "the boys distract your mind" from "how you get the money" and whether the victim, who is not the focus of their conversation (e.g. "not that we are thinking about them") is "alive or dead". Indeed, they serve to temporarily subdue their regrets, and in place of it, focus on praising each other and reframing the incidents in a fun way. In the quote below, it appears that the group facilitates a kind of inversion of the normative moral order of the perpetrator, serving to render the violence and crime as an enjoyable experience which facilitates the social cohesion of the group. This appears to be facilitated by a kind of conflictual inversion of the perpetrators' earlier socialized moral order, and, possibility is indicative of, or facilitated by mechanisms of moral disengagement (which will be discussed in detail below), that result in the othering, or dehumanizing, of the victims of their crimes. This is accompanied and reinforced by attempts to mitigate and distort the consequences of their crimes (Bandura, 1999; Haslam, 2006; Karandinos *et al*., 2014).

P12: interview 2 - 36:2-36:3 (33:39-41:67)

"You have already said you don't think they about the crime you have committed…but do you think about the victims and the stuff you've stolen?

Yes we do chat about it, not that we are thinking about them. We are just talking, it's just a topic or a joke and we just laugh about it and have fun. We even praise the person who committed the crime. So in the group there is no time for regrets, you will only regret when you are alone…when you are alone, and you think about how you get the money. You start to wonder if that person is still alive or dead…Yes you worry what will happen… when you are with the boys, the boys distract your mind… unless you tell yourself that you don't want to do it anymore but once you get in and you get used to that kind of life it is very difficult to stop…you ask yourself what will the boys think of you when you stop, some boys are different once you join their scheme it gets very difficult for you to leave or quit. But some are like that so you see these schemes differ."

In the event, that the participants' inner world conflicts with their violent actions, and they would like to stop, it appears that, their affiliates, then served as a support system which reframed - by distorting or minimizing - the consequences of their actions, and motivated them to go on (e.g. P7 - Interview 2 - 21:4 (180:221)). On the other hand, for some perpetrators, trying to stop may pose a significant threat to them, where their affiliates may make it difficult to leave. Some perpetrators, reported worries about the risk of losing the respect of their affiliates, or the threat of their affiliates turning against the perpetrators, perceiving the risk of subsequent persecution as being high, which may possibly result in them being attacked by their affliates (P15: Interview 1 - 45:2 (137:144) – see below).

P15: Interview 1 - 45:2 (137:144)

"**Did it ever cross your mind that what you were doing was wrong and not right?**

I sometimes used to think that this thing I am doing is not right and I should stop because it will not give me results. But then I used to think that if I stop I will die for sure. I just have to carry on because I have already started and there is no turning back…Yes, because even your friends would attack you. Everyone will be after you."

In this way, it appears, that the perpetrators perceive their agency was partially mediated through their identification and association with the group they are affiliated with. This perhaps reflects the earlier sense of being trapped in the criminal gangs they were associated with, explored in the previous theme on criminality, but also, arguably provides more information on the ways in which the perpetrators relinquish, or are forced to relinquish their sense of agency and responsibility. It thus provided an interesting contrast, and perhaps contradiction, to consider in relation to the fact that their involvement in violent crime was also experienced as a means to increase their sense of control over their lives.

4.1.3.4 - *Moral disengagement in the perpetration of violent crime*

In various points of the narrative it appeared as if the perpetrators accounts of their violent crime were characterized by attempts to rationalize their behaviour via the use of various mechanisms of moral disengagement in order to avoid triggering negative self-evaluations as a function of their internalized social sanctions (Bandura, 1999; Gini, Pozzoli, & Hymel, 2014; Kokkinos *et al*., 2016; Ribeaud & Eisner, 2010). In the narratives, the perpetrators attempted to frame their conduct, and the conduct of their affiliates in ways which displaced the level of responsibility which could be attributed to them, as well as, undercut the severity of their involvement and perpetration of violence through different techniques of moral disengagement.

P1: Interview 1 - 1:11 (416:429)

> **"Were you violent using guns?**
>
> I have shot on people already and stabbed some. In this place I have stabbed some people with knives.
>
> **Did anyone stab you?**
>
> Yes. I was very naughty. That was sometime in 2002. And the last time I caught on nonsense was when I was in Malmesbury with the gangs there."

As reflected in the above quote, throughout many of the narratives. The participants admit to their personal involvement in enactments of violence, whilst simultaneously utilizing language, in part via *euphemistic labelling*, to frame how his behaviour is to be interpreted. The use of this kind of linguistic technique were reported in various perpetrators accounts including their - involvement in shootings and stabbings as "very naughty", or as having "caught on nonsense" P1 (Interview 1 - 1:11 (416:429); attempted rape as "fooling around" (P8: Interview 2 - 23:1 (134:144)); the aggression and fights in prison as a "disease" afflicting the institution (P1 - Interview 2 - 2:7 (251:268)); or that, the "devil" had influenced a participant to hijack a car (P3 (interview 2 - 5:6 (129:154)).

P8: Interview 2 - 23:1 (134:144)

> "**Interviewer: What do you mean by that?**
>
> **Prisoner:** Em I was fooling around, I tried raping some other girl, but I didn't go through with it. Thereafter I was on the run, but the following day I went to school but the police came and fetched me from school"

P1: Interview 2 - 2:7 (251:268)

> "Yes, but nobody fights for anybody here. We are all together here. There are occasions when things are not okay here. Then they say the prison gets a "disease". But nobody fights for anybody here in this section of prison. We all together here. There are occasions when things are not okay here. Then they say the prison gets a "disease". [slang] It's that thing (mad aggression). That's what it's about."

P2: interview 2 - 5:6 (129:154)

> "In 2005 when I was arrested we were playing street soccer. I had stopped everything. Then the influence of the devil came from nowhere... Then came this car filled with people… it had washing machines, microwaves and TV to deliver…What makes me crazy was that it was not the first truck. I had seen many trucks before, thus am saying the devil had power over me."

These examples seem to frame their violence and aggression in terms which seem to *distort the consequences* of their violent behaviour – seemingly implying in nature they are the puerile, preposterous, or silly behaviour of a child - *or displace the level of agency* involved in some of their violent behaviour, by framing their behaviour as a function being determined by some abstract unknown force, displacing their responsibility to act differently in light of it. P14 (e.g. Interview 3 - 44:2 (106:129)), on the other hand, uses *euphemistic labelling and moral justification* to reframe the violence used by prisoners on other prisoners (e.g. a group of 4 men beating a man with prison soap wrapped in socks) in the system as a sociomoral mechanism, a socially sanctioned action amongst the prisoners, thus representing their beating as a function of instilling "discipline" and order in the prison system via corporal punishment (Bandura, 1999; Gini, Pozzoli, & Hymel, 2014; Kokkinos *et al*., 2016; Ribeaud & Eisner, 2010; see these papers for extended explanations of these processes).

P4: Interview 1 - 10:2 (74:80)

> "One night we were sitting around drinking in a Wendy house and one of the guys said I must keep a gun. He took it out and gave it to me. I slipped it in inside my jacket. I asked him whether I must take it with me or whether he would take it from me when he leaves. He lives in Mannenberg and I stay in Heideveld. It was very close. He told me that he would take it from me when he leaves. He was drunk that night. I saw this and this is why I agreed to take the gun and stuck it in my pants by my stomach... I took the gun out and I threatened to shoot him if he didn't listen. He thought I was joking and came for me again. I shot the gun three times and I didn't want to hit him. I just wanted to scare him. I am my sister's brother, his uncle! With these shots he fell to the ground but he got up again. I didn't hit him; I just wanted to scare him. He got up and walked. The one bullet from the gun that went off went into the Wendy house. The bullet penetrated the wood and made a whole in the wood. The bullet hit a person inside the Wendy house in the side. This person was drinking with my sisters and them in the Wendy house. I didn't know what happened. No one knew what had actually happened. My nephew walked away and so did I. I didn't want that gun on me. What happened would not have happened had my friend not given me the gun. I didn't want anything bad to happen. I used it because I had it on me. It would never have happened if I did not have the gun on me that night."

In another incident, P4 (Interview 1 - 10:2 (74:80)) suggests that the key situational or circumstantial factor which resulted in his unintentional murder was the presence of a gun, as such, in part attributing the *blame to an inanimate object* and partially forgoing his own agency in the matter. Yet this seems to ignore and misrepresent the fact that he decided to resort to the threat of violence to effectively exert control over his belligerent nephew, a decision which likely could have been avoided. It suggests that the fact that a gun was present, compelled him to react in that way. That is to say, instead of reflecting on the possibility of negligence or poor judgement among many other factors in his explanation of the incident, he narrows the primary reason for the event occurring to the presence of the gun, as if he had no power to act differently – thus in part seeming to *displace the responsibility* of the act (Bandura, 1999; Gini, Pozzoli, & Hymel, 2014; Kokkinos *et al*. 2016; Ribeaud & Eisner, 2010). Consider this quote:

P11: Interview 1 - 33:3 (145:156)

> **"**No, I was trying to get my gun…I took out the gun and I asked him if he still remembered me and he started raising his voice, I pointed the gun to him and told him that I was going to kill him. I did not mean it, but what happened was that I looked away and that's when he got a chance to grab the gun, while I was still trying to take it from him the trigger went off."

A similar logic is reflected in the above quote, as P11 appears to displace his responsibility in the enactment by, first, explicitly suggesting his threat to kill his victim was inauthentic, that he "did not mean it", attempting to obscure and minimize his agency in the enactment. In part, this suggestion seemingly appeals to the notion that his intent was merely to scare or intimidate the victim, or use the threat of violence for some other end, without actually committing to the enactment's end result (for another example refer to, P4 (Interview 1 - 10:2 (74:80))). In this tussle, the participant suggests in a passive style - again, distancing himself from his agency in the violent enactment – that the "trigger went off", resulting to some extent, in framing the shooting as a result of the compelling circumstances and the trigger going off, as opposed to him mistakenly pulling the trigger during tussle (Bandura, 1999; Gini, Pozzoli, & Hymel, 2014; Kokkinos, Voulgaridou, Mandrali, & Parousidou, 2016; Ribeaud & Eisner, 2010). Aside from these slight severances from their own moral agency and responsibility in their descriptions of these enactments, it is interesting that the perpetrators sometimes attribute their violent conduct to, or as caused by, the behaviour of others, on the basis of either, the victim behaving in a way which elicited the violent reaction – with the participants (e.g. - P3 (interview 2 - 8:3 (145:183)); P7 (Interview 1 - 20:1

(149:175)); & P10 (Interview 1 - 27:4 (415:423))) often suggesting their behaviour was defensive in nature – or, as function of their identification, association, involvement in a group. In these cases, the participants suggest that their violent responses are purely in the interest of securing their own safety, suggesting that their victims are stubborn and looking to retaliate (e.g. - P3 (Interview 2 - 8:3 (145:183)); P7 (Interview 1 - 20:1 (149:175))) or clearly hostile (e.g. -P10 (Interview 1 - 27:4 (415:423)). Indeed, arguably these participants obscure their own reactions by attributing blame to their victim, assuming the worst of their victims. As such, it is arguable that these participants morally disengage from their violent responses by *attributing the blame* to the other by suggesting they were driven to react violently given their provocative behaviour. Finally, there is evidence to suggest many participants attribute their actions to the presence and influence of others, displacing and diffusing their individual role in enactments. P1 (Interview 1 - 1:2 (104:114)) & P5 ((2nd and 3rd interview combined - 14:3 (66:90)) both suggest that they felt their actions were a significant by-product of pressure from others, with P1 linking his violence to the influence and coercion of a kind of diabolical other when he was young and vulnerable, and P5 attributing some of his violent reaction to worries about being perceived negatively and as weak, if he did not act violently. All of these examples, arguably demonstrate that the various mechanisms of moral disengagement are common processes in the perpetration of violence, and indeed may play important role in understanding enactments of violent crime. Indeed, recent research in moral disengagement has been linked to the frequency and persistence of aggression and violence in pre-adolescent and adolescent youth, and suggest that boys with deficits in theory of mind were more likely to present with relational aggression due to their high propensity to morally disengage. This is relevant because it arguably provides a link between moral disengagement and mentalization conceptually and empirically (Bandura, 1999; Gini *et al*., 2014; Kokkinos *et al*., 2016; Ribeaud & Eisner, 2010).

4.2 - Phase 2 - Strategic Situational Event-Based Analysis – Mentalization as a processual mechanism

As the first phase of the analysis focused on understanding how the perpetrators made sense of violence in general, as well as, their involvement in it, the second phase aims to analyse some strategically selected events which were selected during the process of the thematic analysis to perform a more in depth analysis of some of the perpetrators enactments of violence in an effort to attempt to understand how mentalization (or rather it's failure) may come into play during the perpetrators reports of violent enactments, as well as, how situational factors or triggers may be involved in, or interact with, these processes. 6 violent enactments out of the 67 enactments coded were teased out of the 256 quotes. These were seen as fitting examples which appeared to have indicators which may represent the breakdown of mentalization, and although there were other examples (e.g. P1: Interview 2 - 2:5 (169:229); P8: Interview 2 - 23:5 (318:340); P11: Interview 1 - 33:3 (145:156) & P17: Interview 1.doc - 51:1 (50:50)) present in the interviews (with (n=10) in total), these were chosen as they appeared to provide the most direct evidence of these instances, and they also seemed the best choices in order to address the research questions in the briefest way possible. These events were typically analyzed by elaborating upon what appeared to be particularly salient and relevant situational factors and then moves to argue how impaired mentalizing was a likely situational factor in each of these cases.

4.2.1 - Event 1

P2: Interview 1 - 4:3 (97:104)

"**Was there a reason that made you like to fight at school?**

I used to love clothing labels (branded cloths) and when someone saw me with a better brand, they used to ask me who I think I was, to wear such cloths and I saw that as a challenge. I did not face the challenge by answering back. I would show them.

How do you show them?

I used to bite them and get into fights and stuff like that."

In P2's narration, although he does not go into much detail over what precisely occurred during an enactment, it is curious to consider how the perpetrator explains the circumstances which led up to his violent reaction in this extract as it arguably provides particularly salient indicators of pre-mentalistic subjectivity, as well as, the possible influence of conspicuous consumption in motivating the decision to enact violence in a conflict. In this extract, the first

relevant situational factor is the presence of valuable commodities - the perpetrator reflects on his love for clothing labels and how his possession of a "better brand" would provoke reactions from his peers that resulted in conflict. That is to say, the possession of goods which are not only indicative of relative status, by his description of them being "better", but the goods are also noticed and contested by what they imply about the perpetrators identity, suggesting these "clothes" are an indicator of conspicuous consumption (Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Hicks & Hicks, 2014; Jaikumar & Sarin, 2015; Posel, 2010; Sundie *et al*., 2011). The second situational factor is arguably the presence of a censuring peer, whom is a critical, or even perhaps (although not necessarily) envious, peer contesting the legitimacy of the perpetrator wearing such clothes and what they suggest about his identity. On one hand, it seems that from the thematic analysis, these brands may not have been a normalized and common good in the community – they were scarce, and highly desired, that is, in demand. As such, one interpretation of the contestation may serve to be interpreted as a kind of public shaming. On the other hand, given the fact that perpetrator appears to have attained such goods via illicit means, it's clear that the challenge of over who he thinks he is - who he, through his clothes represents himself to be, has some grounds. This suggests that the presence of conspicuous consumer goods and what it was meant to indicate to his peers about his status (that he has "better") served to provoke public censure, or shame, over his identity and status and how it was represented to others. The perpetrator in this case interprets this contestation as a challenge, and interestingly, his interpretation appears to result in the perpetrator's violent reaction. Thus, it appears that his interpretation and choice to react violently instead of communicating through talk, appears to suggest the presence of pre-mentalistic subjective functioning as a situational factor underlying his violent enactment. This situational factor also appears to be connected, or at least perceived as linked to the presence of a conspicuous consumer good. In this narrative, his interpretation of the challenge by a generalized other, mostly likely a peer at school in this case, sparks a reaction to him. This reaction appeals to relegating communication by words in favour of showing up, or meeting the challenge of, his adversary by biting and fighting. This reaction appears to follow the logic of the teleological mode of mental functioning, whereby he rigidly questions and attempts to alter the interpersonal interaction and its dynamics, as well as the thoughts and emotions associated with it via the use of action, i.e. physical violence (Brown, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009; Galgut, 2010; Luyten, 2012; Möller *et al*., 2014).

4.2.2 - Event 2

P3: interview 2 - 8:4 (185:211)

"**Interviewer: What happened?**

Prisoner: We were driving and there were white people working for a contract at the township. So we saw a van – double cab. We thought eish that one we must take it.

Interviewer: You just decided?

Prisoner: Yes, we approached him and when I got near him I saw him and tying to unbuckle his safety belt so I thought he wanted to shoot me so I shot him.

Interviewer: How did you feel?

Prisoner: Eish, there I unbuckled him and drove off; I kept on thinking that eish I hope that person is not dead."

In this enactment, P3 is seeking to rob a van they saw entering the township. He approaches it with a gun and shoots the driver on the mistaken assumption that the driver was going to try shoot him back. This incident will be analysed as a possible case of a failure of mentalization amongst reporting the other situational variables involved. The first noticeable detail which may be a situational factor in the following extract is the perpetrator's use of "we" which implies that he was with a group of accomplices in this violent enactment. This does not on the surface appear to explicitly play a role in the account of the violent enactment however. The second situational factor which appears as if it may be relevant is the fact that the victim was white, taking what was demonstrated earlier in the thematic analysis as a relevant (as this participant did suggest he discriminated against white people in his decision to rob as he perceived them as having money) situational factor which may have influenced the enactment (Posel, 2010). The third situational factor was the presence of and focus on the double van, which appeared to be conspicuous enough to incentivize the desire to steal the vehicle – that is to say, the focus on a conspicuous commodity (Bruce, 2007; Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Hicks & Hicks, 2014). The fourth situational variable was perhaps the perception of threat to the mortality of the perpetrator from the victim whose attempt to untie his seatbelt was understood as the victim attempting to retaliate and shoot him. The last situational variable is arguably the presence of a failure to mentalize. In this enactment, the focus is on the perpetrators interpretation of the victim attempting to untie his seatbelt. In this case, the perpetrator is approaching the vehicle the victim is in, presumably at gunpoint, although this is not explicitly stated. Regardless of that, the perpetrator interpreting the victim's attempt to unbuckle as the victim attempting to retaliate appears to involve a critical assumption which

does not appear evident from his account – that the victim is likely to use the same level of lethal threat to retaliate if given the chance. It appears, firstly, that the participant is functioning under the teleological mode and had formed a narrow concrete understanding of the victim, with him further equivocating his internal fears with the viewpoint of the victim (i.e. psychic equivalence), as he assumes that the victim's attempt to unbuckle his seat belt was a clear sign of him intending to retaliate and shoot back – that the victim had hostile intentions in an essentially ambiguous scenario (Brown, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009; Galgut, 2010; Luyten, 2012; Möller *et al*., 2014). This evaluation by the perpetrator may also suggest that during the event he formed a very rigid conception of what the victim intended, without considering the possibility that perhaps the victim may have been afraid, and perhaps was attempting to escape the car, or even comply with the perpetrator – all potential and understandable reactions when under lethal threat. Rather the perpetrator appeared to be utilizing distorted mentalizing to understand the victim in the given situation, wherein which he appeared to project his own fears of his own socio-cognitive script concerning the possible reaction of victims in general, on the victim, that is to say he may of committed a fundamental attribution error by overestimating the hostility of his victim according to his own cognitive script of robbery events (please refer to earlier quoted (P3: interview 2 - 8:3 (145:183)) which arguably supports this claim) (King, 2012; Luyten, 2012; Twemlow *et al*., 2005; D. L. Wilkinson & Carr, 2008). This strategy also allows to the perpetrator to disengage from his own role in the enactment partially. Thus, in this case, a failure to mentalize appeared to constitute part of the process of the violent enactment, and as such, serves as a situational variable. It may also be likely, although not clearly demonstrable, that his racial assumptions (e.g. - P3: 2nd interview - 8:3 (145:183)) about the victim, as well as his desire for the car, may have facilitated his enactment, although it was not clear that these factors were involved beyond motivating the perpetrator towards executing the hijacking.

4.2.3 - Event 3

P5: interview 2 & 3 - 14:3 (66:90)

> "So this friend came to me and borrowed my gun and I gave him, but then he went to his guys and swapped my gun, and then he came to me and said the gun is lost. So I said ok and I went on with my life. He became very scarce thereafter. One day I came across the very same gun. I asked the guys how did they get hold of that gun they told me that so an so sold it to us. So I confronted him and he wanted to fight but I didn't fight because then I didn't have the gun. When we met again I shot him for that reason… So Saturday afternoon we were drinking and he came at around 18:30 he was accompanying his girlfriend. He approached me directly with his hands in the pockets he was talking many things and I knew that if I could have left him the guys were going to think that I am afraid of him and that I am not sure of myself…so if I could have left him I would have appeared as if I don't have guts or powers. So I shot him, after shooting him when I was alone I started regretting that eish if only I didn't acted like that. "

In the following enactment, P5 shoots a "friend" who had betrayed him as a way of retaliating for his friend's indiscretion, although part of his violent reaction appears to be facilitated by the pressure he perceived from his friends. The first situational variable in this extract which appears particularly salient is the presence and possession of a gun. This is particularly substantiated by the fact that the perpetrator suggests that after discovering he was betrayed and "crook"-ed by his friend, he would have shot him in an encounter, but he reports that did not have a gun on him to do so. Indeed, he did not fight in that first incident because of that. In the next encounter, however, he had a gun, and this did result in him shooting his "friend". The second salient situational factor that appears relevant in this case is the fact that he was drinking – and although he does not mention it having an effect on his judgement, given that alcohol, can have an impairing effect on decision making, lowering inhibitions and somewhat impairing the function of mentalizing, it likely would of influenced his judgement in the given situation (George, Rogers, & Duka, 2005; Haslam-Hopwood, Allen, Stein, & Bleiberg, 2006; Loeber *et al*., 2009). The third salient situational variable which is apparent, is the presence of "the guys", his friends, whose very presence created a perceived pressure to react in a way which demonstrated he was brave, capable, and powerful – where leaving his friend turned adversary may imply the opposite. This likely influenced his decision making in the violent enactment. This suggests a fourth salient situational factor – the threat of losing status, of experiencing shame in relation to his doubts concerning reacting violently. In this case, a significant distinction needs to be made, that, although the presence of his peers may come with expectations of how he should act, his worry of losing status and being judged negatively may only be a fear of his own, an imagined scenario or fantasy in his own mind, in this scenario. His peers may not have judged him that way in he

did not act, but he merely imagined they would. Lastly, a dysfunction in mentalization was a likely fifth salient situational factor in this violent enactment. Firstly, it is apparent that in his account of the incident, he does not seem to grasp or engage anything communicated by his adversary, rather he portrays him as "talking many things" and focuses on how "his hands were in his pocket", with little concern for what may going on the adversary's mind and little attempt at making sense of what is being communicated to him. That he appears to reveal a concrete understanding of the other. Interestingly his focus on "the guys" perception of him in the interaction comes to the fore, and comes to displace the other feelings he may be experiencing, such that it appears as if the presence of his friend who crooked him seems to bring up feelings of embarrassment which are not directly expressed. Rather, the perpetrator focuses on the fact that he has to react, as him leaving the other, his adversary, would be to him, and "the guys" as he sees it, an indication of him being afraid and unsure of himself. Interestingly it appears to be the case that after the shooting, he did express regret at his actions, suggesting that he may have actually been unsure of himself in the situation. This focus on action displacing communication and engagement with cognition and emotion in the interaction is indicative of the presence of teleological thinking – and it may very well be the case that "the guys" also function on this level too. On the other hand, this appeal to pressure also appears disingenuous to some extent when considering the fact that earlier in the extract he suggested that he would have shot his adversary if he had a gun at time in his first encounter with him. Suggesting, their presence was not a key conditional factor in his decision-making process, but rather, the fact that he was duped and embarrassed was more significant to him. Perhaps the conflict he experiences relates to the fact that he perceived his adversary as a friend in the first place. This is pertinent as the perpetrator admits to possessing feelings of entitlement to act violently with other innocent victims with whom he had no affiliation, but, them being targets he robbed. Another consideration in this analysis is the fact that the perpetrator felt the need to escalate to shooting his adversary, and did not see any weaker form of retaliation as plausible in the situation – not to advocate for a violent reaction, but it did not seem apparent that his reaction had to escalate to that extent even given the pressures. Nevertheless, this enactment does suggest that part of the process of his decision to enact violent was related to prementalistic subjectivity, indicating some impairment in mentalizing during the process of the enactment (Brown, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009; Galgut, 2010; Luyten, 2012; Möller *et al*., 2014).

4.2.4 - Event 4

P7: Interview 1 - 20:2 (185:225)

"The owner …was selling the place and he wanted someone to guard it… so I had access to that house. One day as I was checking out the rooms I saw some bullets and a gun safe but at that time I had not seen the gun. There was a room, it was kind of storage. It was full of many toys so because I had been doing crime, those ideas of committing another crime came to my mind. So I was afraid of doing it alone because I felt like that person would over power me, so I had to find another person…So while I was still planning my cousin…arrived and I told him about it…in such a way that it was convincing, I said there was a lot of money in that house. I had seen in the envelope a cash amount to the value of R1500.00. So I thought if there is so much money easily available like that there must be more amongst those papers… So one Saturday that [other man], he left for work, then I told my cousin that it was time we did what we planned. So we didn't know exactly where the money was. We thought we would attack him and convince him to show us where the money was and he would take it out. So I and [my cousin] went out to drink for the whole day, so when we returned around nine (9) o'clock that white man was still not back yet. So I said to [my cousin] you know what if this person is not back at this time it might be he is drinking wherever he is. So we had to do it that day, but [my cousin] was getting cold feet so I tried to motivate him that we must continue with it. So I took a steel iron rod (eish giggly) and I didn't want to talk about this but anymore, I took a steel iron rod and waited behind the door. I asked [my cousin] to look out for him and to tell me when he arrived. So he came and [my cousin] signalled, when he opened and entered the door I hit him with the steel iron rod on his head and he fell on the ground with his face, so he couldn't see it was me. I asked him where the money was, when I asked him that he was just asking what is it he was done? And repeating that question, so I kept on asking him where the money was, and hitting him again and again until he couldn't speak anymore. So I searched him and found money and car keys, I took the car…"

…

"**Interviewer: But what caused you to hit him like that on his head? I mean you were not threatened or maybe in situation that he could hurt you.**

Prisoner: I think because we first started by drinking for the whole day. Alcohol could have contributed as well. It was at night and we didn't want to be seen by the neighbours or something. So we just concentrated on him, that's why I ended up leaving and not taking anything with from the house.

Interviewer: What were you feeling all those time when you were committing crime?

Prisoner: Eish I had this image in my head that my life is going to get better because I will be having lots of money. At that time I was not panicking or thinking about getting caught. I just focussed on getting the money."

In the following extract, P7 narrates a robbery turned violent on a man which did not in any way appear to pose a threat to him. The first situational factor which appeared evident in this narrative is the presence of conspicuous commodities and relatively large sums of capital which were tied to triggering thoughts of robbing the house – although beyond the reference to the cash of up to R1500, they are not directly labeled (Bruce, 2007; Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Hicks & Hicks, 2014). Indeed, the euphemistic use of "toys" seemed to indicate their presence perhaps provided him with a sort of childlike glee, or minimally, were exciting

enough even to inspire in him the desire to rob. The next situational factor appeared to be the perceived threat of taking the risk of robbing. The perpetrator worried about being overpowered and so successfully recruited his cousin by emphasizing the amount of money that could be made by investing in the risk. The third likely situational variable in this case was the presence of a supporting figure, his cousin, whose presence likely gave him confidence to act and helped him plan the robbery better. The fourth situational variable which appeared relevant was the fact that the perpetrator was intoxicated with alcohol, he had been drinking the entire day. The fifth situational variable which appeared relevant was his access to the household, via his job, as this allowed him access to the property and information to plan said robbery. The last situational variable in this case was arguably a failure to mentalize on his part, and in this case it appeared to be sustained by a fantasy of capital accumulation and the agency and enjoyment it implied (Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Dean, 2008). Indeed, this is perhaps the most poignant example of a failure to mentalize triggered or perhaps aggravated by the valuation of wealth over human life. In this case, focusing on the enactment itself, we see the perpetrator attack his defenseless and unaware victim with a steel pole. His nervous laugh whilst narrating the tale possibly suggests that anxiety is triggered by remembering the moments of the enactment. The perpetrator beats the man asking continually about where the money was, whilst the victim seemed bewildered and confused by the attack. The perpetrator appeared nearly trapped or consumed in his mind, or world, reflected by how he was unresponsive to the puzzlement, pain, and pleas of the victim. This suggested a complete lack of mentalization, which was almost solipsistic given how he persisted beating the man into silence – counter to his original instrumental aim of eliciting information. In this case, it appears that the perpetrator is functioning in the teleological mode continuously resorting to physical violence in the interaction as a means of extracting the information. His rigidity of thought, perseveration, and concrete understanding evidenced by his continual repetition of the question, continual beating, and lack of insight into the damage he was inflicting in the situation also too suggest he had impaired mentalization. Indeed, when reflecting upon the event and what he thought in the moment, he appeared to dissociate into his own fantasy of the better future that awaited him once he had the money he repeatedly demanded the location of. This seemed quell and motivate him - his pursuit of money. This fantasy of money arguably strongly influenced his subjectivity which appeared to also function in pretend mode, where his internal representations come to wholly dominate his perception of the interaction (Brown, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009; Galgut, 2010;

Luyten, 2012; Möller *et al*., 2014). – he was money minded, as it were (Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016). On a broad and highly speculative level, this is arguably a powerful reflection of the influence that neoliberal values can have over the fundamental functioning of individuals' mental lives inspiring them towards violence. On the other hand, it is arguably a clear instance of how markers of neoliberalism via conspicuous commodities and fantasies of capital accumulation can come to intersect and influence the process of mentalization (Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Dean, 2008; Springer, 2012a).

4.2.5 - Event 5

P10: Interview 1 - 27:4 (415:423)

"What did you use to hurt your uncle?

You see the axe that you use to cut wood?" That is what I used.

He must have made you very angry

He made me very angry. I was coming into the house and he was sitting with my aunt's husband. They were talking and it looked hot, [heated discussion] so, I sat and listened and my aunt's husband was getting irritated and I told him to cool down. He had taken my stuff without asking, so I asked him about it, he had taken my shoes. And when I had seen him wearing it the previous day, he would not bring it back. My aunt came in to intervene….My uncle then slapped me and…. what was I supposed to do? My aunt said we should not fight. We went outside and my uncle had a knife and I thought he was going to stab me. There was an axe nearby, so I took it and stabbed him thrice."

P10: Interview 2 - 28:7 (320:373)

"So what happened?

I also got angry.

What came to your mind?

I was angry and it came to my mind to beat him up. I was very angry and I knew that something else was going to happen?

Where were the others at that time?

They were in the house; I was sitting on the veranda. He was talking a lot. And I decided that I'm going to beat him up now. My aunt tried to talk to us but I was angry. I was not very angry. I went around the house through a small door that he didn't know. I kicked down the door. He had a knife to stab me. I beat him and he fell down. And I beat him three times on the head. He was bleeding and I left him there. I went out of the gate into the street. Some people were trying to help him up. My cousin was there with his girlfriend and there was a truck from work there. So they started the truck.

What gave you the mind to carry something heavy to hit him?

What was he carrying? Was he not carrying something as well?

Why did you not think of walking away from that fight, from him?

I did not think of that. I had enough of him."

This case spans over the 3 extracts which cover the same incident in slightly different ways, although they all arguably have similar features which are at play and build on each other. In this case, P10 attacks his uncle with an axe after a conflict at home, he bases his attack on a rationale of self-defense, although it is not so clear if this is really the case in his account of the enactment. In these extracts, there are several situational factors at play. The first situational factor evident is a possibly conspicuous commodity, or at least a valued commodity owned by the perpetrator, as in the first extract it is cited as the good which sparked the conflict that resulted in the violent enactment (Bruce, 2007; Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Hicks & Hicks, 2014; Jaikumar & Sarin, 2015). Indeed, the perpetrator remarks on the fact that his uncle did not ask to use his shoes which he saw him wearing nor return his property. The second situational factor that may have influenced this enactment is his minor drink of alcohol, as it would of likely had an influence on his judgement (George *et al*., 2005; Haslam-Hopwood *et al*., 2006; Loeber *et al*., 2009). On the other hand, since the amount was minor and the perpetrator was adamant that he was not influenced by it (not to say his account is the sole authority on the matter), it may be the case that it may have not had a significant effect. The third possible situational factor may have been emotional contagion, as his family members were in a tense dispute, and this seemed to incense the perpetrator (Allen, 2006). In addition to this, another situational factor may have been the resentment and subsequent anger the perpetrator experienced in relation to his uncle who he perceived as an abusive and unfair patriarch. A fifth possible salient situational factor in this case was the perceived threat triggered by the presence of a knife in his uncle's hands, which is cited by the perpetrator as the trigger which led him to grab the axe and seek to defend himself. The final situational factor which appeared relevant in this case, is arguably another example of impaired mentalizing. Firstly, P11 appears resolute and rigidly certain in his interpretation that his uncle wielding a knife in his hand implied that he was at threat of being attacked. Indeed, the perpetrator himself admitted to deciding that he was going to beat up his uncle before the altercation began because he was enraged at his uncle. This suggests that the perpetrator was functioning under the prementalistic states of psychic equivalence and teleological reasoning; psychic equivalence given that it seems likely that the perpetrators own anger and desire to beat his uncle up influenced his interpretation of his uncles intentions, with him rigidly holding on to the idea that his uncle would attack him, although he himself planned to do so (Brown, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009; Galgut, 2010; Luyten, 2012; Möller *et al*., 2014). Furthermore, although his uncle slapped him which may have

provoked the desire to respond in kind. The perpetrator appears to suggest that he had no alternative reaction but to defend himself from his uncle's slap and the sight of him wielding a knife. Although despite this, minor but significant details appear inconsistent between the extracts. The perpetrator on one hand suggests he went outside and approached his unsuspecting uncle, and in another account, suggests they went outside together. In the first and earlier description, he presents himself as more passive to the event, in the second case, he appears to be more actively aggressive. In both descriptions, the perpetrator strongly suggests he had little choice and that his reaction was clearly a response to the threat his uncle posed with a knife. That merely the sight of knife served as a trigger suggesting that he could only settle the conflict by attacking his uncle – indicating the presence of teleological reasoning - and that it was obvious that he was at risk. Though, this does not seem convincing, as it does not seem clear that his uncle would necessarily use the knife on him because he had it in his hand, but rather, the perpetrator interpreted inflexibly that he was at risk of such (Brown, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009; Galgut, 2010; Luyten, 2012; Möller *et al*., 2014). This narrative of self-defense appears to serve the moral disengagement of the perpetrator, as well as, serves to paint a more favorable picture of his role in the violent enactment. It is possible that this is consciously presented as such, or perhaps it is a form of distorted mentalizing in order to displace his agency and thus sense of responsibility in the enactment (Bandura, 1999; Kokkinos *et al*., 2016; Luyten, 2012; Ribeaud & Eisner, 2010). Indeed, he challenges the interviewer in the situation with questions concerning the limited choices he had in the scenario. Yet his admission of desiring to beat his uncle in the first place suggest that he is more likely attempting to present himself favorably. Indeed, it is clear that he felt that he had "enough", thus justifying his violent response. Interestingly and finally, the trigger of his rage and reaction is linked to his shoes which is reported as the basis of his challenge to his uncle in the particular incident. Although this does not necessarily seem to clearly explicitly connect to impaired mentalizing, it certainly incentivized the conflict. And although this may have been a response about something more fundamental, such as, anger at feeling his property was intruded upon, it is interesting that it was concerned with a pair of shoes that the participant clearly noticed his uncle wear, suggesting that it may have been a weak indicator of conspicuous consumption and the status it implies. Thus, impaired mentalizing may be connected to the emotional reactions to conspicuous consumptive goods (Bruce, 2007; Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Hicks & Hicks, 2014; Jaikumar & Sarin, 2015).

4.2.6 - Event 6

P9: Interview 2 - 25:5 (157:196)

> "There was a guy we were at the tavern and me and that guy had met before and he asked why I looked at him that way. So I asked him how do I look at him and he said you look at me like shit, and I was armed at that time and he knew me, but he I didn't know him. So I told the people I was with that eish here is this guy he say so and so. So those people wanted us to fight but some said we should fight outside if we wanted to fight. So we went outside, so when we got there that guy said I must do what I wanted to do and the guys I was with were pressurising me to do something. They said this guy is insulting you, are you going to leave him like that, I got angry and I shot him…I didn't feel bad; I just felt that is going to be easy to shoot another person."

In this case, P9 reacts to the slight and disrespectful manner of an adversary in a bar by shooting him – although he perceived and expressed that there was some pressure to react from his friends in the tavern, he expressed little remorse for killing the man. In this case, the first salient situational factor appeared to the fact that the perpetrator was armed, as this enabled him to shoot his adversary, but also this was something he reported as relevant when speaking about what began the incident. The second salient situational factor appeared to be the presence of other people and affiliates who encouraged the perpetrator to fight and react violently, aggravating the insult dealt out by his adversary in the scenario. The last salient situational factor is arguably that he may have had impaired mentalization motivating his enactment. This is indicated by his focus on behavioural details without much reference to affective and cognitive content, as well as, his focus on the social factors (the pressure of his peers around him) surrounding the incident. Little in the account reflects the thoughts and emotions of the perpetrator, with the exception of him reflecting on how he enraged he became in the moments just before, he decided to shoot his adversary. Little in the account is concerned with mental content, and the adversary's mind, and indeed, the extract focuses on the spoken word and behaviours of each actor. This sentiment is reflected in the narrator's account of the incident where he reports little remorse for the incident, as well as, having found it easy to shoot his adversary. The primary factor which appeared to motivate his reaction was a desire to uphold his own status, particularly in front of his peers who explicitly pressurized him to react. Aside from these behavioural prompts and the curt reference to anger, little in the perpetrators account suggests he engaged in any form of perspective taking of the other, nor, much reflection on his own emotions and thoughts during the incident (Brown, 2008; Fonagy & Luyten, 2009; Galgut, 2010; Luyten, 2012; Möller *et al*., 2014).

Chapter 5 – Conclusions

It is evident from this analysis that the widespread normalization of violence in these perpetrators' communities serves to partially prime and desensitize the perpetrators towards its use as a sociomoral mediator given it is evident that violence often appeared ubiquitous and socially acceptable throughout the perpetrators' histories. This normalization of violence is partially a by-product of the racist, violent, and oppressive historical legacy which in combination undermined traditional forms of socialization, arbitrarily incarcerated millions, and deprived communities of resources and institutional controls which facilitated the widespread development of criminals and gangs in South Africa (Breetzke, 2012; Glaser, 2008; Kynoch, 2008). Indeed, Gang affiliation and identification has a major association with violence in the perpetrators' narratives. Criminal gangs appear to represent an alternative subcultural adaptation to the perpetrators' current experience of relative deprivation, whilst simultaneously appearing to sustain or contribute to the harsh conditions of their respective communities. This is partially a function of some community members, though likely a minority, tacit selective morality over crime, as reflected by the perpetrators' experiential claims of their support and contracting of these perpetrators to rob for them. In the perpetrators' narratives, the gangsters' overidentification with wealth accumulation and conspicuous consumption in part served to fuel their popularity and status within these communities, which serves to tempt many of the youth, given their patent access to conspicuous commodities and the power and influence they have in their communities. It appeared that the pursuit of wealth accumulation and status superseded many of the social institutions and norms in the communities, and indeed, in the narratives, the gangs, and thus the perpetrators appeared to exclusively use violence as a means of negotiating conflicts and disciplining transgressions – forming an integral component of their moral order or economy (Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Dean, 2008; Karandinos *et al.*, 2014; Kramer, 2000; Lindegaard & Gear, 2014; Lindegaard & Jacques, 2014; Steinberg, 2004; R. Wilkinson, 2004). It is argued that this turn towards violence and identification with criminality and gangsterism in many of the perpetrators' narratives is perhaps partially a function of a strategic or tactical decision to adapt via a subcultural alternative form of status seeking (Lindegaard & Jacques, 2014), but may also be a by-product of the perpetrators' continuous exposure to the dominating and coercive behaviour of these violent subjects, as

well as, the threat of injury and their own demise associated with these violent subjects. It is suggested that an affinity for cruelty and the use of appetitive aggression are developed in order to functionally adapt, that is, make the shift from the status of being a victim of circumstances, to an active aggressor (Hinsberger *et al*., 2016). This may also be a function of a process coined by psychoanalysis originally, known as identification with the aggressor (Howell, 2014). The aggressor, whom the perpetrators identify with, is both violent, and flagrantly a predatorial capitalist, and it was evident, that the perpetrators as gangsters, go further as to distinguish themselves as different, exceptional, and superior to non-gangsters, coming to transcend their own relative deprivation via the dehumanization of others around them. This is reflective in their sense of entitlement and distinction between their own rights and others' (being deprived of) rights, conspicuous consumption, and the valuation of wealth accumulation and property above all else. This perhaps is best identified partially as a function of their own ideological identification with neoliberalism, on one hand, and the negative structural effects associated with neoliberal policies which likely contributed to and aggravated the very harsh conditions which enabled the development of such a phenotype of capitalism (Bandura, 1999; Bruce, 2007; Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Dean, 2008; Haslam, 2006; Jaikumar & Sarin, 2015; Khan, 2015; Kramer, 2000; Reidy *et al*., 2008, 2008; Ribeaud & Eisner, 2010; Scharff, 2015; Springer, 2012a; Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016). Indeed, this is typified in some of the perpetrators' narratives by their identification of being an entrepreneur, or businessperson at the expense of everything else – even willing to put a price on human life, in the moral economy of late capitalism (Bowman *et al*., 2015; Bruce, 2007; Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Fisher & Hall, 2011; Scharff, 2015; Steinberg, 2004). Therefore, it is arguable that the presence or symbols of gangsterism, or a particular gang, as well as conspicuous consumption and leisure serve as possible contextual influences in violent enactments and thus can arguably be considered situational determinants in the perpetration of violent crime. In general, throughout the interviews, certain situational factors appeared to play a role across a broad array of the perpetrators. For instance, the possession and presence of a gun appeared to not only be a potent situational factor, which not only appeared to motivate and enable perpetrators to pursue crime and violence, and served as a potentiating factor for participants to react violently in defence, but also, appeared to signify status and power in their respective communities (Barolsky *et al*., 2008; Stretesky & Pogrebin, 2007; Stretesky *et al*., 2007; D. L. Wilkinson & Carr, 2008). In that way, the presence of a gun was a concrete situational factor, which contributed to the process of the perpetrator perceiving

possible risk to his own life. This is likely a by-product of the normalization of violence in their communities, as well as an explicit adaptation by the moral orders of many gangs and criminals in the perpetrators' life worlds. As such, in some ways it is not only a situational factor given it may represent increased risk and existential anxiety, but also considering its high demand and value amongst criminals in these narratives, it perhaps, to some extent, represents another kind of conspicuous commodity; as it is utilized as a symbol of status and power in their context (Barolsky *et al*., 2008; Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Stretesky & Pogrebin, 2007; Stretesky *et al*., 2007). Substance use also played a large role in many of the narratives of the perpetrators, as it fuelled the economic transactions of the criminal underworld, served as one means by which some perpetrators prepared to engage in violent crime, as well as, had a substantial impact on their judgement, sometimes resulting in aggressive reactions and hostile attributions which ultimately lead to violent reactions (Barolsky *et al*., 2008; George *et al*., 2005; Haslam-Hopwood *et al*., 2006; Karandinos *et al*., 2014; Loeber *et al*., 2009; Twemlow *et al*., 2005; White *et al*., 1999). On the other hand, figures of social control and social support served as mitigating factors which did have a short-term influence in shaping the decision making of perpetrators, and as such, do represent a situational deterrent, unfortunately, in many cases, they appeared to only have a limited influence on perpetrators, whom continued their violent crime regardless of being castigated and warned by informal and formal social controls, and this is likely linked to the divestment of many of the perpetrators from the state, local, and traditional moral orders at play (Kramer, 2000; Liotti & Gilbert, 2011; Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016). Their peers appeared to have more purchase for many of these perpetrators, who appeared to share a common interest in conspicuous consumption, wealth accumulation, and supported their pursuit of status. Indeed, the presence of gang affiliates, or peers, appeared to incentivize violent reactions in order to avoid the perceived resultant public scrutiny, humiliation, or violent persecution. This is important because, situationally, a perceived slight or threat to the self, whether reflected as a slight to the perpetrators' reputation, or a genuine threat to them, generally served as one situational factor by which the perpetrators decided to resort to violence (Bruce, 2007; Buccellato & Reid, 2014; Gilligan, 2003; Jones, 2013; Rocque *et al*., 2015).

It is interesting to consider the ways in which the perpetrators came to portray agency in their narratives of violent crime. Although in many ways the influence of structural, social, and situational factors came to the fore in their perpetration of violence and it is critical to

scrutinize these factors' influence on these enactments, the individual agency of these perpetrators, even when understood as subjugated and limited to the role of economic agent, still, appeared to emerge in nuanced and paradoxical ways in their narratives. The perpetrators repeatedly and explicitly report engaging in violent crime as a conscious and deliberate decision which intended to both strategically (in the long term) and tactically (in the short term) transform their lives and elevate themselves within their respective social hierarchies. This was also often done with a conscious and clear divestment from the various local social control and support structures, and sometimes with clear indifference to the consequences of their violent crime. Admittedly in some circumstances, the structural conditions, particularly those as pernicious as prison did earnestly compel extreme reactions to adapt to the very real threat of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and domination, and the perpetrators utilized violence in order to garner their own safety and sense of self in the violent moral order of the infamous Numbers Gang. This is typified by the way in which many non-gangsters are dehumanized and dominated in these prisons, being defiled to the point of merely being an object, or piece of property for others. So in spite of many perpetrators' attempts to increase their agency and increase their freedom and transform their material conditions by engaging in these violent criminal acts, unless they persistently pursue a long term career as a gangster, by most likely, becoming more violent and performing the impressive feat of avoiding serious injury, incapacitation, psychological breakdown, protracted imprisonment, or death, they will likely fail (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014; Lindegaard & Jacques, 2014; Steinberg, 2004). This is interesting for two reasons, firstly, it is arguably indicative of both the extent to which their experience of the structural humiliation of relative deprivation alienates these men towards a destructive nihilistic attempt to transcend their humiliation, precarity, and relative deprivation, as well as, the reality and the fact of the matter that this choice is often recounted as deeply short sighted by the perpetrators. Moreover, it is interesting to consider the ways in which these subjects ultimately find themselves revoking their own sense of agency and control when describing their violent crimes and transgressions. This attempt to displace or mitigate the consequences of their actions, also is perhaps reflective of the ways in which the perpetrators paradoxically appear to revoke their agency in order to avoid internal, as well as, external self-sanctions and the resultant negative self-evaluations characterized by shame and guilt. This is characterized by the various ways in which the mechanisms of moral disengagement were evident in their narratives, which appeared to distort the substantially negative implications of their actions,

undermine their involvement and choice in their participation in them, and the extent to which their victims deserved, or are to blame for the perpetrators aggression and violence towards them (Bandura, 1999; Gini *et al*., 2014; Ribeaud & Eisner, 2010). Although the perpetrators attempted to utilize cognitive restructuring techniques to reframe their actions, and it was unclear whether they did so consciously, or whether this was a by-product of psychological processes at play, given that mentalization has been linked to moral disengagement, and recent evidence suggests that aggressive young boys who tend to morally disengage tend to have theory of mind deficits (Kokkinos *et al*., 2016), it is likely that these processes interact. However, this study only briefly considered this possibility, and it may be valuable for future research to consider their relationship in further detail. Nevertheless, in this study, it appeared this moral disengagement was likely a processual factor which was associated with mentalization. The perpetrators apparent attempts to disengage and disavow their agency from these enactments may be a function of impression management, and thus, the particular audience, whom they seek to represent themselves to. On the other hand, this very same attempt to reframe the content, may alternatively, or simultaneously, be a function of their own attempts to reconcile their own actions for themselves (Hochstetler, Copes, & Williams, 2010; Presser, 2004). This was scrutinized in some of the narratives, but it did not seem evident - although this may be a function of the limited context of a secondary data analysis - that the perpetrators necessarily exaggerated the content of their accounts as much as attempted to reframe it in more amicable terms. In line with this, it is clear that some of the perpetrators were somewhat moulded by the social identifications they held, shifting their behaviour and reactions towards more violent outcomes accordingly, maintaining a façade to match the expectations of their social group. On the other hand, this association with their social group also provided the perpetrators with a means of mitigating the broader moral implications of their violence, as well as, leverage to temporarily forego their own personal experience of shame and guilt with respect to their transgressions. This suggests that in some senses the perpetrators may still be influenced by other intersecting social and cultural values, or may be deeply psychological affected by their violence and exposure to violence. Both of which are observed in the narratives, with some participants deciding to shift their focus on religion, family, and the process of coming to assimilate back into their communities after their incarceration. Some participants, alternatively, ruminated on the negative implications of their violence, and it was apparent that the perpetrators appeared to be struggling to deal with what appear to be symptoms and coping mechanisms which they developed in order to

deal with the traumatic nature of their violence. Interestingly, recent work on mentalization suggests that it serves a preventative factor in developing aggressive behaviour after early childhood traumatic experiences of abuse (Taubner & Curth, 2013) and that mentalization capacity (regardless of type of attachment formed) served as a protective factor for youth with the potential to become violent and experienced childhood adversity (Taubner, Zimmermann, Ramberg, & Schröder, 2016). Which is particularly pertinent given it is apparent that the turn towards appetitive aggression appears in part to serve as an adaptive strategy against the significant psychological costs of many youths continuous experience of threat and trauma in their communities - perpetuating the cycle and normalization of violence in said communities (Hinsberger *et al*., 2016). This is pertinent as this analysis did find that impaired mentalizing, or the failure to mentalize, as indicated by the pre-mentalistic mechanisms which were argued to be at play in the perpetrators accounts of their enactments. It also found that some situational factors appear to interact, and perhaps contribute to this form of subjectivity which underlies many violent enactments. It was clearly evident that substance use was a clear situational factor which likely contributed to their impaired mentalizing which facilitated their violent enactments, given that it has already been affiliated with impaired mentalization (George *et al*., 2005; Haslam-Hopwood *et al*., 2006; Loeber *et al*., 2009). Indeed, it was also evident that the presence of commodities or indicators of conspicuous consumption, and representations or symbols of capital, appeared to both serve as a situational incentive towards property crime, but, also appeared to facilitate pre-mentalistic thinking and moral disengagement. This was particularly potent in one narrative where it appeared that the perpetrator completely dissociated into a fantasy of what the wealth he would acquire would bring him in the face of his brutal battering and eventual murder of his victim. This also appears to manifest in relation to another situational variable, that of race. It appeared that indicators of race, particularly by consumption patterns, served as a situational factor in the decision making of the criminals, with some perpetrators suggesting that whiteness is equated with class and wealth, and conspicuous consumption, regardless of whether they do partake in conspicuous consumption (Posel, 2010), and as such, were considered as more viable targets for violent crime. This was also observed in relation to black non-South African nationals, whom are discriminated against based on prejudice and the lack of social control mechanisms to protect them. This all suggests that the capacity to mentalize may play a key role in the enactment of violence, and this is supported by recent research (Fonagy, 2003; Möller *et al*., 2014; Taubner *et al*., 2016). Moreover, as this thesis

argued earlier, mentalization does appear to be impacted by indicators of value in a neoliberalized society, that is conspicuous consumption, as well as, in the context of South Africa in particular, race as proxy for class. Unfortunately, although this relationship has been highlighted by this research, it has not necessarily clarified why, or by what means indicators of conspicuous consumption relate to mentalization, and, thus violence. Given the nature of this research attempts to understand the intentional structure of the phenomenon at hand, it is limited in the degree to which the evidence can make claims on the causal mechanisms underlying the observed relationships in the perpetrators accounts. However, the work of Billig (1999) on commodity fetishism may arguably provide fruitful grounds to interpret the relationship observed between mentalization and conspicuous commodities. It is interesting to consider Billig (1999) argument that commodity fetishism could be facilitated by a dialogical kind of repression in relation to this, given that, it serves to suggest that conspicuous commodities likely are related to impaired mentalization by way of the process of repression in commodity fetishism. In commodity fetishism, this process entails a kind of forgetting, or repressing of the historical and socials conditions which produced the object, that is the commodity, which the agent encounters (Billig, 1999). In place of the forgotten content, the object or commodity is valuated according to its relationship other commodities on the market, such as money or goods that it can purchase. As such, the use of money in this system serves to obscure the actual value of objects, in terms of the labour and resources put into its creation, and reduces them to a monetary or quantitative figure or simplified variable (Billig, 1999). Broadly, that is to say, the object is reduced to its label and its price on the market, and then, in the consumer market, the label itself becomes an object of fetishism or enjoyment (Billig, 1999). Importantly, Billig (1999) argues that this label, its referent object, and the location of its purchase are the central means by which an individual is to construct their sense of self in this system. The memory or the information regarding its production is suggested to curtail the relationship of the agent to these commodities, particularly the agent's sense of possessing the object. Thus, it must be forgotten to enable the sense of possession to exist further as a subject in the consumer based culture. Billig (1999) argues that this kind of dialogical form of repression is central to the functioning of late capitalism, with the intensity of the fast-paced nature of the current society, and the amount of information and entertainment it is exposed to, serving to provide myriad means of changing the topic, repressing the unwanted content, and thus enabling the mechanism of commodity fetishism. According to Crosby (2012), in order to deal with the excess stimulation which is

entailed by a late capitalist society we formulate a kind of stimulus barrier, or a kind of flatness to events occurring in the world. Furthermore, this kind of inhibition of excess outward stimuli characterized by late capitalism or neoliberalism, and mentalization can be useful in understanding the psychological formation of subjects who exist under this system. Thus, in conclusion, this dialogical conception of commodity fetishism and repression, is also useful because it allows the possibility of assuming that moments of repressing the social nature of interactions can be observed in dialogue, for example, in the format of the interview, and such can be possibly linked both to the failure of mentalization, and an ideological indicator of neoliberalism, commodity fetishism. This research suggests that on an individual level the use of Mentalization Based Therapy, or other therapeutic modalities which focus on mentalization in their administration may be fruitful as a means of aiding violent offenders (Bateman & Fonagy, 2013) and research on the efficacy of such treatments in the South Africa context would be useful. On a community level, and likely more practical level in the South African context, following the work of Twemlow *et al*. (2005), creating interventions which integrate the concept of mentalization to address social systems typified by social and economic inequities and deficits which lead to coercive power dynamics and interpersonal violence, as observed by the powerful presence of gangsterism in this study, may show promise in strengthening social institutions, schools, and families, and enhancing their social cohesion (Twemlow *et al*., 2005). In addition to, and in support of this, there is a need for research aimed at shifting public policy to facilitate and support alternative forms of social control and social support which serve as protective factors on a structural and situational level. This may require more qualitative or mixed methods work which simultaneously critically interrogates the ideological discourses and structural inequities which are associated with the prevalence of violence, while seriously and strategically considering their influence on an individual level from the perspective of perpetrators. That is, research which is more psychosocially orientated. Arguably this thesis has demonstrated that interpretative phenomenological analysis is one potential avenue which could provide a strong methodology to psychosocial research, particularly given its philosophical background which conceives of the subject and their social context as inextricably entwined - aiming to provide an account of a being-in-context (Langdridge, 2008, 2008; Larkin, Eatough, & Osborn, 2011; Larkin *et al*., 2006; Shinebourne, 2011). It is important that analyses of violence integrate both the social and subject in this way to provide an account which can account for the influence of structural factors, whilst avoiding removing the existential

dimension of violence, and other phenomena, by wholly evacuating the subject. Thus it is arguable that this thesis served to illustrate a sense of process to the phenomena of violence, attempting to integrate the complex ways in which structural forces may come to shape the situational determinants and perpetrators perspectives, without removing the unique character and existential dimension of violence, and undermining the way in which the perpetrators make meaning of their acts; and yet avoiding naively assuming that the subjects own reported intentions are necessarily the true source of their actions either. It arguably applied the double hermeneutic associated with IPA successfully, although it may be critiqued by some for moving towards the interpretative dimension too often. This arguably depends on the level and particular theoretical viewpoint by which one understands the aims of the phenomenological approach. In terms of IPA, it in part aims explicitly towards both a descriptive account and interpretative account, but emphasizes the latter, in particular towards enhancing the understanding of a phenomena by utilizing relevant theoretical and empirical literature. Arguably, separating the analysis into phases allowed for a clearer distinction between the more interpretative, hermeneutics of suspicion, which was utilized to make sense of their violent enactments, and the more descriptive account (Larkin *et al*., 2011, 2006; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith, 2011). Nevertheless, despite this aspect of the study, given that it aimed at the minutiae of their enactments as well as the talk they have on violence, this research arguably was a stronger and closer attempt towards illustrating the aesthetics of violence, or the violence itself, that Schinkel (2004) was concerned has often been left out of much violence research. This is useful because it as provides important analogues/examples which may serve to enhance applied psychologists' understanding of their patients in their clinical work (at least in the South African context). Although this doesn't necessarily imply that the findings are broadly generalizable, given that by nature they are idiosyncratic, but, given that it's a relatively large sample for an IPA study, and that it is serves to build on and reflect much of the theoretical and empirical literature, it still arguably adds value to the literature on violence (Larkin *et al*., 2006; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith, 2011). It builds upon and enhances the extant experimental research, and provides evidence which is consistent with, and confirms the broad range of related research and theory – on moral disengagement, conspicuous consumption, neoliberalism, mentalization theory, phenomenology, and violence.

Chapter 6 – Reference List

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule[11]

Outline for interviews:

We have 3x90min interviews with the offenders, to be used as follows:

1. Perpetrator interviews:

(a) Life histories: To provide a picture of the types of life stories and circumstances that perpetrators of violent crime emerge from and to shed light on questions to do with the role of developmental and risk factors.

(b) Involvement in violence: to engage with questions to do with the specific factors that precipitated the involvement of individuals in acts of violence and how they understand their involvement in violence and the function which violence fulfils.

(c) The experience of incarceration: To reflect on the purposes which are achieved and the value and impact of incarcerating offenders. This may include how prison affects the offender, the daily and weekly routines of prison life, narratives about formal interventions, and violence and other aspects of relationships between prisoners.

First interview

This schedule will be used as the first interview with the offender, and the same schedule will be used for the only interview with the offender's sibling.

Materials needed:

A4 sheets of paper, and crayons, pencils or pens. Head the A4 sheets "0-6"; "7-13"; "14-18"; "18-29"; the 30s; the 40s; etc.

Say to the participant:

> Imagine your life as a train journey. The train travels along the railway line, and makes stops at particular stations. These stations are the important events of your life – times when something important happened, something good or something bad, something that affected your life. The train journey takes place in stages: ages 0–6; ages 7–13; ages 14–18; 18–29; the 30s; the 40s [a stage for each decade of the person's life]. On each sheet of paper, draw a trainline, and the significant events of your life in those periods.

Note:

[11] Taken from the study by Barolsky *et al*. (2008).

The participant may be more comfortable if the interviewer does the drawings, so offer to do that for him; or he may be more comfortable just talking. Flexibility, and ensuring that the participant is comfortable with the method, is what is important here — important life events can be explored and noted, regardless of method.

Give the person about 30 minutes to do the drawings. Then ask him to tell you about each of those "stations". Here are some areas to explore:

- Family structure (one or two parents, siblings, who else lived in the household).
- Changes in family structure and why (e.g., death, imprisonment of caregivers or siblings).
- Relationships between family members: Who was the person closest to? What kinds of relationships existed between family members? Were they close? Did they fight? If they did fight, was it verbally or physically? Gender of person closest to?
- Parenting styles: How did parents discipline children? Were they violently punished? Were there close, warm relationships between parents and children, or cold, hostile ones?
- Schooling: look for attachment to school, to teachers, to schoolwork; or for their opposites.
- Peer group: significant friends, their criminality, involvement in gangs. Gender of friends?
- Other significant relationships (other than peers or family)?
- Substance misuse: of the person, or of significant people in his/her life. What drugs? Who introduced him/her to drugs? Involvement in selling drugs?
- Employment: Explore employment history and significant reasons for moving from one job to another.
- Neighbourhood: What was the neighbourhood like, the one in which you grew up? Did people generally trust each other? Was there a lot of drugs and crime and violence?
- "Career" in crime [this may not be relevant for the sibling, except for the questions about attitudes]: When did it start? How did it start? Did it escalate over time? What do you think about these crimes — are they acceptable?
- Hopes for the future: Can remember what his hopes for the future were when he was a child? What were they? What are his current hopes for the future? What has changed them (if there has been a change)? How does he hope to achieve these?
- How did the family spend weekends, holidays or other free time? What was "fun" in the family context? Was drinking or violence ever a part of these events?
- Who were your heroes — who did you look up to? This could be someone in your family or neighbourhood, or on TV or in the movies.

Note that you may not be able to explore all of these themes in the interview, but the life events history should make it possible to explore most of them.

Second interview

This will have three facets to it:

(1) Ask for clarification or extension of anything confusing from the first interview.

(2) Ask the offender to describe experiences of violence growing up:

> Many people have either seen violent acts, or been victims of them. Could you tell us about your experiences of violence, either things you have seen, or where people you care about have been the victim, or where you have been the victim? By violence, I don't necessarily mean extreme acts — include things such as parents smacking children, as well as more serious things.

Allow the offender to talk freely, but explore the following areas:

- First memory of violence.
- How did people around him (his family, friends, teachers) resolve differences? Did they argue, fight, seek mediation, pray?
- Exposure to violence at home, at school, in the neighbourhood, in other arenas.
- Perpetration of violence: What is his first memory of perpetration? Has the extent of the violence escalated over time?

(3) What we'd like to do now is to talk about the violent incident that resulted in your being arrested. Could you tell us in detail about that?

Have the offender tell the story in detail. Ask them to start the story at the beginning of their relationship with the victim (if any), and to describe the relationship up until the final event that ended in their arrest and conviction. If the event was committed in a group, they should also describe the relationships in the group. Throughout the narrative of the actual event, they should try to give a moment-by-moment account of facts and their thoughts and feelings. Ask specifically about substance use of both the victim and the offender at the time.

Third interview

In this interview, the offender should give a history of his experiences with prison. Again, start at the beginning, and explore thoughts, feelings, positive and negative experiences, and positive and negative relationships in prison.

Experiences in prison:

- How many times have you been in prison? Were you ever in a Place of Safety, prison or Special Youth Care Centre (reform school) as a child? Were these imprisonments for acts of violence?
- Explore relationships with friends in these places — what kinds of role models did they provide, ones of deviance or of prosocial behaviour? Experiences of violence with or at the hands of friends? (Victim, perpetrator or witness). Induction into prison gangs.
- Relationships with staff: Were these good, or bad? What kinds of role models did staff members provide? Were they ever violent?
- Relationships with people who visit, and the history of visiting; feelings around that. Pay particular attention to family members and other significant figures: What do they think about the crime itself, and about his incarceration?
- Other opportunities offered in prison, e.g. sport, worship, workshops, etc. What are these? Did he participate? What did he gain? What does he think he needs instead?
- Preparation for life outside: What is offered in terms of rehab and support? It's particularly important to ask this of offenders who've been incarcerated multiple times – what did previous prison experiences do to deter or encourage offending and violence?

Appendix B: Table of Perpetrator Details[12]

PERPETRATOR NO.	AGE	OFFICIAL OFFENCES	PREVIOUS REPORTED OFFENCES	SENTENCE	YEARS SERVED	PRISON
1	26	Attempted murder	Robbery	10–15 years	6 years	Pollsmoor
2	23	Robbery with aggravating circumstances	Armed robbery; Attempted murder	15–20 years	2 years	Pollsmoor
3	24	Robbery with aggravating circumstances	Theft	10–15 years	8 years	Johannesburg
4	30	Murder	N/A	7–10 years	3 years	Pollsmoor
5	29	Murder	Theft	15–20 years	5 years	Johannesburg
6	24	Assault serious	Assault and Theft	15–20 years	8 years	Johannesburg
7	25	Robbery with aggravating circumstances	Charge unknown	15–20 years	6 years	Johannesburg
8	29	Attempted murder	Theft	10–15 years	5 years	Johannesburg
9	26	Murder	N/A	20 years	5 years	Johannesburg
10	30	Attempted murder	Housebreaking; Shoplifting	3–5 years	2 years	Pollsmoor
11	26	Murder	Possession of an illegal firearm; Robbery	10–15 years	3 years	Pollsmoor
12	34	Robbery with aggravating circumstances	N/A	Life	8 years	Johannesburg

[12] Derived Barolsky *et al*. (2008) report, provides an outline of 1) the department of corrections most up to date version of their details and current offences(Barolsky *et al*., 2008, p. 11), and 2) some previous official offences which some of the perpetrators reported during the course of the interview by the participants(Barolsky *et al*., 2008, p. 21)

13	32	Robbery with aggravating circumstances	N/A	20 years	4 years	Johannesburg
14	23	Robbery with aggravating circumstances	Housebreaking	7–10 years	3 years	Pollsmoor
15	27	Robbery with aggravating circumstances	Housebreaking; Murder	15–20 years	7 years	Pollsmoor
16	29	Robbery with aggravating circumstances	N/A	10–15 years	4 years	Johannesburg
17	34	Murder	N/A	10–15 years	4 years	Pollsmoor
18	33	Murder	Theft (details of other arrests unknown)	15–20 years	9 years	Pollsmoor
19	23	Robbery with aggravating circumstances	N/A	7–10 years	5 years	Pollsmoor

Appendix C: Permission Letter from HSRC/CSVR

CSVR The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

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25 March 2014

To whom it may concern:

Re: Permission to use HSRC/CSVR transcripts for secondary data analysis

I hereby grant Brett Bowman, Angelo Dias and Kyle Rowles permission to access and analyse transcriptions of the interviews conducted with 20 purposively selected perpetrators of violent crime for our study titled *Case Studies of Perpetrators of Violent Crime, which* was commissioned by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in 2007.

In so doing I certify that such permission does not violate any of the ethical conditions for the study specified by the original Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) ethics committee.

Signed this day 25 March 2014.

Dr Hugo van der Merwe
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