

https://dspace.org/

Hope or despair: perceptions of punishment in accounts of incarcerated perpetrators of violent crimes in South Africa

Taitz, Jaimee

2022
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/34232

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Hope or Despair?

Perceptions of Punishment in Accounts of Incarcerated Perpetrators of Violent Crimes in South Africa

---

By

Jaimee Taitz (STUDENT NO: 751834)

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

Supervised by: Professor Brett Bowman 2021/ 08/09

Abstract

Physical punishment has been shown to influence a child's later risk for perpetrating violence. However, there is very little research on how interpretations of the uses of punishment by caregivers feature in perpetrators' narrative accounts of violent offending. Informed by a psychosocial approach and drawing on a deductive interpretivist thematic analysis of an existing corpus of transcribed interviews with violent offenders, this study explored the ways in which ten perpetrators of violent crime narrated the meanings of childhood punishment in their offending as adults. The analysis was undergirded by Winnicottian psychoanalytic conceptual thinking about management of the antisocial tendency, while paying attention to the social circumstances that drive physical punishment and that shape the moral logic of violence in the perpetrators' development. My analysis demonstrates that in the participants' formative years, the antisocial tendency and unconscious communication of hope was mismanaged by their caregivers. Primary caregivers, fathers, and teachers failed to provide a good-enough environment to withstand these behaviours and to understand their unconscious needs. As a result, violence and criminality become the only hope for these individuals to gain comfort, status, wealth, and satisfaction of needs. Additionally, these turns to violence become the only hope for individuals to gain the environmental provisions that were absent in their childhood. Informed by this analysis, the report suggests several early interventions that could facilitate caregivers to provide a good-enough environment for children in their care, while accounting for the stressors and difficulties that are present in their immediate environments. This could form one arm in an overarching strategy to prevent young children from becoming violent criminals through offering hope to developing children in South Africa.

.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction, Aims, Rationale 6
1.1 Introduction 6
1.2 Research Aims 8
1.3 Research Rationale 8
Chapter 2: Literature Review 11
2.1 Introduction 11
2.2 The Progression of the Study of Violence in South Africa 12
2.3 Family Life in South Africa 13
2.4 Winnicott: The Antisocial Tendency 17
2.5 Management in the form of Punishment 21
2.6 Legislative Context around Punishment 24
2.7 Morality 25
2.8 Bridging the Psychological and Social 27
Chapter 3: Methodology 29
3.1 Design and Theoretical Framework 29
3.1.1 Deductive Interpretivist Qualitative Analysis of Secondary Data 29
3.1.2 Secondary Data Analyses 29
3.2 Research Questions 31
3.3 Procedure 32
3.3.1 Sampling 32
3.3.2 Analysis 32
3.4 Reflexivity 33
3.5 Ensuring Rigour 34
3.6 Ethical Considerations 35
Chapter 4: Analysis 36
4.1 Management/Punishment by Primary Caregivers 37
4.1.1 Physical Management/Punishment by Primary Caregivers 38
4.1.2 Other Forms of Management/Punishment by Primary Caregivers 43
4.2 Management/Punishment by Father Figures 51
4.2.1 Physical Management/Punishment by Father Figures 51

4.2.2 Management/Punishment by Absent/Non-Resident Father Figures.....54
4.3. Management/Punishment by Teachers 58
4.3.1. Physical Management/Punishment by Teachers 58
4.3.2 Missed Opportunity of Management by Teachers.....62
Chapter 5: Limitations, Recommendations and Conclusion.....65
5.1 Limitations 65
5.2 Recommendations.....65
5.3 Conclusion: Restoring Hope 66
References.....68
Appendix A: Interview Schedule 77
Appendix B: Permission Letter from HSRC and CSVR 80

"The understanding that the antisocial act is an expression of hope is vital in the treatment of children who show the antisocial tendency. Over and over again one sees the moment of hope wasted, or withered, because of mismanagement or intolerance. This is another way of saying that the treatment of antisocial tendency is not psychoanalysis but management, a going to meet and match the moment of hope."

(Winnicott, 1956, p. 309)

"Today, millions live on the margins of the formal economy, their hopes and expectations unmet and arguably unmeetable, even as the white community continues to dominate the economy along with an 'emerging' middle class. Everyone from the president down warns that those who have been left out will not be patient forever: owing nothing to a society that has given them nothing, some have already lost patience."

(Altbeker, 2010, p. 99)

Chapter 1: Introduction, Aims, Rationale

1.1 Introduction

There is a growing body of research on violence calling for a stronger theorising of the way that its risk factors are translated into violent action in South Africa. Several scholars have called attention to how the general public and indeed, victims and perpetrators draw on a range of "moral economies" (Stevens, 2008, p. 217) to make sense of violence (Bowman et al., 2015a; Bowman et al., 2015b). In South Africa, which is riddled with historical inequalities and deprivation, violence has often been attributed to cultural factors which imply a particular form of normative morality as a way to explain, and in some cases, legitimate the use of violence as a currency of action in the country (Bowman et al., 2015b; Collins, 2014). Psychological theory holds that underlying individual-level phenomena including inhibited abilities to self-regulate and to internalise the moral injunctions of broader moral systems (Bandura, 1999; Hochstetler et al., 2010; Presser, 2004), are key to understanding the perpetration of violence. These two relatively separate accounts or explanations for violence are weakened in particular ways. The social theories of violence do not sufficiently account for individual variabilities in the enactment of violence in adverse contexts, while psychological explanations are blind to the systemic organisation and structural drivers of risk factors that cluster around adversity. It is therefore critical to bridge these accounts to better understand acts of violence as activated at the intersection of the psychological and social worlds. This study applies such a psychosocial approach to explore the reported perceptions of punishment and morality by caregivers and teachers in the childhood narratives of incarcerated perpetrators of violent crime. Focusing on the perceptions of punishment in the accounts of these perpetrators provides an important opportunity to qualitatively examine the mechanisms that link this risk factor for violence during childhood to the moral logic of violence in development. Through the lens of a psychosocial approach, this focus will therefore illuminate the ways in which perpetrators make sense of their relationships with caregivers in their early years of life and how they morally account for the influence of these on acts of violence.

The study of violence has a long history in South Africa. This is not surprising since the prevalence and violent features of criminality is a major problem that is often addressed and spoken about by media forums, the public, as well as the government in South Africa (Barolsky et al., 2008; Bruce et al., 2007; Fry, 2014; Seedat et al., 2014; Swartz & Scott, 2014). In 2008,

a seminal study was conducted by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in response to a call by the then Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cabinet committee. Barolsky (2008) and her colleagues studied violent crime in South Africa by interviewing perpetrators of violent crime in Pollsmoor Prison located in the Western Cape, and Johannesburg Prison in Gauteng. These interviews attempted to highlight a more detailed and textured account of the lives of these men and in this process to begin to understand their trajectory of violent crime that could possibly be generalised to a larger population. The objective of this study was to understand how individuals become involved in violence, to understand the degree of violence used in individual incidents and to engage with the possible interventions that could assist in preventing violence and in the rehabilitation of violent offenders. There were three different sets of interviews for each participant. These included interviews about their life story, involvement in violence and incarceration.

The findings called for additional insight into the psychological factors that are implied in the perpetrators' narratives as a means to better understanding the manifestation of violence. This report offers a starting point where deeper interpretations and understandings of perpetrators' experiences can be explored. The study highlighted that the prevention of a cycle of violent offending must be seen in terms of the crucial environments of individuals, such as the home and school. These environments can become contexts of considerable risk for individuals and could lead to them becoming violent offenders (Barolsky et al., 2008). Such epidemiological and violence prevention studies have been a key focus of many psychological researchers (Bowman et al., 2015a; Bowman et al., 2015b; Stevens, 2008) and have proved important in informing the current study. Although the epidemiology of violent crime is central in understanding how risk factors increase the likelihood of violence, there are complex mechanisms that contribute to such a likelihood (Bowman et al., 2015b).

Human beings are meaning-making agents who engage in multiple, shifting interactions within their context, therefore an epidemiological approach needs to be expanded to account for both the social and the psychological (Bowman et al., 2015a). The experience of punishment has been identified as a risk factor for the development of antisocial behaviours, delinquency and violent offending. Caregivers who use abusive and neglectful punishment techniques to discipline children, often achieve the opposite effect, therefore leading to disordered attachment, abnormal maturation, behavioural difficulties and personality characteristics for violence (Fergusson et al., 1997; Krug et al., 2002; Pritchard, 2004). However, these sorts of

studies do little to examine the meanings of such punishments and the moral logic that these imply for acts of violence in later life. By exploring perpetrators' perspectives of their own experiences of punishment, this study attempts to link psychological theorising on punishment as a risk factor for violence whereby meanings of this practice draw on specific moral logics rooted in the social world.

1.2 Research Aims

The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of punishment in the narratives of perpetrators of violent crime.

1.3 Research Rationale

An epidemiological approach to thinking about violence has been highly influential, as it has focused on the influence of broad social and economic risk factors of violence (Bowman et al., 2015a, 2015b; Bruce et al., 2007; Rutherford et al., 2007). However, this approach requires elaboration to better understanding of the importance of the mechanisms by which these factors give rise to specific violent enactments. Therefore, research needs to account for how the social world shapes the psychological risk factors for violence and how these individual-level risk factors in turn influence the social world.

Perhaps the most important of these links is the bidirectional relationship between how social norms shape an individual's life and how these norms are constituted in individuals in the first place (Frosh, 2003). A growing interest in psychosocial studies represents an ontological attempt at better understanding the person-in-context where subjectivity and social-political discourses are inextricable (Gadd & Corr, 2015). An account of cultural and social structures needs to be developed as being in part constructed by and within the internal worlds of individuals who form that culture and society (Frosh, 2003; Jones, 2013). Therefore, this research will be embedded in a psychosocial framework, which is missing in much of the literature on violence. By employing this framework, both the inner worlds of perpetrators psychic experiences of punishment and the outer worlds of social structural context that constitutes these experiences can provide a rich appreciation for how the moral frameworks of these participants shape their own definitions and interpretations of violence (Gadd & Corr, 2015). Specifically, by focusing on the life histories of perpetrators of violent crime, an insider perspective of how violence is defined and accounted for will contribute to a body of research

that has aimed at developing interventions and prevention strategies as well as gaining knowledge about violence and why it occurs (Beaglehole et al., 2004).

Having introduced and located the study within the history of violent crime in South Africa, the remainder of the report situates the study in existing knowledge, outlines the methodology, provides an analysis and highlights concluding thoughts, limitations, and recommendations for this study.

In chapter 2, a review of the literature germane to the study is provided. The objective is to understand the complexities and multiple perspectives of child management and its influence on an individual's development. Thereafter, an outline of the socio-economic and historical factors that shape the family system will be discussed. Central to this report, a critical review of Winnicott's (1956) paper of the "Antisocial Tendency" will be provided to later understand the unconscious communications of transgressions found in the narratives of the perpetrators of violent crime. Leading from this paper, different management styles that follow these antisocial enactments will be unpacked. I argue that by understanding the normative worldviews and moral systems of many South Africans, which are contrary to the legislative perspectives of child management, a better understanding of the narratives of violent perpetrators can be understood. I argue that the use of a psychosocial framework allows for the understanding of management styles for the individual in context.

Chapter 3, provides a brief description of the methodology of the study. It is a secondary data analysis that utilises a deductive interpretivist qualitative analysis of the original data from the interviews of 10 perpetrators of violent crime. This sample includes men who were jailed for robbery, assault, attempted murder and murder, although they had often been involved in a range of other violent and criminal acts from the time they were at school. These interviews were acquired from the Centre of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR). 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. Three primary themes were discovered with two subthemes per the primary theme. The analysis of each theme begins by highlighting how this theme arises from theory and was identified in the transcripts of the participants. Each theme and subtheme will describe the data and then provide a more

strategic and granular interpretative analysis with more of an emphasis on the interpretative component of the punishment and discipline style experienced by the perpetrators in order to tease out the moral indexes and influences of violence later in life.

Chapter 5, outlines some of the limitations, recommendations and conclusions of the study. In summary, the primary conclusions suggests that the hope of gaining environmental provisions through antisocial tendencies is evident in the histories of the participants. However, living in a society where there is a lack resources contributes to the difficulty for caregivers to provide the provisions and management that could prevent children to become violent criminals. Child-rearing is a single feature that contributes to violence. The trajectory of becoming a violent criminal is multicausal therefore, a recommendation for further research is required. In addition to further research, this report provides a focus on childhood development in South Africa and recommends projects that facilitate this development process.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Violent crime in South Africa is a highly researched phenomenon. It is no surprise that the high violence rates and crime statistics in South Africa are compelling researchers to take a multidisciplinary approach to explore the epidemiological factors associated with this social and health challenge. According to a plethora of theories and research, the connection between children and their caregivers is an important moderating factor for criminal behaviour (Barolsky et al., 2008). In a 'good-enough' environment, a child's needs are met by an attuned caregiver who also monitors and provides appropriate limits within this space (Fonagy et al., 2018; Winnicott, 1963a). On the contrary, when parents respond to a child in a neglectful, hostile, and violent way, the child is likely to perpetrate violence in later years. These experiences may foster the development of conduct and antisocial personality disorders, which are risk factors for violent crime (Fergusson et al., 1997; Ishoy, 2017; Johnson, 2016).

The application of psychoanalytic theory becomes complicated in a country like South Africa due to issues such as poverty, race and social inequalities (Lazarus & Kruger, 2004). Some interpretations of psychoanalytic thought have elaborated on the importance of environment and context in praxis (Bowlby, 1940; Winnicott, 1956). Many psychoanalytic thinkers have emphasised the importance of understanding the manifestation of delinquency in society, due to its destructive potential within it. Donald Winnicott is one of the foremost writers on deprivation and delinquency (Winnicott, 1984). His positioning on this subject was precipitated by the Second World War and its effects on family life. Many children were evacuated, separated and displaced from their homes and families. His responsibility became to actively intervene, and provide them with holding and management in his work. In his seminal paper of 1956, "The Antisocial Tendency", Winnicott provides insight into the effects of deprivation on emotional growth and development and how the antisocial tendency manifests. It highlights the approaches and attitudes needed in managing delinquent acts in order to understand the innocence behind the act and thus renewing trust and hope. Winnicott (1960b) believed the environment brings a vitally and all-important reality in its own right to the maturational process that is essential to differentiation, empathy development, personal integration, and individuality in the world. Environmental management, in the form of punishment, has an impact on a child's development. However, Winnicott's (1956) 'optimal' environmental

provisions and reactions become challenging to achieve due to the historical and socio-cultural aspects of South African society.

South African psychology must aim at integrating theoretical analysis while not losing sight of its intersections with the social and economic risks for violence. Likewise, not acknowledging the subject from the manifestation of violence undermines the subjective enactments that could map the causes of violent crime onto solely social factors (Stevens et al., 2013). Thus, this report adopts a psychosocial framework, as encouraged by Frosh (2003), with a view to critically highlight how Winnicott's (1956) theory could provide new insights in relation to perpetrators of violent crime in the South African context.

Therefore, the following review of literature will firstly focus on understanding violent crime in South Africa, followed by Winnicott's (1956) account of "The Antisocial Tendency" and how caregivers and the environment may contribute to a trajectory of violence and crime. Thereafter, the different types of management and punishment styles will be discussed. Lastly, the review will explore how these management practices are part of and reflect the moral universe in which they are embedded. Finally, and drawing on each element of the review, a psychosocial framework will be advanced as the overarching framework in understanding the experiences of perpetrators.

The abovementioned constructs of discipline, punishment and management are culturally embedded terms, and the meaning of these terms will be provided by the accounts of the perpetrators. Thus, I will not take for granted the importance of a child's developmental process in an adverse environment, the historical differences and emergences of discipline and the universality of a particular kind of morality.

2.2 The Progression of the Study of Violence in South Africa

The understanding and orientation of violence have shifted alongside the many shifts that have occurred in South Africa's history. The apartheid regime's dehumanising regulations and unjust legislation became the primary focus of the manifestation of violence. The research was centred around violence as a manifestation of political turmoil and resistance by an oppressed majority (Bowman et al., 2015a). Research moved away from focusing on these determining factors and towards new approaches that focus on the psychological implications that occur in the aftermath of violence in an attempt to have a curative approach. The population-level

challenge of violence in South Africa was declared a major public health problem (Bowman et al., 2015a; Fry, 2014; Seedat et al., 2014; Swartz & Scott, 2014). A public health approach, which encourages an interdisciplinary study of violence, has therefore been one of several dominant approaches to the study of violence adopted by researchers in the field. This public health focus on violence was useful in understanding and explaining variants of violence from a social, political and economic level (Bowman et al., 2015a). However, it was argued that this became a 'one-fit-all' approach, making it difficult to account for differences and complexities of violence that manifest in South Africa.

In response to the high levels of violence that are still present today, Bowman and colleagues (2015b) alert researchers that more empirical and theoretical work needs to be done. Although the usefulness of the public health approach is acknowledged, it is suggested that there have been missing elements that might provide more insight and understanding of the manifestation of violence. For instance, psychoanalytic theory has not been frequently utilised in understanding violent interactions in South Africa. This means that the social subject or agent often appears to be negated in violence studies while prioritising the social and economic factors for violence. Bowman et al. (2015a) propose that violence studies should move towards a more psychosocial perspective in understanding the risk factors and enactments of violence: arguing that the focus should be on integrating the unique processes that transmit risk into violent manifestations for individual subjects with the contextual causal pathways which are inclusive of situational, contextual, social-cultural and historical determinants. In doing this, the 'black box' effect, where risk factors of violent crime are equated with outcomes, can be further unpacked and understood (Bowman et al., 2015a; Schinkel, 2004). Bridging the social and psychological, factors that contribute to the risk model for violent outcomes, such as parenting and child management, become more readily understood. By focusing on actual events and situations from the subject's perspective, the 'black box' exposes the complexities and multiple perspectives of child-rearing, its influence and translation into violence provide further insight into violent crime (Bowman et al., 2015a; Schinkel, 2004).

2.3 Living in a South African Context

In an attempt to do justice to the divergent assumptions and disciplinary perspectives of the determining factors that contribute to the risk of violent enactment, researchers have focused on the multiple interactions between social, community, family and individual levels to explain the onset of violence (Bruce et al., 2007; Rutherford et al., 2007). The prevalence of violence

in South Africa has been attributed to the apartheid regime and colonial rule more generally, where the government prioritised policies and regulations that maintained segregation and oppression rather than focusing on violent enactments and gang formation. Furthermore, the South African state committed systematic violence against the institution of the family among black citizens. Since brutal force was regularly used by an oppressive government in many communities, physical violence became normalised and it spilt over into interpersonal violence (Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018).

Socio-economic determinants of poverty and inequality as well as a lack of social cohesion and social control, are outcomes of the failure of the macro-systems. These socio-demographic conditions of poverty and inequality have often been found to be the strongest variables that influence the prevalence of violent crime in society (Altbeker, 2010; Bruce et al., 2007; Kramer, 2000; Parkes, 2007; Swartz & Scott, 2014; Wilkinson, 2004). Thus, family life in South Africa has been historically constituted in a way that significantly constrains the capacity of caregivers to provide support and safety to their children.

Relative deprivation, inequality and poverty are conditions that infiltrate many households in South Africa. Community members' ability to cope in the face of these adverse conditions is dependent on these structures of social cohesion, social support and social control. These structures are usually provided by meaningful integration of the individual into institutions such as the family, school and community. Additionally, these institutions contribute and assist in regulating the population's behaviour, preventing the youth from transgressing, by enforcing cultural and traditional norms to ensure that behaviours do not go beyond the limits of what is within the social and moral norms. However, this becomes a difficult task in impoverished and poverty-stricken households as there are deficits in these social structures, which limit the possible options and choices for people to make.

The transformation into democracy allowed for more social and cultural exploration where the youth could assert their selfhood. This exploration was ungoverned by existing norms that were longstanding in social institutions which were unequipped to reproduce community values and to manage the potentially violent behaviours of young people's quest for selfhood. Moral bearings that institutions such as families, schools and police provide were not taken up by many young men, therefore, determining boundaries and limits over their behaviours for themselves, weakening the inhibitions of criminality (Altbeker, 2010). The limited amount of

state control influenced the development of systems of informal control within the communities, where violence became a common way of interacting within these communities (Breetzke, 2012; Glaser, 2008; Kynoch, 2008). The formation of gangs provided opportunities for individuals to establish some social control in the absence of systemic control and the face of institutionalised racism. Within these gangs, individuals were able to occupy subjective positions or a sense of identity which perhaps felt more attractive than following their traditional routes (Glaser, 2008). Gangsterism would offer a way for young men to navigate their way into adulthood where violence is often performed as a means of attaining a sense of ideal or a 'successful' masculine identity (Stevens, 2008). Such gangs are associated with violence and risk for criminality, however being associated with gangs becomes a tempting alternative (Glaser, 2008; Kynoch, 2008). Normative values are reconstituted and alternative adaptive strategies to adversity are adopted.

An inevitable consequence of relative deprivation, inequality and poverty is that individuals become vulnerable to multiple stressors. Such stressors mediate a caregiver's and community member's ability to fulfil their role at raising children effectively, despite striving to do so. Poverty and poorer quality home environments often result in attachment difficulties (Bain et al., 2012) and low levels of familial and community support and may directly affect caregivers' capacity to be effectively responsive to their children (Cooper et al., 2009; Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Kramer, 2000; Wilkinson, 2004). Maternal stress, poor attachment, child neglect and abuse, lack of nutrition and violence, inconsistent parental guidance and child-rearing may occur; all of which tend to be key risk factors of violence.

Socio-economic and historical factors have therefore contributed to the configurations of households and family structures. Larger households with extended family members are often seen in poorer communities to balance the consumption of resources and to provide multiple modes of income (Clowes et al., 2013). This creates a complex web that is different to the heteronormative stereotypical nuclear family. Single-headed households, elderly-headed households, female and child-headed households tend to be the outcome of poverty.

Furthermore, fathers and fatherhood are tied to the socio-economic legacy of apartheid, slavery and colonialism. These historical and contemporary social and economic forces have had the effect of severely destabilising mainly black and coloured masculinities, families, lives, relationships, identities and communities. The General Household Survey 2016 data for

children 0–7 shows that black children are the most likely to not live with their biological parents. Just under half a million (3%) lived with their father only; and approximately three in 10 children in this racial group lived with both parents (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Van den Berg and Makusha (2018) highlight the unfavourable impact of father absence and non-involvement in children's lives. The impact of the presence and active involvement of a father in a child's life has been associated with many favourable outcomes. These include improved academic performance, healthy sexual socialisation, as well as favourable social, emotional and cognitive functioning. This is specifically evident for boy children as research has shown that fathers impact a child's transition into manhood and their conception and acquisition of masculinity. Furthermore, the notion of fatherhood is often associated with the disciplinary and economic responsibility within the system (Clowes et al., 2013). Embedded in the construction of men as household heads, are the notions of patriarchy and masculinity which are conflated with fatherhood (Langa, 2020). The traditional notion of patriarchy, where masculinity is obtained through power, control, dominance and the denial of vulnerability and dependence, becomes a difficult social status to occupy partially as a function of institutional racism and partially as a function of its colonial and capitalist ideology.

The conditions that contribute to the configurations of family life and the navigating of selfhood within social institutions make it difficult for individuals to develop an appreciation for their rights, much less the rights of anyone else (Altbeker, 2010). Structural inequalities in social formations that disadvantage certain social groups through some or other form of systemised domination, makes violent and punitive child-rearing an appropriate means of attaining control and discipline (Stevens, 2008). Often members of households in South Africa are separated due to limited space in the housing situation and so families become dispersed (Langa, 2020). This means a network of relatives and community members contribute to the child-rearing responsibilities. Winnicott (1960b) recognises that good-enough mothering reflects both a diversity in experiences of mothering and the substitutability of the provider of mothering. In the South African context, there are often multiple caregivers and so this type of mothering needs to be psychosocially conceptualised. Winnicott (1945) emphasised the importance of a good-enough environment if the mother-infant relationship is going to be facilitated. The environment should have boundaries and be free from any intrusions (Barton et al., 2011). In South Africa, where maternal stressors and societal factors influence a caregiver's ability to provide such an ordered, reliable environment, becomes compromised.

2.4 Winnicott: The Antisocial Tendency

Psychoanalytic theory offers an understanding of the vast problem concerning human violence, crime and destruction. Before Winnicott developed his theory on these topics, delinquency and crime had been attributed to the intrapsychic, internal world. Psychoanalytic theory stated that violence and destruction come from a child experiencing anxiety and guilt about the ambivalent experiences towards their loved and needed person (Klein, 1935). For example, experiencing hate rather than love when a mother is not able to satisfy the physiological frustrations of hunger might result in these ambivalent feelings. If there is an absence of reparation, the guilt builds up and the individual behaves in a way that will ensure that there is something to feel guilty about, rather than having these ambivalent feelings (Klein, 1935). Winnicott (1946) agreed that behaviours had their origin in these unconscious conflicts and acknowledges the intrapsychic dynamics that take place for the child, though he elaborated on these theories by highlighting the environment as important and decisive in the development of aggression and delinquency, hence a good fit for a more psychosocial approach (Winnicott, 1945, 1960b, 1963b). Furthermore, Clare Winnicott (1984) points out that her husband's examination of deprivation and delinquency influenced his strong belief that society needs to be aware of psychoanalytic insights in order to appreciate the meanings behind antisocial acts.

Winnicott (1956) noted that all children express an antisocial tendency making it part of normal development. Though he understood that the children who had gone over into delinquency needed more than clinical help, they presented a problem of care and management. This speaks to the environmental and social aspects of development as well as the relational engagement in the parent-infant dyad. Often antisocial behaviour is reacted to in the form of punishment, and Winnicott's (1956) paper on the Antisocial Tendency acknowledges the importance of understanding the intrapsychic, unconscious aspect of the transgressed behaviour and meeting it with appropriate management. Environmental and relational factors undeniably influence the development of a child (Barolsky et al., 2008; Londero & Souza, 2016). Within a relational interplay between the individual and the social world, the individual navigates through a maturational process where they develop their mental ability, personality, social competence and a sense of self and others (Howe, 2005; Winnicott, 1956). This environmental influence can be both facilitating and inhibiting in the developmental process, as Winnicott (1960b) states that inherited maturity tendencies could occur only within an enabling environment.

It is with ‘good-enough’ parental and environmental provisions that a climate is created in which maturation can occur. ‘Good-enough mothering’ is categorised as providing for the child’s physical needs, for food and hygiene and fulfilling the maternal functions of holding, handling, and developing a deep and meaningful communication with the child (Londero & Souza, 2016; Winnicott, 1960b). Providing this type of management and attention to a child becomes difficult when there are socio-economic factors that do not facilitate it. Horwood et al. (2019) highlights the vulnerability of mothers and their children to falling victim to poor health like food insecurity, poverty, and informal work. Maternal depression has been associated with adverse effects on the quality of the mother-infant relationship and a child’s development (Horwood et al., 2019). These socio-economic factors don’t only make it challenging for caregivers to attend to the physiological needs of the child but can also lead to depression and other psychological symptoms for the caregiver which may impact their ability to function and provide emotionally. However, the description of ‘good-enough’ applies to mothering that is acceptable, not perfect. In South Africa, where deprivation and high levels of chronic stress are apparent, the standards of good-enough mothering set by European theorists in the mid-1900s require caution.

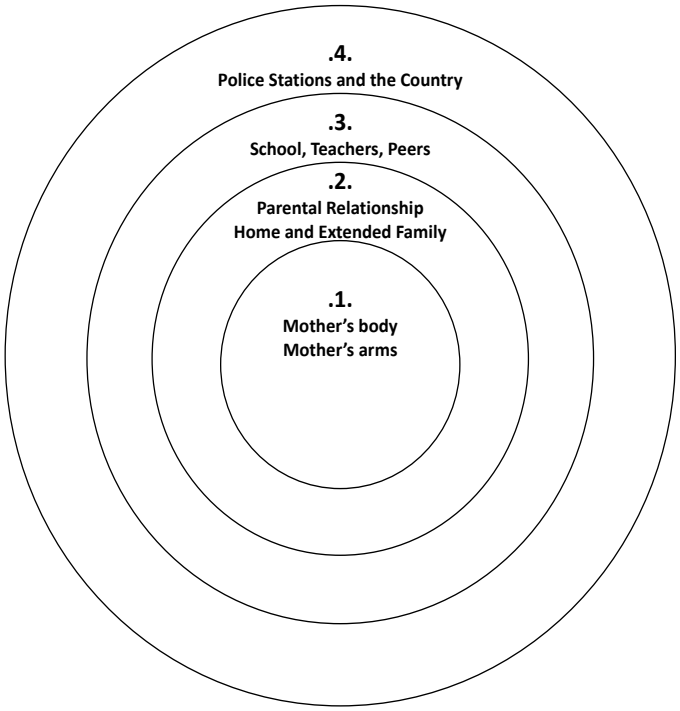
The antisocial tendency is not a diagnosis, it is a ‘normal’ process and may occur at any developmental age (Winnicott, 1956). During development, the child “pulls out all the stops” (Winnicott, 1946 p. 45) to test the environment’s stability, and the environments strength to withstand the child’s aggressive impulses. Therefore, there is an unconscious communication beneath the antisocial act. Vital to the antisocial tendency is the caregivers’ response to the young child’s “power to disrupt, to destroy, to frighten, to wear down, to waste, to wangle, and to appropriate” (Winnicott, 1946 p. 45). In a facilitating environment the caregivers can survive and tolerate the child’s aggression, which is key to the child’s maturational process (Abram & Hjulmand, 2018). However, if the unconscious communication of the antisocial tendency is not understood by the environment, the child’s antisocial tendency is in danger of evolving into delinquency (Winnicott, 1967). Eventually, the child becomes emotionally hardened by the absence of the containing boundary of the environment and a life of violent crime becomes the only way for the individual to feel real (Abram & Hjulmand, 2018).

According to Winnicott (1956), two trends manifest in an antisocial tendency. The first trend is ‘object-seeking’, which is seen in stealing, which is associated with lying. Winnicott (1956) explains that when a child is in a situation of searching for an object and steals, he is not

specifically interested in the ‘thing’ he steals but is rather trying to find what is felt to be lost. The second trend is ‘destructiveness’, which is characterised by breaking, burning, and destroying. When destructive, the child seeks environmental stability, in the form of a protective “human attitude” (Winnicott, 1956, p. 310). This stable environment will help the child to gain a sense of security to be free to explore, express and be creative. Hope is a feature that underlies the acts of stealing and destructiveness (Winnicott, 1956). In the first case, there is a hope that the object (holding mother) which the child originally lost will be found and preserved. In the second case, the hope is that there will be a protective and stable reaction from the environment.

If this hope is unmet and the child’s primary caregivers’ do not provide good enough management, the child will have no sense of boundaries and will become anxious. This will lead to him seeking management from outside the home (Abram & Hjulmand, 2018; Winnicott, 1946). Winnicott (1956) states that one can discern total environmental reactions through an ever-widening frame to achieve emotional growth. The frame or circle starts with the child’s first experience of a holding environment from “the mother’s body” or “the mother’s arms”. The circle widens to the second environment of the “parental relationship”. This is followed by the home and extended family. It further widens when the child goes to “school” with teachers and peers. Eventually, the circle extends to the police stations and the country with its laws (Winnicott, 1956). See Figure 1.

Figure 1.
Ever-Widening Circle



Winnicott, 1956

Even though Winnicott (1945) prioritises the role of the maternal function as providing care for the child, the paternal function was also addressed in his writings and the writings of contemporary psychoanalysts (Target & Fonagy, 2002; Winnicott, 1944). The paternal figure contributes to the management of a child's antisocial tendency. While the maternal function involves providing care for the child, the paternal function includes dimensions that can enable the child to take up their place in society as a human being (Target & Fonagy, 2002; Winnicott, 1944). The crucial function of the father evolves with the different stages of dependence. During the relative dependence stage, the father becomes introduced to the mother-infant dyad, becoming the third person. His role is to establish limits, control impulses, tolerate frustrations and provide an external reality to the child. These experiences of externality promote healthy human development (Barbieri & Pavelquieres, 2012). When the antisocial tendency is present, the father must assimilate and respond to the child in a strong and loving way. If the father fails to do this, the child will have difficulties making sense of himself in the world (Barbieri & Pavelquieres, 2012; Winnicott, 1944).

According to Winnicott (1967), the function of a two-parent relationship suggests that one parent can be "left to remain loving while the other is being hated […] which has a stabilizing

influence" (p. 114) for the child. The psychoanalytic term "paternal function" is often associated with the pronoun "he" or the role of the father in the triangular relationship. However, Davies and Eagle (2013) argue that the paternal function doesn't need to be a "father" but rather a "not-mother" (Winnicott, 1945) to facilitate a healthy development of a child's psyche. Households in South Africa often have multiple caregivers or the absence of such caregivers. Van den Berg & Makusha (2018) report on the state of fatherhood in South Africa as a whole, which indicated that father figures are often not present in children's development.

2.5 Management in the form of Punishment

Managing a child with antisocial tendencies and delinquency becomes a challenging task (Chescheir & Schulz, 1989). This is because the environment must be stable enough to withstand any destructive or aggressive behaviours. Winnicott (1962) addresses the importance of "good-enough management" which means providing structure and safety provisions while offering understanding, empathy and the security of limits. If this occurs within a trusting and caring relationship, the child will develop the ability to have concern for others which may prevent criminality (Chescheir & Schulz, 1989; Winnicott, 1962, 1963b). If a child behaves in a delinquent manner, the individual is searching for an environment that will provide safe boundaries in a non-punitive way, but rather in a way that will create a sense of security. Repeatedly, the child is unconsciously searching for safe limits to be set, which is instinctively felt to be missing (Abram & Hjulmand, 2018).

In the absence of such an environmental provision, the child's capacity for concern becomes compromised, increasing the risk for violent outcomes. In other words, there is a provocation of management from caregivers who might respond to these trends with physical punishment which only hinders the child's emotional development for concern (Winnicott, 1946). Another type of reaction to delinquency could be "mother-love" (Winnicott, 1956, p. 312), where the caregiver overindulges and spoils the child, out of their intrinsic complexes, which then becomes unsuccessful treatment.

It is important to understand the societal enabler (Straus, 2010) that are attributed to the use of physical punishment. Cultural norms and beliefs, a society riddled with violence and the very real strain of living in high poverty conditions raise the probability that caregivers or teachers will engage in physical punishment to correct transgressions of a child (Breen et al., 2015).

This management style becomes effective in achieving short-term solutions to control children's behaviour in high-risk environments (Adams, 2020).

Discipline and physical punishment as child-rearing practices employed by caregivers to correct a child's behaviour is often conflated. On the one hand, the use of discipline as a child-rearing tool helps a child understand consequences, moral values, inhibit aggressive behaviour and enhance empathy and regard for others (Grusec et al., 2017). On the other hand, physical punishment is when this force or measure is inherently physical with "the intentions of causing a child to experience bodily pain or discomfort so as to correct or punish the child's behaviour" (Gershoff, 2008, p. 9). This violent form of punishment at home and school is associated with psychological cognitive, emotional problems and later aggressive behaviour (Gershoff, 2018; Holden, 2020). This is exacerbated by the traumatic experience of a child being attached to a parental figure who on the one hand attends to the child's dependence and on the other hand inflicts pain, in the form of punishment, on the child (Mayisela, 2020).

Psychologists consider inductive disciplining as the preferred method of disciplining for optimal development, as it includes setting limits, reminding children of rules and eliciting understanding of potentially harmful consequences of their behaviours (Cloe, et al., 2013). Through this, the caregiver aims to balance the tension between children expressing their subjectivities in the world, while acting with respect towards others and towards larger society (Adams, 2020). The intention of this method is to achieve the internalisation of rules and age-appropriate self-regulation. Grusec et al. (2017) explains that children conform to society and reach their best potential when the motivation to comply is directed from within due to internalised norms and beliefs, therefore they develop self-discipline and practice thoughtful self-control. This has the potential of shaping children into becoming responsible members of society who delay gratification, control impulses, tolerate frustration and develop a capacity for concern (Barbieri & Pavelquieres, 2012; Baumrind, 1966, 1967; Cloe et al., 2013; Grusec et al., 2017; Winnicott, 1963b), assuming these are adaptive in that society. The cultural and social settings in which many South Africans reside is not benign as there is violence and benevolence within and between systems. Many parents are subjected to toxic stress which hampers their ability to implement 'good-enough' management as seen in an inductive discipline (Adams, 2020).

Physical punishment becomes a common response to children's transgressions. Physical punishment is being hit by a figure of authority either using a hand or an object (Breen et al., 2015). Studies have shown that this form of punishment reduces a child's spontaneity, curiosity and creativity, therefore, impacting their ability to function optimally in society (Adams, 2020). Furthermore, anxiety, humiliation, fear, shame and anger are the affective responses that are elicited due to physical punishment and fear of external figures is what drives a person to manage their behaviour (Breen et al., 2015; Holinger, 2020). Research states that physical punishment is associated with detrimental outcomes such as delinquency, antisocial behaviour, and aggression in children and interruptions in the parent-child relationship (Gershoff, 2008). Studies that explored children's experiences of physical punishment found that children do not agree with this type of punishment as it causes physical and emotional pain (Dobbs et al. 2006; Saunders & Goddard, 2007). Moreover, children feel strong adverse feelings towards the caregiver who physically punishes them (Gershoff, 2002) and it is felt to be an unfair method of disciplining (Vittrup & Holden, 2011). This form of punishment diminishes one's ability to self-impose discipline, regulate one's behaviours and internalise rules that would enhance self-control (Adams, 2020; Grusec et al., 2017).

Often driving the disapproval of physical punishment is the assumption that families reside in social settings that support more benign forms of discipline than hitting children. Also assumed is that social and economic factors are committed to protecting and nurturing families and children (Adams, 2020). However, in South Africa, where violence is often considered normative and a means of navigating the world, which could be explained by the legacy of apartheid, self-discipline and self-control are often conflated optimal for survival; adopting more violent behaviours becomes necessary (Mayisela, 2020). Physical punishment has been entrenched in South African society as an appropriate means to respond to the above-mentioned trends of antisocial tendency: Physical punishment meted out to others is most likely the same form of discipline that these people received growing up. Thus, for many children living in South African society, physical punishment could be perceived as a positive reaction from the environment as it is a 'normal' and legitimised form of management.

The relationship between these two constructs of discipline and physical punishment very much depends on the social context within which these practices are used, and the terms deployed. Through this lens, violence could potentially be an invaluable resource for accomplishing goals, sustaining authority and accordingly becomes a resource for action,

2.6 Legislative Context around Punishment

The normative worldviews of many South Africans are often at odds with legislation around corporal punishment. The use of violence has become a normative means of asserting one's interests and negotiating social interactions. This is evident in power dynamics between figures of authority and children. This occurs especially when social forces place unbearable pressure on caregivers and educators, leaving them feeling helpless (Adams, 2020; Morrell, 2001). For example, studies on corporal punishment in schools in South Africa suggest that there is a preference for corporal punishment as a disciplinary method, due to the "intergenerationally, racially-based normalisation of violence towards black people" (Mayisela, 2020, p. 10). In the schooling system, educators' control and power over learners has mostly relied on the use of corporal punishment (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010).

Mayisela (2017) describes how educators believe that they are warranted to use corporal punishment to ensure that children are reared to behave appropriately despite the developmental harm that this form of management causes. "A school as an institution is used to disseminate the power through its dominant normalising discourse, where such discourses determine what is normal and abnormal, what is sane and insane, what is acceptable and unacceptable" (Mayisela, 2017, p. 25). This is seen in the many teachers' narratives of corporal punishment, as they believe that it is an expression of love, care and concern for children and an attempt to guide them to act in accordance with larger societal expectations (Mayisela, 2020; Morrell, 2001).

Research and human rights come together in the acceptance that, for children to survive and thrive, families need an enabling environment to provide responsive caregiving, and opportunities for early learning (Richter et al., 2019). In South Africa, *Freedom of Religion South Africa v Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development and Others* consider the religious, cultural, and psychological perspectives of corporal punishment on children. The judgment drew on research that shows how all corporal punishment is potentially harmful and part of a wider circle of violence, and recognised South Africa's "history of widespread and institutionalised violence." Sections 10 and 12 of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa protects human dignity and the freedom and security of the individual. Thus, the common law defence of "reasonable and moderate chastisement", was deemed unconstitutional. This encourages the use of other, non-violent forms of child-rearing which

are in accordance with the best interest of the child. Richter et al., (2019) highlighted the opinions of South African caregivers' experiences of the legislation. They contend that there has been a removal of authority and control from the discipliners, while there is an acquisition of "too many rights and privileges" (p. 305) for children.

2.7 Morality

The way that primary figures manage children through discipline conveys a dynamic set of moral coordinates for action. Dunn's (2006) suggestion is that moral reasoning is dependent on one's ability to develop and internalise norms as influenced by the interaction with caregiving figures. Winnicott (1956) states that with the permanence of a reliable and safe environment, children are able to develop the ability to worry about their acts and have a capacity for concern towards others: thus, by redirecting aggressive and destructive impulses to constructive impulses, one will be able to function in society. Winnicott (1984) asserts that eventually, an inner capacity for a sense of security will develop and the individual will have the ability to live in conformity within the boundaries set by society while still being able to express themselves.

In contexts like South Africa where high rates of violence are embedded in communities, the local moral order is frequently established through violence (Bennett & Brookman, 2008; Bruce et al., 2007; Collins, 2014; Parkes, 2007). Therefore, Winnicott's idealised moral order cannot always be universally endorsed as normative nor wholly available to many in South African who live in unjust and unequal conditions as a matter of course. In such conditions, violence serves as a moral resource and a normative means to assert personal and community needs and desires; gets endorsed in various circumstances and therefore becomes perceived as a constructive means of communicating and negotiating rather than a destructive means of doing so (Stevens, 2008). This can partly be explained by becoming desensitised as a consequence of the 'culture of violence' in which many communities exist (Bruce et al., 2007; Collins, 2014). The existence of a culture of violence creates a social environment in which people can all too easily come to see criminal violence as a reasonable option. Therefore, perpetrators have an insufficient sense that gaining power, control and an opportunity for a better life through criminality may be both unusual and unacceptable (Collins, 2009). Swartz & Scott (2014) present that one way that young people in South African townships morally engage with violence is that it is acceptable when individuals transgress a group's social norms and in the absence of institutional action. Figures of authority of informal social control, such

as caregivers and teachers, often use aggressive and violent means to maintain social order and to punish social transgressions.

Winnicott (1956) states that antisocial behaviour implies hope. The hope is that the environment will be able to withstand the test of the aggressive behaviour, repair the destruction and recognise the positive element of the antisocial tendency. Inequality can give rise to hopelessness about achieving aspirations that are out of reach due to social structures that fundamentally constrain the prospects of a better life. Langa (2020) recognises that such societies make it difficult for individuals to see a way forward and to avoid the trajectory of violent crime. The hope of accumulating wealth and status in a post-apartheid South Africa becomes instantly achievable through conspicuous consumption. Therefore, engaging in criminal acts becomes a way for individuals to internalise a marker of freedom. Hence the agency to say no to engaging in criminal activity "gets lost in the world of instant gratification" (Langa, 2020, p. 154). This may increase the currency of violence as a resource for shifting the everyday oppressive conditions for some communities (Stevens, 2008).

Violence may intersect with moral systems that legitimate or even encourage it. It is precisely these systems that are encoded into the way in which perpetrators of violence may interpret their early childhood histories and the place of punishment therein. Understanding this intersection of morality and violence viewed through the prism of accounts of punishment requires both an understanding of the psychological dimensions of the role and effect of punishment, but simultaneously implies the need for a socially sensitive analysis of the meanings and moral frameworks attached to the practice of punishment in early childhood. Therefore, Winnicott's knowledge related to the parental characteristics promoting human development, provide an understanding of how punishment may facilitate violence (Barbieri & Pavelquieres, 2012; Winnicott, 1963b), while a focus on the structural and social dimensions of violence, such as masculinity, drugs, alcohol, inequality, and weaponry is required to understand the social context in which practices such as punishment are made meaningful. It is evident that psychological perspectives alone are not sufficient for understanding violence, while social approaches lack the complexities involved in understanding the development of subjectivity amongst violent people, therefore a psychosocial approach is the most valuable way to engage this project.

2.8 Bridging the Psychological and Social

Psychologically, studies of families and their management styles of children account for intrapsychic and interpsychic family dynamics. Social factors that are commonly experienced by mostly low-income black communities often obstruct a caregiver's ability to provide a facilitating environment that both allows for expression and curiosity and adequate limit-setting towards antisocial tendencies. Such psychological studies include Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor's (2016) research on the effect of negative childhood experiences, such as physical punishment. It was found that physical punishment is a form of toxic stress experienced by children which compromises the functioning and structure of a child's brain. Furthermore, Richter et al., (2019) acknowledged the social environment and all its forces as important to a child's individual development. They were able to gauge the perspectives of South African citizens on the topic of physical punishment, where there is limited understanding of the harm caused towards children through this means of managing. Members of the public in this study felt that children are afforded too many rights in South Africa and that the discourse of 'children's rights' comes at the expense of parental and community authority over children.

These studies do not reckon with the social contexts in which individuals live and which live within the individual (Lazarus & Kruger, 2004). Contextual deprivation and a society that is riddled with violent enactments need to be accounted for in the childhood narratives of perpetrators of violent crime. Adams' (2020) paper highlights this intersection of the psychological and the social perspectives of punishment: by focusing on the ineffectiveness of physical punishment while giving attention to the cultural context where individuals are at high risk of being harmed which then leads to the frequent assertion of this form of punishment. Adams' (2020) report focuses on the African-American population and the toxicity of their world in relation to longstanding perceptions of black people, state oppression and police brutality. Similarly, Dias' (2017) thesis pursued a psychosocial analysis of violence based on the mentalization theory, whilst accommodating factors related to conspicuous consumption and neoliberalism. The study aimed to highlight 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 that result in their own, and others' enactments of violence.

Therefore, a psychosocial framework has been adopted to fully appreciate the perpetrator's experience of punishment, as punishment is a concept that is psychologically and socially nuanced. Psychosocial studies offer new ways of exploring a balance of the psychological focus on the individual and the social perspective of culture and history (Frosh, 2003). This bridging of these two approaches highlights the notion that the human subject is within, charged by, reflecting of, influencing, and determined by the social world (Frosh, 2014). There is a need to embrace the psychological notion of 'selfhood', individuality, and the psyche in conjunction with one's social, historical, and cultural world, which is required in understanding violence in South Africa (Bowman, 2015a; Frosh, 2003). Thus, a psychosocial form of analysis will highlight the ways in which perpetrators make meaning of punishment through the codes of their current moral worlds (Frosh, 2003, 2014).

Therefore, it becomes important to account for the causation of violent crime in South Africa from a psychosocial perspective because it is important in understanding the manifestation of violence in individual subjects within a context that includes social-cultural, economic and historical factors. These perspectives of child-rearing need to be understood within the South African context in order to fully account for the complexities that contribute the use of certain discipline styles. Despite the clear legal framework of corporal punishment, a range of normative orientations to morality that guides the disciplining of children, view corporal punishment as an instrument for discipline in the repertoire of caregiving and child-rearing practices. This seemingly speaks to the environment being amoral, regardless of the morality or forms of punishment employed by caregiver and teachers. Although Winnicottian parenting seems to have an impactful outcome on a child's internal experience of the world, in a depriving environment Winnicottian management of the antisocial tendency might not hold a chance against the trajectory of young children eventually becoming violent perpetrators.Caregivers providing deeper understanding and Winnicottian management might not function within a context that pulls the youth towards criminality, which seems to have many rewards in a depriving environment.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Design and Theoretical Framework

3.1.1 Deductive Interpretivist Qualitative Analysis of Secondary Data

The method of analysis that I employed for this research was a qualitative analysis to explore perpetrators' reported experiences of punishment in their childhood. It was an appropriate research method as it is used to describe and explain individuals' experiences, behaviours, interactions and social environments (Fossey et al., 2002). This is achieved through "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data" (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 79).

Moreover, given that this study focuses on the perpetrators' accounts of punishment, the research employed an interpretivist paradigm. In addition, psychosocial studies are dedicated to recover and construct meaning (Frosh, 2003). The subject's social reality is based on the interplay between their meanings of behaviours and the context in which these behaviours take place. Thus a psychosocial theoretical approach is useful for understanding how social subjects make sense of and interpret the world through language. Therefore, the design was a deductive interpretivist approach driven by psychosocial theory.

3.1.2 Secondary Data Analyses

The study offers a part-response to the Barolsky et al., (2008) call for a deeper psychological analysis of these perpetrators' narratives. It will serve as a supplementary analysis to the original aim of the CSVR study**,** as I will focus on psychosocial processes that precipitate violent enactments in South Africa. A benefit of secondary data analysis is that even without reference to the previous report, given the extensive breadth and depth of the interviews, it is arguable that these narratives may provide a sufficiently rich resource to contextualise and make sense of the data (Barolsky et al., 2008). Additionally, since incarcerated perpetrators of violent crime constitute a sensitive and hard to reach population, secondary data analysis was an appropriate strategy for answering the research question (Corti & Thompson, 2004).

In the first study, 20 incarcerated perpetrators were selected. The sample was a purposeful, non-random convenience sample. The participants were originally approached and recruited on a voluntary basis with assistance from the Department of Correctional Services. Half of the participants were sampled from Pollsmoor Prison located in the Western Cape, and half were

sampled from Johannesburg Prison in Gauteng. The selection process was based on a rigorous search with one of the inclusion criteria being the type of crime committed. These included murder, attempted murder, assault with grievous bodily harm and aggravated robbery (Barolsky et al., 2008). In addition to these processes, a selection interview was performed prior to the start of the study taking into account the judgement of an experienced and trained interviewer's perception of the perpetrator's ability to participate in the interview process.

Three separate interviews (See Appendix A for interview schedule) were conducted by trained interviewers who were involved in the research project. The themes of the interviews were: 1) life history (including content about their families, peer groups and schools), 2) involvement with violence (where themes of masculinity, poverty, status, guns, alcohol, drugs, aggression were found), 3) incarceration (their previous experiences with the criminal justice system, violence in prison, gangs, and finally, rehabilitation and reintegration beyond prison). Ninety minutes was allocated for each of the three interviews (Barolsky et al., 2008). Participants were advised to speak in their language of choice. The 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 Appendix A (which contains the original interview schedule) (Barolsky et al., 2008). Given the relative complexity of developing 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, debriefing sessions were offered to the participants after each interview to aid them in coping with the difficult and emotionally intense nature of the interviews (Barolsky et al., 2008).

The aim of this secondary data analysis was to explore an additional research topic, which is different from the initial CSVR study (Barolsky et al., 2008) as outlined, firstly to understand how specific individuals become involved in violence, and secondly, to engage with possible interventions that could assist in preventing violence (Barolsky et al., 2008). This current study works towards finding a deeper understanding of these objectives, as encouraged by the primary researcher (Barolsky et al., 2008). This was done by focusing on the first set of interviews, where the life histories and the relationships between the perpetrators and their caregivers and teachers are explored. The perpetrators describe that these primary socialising agents are the people who had the most influence over them since childhood (Barolsky et al., 2008), often with reference to how they would respond to their transgressions.

The limitation of using secondary data is that the current researcher was not present when the data was collected, therefore did not interact with the participants (Long-Sutehall et al., 2010). However, the previous study's researcher was also not present during the collection due to language differences between the researcher and participants (Barolsky et al., 2008). Furthermore, due to the difficulties implied in reaching a sample of incarcerated perpetrators of violence, secondary data becomes a useful source (Neuman & Wiegand, 2000). Such obstacles cannot be avoided; therefore the use of secondary data is appropriate and relevant. An additional limitation is that discipline and punishment were not pre-defined or privileged constructs for investigation in Barolsky et al., (2008) study. The narratives did not focus on a specific developmental age and some of the participants spoke about the punishment styles received from caregivers in their adolescence. This inconsistency amongst the narratives is somewhat of a limitation. However, Winnicott's (1956) theory speaks about antisocial acts that occur throughout development, therefore the analysis will not focus on a specific age, but rather all stages of childhood development. Further, while severe physical punishment has particular implications in child-rearing and has been suggestive in the later development of violent behaviour, the trajectory of criminal behaviour cannot be attributed to just one risk factor.

3.2 Research Questions

Winnicott's (1956) paper had a huge impact on parenting during the Second World War, however, his theory of the antisocial tendency does not only belong in the past, but to the ever-present encounter between the antisocial elements in society and the forces of health which reach out to reclaim and recover what has been lost. The complexity of this encounter cannot be overestimated (Winnicott, 1984). The point of interaction between the caregivers and the cared for is of particular interest, as early good-enough management of these antisocial elements can provide a child with hope in a society that feels hopeless. The concern driven by psychosocial theory is how to maintain an environment that is humane enough, and strong enough, to contain both the caregivers and the deprived and delinquent who desperately need care and containment. Hence, the following research questions underpinned this study: What are perceptions of childhood punishment in the accounts of incarcerated perpetrators of violent crime in South Africa?

3.3 Procedure

3.3.1 Sampling

The researchers from the original study liaised with the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), to compile a sample of 20 male offenders who had committed the violent crimes of murder, attempted murder, assault with grievous bodily harm and aggravated robbery. This was a rigorous process. The participants were between the ages of 23 to 34 and had been incarcerated for crimes committed between 2000 and 2005. Permission to access these transcripts was obtained from the CSVR's research manager and the lead researcher on the project (Barolsky et al., 2008) at the time. These transcripts formed the corpus for the current study.

After I became familiarised with the dataset a sub-sample was selected (Long-Sutehall et al., 2010). I took a close look at the pre-existing data of 20 interviews and selected the most productive sub-sample to answer the research question. Thus, a sample of 10 participants was used in this study as these participants' interviews provided relatively rich details about different experiences of punishment in their childhood. This strategy is known as information-rich, purposive sampling, therefore selecting cases that are applicable to the aims of the research report to explore and gain insight and in-depth understanding of the topic (Patton, 2014).

3.3.2 Analysis

The study made use of deductive thematic analysis whose theoretical framework was informed by psychosocial theory in analysing the secondary data transcripts (Braun & Clark, 2006). This method was adopted as a means to identify and analyse any themes and patterns that are related to the research questions (Braun & Clark, 2006). Themes were organised through any commonalities and differences clustered within the transcripts in relation to punishment in the life story interviews of the participants. This was accomplished through the use of Atlas TI 9.0-2.

The procedure started by coding the interviews, with a focus on any language that communicated punishment or was related to the management of transgressions by authority figures. I explored different types of punishment. These included punishment from primary caregivers, fathers and educators. Different types of management by these social figures were

then translated into three different Excel spreadsheets. Thereafter, I grouped the forms of punishment into different sections. For example, under the primary caregiver code, there were three types of punishment, implied by psychosocial theory (Frosh, 2003, 2014) with a focus on Winnicottian theory (Winnicott, 1956). These will be discussed in the analysis section. Under the father code, three common subthemes became evident, namely, the present father, the absent father and the loss of father, and how this influenced the perpetrators' experiences of punishment.

This form of data analysis was chosen for its flexibility and accessible approach to analysing data. Braun and Clarke, (2006) suggest that these are characteristics of thematic analysis as it does not occupy a single epistemology, but rather can be adopted within diverse theoretical frameworks. An interpretivist analysis was used as the research explored the ways that perpetrators perceived punishment during childhood to understand how such perceptions may be related to the moral frameworks that inform their worldviews and the violence that they have perpetrated within them.

The research focused on the identification and examination of latent themes in the data. In keeping with the psychosocial framework of the proposed study, the common threads in the accounts of the perpetrators were understood by exploring the underlying ideas, assumptions and concepts that inform the content and that were not explicitly described in the interviews (Braun & Clark, 2006).

The research used a deductive approach to thematic analysis where codes and themes are generated from psychosocial theory. The aim here is to develop a complex understanding of how perpetrators' perceptions of punishment were shaped and how this provides insight into their moral worlds. Thus, this approach does not focus on the way the perpetrators responded to interview questions (Braun & Clark, 2006).

3.4 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is "a hallmark of rigorous qualitative research in which the researcher is considered an instrument of the study" (Hoover & Morrow, 2015, p. 1476). When reading the transcripts, it became important for me to recognise my outsider status and moral stance and to engage in the perpetrators' perspectives in an open and non-foreclosing manner. As a white South African, the aftermath of a history of colonialism and apartheid, specifically, has shaped

privilege and has positioned me as having different life experiences that are foreign to the narratives that unfolded in the transcripts. Although the study developed my initial understanding of the social worlds of the participants, these differences in lived experiences and worldviews could have had implications on the study.

Given my clinical psychology training and currently being exposed to a wide range of destructive behaviour and unconscious communications in my internship, I was originally compelled to focus on these narratives firstly, from a psychoanalytic perspective, prioritising Winnicott's (1956) theory of the Antisocial Tendency and thereafter highlighting the social aspects in separate sections. Frosh (2003) views this constant adjustment of a theoretical lens between individual and social as a "vastly difficult task" that cannot be understood outside its context (Frosh, 2003, p. 1564). So, keeping these separate does not encapsulate the meaning of these narratives and embarking on this 'vastly difficult task' became something that I needed to carefully consider.

3.5 Ensuring Rigour

The report ensured rigour by giving privilege to the perspectives of the participants as the participants' perspectives have been authentically represented in the research process and the interpretations provided were coherent with the social contexts in which the participants lived (Fossey et al., 2002). Although this study doesn't necessarily imply that the findings are broadly generalisable, it serves to build on and reflect much of the theoretical and empirical literature; it arguably adds value to the literature on violence.

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, 2004). I read the transcripts thoroughly and gathered the data which informed the research question. This led to more focused sampling as only 10 of 20 transcripts spoke to the specific research question. The first set of interviews (life history) were utilised, as this was coherent and appropriate to the objectives of the research study. This reading process occurred several times to avoid missing information and to ensure adequacy and accuracy (Fossey et al., 2002). I looked for potential trends in the data to the theoretical framework and separated the data into the separate themes generated from the theoretical framework chosen for this report. While interpreting the data, I corroborated the direct quotes from the data while freely associating and holding in mind the psychosocial framework (Fossey et al., 2002). All these steps were carried out to ensure the

methodological rigour of the analysis, as well as enhance transparency (Fossey et al., 2002). After all of this was performed, my supervisor reviewed all the analyses and helped refine them, to ensure the rigour and clarity of my interpretations.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Approval for access to the interviews was 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. The permission letter and ethics clearance certificate for the study are attached in Appendix B.

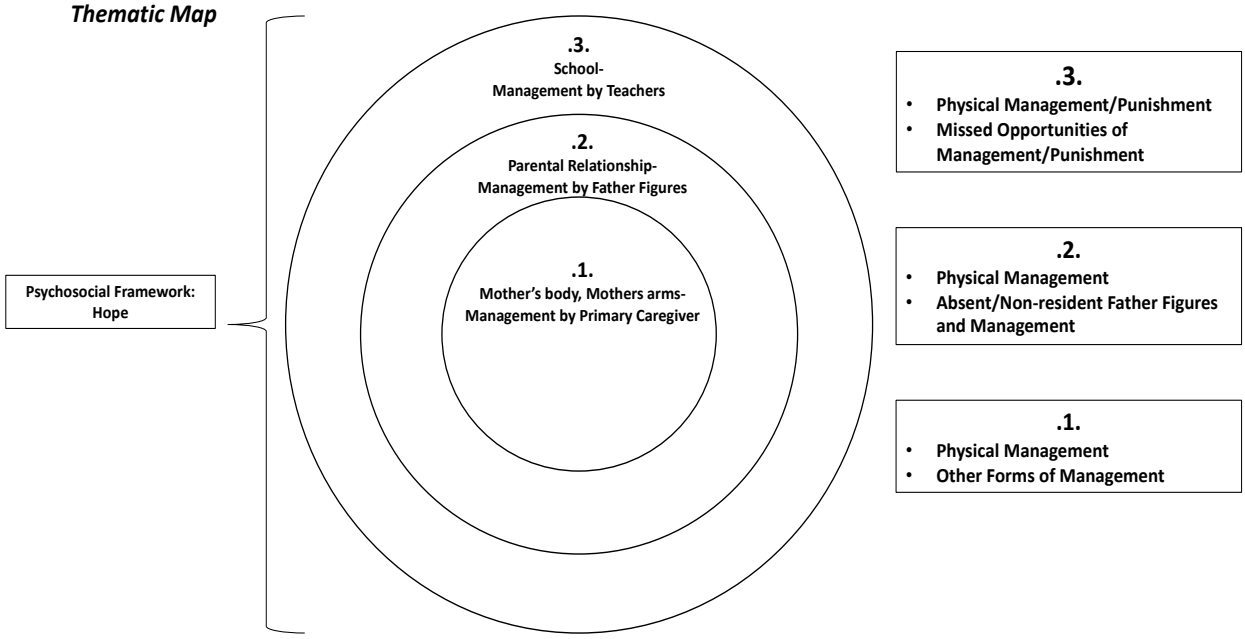
Chapter 4: Analysis

The themes generated by deductive thematic analysis elaborate on three primary themes influenced by Winnicott's (1956) theory of the antisocial tendency (see Figure 2, derived from Figure 1) read against the social realities that inform South African life for many of the participants. Winnicott (1956) is claiming that the antisocial individual's behaviour expresses—and protests at—a loss of something once sensed as good and needful. Hence for him, the importance of discerning the element of hope behind the antisocial manifestations of the delinquent becomes crucial. The participants' antisocial tendencies in their childhood narratives are presented as part of the broader psychosocial framework. It is through this psychosocial framework that through the conceptualisation of the management (punishment) of these behaviours drives the analyses. The different environmental provisions are provided by 1) primary caregivers, 2) father figures, 3) teachers and each will be discussed in relation to psychosocial theory. Each of these themes is divided into subthemes of the different types of management used by these structures. Winnicott (1956) describes the reaction from the environment in the form of a human attitude. This human attitude from social structures could be in the form of avoidance through denial and collusion, punitive judgement in the form of harsh punishment or containment and holding, which is the hopeful equivalent in the adult environment of the healing response of the caregiver in healthy child development (Shields, 2000).

Moments of hope are characteristic of the child with antisocial behaviour. The child's referential structure crumbles when there is environmental failure. If there is still hope, there is a search for new references and external stability which guarantees the maintenance of an integration state (Shields, 2000). Antisocial behaviour is usually a request for an emotional barrier or stealing back something that was lost in early development, usually through outside management and carried by strong, loving and confident people, who can make effective involvement possible (Shields, 2000). The child seeks this control and when it does not have it will act against its family or society, unconsciously aiming to restore the control from the external environment. This search is charged by a feeling of hope of finding in the external environment something that failed at some stage of its maturation. This notion of hope can be applied within the social context of South African society, where hope and expectations go unmet as false promises, by the state, of a better life for all, its lack of delivery and its denial of the existence of rampant crime in the country (Altbeker, 2010). The hope which is

communicated in antisocial tendency might never get met as the environmental circumstances do not facilitate this process. This is seen in the below themes of the different experiences of management in the narratives of perpetrators of violent crime. The following analysis will therefore provide a way of identifying the meaning of these terms through the accounts of perpetrators' experiences.

Figure 2.
Thematic Map



Winnicott, 1956

4.1 Management/Punishment by Primary Caregivers

According to Winnicott (1956), there are trends in which the antisocial tendency manifests. In the narratives of the participants, these acts range from minor to more severe transgressions and some were reported in more specific terms than others. The childhood narratives seemed to highlight these behaviours that occurred at different times ranging from early childhood through to adolescence. All the participants referred to at least one of the following behaviours, such as, *"not listening", "committing theft", "being involved with gangsterism", "doing something wrong", "doing things without thinking", "being late for curfew", "not behaving in accordance with"* or not *"obeying"* the expectations of caregivers.

These antisocial behaviours test whether the environment is stable enough to recognise the positive element in the antisocial act and to tolerate the destruction and drive of object-seeking. Winnicott says that punishment only exacerbates the problem because the symbolic value and unconscious communication is unseen. However, the unfavourable conditions in South Africa may limit the possibility of caregivers exploring the root of the criminal act.

4.1.1 Physical Management/Punishment by Primary Caregivers

Some of the participants would express the use of physical punishment as a reaction to some of the above-mentioned transgressions. Studies that highlight the child's perception of physical punishment have shown that children perceive this form of punishment as unfair compared to other forms of punishment, such as reasoning or withdrawal of privileges. Receiving physical punishment frequently leaves children with negative feelings towards their caregivers, and they struggle to understand the reason why they received physical harm (Mayisela, 2020). This general finding seems contrary to the perceptions of punishment experienced by the perpetrators, which can be understood within the psychosocial framework.

Ahmed stated that *"We were beaten … We were hit with a belt"* when he did not listen to his caregivers. He reports that "*every naughty child must get a beating.*" Ahmed identifies these sociomoral conflicts by pointing out that if an individual is "naughty" the implementation of social control by authority figures is important and this should be done in the form of a "beating". It is through this sort of imperative linking of "naughtiness" to "beating" that physical punishment is normalised and is therefore suggested as a resource for accomplishing goals and sustaining authority; seemingly important and becomes reported as a productive resource for action. Winnicott (1956) states that there needs to be a holding, good-enough environment in which the child is free to develop, protected at first from the impingements of the outside world. This physical and psychic environment provides space for growth, even in the form of acting out. Caregivers are responsible for providing this space to the child. By physically punishing, rather than understanding and attending to the hope, there is a missed opportunity by the caregivers of these participants for easing tensions and providing trust in the environment. Research has shown that developmental consequences and difficulties are associated with physical punishment (Adams, 2020; Holinger, 2020), including interruptions in the attachment between a caregiver and the child. Though, when it comes to the social context in which individuals interact, environmental realities cannot be ignored (Frosh, 2003).

In South Africa, beating, hitting, and spanking has become a common and appropriate way to manage children's behaviour (Breen et al., 2015). Violence was an almost defining characteristic in South Africa's history. This can be explained by constant uprisings against the apartheid regime and the need to enforce social control within communities because of the deficit of formal social systems, such as a legitimate police force. Physical punishment has become deeply entrenched in the culture of the society and the normalisation of violence contributes to the navigating of interpersonal interactions and sociomoral conflicts (Barolsky et al., 2008; Collins, 2014; Hinsberger et al., 2016; Parkes, 2007). Thus, this form of management of antisocial tendency must be understood within the extreme conditions and social expectations that shape the perpetrators' experiences, therefore, perpetuating the likelihood of becoming perpetrators of violent crime.

Zolani reported, *"Sometimes I would get beaten for being late."* He experienced his mother as *"strict"* as she instilled a curfew to ensure that he was not out late with his friends. Zolani's mother attempts to set limits and she uses violence as a normative disciplinary mechanism to enforce boundaries. Limit setting is a component of good-enough caregiving, but caregivers may draw on the social norms of the context in deciding what those limits look like. In South Africa, limits are set, challenged and negotiated using violence and this is how norms are sedimented (Holden, 2020). However, Winnicott (1946) states that there needs to be a good balance between boundaries and freedom when raising children in order to prevent the child from offending against society. This balance becomes difficult to achieve for Zolani's mother and she resorts to being "*strict*" and providing strong management. This form of law enforcement was not limited to mothers. The community seems to take on the responsibility of implementing social control in the absence of social structures. Zolani says, *"it is unusual for them to call the police in the township. They take the law into their own hands. They beat you up."* Thus the use of legitimate violence is reported as not falling exclusively into the purview of the police. Rather, "criminals" and gangsters are represented as subjects that appear entitled to enforce the "law" through the use of violence. These sorts of statements point to the fact that the use of violence as a way to solve problems or pursue goals (Barolsky et al., 2008; Collins, 2014; Hinsberger et al., 2016; Parkes, 2007).

This is seen in Zolani's narrative:

> *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."… "So in the township there is a lot of crime. And we used to go to many places at night. I was a person who liked to have a good time. And we would go around at night, until the morning. So we would see many things. Many fights in the bars. People shooting and stabbing each other and many fights.*

Zolani's mother then reportedly used violence as a way to protect her son from exposure to the everyday contexts he describes. However, he also makes sense of her "beating" him and being strict because of her own anxieties about raising him alone and trying to be a 'good enough' mother. This could be associated with needing to be strict because of the absence of Zolani's father. Someone had to do the disciplining because of the ambient violence and crime in the community. Psychosocially, the absence of a father due to a range of apartheid legacies must be substituted by the mother "symbolically filling the void of the father" (Langa, 2020, p. 60) in a world that is dangerous. In support of this argument, Zolani continues:

> *No, in most of their homes, it was open for them to come whenever they want. It was not strict, like my home. And I used to enter into their houses even if the elders were there. But in my home they did not enter when my mom was there, only when she was not there. Sometimes my mom would find them there and she would shout at me there. She was very strict. Because I grew up without a father.*

Zolani experienced his mother as stricter and more punitive than other mothers in the township. Being late for curfew would result in Zolani receiving harsh, physical punishment. On the surface, he was breaking his household rules and transgressing when arriving past curfew. However, Winnicott (1956) states that such transgressions have an unconscious meaning and can be understood as a manifestation of hope that there will be a responsive human attitude, which is a healthy alternative to resignation and despair. There is a hope that this human attitude can be relied on therefore giving him the opportunity to move, act and get excited. On the contrary, Zolani's mother's human attitude of intolerance and use of physical punishment shows that in South Africa, social forces jeopardise the good-enough environment, where a

caregiver is attuned enough to understand the signs while providing appropriate limits. For Xolela, his grandmother was his primary caregiver but there were other family members who would partake in disciplining him in different ways and inconsistently:

> *They disciplined in different ways because, when the family is together and there is a lot of you, you not disciplined in the same way. If someone doesn't like your mother, or you do something wrong or you did it with someone, you get hit but he doesn't.*

When he experienced punishment from his aunts, Xolela would seek protection from his grandmother. This showed that she was the only one who he felt had a right and authority to punish him, as his primary caregiver. This distinction can be understood through his perception of the way she would spank, which was managed with the addition of her asking him questions about his transgressions. These questions seemed to encourage mindfulness, as they allowed him an opportunity to observe, describe and participate when responding about his behaviour (Linehan, 2014). Feeling protected and psychically held coloured his experience of physical punishment from his grandmother as appropriate and necessary, similar to views reported in previous studies (Breen et al., 2015; Simons & Wurtele, 2010). Although this was a containing experience for Xolela, Gershoff et al. conclude that "physical punishment increases the risk that children will experience detrimental outcomes, and this risk is experienced equally across cultural groups, families, and neighbourhoods"
(2018, p. 634).

Xolela described the following:

> *If I get hit, I went to my grandmother crying, and she would ask why I'm crying, who was I fighting with, are they my age and say that person must be called and ask why she hit me like that, that's not the way to hit a child."…"If you did something wrong, she (grandmother) first asked you questions like "didn't you know that what you did was wrong?" Then she would ask "if I spank you, how will you feel?" Then you would apologise, and she would say "I hear your apology but come let me spank you so that you know that what you did was wrong … Yes, that's how she disciplined when she spanked. She wasn't like the sisters.*

Holden's (2020) research which highlights that there is agreement amongst researchers that harsh, abusive punishment has negative consequences for the child. Low-income families reside in impoverished, violent spaces and must be vigilant to protect themselves against danger and deprivation. In such settings, there is little intrapsychic or social space to tolerate enactments or failure, when these could well mean injury or death. Thus, physical punishment is an often-approved disciplining tool for securing obedience, given the high-risk environments in which these families reside. A troubling paradox noted by Gershoff (2002) is that in seeking to protect against societal harm, parents inflict pain that may increase the level of aggression that emerges when their children become adolescents and adults (Straus & Yodanis, 1996). This, in turn, only increases the possibility of attracting interpersonal aggression in communities already at high risk to be subjected to violence. In South Africa, there is normalisation of violence and a history of physical punishment as a means of controlling individuals in the absence of other means of social control. However, this type of punishment did not seem to correct Xolela's behaviour and influence him to act differently. Winnicott (1956) states that the environment must tolerate, withstand, and find the positive attributes to the antisocial tendency. Xolela refers to this when he says:

> *Yes, you did it again because … a child does it again because that's what children do, they do childish thing. So, I got spanked right, and do something wrong again. Not to say that you will do something wrong right then and there.*

It is quite possible that Xolela actually hopes that his behaviour will evoke the kind of response from those around him that he needs. He needs boundaries and limits to his behaviour. At the same time, he needs to be understood and accepted, even though his behaviour may not be understood. Barton et al. (2011) state that this should be done in a firm but non-punitive way. Xolela's narrative shows that he is unphased by being spanked and therefore was governed by external motivation did not work for him. This shows that the long-term internal motivation of controlling themselves and having a sense of concern for others was not achieved through this management style. He continued to commit crimes until eventually receiving management from the prison system as a last resort.

Relative deprivation, inequality, poverty and interpersonal difficulties are factors that infiltrate South African society and lead to individuals feeling both physical and psychical pain (Cooper et al., 2009; Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Kramer, 2000; Wilkinson, 2004). The caregiver's provision

of a safe, facilitating environment may restore hope and trust in the environment that otherwise feels hostile. In South African societies, providing this space becomes a difficult task due to the harsh conditions that intrude on one's lifestyle. Therefore, a caregiver's limited ability to be attentive to a child could lead to the child experiencing true deprivation, which results in the antisocial tendency. The child behaves in a delinquent manner with unconscious motives to gain back the attention and love of the caregiver, which was lost.

When the caregiver does not provide holding and containing management and rather resorts to physical punishment, the child experiences additional physical and psychical pain. There is a failure to repair an early deprivation, which the child hopes to recover through his acts. The child continually engages the environment through antisocial acts and although this often feels containing as they receive attention from caregivers, the violent nature of physical punishment has consequential outcomes.

Winnicott (1956) and empirical research has shown that there are detrimental consequences for this type of management, which might be one precipitating factor that contributes to these participants become violent criminals. In combination with additional relational, interactional, structural, cultural and social factors these antisocial behaviours are likely to contribute to the trajectory of being violent criminals.

4.1.2 Other Forms of Management/Punishment by Primary Caregivers

The other forms of punishment that were evident in the narratives of the perpetrators included demonstrating disapproval, withdrawing privileges, shouting and scolding in relation to the violent actions of stealing, robbing, self-destruction.

Punishing Stealing

Winnicott (1956) highlights that the antisocial trend of object-seeking or stealing is a behaviour that manifests symbolically as a representation of the provision a child had lost in early infancy, and to help fill some of the gaps left by that (Winnicott, 1956, p. 311). In addition to this intrapsychic motivation, stealing is performed for economic gain and a hope for a better life in society.

Smithson reported "*stealing money [to] buy clothes and groceries.*" He is stealing money with the unconscious motive of seeking his mother, which may have been lost in his formative years.

And he is seeking to assist his mother with the very real difficulties of having scarce resources. As he says:

> *So, but my mother does not want stolen goods groceries. So, you will find that if I buy groceries when I come back, they are scattered all over the yard, she has spilt them. She will tell me straight on that she doesn't want stolen food. She works for herself and she will buy her own groceries.*

When he would provide stolen groceries for the household, his mother disapproved and *"spilt"* and *"scattered them all over the yard."* She demonstrated her anger, opposition, and disapproval about his criminal activities, by scattering the goods and telling him that she earned her own money. This form of management was an attempt to demonstrate to him that stealing rather than working for goods is 'wrong'. This speaks to an attempt to disrupt the normalisation of violence and crime as a means of making a living in South Africa, where inequalities and class-divides fuel criminal practices in processes of material gain and possession of resources (Stevens 2008).

Based on the antisocial tendency, Smithson was "compel[ling] the environment to become important" (Winnicott, 1956, p. 309) to self-cure in a moment of hope. However, the mother did not "meet and match the moment of hope" (Winnicott, 1956, p. 309), by attempting to understand what her son's communication might have been. This is an optimal means of managing misbehaviour, however this might not be achievable given that the offenders who were interviewed described growing up in deprived environments in South Africa.

Psychoanalytic theory refers to the mother-infant dyad as an attachment relationship where the physiological experience of hunger, amongst others, must be met through feeding. This is a gratifying and satisfying experience for the child and an opportunity for the attachment bond to form. It can be interpreted that Smithson experienced this pleasurable experience of possessing his mother in his formative years, through feeding. But this might have been lost leading to an absolute deprivation. In providing groceries to his mother, Smithson is communicating an unconscious motivation of seeking this gratifying experience. Therefore, providing her with the groceries with the hope that she will use them to nourish and feed him once again. In a society where the financial lives of lowly paid workers cause extraordinary uncertainty and increased stress, there is bound to be devastating consequences for the levels

of violence (Altbeker, 2010). Stealing food to alleviate the mother's stress in this social environment, where uncertainty, food insecurity and poverty is ripe, shapes the way the need for gratification is symbolised.

Smithson's mother's reaction seemed to be a management failure, where her attitude was punitive and judgemental of the crime committed. She was unable to see the unconscious motive beneath the act of stealing. Smithson, therefore, would stop seeking his mother's attention and would seek attention elsewhere. With his stolen money, he would buy clothes for himself to impress "girls". In moving the narrative from his rejection and punishment by the mother for stealing to account for his enduring theft to impress other women, Smithson appears to invite Winnicott's (1956) understanding that the trend of object-seeking as his stealing is driven by what once belonged to him by right and which has been lost (Barton et al., 2011). He is also "alerting the environment to this fact" and testing the environment's tolerance towards the nuisance value of such behaviour (Barton et al., 2011, p. 95). This desire to gain interest from women may be a desire to satisfy the need for the management that he hopes to acquire from his mother. In addition, this might be an attempt at securing a woman to assure or enhance his masculinity. In South Africa, wealth accumulation is highly masculinised and therefore directly related to gender relations. Men remain constructed as the breadwinners in most households (Stevens, 2008). Violent performances may be considered hegemonic, as being a breadwinner is not always attainable and therefore resorting to illegal means to gain this status. Langa (2020) reveals accounts by men in townships and how having girlfriends boosted their status amongst their peers and contributed to their masculine identities. This is additionally seen in David's childhood narrative as he began robbing because he wanted money to buy clothes. He says:

> *I was robbing, getting a lot of money and I didn't know what to do with all that money, I bought myself clothes and stuff."* This was to impress women.
> David states, "*In that love of clothes, I also loved girls. So, you can't go to girls if you look scruffy/dirty and wearing the same clothes all the time. So, you must look good, then at least your girlfriend can say nice things like 'my man looks good etcetera'.*

Smithson and David show examples of conspicuous consumption as they aspire to afford commodities to impress girls, even though this is through illegal (and often violent) means. Langa (2020) and Stevens (2008) recognise that in societies, like South Africa, which is riddled

with inequalities and stuck in the legacy of apartheid, it becomes difficult to attain aspirations to wealth and status legally. The pursuit of wealth accumulation and conspicuous consumption manifests as a motive to secure status in the perpetrators' accounts of violence (Bruce, 2007; Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Kramer, 2000, & Wilkinson, 2004). This psychosocial dynamic highlights that hope for the psychological attachment with primary caregivers is wholly related to and moderated by a context of real deprivation for both Smithson and David, in which their early transgressions were not adequately limited, but merely redirected towards violence as a legitimate means to a socially recognised form of masculinity that is marked by conspicuous consumption (Stevens, 2008).

When David's mother was aware of his transgressions, she would punish him by withdrawing privileges. He reported:

> *Like when I did something wrong ... okay at home, I was the type of person who loved clothing, I liked being bought clothes and enjoying myself, so the way they punished me ... So she would punish me by saying 'you did such a thing so you must know that at the end of the month you won't get such a thing … So, that was the way in which I would be punished in and when I wanted money I wouldn't get it.*

He experienced his mother's punishment as teaching him respect and how to humble himself, though this did not stop him from engaging in criminal activities. When David's mother would withhold clothes, he felt that there was even more reason to engage in crime. He stated:

> *I wanted to have my own money so that I didn't have to keep asking for money all the time. So that is where I started misbehaving, being mischief, robbing and doing armed robberies and all things like that.*

Again, one can see that engaging in the trend of stealing (Winnicott, 1956) one is hoping for an environmental provision. Linked to this, is the interest in securing a 'girlfriend' through the acquisition of material resources, such as clothing. This link highlights the societal set-up that creates a structural form of violence, where wealth discrepancies, in societies like South Africa, legitimise violent crime as one's ability to mature and to establish their identities, both in society and for the self (Stevens, 2008).

Punishing self-destruction

Winnicott (1956) writes about a second trend, which is the antisocial trend of "destruction". Destructive acts are the individuals' attempts to compel environmental stability. This environmental stability allows for one to have the freedom to explore and express oneself through development.

Ahmed described his neighbourhood as an environment that lacked stability as he stated, *"Where I came from, is a messed-up place, in other words, nobody really trusted each other ... there was a lot of violence and drugs going on there. In every neighbourhood it is like that."* Ahmed was involved in these activities as he dealt with and used drugs, which can be interpreted as a form of destruction. He says:

> *… for a very long time that I did dagga and Mandrax. I was small when I first started with that stuff. On primary school I started with the dagga and later on went onto pills, I think I was then in standard 2 or 3.*

Being involved in these activities can be understood from a psychosocial perspective. Ahmed reports that the "neighbourhood" in which he lives includes social practices of violence and illegal substance distribution and use. Due to the adverse conditions and turbulent history, these social practices become legitimised and adaptive which then is seen as a normative behavioural repertoire and a way of surviving in an adverse society. He is also alerting the environment to his deprivation and testing the environment's tolerance towards the nuisance value of such behaviour (Barton et al., 2011). He is seeking environmental stability and response in the form of a "human attitude" (Winnicott, 1956, p. 310). This will be in his mother's reaction to the antisocial trend. Ahmed's mother would provide her human attitude and respond to his antisocial acts by not only employing physical punishment, mentioned above but would also scold him. He reported, "*She did find out and when she found out I was dead meat. When she found out, she was angry and would scold at me about it."*

Thabo expressed that he would receive a similar type of management from his mother. He reports, "*She used to shout at me and correct me."* When asking Thabo how it felt to receive this type of response from his mother, he explained that "*It felt great because she showed love and care for me."* This highlights the environmental response that he received in the form of management from his mother. He reports having a positive perception of this experience as he

felt loved and cared for. Perhaps this felt like something he was missing or had lost, as suggested by Winnicott (1956), and so getting a response in the form of shouting might have been a way that his needs were fulfilled. This was not the case for Ahmed, as his words of "dead meat" seem to suggest that this felt punitive and harsh, in line with the feelings expressed about being physically punished. Based on Winnicott's (1956) theory, this form of management might have been a missed opportunity of understanding what was being communicated. Straus (1994) highlights that living in situations of overwhelming poverty and instability inhibit the potential for parents to develop skills to rear children to become able to express themselves and act in the world while respecting the rights and property of others (Adams, 2020). Toxic stress disrupts physical health, thinking and ways of relating and has consequences for family relations and quality of life. Parental availability, thoughtfulness, and the ability to digest the child's aggression are considered a good implementation of good enough management. However, many parents in South Africa must still cope with the social ills and toxic stressors, making this quality of caretaking difficult to achieve (Adams, 2020). Harsh punishment becomes a preferred parental practice to protect their children against danger (Adams, 2020). Sicelo also reported being shouted at by his mother when he did something "wrong", which he did not like and therefore would react by ignoring her. Therefore, after shouting, she would "spoil" him to repair the relationship. He stated:

> *She used to shout at me but when she noticed that I did not want to talk to her, she used to take me to Mitchell's Plain and maybe buy me shoes. She did not want me to be upset and never allowed anyone to upset me.*

Winnicott (1956) mentions that spoiling might be an inability for her to tolerate the hate that Sicelo expressed towards her for being the "depriving mother". He states that when this type of management is "a reaction formation arising out of her own complexes, then what she does is called spoiling" (Winnicott, 1956). Sicelo seemed to orchestrate a power dynamic, through tactics of manipulation and intimidation. This made his mother feel guilty and insecure about their relationship after shouting. He seems to identify that by being "her only child" he was able to benefit and get "treated ... like an egg." Sicelo further stated that it was very rare to see his mother get upset. When neighbours would tell his mother that he misbehaved, he would get angry at those people and confront them. He would say, *"Do you like when my mom is unhappy?"* The absence of reflection of his actions and the manipulation and inversion of responsibility is facilitated through a process of moral disengagement. This involves denial and

disavowal of his involvement in criminal activity in an attempt to mitigate or undercut the responsibility for the harm he caused (Bandura, 1999; Hochstetler et al., 2010; Presser, 2004). This is seen when Sicelo confronts his neighbours, showing no moral consideration and would blame them for his mother's unhappiness rather than taking responsibility for the unhappiness that his actions had caused. Sicelo seemed to deny responsibility, and seek to blame others when problems are confronted, often pointing out others' faults and distorting negative implications of his actions, in order to morally disengage (Bandura, 1999; Luyten et al., 2012).

Punishing both Stealing and Self-destruction

Thembikile reported that he was involved in gangsterism, where the gangs would engage in stabbings and robberies, alcoholism, and substance use. He describes that his mother would respond to these behaviours. He reports, "*She tried to stop me, you know. She would tell me that this thing I am doing will land me in trouble or even in prison. And I would stop for a while, but, you know, when I see the guys, I would go back."* He seemed to appreciate this type of management of his behaviour as he stated, "*She was very close to me, because we lived together at home. So, all my mistakes that I was committing, she was the one who was correcting them. She would tell me you should not do this, and you must do this…. She gave me respect. She respected me as a child that was younger than her. Just like other children."* Although this type of management felt holding and containing for Thembikile, Winnicott (1963b) proposed that delinquency did not represent a corruption of character to correct. Thembikile's mother seemed to attempt to "correct" the crimes that he was committing by warning him of the potential consequences. However, she may have failed to notice the delinquency as a representation of an important sign of hope in response to the abrupt and overwhelming loss of connection with the mother. Another explanation of understanding why he landed in prison, despite experiencing holding and containment from his mother may be that other external factors such as gangsterism, conspicuous consumption, and substance use became such strong influencing factors, which satisfied his needs, that re-gaining the primary but still-needed, caring, holding, and facilitating environment (Winnicott, l963b) become less significant in satisfying his needs.

Stabbing/Killing

Stevens (2008) highlights that violence is frequently expressive in nature, implying heightened levels of emotional tensions that escalate from disagreement to altercation to violence (stabbing). He further states that other triggers that precipitate this type of violence may include

the despair and rage associated with loss and how this often leads to family violence and potentially family murder. This loss could be in the form of loss of personal security, internal control or a loved one.

Nyami reported that his mother passed away and so his grandmother and aunt took on the role of his primary caregivers. He reported that his grandmother would speak to him rather than spank him. This made him feel like a respected person as he said it was like she was treating me like an adult. He says*, "she spoke to me like an adult, and I had a chance to respond to what was being said. We spoke a lot; she was the one person I was close to."* He was also allowed to express his subjective experience in these interactions. In this instance, there seems to be a set of limits and upholding rules within a stable environment.

In Nyami's narrative, there is very little evidence of violent crime compared to the other participants. Although, it is possible that there might be some association that his grandmother's management resulted in less destructive and antisocial behaviour. According to his narrative, he did not steal, carry weapons, involve himself in gangs or engage with illegal substances. In fact, the only violence that he recalled from his childhood was of getting mugged. He said, *"I was mugged.... It was a bad experience, especially being mugged by a small boy. You can't even rebuke these kids because they have weapons... I never fought, the only time I fought, was when I was being mugged."* This first violent interaction that Nyami reported seems to be a retaliation to uphold his masculinity. The event that placed him in prison was a conflict with his uncle. He described his uncle as *"the only person who interfered with our peace"*, therefore describing the indiscriminate nature of his uncle's punishment. Nyami reported that his uncle provoked him, and he had a weapon. He said, *"there was an axe nearby, so I stabbed him."* Nyami's power in relation to his uncle could have been an enactment of preserving his masculine status and claiming a degree of respect from him and others, therefore not fully aligned to the antisocial tendency. This dispute portrays a degree of emasculation, public humiliation and embarrassment which needed to be defended. According to Stevens (2008) defensive masculinity often becomes more entrenched within contexts of re-masculinisation, showing the nature of masculinities in many marginalised contemporary South African communities. In an environment where there is a culture of violence, violence becomes a communicative tool and a means of negotiating interpersonal interactions and sociomoral conflicts (Barolsky et al., 2008; Collins, 2014; Hinsberger et al., 2016; Parkes, 2007; Stevens, 2008). Regardless of his grandmother's management style and provision of a

healthy facilitating environment, which seemed to enable structure, boundary and setting of limits, the norms of society made it difficult for him to practice self-discipline and reflection (Adams, 2020; Grusec et al., 2017; Holdstock, 1990). Indeed, the importance of the relationship between limit-setting through punishment was iteratively reported in the form of the compromised father figure.

4.2 Management/Punishment by Father Figures

Following from the mother's arms is the "parental relationship" which is the next space within the "ever-widening frame" that manages antisocial tendency. Although the parental relationship does not specifically refer to the father figure, many of the participants mentioned their fathers as being influential in disciplining and asserting power, or the absence of father's influencing the lack of power assertion. This is not to say that all parental relationships, where the third person, "not-mother" must be a father (Davies & Eagle, 2013), rather it could be a complex web of individuals, including social fathers (Clowes et al., 2013; Langa, 2020). A social father is a person who takes on the responsibility of being a father to a child, but who is not the biological male parent of the child. The status of fatherhood is therefore a social status. In antisocial behaviour, the subject has an impulsive search for the father, who represents power and force. In front of this father, the child will be able to recover its impulses of love as well as guilt and a repairing gesture.

4.2.1 Physical Management/Punishment by Father Figures

For many theorists, patriarchy and fatherhood can appear so inextricably interlinked that any allusion to the paternal role invariably signifies masculine domination (Freeman, 2008). Relations of power between fathers and children, where a father using violence is justified as a need to provide protection and discipline to unruly children is explored in this theme.

Geoffrey's father took on the role of power and discipline. His description shows that the mother transfers responsibility to the father to provide the punishment. "When the father stands between the mother-child dyad and establishes limits, he enables the child to delay gratification, control impulses and tolerate frustration long enough to enable the development of thinking" (Barbieri & Pavelquieres, 2012, p. 103). Geoffrey states that he "loves [his] father" despite getting "hidings" from him. This implies that receiving hidings did not negatively colour the experienced connection and he saw this as an appropriate management tool. Perhaps, this "love" that Geoffrey expresses might be an idealised version of patriarchal manhood.

Research has previously pointed to how both crime and violence are ways of establishing a masculine identity, especially in environments where this identity is under threat from the forms of powerlessness produced by poverty and social marginalisation (Altbeker, 2010; Collins, 2009). It further highlights the tension of feeling the need to inverse one's psychic pain into love and acceptance to uphold notions of patriarchy and masculinity, while psychically, denying the painful psychic experience of the physical pain experienced when receiving this type of punishment (Mayisela, 2020). Within a society where physical punishment is normalised and considered appropriate, often a child does not face or allow oneself to become aware or think about uncomfortable feelings about physical punishment and the person who provides it. Winnicott (1984) further writes that this is an outcome of not being able to express sadness as a result of deprivation and loss.

Geoffrey states that the management was *"the way a hiding usually is"* highlighting how common it is to have physical, violent, painful ways of navigating interpersonal relationships. The words "usually is" suggests that the interviewer should know exactly what a hiding is and what the experience is like, suggesting that this is a norm for everyone that is deeply entrenched in a shared society and culture.

Geoffrey further explained that his father was "*a straight man"*. When exploring what Geoffrey meant by his father being "straight", he said that he was traditional and would raise them "*with discipline, he would tell [them] that a man is supposed to do this and a girl is supposed to do that."* The role of his father becomes evident from Geoffrey's narrative as he describes him as employing the "paternal function". Winnicott (1944) expresses that the 'not-mother' establishes limits, manages impulse-control, tolerates frustrations, and provide an external reality to the child. Barbieri & Pavelquieres (2012) state that the father needs to meet these antisocial tendencies in order to promote healthy development. In psychosocial terms, violent masculinities (of the form Geoffrey's father is implied to occupy) represents a simultaneously idealised but physically abusive patriarch. He can integrate that his father might not be all bad, also that he occupies a patriarchal social status in society where power, dominance and control are appropriate. This idealised abuser seems to be a psychosocial version of the paternal function as seen in Geoffrey's narrative.

He says that his father stopped him from committing crimes and provided for the family's financial needs while he was still alive. He states, *"Well, things were ok. My father was still*

alive, and we lived well." This additionally highlights the stereotypical heteronormative and patriarchal tropes of fathers providing for the household and providing the discipline, while the mother offers sensitivity, love and care (Clowes et al., 2013). Around the time that his father died, he recalls that he began experimenting more with smoking, drinking, and engaging with "bad friends". This highlights how the loss of the paternal function, potentially resulted in a loss of internal discipline, control and order:

> Interviewer: Emotionally how did you feel about his death?
> *Geoffrey: Somehow it changed me.*
> Interviewer: How so?
> *Geoffrey**:** Well, I have explained how he was a straight man and he helped me a lot. So, when he died no one filled his space and so even when they tried to discipline me I would not listen. I'm sure you can imagine losing your father at sixteen is not any easy thing to go through.*
> Interviewer: What is it that you miss about him mostly?
> *Geoffrey: Well, he would have stopped me from committing crimes, he hated that.*

Therefore, for Geoffrey, the harsh, physical punishment that he received from his father served him in good stead as he was driven by external discipline to behave in accordance with his father's expectations. Grusec et al. (2017) state that physical punishment diminishes ones' ability to self-impose discipline and regulate behaviours. This form of punishment could have thus inhibited Geoffrey's ability to have self-discipline after his father's death. Additionally, the turn to gangs and violent peer groups providing a masculine identity and social control that his father would have provided in the past could be explained as an attempt to reclaim the paternal function within conditions where power is synonymous with violence.

Although Geoffrey reported on his father's punishment style with fondness, Nyami had a different experience of receiving physical punishment from his uncle, a social father. Although Nyami pointed out that his uncle did not reside with the family, he did partake in punishing him. Nyami felt that his household was a *"family in unity",* however when his uncle would come to the home, Nyami said that "he interfered with the peace." He describes his punishment as follows:

> *He would get information that we come back home late and would kick the doors in, he would just come and beat us, as a result of what he had heard, without asking questions…. If my uncle heard that there was a problem in the house, for example, if money went missing. You must remember there were many of us and if no one owned up, he'd take the belt and beat everyone.*

Nyami's report of his uncle suggests that he perceives him as an unfair patriarchal man who would act violently when attempting to control the children in the household. This was an unfamiliar experience for Nyami, as he felt that his other caregivers offered a containing environment. Mayisela (2020) and Gershoff (2002) claim that the infliction of physical pain by a primary caregiver, who provides for the child's basic needs at the time of the violent act can jeopardise the child's development, object relations and the parent-child relationship. Additionally, in a previous study children reported feeling adverse emotions towards their caregivers when reflecting on how they were physically punished (Breen et al., 2015). Nyami is an example of this as he described being upset and angry with his uncle on many occasions. And although Winnicott (1987) highlights that it is necessary for the father to occupy the position of a bad and hated object, Nyami's hate was unable to be processed. The father figure contributes to the good-enough environment as he helps the growing child to feel safe enough to be spontaneous and free. The father's strength supports the mother in surviving the child's aggressive feelings and desires, which eventually enables the child to integrate his destructive impulses with loving impulses (Abram & Hjulmand, 2018). With the absence of Nyami's biological father and his uncle being the only reference to represent his father figure, he could not develop self-control and integration of his aggressive desires, which "weakened the inhibitions of criminality" (Altbeker, 2010, p. 118) as he eventually violently assaulted his uncle and landed in prison.

Although Nyami's report of punishment represents limited details about whether the antisocial tendency was present, his narrative highlights the detrimental consequences of physical management and how there is an absence of a paternal role, who sets limits while enabling the freedom of expressing himself in a safe and satisfying manner.

4.2.2 Management/Punishment by Absent/Non-Resident Father Figures

Within the clinical literature, there has been an ongoing concern with the damaging consequences of fatherlessness for psychological development (Freeman, 2008). Absent

fathers are those who are not involved in the child's life. Non-resident fathers are distinct from absent fathers, as they are often involved through financial or moral provision, despite being at a distance (Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018).

Nyami has only had contact once with his biological father. He describes that his life would have turned out differently if he lived with his grandfather, who lived in the homelands, therefore making him a non-resident father. He said:

> *I loved the way he did things. He hated bad things. He spoke the truth, if there was something wrong, he'd tell me… He told me if you do something wrong it will be fun for the moment, but the repercussions will last for a long time.*

Nyami felt that if he had lived with his grandfather, he would have received environmental provisions and management that he felt he needed. Although his grandfather would teach him right from wrong and seemed to "represent the vivacity of the streets" (Barbieri & Pavelquieres, 2012, p.103), Nyami felt that this was not enough due to the physical distance between them. It is evident that there is a desire to have experienced this type of discipline from a father figure and something that he feels was different to the physical punishment that he experienced from his uncle.

Xolela's uncle (social father) was the male figure in the household, who helped his grandmother raise him. He reported that his uncle participated in the child-rearing. He stated that *"He did discipline us because he cooked for us but he wouldn't just hit us, he just spoke."* This statement highlights that Xolela perceives that if a member of the household is a provider, this member has the right to provide management too.

Although Xolela had a social father, he felt that he had missed out on management from his biological parents. He said that when one doesn't have parents, one *"doesn't get certain disciplines and values that are important."* The conditions which Xolela is highlighting are in line with Altbeker's (2010) suggestion that demographic change in South Africa is affecting the transmission of values from older generations to younger generations. Altbeker argues that "as the cohort of young people grows, relative to the rest of society, and as the population bubble passes through the dangerous years, it becomes harder and harder for older generations to transmit established values and morality to younger ones" (p. 117). There are fewer parents

available to attend to the growing number of children which has an enormously disruptive effect. Xolela felt that he did not experience a paternal function that provides the child to integrate important values and self-control which are characteristics that could have partly prevented him from becoming a violent criminal. He seemed to feel that there was mismanagement of his antisocial tendency. He further reflected that growing up without a father had an impact on his life as it determined his behaviours and the social groups with which he would associate.

The existing patterns of crime and the persistence of violence in South Africa, make it difficult to resist the temptation of making money through antisocial behaviour (Altbeker, 2010). Additionally, the absence of his father, who he imagines would play the conventional heteronormative role of financial provider would have created a different life trajectory (Stevens, 2008). The absence of this led to an engagement in theft, which became an appealing alternative to earning money through work. Xolela felt that the risk was worthwhile as he said:

> *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.*

Goal directedness and free will are central in Xolela's narrative as he rationally chose the best action according to preferences and constraints that he faced, after weighing up the risks and benefits of his behaviours (Stevens, 2008). One can see that there is a hope that he would gain financial resources through theft, due to the social constraints that provide limited hope.
The father's role of being a facilitating and indestructible environment where firm limits and boundaries are set with force seems to be absent for Xolela, and he felt that without the external control from a powerful authority figure, he became vulnerable to associate with social groups that were dangerous and violent. Without this facilitating, indestructible environment, Xolela cannot feel confident enough to experiment with impulses while having the safety provided by the father's presence gradually gives way to self-control (Yakeley, 2012).

Criminal behaviour is learned through interactions with others and in contexts where there are limited prohibitions against such behaviours (Stevens, 2008). This could be further understood by the pervasiveness of violent crime in South Africa and how this feature lowers the threshold of many people to join in on criminal activities (Altbeker, 2010). Target and Fonagy (2002)

states that the paternal function enables a child to act in accordance with the norms of society. But in a society that is plagued with violent and dangerous encounters, the motivation to act in accordance with society leads to an involvement in gang activity. Gangs provide a way for men to navigate into "successful" masculinity that one would otherwise achieve through the influence of one's father. Xolela seemed to admire the gangs, as he said, "*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 whoever can stop it will stop it, and it just carried on.*" Therefore, without a holding and containing experience of management he would "test and retests the environments' ability to withstand the antisocial acts and tolerate the "nuisance" (Winnicott, 1956, p. 314). In the absence of this management and not getting *"caught"*, he did not stop, and the ever-widening frame extended to the prison system being the last resort of withstanding and tolerating his object-seeking and destruction.

Unlike Xolela's longing and desiring of a father figure's management, Smithson felt that a trajectory of violent crime is not influenced by the management of the family. He said that "*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."* This could be interpreted as a denial of vulnerability of the feelings of loss associated with not having a mother and father who provides management (Winnicott, 1984).

Zolani specifically highlighted that his mother was very strict because of the absence of his father. This implies that the father takes the position of the disciplinarian and highlights how the mother needs to adopt a paternal function to enable the child to assume his place in society (Target & Fonagy, 2002).

Actual loss of 'caringly' disciplining adults, or loss of access to such figures, seems to have been salient in some instances in participants giving up attempts to more prosocial mores. These absence caregivers seem to lead to the young boys not having the capacity know what is right or wrong and the possible gains of seeking financial resources and powerful control through criminality became their only hope for meaningful future. Without caring management by a caregiver, it is possible that these boys were easily influenced to participate in a society that is amoral and encouraging of gangsterism and crime. Specifically, not having fathers to provide financially for the family system, seem to escalate these boys needs to be providers

and in a society with limited opportunities for growth and development, engaging in criminal acts like stealing become hopeful to succeed financially.

4.3. Management/Punishment by Teachers

Winnicott (1956) derives a series of environments where the child provokes a reaction. After the *mother's arms or mother's body* the child will seek the *parental relationship* and *home* to withstand his impulsive behaviour. Eventually, the series extends to *the school*. This is where the learning environment and teachers stand the strain and destruction resulting from the child's antisocial tendencies. Defiance and violence in the school setting are common experiences that were reported by the participants.

The government has long recognised that some of the values held by South Africans are amongst the many causes of crime. Often government suggests that the responsibility falls on educators to be the drivers of "a sound moral education" (Altbeker, 2010, p. 157). The majority of South African children attend schools which are characterised by poverty and overcrowding where there is a lack of resources and non-stimulating learning environments. The value system creates a tolerance for violence, as schools are often based on patriarchal norms. Mayisela (2020) argues that teachers themselves were brought up under these conditions and hence aren't fully equipped to teach morality.

4.3.1. Physical Management/Punishment by Teachers

Altbeker (2010, p. 158) states that morality is "a set of habits – of honesty and judgement and discipline and duty – that are formed by observing others and by responding to rewards and punishment." The use of violence in the form of corporal punishment has become perceived by these educators as an effective way to manage the antisocial tendency (Maphosa & Shumba 2010). Although this leads to a greater tolerance for violence in social systems, corporal punishment equates to the child's motivation to learn and in a violent society where control and self-discipline are limited skills, physical management becomes the most viable option for teachers. "The historical pervasiveness of violence in these environments has resulted in a belief system that reinforces the idea that violence is a legitimate, credible, normalised and socially sanctioned means of interacting, which is also learned and transmitted inter-generationally" (Stevens, 2008, p. 63). If educators, who were reared by this form of punishment, do not have the option of using corporal punishment this equates to the abolition of corporal punishment with no discipline. As both Winnicott (1956) and Altbeker (2010)

suggest, without the management of the antisocial tendency, an unconscious hope (Winnicott, 1956) and opportunity for sound morality become lost (Altbeker, 2010). Holding in mind the historical pervasiveness of violence in social environments and the socio-cultural factors that impact these learning conditions, punishment frequently becomes physical in nature. This management is reported in the narratives of some of the participants, specifically in the narratives of Xolela, Sicelo and Ahmed.

Impact of Living Conditions on Education and Punishment

Xolela stated that poverty at home influenced his ability to function at school as he stated:

> *When you are at school as children, and the other children's mothers would prepare them breakfast when he wakes up, he'd eat you see. But when you're are raised by an elderly woman, she doesn't have a lot of energy, and even when my uncle did those thing, he left you see, and left us and we didn't have anyone who had time for us, to cook for us, when I get to school I'm hungry and can't concentrate properly then I get sent back home to go sleep because I didn't eat.*

This was a continued experience when he was older as homework was a task that he did not cope with due to having to attend to household chores after the school day. He stated:

> *I did my school work but when I was older I was busy cleaning, cooking and washing dishes… I was the firstborn and all my siblings depended on me, the family depended on… I'd cook go to bed tired. Yes, I'd get sleepy and sleep. That's when I was living here in Cape Town at the age of eleven.*

He further reported that there was minimal encouragement and motivation to gain an education from figures of authority, either at home or at school:

> *I didn't like school. I became aware that I didn't like school in Sub A because I didn't see the reason to go to school. All I liked doing at school was drawing … I never listened to the teacher; I drew, drew, drew and drew.*

In response to Xolela's antisocial tendencies, the teacher would exhibit physical punishment and although he reported that he "*liked [his] teacher. [He] only didn't like her when she hit…*

when she hit [him] with her cane." The socio-economic and cultural barriers, which the majority of children experience, lead to some children coming to school with physiological and psychological challenges like childhood deprivation stress and lack of motivation caused by poverty.

Impact of Gangsterism on Education and Punishment

Sicelo highlights how social groups at school would influence his school performance. He was friends with gangsters from a young age, which meant that he was involved in illegal and aggressive behaviours, which eventually resulted in him dropping out. Langa's thesis (2020) 'Becoming Men' differentiates a 'tsotsi boy' from an 'academic boy'. 'Tsotsi boys' don't attend classes, bully learners, bring substances and weapons to school. Whereas 'academic boys' are more driven and ambitious in a school setting. He also highlights how 'tsotsi boys' defy the teacher's authority making it difficult for them to intervene and to instil discipline. Sicelo could be considered a 'tsotsi boy' as Langa (2020) implied. He stated that he would *"listen"* and was *"very quiet in class"* but these behaviours interfered with a possibility of having a full education, he stated:

> *When you got to certain age, you have arguments with friends about girls and that leads to fights, … like gangsters, which led me to drop out…. I had good friends at school, apart from the fact that they used to smoke weed, but I never smoked it, I only smoked cigarettes… I used to smoke and when you do those things, teachers used to say you don't listen. In class I was very quiet, after we got caught smoking we used to be ordered to the office for punishment.*

The punishment that the teachers used was physical, as he reported that *"they would beat us."* Thus, while Sicelo's mother would shout and spoil him in response to his transgressions, he was nonetheless physically punished by the very people socially sanctioned to educate him. Another way in which teachers would manage the children was by getting the parents involved. He stated that *"parents were called in, so I decided to stop … I was busy with girls and I did not want my mother to attend those meetings so I decided to stop."* Straus and Paschall (2009) argue that corporal punishment takes away the child's attention from his wrongdoing, and directs attention to the punishment itself. As a result, the punished child fails to take responsibility for the offence and focuses more on avoiding being caught. His mother's opinion meant the most to him and he stopped misbehaving to avoid the punishment laid out by his

teachers, which included her involvement. Winnicott's (1960a) believes that when retaliating and punishing, rather than understanding the underlying need of the antisocial act, the child's moral framework becomes governed by compliance and a false-self. Sicelo stopped misbehaving in order to be compliant with his mother's rules about relationships with girls. The teacher did not facilitate the process of Sicelo getting to know the need that is underlying the antisocial behaviour, and so he was unable to develop ideas of what is right and wrong, which Winnicott (1956) believes can be done through working with the child's inner experience.

Ahmed's education was also negatively influenced by being involved with gangsters. He was engaging in activities that represent the antisocial tendency:

> *I was busy with wrong activities outside … With gangster activities ... The gangster activities, the 'skollies'. I was involved with that type of people. I was involved with drugs. 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.*

In addition to these violent behaviours, there were destructive behaviours reported as he said:

> *We threw each other with stones … The time that we threw each other with stones, we were still small kids. And the worst thing is that I used to do, wasn't something I would have done out of my own, it was mostly things other people would put into our heads, things we had to do. And that is how I grew up, having my mind indoctrinated with these sort of manners. What we do on this side isn't things we can do without having to look behind ourselves, and so it went on until I ended up in prison.*

Management from the teachers was physical in nature as he said:

> *I got hit a lot more [at school], 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."* According to Ahmed, this was a different experience to getting

"hit with a belt" by his mother, as he says, "*In other words, I would get a worse hiding at school than what I would have gotten at home."*

His distinction of it being "worse" could possibly be understood as the experience being more painful. A school as an institution ignores the rights and responsibilities of a child, as they are viewed as a dependent and lacking agency. Corporal punishment by such institutions aims at producing obedient subjects with less capacity to have freedom and creativity. Although this seems punitive and against researchers claims of the detrimental outcomes of physical punishment, the narratives show that when these children who live in a society where violence is an entrenched mode of interpersonal and social relating, and where the antisocial tendencies become more difficult to manage, teachers seem to act with counter-violence where physical punishment is used to obtain social control of those offering resistance to it (Stevens, 2008).

Mayisela (2020) argues that some children present with difficulties that need empowerment rather than punishment. This is in line with Winnicott's (1956) point of view, that when deprived children misbehave, they are communicating an unconscious hope that their needs will be met by environmental provisions.

4.3.2 Missed Opportunity of Management by Teachers

Some teachers would look past the criminal behaviour enacted by students. David stated, *"I started being mischievous while I was at school, studying/learning."* When questioned on whether he would get disciplined by his teacher, he reported that although she knew about his criminal activities in and out of school, the teacher was unable to find the evidence to prove that he was engaged in these activities. He said:

I was the type of person who attended school normally, like on school days. But that ended up with me messing things up for myself by getting involved in drugs. Because I was robbing, getting a lot of money and I didn't know what to do with all that money, I bought myself clothes and stuff and there was more money left over and I ended up smoking. So I smoked rocks, tik tik ... so I ended up being too lazy to go to school, you see?... I started being mischievous while I was at school, studying/learning.
There was a lady teacher that I got along with Mrs. Ngcobo who lived at Sea Point… She did know the activities I used to get up to. She did hear about the things I did at school. I didn't usually get up to mischief at school or at home. They'd search my bag

or at school and find nothing. They knew me as a person who loved to fight. I loved to fight at school.

The absence of punishment in David's narrative shows the impact of the antisocial behaviour being denied (Shields, 2000). There is an avoidance of management which could be explained by his good relationship with his teacher, not often getting up to mischief at school, and ensuring that there is no physical evidence of his misbehaviours. This could have set up a dynamic where the teacher does not feel warranted to manage the behaviour, despite knowing that he was a person who would become destructive, through violent conflicts. David mentions that he has a strong relationship with his teacher. The strength of this relationship could facilitate management of his behaviours by exploring his underlying needs and their manifestation (Barton et al., 2011). However, by not receiving attention from his teacher, David becomes let down by the environment, which will hopefully feel like a safe and facilitating environment.

In Thabo's narrative, there is a transfer of responsibility from the teacher to the primary caregiver whenever antisocial behaviour was acted out. When exploring how he would get disciplined at school he stated:

If I did something wrong, my teacher would write a letter to my mother to tell her what I had done and if I did it again I'd be expelled and at home I'd get more shouting I was good at school and I had bad friends, so I left school. I was not naughty I did well in class.

Although teachers are expected to play an important role in providing the child with a safe and secure environment while engaging in some caregiving behaviours, the range of these caregiving behaviours is restricted by their primary role of teaching academic material (Verschueren & Koomen, 2012). Unfortunately, this primary role of teaching does not always extend to teaching children values and morals (Altbeker, 2010). Therefore, the transfer of responsibility could be considered a missed opportunity of management of Thabo's unconscious communicating of hope for attention and connection.

Having power and control over children suggests that children should receive information, norms and values that teachers provide in educational institutions. Altbeker (2010) states that

teachers are arguably unequipped to pass down the meaningful values that prevent violence. Teachers, within an institution, resort to drawing on physical punishment to socialise children in line with expectations of acceptable behaviour. Furthermore, Winnicott states that if the child does not get managed for his antisocial behaviours, “the delinquent can only become progressively more and more inhibited in love and consequently more and more depressed and depersonalised, and eventually unable to feel the reality of things at all, except the reality of violence” (Winnicott, 1946, p. 46).

This section has brought together the findings and interpretations of the material against a theoretical backdrop. The use of Winnicott’s. model of layers of containment from original caregivers (usually the mother, to the father and family system, to the schooling environment and broader society. The participants had rather ambivalent feelings towards censure and punishment and towards those who meted them. in several instances punishment was understood to be associated with caring of some kind or as being designed to reduce potentially destructive outcomes for them as growing children and adolescents. This perception displays some of Winnicott’s arguments about the antisocial behaviour is designed to achieve. Physical punishment was also in many instances viewed as normative within their cultural environments and there is generally an absence of resentment about punishment about punishment, including physical punishment, unlike what is predicted in the literature. Beyond mothers, present fathers and grandparents were able to play a significant role in offering some of the kinds of psychological provisions that Winnicott suggests are necessary in response to antisocial forms of conduct.

Chapter 5: Limitations, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Limitations

This report provides a psychosocial understanding of the loss of hope through the mismanagement of caregivers in a society that feels hopeless. Perhaps it is society itself which has 'mismanaged' the caregivers by allowing people to live in poverty alongside extraordinary wealth. Many children get mismanaged however they manage to steer away from a life of crime. There is a psychological payoff in the interview for expressing a certain kind of reform and reconstitution of subjectivity. Therefore, this report provides but one suggestion for the way that punishment as a psychosocial phenomenon may intersect with a range of other influences to explain a participant's life. This report's use of secondary data created many limitations as the information of punishment provided in the narrative was often limited, although the information that was provided was able to be interpreted by Winnicott's (1956) theory within a South African context. In addition, the types of transgressions that happened prior to management from primary caregivers, fathers and teachers were not often evident in the narratives which limited the researcher's ability to account for the severity of crimes concerning the severity of punishment. Furthermore, the single interview of personal histories provided from the seminal study accounts for punishment at different life stages for each participant, as some participants reported punishment in childhood while others referred to punishment in adolescence. This implied inconsistencies and limitations for the theoretical framework used (Winnicott, 1956).

5.2 Recommendations

This report provides insight into the importance of the holding, facilitating environment and the family's ability to provide for the child's needs and to be available to them during development. A further development of what it might mean to have had some experience of understanding, containment and related hopefulness in relation to ones misbehaviour and then to lose it is an area in which Winnicott's thinking could be extended.

My recommendations are partly in line with Winnicott's (1967) suggestion that the child who has an antisocial tendency needs an appropriately safe and structured setting (management) as well as one on one treatment (psychotherapy) (Abram & Hjulmand, 2018). In South Africa, such resources of management and psychotherapy are scarce. Therefore, I recommend that projects which help the mother move from a concrete and overt understanding of antisocial

behaviours to a more symbolic understanding of unconscious motivations for this behaviour can prevent delinquency and violent crime. Projects such as "The Ububele Mat Project" is facilitated by psychologists who understand the social conditions in South Africa that impact the caregivers' ability to provide this form of management, therefore making it appropriate for facilitating development (Frost, 2012).

Additionally, a recommendation for all parents to have access to a basic income grant could impact on the level of deprivation being reduced somewhat resulting in less power being given to gangsterism which for many is the only form of physical survival.

Teachers play a large role in managing a child's antisocial tendency as they have opportunities to spot transgressions and provide provisions for better management. As a manifestation of psychosocial processes, physical punishment has become deeply entrenched in educational institutions. I recommend that there is a need to improve teacher professional development to help teachers identify children's impoverished conditions and unconscious communications, thus encouraging more holding management (Mayisela, 2017; Verschueren & Koomen, 2012). Further research into the punishment styles of caregivers and teachers and into the other causes of violence is recommended in the interest of having a holistic understanding of violent crime in South Africa.

5.3 Conclusion: Restoring Hope

The narratives in this report highlight the antisocial tendency that manifested in the childhood development of the participants. These behaviours were either in the form of object seeking or destruction in moments of hope. These hopes manifest from the break in the continuity of environmental provision during very early years, which led to deprivation. Throughout their life histories, they engaged in antisocial acts which have been interpreted as both their unconscious hope to seek something that they had lost in their formative years, to find safety and security in the environment; as well as, a response to their social contexts which are influenced by inequality, deprivation, violent situations and communities and limited opportunities for a better life.

Winnicott (1956) believes that primary caregivers, father figures and teachers have the opportunity to catch the moments of hope which underlies the antisocial tendency and to provide the child with a safe environment where his need can be met. When antisocial

behaviour is survived by the mother, who is stable and good enough and a father who functions as indestructible, the developmental process can commence. However, when good-enough parenting is lacking and the caregivers retaliate and punish, as seen in the participants' narratives, they constantly experience impingements on their development and look for a feeling of security outside the home. This report shows that they still have hope when seeking external stability at school as they engage in antisocial acts within this setting.

Cultural attitudes, values, and practices, as well as the economic circumstances of social and historical factors, influence the management styles of caregivers (Barton, et al., 2011). While psychological theory and research has shown that punishment has detrimental consequences, South Africa has a long history of physical punishment where it is perceived as an appropriate and necessary reaction to a child's misbehaviour. This creates contradictions in the perceptions of punishment as can be seen in the material provided by the perpetrators in this report.

In South Africa, where violence has become so pervasive and persistent, unattuned management frequently occurs due to the social conditions which make it difficult to provide good-enough management. In Winnicott's (1967) paper, 'Deprivation as a Sign of Hope', he explained that if the unconscious communication of the antisocial act is not managed by the environment, then there is a possibility that the child's antisocial behaviour will develop into delinquency (Abram & Hjulmand, 2018). If the environment fails to provide for the needs that are being communicated through getting to know the deprivation that was once suffered, Abram and Hjulmand (2018) explain that continuous criminality arises as "the individual has lost touch with the sense of the original deprivation and the antisocial way of life keeps the psychic pain at bay." (p. 126).

My analysis demonstrates that the perpetrators did not get their unconscious hopes met by their caregivers, as there was no bridging of the gap (deprivation) that was experienced in their earlier years. For these perpetrators, delinquency and a life of crime became an alternative way for their needs to get met, through secondary gain (Abram & Hjulmand, 2018). Therefore, the loss of hope precipitates the use of violence. In democratic South Africa where hopes and promises are unmet, violence becomes a tempting and comforting alternative to restore the hope of a better life. In seeking hope for a more secure environment, people become willing and eager to commit crimes in the absence of catharsis in post-apartheid (Altbeker, 2010). Violence and criminality become the only hope for individuals to gain comfort, status,

wealth, and satisfaction of needs. Additionally, it becomes the only hope for individuals to get the environmental provisions that they need from the social structures, parents, and teachers, in their lives.

In many instances the participants described having had access to parental type figures who had engaged them in a manner that felt constructive in response to their 'bad' behaviour. Despite these ministrations from people who appeared to respond in accordance with Winnicott's recommendation for optimal outcomes, these young men nevertheless ultimately became incarcerated for commissions of violent crime. This seems to suggest that the environmental forces were such as to outweigh these inputs and that perhaps the pervasiveness of material deprivation and the normalisation of violence outweighed even constructive family inputs.

Winnicott (1956) and Altbeker (2010) concur that the prison system becomes an important last resort for crime prevention and management of delinquency. This is evident in the narratives of the perpetrators in this report. In South Africa, this amounts to a holding pattern, where building more prisons with stricter and more punitive management have been institutionalised as a cure for violence. A more hopeful view of crime prevention is through the management of a child's behaviour when the antisocial tendency presents itself. By focusing on enabling caregivers to provide facilitating environments the child may not reach the stage of seeking objects outside the family setting and the prison system will be averted. Therefore, this report shows that early interventions that facilitate caregivers to provide a good-enough environment for children in their care, while accounting for the stressors and difficulties that are present in society, could prevent young children from becoming violent criminals. Understanding the profound needs of children (by adults) and appreciating the significance of these needs, offers a glimpse of hope for the healthy development of children in South Africa.