



**UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE**

Department of Psychology

**An exploration into the perceptions of parents on their adolescent child's sense of safety
and future aspirations in a community characterised by violence**

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Declaration

I declare that the study entitled ‘An exploration into the perceptions of parents on their adolescent child’s sense of safety and future aspirations in a community characterised by violence’ at the University of the Western Cape is my own work. That it has not been submitted previously for any degree or any other university, and that all the sources have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Letitia Butler-Kruger

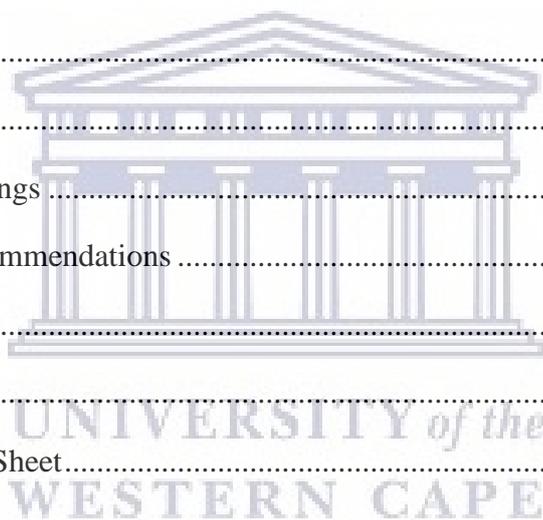
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Abstract

Community violence has been found to have profound negative effects on the lives of those exposed to it daily. The victims often tend to be adolescents, who, while striving for a better future, are often quite vulnerable to its effects. The present study focuses on the perception's parents hold of their adolescent's sense of safety and future aspirations in a community with high levels of violence. The data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews with participants residing in a community prone to violence. The researcher purposively sampled eight participants and conducted interviews in both English and Afrikaans. The theoretical framework adopted for this study was the descriptive phenomenological approach. Ethics principles such as confidentiality and obtaining informed consent was strictly adhered to. The information received from the participants was analysed using descriptive phenomenological analysis and was discussed accordingly. Participants in the present study perceive community violence to influence their adolescents both internally and externally. They do acknowledge that they have a strong role to play in providing their adolescents with a sense of safety, support and understanding when it comes to their future decisions and goals. Throughout the study it is evident how the phenomenon of community violence is experienced to have a strong effect on the lives of both the participants and their adolescents.

Keywords: Community Violence; Sense of safety; Future aspirations; Phenomenological approach.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

South Africa has been described as one of the most violent and unsafe countries in the world (Institute for Economic and Peace, 2017). It was ranked as the 15th worst country when it comes to societal safety and security and the 8th most violent country with a murder rate of 31 per 100,000 people (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2017). According to Lambert et al. (2005), youth exposure to violence – either as witnesses or as victims of violence – is a significant public health problem with negative consequences for various aspects of youth development as well as future adjustment. Prolonged exposure to violence in youth has been associated with poor psychological adjustment and a range of social difficulties, poor academic functioning, and achievement, as well as health problems (Richter et al., 2018). Lynch (2003) found that adaptational status is closely related to a child's home, with children from a stable, safe and loving home, more likely to develop emotionally and academically. The communities' children grow up in can have a profound effect on their development; furthermore, the home environment can moderate the way they cope with what they are exposed to on a daily basis (Guerra & Dierkhising, 2011). At the other end of the spectrum, millions of children grow up under conditions of difficulty, often because of the absence of basic resources necessary for development (Guerra & Dierkhising, 2011). Conditions of difficulty can also reflect heightened exposure to negative events that shape life outcomes (Guerra & Dierkhising, 2011). As previous research has highlighted, exposure to violence in communities may explain risk for later aggression, delinquency, and violence (Gorman-Smith et al., 2004).

Osofsky (1995, p. 782) defines exposure to community violence as "... frequent and continual exposure to the use of guns, knives, drugs, and random violence". Many children

experience violence within the confines of their own home or neighbourhoods (Margolin & Gordis, 2000; Shields et al., 2008). Richter et al. (2018) found that two-thirds of children of school going age were reported as having been exposed to violence and more than half of all children have been exposed to violence in their own homes in South Africa. The problem posed by children's prolonged exposure to community violence is that not only does it affect children's physical health and safety but it also affects their psychological adjustment, social relations, future academic achievement and behaviour (Shields et al., 2008; Mueller & Tronick, 2019). According to Guerra and Dierkhising (2011), and Holt et al. (2008), one clear message is that "violence begets violence", thus children who experience violence are more likely to become trapped in a cycle of violence that leads to future violent behaviour including aggression, delinquency, violent crime and child abuse. In addition to posing threats to the child's personal safety, violence disrupts the child's immediate environment as a haven and render parents potentially less available for physical and emotional caretaking (Leoschut, 2009; Richter et al., 2018). This exposure affects children's views of the world and of themselves, their ideas about the meaning and purpose of life, their moral development as well as their future aspirations (Mueller & Tronick, 2019).

Adolescence is seen as a critical time for developing and expanding one's future orientation, including making decisions concerning education and occupation, and repeatedly witnessing violent acts may influence youths' favourable violent attitudes and behaviour, (Stoddard et al, 2015). Parents' may be unaware of their children's subjective experiences and therefore may be oblivious to address their children's problems. It is believed that the lack of awareness from parents regarding their children's experience of violence may impair parents' ability to create spaces that are safe for their children (Ceballo et al., 2012; Stanley et al., 2012). According to Borofsky et al. (2013), parents and their children display discrepancies when it comes to the evaluation of the level of violence children experience and

their sense of safety. The notion of ‘unsafety’ includes different aspects depending on the perspective one adopts (Richter et al., 2018). On the one hand, the concept may refer to the objective risk of being involved in or becoming a victim of an aggression in a specific environment. On the other hand, the term can be used to refer to individual perceptions or subjectivity of such risk and the estimation of personal vulnerability. In many studies of exposure to violence at home, school, and in the community, adolescents’ report using coping strategies aimed at helping themselves feel safe, such as surrounding themselves with people who make them feel safe (Rather et al., 2006; Richter et al., 2018). These findings suggest that children exposed to community violence but who feel safe at home may have higher levels of academic performance and positive future aspirations (Grant et al., 2005; Mueller & Tronick, 2019; Overstreet, 2000).

In recent years, the prevalence of violence has escalated and caused a cry amongst community members for safety measures to be put into place (Nothling et al., 2016). Communities that were identified as being highly affected by the escalating violence are mostly situated on the Cape Flats, such as Elsies River, Steenberg, Belhar, Manenberg, Khayelitsha, Ravensmead and Bishop Lavis (Department of community safety, 2015/2016). These areas tend to be associated with a lower socio-economic status (Ceballo et al., 2001). Thus, living in a community where violence is known to occur daily, and increasing, as the murder rate has increased with 40% the past four years (South African Cities Network, 2017), it is fair to say that the violent activities within Cape Town communities has a strong role to play in the lives of adolescents and the adults they become.

Although community research has been examined in terms of the context and consequences of violence, including emotional, stress related consequence through self-reported data from adolescence more needs to be learned about the parent’s perceptions of the influence of these violence-related events and experiences of safety and aspirations of

adolescence especially in a South African context (Borofsky et al., 2013; Fowler et al., 2009; Franzese et al., 2017). Cabello et al. (2001) state that the challenges that parents in impoverished, high-risk neighbourhoods are facing are numerous and although the links between children's violence exposure and psychological difficulties have been well documented, less attention has been focused on parents' awareness of the environmental dangers facing their children (Salzinger et al., 2011). Therefore, this study sets out to explore the perceptions parents have of their adolescent children's exposure to community violence and how they perceive this experience to influence their children's future aspiration and how they contribute to the sense of safety their children perceive.

1.2 Problem Statement

Adolescents are at a stage in their lives that make them vulnerable to external influences (Louw & Louw, 2014). To meet the required development milestones, adolescents need to be in a space where they feel safe and able to express themselves. Violence in any form can have severe detrimental effects on the lives of adolescence and impacts negatively on their sense of safety, security, and future aspirations (McCart et al., 2007; Stoddard et al., 2015). According to Schermerhorn and Cummings (2008) and Stoddard et al., (2015) child development occurs within multiple levels of context and within this context, family is considered the most influential of the systems that can moderate and positively influence child development. With the recent increase in violence within the communities of South Africa, especially on the Cape Flat, adolescents are left particularly vulnerable (Louw & Louw, 2014). At this stage of their adolescent lives their families are expected to play a bigger role for ensuring their safety especially in high violent areas. However, parents and caregivers are often unaware of the full extent of their adolescents' exposure to violence. It thus becomes important to gain knowledge in exploring the perspective of their parents particularly because it is under-

researched. This study therefore explored the perceptions parents have of their adolescent children's exposure to community violence on a daily basis, how they perceive community violence to influence their children's future aspiration and how they contribute to the sense of safety their children perceive.

1.3 Research Question

What are the experiences of parents on their adolescent child's exposure to community violence and their perceptions of this experience on their children's future aspirations?

1.4 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to explore parents' understanding of their adolescent children's experience of community violence and their view of the influence it has on their children's future aspirations.

1.5 Objectives

The objectives of the study were to explore:

- parents' understanding of their children's exposure to community violence
- parents' perceptions of their role in their children's perception of safety.
- parents' experience of the impact of their children's exposure to community violence on their future aspiration

1.6 Thesis Chapter Overview

Chapter 1: Introduction

The chapter above explored the background, rationale and significance of the issues faced by adolescents' in low-income and high violence communities and the importance of the parents' role in moderating this.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The literature review will review literature that focuses on the effects that community violence has on adolescents concerning their exposure to community violence, their parent's insights and knowledge of their experiences and how the exposure to community violence might affect their future aspirations.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology chapter will discuss the research design, procedure, participants, and ethical considerations of the current study furthermore the researcher will also reflect on the validity of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

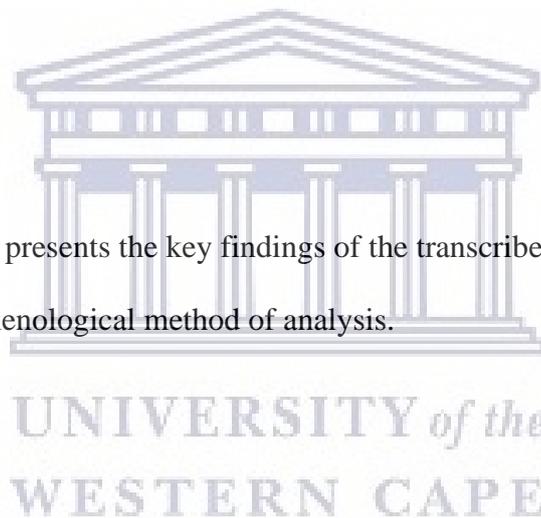
The results chapter presents the key findings of the transcribed semi-structured interviews using a phenomenological method of analysis.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter outlines the implications of the findings of the study as well as the limitations and recommendations of the study.

1.7 Chapter Conclusion

The above chapter served as an introduction. This chapter defined and explained the key concepts that will be highlighted and discussed in the following chapters. It provided the context in which this study takes place as well as highlighted the previous work in the field of community violence. This chapter introduced and defined the key concepts that will be the



focus of the study. A chapter overview has further been provided to guide discussions. The next section, chapter 2, aims to provide a base for the current study from previous literature.



Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

South Africa's socio-political history of apartheid has bequeathed the country to be known as having a "culture of violence". This has become evidently clear as violence in South Africa continue to become normative rather than deviant (Coovadia et al., 2009; Vogelman & Simpson, 1990; Straus, 2012), with President Cyril Ramaphosa describing South Africa as being one of the most unsafe countries in the world especially for women and children (BBC, 2020). Violence, defined as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation " by WHO (2020) has come to be regarded as an appropriate means of resolving social, political and even domestic issues (Coovadia et al., 2009). While the start of democracy in 1994 led to a decrease in politically motivated violence, other forms of violence are still widespread in post-apartheid South Africa (Savahl et al., 2013; Vogelman & Simpson, 1990). South Africa, together with its escalating rates of violence against women and children is known for its violent protest and riots in an attempt to be heard and influence public opinion (Mottiar & Bond, 2012). Community violence, one of the escalating forms of violence, can be defined as the exposure to intentional acts of interpersonal violence committed in public areas by individuals who are not intimately related to the victim (Cammack & Lambert, 2011). The consequences of high levels of all forms of violent victimisation permeate widely into the South African society and only a few, if any, South Africans remain unaffected.

The impact of these forms of violence are of great concern, especially on the adolescents of South Africa, who are exposed to violence daily (Savahl et al., 2013). From a

developmental perspective, adolescents are at a particularly vulnerable stage especially because mental health problems are likely to emerge during this stage in life due to the maturational changes that occur in the brain (Sui, 2018). Furthermore, adolescence is a period of life with specific health and developmental needs. It is also a time to develop knowledge and skills, learn to manage emotions and relationships, and acquire attributes and abilities that will be important for enjoying the adolescent years and assuming adult roles (Sui, 2018). There have been studies by researchers, to understand the effects of this phenomenon on the well-being of adolescents and the various factors that might be able to mitigate this effect. For example, a study by Epstein-Ngo et al. (2013) sought to provide a framework on how coping strategies and involuntary stress responses may both mediate and moderate the relation between exposure to community violence and psychological well-being found that adolescents reported using an array of coping strategies as well as experiencing a number of involuntary stress responses. The most frequent coping responses were turning to religion and seeking social support (Epstein-Ngo et al., 2013). With this being said, only a few studies have studied the role of parents in their children's sense of safety and future aspirations in connection with community violence.

The following section, literature that focuses on the effects that community violence has on adolescents concerning their exposure to community violence, their parent's insights and knowledge of their experiences and how the exposure to community violence might affect their future aspirations, will be discussed.

2.2 Effects of community violence on the lives of adolescents

South Africa's history, from the time of colonisation, has always been characterised by violence, although violence only became a focus of research in the 1980's (Brankovic,

2019). Nonetheless, many South Africans remain exposed to high levels of differing forms of violent crimes, including public violence, rape, high jacking of cars, aggravated assault, aggravated robbery and even murder (Shaw, 1997). Some of the victims of these acts subsequently become perpetrators of violence themselves perpetuating the culture of violence in South Africa (Shaw, 1997). The communities, that children grow up in, can have a profound effect on the adults they become (Lynch, 2003). Exposure to community violence is amongst the most detrimental experiences children can have, affecting how they think, feel and even act (Guerra & Dierkising, 2011). There is a considerable amount of literature on exposure to violence, which holds that exposure to high levels of community violence whether directly or indirectly can lead to a range of negative outcomes for young people (Buka et al., 2001; Gorman-Smith et al., 2004; Viosin et al., 2011).

Several studies have shown that youth who are exposed to violence in their communities show higher subsequent aggression (Dube et al., 2018) and other research has shown elevated levels of PTSD (Guerra & Dierkising, 2011), hopelessness and substance abuse (Kilpatrick et al., 2000). In a recent report by Guerra and Dierkising (2011), they highlighted the fact that violence beget violence in other words, as mentioned previously children who experience violence are more likely to become ensnared in a cycle of violence that leads to future violent behaviour, including aggression, delinquency, violent crime and child abuse. Their report also added to the fact that violence exposure has been shown to contribute to mental health problems during childhood and adolescence including depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder, which are found at higher rates amongst violence exposed youth (Guerra & Dierkising, 2011). Similar findings have been highlighted in studies by Fairbrook (2013), Dube et al. (2018), Fowler et al. (2009), Viosin et al. 2011 and Larke (2014). Thus, it is evident that community violence influences the lives of adolescents and

has become an important aspect of consideration when researchers investigate the lives of adolescents.

In a study by Margolin and Gordis (2004), in which they examined the theoretical and empirical literature on children's reactions to three types of violence namely maltreatment, community violence and interpersonal violence, they identified the short-term effects of these types of violence as aggression, delinquency, depression and anxiety. Posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms such as nightmares and flashbacks were also reported. Margolin and Gordis (2004) concludes that children's exposure to violence frequently goes unnoticed and unattended by professionals who work with children as well as by their parents. Parents typically underestimate their children's exposure to violence and may even be unaware of abuse in their own homes. Although previous research has emphasised what goes wrong with children who have been exposed to violence, a focus on children's successful adaptation is equally important. Thus, this current study places an emphasis on parental involvement in children's lives.

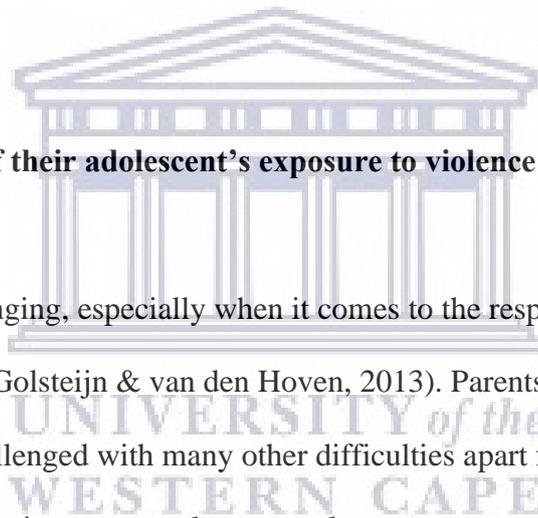
Violence in the community alone has detrimental effects on the lives of adolescence. As the community violence often leads to long-term effects such as PTSD as well as delinquency, becoming the perpetrators themselves, elevated levels of aggression as well as disconnectedness to the community and an actual withdrawal of all community activities (Buka et al., 2001; Gorman-Smith et al., 2004; Osofsky, 1995). A sense of community is important for adolescence to flourish in all aspects of development. The home environment thus has an equal important role to play in the effects of violence on the lives of adolescents, as house-hold poverty and daily hardships can further influence their development. Parents in these poorer communities which is often the communities known for its high levels of violence battle their own battles with having to keep the household running by working multiple jobs and dealing with many outside stressors. Parents and families are very often

emotionally and psychologically distant which at a later stage effect the adolescents view of themselves and how they feel. Leading to further aggression and depression. Their also drop-out and perpetuate the circle of violence.

Considering the above-mentioned literature, it is evident that exposure to community violence can have a detrimental effect on adolescents. The effects can manifest itself in both internalising and externalising symptoms and by either being direct victims of the violent crimes or by being witnesses of the crimes however there are other factors, such as parental involvement and future aspiration that previous research has identified as having the ability to moderate these effects.

2.3 Parents' awareness of their adolescent's exposure to violence and involvement in their adolescent's lives

Parenting is challenging, especially when it comes to the responsibility of raising a well-adjusted adolescent (Golsteijn & van den Hoven, 2013). Parents in impoverished communities are often challenged with many other difficulties apart from raising their children, such as lacking basic resources, lower employment opportunities, low educational levels (Golsteijn & van den Hoven, 2013). Thus, parents often find themselves working multiple jobs to meet their living requirements (Ceballo et al., 2001; Rawles, 2010). It is possible to say that they often struggle to identify their needs and provide sufficient support to their children exposed to community violence as they generally have other immediate concerns they need to see to (Ceballo et al., 2001; Rawles, 2010). For example, according to Rawles (2010), over the past few decades there has been an increase in the number of female-headed households as the primary care giver may be a single mother with a history of abuse or trauma and dysfunction in the family origin. Within such families, the primary care giver



is unable to be emotionally and psychologically present (Rawles, 2010). Supportive parent-child relationships characterised by parent-child communication, parent concern, and parent connectedness have been linked to reductions in many externalising behaviours (Park & Holloway, 2018). Furthermore, supportive parenting has been associated with more favourable social and emotional outcomes for adolescents, such as less disruptive behaviour (Nokali et al., 2010). However, as mentioned before, parents in most of the South African poorer communities lack the necessary resources and have to work multiple jobs in order to provide for their children, often resulting in a less supportive relationship with their children (Brookmeyer et al., 2005; Ranson & Urichuk, 2008; Ward et al., 2015). Very few studies on community violence have focused on parental involvement and understanding and even less studies have focused on a South African population making this study ideal for the gap in the literature.

Researchers such as Horn and Trickett (1998), found that it is only when the home or family itself harbours threats or experiences of violence that children's psychological well-being and adaptive success are damaged, therefore providing evidence for the moderating role that parent's play in their children's positive developmental outcomes, regardless of violence exposure. According to Richters and Martinez (1993) children's adaptational success was compromised only in families that provided unsafe and unstable homes, despite high levels of exposure to community violence. Parents' exposure to many of the same hardships as their children may deplete personal and environmental resources leading to harsh and unsupportive, sometimes even abusive, and negligent, parenting. Alternatively, the harshest parents (parents that employ strict discipline measures) may disproportionately choose to live in the riskiest environments. It is also possible that parents who are raising children in violent or otherwise threatening environments use harsher parenting styles in an

effort to toughen their children for the world outside of the home (Richters & Martinez, 1993; Lynch, 2003).

Krenichyn et al. (2001) discuss the psychological correlates of inner-city violence on children, and the potential mediating and moderating roles of parents using interviews regarding exposure to community violence (ECV), parenting practices, child distress, posttraumatic symptomology, and competence. Their paper concludes that parenting moderated but not mediated the effects of violence on measures of competence. Thus highlighting, once more, the importance of parenting and the type of parent-child relationship that is needed for children to flourish. It is therefore important when looking at adolescent community violence exposure to include the perceptions and understandings of their parents to provide a broader overview of the effects of community violence.

Dubrow and Garbarino (1989) interviewed mothers with young children who were living in public housing. The mothers' greatest fear was that their children might be shot. In such circumstances, children may be required by their parents to sleep under their beds at night and or play within the confines of their homes during the day or keeping them informed about neighbourhood dangers, developing rules and procedures to help their children avoid danger and get help when necessary, educating their children about dangerous behaviours, and supervising children closely. Parental attempts to keep children safe while living in a violent community may impede the children's developmental progress as parents may employ harsher parenting styles or even become helicopter parents (Dubrow & Garbarino, 1989).

A study done by Shahinfar et al. (2000), in which they examined parent and child perceptions of the rate and correlates of violence exposure in a sample of three to four-year-old preschool children, found that community violence appears to be part of the experience of

even very young children. Children who reported to have witnessed mild violence by themselves or their parents were described by their parents as displaying significantly more internalising problems than were their non-witnessing peers (Shahinfar et al., 2000). Parent-child consistency in terms of reporting on children's levels of exposure are significantly poor, as parents are not fully aware of the violence their children had been exposed to and therefore the current study is interested in parents perceptions as the findings can inform future research and interventions (Shahinfar et al., 2000).

Consistent with the findings of other studies (Borofsky et al., 2013), children reported that they had experienced significant exposure to community violence either as victims or as witnesses (Ratner et al., 2006). As predicted, children who reported they felt safe, in terms of being cared for by caregivers, regardless of their actual exposure to community violence performed better on most cognitive and achievement outcome measures (Ratner et al., 2006). The caregiving that children received from adults may have contributed to these feeling of safety. Children who said they felt safe at home and at school also reported that adults were nice to them. Higher family adaptability and more positive parent perceptions, on the part of both parents and children, were related to more frequent reports of child's feelings of safety. In contrast, higher levels of parent-child dysfunction scores were both related to fewer child reports of feeling safe. Children who felt safe and performed better in school and on achievement and intelligent test may be thought of as resilient which provides evidence for arguing that parents have an influence on children's perceptions of safety.

Drawing on the literature above, it should be noted that adolescents who are exposed to adverse levels of violence influences their internalising and externalising behaviour. However, research highlights the impact that good parent-child relationships can have in mediating this effect. Socioeconomic (SES) circumstances can make parenting a very difficult task, and parenting that is harsh and inconsistent can increase the risk that young

people continue to live in varying SES communities – because such parenting is more likely to lead to poor health and risk behaviours in children that will negatively affect good outcomes in their future. Research also noted that parents can either mitigate or increase the level of effect the exposure to community violence can have on an adolescent's life by being either being present in their lives or contributing to the effect through neglectful and abusive parenting.

2.4 Child and Adolescents' Future aspirations

Future aspirations are an individual's thoughts, plans, motivation, hopes and feelings about his or her future (Stoddard et al., 2010). It includes the setting of goals and making plans for multiple aspects of the future, such as educational goals, relationship goals and career aspirations. Adolescents' future aspirations and expectations influence the decisions they make as they transition into adulthood. According to Stoddard et al. (2010), future aspirations are vulnerable to stressful life experiences. Environmental factors such as exposure to community violence may decrease adolescent's expectations and aspirations associated with their future (Stoddard et al., 2010; Kabiru et al., 2017; Robinson & Diale, 2017).

Parental and community support has been found to have to the ability to mitigate the effects of community violence. In 2015, McCoy and Bowen used structural equation modelling to identify some potential pathways through which parental relationships and neighbourhood environments may influence perceptions of future success and associations between future aspirations and self-efficacy in school setting for adolescents in urban environments. It was found that several factors, including neighbourhood safety and supportive parental relationships, can help youth maintain hope for the future and that such

future aspirations can bolster adolescents' sense of self-efficacy in school. Similarly, Stoddard et al., (2010) investigated the associations between future orientation and violent behaviour across the high school years of adolescents in a sample of African American youth. Their finding suggests that violent behaviour decreases with age, however higher levels of future orientation were associated with greater decreases in violent behaviour over time. Thus, supporting the current argument that an adolescent's future aspirations might be influenced by the violence in their community.

One example can be found in a study conducted by Durant et al. (2011), who examined the social and psychological factors associated with the use and non-use of violence amongst black adolescents living in a community with high levels of violent crimes. It was highlighted that adolescents with a higher sense of purpose in life and less depression were better able to withstand the influence of exposure to violence in the home and community. Adolescents who reported lower levels of hopelessness had higher scores on the purpose life scale and believed that there was a high likelihood that they would be alive at age 25, were less likely to report engaging in violent behaviour. Davids et al., (2017), conducted a similar study which aimed at establishing the relationship between goals and aspirations, mental health behaviour and psychological well-being. The study included a sample of 457 secondary school learners in the Overberg Education District, Western Cape, South Africa. Their findings indicated that adolescents aspired to both intrinsic and extrinsic goals when it comes to a sense of community. Community violence may thus influence an adolescents' sense of community, which in the long-term, may affect his or her goals for him or herself.

Living in a disadvantage context has been associated with lower levels of aspiration among African American adolescent as Steward et al., (2007) highlighted in their study in which they examined the extent to which neighbourhood structural disadvantage predicts

college aspirations among African American adolescents they found that concentrated neighbourhood disadvantage exerts a significant influence on college aspirations, even when accounting for micro-level context of adolescents. The adolescents in the study come from a neighbourhood characterised by racial composition, socioeconomic status, poverty, family organization, housing density and high unemployment status as well as violence. Their research showed that neighbourhood socioeconomic inequality is a strong correlate of negative attitudes and problem behaviours.

The extent to which children's individual, family, school, and peer group characteristics influence resilience responses to violence exposure amongst grade six students living in a high-violence community in Cape Town were investigated by Ward et al. (2007). Most of these grade six students reported witnessing and being a victim of violence. Both witnessing and victimization can be positively associated with conduct problems such as aggressive and destructive behaviour. Mosavel et al. (2013) further suggests that youths are clearly able to identify concerns about many of the risk factors in their community including high rates of poverty and unemployment, drug use, poor education, overcrowded housing, lack of recreational facilities and ubiquitous violence and crime. Thus, in response to these adversities many of the youth's dreams for their future focused on fundamentals such as food, housing and security (Mosavel et al., 2013)

A study by Kirk et al. (2011) sought to explore the degree to which parents play a key role in the shaping of educational aspirations in their children. It was found that 75 percent of parents in the study had high educational expectations for their children, despite lower levels of personal education. Thus, parents wanted their children to excel in their education. While this relationship is well documented, these findings suggest that low-income parents may feel ill-equipped to prepare their children for college or university, despite a strong desire to do so

(Kirk et al., 2011), which supports the focus of the current study in examining the views of parents and what they perceive their role to be in their adolescents future aspirations.

2.6 Theoretical framework: Phenomenology

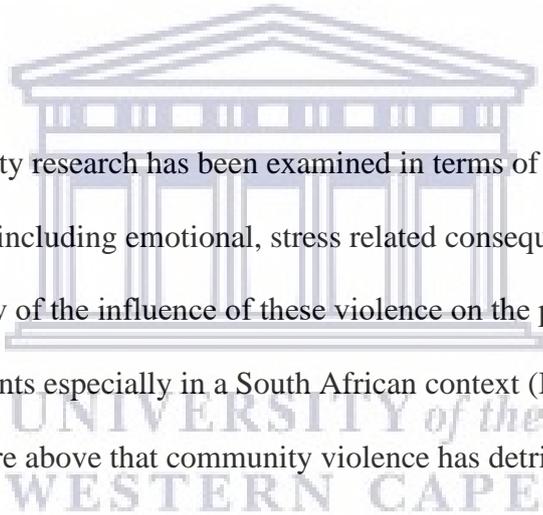
The chosen theory for this study is phenomenology. Phenomenology finds its roots in the work of philosophers such as Kant, Hegel, and Mach, and was formally introduced by Edmund Husserl at the beginning of the twentieth century (Moran, 2002; Guignon, 2006). Husserl became known as the founder of phenomenology (Moran, 2002; Moustakas, 1994) with a desire to convert philosophy into a strict science (Guignon, 2006). Husserl believed the key to separating science from philosophy was to direct attention toward meanings that connect our experience of objects (Guignon, 2006). Phenomenological principle states that scientific investigation is valid when the information gained comes about through rich description that allows for understanding of the essences of experience (Moustakas, 1994). In other words, phenomenological research investigates the lived experience of participants with a phenomenon. The current study adopts a descriptive phenomenological method of study as proposed by Husserl's phenomenological framework.

The application of Husserl's phenomenological description was appropriate because of its emphasis on the lived experience and its aim to uncover universally shared experiences. Descriptive phenomenology is concerned with describing phenomena rather than explaining it. Within a descriptive phenomenology no attempt is made to find the underlying causes of the phenomenon thus the main aim is to simply describe the phenomenon as it appears or as it is experienced (Langdrige, 2007). Therefore, phenomenological research aims to clarify situations lived through by persons in everyday life (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003).

Within the current study, parents described how they perceived their adolescents' experiences of living in and being exposed to high levels of community violence. The aim

was to capture as closely as possible the way in which the phenomenon was experienced within the context in which the experience takes place (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). This given community has experience an increase in violence within the community over the last few years and therefore this phenomenon is set within this given context, by the parents who both grew up in the same community that their children are currently living in. The participants in the study shared their experiences of violence in their community, how they helped their adolescents cope with violence exposure and whether not they believe this exposure has an effect on their adolescents' lives.

2.5 Chapter Conclusion



Although community research has been examined in terms of the contexts and consequences of violence, including emotional, stress related consequences, more needs to be learned about parent's view of the influence of these violence on the perceptions of safety and aspirations of adolescents especially in a South African context (Borofsky et al., 2013). It is evident from the literature above that community violence has detrimental effects on the internalising and externalising behaviours of adolescents (Collins et al., 2013; Margolin & Gordis, 2004; Salzinger, 2011). What the literature also reveals is that parents are often not fully aware of their children's exposure to community violence and emotional distress cause by this exposure (Cabello et al., 2001). However, studies have also found that parents' awareness and support to children who have been exposed to community violence can mitigate the long-term effects (Brookmeyer et al., 2005). The extent to which this is possible is often mitigated by contextual factors such as economic and social resources, and the family's ability to recognise emotional distress.

There remains a gap in literature that investigates parent's perceptions or understanding of their adolescents' exposure to community violence through qualitative studies. Thus, this study would further investigate the degree to which parents understand the effects of community violence on their children and how they believe this exposure could affect their children's future aspirations.



Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this phenomenological study was to capture the perceptions and experiences of parents regarding their adolescent children's exposure to community violence. This study aimed to understand how parents perceive community violence to have an influence on their adolescents' future aspirations and how parents believe to be contributing to their adolescent's sense of safety. In this chapter, I will be discussing the research design, procedure, participants, and ethical considerations of the current study. Furthermore, given the nature of the utilised research approach, I will also reflect on the validity of the study.

3.2 Research design

An explorative, phenomenological research design was employed for the purpose of this study. Phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group (Creswell, 2013). The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon by understanding the phenomena from the perspective of the people involved (Creswell, 2013). This is also aligned with the theoretical frame of the study. Qualitative research was chosen as it relies on the naturalistic description or interpretation of a phenomena in terms of the meaning these have for the people experiencing it. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research can be described as naturalistic, holistic, and inductive as it allows real-world situations to take place naturally, and to understand the complexities of certain phenomena. This research design allowed me to study certain issues in-depth and attempt to understand categories of information that emerged from the data.

This study was explorative in nature, which is suited to a qualitative approach as the current study had set out to explore the views of parents about their adolescent children's sense of safety and future aspirations and exploring their views of the impact on their children's sense of safety. Previous research studies that has been conducted with adolescents speaking about their own experiences and only a few have attempted to discover the experiences and perceptions of parents. The approach taken in the current study allowed me to study the phenomena under question from the words and perspectives of the parents themselves.

3.3 Research context

The context of this study was chosen as it is in line with the aims and objectives of this study. The chosen community, Bishop Lavis, is a suburb of the Cape Flats, located 15 kilometres east of the city centre, near Cape Town International Airport with a total area of 2.58 km² and a population of 26,482 (Census, 2011). This community was one of the many communities that was established by the countries reigning regime at the introduction of apartheid in South Africa. According to Crime Stats SA (2019) in their yearly report, Bishop Lavis police precinct was ranked as number one for having the highest number of attempted murder cases and 10th for actual murder cases in the Western Cape. Bishop Lavis has been ranked 3rd for its cases concerning illegal possession of fire-arms and 7th for sexual assault and 9th for both common robbery and drug-related crimes bearing in mind that these are just cases that has been reported.

3.4 Sampling and participants

The sampling method that was used in this study was non-probability, purposive sampling. Purposive sampling can be described as the technique in which the researcher uses subjective judgements to resolutely select groups that they believe will represent the population under study (Creswell et al., 2016). This technique utilises the deliberate selection of a participant because of certain qualities the individual possesses. This approach allows me to select information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Creswell et al., 2016).

I recruited participants through the assistance of a community organisation called BLAC or Bishop Lavis Action Committee to participate in the study. BLAC is a community organisation that helps fight the many social problems in the community by working with the adolescents and their parents in Bishop Lavis. BLAC consist of both past and present community members of Bishop Lavis. The participants were recruited based on specific criteria. The participants of the study were required to have been a resident of the community and a parent of an adolescent between the ages 12 to 17 years. BLAC provided the me with a list of possible participants who met the necessary requirements. I contacted participants through telephone and participants then agreed to meet at a time and place that suited them for the interview to take place.

Eight participants were samples, specifically seven females and one male, in order to provide the researcher with their experiences and perception around their adolescent children's exposure to community violence. All the participants were from Bishop Lavis and a parent of an adolescent at the time the study took place. The age of the participants ranged from 41 to 60 with their adolescents being 13 to the age of 17. Three of the parents were single parents and five were living with or married to their partners. One of the mothers was not the primary caregiver of her children and they only visited her on weekends.

3.5 Data collection

Data was collected by means of eight, individual, semi-structured interviews. According to Creswell (2003), semi-structured interviews has some degree of predetermined order but still ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed by the informant. Semi-structured interviews are advantageous and considered most appropriate for the aims and objectives of this study. This allowed an opportunity for more probing questions, which provided enriched data relevant to this study. The strength of this approach was that the researcher had control over the issues discussed, the researcher allowed the interviewee to deviate on the core issue of discussion, as long as it was still within the scope of the study. Eight questions were asked (Appendix C) pertaining to topics such as parents' background and their experiences with community violence and how they perceive their child to be experiencing community violence in terms of safety and their future aspirations. Parents were also asked about their perceived role in their children's aspirations. The interviews were approximately 30 – 40 minutes in length and conducted in both English and Afrikaans.

3.6 Procedures

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC). I contacted the BLAC organisation and arranged a suited time and place to meet for an introduction session with the BLAC members. BLAC recruited possible participants based on the study criteria who then gave consent for their contact details to be shared with the me. I contacted participants via telephone and set an agreed upon time and place for the interview to take place. After being informed of the study details, eight participants agreed to be interviewed and gave their written consent. Six of the eight interviews were conducted in Afrikaans and two in English. Interviews were audio-recorded and therefore transcribed verbatim in order to begin data analysis.

3.7 Data analysis

For this study, a phenomenological method of analysis was employed. A phenomenological analysis is primarily concerned with describing and understanding lived experiences (Langdrige, 2007). In this study, those experiences included those of living in the community, community violence and perceptions of their children's experiences and consequent aspirations. To have carried out a phenomenological analysis, I had to assume a lens of phenomenological reduction and be mindful of the phenomenon being studied.

There are four stages to a descriptive phenomenological analysis (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). First, all transcriptions were read in its entirety to try to grasp an overall sense of meaning of the text. Secondly, significant statements from each description had to be extracted, this was an attempt to separate discrete meaning units and at the same time, adopt a psychological attitude towards the text. Third, these statements were formulated into meanings, and these meanings were clustered into themes this was to move from the idiosyncratic (individual) detail to a more general meaning. Lastly, these themes were integrated into a narrative description. Four themes emerged from the transcriptions which were then collated to form a comprehensive picture of the participants' collective experience (Creswell, 2013). These are discussed in Chapter 4.

3.8 Reflexivity

In terms of reflexivity, I had to systematically reflect on who I am in the enquiry and had to be sensitive to my personal biography and how it shaped the study (Creswell, 2003). Thus, Langdrige (2007) states that in the process of reflection, I should always be conscious about the ways in which my questions, methods and my subjective position might impact on the psychological knowledge in the research study for the role of the researcher is co-producing psychological knowledge either as an insider or an outsider.

As I am a resident of the community chosen in the study the I have personal experience of being exposed to community violence, thus having dual roles, being both resident (with personal opinions and experiences), a parent and a researcher. The researcher was thus aware and has first-hand experience of what potential participants might be experiencing. Furthermore, as a young woman, I had to reflect on who she is as a female in a setting with high levels of violence perpetrated, predominantly, by males, as a resident and mother to a new-born daughter.

In an attempt to guard against misinterpretations, especially considering the complex role I have as a researcher, resident and mother, I had to assume a phenomenological attitude (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). To assume the phenomenological attitude meant two things. In the first place, I had to bracket all past knowledge about the phenomenon being researched so that I could be freshly present to the current instance of it. Bracketing the knowledge as a researcher regarding community violence and adolescents was difficult as the concept is not new to me (having been involved in several other research projects before). In the second place, I did not speculate the phenomenon I was experiencing to be real (even if it was), but merely considers it to be a presence to the experiencing person. Strictly speaking, it is a subjective reality or phenomenon for the experiencer (participant).

Consequently, all the epistemological claims made by me will relate to the experiential realm of the experiencer and not the reality aspect of the 'given' (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). In other words, all claims made by the me would be directly linked to what the participants described as part of their experience. Community violence is a crude reality in the world however, the lived experience of each participant remains a subjective experience, present to the experiencing person. The information was handled as subjective and each participant experience was regarded as truth and was respected.

Phenomenological research also emphasises the lived experience not only of the research participants, but also that of the researcher (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Due to the familiarity of the research topic to me, I had to guard against getting too emotionally involved thus I had to be psychologically prepared to listen to respondents' experience without showing too much emotion. I reflected on my self-involvement during the research process by communication with my supervisor, and through continuously diarising my thoughts before and after interviews and discussing these with my supervisor. The analyses were discussed with the participants themselves to ensure accuracy as close to participants' meaning as possible.

Within qualitative research validity is not a fixed concept but rather a contingent construct, grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects (Winter, 2000, p. 1). Guba and Lincoln (1994) replace the concept of validity with "trustworthiness" and propose steps to ensure the trustworthiness of a qualitative research study. In this study, I, firstly ensured credibility by employing "member checks" where the outcomes of the data were tested with participants from whom the data was initially collected (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, I aimed at providing exact reports of the human experience in question. This was done so that people who shared that understanding would immediately recognise the explanations. Dependability was guaranteed by having an independent reviewer to evaluate my transcripts of the interview data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thirdly, I aimed to ensure transferability of the study by providing a comprehensive, rich description of the setting that had been studied. This was done so that readers are provided with adequate information to allow them to judge the applicability of the results to other situations that they were familiar with (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

3.9 Ethics considerations

According to Durrheim and Wassenaar (1999), the essential purpose of ethical research planning is to protect the welfare and the rights of research participants. This study received approval from the appropriate committees at the University of the Western Cape, therefore, the Community and Health Sciences Higher Degrees (CHSHD) and the Human Social Sciences and Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) (Ethics reference number: HS18/9/8). In this study, ethics principles such as obtaining informed consent from the participants, and ensuring autonomy, and confidentiality. In other words, participants were made aware of the aim and objectives of the study as well as how the data will be used through discussions and a formal information letter (Appendix A). Permission was received from the participants to audio tape the interviews and confidentiality regarding the information was ensured to the participants (Appendix B). Therefore, their names are never disclosed in this study. Moreover, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the process at any point without any consequences for them.

Given the nature of the study at hand and the possibility that some of the participants might already have experienced trauma from the community violence a possibility existed that being interviewed about these aspects of community violence might evoke emotional distress. If any participant felt uncomfortable or experience any discomfort or problems as a result of the research study, they were appropriately referred for help. One of the recommended participants had experienced the death of her son the year before as a result of community violence. She therefore did not complete the interview. I then informed my supervisor about her situation and the counsellors at BLAC who arranged for her to see a counsellor.

3.10 Chapter Conclusion

The chapter discussed the method used to sample participants, collect information, procedures and ethics as applicable to the current study. The chapter further identified a phenomenological method of analysis aimed to answer the research question. The following chapter aims to present the results of the study.



Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the present study was to explore parents' understanding of their adolescent children's experience of community violence and their perceptions of the influence it has on their children's future aspirations. The following chapter presents the findings of the transcribed semi-structured interviews using a phenomenological method of analysis. A phenomenological analysis is concerned primarily with lived experience (Langdrige, 2007), such as the experience of community violence. The discussion of thematic categories and themes was informed by the aims and objectives of the study as well as the literature and the theoretical framework. The discussion comprises a range of responses among participants in each category, therefore, the perceptions parents hold of their adolescent children's exposure to community violence. Hence, the themes discussed are not mutually inclusive as they often emerged in more than one category.

4.2 Overview of findings of the study

Four categories arose from the data retrieved from the participants. These categories were further divided into themes:

4.2.1 Theme Category 1: Parents' perceptions of community violence.

4.2.1.1 The community of the past.

4.2.1.2 The rapid escalation in violence.

4.2.2 Theme Category 2: Parents perceptions of the effects of community violence on their adolescents.

4.2.2.1 Internalising effects of violence.

4.2.2.2 Externalising effects of violence.

4.2.3 Theme Category 3: Parents perceptions of their duty to their children's safety.

4.2.3.1 Parental monitoring.

4.2.3.2 Adolescents' feelings of safety.

4.2.3.3 Parent-adolescent violence-talk.

4.2.4 Theme Category 4: Parents' perceptions of adolescence future aspirations.

4.2.4.1 Parents understanding of their adolescents' future aspirations

4.2.4.2 Supporting their children's choices

4.2.4.3 Violence affecting their future aspirations

4.2.1 Parents' perception of community violence

Participants provided an in-depth description of their experiences of violence. This gave the researcher the opportunity to understand what participants had previously experienced and how they made and continue to make sense of it in a community affected by violence. Violence on the Cape Flats is hardly a new phenomenon, as high levels of violence have been reported by police, health care workers and Non-Governmental Organisations. Parents in the present study believe that there was once a time when their community could be perceived as a "safe haven" where they as adolescents themselves had the "freedom" they would have wanted their children to experience. However, the violence parents perceived in their adolescent years differs vastly from how they perceive their adolescents' to be experiencing it. In the following section, the perception parents hold of community violence in their past and present community will be discussed. Issues such their experiences of

feeling safe and unsafe in their community as well as the forms of violence will be discussed. The following thematic category is divided into two themes: “The community of the past” and the “rapid escalation of violence”.

4.2.1.1. The community of the past.

Violence in this given community has been experienced in many ways. However, even though violence has been present in many forms over the years, participants believe that somehow the violence has changed. When discussing participants’ experiences of community violence when they were adolescents, they responded by providing their experiences of the community:

Participant 1: “...it was a safe haven...”

Participant 2: “It was not like now... I don’t know... When I grew up, there wasn’t any violence.”

Participant 3: “I grew up in ----- in Bishop Lavis. The community that I grew up in, - -----, was so it was very quiet.”

Participant 4: “I grew up in Bishop Lavis... That time it wasn’t so violent like it is now...”

Together with parents having experienced their community as a place where they felt safe, they also perceived it as a place they had much more freedom than they do now. Many of the participants grew up in Bishop Lavis and has been a part of the community since their childhood. The age of the participants ranged from 41 to 60 years, placing their period of adolescence in the years of apartheid. During this period, South Africa, which amongst other issues, was characterised by high levels of political violence. According to Schonteich and Louw (2001) the levels of crime reported escalated in the mid-1980s and even more so in the early 1990s due to the political uproar thus after 1994 the expectations people held of violent

crimes decreasing was never materialised. According to Schonteich and Louw (2001), the annual increase in the overall number of recorded crimes was greater in 1999 than in any previous year after 1994. The murder rate increased rapidly in the late-1980s and early-1990s. Between 1994–2009, the murder rate halved from 67 to 34 murders per 100,000 people (Justice Research Institute, ND). Therefore, this statement contradicts the notion that parents feel that they did not experience great levels of violence during their adolescent years. By the above-mentioned reports, violence was indeed present and statistically they were adolescents in a time that was characterised by higher levels of violence. However, participants' experience should be viewed as their reality which was influenced by their perception during their adolescent years.

Furthermore, together with experiencing their community as a “safe haven”, they experienced the freedom of movement within their community. A safe haven is often thought of as locations or spaces of physical safety that are free from harm (Djohari et al., 2018). Safe spaces are significant in understanding children's lives given how they are subject to surveillance and restricted freedom of movement by a risk-averse society, fearful of children as perpetrators and as victims of unsafe environments (Djohari et al., 2018). Safe spaces also describe the social and emotional conditions required for psychological freedom. Participants explained that (during their adolescent years) they still had the freedom to walk freely in the community at any time day or night without the fear of being assaulted.

Participant 4: “I could walk to school in Clarke estate... Safe you weren't even afraid to walk and I walked back home...”

Participant 6: “I grew up here in -----¹ Road, Bishop Lavis... It wasn’t so disorganised... it was a peaceful atmosphere you could walk without being afraid... it was a safe and peaceful place...”

When their experience of violence were discussed, participants referred to the fact that the situation in the community has changed and even though they had the freedom of being able to move freely within their community and other communities, they acknowledged that *their children* do not experience the same level of freedom by stating that:

Participant 1: “She doesn’t feel safe to walk around and she spends more time in the house”.

Participant 2: “But if he walks then he must be careful and turn his phone off or without a phone”.

Participant 7: The freedom of that time is not the same as now like I cannot send her to the shop at night. It’s dangerous I know it’s dangerous on the road especially with the age she is now”

The parents’ experience of violence in this current study differs from the expected reality, as violence was present during their adolescent years. This differing opinion can be the result of many factors that may have been present in their adolescent year. Their perception of their children’s experience seems to be more on par with what is identified to be present in the community. One way of explaining this phenomenon is the way the cultural and social norms have changed over the last few years. The way violence is seen and experienced might have changed over time (World health Organisation, n.d). With access to social media and the internet, adolescents today are more exposed to violence indirectly.

¹ Street names omitted

They have full access to the latest news and information regarding violent acts and incidences because of social media. This might be one of the explanations the way the parents of this study experienced their reality. They did not have immediate access to these sources and were often unaware certain incidences.

4.2.1.2 The rapid escalation in violence:

Participants also expressed a perception of escalating violence in the community. Sexual offences went up by 4.6% the year 2019, the national murder rate increased from 35.8 per 100,000 people to 36.4, according to a report released by Statistics South Africa. Cape Town is among the most violent cities in the world. In 2017/18 its murder rate was 69 per 100 000 residents compared to the national average of 36, and a global average of 6.1. Since November 2018, over 2 300 people have been murdered in the Western Cape province, most in specific parts of the Cape Flats. In Philippi for example, 14 people were murdered in just three incidents over the weekend of 5 June 2019 (Stuart Mbanyele, Consultant and Andrew Faull, Senior Researcher, Justice and Violence Prevention, ISS Pretoria) Forensic services recorded 47 murders at the weekend - 27 shootings, 13 stabbings and seven “murders by other means” in the metro region of the province (12 August 2019, TimesLIVE). Participants descriptions included the different types of violence, how it has changed as well as the weapons used to conduct these forms of violence.

Participant 1: “...And how it was and how it is now it is actually much worse for our young children”

Participant 2: “Man I myself did not get hurt or robbed or something or assaulted but sometimes I heard from my sister who is there on -----¹ now. Sometimes I cannot go to her because they will call me and say that they shooting there and so... But Bishop

Lavis is now a... and then it is up and then down... it is sometimes very unorganised and then sometimes it's very quiet.”

Participant 6: “It wasn't as disorganised as it is now.”

Participant 7: “You got people that time that used cane knives and stabbed with knives and pick, axe and take the garden fork and stab right through you...”

Parents often compared their experience with what they believe their children are currently experiencing growing up in Bishop Lavis. There was a shared sense that the acts of violence and the weapons used was erratic or ‘disorganised’. There is this distinction between crimes before and the crimes now – that it is worse now in its disorganisation and weaponry. As mentioned before, the participants in the current study enjoyed their adolescent years in the years of apartheid in South Africa. In the time of apartheid (Between 1950s and late 1980s), behaviour which is considered normal today was criminalised. Politically motivated strikes, the actions of people of one race working, living or playing in areas reserved for people of another race; interracial couples; or, the possession of subversive literature were seen as serious crimes (Dubow, 2019). Thus, Dubow (2019), states that those who participated in “the struggle” especially from the mid-1980s onwards justified forms of violence as legitimate weapons against the system. Actions which were violent crimes were often seen and justified by their perpetrators as a legitimate defence against political opponents and enemies. The result was a society in which the use of violence to achieve political and personal aims became widespread. This thus explains the current study.

4.2.2 Parents' perceptions of the effects of community violence on their adolescents.

To provide effective guidance parents should understand what their children experience (Park, 2018). Even though parents experienced a safer environment during *their*

youth, they acknowledge that times have change and their children's experiences are different.

When parents discussed what they perceive the effects of children's experience of community violence are, parents stated that their children often avoid leaving the house as participants note that the often stay "inside". Parents have also noted that their adolescents changed their friends. As their adolescents would start staying away from certain groups of friends that might be involved with wrong activities and they will start bringing new friend's home or completely stay away from friends. Parents also noted that their children are affected emotionally as they do not feel safe to move around in the community because the perpetrators and victims are often people they have seen around or even know (Buka et al., 2001; Gorman-Smith et al., 2004; Osofsky, 1995). Their children's sense of safety is lacking. Community violence has been associated with both internalising and externalising symptoms. According to Lambert et al. (2012) and Kennedy and Ceballo (2014), being the victim of community violence by someone close has been associated with more depressive and PTS symptoms (internalizing symptoms), more aggressive behaviours (externalising symptoms) as well as being victimized by a stranger. In the following section it becomes evident that parents perceive their children to experience both internalising and externalising symptoms, as participants describe their children to withdraw themselves from friends and outside activities by staying indoors.

4.2.2.1 Internalising effects of violence.

It has been established that community violence can have profound effects on the lives of adolescents (Buka et al., 2001; Gorman-Smith et al., 2004; Osofsky, 1995). Specifically, when children are exposed to a violent event, the initial response is commonly (and appropriately) fear (Kistin & Bair-Merritt, 2017). These effects were clear to parents as well, as is evident in the responses the parents gave.

Participant 1: “She doesn’t feel safe to walk around and she spends more time in the house... She doesn’t come out of the house because she doesn’t feel safe”

Participant 3: “For them it’s new. Its new to them if somebody swears or they argue or something and then they like go mommy you know and they shocked and it’s not even fighting but with the one incident that happened in our road also with the shooting they came and said to me mommy we are never coming here again”

Participant 3: “They cry because like I said it’s a shock to you and its people that they have seen walking around here so basically they know them... She will take everything that happens to heart, and she is just also in the house she doesn’t go out anymore so she comes here she will stay inside and we will go do our thing... They would tell me what happened at school.”

Previous research on the effects of community violence exposure has highlighted that the effects can be seen in both internalising and externalising effects (Shahinfar et al., 2000; Brookmeyer et al., 2005). As a result of the violence in the community, parents believe that their children have become more withdrawn and avoid the dangerous situations which is one of the common internalising effects of community violence. These participants acknowledge that their adolescents live in constant fear which affects them emotionally.

4.2.2.1 Externalising effects of violence.

Youth exposed to violence have limited opportunities to interact appropriately with their peers and to develop positive socializing experiences (Dube et al., 2018). Living in an environment where violence is prevalent has been linked to increased stress and feelings of hopelessness (Wilson et al. 2012; Woods-Jaeger et al. 2013). In this present study parents described their children’s experience of community violence in the following ways:

Participant 2: “Man he tries to avoid it. But sometimes like what he saw how they shoot someone in front of him so he came home and he tries to stay away from the danger. He won’t go and join a gang.”

Participant 3: “... They have a few friends here but they withdrew themselves because of the language. We do not tolerate any form of violence or misconduct. But they have no more friends in Bishop Lavis.”

Participants in the current study were acutely aware of the effect of the community on their children. Higher rates of psychological distress symptoms among females may also reflect gendered ways of coping with community violence exposure. For instance, a recent qualitative investigation found that females are more likely than males to cope with violence within their communities by isolating themselves at home (Voisin et al. 2011). Coping styles range from "getting through," which included both an acceptance of community conditions; "getting along," which included self-defence techniques; "getting away," which included avoidance coping strategies; and "getting back," which consisted of confrontational coping strategies (Voisin et al. 2011). Boys report more confrontational coping styles than are girls, who utilized more avoidance approaches. An explanation is that violence exposure contributes to the development of hostile attributions towards the actions of others and to the normalization of aggressive behaviours (Janosz et al. 2018). It is evident that parents believe their adolescents experience many externalising effects by staying indoors and reducing or changing their friends in order to cope with their experiences. The experiences of these adolescents in the community has led to them isolating themselves and restricted the freedom they enjoy.

4.2.3 Parents perceptions of their duty to their children's safety.

To provide effective guidance, parents should understand how adolescents perceive conflict (Rai et al. 2003). Adolescents whose parents are knowledgeable about their friends, activities and whereabouts are less likely to engage in early sexual initiation, unprotected sex, or have multiple partners (Huang et al. 2011; Rai et al. 2003). Such associations between parental monitoring and adolescent sexual risk have been found among a variety of youth populations, including justice involved youth (Voisin et al. 2012). In this present study, parents said that they would warn their children, scold at them and point out to them when they see something that is not safe or right – either in their children's behaviour or the behaviour of others in the community. Parents would limit their children's physical movement in terms of walking certain places and keep them away from certain people within their community. The two themes, which emerge in terms of parents' perceptions of their duty, is parental monitoring, feelings of safety and a recognition of the importance of engaging in 'safety talk' with their children.

4.2.3.1 Parental monitoring

Positive family factors (e.g., parental monitoring) can mitigate the adverse effects of living in a high-risk community on adolescents' problem behaviours and risky exposure. Parental monitoring refers to behaviours that involve “keeping tabs” on where, how, and with who adolescents spend their leisure activities, which has been shown to largely reduce the likelihood of adolescents engaging in or developing risky behaviours (Kliewer et al., 2006; Vaala & Bleakley, 2015) such as being exposed to or being the victims or perpetrators of violence. Parental monitoring has been shown to vary in different social contexts (Luthar et al., 2015). In a high-risk environment, effective parental monitoring might be a way of demonstrating care and concern for adolescent children (Dishion & McMahon, 1998; Luthar et al., 2015). For example, in areas of armed conflict, parental monitoring can improve the

mental health of adolescents, who have been exposed to violence (Tol et al., 2013). In the following responses parents describe how they try and keep their children safe. According to the risk-buffering model (Luthar et al., 2015), family protective factors serve as one of the essential aspects of resilience of adolescents, who are facing adversity.

Participant 1: “I will always warn her when she says where she is going then I will always tell her to be safe.

Participant 2: “But I don’t actually allow him to sleep in Vahallah Park because I don’t know the people there. The friends I also saw now then I see but I don’t know their parents... So I will keep an eye on him so that he does not have the wrong friends and maybe gangs and that. There was a time I noticed that he smoked weed...so I told him that I will then have to send you to rehab if you continue with this. I try to keep a watchful eye on my son that he does not do wrong things”
 Sometimes at its worst then I would threaten him with his daddy: “I will tell your daddy and you know your daddy don’t take any drama.”

Participant 3: “I am a very paranoid mother. If they with me or not like safety is a priority to us... I will make them aware they know which numbers to dial there is a list on the fridge there is a list at n their heads of emergency numbers that they need to call... We have code words like passwords when you get lost or when somebody kidnaps you there is a password like I will even if she chats to me on someone else’s phone and then I would ask her

Participant 5: “I will tell him not to walk this side because this side is a bit dangerous...I will tell him he must stop walking around and especially at night and even weekends then I worry...”

Participant 6: Like a parent and a child will talk. I will tell him the do's and the don'ts. And what is expected from him when it comes to such things.

Participant 7: "I will always tell her if you see gangsters by the gate and so don't still give them attention to still talk with them. You just go to school and from the school and you don't still look at them straight home. Your safety is mostly at home. Your safety is not on the streets.

Another aspect of the family environment that may be disturbed by community violence is the behaviour of parents and the way they parent (Overstreet & Mazza, 2003). Community violence can be a stressor for parents as well, by increasing the levels of parental distress and fears for safety. According to Overstreet and Mazza (2003), increased parental distress has been found to be related to less sensitive and responsive parenting behaviour. In the above statements it may become clear that parents in the given study are more authoritarian than authoritative. One parent even describes herself as a 'paranoid mother'. According to Thomas et al. (2003) authoritarian parenting consists of "firmly enforced rules and edicts decided by parents, without acceptance of children's demands and without bargaining and discussion". Even though harsh parental discipline is one aspect of parenting which is associated with the development of childhood maladaptive behaviours (Thomas et al., 2003) in communities such as the community under study, characterised by high violence and low options and resources to combat violence, authoritarian parenting style helps keep their children safe.

4.2.3.2 Adolescents' feelings of safety:

A sense of safety is important for the well-being of adolescents as they are at a sensitive stage of transition (Gorman-Smith et al. 2004). It is thus important for parents to be

aware of their children's safety. In the following section it can be seen that parents believe their children feel safer in areas known to them such as their own street and the homes.

Participant 1: "I think there are still a few places where she feels safe... I think in the house of course and in her own road she is obviously safer"

Participant 2: "Man he will tell me when he doesn't feel safe... okay it did not come to that with him not feeling safe but he can't walk there because he is wanted [by gang members]...so there wasn't such an incident yet...I won't say that my children are safe because the community isn't safe but I don't have a choice they have to attend school. We have to make it safe as best as we can."

Participant 3: I think when they enclosed like they are now they do feel safe but outside of the gates they don't"

Participant 4: "No not really. During the day yes look I am more at home now during the day I will see him but I don't believe that he will be able to sit outside alone it is not safe"

Participant 5: "I don't know if he feels safe, but he isn't actually one that walks around"

Participant 6: I can't say directly but like I can see it looks like he where he walks its safe and the type of friend circle he hangs out with is not people's children who is rough and so. I am at easy in the environment that he is.

Participant 7: "Yes she does. When she goes to school and from there."

In many studies of exposure to violence at home, at school, and in the community, adolescents report coping strategies aimed at helping themselves feel safe, such as surrounding themselves with people who make them feel safe (Rather et al., 2006). These

findings suggest that children exposed to community violence who feel safe at home may have higher levels of academic performance and positive future aspirations (Grant et al., 2005; Overstreet, 2000). Dubrow and Garbarino (1989) identifies a mothers' greatest concern is their children safety. Parental attempts to keep children safe while living in a violent community may actually also impede the children's developmental progress as parents may employ harsher parenting styles or even become helicopter parents.

4.2.3.3 Parent-adolescent violence-talk:

Seeing the influence that the exposure to violence has on adolescents, parents' knowledge about what their adolescents' experience is important. When asked if parents talk to their children about their experiences many of them state that they would have to talk to their children first or their children will only disclose certain information.

Participant 2: "He will talk yes if he saw something... He won't joke about it. I can sometimes see he is in shock then I ask him "what happened?" "why do you look like that". Then he will talk.

Participant 4: Yes, I talk to him I will always tell him "did you see they did shoot again?" and with the police man of yesterday... now and then he will come tell me mummy they were shooting there and so... he is very serious.

Participant 5: "He will talk if you come to him yes" He will say mummie I don't want to be like these guys. I don't want to be like that guy."

Participant 6: "He will come tell us what happened, and he won't be scared to talk"

Participant 1: "She doesn't really talk about it" ... She will maybe say she is a little... she doesn't feel safe to walk everywhere"

Participant 7: If it is maybe something wrong then she will come tell me and I believe that she will come tell me. Look myself and ---, don't talk a lot all she talks about is dancing... she doesn't talk to me about other stories and stuff.

Parents had differing experiences of talking to their children and their children sharing details of their lives with them. Four parents said that their children will talk about their experience, while others noted that they had to approach their children first and open the table for discussion. Although communication during the adolescent years certainly is a challenge for parents and children, this challenge stems primarily from the changing nature of the relationship, not from an inherent inability of adolescents and parents to engage in meaningful conversation (Laursen & Collins, 2009; Smetana et al., 2006). As families navigate the transition from childhood into adulthood, the frequency and content of their interactions change. Increasing adolescent autonomy inevitably alters patterns of self-disclosure, shared experiences, and perceptions of privacy and responsibilities (Laursen & Collins, 2009; Smetana et al., 2006).

4.2.4 Parents' perceptions of adolescents' future aspirations

Family is an important context in which children develop their career aspirations (Gerard & Booth, 2015). Future expectations are vulnerable to stressful life experiences (Gerard & Booth, 2015). As such, environmental factors such as exposure to community violence may decrease adolescents' expectations and aspirations associated with their future but may be mitigated by parental involvement. This thematic category speaks to research by Stoddard et al., 2010; Kabiru et al. (2017) and Robinson and Diale (2017) and is divided into three themes, namely: Parents' understanding of their adolescents' future aspirations; supporting their children's choices; violence affecting their future aspirations.

4.4.1. Parents understanding of their adolescents' future aspirations

Parents can either mitigate or increase the level of effect the exposure to community violence can have on an adolescent's life by being either being present in their lives or contributing to the effect through neglectful and abusive parenting (Kabiru et al.,2017). In the following section parents' views of their children's future career aspirations are quoted:

Participant 1: "She will like to be a teacher one day and I try to support her with it."

Participant 2: "Man I am not sure what he wants to be one day but he is good with IT stuff and so.. He is not sure in which direction he would want to go. And his daddy wants to push him into a direction because his dad thinks about money."

Participant 3: "She wants to be a marine biologist. We already steering in that direction."

Participant 4: "He wants to do engineering"

Participant 5: "...like he said a fireman. That was when he was grade 9 but I think he wont worry with that anymore he hasn't spoken about it any further."

Participant 6: "He wants to be a mechanical engineer something like that... he wants to go on that direction."

Participant 7: "I don't know she tells me I shouldn't tell her what she must do. She must decide on her own."

In this section above its evident that parents have, to a greater or lesser extent, some idea of their children's future aspirations. Some of the knowledge is more recent, while it seems as though others might be limited in the communication with their children regarding their aspirations. In the current study, it was evident that parents have little communication with their adolescents about their safety and future endeavours. Parents entrust their children

to make their own decisions and would not stand in their way of what they want in life. It is also evident from the interviews that a few parents are unaware about what their adolescence aspire to be. The information that they have, comes from conversations they had a few years ago or when their adolescence was a bit younger.

4.4.2 Supporting their children's choices

Family and the parent–adolescent relationship, provides one of the most important social contexts for adolescent development. Although peers become increasingly influential during adolescence (McCoy & Bowen, 2015), parents continue to be important sources for adolescents' decisions about major life choices. The parents in this study demonstrated an understanding of the need of support their adolescents required.

Participant 1: “I try and stand by her side... Yes just to support her and stand behind her to motivate her and all that I can do as a parent is to motivate her to where she will be and for her and to stand by her side.

Participant 2: I think I can keep them on the right path. Man, I support them in whatever they want to be I will support them.

Participant 3: Is to keep her curious in the first place because I believe that when you keep a child curious then they will go dig for information and knowing.

Participant 4: I tell him that it is not necessary to work for me he can put is money away... I want to look out to him going forward in life.

Participant 5: I tell him that I will not always be there. If you want to be something in life then you must start making up your mind now already what you want to do but further than that we didn't talk again.

Participant 7: My role is to look after her and for what she must do... I don't tell her what to do but I want to give her the chance... I won't let her walk to school with broken shoes and a tracksuit she got by someone else. Okay we are poor but while I am working, I won't allow it.

In the above quotations it is evident that parents realise the amount of emotional support and required resources for their children's educational development. The family plays an important role in a child's educated-related context for adolescents' socio-emotional functioning (Pomerantz & Moorman, 2010). This support and resources have the potential to direct adolescents toward positive behavioural choices and enhance their emotional well-being through encouragement and support for academic goals. Findings from a previous study by Gerard and Booth (2015) suggest that supportive educational environments have more far-reaching impact on youth that extends beyond scholastic performance to their behavioural and emotional well-being (Gerard & Booth, 2015).

4.4.3 Violence affecting their future aspirations

Several factors, including neighbourhood safety and supportive parental relationships, can help youth maintain hope for the future and that such future aspirations can bolster adolescents' sense of self-efficacy in school. When asked how parent's viewed community violence to have an impact on their children's future aspiration these were their responses:

Participant 1: "The children is now not safe but we try and let her achieve what she will achieve. I try to support her and make sure that she stays on the safer side."

Participant 2: "It does affect him look especially my son he is now big and I don't mind if he goes out but it is not always safe and I worry sometimes."

Participant 3: "Being involved with her boyfriend that grew up in Bishop Lavis... it is almost like he is rubbing off on her."

Participant 4: “There isn’t a lot of ways out for our children. Our coloured children stays behind because when they go forward then it’s always no vacancy and this makes our children fall behind because it doesn’t matter if they go to college and work now they go for three months and they done studying then there isn’t work for them.”

Participant 5: “It is yes. There is certain stuff that keeps him back but he doesn’t talk about it.”

Participant 6: It makes them confused. They don’t know if they must move what is going to happen and so it makes them their mindset... it makes them confused the violence because they don’t know where they will find themselves.”

Participant 7: “It is all just the child. The child is what she wants to be one day we cannot tell her. I can send her to school every day. Stuff she needs I can give her. But I cant tell her what she must be.”

When asked about their children’s future aspirations parents expressed a little more than just issues around community violence. As seen above they mention issues of race, economic stability and relationships when it comes to the discussion of the effects of the community on their adolescents’ future aspirations which can be supported by the study by Steward et al. (2007) and their findings suggest that living in a disadvantaged context lowers aspiration adolescents. Parents are fully aware of the other constraints that might have an influence on their children’s future aspirations. Their research showed that neighbourhood socioeconomic inequality is a strong correlate of negative attitudes and problem behaviours (Steward et al., 2007). Parents also highlight the fact that their adolescents need a way out of the community this may come from their experience of living in the community where the unemployment rates are high and the possibility of youngsters joining gangs are even higher.

4.3. Summary of findings

This chapter discussed the findings of the transcribed semi-structured interviews. Four categories arose from the data which included: firstly, parents perceptions of community violence in which participants discussed the community of the past which they perceived to be a safe haven in their adolescent years as well as highlighting the current environment characteristics that their children are experiencing. The second category discussed parents' perceptions of the effects of community violence on the lives of their adolescents in which they highlighted how they perceive community violence to effect their children internally and externally. Participants in the current study confirm what previous studies have highlighted, in that community violence have a profound effect on the day to day lives of adolescents. The third category identified parents' perceptions of their duty to their children and the conversations they have with them around their safety. The fourth category highlighted parents perceptions of adolescents future aspirations in which parents identified that their children do have goals for their futures and that they perceive their role to be to support their children and providing them with the necessary resources. Participants acknowledge that community violence does have an effect on their adolescents' future aspirations and describe their role in supporting their adolescents' future. The following chapter will discuss the implications and limitations of the present study.

4.4. Chapter Conclusion

The chapter above outlined the findings of the transcribed interviews as captured for this study using a phenomenological method of analysis. The thematic categories that were found in the analysis is further discussed as well as participants response to each category and topic that was discussed.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

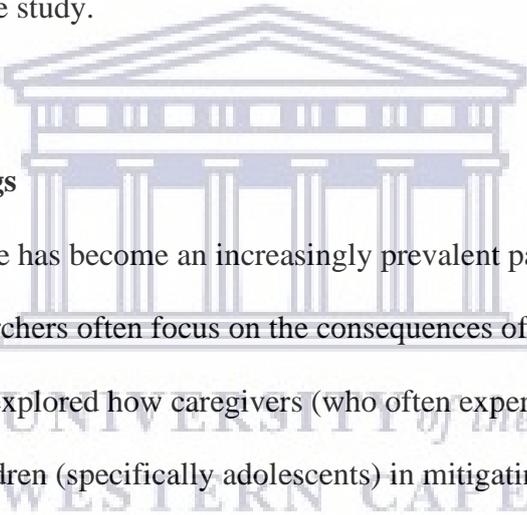
5.1 Introduction

The current study had set out to explore the perceptions of parents regarding their adolescent's community violence experience, their role in their children's lives as well as the impact they believe community violence has on their adolescents' future aspirations.

Participants in the current study experience community violence as being much worse now and having more negative effects on their adolescents' lives than when they were adolescents.

This chapter outlines the implications of the findings of the study as well as the limitations and recommendations of the study.

5.2 Implications of findings



Community violence has become an increasingly prevalent part of life for many South African adolescents. Researchers often focus on the consequences of community violence for victims but have not often explored how caregivers (who often experience similar levels of violence) support their children (specifically adolescents) in mitigating these effects. The current study had similar interests aiming to firstly explore parents' experience of their children's exposure to community violence. The study secondly aimed to explore parents' perceptions of their role in their children's perceptions of safety and lastly to explore parents' experience of the impact of their children's exposure to community violence on their future aspirations.

This study was conducted in one of the most crime ridden communities of the Cape Flats (Crime Stats SA, 2019). Bishop Lavis serves a population of just over 44 419 people in 5 788 households that is predominantly coloured and speaks Afrikaans. This community is one of the many townships that was established in the Western Cape Province by the

country's reigning regime for the introduction of apartheid in South Africa. The 2011 census reports a 26.6% unemployment rate and a 47% of the community receiving an income of less than R3200 per month. The Census of 2011 also notes that 15.4% of this population has either of completed primary education or has no education and only 5.9% has higher qualifications, placing Bishop Lavis as one of the low socio-economic communities in the western cape. For young people growing up in poor communities, violence is often a part of daily life. Participants acknowledge that their adolescents are experiencing a time of hardship when it comes to community violence which is robbing them of the experiences of the youth they themselves experienced. From this above section participants highlighted how the community their adolescents are living in effects many aspects of their lives. Participants referred to the ways in which they try and protect their adolescents from the dangers in their communities. It is also evident that these participants experience the phenomenon of community violence as a real part and big factor in their lives as well as those of their adolescents. The poor are generally more vulnerable to violent crime than those in middle- and upper-income neighbourhoods owing to environmental factors such as poor public policing, poor street lighting, and overcrowding (Golsteijn & van den Hoven, 2013). Parents in impoverished communities are often challenged with many other difficulties apart from raising their children, such as lacking basic resources, lower employment opportunities, low educational levels (Golsteijn & van den Hoven, 2013). For adolescents exposed to violence in these communities, whether directly or indirectly, have substantial long-term health consequences, many of which remain unrecorded and unquantified. Exposure to community violence places adolescents at risk for either becoming the victims or the perpetrators of further violence in their adult life.

Participants in the current study are aware of the heightened levels of violence their community experience. However, many of them claimed to have had a different experience

of their community when they were adolescents. Many of them experienced their community as being a place where they felt safe and had the freedom to be able to move around.

According to Crime Stats SA (2019) Bishop Lavis has always been one of the communities that were characterised by high levels of violence however there has been a recent spike in the violence. Participants also outlined the violence that was present at the time of their adolescence was different in terms of the weapons and brutality. According to Thomas (2012), between September 1984 and February 1986 protests intensified and resistance to apartheid spiked and over a thousand persons were estimated to have died in the unrest especially in local townships and other areas on the Cape Flats. Furthermore, there were 66.9 murders per 100 000 people in 1994 however by 2012 it had dropped to 30 murders per 100 000 people. Looking at statistics, this experience of living in the community at the time are somewhat skewed as it is evident that violence was indeed prevalent. However, a phenomenological perspective allows for the difference in different realities – different experiences. These participants experienced their period of adolescence as being safer while their children experience their community as unsafe and dangerous which is more aligned with the current statistics.

Participants regard community violence as having many effects on the lives of their adolescents. Parents acknowledged that the community is not a safe place for their adolescents and thus need to adjust their ways on parenting in order to keep their children safe. As a result of the violence in the community, parents believe that their children have become more withdrawn and avoid the dangerous situations which is one of the above mentioned internalising effects of community violence that has been highlighted in literature (Wilson et al. 2012; Woods-Jaeger et al. 2013). As the exposure to community violence may lead to internalising and externalising effects, the youth may attempt to regulate and cope with such emotions through alcohol and drug use (Lindenberg et al. 1993), which was also

presented in the current study. Participants identified with the fact that their adolescents might have been part of risky behaviours such as the smoking of marijuana and drinking.

Participants in the current study were quite aware of the effect of the community on their children. They were worried about how their children are becoming involved with the ‘wrong crowd’ and how their behaviour such as swearing, and disrespect would rub off on them.

Previous literature has highlighted that positive family factors (e.g., parental monitoring) can mitigate the adverse effects of living in a high-risk community on adolescents’ problem behaviours and risky exposure. In the current study parents confirmed with the characteristics of parental monitoring which refers to behaviours that involve “keeping tabs” on where, how, and with who adolescents spend their leisure activities, which has been shown to largely reduce the likelihood of adolescents engaging in or developing risky behaviours (Kliewer et al., 2006; Vaala & Bleakley, 2015) such as being exposed to or being the victims or perpetrators of violence. In a high-risk environment, effective parental monitoring might be a way of demonstrating care and concern for adolescent children (Dishion & McMahon, 1998; Luthar et al., 2015). For example, in areas of armed conflict, parental monitoring can improve the mental health of adolescents, who have been exposed to violence (Tol et al., 2013). Parents believe that it’s their duty to constantly check on their children to make sure that they are safe.

A sense of safety is an important aspect of development in adolescents. As mentioned previously findings suggest that children exposed to community violence who feel safe at home may have higher levels of academic performance and positive future aspirations (Grant et al., 2005; Overstreet, 2000). Participants identified with the fact that their adolescents tend to feel safe only in familiar areas such as the schools, in their road and at home. Previous research has highlighted that adolescent way of protecting themselves would be to surround

themselves with people who make them feel safe (Rather et al., 2006). This is evident in the way participants have experienced their children to withdraw from activities and friends.

A good parent-child relationship together with a sense of safety might be what differentiates between adolescents who flourish and those who do not. A previous study by Rather et al. (2006) found that children who reported they felt safe, in terms of being cared for by caregivers, regardless of their actual exposure to community violence performed better on most cognitive and achievement outcome measures (Ratner et al., 2006). Parent-child relationships in the current study differs vastly in terms of parental monitoring. A few parents identified that they do not have much influence on what their children become but all they can do is support and allow their children to decide. Others described their experience as constantly trying to encourage and broaden their ways of thinking about their future. These parents also show a clear positive regard for what it means to support their child not only in an educational and schooling sense but to develop a sense of general wellbeing. The parents in this study are afraid of their children becoming what they fear. They are afraid of their children becoming involved in the wrong crowd and taking part in the wrong activities such as gangsterism and drugs. Parents also highlight the fact that their adolescents need a way out of the community this may come from their experience of living in the community where the unemployment rates are high and the possibility of youngsters joining gangs are even higher.

The exposure to community violence has a great bearing on the lives of both the parents and adolescents in this study. Parents are often left hopeless and living fearful for the future of their adolescents as they themselves know and have experienced what it is like living in this kind of community. The experiences of these parents are their reality and what they have experienced is that community violence had affected their adolescents by restricting their movements and robbing them of an experience of freedom like they had.

They also experience a need to guide their adolescents out of this community for them to become and achieve better things.

5.3 Limitations and recommendations

This study is not without its limitations. Firstly, it should be noted the generalisability of the findings of this study in that the findings yielded here are confined to the perceptions and understandings of parents in the Bishop Lavis area, who experience community violence. Therefore, these findings do not necessarily speak to the perceptions and understandings of parents in general or even others living in similar communities. Secondly, the participants were all parents from a low-income community thus the findings cannot be generalised and although they spoke with ease, their responses were brief. Whilst the information that they provided was sufficient for the purpose of this study, more detail could perhaps have been obtained if the participants had been interviewed in a group setting.

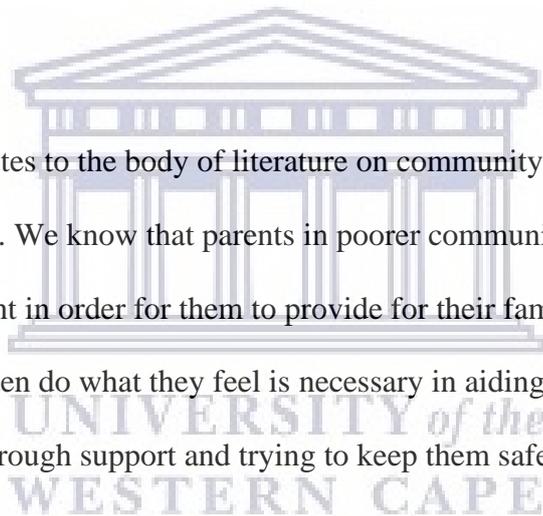
It is important that, based on parents' perceptions and understandings from the study, the various and often interrelated ways in which their context influences their adolescents' development be considered. Parents referred to their children participating in actions that might hinder their development such as hanging out with friends who has bad habits such as drinking or smoking and even their language use. Parents stated that the relationships their children have with friends in their community is not always positive as their friend's bad habits might become their children's bad habits. In addition, the research directs the attention of researchers and other interested parties to the complex and multifaceted nature of risk and protective factors in the parent-child relationship and how this is compounded by low-income contexts. An inclusive intervention strategy is needed, involving various interventions aimed

not only at addressing the risk factors for community violence exposure, but at the same time increasing the resilience of young people to community violence exposure.

In this study support for parents have also been highlighted. Parents supporting one another needs fostered to protect adolescents from community violence exposure. Parents should therefore be encouraged to come together and become involved in adolescents' lives and provide adolescents with adequate support in the face of community violence exposure. The safety of adolescents should become a priority. In this community, neighbourhood security should be discussed and addressed to maintain a sense of safety in the adolescents.

5.3 Chapter Conclusion

This study contributes to the body of literature on community violence and its effects on parents and adolescents. We know that parents in poorer community have much more concerns and battles to fight in order for them to provide for their family but we now also know that these parents often do what they feel is necessary in aiding their adolescents to reach their full potential through support and trying to keep them safe.



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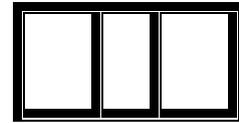
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Appendix A: Information Sheet



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INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: An exploration into the perceptions of parents on their adolescent child's sense of safety and future aspirations in a community characterised by violence

What is this study about?

This is a research project being conducted by Dr. Serena Isaacs and Letitia Butler a MA research (structured) student at the University of the Western Cape. This study is conducted for the purposes of investigating parent's understanding of their adolescent's sense of safety and future aspirations. You are being asked to participate in this research project because you are a parent of an adolescent in a community experiencing community violence.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

You will be asked to complete a consent form as well participate in an interview that will be recorded which would be 30min to an hour long.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

The researcher undertake to protect your identity and the nature of your contribution. To help ensure your anonymity, your name will not be connected to the data collected. The interview will be anonymous and will not contain information that may personally identify you.

(1) your name will not be included in the interview recording;

<http://etd.uwc.ac.za/>

(2) a code will be placed on the recording and other collected data.

To ensure your confidentiality, all recordings will be stored on a password protected computer at the Department of Psychology of the University of the Western Cape.

In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, the researcher will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to you or others.

What are the risks of this research?

All human interaction and talking about yourself or others may carry some risk. However, I will minimise such risk and act promptly to assist you if you experience any discomfort, psychological or otherwise during the process of your participation in this study. I assure you that the only aim of this study is to gain an understanding of your experiences and your perceptions.

What are the benefits of this research?

The overall benefit of this study is that it aims to add to existing knowledge on the above mentioned constructs. In doing so the researcher hope to create awareness and further intervention for those individuals who have been affected by community violence.

Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalised or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?

Yes. Please contact the researcher (details below) and she will arrange for the appropriate care, eg.

What if I have questions?

This research is being conducted by Letitia Butler at the Department of Psychology at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact:

Letitia Butler

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Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

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This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (REFERENCE NUMBER: HS18/9/8).

Appendix B: Consent Form

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CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: An exploration into the perceptions of parents on their adolescent child's sense of safety and future aspirations in a community characterised by violence

This study has been described to me in a language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve and agree to participate of my own free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone, except to the researchers that will be conducting the interview. I understand that the interview will be recorded by the researcher. I understand that I am able to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits.

Signature of participant **Date:**

Signature of Researcher **Date:**.....

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study.

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

Interview schedule

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
 - a. Your family life.
 - b. Did you grow up in Bishop Lavis
2. What has been your experience of the violence in your community?
3. Do you think your child has a similar experience?
 - a. If not, explain why not.
4. How would you describe your child's experience of violence in the community?
 - a. Do they speak to you about their experiences?
 - b. How do they speak to you or any family member about violence in the community? (e.g. do they joke about it?)
 - c. What kind of stories about violence do they speak about?
5. How do you discuss safety with your children?
 - a. Do you think your child feels safe in the community?
 - b. Do you think it is important to talk about safety with your children?
 - c. How do you talk to them about being/staying safe?
6. Because of the violence that increasing. When you watch the news you see what's happening in the country and in the community- What are the kinds of things you have to do now, to make sure they stay safe?
 - a. What do you do in order to make your child feel safer/ protected?
7. What do you think are your child's future aspirations?

- a. Do you and your child talk about their future?
 - b. What do you think they would like to do with their lives?
 - c. What would you like them to do one day?
8. Do you think the exposure to the violence influence your child's future aspirations?
- a. How do you it influences your child's future?
 - b. What do you think is your role in your child achieving their aspirations?

