A research agenda for (youth) violence prevention

Cathy Ward and the Safety and Violence Initiative team
Who are we?

- Lillian Artz – Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit
- Julie Berg – Centre of Criminology
- Floretta Boonzaier – Department of Psychology
- Sarah Crawford-Browne – Primary Health Care Directorate
- Andrew Dawes – Department of Psychology
- Donald Foster – Department of Psychology
- Richard Matzopoulos – School of Public Health and Family Medicine, UCT; and Medical Research Council
- Andrew Nicol – Department of Surgery
- Jeremy Seekings – Centre for Social Science Research
- Sebastian van As – Department of Surgery
- Elrena van der Spuy – Centre of Criminology
- Catherine Ward – Department of Psychology
The broader view of SaVI

• Engineering and the Built Environment:
  – Town planning

• Humanities:
  – Anthropology; linguistics; film & media studies; psychology; religious studies; social development; sociology

• Health sciences:
  – Forensic medicine; Gender, Health & Justice Research Unit; Primary health care directorate; psychiatry; public health; surgery

• Law
  – Law, Race & Gender Research Unit; criminology; public law
Violence in South Africa

Norman et al., 2007

Khayelitsha and Nyanga: 451 and 484 per 100,000 in the 15-24 age group
Intentional homicide rates around the world

Intentional homicide rate per 100,000.
- 0-1
- 1-2
- 2-5
- 5-10
- 10-20
- >20
### Homicide rates for Australian states (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Homicide rate per 100,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

South Africa: 113.4

A view from a broader context

World map indicating the countries' Human Development Index in 2010 (Source: 2010 Human Development Report).

- > 0.784 (Very High)
- 0.677–0.784 (High)
- 0.488–0.676 (Medium)
- < 0.488 (Low)
- No data
South Africa has one of the highest inequality rates in the world.
Gender, age, temperament

The Macrosystem
Government social programs and policies, socio-economic factors, attitudes and ideologies of culture

The Exosystem
Neighbourhoods, extended family, health, social and legal services, media

The Microsystem
Family, peers, school

Individual
Gender, age, temperament
Individuals and violence

• Key questions:
  – Does South Africa have more life-course persistent offenders?
  – What is the role of learning disabilities?
  – What about empathy-based guilt?
  – What is the effect of delayed attainment of adulthood?
  – Can violence be reduced by reducing the vulnerabilities of victims?
Microsystem contexts: the family

- Effective, culturally appropriate parenting programs
- Reducing intimate partner violence
Microsystem contexts: the school

• Develop school-based violence prevention programmes and policies
Microsystem contexts: the peer group

• The role of peers in offending
• Gangs
• Leisure opportunities
Exosystem contexts: the neighbourhood

• Relationships between families and neighbourhoods
• How can we improve neighbourhood crime prevention without encouraging vigilantism?
• Why are patterns of violence across different communities very different?
Exosystem contexts: health services

• How can medical and psychological services best be provided for victims?

• Screening and prevention:
  – Alcohol misuse
  – Promoting maternal health
  – Promoting parenting
  – Reducing intimate partner violence
  – Early detection of child mental health problems

• Surveillance of injury and mortality
Exosystem contexts: policing

• The role of the police in a constitutional democracy
• Roles of State and non-State entities
Exosystem contexts: the media

- Media violence, sexism, materialism:
  - What are the mechanisms by which these are associated with violence?
  - Do these relationships hold in the high-violence context of South Africa?
Macrosystem contexts: Social norms around violence

• Violence is legitimate when perpetrated by higher-status individuals against lower-status individuals

• Violence is a legitimate way of resolving disputes
Macrosystem contexts: Socio-economic factors

- Is it economic inequality?
Macrosystem contexts: Government policies

• Policy evaluation:
  – Of policies intended to prevent violence (the Children’s Act)
  – Of policies indirectly likely to affect violence (alcohol control)
Conclusion

• There are two main strands of research:
  – Understanding violence better
  – Intervention research

• These questions are inter-twined, and require inter-disciplinary collaboration
Youth violence
Sources and Solutions in South Africa
Edited by Catherine L. Ward, Amelia van der Merwe, Andrew Dawes