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**YOUTH AND ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE IN POST-  
APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW**

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**A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Psychology in  
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## Abstract

The history of South Africa is embedded in violence. This can be traced to the arrival of the Dutch settlers in 1652, to the Afrikaner–nationalist ideology of apartheid, and finally into the current dispensation of democracy. Historically, violence with its various forms and negative sequelae, has been narrated from an adult-centred perspective. Thus, due to the paucity of literature from the perspective of youth and adolescents, this study aims to review and synthesise the findings of existing empirical studies focusing on youth and adolescents' perceptions of violence in post-apartheid South Africa. The study employed a systematic review methodology, which is a rigorous approach to reviewing the breadth and depth of literature on a particular topic, with specific criteria. After a systematic search of the literature, 34 articles were included in the review, with study samples including youth and adolescents aged 8 to 27-years. Three overarching themes were identified from the included studies, using thematic analysis, namely: exposure to violence; gender and sexual-based violence; and interpersonal and school violence. Findings demonstrate that the concept of violence is broad and nuanced, and that violence is experienced and enacted in multiple social settings. The key findings of the review are that several contributing factors result in violence, which includes but is not limited to the consequences of apartheid, low socioeconomic conditions, hegemonic masculinity, and male entitlement over women. At a grassroots level, more research is needed to gain deeper knowledge about how youth and adolescents understand, conceptualise, and contextualise the differing constructs of violence through various frameworks. Violence prevention and intervention requires a collaborative approach to exact meaningful change that will be beneficial for all stakeholders.

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## Declaration

I, Moghamad Phadiel Hoosen (student number: 3762927), the undersigned, hereby declare that this research thesis is a true and accurate reflection of my work, with the publication of others acknowledged using the American Psychological Association (APA) reference technique.



Signed: *Moghamad Phadiel Hoosen*

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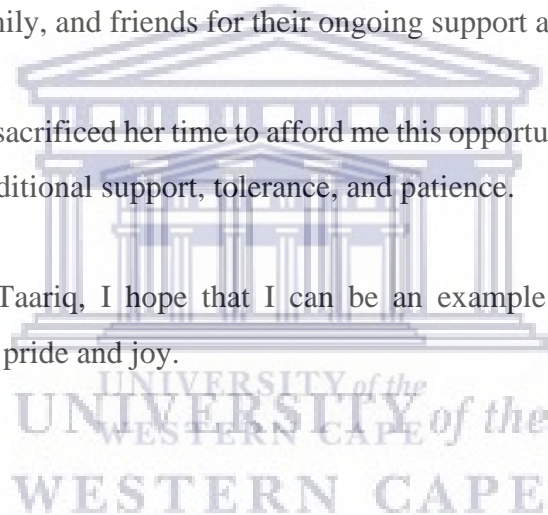
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## 1 Background

“Violence is any relation, process, or condition by which an individual or a group violates the physical, social, and/or psychological integrity of another person or group” (Bulhan, 1985, p.135). From this definition delineated by Bulhan (1985), it is evident that violence is a profoundly negative process that impedes the ability for human growth, suppresses innate potential, limits productive development and self-actualisation, and causes death (Bulhan, 1985). With South Africa having one of the highest recorded rates of violent crime in the world, violence in the lives of youth and adolescents is ubiquitous particularly amongst those living in low socio-economic status (SES) neighbourhoods (Hallman et al., 2015; Hamber, 2000). Youth and adolescents in some communities in this context experience violence in a multi-layered social context. This includes violence in private and public settings, such as in the home, at school, in their neighbourhood, and other open spaces that include but are not limited to shopping malls and public transport (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Seedat et al., 2004). According to the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMSS) in South Africa, in 2008 violence was the leading cause of death among 10 to 19-year-olds accounting for approximately 36%; followed by transport accidents at 30%; non-transport accidents at 15%; suicide at 13%, as well as 6% with causes undetermined (MRC-UNISA, 2010). More recently, statistics from the South African Police Service (2019, p.2) 2018/2019 Annual Crime Report reflected the highest increases in the broad category of violent crime, including “sexual offences (4,6%), common assault (3,7%) and murder (3,4%)”. Taken together these statistics emphasise that the threat of violence to the safety of adolescents is of great concern within the South African context (Hallman et al., 2015).

Violence in South Africa is not a new phenomenon. Marginalised, disadvantaged, and previously oppressed population groups in South Africa have experienced the enactment and imposition of violence since the documented landing of the first Dutch settlers (Boucher, 1991). The San and Khoikhoi were the first to experience the negative consequences of colonialism when they were forcibly dispossessed of their lands by the invading ‘White’ settlers (Bredenkamp, 1991). Resistance by the indigenous San and Khoikhoi were met with extreme levels of violence, resulting in further loss of land (Louw & Kendall, 1987). These settlers were the cultural ancestors of Afrikaner–nationalist ideology (Boucher, 1991), and from this lineage emerged the architects of apartheid that legislated severe oppression and violence into the rule of law.

Therefore, with the history of South Africa embedded in violence, the effect on South African youth and adolescents<sup>1</sup> is a perpetual concern given increased rates of violence perpetrated against this cohort (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Seedat et al., 2004). Studies have shown that exposure to violence has the potential to develop various adverse psychological, emotional, and developmental problems (Henrich et al., 2004). Sequelae include the manifestation of depressive symptoms, lower academic achievement over time, feeling less safe in a ‘normally’ safe environment, such as in schools (Henrich et al., 2004), a reduced sense of ‘self’ and well-being (Adams, Savahl & Fattore, 2017; Benninger & Savahl, 2016; September & Savahl, 2009), and a reduction in perceived hope (Oskin, 1996; Savahl, 2020; Savahl et al., 2016). Given the paucity of empirical research in studies exploring children’s<sup>2</sup>, adolescents’, and youths’ subjective perspectives in South Africa, the need to understand and explore the subjective perspectives of violence particularly as it pertains to youth and adolescents is of pressing practical concern (September & Savahl, 2009). Advancements in information and communication technologies have altered the nature of social relationships and subsequently changed the form of how violence is experienced (Savahl et al., 2008).

In a qualitative study, Scorgie et al. (2017) explored various types of interpersonal violence from the experiences of adolescents’ living in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, South Africa. Using purposive and snowball sampling to select participants, the study specifically investigated differences in how adolescent girls and boys encountered violence and how they made sense of ‘dangerous’ and ‘safe’ spaces in their neighbourhood, through in-depth interviews. The study used data from the developmental stage of the ‘Wellbeing of Adolescents in Vulnerable Environments’ (WAVE) study, which used a cross-sectional design among adolescents (15 to 19-years) living in low SES areas. The study found that although both girls and boys were reportedly exposed to high levels of violence and crime, their experience of the types of violence varied. Sexual harassment and violence were more prevalent for girls, while boys feared threats by local gangs, physical violence, and the potential for substance use. Boys found their homes to be places of safety, while girls often experienced their homes as places of sexual violence, abuse, and neglect. Some adolescents actively sought out places of worship, community theatres, and other places of sanctuary from violence as coping mechanisms. The

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<sup>1</sup> South Africa’s National Youth Commission Act (1996) defines youth as persons between the ages of 14 and 35-years. However, for the current study youth and adolescents were defined as any persons up to and including the age of 25-years.

<sup>2</sup> The term ‘children’ refers to every child between the ages of 0 to 18 years. This position is consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), as well as the Constitution of South Africa wherein a child is defined as any individual between 0 and 18 years.



study found that community-based services and shelters that are intended to support adolescents were under-resourced, and experienced overall instability, and difficulties related to effective networking. Given that youth and adolescents' neighbourhoods are often synonymous with fear and violence, it is essential to implement effective interventions that increase youth social capital and resilience and reduce violence-related trauma and long-term health and social consequences for adolescents in their community. Though the spaces youth and adolescents' traverse in their community is frequently marked by fear and violence, they show a remarkable capacity for resilience in navigating the ambivalence of seeing their neighbourhood as having both good and bad places (Scorgie et al., 2017). The concept of resilience pertains to the ability to sustain normal functioning or exceeding expectations, following an adverse experience (Ungar & Perry, 2012). An individual's ability to sustain normal functioning when faced with adverse experiences is influenced by biological, psychological, interpersonal, and socio-cultural factors (Ungar & Perry, 2012); regarding the predisposition to violence, the capacity for resilience is not universal.

Gardner et al. (2015) conducted a prospective, longitudinal study regarding risk factors for antisocial behaviour among 1025 low-income isiXhosa speaking youth in Cape Town, South Africa. All data were gathered from young people who completed a 60-minute self-report questionnaire. Findings revealed that antisocial and violent behaviour were largely enacted by males. High levels of violence and sexual violence in communities were associated with the traditional patriarchal system in South Africa. Antisocial behaviour was anticipated through exposure to high levels of violence specifically among males (Gardner et al., 2015). The National Youth Victimization Study (Burton, 2006) interviewed 4409 young people aged between 12 and 22-years. The study sample was stratified by province and race and reported that 12% of youth disclosed that they witnessed violent relational disputes between family members, with weapons used in half of these disputes. Furthermore, 50% of youth reported to know of people in their community who had participated in violent actions, such as muggings and assaulting others (Gardner et al., 2015). The National Youth Life-style Survey indicates that 52% of youth reported being caned, spanked, or hit at school. This is pertinent as youth exposed to high levels of violence have become victims as well as perpetrators of violence (Leoschut, 2009). Accordingly, the frequent exposure of youth and adolescents to violence and crime in their homes, schools, and communities is hypothesised to be the cause of antisocial behaviour. The cycle of violence in communities is therefore perpetuated through the antisocial behaviour of youth and adolescents (Gardner et al., 2015).

As violence due to antisocial behaviour seems to become indelibly etched into the fabric of society, a phenomenon known as poly-victimisation has emerged (Kaminer et al., 2013b). This phenomenon relates to the exposure to violence across multiple domains. Studies on poly-victimisation among urban youth in high-income countries are common. However, there is a paucity of research from low- and middle-income countries. A study that investigated the exposure to violence across multiple sites among young South African adolescents was conducted in Cape Town (Kaminer et al., 2013b). A cohort sample of 617 adolescents aged 12 to 15-years was assessed on direct and indirect exposure to sexual, domestic, neighbourhood, and school violence. It was found that 98.9% of participants had witnessed community violence, 40.1% had experienced direct threats or had been physically assaulted in their neighbourhood, 76.9% witnessed domestic violence, more than half (58.6%) had been victimised in their home, 75.8% had experienced school violence, and 8% had been sexually abused. The study further found that 93.1% of the sample had encountered more than one type of violence and more than 50% encountered in excess of four types of violence. These results point to a high prevalence of poly-victimisation and thus suggests that experientially, violence is an inescapable part of these youth and adolescents' daily lives. The authors discussed the need for further research that explores the impact of poly-victimisation on young adolescents. Moreover, they recommend appropriate intervention strategies to mitigate conditions of ongoing danger across multiple life domains (Kaminer et al., 2013b).

Another study conducted by Shields et al. (2008) comprised a sample of children living in Cape Town, South Africa. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between exposure to community violence in multiple domains (neighbourhood, school, police, and gangs) and psychological distress. The study further aimed to identify variables that moderate and mediate the relationship between children's exposure to community violence and their experience of psychological distress. The method employed to conduct the study was through face-to-face interviews. A sample of 185 children between the ages of 8 and 13-years were selected from five Cape Town township schools. Structured scales used were the Moos Family Environment Scale; Nadel, Spellman, and Alvarez-Cannio Victimization Scale; Levonn: A Cartoon-Based Interview for Assessing Children's Distress Symptoms scale; Children's Distress Symptoms scale; and the Vaux Social Support Record to measure exposure to several forms of community violence, family functioning, social support, perceptions of safety, and 'unknown' locus of control (not knowing why events occur). The study findings demonstrated that exposure to all

forms of violence was disproportionately high, which led to substantial psychological distress. Older children reported hearing about and being exposed to more violence than younger children. This could be indicative of an 'exposure accumulation' effect. Furthermore, the study found that exposure to various forms of violence were highly interrelated and that there was a moderate-to-strong pairwise correlation between the various types of violence (Shields et al., 2008).

Ward et al. (2001) found this correlation between the various types of violence to be consistent with other research that explored multiple forms of violence that children were likely to be exposed to. Research has demonstrated that children in these circumstances experience high levels of distress, as many do not have access to safe places from violence (Ward et al., 2018). The study found that the effects of exposure to certain kinds of violence were moderated by factors such as social support, family organisation, family control, and 'unknown' locus of control (not knowing why events occur). The mediating variable for all forms of violence was perceived safety. A surprising result of this study showed that exposure to murder had no relation to psychological distress. This finding could suggest a possible 'numbing' effect due to exposure to extreme forms of violence. However, the study found that hearing about violence from others had a similar effect as witnessing acts of violence. The authors note protective factors, conditions or attributes that reduce or eliminate risk in individuals, families and communities, and access to places of safety for children living within violent contexts to reduce resultant distress from exposure to various forms of violence. It is important to consider the limitations of protective factors (e.g., such as parents and schools) to help children cope. For this reason, it is important for the implementation of early intervention strategies to counteract the development of maladaptive coping mechanisms (Ward et al., 2018).

Exposure to violence contributes to traumatic disturbances, such as domestic violence, gang violence, school violence, physical abuse, and neglect, etc. (Snyder et al., 1997). A study exploring the relationship between hope and community violence by Oskin (1996) revealed a mixed result. The sample was selected from a low-income African American community with moderate to high violence rates, and consisted of 59 girls and 40 boys, aged between 8 and 12-years old. Home interviews were conducted using the Survey of Exposure to Community Violence (Self-Report Version) and the Children's Hope Scale. Victimization, gender, and age displayed a significant tripartite interaction. For younger children, as victimisation increased their experience of hope agency declined, demonstrating a negative correlation. However, older

children experienced an increase in hope agency as victimisation increased, demonstrating a positive correlation. At both ages, these effects were stronger for girls than for boys. The results confirmed the hypothesis of the study that the relationship between victimisation and hope agency for younger children is negative. It was hypothesised that girls experienced higher levels of victimisation than boys. This could be because girls experience different types of violent events than boys, and thus experience victimisation differently (Oskin, 1996). Girls may experience differing emotional responses to victimisation, such as anxiety, depression, anger, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Furthermore, girls may use different cognitive processes than boys, resulting in different understandings of victimisation. The positive relationship between victimisation and hope agency beliefs were unexpected for older children. As the effect is stronger in girls than in boys, it is thought that gender differences in coping strategies may offer a partial explanation. Numerous studies espouse that instrumental or problem-focused coping are more likely to be used by males, while emotion-focused coping is more likely to be used by females (Miller & Kirsch, 1987). The findings reported by this study may be the result of such coping processes at work, however, further research is needed to confirm the mechanism for the rise in hope agency beliefs (Oskin, 1996).

### **1.1 Rationale for the review**

Thus, when considering the literature, the complex and dynamic nature of violence and how it impacts the lives of youth and adolescents is evident. While several studies have been conducted in the South African context that examine and explore the role of violence in the lives of adolescents and youth, there is no existing systematic review that synthesises and evaluates this literature. Given the historical antecedents of violence in this context, outlined above, the concern for safety permeates young people's lives, evidenced by the highest levels of violence perpetrated against children, adolescents, and youth globally (see Ward et al., 2018). As all types of violence and abuse have negative developmental consequences for these cohorts (Ward et al., 2018), impacting their current and future well-being, a systematic review of the literature is essential to provide a more nuanced understanding of the key study findings. This will inform the development of new and current prevention and intervention efforts, and ultimately improve young people's quality of life (Savahl et al., 2019). Abalos et al. (2001, p. 42) assert that:

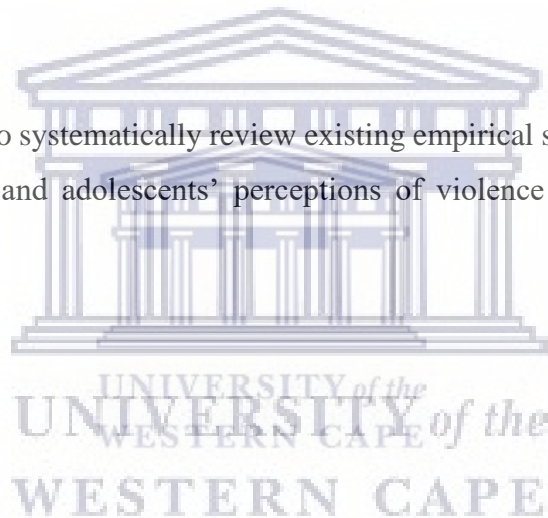
**A systematic review is an exhaustive review of the literature addressing a clearly defined question, which uses a systematic and explicit methodology to identify, select and critically evaluate all the relevant studies, and collect and analyse the data**

**emerging from the studies included in it.**

Given the absence of a systematic account of the literature on the topic, the current study contributes to the literature in this regard by employing the requisite rigorous methodology (Adams & Savahl, 2017), with a focus on youth and adolescents' perspectives of violence in post-apartheid South Africa. In particular, the review provided a systematic account of and appraises the research studies conceptualisation, the sampling strategy and participants, the research context, data collection methods, theoretical grounding, and key findings. As a quality systematic review is the highest form of evidence to inform empirical research and practice, providing an opportunity to evaluate the state of research (Abalos et al., 2001), the current review contributes a comprehensive, rigorous identification and synthesis of empirical studies examining youth and adolescents' perspectives of violence to the literature.

## **2 Aim of the study**

The aim of the study was to systematically review existing empirical studies and synthesise the findings regarding youth and adolescents' perceptions of violence in post-apartheid South Africa.



## 3 Method

### 3.1 Review Question

How do youth and adolescents perceive violence in post-apartheid South Africa?

### 3.2 Design

The study employed a systematic review, with a focus on empirical peer-reviewed literature. A systematic review is differentiated from “traditional reviews and commentaries” in that it employs an explicit *systematic* approach (Khan et al., 2003, p.118). It is essentially a rigorous and transparent way of reviewing and appraising the literature (Mallet et al., 2012). Khan et al. (2003, p.118) note that “Systematic reviews and meta-analyses are a key element of evidence-based healthcare”, often utilised as starting points when developing clinical practice guidelines and interventions, and used by researchers to stay up to date in their field (Gopalakrishnan & Ganeshkumar, 2013). Systematic reviews are further able to identify gaps in existing knowledge, which can guide future research (Gopalakrishnan & Ganeshkumar, 2013). More broadly, the study followed the five steps to conduct a review as put forward by Khan et al. (2003), namely:

- *Step 1: Framing the question.* The researcher should be clear and specific when structuring the review question;
- *Step 2: Identifying relevant publications.* A wide range of resources should be identified, and the inclusion and exclusion should follow;
- *Step 3: Assessing study quality.* The appropriate tool should be used to determine the relevance of the articles to the review question;
- *Step 4: Summarising the evidence.* The relevant articles should be organised in a table, summarising the articles; and
- *Step 5: Interpreting the findings.* The findings should be illuminated, and strengths and limitations of the articles should be explored.

This model was used in previous research with children and adolescents (see Adams & Savahl, 2017; Benninger & Savahl, 2017; Wagenaar et al., 2018; Witten et al., 2019).

As systematic reviews are founded on a pre-determined inclusion criteria and methodological approach, researchers advance the use of a systematic review protocol as it details a definitive plan to conduct the review. A protocol delineates the rationale for the review and “...*a priori* methodological and analytical approach of the review” (Moher et al., 2015, p.3). The

prospective nature of a protocol for a systematic review is key as it indicates what the researchers intend to do, and indorses coherence, amenability, ‘research integrity’ and transparency by reviewers (Moher et al., 2015). Further benefits of a protocol are attenuation of potential bias such as selective reporting or difficulties that may arise in the decision-making process of the review. The PROSPERO (International Prospective Register of Ongoing Systematic Reviews) international register, established in 2011, was borne to address ongoing calls for the development and registration of systematic review protocols. However, the lack of registered guidelines for protocols for systematic reviews and the less than optimal reporting of reviews led to the development of the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic review and Meta-Analysis Protocols) Statement checklist and the PRISMA-P (for protocols) (Moher et al., 2015). The PRISMA and PRISMA-P are widely used extensively in health systems and nursing research. **In the current review, the PRISMA-P and PRISMA Statement were employed to conduct the review.** Given this, it is important that we elaborate on and differentiate between the PRISMA-P and PRISMA and how they were used in this review. While the PRISMA-P 2015 checklist was developed at a later stage by these authors, it will be discussed first as it was used to plan and frame the review within the proposal phase of the study. It encompasses 17 items (26 inclusive of sub-items), and classified into three key sections, that is: administrative information; introduction; and methods (see Moher et al., 2015, Table 3: PRISMA-P 2015 Checklist). In this review, the *administrative information* section identified the intended study as a systematic review, included the student and supervisors’ (reviewers) details and their respective roles, and the title of the review. The *introduction* section included the rationale for the review given current empirical research on youth and adolescents’ perspectives of violence in post-apartheid South Africa, and the lack of a systematic review of the literature. It further delineated the research question in relation to the search tool employed in the current study, namely the SPIDER (Sample, Phenomena of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research type; discussed below), as an organising framework to guide the development thereof. Finally, the *methods* section detailed the inclusion criteria, search strategy including the information sources used, managing the data, selection process, data extraction process, risk of bias, and data synthesis to be used (namely narrative synthesis, discussed below).

The PRISMA Statement was developed by Moher et al. (2009) and comprises a checklist and flow diagram. The PRISMA Statement is a 27-item checklist accompanied by a four-phase flow diagram that depicts the search process yielded by the review (Moher et al., 2009). The

key aim of this statement guideline is to aid scholars in reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. While PRISMA was developed for a focus on randomised controlled trials, the authors note that it can be used for systematic reviews more broadly. Additionally, while it may be beneficial in the ‘critical appraisal’ of published reviews, it should not be used as a quality assessment measure to evaluate the ‘quality of a systematic review’ (Moher et al., 2009). A more detailed discussion of each of the items included in the PRISMA Statement can be found in several studies by the authors (see Liberati et al., 2009). The completed PRISMA Statement checklist is included as an appendix (Appendix D). The reporting practice of the PRISMA Statement was followed in this review.

The role of a search tool in a systematic review is important to note. As briefly indicated above, the SPIDER was used to develop the review question for the study and informed the search strategy. This fitted within and aligned to two of the five steps, Step 1: Framing the question and Step 2: Identifying relevant publications, that were employed to conduct the systematic review (see Khan et al., 2003). While various search tools, sometimes referred to as a ‘framework’, are used to conceptualise and structure systematic review questions such as the PICO (Population, Patient, Problem; Intervention; Control; PEO (Population and problems, Exposure, Outcomes); and FINER (Feasibility, Interesting, Novel, Ethical, Relevant), the SPIDER was most suitable for the current study, and is often used in the social sciences (Methley et al., 2014). Given the focus of this review, we were able to capture the focus of the review by adhering to the key aspects of the SPIDER, thus, on the sample (adolescent and youth), phenomena of interest (perceptions of violence), design (systematic review), evaluation (perceptions, experiences), and research type (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods). Moreover, given that the current review included quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies it made this search tool the best fit as we were able to search for studies that used these three methodological approaches (Cooke et al., 2012). The SPIDER has been used in other systematic reviews including these types of studies (see Cooke et al., 2012; Methley et al., 2014). This is evident in the intentional broad-based nature of the review question to capture both the breadth and depth of empirical studies focusing on the topic.

### **3.3 Article Search**

The article searches for this review encompassed electronic resources and included electronic meta-databases and databases, namely EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ScienceDirect, that indexed peer-reviewed journal articles published in English. Given the



historical focus of the review on South African youth and adolescents' perceptions of violence since democracy, the period was from the year 1994 until 2019. The following keywords that were used in the defined database searches are: youth, adolescents, perceptions, experiences, perspectives, violence, post-apartheid, South Africa, crime, and safety (see Appendix C for keyword strings searched).

### **3.3.1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

The inclusion criteria for the review were: articles that explored youth and adolescents' subjective perceptions of violence in South Africa; studies conducted between 1994 to 2019; qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies; and studies published in English. South Africa's National Youth Commission Act (1996) defines youth as persons between the ages of 14 and 35-years. However, for the current study youth and adolescents were defined as any persons up to and including the age of 25 years.

The exclusion criteria were studies that included participants older than 25-years of age, studies outside of South Africa and outside the time frame of 1994 to 2019, and studies where adults were used as proxies for exploring youth and adolescents' perspectives. Grey literature and commissioned reports were also excluded from the review. All relevant studies yielded from the database searches were available through the University of the Western Cape subscription or were publicly available. Reference mining was used to access studies not yielded by initial database searches.

### **3.4 Quality appraisal**

The quality appraisal tool used for the study was the adapted version of the Evaluation Tool for Quantitative and Qualitative Research Studies (see Appendix A; Long et al., 2002; Long & Godfrey, 2004). These tools were developed to assist researchers with the critical appraisal of studies, serving as a template consisting of key questions for analysing the key areas of each article (Long et al., 2002). As many of the sections dovetailed, the aspects specific to each methodological framework (quantitative or qualitative), such as comparable groups, outcome measure, and time scale (quantitative), and theoretical framework (qualitative) were removed. The remaining review areas common to both tools and applicable to both qualitative and quantitative studies were maintained, namely: *study overview*, *study setting*, *sample*, *ethics*, and *policy and practice implications*. The tool was further adapted for use with mixed-methods studies. For each article included in the full-text review process, the quality appraisal tool was

applied to assess the quality, summarise the key points and evaluate whether the article should be included or excluded (Long et al., 2002). For a systematic review focusing on empirical literature with adolescents as respondents, this was specified within the appraisal tool criteria when evaluating potential studies for inclusion. As critical appraisal of empirical research is key for a systematic review it was important to consider if the quality of the study is of a high calibre, but also whether the data collected have an organisational and culturally relevant context (Long & Godfrey, 2004). For this reason, the quality appraisal is relevant to every step of a review.

In their 2002 and 2004 articles, Long et al. provide permission for use of the critical appraisal tools. Long and colleagues (Long & Godfrey, 2004; Long et al., 2002) argue that while there is contention in the literature regarding the use of scored and non-scored appraisal tools for systematic reviews, the current adapted appraisal tools emphasise the quality and rigour of each study. **Therefore, using this tool, reviewers are able to make evaluative comments regarding the strengths and weaknesses of each study rather than the use of scoring, to include or exclude a study.** The review was conducted by the student (first reviewer), and supervisors (subsequent reviewers) during the process of article searching (title and abstract search) and full-text article appraisal to ensure rigour of the review (Wager & Wiffen, 2011).

### 3.5 Data extraction

An adapted data extraction table was used to extract information from the included studies in the review. The table included the following key areas:

Authors	Context	Content – Aims and Objectives	Method and Data analysis	Sample size and age	Key findings
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### 3.6 Data synthesis

Data synthesis refers to synthesising the findings of the various empirical research studies. The data synthesis employed for this research was a narrative synthesis put forward by Popay et al. (2006). Narrative synthesis encompasses the explanation and summary of the various findings of the synthesis (Arai et al., 2007) and “...adopts a textual approach to the process of synthesis to ‘tell the story’ of the findings from the included studies” (Popay et al., 2006, p.5). This synthesis technique affords a comprehensive understanding of the study. Arai et al. (2007) and

Popay et al. (2006) identify four main elements that contribute to the guiding framework of a narrative synthesis, namely:

- 1) Developing a theory of how the intervention works, why and for whom
- 2) Developing a preliminary synthesis of findings of included studies
- 3) Exploring similarities/relationships in the data
- 4) Assessing the robustness of the synthesis

As the purpose of this review was not to develop a theory for an intervention, only points 2 to 4 were employed as detailed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

*Key elements of a narrative synthesis*

<b>Main elements of synthesis</b>	<b>Effectiveness Reviews</b>	<b>Implementation Reviews</b>
1. Developing a preliminary synthesis	Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To organise findings from included studies to describe patterns across the studies in terms of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The direction of effects</li> <li>o The size of effects</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To organise findings from included studies in order to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Identify and list the facilitators and barriers to implementation reported</li> <li>o Explore the relationship between reported facilitators and barriers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2. Exploring similarities/relationships in the data	Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider the factors that might explain any differences in direction and size of effect across the included studies</li> </ul>	Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider the factors that might explain any differences in the facilitators and/or barriers to successful implementation across included studies</li> <li>• To understand how and why interventions have an effect</li> </ul>
3. Assessing the robustness of the synthesis product	Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide an assessment of the strength of the evidence for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Drawing conclusions about the likely size and direction of effect</li> <li>o Generalising conclusions on effect size to different population groups and/or contexts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide an assessment of the strength of the evidence for drawing conclusions about the facilitators and/or barriers to implementation identified in the synthesis. Generalising the product of the synthesis to different population groups and/or contexts</li> </ul>

### 3.7 Procedure and Ethics

Wager and Wiffen (2011) put forward key considerations for addressing the ethics of a systematic review. This includes: specifying how databases are accessed; stating who will be conducting the review; good practice in publishing a systematic review in terms of avoiding plagiarism (by citing all sources used as full references), and ensuring accuracy (by extracting data accurately and not to slant the results in a particular way). For the current review, three reviewers (student and supervisors) conducted the review. The student worked independently, and the supervisors deliberated the findings of the review to reach consensus to ensure accuracy of the studies appraised, included, and extracted. The student had access to the specified databases through the UWC library to conduct the searches. Furthermore, all references obtained through the review were cited in full, with clear acknowledgement of the respective authors. Finally, the UWC is acknowledged as the institutional resource that enabled the review to be completed.

Ethics clearance was obtained from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research and Ethics Committee of the UWC. As this study used secondary data analysis, i.e., published journal articles – ethics clearance was sought from the UWC for the use of the databases used during the search process. Ethics considerations with regards to this systematic review emphasised the importance of being methodical, thorough, and precise. It was also important to verify the findings and to minimize bias in order to ensure accuracy of results and findings (Leibovici & Reeves, 2005).

## 4 Results

The aim of the study was to systematically review existing empirical studies focusing on youth and adolescents' perceptions of violence in post-apartheid South Africa. The articles included in the review were categorised into three themes based on the study focus, namely:

- Theme 1: Exposure to violence
- Theme 2: Gender and sexual-based violence
- Theme 3: Interpersonal and school violence

Using *narrative synthesis* (Popay et al., 2006), the studies included in the review were synthesised and are discussed under the key headings of: Context, Content – aims and objectives; Method and data analysis; Sample size and age cohort; and Key findings. Further elaboration of these key aspects is preceded by a discussion of the article search procedure.

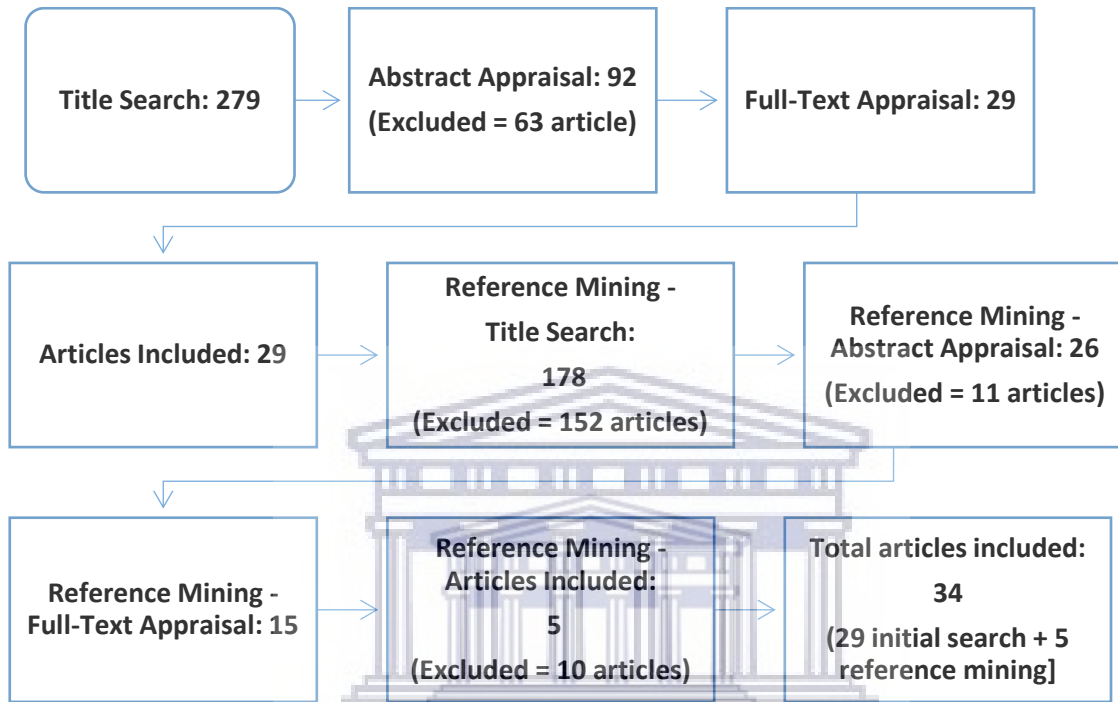
### 4.1 Article search procedure

The search process included entering various keyword strings into EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Science Direct (see Appendix C). The search strategy included three sequential steps, namely: title search, abstract search, and full-text appraisal. The keyword searches provided the following results: EBSCOhost,  $n = 32$ ; Google Scholar,  $n = 112$ ; JSTOR,  $n = 74$ ; and Science Direct,  $n = 61$ . The total number of articles yielded from the keyword search was therefore 279. Of the 279 articles identified through the database searches, based on a title search 92 were included for abstract appraisal. A total of 187 articles were excluded as they did not meet the focus of the review question. Based on the abstract appraisals of the 92 articles, 29 were included for full-text appraisal and 63 excluded. All 29 included for full-text appraisal were included in the review. Reference mining was then conducted on the 29 included articles, which yielded a further 178 articles. Based on a title search, 152 of the 178 articles were excluded as they did not meet the review question and inclusion criteria. This resulted in 26 articles being included for abstract appraisal. Based on abstract appraisal, 15 additional articles were included for full-text appraisal, thus excluding 11 articles. Following the full-text appraisal of the additional 15 articles yielded from reference mining, 10 were excluded based on not being empirical studies, a lack of focus on the review topic, or not being conducted in the South African context. Therefore, an additional five articles were included in the review based on reference mining. This brought the total number of articles included in the review to 34 articles; this included the initial 29 articles and the additional five articles from reference

mining. Figure 1 below depicts the article search procedure, and Figure 2 presents the PRISMA Statement flow diagram.

**Figure 1**

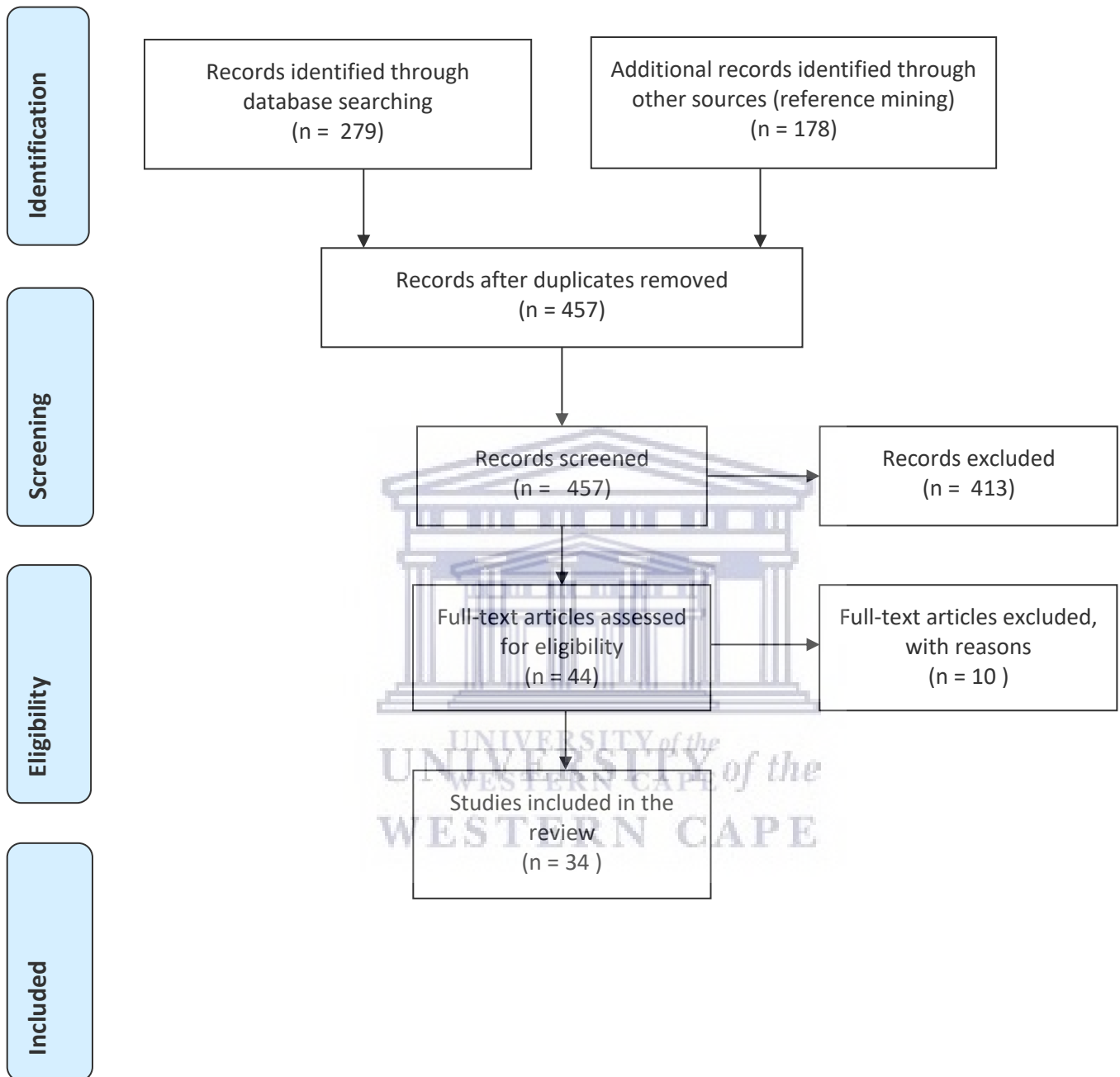
*Article search procedure*



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Figure 2: PRISMA (2009) flow diagram



## 5 Themes

### 5.1 Theme 1: Exposure to violence

This theme includes 10 (du Plessis et al., 2015; Kaminer et al., 2013a; Kaminer et al., 2013b; Meinck et al., 2017; Ramphele, 1997; Selenga & Jooste, 2015; Shields et al., 2009; Swartz & Scott, 2014; Ward et al., 2001; Wood et al., 1998) of the 34 articles focused on adolescents' and youth exposure to violence (see Table 2). 'Exposure to violence' is defined as and includes both experiences of and witnessing violence (World Health Organization, 2019).

#### 5.1.1 Context

Most of the studies in this theme were conducted in low SES peri-urban (on the outskirts of urban areas) and urban contexts in Cape Town, located in the Western Cape. The study by Selenga and Jooste (2015) focused on the experiences of support received at an emergency unit by youth victims of physical violence. The emergency unit was located in the Mitchell's Plain Community Health Centre, located on the Cape Flats, Cape Town (Selenga & Jooste, 2015). The Cape Flats is characterised by high levels of poverty and unemployment, community violence, substance use, poor infrastructure, and low levels of education (Savahl, 2010). Studies by Swartz and Scott (2014) and Kaminer et al. (2013a) were conducted in secondary schools in Langa, a peri-urban low-income township community in Cape Town. In the South African context, the term township usually refers to the often underdeveloped racially segregated urban areas that, under the apartheid rule, were delineated for people who were classified as 'Black'<sup>3</sup>, which broadly refers to those classified as 'Black', 'Coloured', and 'Indian'. Shields et al. (2009) conducted their study in five township schools surrounding Cape Town. The schools were located in Lavender Hill, Nyanga, Manenberg, Khayelitsha, and Mitchell's Plain, all classified as low SES, and historically and currently disadvantaged and under-resourced. The study by Ramphele (1997) encompassed a longitudinal study conducted in the township of New Crossroads near Cape Town. Wood et al. (1998) conducted a study in Khayelitsha, a township in peri-urban Cape Town. Kaminer et al. (2013b) included a sample of young adolescents from nine primary schools in two low SES urban municipal districts in Cape Town. In the study by du Plessis et al. (2015), the sample comprised Grade 7 learners attending primary schools within a district area of Cape Town. This residential area was historically classified as a

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<sup>3</sup> The racial groups, that is 'Coloured', 'Black', and 'Indian', were employed as racial categories within the Apartheid era to reinforce a segregated society, and refer to those who were not afforded the same benefits as 'Whites' in this era. These terms are used here solely for descriptive purposes and does not imply endorsement of these terms by the author (Adams & Savahl, 2017).



‘Coloured’ area under the apartheid regime. Hanover Park is a low SES community with the highest levels of gang activity and gang homicide in the country (du Plessis et al., 2015) and this remains the status quo (Knight, 2019).

The study by Ward et al. (2001) formed part of a larger study, drawn from four English-medium private secondary schools in Cape Town. Meinck et al. (2017) conducted a longitudinal study in two provinces, namely the Western Cape and Mpumalanga, South Africa. In each province, two health districts with high deprivation were selected and census enumeration areas were chosen randomly (Western Cape 51.5%, n = 1753 and Mpumalanga 48.5%, n = 1648).

### **5.1.2 Content: Aims and objectives**

Among the foci of the studies in this theme, Selenga and Jooste (2015) explored the experiences of youth victims of physical violence attending a community health centre on the Cape Flats. Swartz and Scott (2014) explored the settings, forms, and experiences of violence amongst a sample of 37 ‘Black’ youth living in an impoverished township in Cape Town. Shields et al. (2009) compared the effects of witnessing school or neighbourhood violence and victimisation on psychological distress. The study by Meinck et al. (2017) investigated whether children know about post-abuse services, if they disclose and seek services, and what the outcomes of help-seeking behaviour are. They examined factors associated with request and receipt of services. Ward et al. (2001) aimed to establish the prevalence and relationship between adolescents’ exposure to violence and related symptoms in the South African context. The study by Kaminer et al. (2013a) aimed to establish gender patterns in the independent and comparative contributions of five types of violence exposure to the severity of posttraumatic stress symptoms among isiXhosa-speaking South African adolescents. Du Plessis et al. (2015) examined the contribution of different forms of violence to internalising and externalising symptoms among young adolescents in South Africa. The aim of the study by Ramphele (1997) was to examine the nature of violence as experienced by adolescent ‘Black’ African children. The purpose of the study by Wood et al. (1998) was to explore aspects of sexual dynamics occurring within adolescent relationships. The aim of the study by Kaminer et al. (2013b) was to establish the prevalence of lifetime exposure to different types of violence in the home, school, and community, as well as the prevalence of poly-victimisation across multiple contexts.

### **5.1.3 Method and data analysis**

In this theme more studies used quantitative methods ( $n = 6$ ) than qualitative methods ( $n = 4$ ). The study conducted by Shields et al. (2009) used a quantitative approach, and descriptive statistics and regression analysis to analyse the data. The study by Meinck et al. (2017) used a quantitative, longitudinal, community-based household survey and descriptive analyses. Ward et al. (2001) conducted a quantitative research study using Spearman-rank correlations to analyse the data, while Kaminer et al. (2013a) used Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple linear regression analysis. Du Plessis et al. (2015) utilised a quantitative approach and data were analysed using Pearson product-moment correlation and descriptive statistics. Selenga and Jooste (2015) used a qualitative methodological framework within a phenomenological, exploratory, descriptive, and contextual design to explore the lived experience of violence. The data collection and analysis were conducted concurrently and followed the steps of open coding. Similarly, Swartz and Scott (2014) used inductive coding to analyse data focusing on youth involvement in violence in a South African township. The study also employed two theories namely, the notion of 'moral capital', and ideas of 'gratuitous violence' and 'increasing barbarism and lawlessness' (see Hobsbawm, 1998). A qualitative, longitudinal research study was conducted by Ramphela (1997), using an action research approach by utilising surveys, interviews, workshops, and participant observation. Wood et al. (1998) used a qualitative approach and a case-control study. The study by Kaminer et al. (2013b) employed a quantitative method, using descriptive statistics and Spearman Rank-order correlation to analyse the data.

### **5.1.4 Sample size and age cohort**

Of the 10 articles in this theme, nine had a sample size of less than 1000 participants. The study by Meinck et al. (2017) was the only one to include over 1000 participants using a longitudinal design, with a sample of 3515 children and adolescents aged 10 and 17-years old. Most of the participants ( $n = 3401$ ) were followed up one year later, including 1648 participants from Mpumalanga and 1753 participants from the Western Cape. In the study by Kaminer et al. (2013b), a sample of 617 (female,  $n = 336$ ; male,  $n = 279$ ) adolescents aged between 12 to 15-years old were included. Du Plessis et al. (2015) utilised 616 (54.6% female and 45.4% male) Grade 7 learners aged 12 to 15-years. Shields et al. (2009) used a sample of 247 learners, aged 8 to 13-years, from five schools located in a township. The study conducted by Kaminer et al. (2013a) included 230 learners (138 females and 92 males) in Grades 9 to 11, aged 14 to 21-

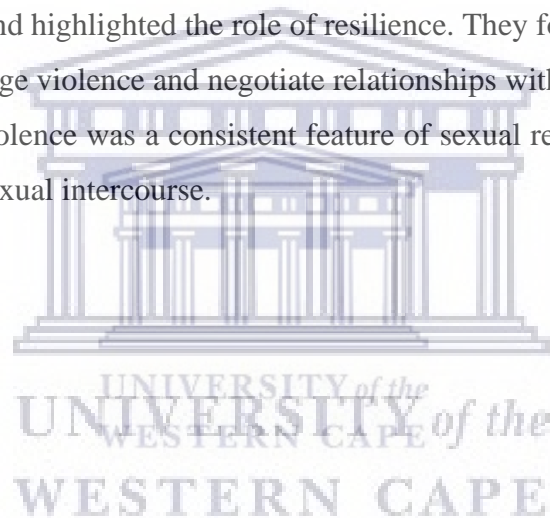
years. Ward et al. (2001) included a sample of 104 Grade 11 learners (female, n = 32; males, n = 71) aged 17-years old. The remaining four articles had sample sizes of under 100 participants. The longitudinal study by Ramphela (1997) included 48 randomly selected adolescents from households with children and adolescents aged 10 to 14-years; while Swartz and Scott (2014) included a sample of 37 youth aged 14 to 20-years using sustained contact. The study by Wood et al. (1998) included a sample of 24 pregnant adolescent women, using semi-structured interviews with participants aged 14 to 18-years. Selenga and Jooste (2015) used a qualitative approach, including eight male participants between the ages of 18 to 27-years, the majority of whom were unemployed, with grade 11 as the highest level of education.

### **5.1.5 Key findings**

The findings of the studies in this theme related to psychological effects that violence has on an individual. Selenga and Jooste (2015) found that some participants could cope through social support, while others experienced symptoms, such as aggression, anxiety, and depression. Youth exposed to these symptoms were likely to participate in gangs and gang activities. The findings by Shields et al. (2009) suggested that school victimisation had a stronger effect on distress and psychological well-being than witnessing violence, however, the opposite was found in the neighbourhood. The results by Ward et al. (2001) indicated that most children were exposed to at least one type of violence, which made children more vulnerable to experience other types. PTSD and depression symptoms appeared related to most types of exposure. However, anxiety symptoms were only found when violence was perpetrated in the home or by someone known to the child. The study by Kaminer et al. (2013a) found that witnessing community violence was the most common form of violence exposure that adolescents experienced. Further, sexual victimisation and being a victim of community violence, compounded by gender, added to the severity of PTSD symptoms. Increased exposure to community and sexual victimisation were associated with symptom severity among girls, while increased exposure to direct victimisation in both the community and domestic settings were associated with symptom severity in boys. The findings by du Plessis et al. (2015) indicated that domestic victimisation was the strongest predictor of both internalising and externalising challenges. Moreover, cumulative exposure to other forms of violence contributed to the indication of aggression and conduct disorder, but not depression. The findings by Kaminer et al. (2013b) showed that exposure to violence across multiple life domains is part of daily life for younger adolescents, and that access to safe spaces was limited. The findings also indicated that while evidence-based interventions for PTSD after single-episode traumas are evident,

there is a dearth of treatment outcome studies with populations affected by multiple forms of violence across different life domains.

The remaining studies under this theme had varied findings. Swartz and Scott (2014) indicated that having rules did not mean that violent behaviour in society would not increase. However, the notion of moral capital argues that the use of rules to control violence by young people can be a social asset that reflects their rational decision-making ability despite adverse contexts. Study findings by Meinck (2017) focused on help-seeking behaviour and found that most children knew about services to help victims of abuse. However, only 20% of children who experienced sexual abuse, or physical or emotional abuse disclosed their abuse or requested help. Most children disclosed to a caregiver, teacher, or other family member rather than professionals. Similarly, Ramphele (1997) found that violence occurred in three spheres, home, school, and community; and highlighted the role of resilience. They found that the participants devised strategies to manage violence and negotiate relationships with adults and peers. Wood et al. (1998) found that violence was a consistent feature of sexual relationships and enforced male control and define sexual intercourse.



**Table 2:**  
*Theme 1: Exposure to violence*

Authors	Context	Content: Aims and objectives	Method and data analysis	Sample size and age cohort	Key findings
<b>1. Du Plessis et al. (2015)</b>	Grade 7 learners attending primary schools within one municipal district of Cape Town, South Africa.	To examine the contribution of different forms of violence to internalising and externalising symptoms among adolescents.	Quantitative Pearson product-moment correlation	12 - 15-years ( <i>n</i> = 616: 54.6% female, 45.4% male)	Domestic victimisation was the strongest predictor of internalising and externalising difficulties. Cumulative exposure to other forms of violence contributed to the prediction of aggression and conduct disorder, but not depression.
<b>2. Kaminer et al. (2013a)</b>	Adolescents in Grades 9 – 11 attending secondary school in a low SES urban community, Langa in Cape Town.	To establish gender differences among five types of violence exposure and the severity of PTSD stress symptoms.	Quantitative Pearson product-moment correlation Multiple regression	14 - 21-years ( <i>n</i> = 230: 138 females and 92 males)	Witnessing community violence was the most common form of violence exposure, sexual victimisation, and victim of community violence, together with gender, contributed to the severity of PTSD symptoms.
<b>3. Kaminer et al. (2013b)</b>	Nine primary schools in two low SES urban municipal districts in Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa.	To establish the prevalence of lifetime exposure to various types of violence in the home, school, and community, and poly-victimisation.	Quantitative Descriptive statistics	12 - 15-years ( <i>n</i> = 617; 336 females, 279 males)	Exposure to violence across multiple life domains is part of daily life for younger adolescents, with limited access to safe spaces.
<b>4. Meinck et al. (2017)</b>	Children in two health districts in Mpumalanga and Western Cape.	To investigate whether children know about, disclose, and seek post-abuse services.	Quantitative (longitudinal, community-based household survey) Descriptive analysis	10 - 17-years ( <i>n</i> = 3515) Year one: <i>n</i> = 1648 Year two: <i>n</i> = 1753	Most children knew about post-abuse services, however, only 20% of victims (sexual abuse, physical /emotional abuse) disclosed or requested help; from a caregiver, teacher, or other family member.
<b>5. Ramphele (1997)</b>	Adolescents in New Crossroads Township near Cape Town, South Africa.	To examine the nature of violence as experienced by adolescent children.	Qualitative (Longitudinal; action research)	10 - 14-years ( <i>n</i> = 48)	It was found that violence occurred in the home, school, and community. Children learned to devise strategies for coping and negotiating.
<b>6. Selenga &amp; Jooste (2015)</b>	Youth at an emergency unit, Mitchells Plain Community Health Centre, Cape Town, South Africa.	To explore and describe experiences of youth victims of physical violence.	Qualitative (Phenomenological) open coding	18 - 27-years ( <i>n</i> = 8 males)	The psychological effects of violence were mitigated through social support, while others experienced aggression, anxiety, and depression; may lead to gang membership.
<b>7. Shields et al. (2009)</b>	Five township schools surrounding Cape Town	To compare the effects of witnessing school or	Quantitative Descriptive	8 - 13-years ( <i>n</i> = 247)	The findings suggested that school victimization has a stronger effect on distress than witnessing

	(Lavender Hill, Nyanga, Manenberg, Khayelitsha, Mitchells Plain.	neighbourhood violence on psychological distress.	statistics Regression analysis		violence. However, in the neighbourhood, the opposite was found.
<b>8. Swartz &amp; Scott (2014)</b>	A secondary school in Langa, a peri-urban township near Cape Town, South Africa.	To explore settings, forms, and experiences of violence amongst a group of 'Black' youth living in an impoverished township.	Qualitative Inductive coding	14 to 20-years ( <i>n</i> = 37 men and women)	Having rules does not mean that violent behaviour in society will not increase. Moral capital argues that the use of rules to control violence by young people can be a social asset that reflect their rational decision-making ability despite adverse contexts.
<b>9. Ward et al. (2001)</b>	Four English medium private secondary schools in Cape Town.	To establish the prevalence of and relationships between adolescents' exposure to violence and related symptoms.	Quantitative Spearman-rank correlation	17-years ( <i>n</i> = 104; 32 females, 71 males)	Most children were exposed to one type of violence, violence, which was related to other types. Symptoms of PTSD and depression were related to most types of exposure, with anxiety symptoms only due to violence perpetrated by someone known to the child.
<b>10. Wood et al. (1998)</b>	Conducted in Khayelitsha, a township in peri-urban Cape Town, Western Cape.	To explore aspects of sexual dynamics occurring within adolescent relationships.	Qualitative (case-control)	14 - 18-years ( <i>n</i> = 24 pregnant adolescent women)	Violence was a consistent feature of sexual relationships and enforced male control and definition of sexual intercourse.

## **5.2 Theme 2: Gender and sexual-based violence**

The eight articles in this theme focused on gender and sexual-based violence. The key aspects considered in this theme are expounded on below (see Table 3).

### **5.2.1 Context**

Of the eight studies in this theme, five were predominantly conducted in urban areas (Mosavel et al., 2011; Rasool, 2017; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Richter et al., 2018; Haffejee, 2006); two were undertaken in a semi-rural area (Petersen et al., 2005) and a rural context (Sathiparsad, 2005); while the study by Heeralal (2014) did not indicate the context. The study by Mosavel et al. (2011) established a collaborative relationship with four secondary schools in an urban community named Masidaal (pseudonym) located on the outskirts of the city centre of Cape Town. Rasool (2017) utilised a two-stage sampling strategy with adolescents in Grade 8 in a range of secondary schools in Johannesburg, conducted over a two-year period. The first stage was initiated in 2012 with 24 secondary schools and the second stage in 2013 was pursued with 30 secondary schools in Johannesburg. Richter et al. (2018) used the longitudinal data collected in the Birth to Twenty Plus (Bt20+) study, also conducted in the greater Johannesburg-Soweto metropolitan area – the largest and longest running study of child and adolescent health and development in Africa. The study by Haffejee (2006) was the second of a three-phase project on gender-based violence (GBV), including nine peri-urban schools from the Gauteng Province, located in urban areas and townships. Gordon and Collins (2013) conducted their study in a major metropolitan university in KwaZulu-Natal. isiZulu-speaking adolescents belonging to the Nguni tribe were the focus of a study by Petersen et al. (2005), situated outside of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal. Similarly, the study by Sathiparsad (2005) was conducted with Grade 11 male youth attending secondary schools in Ugu North, a rural area in southern KwaZulu-Natal. Heeralal (2014) conducted a study that focused on Grade 11 adolescents attending secondary schools in South Africa.

### **5.2.2 Content: Aims and objectives**

The studies in this theme centred on understandings and experiences of gender and sexual-based violence from the perspectives of female and male victims and perpetrators. As an initial step toward developing a health promotion program, Mosavel et al. (2011) conducted an exploratory formative research study to examine the barriers that affect the health and

well-being of youth. Heeralal (2014) conducted a study to describe the direction and intensity of adolescents' perceptions of rape. The aim of the paper by Rasool (2017) was to describe adolescent's reports of GBV based on a cross-sectional survey conducted with Grade 8 learners in secondary schools. The study by Gordon and Collins (2013) explored female residence students' experiences of GBV at a South African university. The study examined how women's identities and social interactions were shaped by GBV in their communities, and in higher education institutions. Petersen et al. (2005) explored multiple levels of risk influences that render adolescent girls vulnerable to experiencing sexual violence and adolescent boys' perpetrators of such abuse in one South African community. Sathiparsad (2005) examined males' perspectives on gender roles and violence in relationships. The study by Richter et al. (2018) examined childhood sexual abuse in South Africa, exploring the personal and social vulnerability of male sexual abuse victims, and mental health outcomes. Haffejee (2006) aimed to explore adolescent girls' experiences of GBV in relationships, their constructions of gender violence, and their perspectives on interventions.

### **5.2.3 Method and data analysis**

In contrast to the previous theme, five studies utilised qualitative methods and three studies used quantitative methods. The qualitative study by Mosavel et al. (2011) employed grounded theory analysis (see Glaser & Strauss, 1965) using an inductive process. A quantitative, descriptive survey research design conducted by Heeralal (2014) employed descriptive and inferential statistics to interpret data. Rasool (2017) used a quantitative approach, and descriptive analysis. The study by Gordon and Collins (2013) used social constructionism to frame their qualitative study, applying discourse analysis to the data. Petersen et al. (2005) conducted a qualitative rapid focus ethnographic study using an inductive thematic analysis. Sathiparsad (2005) employed a qualitative descriptive research method and framework, and descriptive statistics was used to analyse data. Richter et al. (2018) utilised a quantitative, longitudinal research design, using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression analysis. The study by Haffejee (2006) used a qualitative, explorative research method. Data were collected through focus group discussions and analysed using content analysis.

### **5.2.4 Sample size and age cohort**

The eight studies in this theme included adolescents and youth between the ages of 13 and 24-years old. The sample size of two of the studies was above 1000 participants (Rasool,



2017; Richter et al., 2018). The study by Rasool (2017) included 3985 adolescents ( $n = 1756$  in 2012;  $n = 2202$  in 2013) in Grade 8, aged 13 to 15-years. Richter et al. (2018) included 2000 male participants over the course of the study, aged 22 to 23-years. Three studies included smaller sample sizes of more than 100 participants. Heeralal (2014) included 347 Grade 11 learners, with no ages specified (200 females; 147 males). In a study by Haffejee (2006), the sample included 140 girls between the ages of 13 to 17-years. Mosavel et al. (2011) conducted 14 focus group discussions, which included 112 adolescents, with an equal gender composition and an average age of 15-years. In keeping with their qualitative methodological frameworks, the studies by Gordon and Collins (2013,  $n = 12$  female residence students), Sathiparsad (2005,  $n = 10$  isiZulu-speaking males) and Petersen et al. (2005) used smaller samples (five male and five female adolescent focus groups) with participants between the ages of: 19 to 23-years (Gordon & Collins, 2013); 15 to 24-years (Sathiparsad, 2005); and 13 to 16-years (Petersen et al., 2005).

### 5.2.5 *Key findings*

The findings of the studies included in this theme focused on rape and fear. The study by Heeralal (2014) found that adolescents are aware that rape is unlawful, and that they believe that effective law enforcement can reduce rape. Participants were not of the view that a culture of violence contributes to rape and that women are reluctant to report being raped; rape was perceived as a crime of aggression that decreases self-esteem. The study also revealed significant differences between males and female's perceptions of rape, specifically to the punishment of rape offenders, the motivation for rape, and whether rape is a degrading act that decreases the self-esteem of women (Heeralal, 2014). Rasool (2017) found high levels of GBV among adolescents, with boys more likely than girls to report experiencing all types of GBV, except for three physical GBV indicators, in 2013. It was also demonstrated that rates of rape were between 8 and 11% in this study, and that most perpetrators were male. Further, adolescents were more likely to report experiences to family and friends, rather than authorities. Although a quarter of perpetrators were strangers, more were known to the victims (Rasool, 2017). Petersen et al. (2005) found that there were multiple levels of risk factors for adolescent girls and boys, to become either victims or perpetrators of sexual violence. At the distal socio-cultural/environmental level, these factors included the normalisation of inter-personal violence and traditional beliefs of masculinity as well as poverty and casual sexual encounters, which lead to a rape-supportive culture. At the proximal-situation-context/social normative level, factors converge to weaken adult and

community protective factors and lower social support, which leads to high-risk social norms. At the intra-personal level, influential factors included low self-efficacy and low self-esteem as well as inter-personal affective anger (Petersen et al., 2005). Richter et al. (2018) focused on reports of all sexual activity, including touching, oral and penetrative sex, and found that it increased with age, whereas most sexual coercion decreased after the age of 18-years. For adolescents at age 11-years, most sexual activity was coerced. The highest rates of coercion occurred between 13 and 14-years of age. Furthermore, 45% of reports of coerced touching were reported at age 14-years, 41% of coerced oral sex at age 13-years, 31% of coerced penetrative sex at age 14-years. Sexual coercion was perpetrated most frequently by similar aged peers. Boys who experienced childhood sexual abuse tended to be smaller in stature and from poorer families (Richter et al., 2018). The findings by Gordon and Collins (2013) revealed that the fear of becoming a victim of GBV restricted the daily activities of women. Several discourses that act to normalise, legitimise, and excuse GBV creates a culture of fear for women on a higher education institution campus. In turn, women's lives are structured by the fear of GBV and are changed as a result (Gordon & Collins, 2013). The findings by Sathiparsad (2005) showed that the participants perceive transitional love, transactional sex, forced sex, violence, the objectification of women, and multiple partnerships as acceptable elements of heterosexual relationships. The ambiguities of 'love' may leave youth uncertain about what constitutes a 'good' relationship (Sathiparsad, 2005). The results by Haffejee (2006) highlight a prevalence of GBV and male hegemony in relationships. For young women, school is not seen as a safe place, thus making it difficult for them to challenge the status quo (Haffejee, 2006). Mosavel et al. (2011) suggest that health promotion programs should create safe spaces for youth and opportunities to critically question the assumptions and manifestations of a patriarchal society. There is a strong need for multi-sectorial interventions directed at many levels to prevent GBV (Mosavel et al., 2011).

**Table 3***Theme 2: Gender and sexual-based violence*

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Content: Aims and Objectives</b>	<b>Method and Data Analysis</b>	<b>Sample size and age cohort</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>
<b>1. Gordon and Collins (2013)</b>	A major metropolitan university in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.	To explore how female residence students at a South African university understand and experience GBV.	Qualitative (Social constructionism) Discourse analysis	19 - 23-years (n = 12 females)	Findings revealed that the fear of becoming a victim of GBV serves to constrict daily activities of women. Several discourses that act to normalise, legitimise and excuse GBV create a culture of fear for women on campus, and how women's lives are structured by the fear of GBV and are changed as a result.
<b>2. Haffejee (2006)</b>	Nine secondary schools from Township areas, Gauteng, South Africa.	To explore adolescent girls' experiences of GBV, in relationships, constructions of gender violence, and perspectives on interventions.	Qualitative (Explorative research) Content analysis	13 - 17-years (n = 140 girls)	Findings highlight a prevalence of GBV and male hegemony in relationships. For young women, school is not seen as a safe place thus making it difficult for young women to challenge the status quo.
<b>3. Heeralal (2014)</b>	Grade 11 learners from secondary schools in South Africa.	To describe the direction and intensity of adolescents' perception of rape.	Quantitative Descriptive and inferential statistics	No ages were included (n = 347; 200 females and 147 males)	Adolescents are aware that rape is unlawful however, women are reluctant to report being raped as rape is a crime of aggression that decreases self-esteem. Females and males respond differently to the question that deals with rape.
<b>4. Mosavel et al. (2011)</b>	Four secondary schools in an urban community on the outskirts of Cape Town, South Africa.	To develop a health promotion program through exploratory formative research and to examine barriers that affect the health and well-being of youth.	Qualitative Grounded theory	15-years (n = 112; 56 females, 56 males)	Health promotion programs should create safe spaces for youth and opportunities to critically question the assumptions and manifestations of a patriarchal society. There is a strong need for multi-sectorial interventions directed at many levels to prevent GBV.
<b>5. Petersen et al. (2005)</b>	Semi-rural isiZulu tribal area Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.	To explore risks of adolescent girls becoming victims of sexual violence and boys becoming	Qualitative Rapid focused ethnographic study Inductive thematic analysis	13 - 16-years. (Focus groups; 5 females, 5 males, 8 - 10 participants in each)	Multiple levels of risk influence adolescent girls and boys becoming victims or perpetrators of sexual violence. Influences at the distal socio-cultural/ environmental level, at the proximal situation context/social normative level, and at the intra-

the perpetrators.

<b>6. Rasool (2017)</b>	24 Johannesburg secondary schools in 2012 and 30 Johannesburg secondary schools in 2013, South Africa.	To describe adolescent reports of GBV.	Quantitative Descriptive statistics	13 - 15-years ( <i>n</i> = 3985; 1756 in 2012, 2202 in 2013)	personal level included low self-esteem and self-efficacy as well as inter-personal affective anger. Results found high levels of GBV among adolescents, with boys more likely than girls to report experiencing GBV. Most perpetrators were male. Adolescents were more likely to report experiences to family and friends, rather than authorities. Although a quarter of perpetrators were strangers, more were known to the victims.
<b>7. Richter et al. (2018)</b>	Johannesburg-Soweto metropolitan area, South Africa.	To examine vulnerability of childhood male sexual abuse victims.	Quantitative (longitudinal research) Descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression	22 - 23-years ( <i>n</i> = 2000 male)	Reports of all sexual activity – touching, oral and penetrative sex – increased with age and sexual coercion decreased with age. Most sexual activity at ages 11 - 14-years was coerced. Boys smaller in stature and from poorer families tended to experience childhood sexual abuse. No significant association between childhood sexual abuse and mental health in adulthood were found.
<b>8. Sathiparsad (2005)</b>	Secondary schools in Ugu North KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.	To explore male perspectives on gender roles and violence in relationships.	Qualitative Framework analysis	15 - 24-years ( <i>n</i> = 10; isiZulu-speaking males)	Transitional love, transactional sex, forced sex, violence, the objectification of women and multiple partnerships are viewed as acceptable elements of heterosexual relationships. The ambiguities of love may leave youth uncertain about what constitutes a good relationship.

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### **5.3 Theme 3: Interpersonal and school violence**

This theme comprises 16 articles that focused on interpersonal and school violence (see Table 4). It includes both family/partner and community violence (WHO, 2019).

#### **5.3.1 Context**

Most of the studies in this theme were conducted in low SES contexts. Nine of the 16 articles in this theme were conducted in or close to Cape Town in the Western Cape (Khan et al., 2016; Kubeka, 2008; Petersen et al., 2017; Isaacs & Savahl, 2014; Shields et al., 2008; Savahl et al., 2013; Parkes, 2007a; Ngqela & Lewis, 2012; Parkes, 2007b), three in Gauteng (Scorgie et al., 2017; Burnett, 1998; Nesor, 2006), one in Mpumalanga (Mampane et al., 2014), one in KwaZulu-Natal (Hallman et al., 2015) and one in Buffalo City, Eastern Cape (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). The study by Manyema et al. (2018) was conducted in two provinces, Mpumalanga and Gauteng. The study by Khan et al. (2016) was conducted at a secondary school in a low SES community on the Cape Flats, Cape Town. Kubeka (2008) recruited participants from a local secondary school located in the Hometown Township (pseudonym) of Stellenbosch, which comprises informal settlements and a few brick houses. In the study by Petersen et al. (2017), adolescent participants were selected from three secondary schools in the Belhar community of the Western Cape. For the study by Isaacs and Savahl (2014), adolescent learners were accessed via a secondary school in a low SES township situated on the Cape Flats, positioned on the periphery of central Cape Town. Five Cape Town Township schools participated in the study conducted by Shields et al. (2008). Savahl et al. (2013) conducted a study with Grade 9 learners from seven public schools in both high violence (low SES, disadvantaged) and low violence (high SES, privileged) areas in Cape Town. In two studies by Parkes (2007a; 2007b), participants were recruited from a primary school in Uitsigberg (pseudonym) in an urban township of metropolitan Cape Town. Ngqela and Lewis (2012) conducted their study with adolescent learners selected from a secondary school in Nyanga Township in the Western Cape. Scorgie et al. (2017) conducted a study using data collected in the early phase of the WAVE study of challenges faced by adolescents living in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. The study by Burnett (1998) included Grade 7 learners from Davidsonville, Johannesburg. In the study conducted by Nesor (2006), the sample consisted of learners in Grades 6 to 11 from nine primary schools, eight secondary schools, and two special needs schools in Tshwane South, Educational District 4, Gauteng. Mampane et al. (2014) included a sample of adolescents in Grade 9 from a rural secondary school in Mpumalanga. The study by

Hallman et al. (2015) was conducted in one urban township and one rural community, with learners in one primary school and one secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) conducted a study in four schools in the Buffalo City district in the Eastern Cape province. The study by Manyema et al. (2018) was conducted in rural and urban sites in two provinces: the rural site was a sub-district of the Mpumalanga Province covering 31 villages; and the urban site was in Soweto, a densely populated suburb of Johannesburg, Gauteng.

### **5.3.2 Content: Aims and objectives**

The aim of the study by Khan et al. (2016) was to explore adolescents' perceptions of substance use as a contributing factor to community violence using focus group interviews. In the study by Kubeka (2008), the aim was to explore 'Black' adolescents' experiences and perceptions of domestic violence in their homes of origin and in their intimate relationships. The aim of the study by Scorgie et al. (2017) was to understand the forms of interpersonal violence experienced by adolescents, by exploring how violence was experienced differently by boys and girls, how they conceptualise 'dangerous' and 'safe' spaces in their neighbourhood, and what gaps exist in available services for youth in Hillbrow. Manyema et al. (2018) aimed to investigate the association between interpersonal violence and psychological distress among rural and urban young women. Petersen et al. (2017) explored the self-identity constructions of South African adolescents with a history of family violence. The study by Isaacs and Savahl (2014) explored the sense of hope in adolescents, who were living in communities known to have high levels of violence. Mampane (2014) examined adolescents' conceptualisation of school violence in a rural secondary school. The aim of the anthropological study by Burnett (1998) was to understand school-related violence experienced by adolescents in the context of chronic poverty in a South African community. Shields et al. (2008) investigated the relationship between exposure to community violence (neighbourhood, school, police, and gang violence) and psychological distress in a sample of children living in Cape Town. The study further aimed to identify variables that moderate and mediate the relationship between exposure to community violence and psychological distress. Savahl et al. (2013) explored the relationship between exposure to community violence, hope, and well-being. More specifically, the study aimed to ascertain whether hope is a stronger predictor of well-being than exposure to violence. Hallman et al. (2015) included learners in Grades 5, 8, and 9 to compare adolescents' perceptions at two different stages of development: pre-adolescence and early-to-mid-adolescence. They were asked to draw the area that represented their community and to indicate places in the

community and rate each in terms of its safety or lack of safety.

Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) sought to investigate the nature, causes, and effects of school violence in four South African secondary schools. The study by Parkes (2007a) aimed to examine how young people living in a violent neighbourhood, construct understandings about danger, violence, and safety. Ngqela and Lewis (2012) focused on exploring adolescent learners' unique experiences of school violence in a secondary school located in a township, in order to assist in understanding the phenomenon, and informing school prevention and/or intervention programmes/strategies for this and similar contexts. The article by Parkes (2007b) explored children's understandings of violence in their neighbourhood. Nesor (2006) aimed to gain knowledge of, and insight into, learners' experience as victims of aggressive acts.

### **5.3.3 Method and data analysis**

Among the studies in this theme, 10 used qualitative methods, four used quantitative methods, and two used a mixed-methods approach. Khan et al. (2016) employed a qualitative methodological framework in their study, using Braun and Clarke's (2006) theoretical thematic analysis technique. A qualitative, phenomenological research study was conducted by Kubeka (2008) employing Denzin's (1989) interpretive analysis. The study by Scorgie et al. (2017) used a qualitative framework, with an inductive thematic analysis approach. Manyema et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative research study, and analysed the data using generalised structural equation models. Petersen et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative study and data were thematically analysed by following guidelines offered by Vaismoradi et al. (2013) and Braun and Clarke (2006). Isaacs and Savahl (2014) used a qualitative framework with an exploratory approach, and analysed data using theoretical thematic analysis. A qualitative study was conducted by Mampane et al. (2014), using constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyse the data. Burnett (1998) used a mixed-methods research design, utilising a deductive approach and descriptive statistics to analyse data. The study by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) used a sequential mixed-methods approach; with quantitative data analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative data analysed using thematic analysis. Shields et al. (2008) employed a quantitative framework, using descriptive statistics, pairwise correlation, and regression analysis to analyse the data. Nesor (2006) conducted a quantitative research study, using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. Savahl et al. (2013) utilised a quantitative approach using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and multiple regression to analyse the data. In the study by Hallman et al. (2015), a qualitative

research method was employed, and a deductive approach was used to collate and analyse data. Parkes (2007a) conducted a qualitative research study using thematic data analysis. Similarly, a qualitative research study was conducted by Ngqela and Lewis (2012), using thematic data analysis. In the article by Parkes (2007b) a qualitative research study was employed, and thematic data analysis used.

#### **5.3.4 Sample size and age cohort**

The studies in this theme included participants between the ages of 8 to 22-years old, with relatively small sample sizes compared to Themes 1 and 2. The largest samples used was by Nesor (2006) with a purposive sample of 995 learners, comprising of 453 females and 542 males, with 602 learners younger than 14-years and 393 older than 14-years. The study by Manyema et al. (2018) included 926 young women aged 18 to 22-years. Savahl et al. (2013) conducted a study with a sample of 566 adolescents aged between 14 to 17-years. Shields et al. (2008) conducted a study with 185 participants aged between 8 to 13-years old, including a sample of girls (50.3%) and boys (49.7%). Hallman et al. (2015) conducted a study in one urban and one rural community within primary schools with a sample of 136 participants. This resulted in four groups per community: Grade 5 girls, Grade 5 boys, Grade 8 to 9 girls and Grade 8 to 9 boys, and an average of 17 students per group. In an article by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), a purposive sample of 80 learners from four secondary schools participated; no ages of the participants were recorded. Burnett (1998) conducted a study with participants in Grade 9 with a sample of 76 adolescents (no ages were recorded). The article by Scorgie et al. (2017) draws on data collected in the formative phase of the WAVE study with 59 adolescents aged 15 to 19-years (equal gender composition) using in-depth interviews, while the community mapping involved 19 girls and 20 boys. In two articles by Parkes (2007a, b), studies included a sample of 36 participants focusing on six friendship groups in three age cohorts of 8, 10, and 13-years. The studies that follow had samples sizes of less than 30 participants. Kubeka (2008) conducted a study with 23 adolescent boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 20-years. Khan et al. (2016) included 16 secondary school adolescents (nine females and seven males) between the ages of 15 and 16-years. The study by Isaacs and Savahl (2014) included a sample of 14 participants between the ages of 14 and 15-years (eight females and six males). Ngqela and Lewis (2012) explored the experience of school violence of 13 adolescent learners from Grades 10 and 11 (no ages were recorded). The study by Petersen et al. (2017) included a purposive sample of 12 school learners, 11 females and one male, aged 15 to 18-years. Mampane et al. (2014) collected data over two two-day periods (24 hours) from nine adolescent participants in



Grade 9 (five girls and four boys) in a rural secondary school, aged between 15 and 17-years.

### **5.3.5 Key findings**

The key findings from the studies in this theme relate to hope, safety, coping, and resilience. The study by Isaacs and Savahl (2014) found that hope was related to religion and faith. Hopelessness was associated with negative effects stemming from exposure to community violence, resulting for some in the perpetration of violence. However, participants reporting a high sense of hope perceived it as a useful motivational tool in their goal setting and future-planning (Hendricks et al., 2015). The study by Savahl et al. (2013) found a positive, significant relationship between children's hope and their well-being; while exposure to community violence was found to be significantly correlated with well-being, the relationship was negligible. Exposure to community violence and hope were found to be significant predictors of well-being, and hope emerged as a stronger predictor of child well-being than exposure to community violence (Savahl et al., 2013). Parkes (2007a) identified how young people attempted to stay safe through reliance on adult protection, avoidance and escape, peer support and retaliation. Hallman et al. (2015) found vast gender differences in access to the public sphere for those learners in grade 8 and 9, with girls' mobility more restricted than boys. It was found that in grade 5, female-defined community areas were equal or larger in size than those of males. Community areas mapped by urban grade 8 and 9 girls, however, was only one-third that of male classmates and two-fifths that of grade 5 girls. Conversely, community areas mapped by grade 8 and 9 boys was twice that of grade 5 boys. Similar differences emerged in the rural area, while the mobility of grade 8 and 9 boys contained a mix of safe and unsafe places. Reducing girls' access to the public sphere does not increase their perceived safety but may instead limit their access to opportunities for human development (Hallman et al., 2015). In another article by Parkes (2007b), the findings show that violence carried multiple meanings and thus may have multiple consequences for children, as they strive to make sense of their experiences. Violence in the neighbourhood was found to be a constant threat that undermined their safety as young people struggled to construct coherent subjectivities; they rejected some forms of violence, while endorsing others. However, children also resisted violent practices, as they struggled to position themselves in relation to violence; they both contested and perpetuated forms of violence (Parkes, 2007b).

The findings by Shields et al. (2008) suggested that exposure to all forms of violence resulted in psychological distress. Perceived safety offered by social support, family organisation, and

family control reduced the effects of exposure to certain kinds of violence. The study found that exposure to murder was not related to psychological distress indicative of a possible ‘numbing’ effect of extreme forms of violence. However, hearing about violence from others had almost the same effect as witnessing it (Shields et al., 2008). Petersen et al. (2017) found that adolescents’ self-identities in the context of family violence seem to be characterised by polarities of love versus hate, protect versus blame, and compassion versus anger and resentment. The adolescents also self-defined in terms of coping and resilience despite elevated risks of self-harm behaviour (Petersen et al., 2017). Other findings in this theme was more nuanced. The results of the study by Mampane et al. (2014) indicated that adolescents view school violence both as negative, in that it causes harm, and positive, in that it serves as a strategy to ensure order and protection. The participants conceptualised violence as interweaving constructs of power, discipline, and aggression. Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) found that bullying, vandalism, gangsterism, lack of discipline, intolerance, and corporal punishment were prevalent in schools. School violence had the following effects on learners: loss of concentration; poor academic performance; absence from class; and depression.

The findings by Nesor (2006) show that school violence was a reality in the lives of children, with 40% of the victims frequently exposed to violence. Most victims were subjected to verbal aggression (cruel teasing, name-calling, and threats of harm), physical aggression (hitting, kicking, and pushing), and fewer incidents of relational aggression (social exclusion). Additionally, perpetrators were often from the same class and in the same grade with the other half of incidents perpetrated by a peer in a different class in a higher grade; and 60% of aggressive incidents were initiated by male learners. The study by Ngqela and Lewis (2012) concludes that school violence is a multifaceted phenomenon with unique contextual characteristics. It was recommended that a holistic and integrated approach is taken when dealing with violence in these and similar schools. Moreover, there is a need to intensify security measures within school premises to promote an effective environment of learning and teaching and therefore ensuring the right to education. Educators were found to show a lack of adequate classroom management skills, highlighting a need for this to be enhanced within this specific community (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012). Manyema et al. (2018) found that the relationship between violence and psychological distress differs between young women in urban and rural contexts in South Africa, and is influenced by individual, household, and community (contextual) factors. Experiences of interpersonal violence are higher in urban than in rural young women and was not associated with psychological distress in rural young women.

Stressful household events were indirectly associated with psychological distress, which was mediated by violence among young women in the urban area (Manyema et al., 2018).

The findings by Kubeka (2008) indicated that observational learning contributes to PTSD and dating violence among adolescents in South Africa. Some predictions of the intergenerational transmission of violence were also supported by respondents' experiences and perceptions of violence within their own relationships. There was evidence of socialised gendered notions of male power and control, where violence was used to affirm masculinity (Kubeka, 2008). In the article by Scorgie et al. (2017), both girls and boys reported high exposure to witnessing violence and crime. For girls, the threat of sexual harassment and violence was pervasive, while boys feared local gangs, the threat of physical violence, and substance use. While home was predominantly a haven of safety for boys, for girls it was often a space of sexual violence, abuse, and neglect. Some adolescents developed coping mechanisms, such as actively seeking out community theatres, churches, and other places of refuge from violence. Community-based services and shelters that support adolescents reported a lack of resources, overall instability, and difficulties networking effectively (Scorgie et al., 2017). Khan et al. (2016) found that the physiological and behavioural effects of substance use and withdrawal symptoms result in aggression and violence: persons who use substances frequently committed property and violent interpersonal crimes such as theft, robbery, assault, and murder to procure substances. Furthermore, adolescents perceived violence to be rooted within gang culture as well as the involvement in shared markets for illicit substance trading (Khan et al., 2016). In the study by Burnett (1998) it was found that the ideology and structures of apartheid exposed children to a context of impoverishment and structural violence. School was one of the social institutions where children were subjected to structural, psychological, and physical violence, daily. Violent behaviour or discipline was justified as being just and an effective teaching practice by authoritarian parents and teachers. The manifestations of poverty included emotional erosion, a negative self-concept, and reactive violence (Burnett, 1998).

**Table 4:**  
**Theme 3: Interpersonal and school violence**

Authors	Context	Content: Aims and objectives	Method and data analysis	Sample size and age cohort	Key findings
1. <b>Burnett (1998)</b>	A secondary school in Davidsonville, Johannesburg, South Africa.	To create an understanding of school-related violence experienced by adolescents living in chronic poverty.	Mixed-methods Deductive approach, Descriptive statistics	No ages or sexual orientation <i>n</i> = 76	Apartheid exposed children to structural, physical, and psychological violence and daily impoverishment. Violent behaviour or discipline was justified and used as an effective teaching practice by authoritarian parents and teachers.
2. <b>Hallman et al. (2015)</b>	One primary school and one secondary school in an urban township and rural community, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.	To compare perceptions of adolescents at two different stages of development: pre-adolescence and early-to-mid-adolescence.	Qualitative Deductive approach	9 - 17-years <i>n</i> = 136	The study found that relative to Grade 5 students, wide gender differences in access to the public sphere was found at Grade 8–9: with girls’ mobility more restricted than boys. In Grade 5, female-defined community areas were equal or larger in size than those of males. Similar differences emerged in the rural areas.
3. <b>Isaacs &amp; Savahl (2014)</b>	A secondary school in a low SES township, Cape Town, South Africa.	To explore the sense of hope in adolescents living in communities with high levels of violence.	Qualitative Explorative method Thematic analysis	14 - 15-years <i>n</i> = 14 (8 females and 6 males)	Hope was related to religion and faith. Hopelessness was associated with more negative effects than those experienced due to exposure to community violence, resulting in perpetration of violence. Yet, participants reported a high sense of hope and perceiving it as a useful motivational tool in their goal setting and future-planning.
4. <b>Khan et al. (2016)</b>	A secondary school in a low SES community, Cape Town, South Africa.	To explore adolescents’ perceptions of substance use as a contributing factor to community violence.	Qualitative (Methodological framework) Theoretical thematic analysis technique	15 – 16 years <i>n</i> = 16 (9 females and 7 males)	Substance use and withdrawal symptoms results in aggression and violence causing substance users to commit crimes to procure substances. Adolescents’ perceived violence to be rooted within gang culture and illicit substance trading.
5. <b>Kubeka (2008)</b>	A secondary school in Hometown Township (pseudonym), Stellenbosch, Cape Town, South Africa.	To explore ‘Black’ adolescents’ perceptions of domestic violence and intimate relationships.	Qualitative, (Phenomenological) Interpretive approach	14 - 20-years. <i>n</i> = 23 Females and males	Findings indicated that observational learning contributes to PTSD and dating violence among adolescents. Evidence emerged of socialised gendered notions of male power and control, where violence is used to affirm masculinity.
6. <b>Mampane et al. (2014)</b>	Grade 9 from a rural secondary school, Mpumalanga, South Africa.	To explain how adolescents conceptualise school violence in a rural secondary school.	Qualitative Constructivist grounded theory, thematic analysis	15 - 17-years <i>n</i> = 9 (5 girls and 4 boys)	Adolescents view school violence both as negative, in that it causes harm, and positive, in that it serves as a strategy to ensure order and protection. The participants conceptualise

					violence as constructs of power, discipline, and aggression.
<b>7. Manyema et al. (2018)</b>	A rural site in Mpumalanga Province, <i>n</i> = 31 villages; an urban site in Soweto, Johannesburg, Gauteng.	To investigate the associations between interpersonal violence and psychological distress among rural and urban young women.	Quantitative Generalised structural equation models	18 - 22-years. <i>n</i> = 926 young women	The relationship between violence and psychological distress differs between young women in urban and rural contexts and is influenced by individual, household, and community factors. Interpersonal violent experiences are higher in urban than in rural young women and was not associated with psychological distress in rural young women.
<b>8. Ncontsa &amp; Shumba (2013)</b>	Four schools, Buffalo City, Eastern Cape, South Africa.	To investigate the nature, causes and effects of school violence in four secondary schools.	Mixed-methods Quantitative (percentages and tables), qualitative (coded to develop units, themes, sub-themes, and categories)	No ages or sexual orientation <i>n</i> = 80	The study found that bullying, vandalism, gangsterism, indiscipline, intolerance, and corporal punishment were prevalent in schools. School violence had the following effects on learners: loss of concentration; poor academic performance; skipping class; and depression.
<b>9. Ngqela &amp; Lewis (2012)</b>	Secondary school, Grades 10 – 11, Nyanga Township, Cape Town, South Africa.	To explore adolescent learners' experiences of school violence in a township school, which may assist in prevention and/or intervention programmes for this and similar contexts.	Qualitative Thematic analysis	No ages or sexual orientation <i>n</i> = 13	School violence is a multifaceted phenomenon with unique contextual characteristics. There is a need to intensify security measures within school premises to promote an effective environment of learning and teaching and therefore ensuring the right to education. Educators show a lack of adequate classroom management skills and there is a need for this to be enhanced.
<b>10. Parkes (2007a)</b>	A primary school, Uitsigberg (pseudonym), Cape Town, South Africa.	To examine young people's perception of danger, violence, and safety in a violent neighbourhood	Qualitative Thematic analysis	8 - 14-years <i>n</i> = 36	The study identified how young people attempted to stay safe through reliance on adult protection, avoidance and escape, peer support and retaliation.
<b>11. Parkes (2007b)</b>	Primary school, Uitsigberg (pseudonym), Cape Town, South Africa.	To explore children's talk about violence in their neighbourhood.	Qualitative Thematic analysis	8, 10 and 13-years <i>n</i> = 36	Children found violence in the neighbourhood a constant threat, that undermined their safety; as young people struggled to construct coherent subjectivities, they rejected some forms of violence, while endorsing others.
<b>12. Petersen et al. (2017)</b>	Three secondary schools, Belhar, Cape Town	To explore the self-identity constructions of	Qualitative Thematic analysis	15 - 18-years <i>n</i> = 12 learners	Adolescents' self-identities in family violence are characterised by polarities of love versus hate, protect versus blame, and compassion versus

		adolescents with a history of family violence.				anger and resentment. Adolescents also self-defined in terms of coping and resilience despite elevated risks of self-harm behaviour.
<b>13. Savahl et al. (2013)</b>	Seven public schools, Grade 9, both high violence and low violence areas, Cape Town, South Africa.	To explore the relationship between exposure to community violence, hope, and well-being.	Quantitative Descriptive statistics, correlations, and multiple regression	14 - 17-years <i>n</i> = 566		A positive, significant relationship was found between children's hope and well-being. While exposure to community violence and hope were found to be significant predictors of well-being, hope emerged as a stronger predictor of child well-being than exposure to community violence.
<b>14. Scorgie et al. (2017)</b>	Hillbrow, Johannesburg, South Africa.	To glean forms of interpersonal violence experienced by adolescents and the different experience of boys and girls.	Qualitative. Inductive thematic analysis approach	15 - 19-years. <i>n</i> = 59 (equal number of females and males)		Girls and boys experienced violence differently. For girls, sexual harassment and violence was pervasive. Whereas boys feared local gangs, physical violence, and engaging in substance use. Home was a haven for boys however, girls often experienced sexual violence, abuse, and neglect.
<b>15. Shields et al. (2008)</b>	Five Township schools, Cape Town, South Africa.	To investigate the relationship and identify variables between exposure to community violence and psychological distress in children.	Quantitative Descriptive statistics	8 - 13-years <i>n</i> = 185 (girls 50.3% and boys 49.7%)		Findings suggested that exposure to all forms of violence resulted in psychological distress. Perceived safety offered by social support, family organisation, and control reduced exposure effects to certain kinds of violence. Exposure to murder was not related to psychological distress that could suggest a possible "numbing" effect of extreme forms of violence.
<b>16. Nesor (2006)</b>	Learners in Grades 6 - 11 in Tshwane South District 4, South Africa.	To gain knowledge of, and insight into, learners' position as victims of aggressive acts.	Quantitative Descriptive statistics and chi-squared test	<14 - >14-years ( <i>n</i> = 995; 453 females and 542 males)		Findings indicate the prevalence of school violence, with 40% of victims frequently exposed to violence: such as verbal aggression; physical aggression; and relational aggression (social exclusion).

## 6. Discussion

This study aimed to systematically review existing empirical research and synthesise the findings on how youth and adolescents perceive violence in post-apartheid South Africa. Using various keyword strings, indicated databases were searched using a defined search strategy. The keyword searches and reference mining yielded 457 articles, of which a total of 34 were included in the review. The articles that qualified for this review, of which more than 60% were conducted in the last decade, confirm a paucity of empirical work in this area. The identified articles reflect that the concept of violence is broad and nuanced, focusing on three themes: exposure to violence; gender and sexual-based violence; and interpersonal and school violence. The most important and prominent implication that emerged was that violence occurs in multiple settings, such as the home, school, neighbourhood (community), and within social relationships. Those exposed to violence were at risk of psychiatric challenges, difficulty with interpersonal relationships (Hertweck et al., 2010), negative internalising and externalising behavioural problems (Ward et al., 2001), and lower well-being (Savahl et al., 2017; Montserrat et al., 2019). Female adolescents were especially vulnerable to culturally and socially sanctioned male hegemonic GBV (Gordon & Collins, 2013) influenced by the legacy of apartheid (Campbell, 1992). This cycle of violence has become a prominent feature in schools through various forms perpetuated by adolescents and educators alike (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013).

The reviewed studies were conducted across the nine provinces of South Africa. Most of the studies were conducted in urban and peri-urban (township) areas within the Western Cape, while the remainder conducted in KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga, and the Eastern Cape were in rural and semi-rural areas. Three studies in particular were conducted across both urban and rural areas, namely the study by Meinck et al. (2017) (Western Cape and Mpumalanga provinces), Hallman et al. (2015) in a peri-urban and rural community in KwaZulu-Natal, and Manyema et al. (2018) at a rural site in Mpumalanga and an urban site in Soweto, Gauteng.

In terms of methodological frameworks, the reviewed studies used qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods frameworks, with most studies utilising a qualitative framework (see Ramphele, 1997; Selenga & Jooste, 2015; Swartz & Scott, 2014; Wood et al., 1998; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Haffejee, 2006; Mosavel et al., 2011; Petersen et al., 2005; Sathiparsad, 2005; Hallman et al., 2015; Isaacs & Savahl, 2014; Khan et al., 2016; Kubeka, 2008; Mampane et al.,

2014; Ngqela & Lewis, 2012; Parkes, 2007a; Parkes, 2007b; Petersen et al., 2017; Scorgie et al., 2017). Fewer studies employed a quantitative framework (see du Plessis et al., 2015; Kaminer et al., 2013a; Kaminer et al., 2013b; Meinck et al., 2017; Shields et al., 2009; Ward et al., 2001; Heeralal, 2014; Rasool, 2017; Richter et al., 2018; Manyema et al., 2018; Savahl et al., 2013; Shields et al., 2008; Nesor, 2006), and fewer still utilised a mixed-methods framework (see Burnett, 1998; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). Qualitative studies by Heeralal (2014), Hallman et al. (2015), and Mosavel et al. (2011) had sample sizes of over 110 participants; Meinck et al. (2017), Rasool (2017), and Richter et al. (2018) had sample sizes of over 2000 participants using quantitative studies; and Burnett (1998) and Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) had sample sizes of under 90 participants. As most studies used qualitative research, the data analysis technique most often used was inductive thematic analysis (Isaacs & Savahl, 2014; Khan et al., 2016; Ngqela & Lewis, 2012; Parkes, 2007a; Parkes, 2007b; Petersen et al., 2005; Petersen et al., 2017; Scorgie et al., 2017). One of the most frequently used forms of analysis within qualitative research, thematic analysis, enables identifying, categorising, and interpreting patterns of meaning of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Petersen et al., 2017). Participants in the various studies were selected from the general population in the researched communities. The participants from the quantitative studies were reported to be a representation of the population of the specific studies. The majority were adolescent male and female learners from primary and secondary schools, with the study by Gordon and Collins (2013) using university students. The age range of the participants in the reviewed studies were youth and adolescents between 8 and 27-years old. The most prominent ages studied was 14 to 17-years of age. For the current review, youth and adolescents were defined as any persons up to and including the age of 25. However, the article by Selenga and Jooste (2015) included eight participants aged 18 to 27-years. Despite the ages of the participants being slightly older than the defined age range, the study was retained in the review as it offered relevant qualitative information about the youth victims' experiences of and exposure to physical violence in Mitchell's Plain on the Cape Flats, Western Cape.

A consideration of theory demonstrated that only one third of the reviewed articles used a theoretical framework to formulate their studies. The theories used in the studies included: social constructionist theory; theory of moral capital; grounded theory; theory of triadic influence; actor network theory; theory of hope; Goldstein's tripartite conceptual framework; trauma theory; social learning theory; and bio-ecological theory. The application of theory served to highlight contextual experiences and understandings of adolescents and youth concerning exposure and experiences of violence.



The following section will further explore the three themes that emerged from the study, namely exposure to violence; gender and sexual-based violence; and interpersonal and school violence.

## **6.1 Exposure to violence**

The key findings of the studies in this theme indicate that children, adolescents, and youth who witnessed, were exposed to, and directly experienced violence were at an increased risk for short-term and long-term physical and mental health problems (Benninger & Savahl, 2016; du Plessis et al., 2015; Kaminer et al., 2013a; Kaminer et al., 2013b; Selenga & Jooste, 2015; Shields et al., 2009; Ward et al., 2001). The experience of violence was shown to affect their interpersonal relationships as they could become the victim or perpetrator of violence, with the risk of psychopathology higher with this cohort (Hertweck, et al., 2010). Those who have experienced violence, display internalising behaviours such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD, as well as externalising behaviours such as poor school performance and conduct disorder such as bullying, vandalism, and physical aggression towards others. Without appropriate intervention, undiagnosed and untreated internalising, and externalising problems markedly hinder functioning in later life (Ward et al., 2001), and overall quality of life (Savahl et al., 2017).

Parental responses to and engagement with experiences of violence influences adolescent's developmental outcomes (Ramphela, 1997). For this reason, it is not surprising that violence in the home poses the greatest risk for developing internalising and externalising behaviours in adolescence (du Plessis et al., 2015). The home and family network are conceptualised as a means of safety for adolescents to receive nurturance (Carr, 1999) and protection by adult/guardians from external dangerous threats in the community (Parkes, 2007a). However, when the safety within the home environment is compromised by domestic and other forms of violence, confusion can arise from the ambiguity of having a place of safety becoming a place of violence. This is in line with structured family systems theory that describes dysfunctional families as a root cause for mental health difficulties and acting out behaviour amongst adolescents (Carr, 1999). This dissonance is compounded by the credible threats to safety and violence that young people traverse and experience in their communities in their daily lives. While one in six South Africans suffer from anxiety, depression, or substance-use problems, adolescents, in spite of their knowledge of victim abuse services do not feel safe disclosing abuse or seeking help (Meinck et al., 2017). This is evident in families with adolescents exhibiting conduct and behavioural disorder difficulties who struggle with intergenerational

hierarchies such as parents or grandparents who seek to pass down learnt experiences and ways of living that cause conflict, confusion, and distrust for the adolescent (Carr, 1999).

These challenges are reflected in studies by Burnett (1998), Parkes (2007a), Parkes (2007b), and Ramphele (1997), which highlight the impact of oppression instituted by colonialism and apartheid on social behaviour. The high levels of violent crimes in South Africa can be attributed to the legacy of the apartheid regime that endorsed structural violence to control the majority of the population categorised as 'Black' (Parkes, 2007a; Parkes, 2007b; Ramphele, 1997; Swart, 1997). Structural violence takes on multiple forms (Hamber, 2000; South African Police Service, 2001) that affect social institutions that include, among others, basic human rights and dignity, the family, religion, education, and economics. In these institutions, women and children are mostly exposed to the cycle of violence (Aysen & Nieuwoudt, 1992; Klassen, 1990). Through the brutal response of the apartheid regime on opposition by the oppressed, violence has become a part of children's lives. This culture of violence creates an intergenerational legacy where victims become susceptible to being perpetrators of horizontal violence in their environments (Bulhan, 1985; Ramphele, 1997). The exposure to violence is not exclusive to, but predominantly occurs in impoverished communities (Dawes & Donald, 1994; Reynolds, 1989; World Bank, 1995). This was corroborated by recurring themes and discourses in the reviewed studies that link the cause of low SES conditions of these communities to the legacy of apartheid (see Burnett, 1998; du Plessis et al., 2015; Hallman et al., 2015; Isaacs & Savahl, 2014; Kaminer et al., 2013a; Khan et al., 2016; Kubeka, 2008; Mampane et al., 2014; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013; Parkes, 2007a; Parkes, 2007b; Petersen et al., 2005; Ramphele, 1997; Savahl et al., 2013; Shields et al., 2008; Shields et al., 2009; Swartz & Scott, 2014).

With the fall of apartheid and the advent of the new political dispensation in South Africa, the Bill of Rights developed as the foundation of democracy. Embedded in the Bill of Rights is "the right to life, the right to freedom and security of the person, and the right to bodily and psychological integrity" (The Bill of Rights, 1996, p.6) for all citizens. Enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the protection of children from all forms of violence (United Nations, 2019a), thus the protection of children is paramount. However, the violent landscape of South African society reflects the challenges of keeping children safe despite the resolution of various national and international laws. In the first national study of child homicide conducted by Mathews et al. (2013) in South Africa, it was found that the child

homicide rate is more than double the global estimate with homicide involving rape mainly affecting girls. The disproportionately high child homicide rate motivated by sexual assault is indicative of the pervasiveness of sexual violence. This is linked to the belief of hegemonic masculinity and the entitlement of control males exert over females (Mathews et al., 2013).

## **6.2 Gender and sexual-based violence**

Of the three themes that emerged, gender and sexual-based violence yielded the least studies. Despite the severity and increase in gender and sexual-based violence there appears to be a lack of empirical studies seeking to understand the source of this violence in particular and the increasing use of violence in general. Furthermore, female adolescent participants in the study by Gordon and Collins (2013) reflected that anxiety and fear was intrinsic to their identity as women. Participants expressed that they live in fear of physical and sexual violence and were expected to tolerate and cope with the pervasive nature of GBV instituted by socially accepted male hegemonic authoritarianism (Gordon & Collins, 2013), which is culturally inscribed (Mosavel et al., 2011). These findings are supported by studies reporting that South Africa has the highest rates of recorded rape and sexual violence in the world (Haffejee, 2006; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Petersen et al., 2005; Sande, 2010): a woman is raped every 17 seconds (Joffe-Walt, 2013; Sande, 2010). A study conducted by the Medical Research Council (MRC) in 2009 found that 37.4% of South African men admitted to committing a rape and 25.3% of women reported to having been raped (Rasool, 2017; Sande, 2010). The study by Haffejee (2006) further articulated that adolescents expressed fear, feelings of hopelessness, discouragement, defeat, and an inevitability of experiencing an abusive relationship that they likely would have to face on their own given inadequate enacted social support. Without this kind of support adolescents are not able to receive assistance when they are confronted with situations that cause them distress (Barrera, 1986). Furthermore, a minority of adolescents had knowledge about services to assist with abuse but did not trust in the process if it was reported (Haffejee, 2006), fearing that perpetrators would find out and that they would suffer severe repercussions. In this way, a state of learned helplessness develops causing victims of GBV to continue being the recipients of the cycle of violence (Sadock et al., 2015).

Research by Petersen et al. (2005) elucidated the factors that influence violence, foregrounding the centrality of the historical context and socioeconomic conditions in South Africa. Within the family, male patriarchy and power were made dominant through the structures of apartheid (Campbell, 1992). Under this form of oppression, a culture of acceptable violence developed

in exacting discipline, exerting influence and dominance, and resolving disputes (Simpson, 1991). The erosion of Black African masculinity became compromised to a point of crisis (Campbell, 1992; Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001). After the abolition of apartheid in 1994, the constitution of South Africa legislated equality of women in society (Morrell, 2001), which inadvertently exacerbated the erosion of traditional concepts of Black African masculinity (Petersen et al., 2005). Without targeted interventions to assist men to cope with these developments (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001), disenfranchised males used GBV to reclaim their power over women (Petersen et al., 2005). As can be seen in South African society, it is commonplace for men to coerce, control, and enforce obedience on women and girls by using various forms of violence (Wood & Jewkes, 2001).

Thus, due to the ubiquitous nature of GBV and oppression, the United Nations formulated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), “a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030” (United Nations, 2019b). In this mandate, gender equality (Goal 5) is focused on eradicating female genital mutilation; early marriage; legal discrimination; addressing unfair social norms and attitudes; decision-making on sexual and reproductive issues and low levels of political participation. A recent SDG progress report (2019) indicates that insufficient progress on structural issues are undermining the ability to achieve SDG 5 (United Nations, 2019b). In South Africa, legislation has been implemented to target GBV and the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security cluster has adopted a zero-tolerance stance to GBV. The Protection from Harassment Act, 2011 (Act 17 of 2011) (Department of Justice, 1996) constitutes the “first specific legislation to address sexual harassment in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region” (Department of Justice and Correctional Services, 2019, p. 12). Notably however, the incidence of gender and sexual-based violence, and violence in general in South Africa continues to rise. In sum, stringent enforcement of the law must be paired with educational and supportive intervention strategies to reduce, eliminate, and eradicate violent behaviour.

### **6.3 Interpersonal and school violence**

Youth and adolescents in schools are not immune to the cycle of violence. The study by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) found that the most prevalent forms of violence in schools were bullying, vandalism, gangsterism, indiscipline, intolerance, and corporal punishment. Most learners concurred that the frequent perpetrators of violence were older male students. Diminished school enjoyment was attributed to exposure to multiple forms of violence at school (Ncontsa

& Shumba, 2013). Although corporal punishment is illegal in South African schools, learners expressed their humiliation, resentment, and feelings of helplessness when physically punished by educators or the principal (Burnett, 1998; Mampane et al., 2014; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). Studies have espoused that corporal punishment and punitive teaching styles perpetuate a culture of violence among children (Burnett, 1998; Harber, 2004; Steyn & Naicker, 2007). Coupled with poor role-modelling and poor parenting, continuous exposure to violence develops negative learnt behaviours for adolescents by using aggression when dealing with conflict and challenging life events (Khan, 2008). School learners in low SES communities are more susceptible to violence as they lack agency when subjected to corporal punishment (Burnett, 1998; Ngqela & Lewis, 2012). School violence is a product of the surrounding community's social dysfunction (Steyn & Naicker, 2007) and by extension, that society's behaviour is reflective of the communities and the families therein (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012). Further, children reared in violent homes have a higher probability of internalising violence as patterns of behaviour that manifest in current and future interpersonal relationships (Bandura, 1973). Thus, laws are constituted to develop a framework within which children and parents/guardians' function. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child seeks to ensure that "every child has the right to survival, protection and education" (United Nations, 1989, p.1). The Children's Act 38 of 2005 further seeks to imbue the best interest of the child by affording children the right to participate in matters affecting them, care and protection, defined parental responsibilities, and social, cultural and religious developmental opportunities under the constitution of South Africa (The Children's Act, 2005).

As children are socialised, they are set on a path of becoming. They learn patterns of behaviour from those in their environment (Khan, 2008). Social learning theorists posit that these patterns of behaviour evolve from intergenerational relationships (Kubeka, 2008). Apartheid is a legacy that traumatically etched an indelible mark on the psyche of the people of South Africa (Mampane et al., 2014). This legacy of intergenerational trauma has not been dealt with in an appropriate way (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001), which is evident in the overt violent interpersonal relationships displayed by people in South Africa, with the majority of incidence perpetrated in low SES communities (Burnett, 1998; du Plessis et al., 2015; Hallman et al., 2015; Isaacs & Savahl, 2014; Kaminer et al., 2013a; Khan et al., 2016; Kubeka, 2008; Mampane et al., 2014; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013; Parkes, 2007a; Parkes, 2007b; Petersen et al., 2005; Ramphela, 1997; Savahl et al., 2013; Shields et al., 2008; Shields et al., 2009; Swartz & Scott, 2014). Youth and adolescents are not only exposed to and experience violence but also

become the perpetrators of violence through learnt behaviours (Bulhan, 1985; Ramphela, 1997). Through the process of learnt violent behaviour, the cycle is perpetuated and strengthened. To break the cycle of violence, a multifaceted comprehensive approach is paramount.

## **7 Conclusion, limitations, and recommendations**

As much as previous studies sought to elucidate adolescents' perceptions of violence, this current review contributes to the literature by focusing on the cause and effect of post-apartheid violence through the perceptions and perspectives of adolescents and young adults. Through understanding the cause and effect of intergenerational violence, insight can be gained into patterns of behaviour of adolescents as well as employing remedial action needed to ameliorate the patent challenges. The findings of this study have the potential to benefit society in that it could assist with reforming social policies that relate to youth and adolescents, and how these policies are enacted. It could afford more security to youth and adolescents in the implementation of such policies that would have a direct effect on their protection from the deleterious outcomes of violence that is pervasive in many societies.

Although 60% of the studies that met the inclusion criteria for this review were conducted in the last decade, marking a shift in focus on youth and adolescents' perceptions from an adult-centred approach to a more youth and adolescent centred one, few studies have asked children directly about their perceived experience of violence.

### **7.1. Limitations**

While every effort was taken to reduce potential bias and limitations of the current review, through the use of best practice for systematic reviews, it is important to note the following challenges. Foremost, given the varying terminology that is used in the literature, and aligned to particular disciplines, the use of numerous keyword strings used to identify relevant empirical studies was required. Additionally, only English-language studies and those peer-reviewed publications were considered. This means that grey literature, and commissioned reports were excluded, which may miss an important component of the literature that has not been formally published in journal articles or edited books. Notwithstanding the possible bias from institutional database access and retrieval of relevant articles, any articles that were not accessible through the university-database subscriptions, was accessible through Google Scholar or other academic platforms such as ResearchGate. Although the systematic review

process is a human- and resource-intensive activity, the rigorous and lengthy review process conducted by the student and the supervisors contributed to the quality of the review (see Mallett et al., 2012, for a detailed overview of the advantages and challenges of doing a systematic review).

## **7.2 Recommendations**

At a grassroots level, more research is needed to gain a clearer perspective on how children understand both violence in general and different forms of violence among a diverse age range of young adults. From a methodological standpoint, studies using quantitative research with nationally representative samples, and qualitative research across various SES contexts in the different provinces of South Africa are also needed. Additionally, further research is required on youth and adolescents' conceptualisations of violence, and the validation of standardised measurement instruments to evaluate various forms of violence experienced by them. Thus, an urgent need exists for further studies to explore the subjective understandings, perceptions and discursive constructions of children affected by violence. Of equal importance is the need for remedial action through educational social outreach programmes, which would contribute to a more informed understanding of the social dynamics that youth encounter. The structure and design of these social outreach programmes could consequently be adapted to assimilate the new information, thus allowing the educational process to maintain social relevance. These interventions must be inclusively actioned through a bottom-up and top-down approach, that is collaboration by civil society and local and national governmental departments working within egalitarian partnerships to attain redress. Furthermore, structured individual therapy, for example, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), and Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) can guide individuals in dealing with challenges by employing problem-specific and goal-orientated approaches. In conjunction with mental health professionals, educators and appropriately trained support staff at schools can form work groups to provide a platform for youth and adolescents to identify challenges and inclusively brainstorm ways of overcoming them.

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## Appendix A: Critical Appraisal Tool

### Adapted Appraisal Tool for Qualitative and Quantitative Studies

Review Area	Key Question	Yes/ No	Comment
<b>1. STUDY OVERVIEW</b>			
Details	Author, title, source, year		
Purpose	Aim/s of study mentioned?		
Key findings	Are key findings mentioned?		
Evaluative summary	Are strengths and weaknesses of study mentioned?		
<b>2. STUDY, SETTING, SAMPLE AND ETHICS</b>			
Type of study	Type of study mentioned?		
Study setting	Setting mentioned?		
Sample	Sample and population specified?		
	Is the sample appropriate for the study aim/s?		
<b>3. ETHICS</b>			
	Was ethics committee approval obtained?		
	Was informed consent obtained?		
	Have ethics issues been appropriately addressed?		
<b>4. DATA COLLECTION</b>			
Appropriateness of data collection method	Was data collection method appropriate for study aim/s?		
Data collection process	Is data collection process adequately described (range of questions, length of interview or administration of questionnaire)?		
Reflexivity/ validity	Is reflexivity/ validity discussed/ addressed?		
<b>5. DATA ANALYSIS</b>			
	Data analysis mentioned and adequately described?		
	Data analysis technique is appropriate for study aim/s?		
	Is adequate evidence provided to support results/findings? (raw data, iterative analysis)		

<b>6. POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Findings interpreted within context of other studies and theory?		
	Are conclusions justified given context of study?		
	Are implications for policy and practice discussed?		
	Are recommendations given for future research/ intervention?		

Source: Long et al. (2002; 2004)



**Appendix B:**

**Data extraction table**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Content: Aims and Objectives</b>	<b>Method and Data Analysis</b>	<b>Sample size and age cohort</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>
1)					
2)					
3)					



**Appendix C:  
Keyword search strings**

	1	2	3	4	5
1	youth	youth	youth	youth	youth
2	adolescents	adolescents	adolescents	adolescents	adolescents
3	perceptions	perceptions	perceptions	perceptions	perceptions
4	violence	violence	experiences	experiences	experiences
5	South Africa	South Africa	violence	violence	perspectives
6	Post-apartheid	Post-apartheid	South Africa	South Africa	violence
7		safety	post-apartheid	post-apartheid	South Africa
8			safety	safety	post-apartheid
9				crime	safety
10					crime





## Appendix D: PRISMA Statement checklist

Section/topic	#	Checklist item	Reported on page #
<b>TITLE</b>			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review, meta-analysis, or both.	7-10
<b>ABSTRACT</b>			
Structured summary	2	Provide a structured summary including, as applicable: background; objectives; data sources; study eligibility criteria, participants, and interventions; study appraisal and synthesis methods; results; limitations; conclusions and implications of key findings; systematic review registration number.	ii,1-6,7,10,11,12,13,15,48,49
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of what is already known.	6,7
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of questions being addressed with reference to participants, interventions, comparisons, outcomes, and study design (PICOS).	6,7
<b>METHODS</b>			
Protocol and registration	5	Indicate if a review protocol exists, if and where it can be accessed (e.g., Web address), and, if available, provide registration information including registration number.	PRISMA-P available on request
Eligibility criteria	6	Specify study characteristics (e.g., PICOS, length of follow-up) and report characteristics (e.g., years considered, language, publication status) used as criteria for eligibility, giving rationale.	8-10
Information sources	7	Describe all information sources (e.g., databases with dates of coverage, contact with study authors to identify additional studies) in the search and date last searched.	10,11
Search	8	Present full electronic search strategy for at least one database, including any limits used, such that it could be repeated.	10,11,63
Study selection	9	State the process for selecting studies (i.e., screening, eligibility, included in systematic review, and, if applicable, included in the meta-analysis).	11,12

Section/topic	#	Checklist item	Reported on page #
Data collection process	10	Describe method of data extraction from reports (e.g., piloted forms, independently, in duplicate) and any processes for obtaining and confirming data from investigators.	12
Data items	11	List and define all variables for which data were sought (e.g., PICOS, funding sources) and any assumptions and simplifications made.	12,13
Risk of bias in individual studies	12	Describe methods used for assessing risk of bias of individual studies (including specification of whether this was done at the study or outcome level), and how this information is to be used in any data synthesis.	12,13
Summary measures	13	State the principal summary measures (e.g., risk ratio, difference in means).	N/A
Synthesis of results	14	Describe the methods of handling data and combining results of studies, if done, including measures of consistency (e.g., $I^2$ ) for each meta-analysis.	N/A
Risk of bias across studies	15	Specify any assessment of risk of bias that may affect the cumulative evidence (e.g., publication bias, selective reporting within studies).	N/A
Additional analyses	16	Describe methods of additional analyses (e.g., sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression), if done, indicating which were pre-specified.	N/A
<b>RESULTS</b>			
Study selection	17	Give numbers of studies screened, assessed for eligibility, and included in the review, with reasons for exclusions at each stage, ideally with a flow diagram.	16,17
Study characteristics	18	For each study, present characteristics for which data were extracted (e.g., study size, PICOS, follow-up period) and provide the citations.	23,28,37
Risk of bias within studies	19	Present data on risk of bias of each study and, if available, any outcome level assessment (see item 12).	N/A
Results of individual studies	20	For all outcomes considered (benefits or harms), present, for each study: (a) simple summary data for each intervention group (b) effect estimates and confidence intervals, ideally with a forest plot.	N/A
Synthesis of results	21	Present results of each meta-synthesis done, including confidence intervals and measures of consistency.	15
Risk of bias across studies	22	Present results of any assessment of risk of bias across studies (see Item 15).	N/A
Additional analysis	23	Give results of additional analyses, if done (e.g., sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression [see Item 16]).	N/A

Section/topic	#	Checklist item	Reported on page #
<b>DISCUSSION</b>			
Summary of evidence	24	Summarize the main findings including the strength of evidence for each main outcome; consider their relevance to key groups (e.g., healthcare providers, users, and policy makers).	41-48
Limitations	25	Discuss limitations at study and outcome level (e.g., risk of bias), and at review-level (e.g., incomplete retrieval of identified research, reporting bias).	48,49
Conclusions	26	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence, and implications for future research.	48,49
<b>FUNDING</b>			
Funding	27	Describe sources of funding for the systematic review and other support (e.g., supply of data); role of funders for the systematic review.	No funding

From: Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, The PRISMA Group (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. PLoS Med 6(7): e1000097. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed1000097

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