

## SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND VIOLENCE IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

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### Abstract

There is considerable debate over the causes of violence around the world, one which goes beyond the analysis of conflict to consider the dynamics of community behavior and the importance of economic and behavioral factors. South Africa competes with Colombia, Venezuela, and a number of Central American countries for the unwelcome distinction of having among the world's highest homicide rates, and high prevalence of other forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence, are also appallingly prevalent. This article presents an analysis of data from a panel of young men in Cape Town. It provides little support for the hypothesis that unemployment is a direct cause of violence against strangers. The impact of drinking (or taking drugs) by adults in the home or by the young men themselves, living in a bad neighborhood, and immediate poverty are associated with violence against strangers, but being unemployed is not. This suggests that few young people in South Africa in the early 2000s come from backgrounds that strongly predispose them against the use of violence.

There is considerable debate over the causes of violence around the world, one which goes beyond the analysis of conflict to consider the dynamics of community behavior and the importance of economic and behavioral factors. One of the more interesting countries to study is South Africa, which competes with Colombia, Venezuela, and a number of Central American countries for the unwelcome distinction of having among the world's highest homicide rates. Other forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence, are also appallingly prevalent. Rising violence has been a major concern for privileged white South Africans, many of whom seem to view violence as a racialized reaction by young black men to the inequalities that have outlasted apartheid itself. But violence has been as much of a concern to black South Africans. Even though black South Africans, especially in urban areas, experienced high levels of violence in the past, the perception that personal security was better then has contributed to elements of nostalgia for the apartheid era.<sup>1</sup>

There are many possible causes of high and rising levels of everyday violence. Our understanding of the causes of trends in violence remains limited, however, by the paucity of good data. Ideally, we would be able to draw on two kinds of data. First, we would have data on the incidence of violence by neighborhood and over time, which would be matched to data on varying and changing socioeconomic conditions and to the efficacy of the criminal justice system. Variations over time and space would allow us to identify the conditions that drove

or permitted varying and changing levels of violence. This approach has been adopted widely in the United States, and in some countries in the global South.<sup>2</sup>

The second kind of data that would ideally be available are data on individuals collected through a panel study designed from the outset to assess how and why some young people end up with violent careers. An example is the National Youth Survey (NYS) in the U.S., which began collecting data in the late 1970s on a cohort of young people, then aged 11-17. The study has continued into the 2000s, and the participants in the panel are now middle-aged. Such studies have resulted in important findings with regard to the ages at which young people first perpetrate violence, the sequence of forms of violent behavior, and the ages at which perpetrators cease to perpetrate violence. They have also pointed to the factors and pathways that lead to serious violence, including social class, specific conditions at home and school during childhood, and more proximal predictors such as norms and peer influences.<sup>3</sup>

This article goes beyond existing studies by using two new sources of data. First, we draw on semi-structured interviews conducted in 2008 with forty-five residents living in high-violence, African neighborhoods in Cape Town, to examine local knowledge about the causes of violence. Second, we draw on data from a panel study of young people in Cape Town (the Cape Area Panel Study) to model causal pathways to violence.<sup>4</sup>

### Data sources

In the interview study, our goal was to tap into local knowledge about violence in selected neighborhoods on the eastern periphery of Cape Town (Delft and Khayelitsha). The sample comprised a random sample of residents of selected neighborhoods supplemented with additional interviews with a smaller convenience sample in the same or similar neighborhoods. The sample includes men and women, aged 21 to 54, some working, others not. We pay particular attention to interviewees' views on the involvement in violence of young men.

The second source of data is the Cape Area Panel Study (CAPS) of adolescents in Cape Town. The first wave of CAPS was conducted in 2002, when interviews were conducted with 2,140 young men (together with a slightly larger number of young women), then aged 14 to 22 years old, as well as older members of their households. The panel included many young people who had been born in rural areas and subsequently migrated to the city. In 2009, about 1,420 young men, by then aged between 20 and 29 years, were interviewed as part of the most recent, fifth, wave (together with about the same number of young women). One disadvantage of a panel study such as CAPS is that the panel shrinks over time through attrition. After five waves, CAPS has very detailed data on a panel that, due to attrition, is no longer representative of the general population of young people in Cape Town in their 20s.<sup>5</sup>

In the fifth wave, the measure of the dependent variable was participants' response to being asked whether, in the past three years, they had hit or physically assaulted each of (1) "a girlfriend, boyfriend, partner or any adult in your family," (2) a friend or neighbor, and (3) a "stranger or someone you do not know well." There was no measure of chronicity and the perpetration could have occurred at any time in the three-year period. To reduce the extent to which the perpetration of violence would be underreported, respondents completed the module about the perpetration of violence themselves without being questioned by the interviewer. In total, about one in four young men (and one in eight young women) said that they had hit someone (i.e., in any of these categories) in the previous three years. In each of the three categories, about one in eight men (and a smaller proportion of women) said that they had hit someone. These figures broadly accord with other data on the perpetration of everyday violence.

### Economic factors: Poverty and unemployment

There are many possible reasons why poverty and unemployment might lead to violence. Poverty means that young men have an incentive to commit crime, especially when poverty coexists with inequality, and crime is likely often

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to entail violence (especially against strangers, outside of the home). Unemployment means that young men have lots of free time. Unemployment probably also undermines traditional bases of masculinity, resulting in young men resorting to violence, inside as well as outside the home, as an alternative marker of their masculinity. Moreover, the unemployed, and perhaps the poor generally, might either see themselves as outsiders in society or are actually outside of the social networks that sustain norms against violence.<sup>6</sup>

When we asked our respondents in wave 5 of CAPS about the causes of violence in South Africa, almost everyone (89 percent) agreed that poverty and unemployment were important causes. Similarly, in our semi-structured interviews, interviewees frequently pointed to these economic factors and reported that violent people themselves justify their actions in terms of poverty. Poverty is widely attributed to unemployment and difficulties in securing a job. Interviewees acknowledged that the government has sought to create jobs, but there is a widespread perception that employment opportunities have actually worsened since the end of apartheid, with permanent and formal employment ever scarcer: With their prospects for employment diminished, young people are said to turn to crime as an alternative source of income. Our interviewees emphasized that while employment does reduce violence, the lack of employment does not inevitably lead to crime or violence.<sup>7</sup>

Among the CAPS panel, we find modest bivariate correlations between some measures of economic conditions and the perpetration of violence against strangers. Young men who report that their household had not had enough to eat sometime in the past month, or who had been living in poor or very poor households in 2006, were about one and a half times more likely to have hit a stranger than young men without these characteristics. But various measures of unemployment did not predict violence against strangers. Nor was there any statistically significant relationship between whether a young man had lived in a poor neighborhood in 2002 and the subsequent perpetration of violence against strangers. Even together, these conditions have little effect. A young man who

reported not having enough to eat in the past month and who had been unemployed at the time of the 4th interview (in 2006) and who had lived in 2002 in a poor or very poor neighborhood was no more likely to have hit a stranger than a young man with none of these characteristics.

These findings mean that young employed men are almost as likely as their unemployed counterparts to have assaulted a stranger. Similarly, young men who have graduated from high school are almost as likely to have hit a stranger as those who dropped out of school. They also mean that other factors are causing considerable variance within each of these categories in terms of the perpetration of violence. Evidently some forms of violence are widespread in South African society, rather than being heavily concentrated in particular economic contexts.

Economic variables explain only a small part of the variance in violence among the young men in our panel. Our best multivariate regression model, regressing violence against economic and educational variables, has an R-squared value of only 1 percent for violence against strangers (much less than the 4 percent for domestic or intimate partner violence). As many of the interviewees in our in-depth study noted, young men from economically disadvantaged backgrounds make choices: some choose to use violence; many do not.

Our findings are broadly consistent with others. For example, Patrick Burton, Lezanne Leoschut, and Angela Bonora, compared young offenders and nonoffenders. They found that offenders could not be distinguished on the basis of the poverty of their households, the education levels of their household heads, or unemployment rates in their households. They did find that offenders were less likely to have completed school than nonoffenders, which was not replicated in our comparison of perpetrators of violence against strangers compared to nonperpetrators. But their finding might be, at least in part, a consequence of arrest and conviction.<sup>8</sup>

Overall, contrary to the local knowledge of residents of high-violence neighborhoods, unemployment does not seem to be a direct cause of violence, economic conditions appear to have weak effects, and education does not deter young men from violence.

### **Social factors: Disintegration and indiscipline**

The choices that young men make about the use of violence are likely to be shaped by their social experiences. Exposure to violence or other forms of social adversity during childhood often has a lasting effect into adulthood. In the original interviews (in 2002) with young men and women in Cape Town, just under one in ten reported that they had occasionally, sometimes, or often been hit hard when they were

growing up, and one in three said that they had been pushed around. Almost one in four respondents told us that they had grown up in a household with an adult who had either a drinking problem or took street drugs. Almost one in ten reported that, when they were children, some of their kin were in jail.

In most poor and many medium-income neighborhoods, only about one-third of children live with their fathers. While some absent fathers make great efforts to play a role in their children's lives, and in some cases stepfathers or other men assume the role of a father, in many cases separation from a father results in an important gap in the life of a young person. This is in part because of the shrinkage of the extended family. At the same time as the proportion of young people growing up in nuclear-family households has declined, non-nuclear kin seem to recognize fewer obligations to each other than in the past.<sup>9</sup>

Three out of four of our CAPS respondents agreed that a lack of respect and discipline was an important cause of violence. We have no measures for "discipline" or "respect," but we have asked young people about aspects of their home environment during childhood (see above). We find a weak statistical relationship between reported exposure to violence during childhood (as reported in 2002) and the perpetration of violence in early adulthood against strangers (as reported in wave 5, in 2009).

Paternal absence during childhood clearly matters. A young man who spent little of his childhood living with his biological father was one and a half times as likely to perpetrate violence as a young man than someone who had mostly or always lived, as a child, with his father. The time that a boy spent living with his mother had no such effect.

Exposure during childhood to drinking and drug-taking also correlated with violence during early adulthood. A young man who had reported (in 2002) that he had grown up in a household with someone who "was a problem drinker or alcoholic" or "used street drugs" was almost twice as likely to say (in 2009) that he had hit a stranger in the previous three years, compared to someone who had not grown up amidst drinking and drug-taking. The effect of exposure to violence during childhood was slightly weaker.

We also investigated whether marital status, parental status, or household headship affected the perpetration of violence. In bivariate analysis, neither being a household head nor being married (in 2006) had a statistically significant relationship with the perpetration of violence, and the odds ratios were close to 1.

Our findings are consistent with those of Burton, *et al.* They found, using once-off rather than panel data, that some

social factors do distinguish young offenders from nonoffenders. Young offenders were less likely to have good relationships with their fathers or mothers than nonoffenders. They were also more likely to come from households where violence was common, where parents disciplined them violently, or other household members engaged in crime, than nonoffenders. Data from the fifth wave of CAPS also show a strong relationship between whether a young man has kin who are in jail, take drugs or steal, and the perpetration of violence against strangers, but because these data are all from the fifth wave there is some uncertainty over whether the direction of causation runs solely from kin to violence. It is possible that perpetrators of violence corrupt their kin as much as vice versa.

### **Behavioral factors: Drinking and drugs**

Drinking and using drugs are widely seen as behaviors that are associated with violence, in South Africa and elsewhere. Seventy percent of CAPS respondents agreed that excessive drinking by men was an important cause of violence, lower than poverty and unemployment, and disrespect and ill-discipline, but a substantial majority. Women, and men who reported not consuming alcohol in the past month, were significantly more likely to agree that male drinking was a cause of violence. African people were more likely to agree, while white people were more likely to disagree. This racial difference may be attributable to differences in either drinking cultures or locations. White people are more likely to drink alcohol in licensed establishments with security personnel present, while African people are more likely to drink in unlicensed shebeens. Interviewees concurred that shebeens are sites of frequent violence.<sup>10</sup>

South Africa has one of the highest rates of alcohol consumption per drinker in the world, as well as some of the highest rates of hazardous drinking. When the country is broken down by province, the Western Cape emerges as having the highest rates of lifetime and previous year alcohol use and risky drinking among both males and females, although with higher rates for males for both variables.<sup>11</sup>

According to our interviewees, alcohol may increase aggression, prompting violent behavior. At shebeens, the high levels of intoxication among customers frequently lead to violence, often over small matters. Drug use was closely associated by interviewees with alcohol abuse and violence. Robbery is believed to be a means to pay for alcohol and drug habits. Like drunkenness in shebeens, the influence of drugs is also seen as leading to violence independent of other motivations. Drug and alcohol abuse is clearly a social ill associated with increased levels of violence and is an especially great problem in Cape Town, where one study found

47 percent of arrestees for violent offenses to have been under the influence of at least one drug.<sup>12</sup>

Within the CAPS panel, when interviewed in 2009, we find a strikingly bipolar distribution of alcohol consumption. Almost half of the panel (45 percent) say that they have never drunk alcohol, and another 10 percent say they last had a drink more than twelve months earlier. In contrast, more than one half of young men and more than one quarter of young women reported having consumed some alcohol in the past month. One in ten young men say they drink at least 2-3 times per week, and another 30 percent say they drink about once per week. When asked how many drinks they typically consumed on one of these drinking days, hardly any young men said “one or two.” The median consumption was 5 or 6 drinks, and as many as one-third of the young men (who said they had drunk in the past month) said that they typically drink ten or more drinks. Our panel of young men thus includes a large number of nondrinkers, some moderate drinkers, and a significant minority of heavy, binge drinkers. CAPS respondents were asked about drinking in previous interviews also, allowing us to build up a picture of our respondents’ drinking histories.

Young men who drink are approximately twice as likely to report perpetrating violence against strangers (and the odds ratios are similar for violence against girlfriends, family, friends, and neighbors). Men who drink heavily are more likely to report violence than men who drink moderately. Men who have reported drinking through successive interviews, and men who say they grew up in households where someone had a drinking problem, are more likely to report perpetrating violence. All of these measures of drinking have sizeable and statistically significant effects on violence even when included in a multivariate model. A young man who had reported drinking in successive interviews and who had been exposed to excessive drinking at home, as a child, was over five times more likely to report perpetrating violence than a young man who never reported drinking or exposure to drinking problems.

Taking drugs, or exposure to drug-taking, also correlates with violent behavior. Young men who admitted to taking drugs in the 4th wave of CAPS (in 2007) were almost twice as likely as others to report (in the 5th wave) that they had perpetrated violence during the intervening years. Being exposed to drug-taking in childhood, or having kin who take drugs now, also correlate with the perpetration of violence.

Almost all studies that probe the effects of drinking and drugs on violence in South Africa find that they matter. In Burton, *et al.*'s study, offenders reported much higher levels of alcohol and drug abuse than nonoffenders. Jewkes, *et al.* found that problem drinking correlated positively and significantly with both intimate partner rape and nonpartner rape. Abrahams,

*et al.* found that drinking (and drug use) correlated positively with intimate partner violence among working men in Cape Town. Data from urban hospitals and mortuaries show that one half of the victims of fatal injuries and three-quarters of the victims of nonfatal injuries tested positive for alcohol. These proportions were highest in Cape Town, where alcohol-related deaths and injuries peak distinctively over weekends.<sup>13</sup>

The precise relationship between drinking and violence has not been demonstrated empirically, but the accounts given by our in-depth interviewees above are likely to be accurate. A high proportion of non-domestic violence is situational in that it occurs in and around bars and shebeens. Returning drunk from bars or shebeens also exposes people to violence. Drunk men also seem more likely to be violent in or around the home.

**The relative importance of different factors in the perpetration of violence by young men**

CAPS data allow us to run a multivariate analysis to examine how different factors are related to the perpetration of different forms of violence. Following the analysis used in some South African studies of rape and intimate partner violence, Table 1 reports logistic regression results for the dependent variable taking the value one when violence against strangers by young men is reported in CAPS, and zero otherwise. The first model only considers four economic and educational variables: Whether the respondent said (in 2009) that any household member had gone without food in the past month, whether the respondent had been unemployed in 2006, whether the respondent had lived in a poor neighborhood in 2002 (i.e., at the time of the first wave of interviews for CAPS), and whether the respondent had passed matric by 2006. (To reduce uncertainty about the direction of causality, we use data for 2006 or earlier whenever possible.)<sup>14</sup>

The model shows that going without food in 2009 is highly significant in this multivariate model, with an odds ratio of 1.8. Neither unemployment nor educational attainment are significant, and coming from a bad neighborhood actually has a negative effect (an odds ratio of less than 1) when controlling

**Table 1: Predictors of violence against strangers, young men aged 20-29**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Gone without food (2009)	1.8*** (0.3)	1.7*** (0.3)	1.6*** (0.3)	1.7*** (0.3)
Unemployed in 2006	1.1 (0.2)	1.0 (0.2)	1.0 (0.2)	1.0 (0.2)
Poor neighborhood background (2002)	0.7* (0.1)	0.7* (0.1)	0.7 (0.1)	0.8 (0.2)
Passed matric by 2006	0.8 (0.1)	0.9 (0.1)	0.9 (0.2)	1.1 (0.2)
Absent father during childhood		1.3* (0.2)	1.3 (0.2)	1.3 (0.2)
Childhood home drinks or drugs		1.8*** (0.3)	1.7*** (0.3)	1.6*** (0.3)
Takes drugs (2006)			1.4* (0.4)	1.2 (0.3)
Drink moderately (various waves)			1.4 (0.3)	1.3* (0.3)
Drink heavily (various waves)			1.7*** (0.3)	1.6** (0.3)
Short-tempered or impulsive				1.8*** (0.3)
Bad kin (2009)				1.0 (0.1)
Bad neighborhood (2009)				1.4*** (0.1)
Pseudo-R-squared	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.08
Sample size (n)	1,420	1,420	1,264	1,264

*Note:* Logistic regressions, reporting odds ratios (standard errors in brackets). All variables are dummy variables. Significance: \* p<0.1; \*\*p <0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01.

for the other economic and educational variables. At only 1 percent, the R-squared value for this model is low. (An equivalent model, for domestic violence, shows somewhat larger coefficients, higher significance, and a larger R-squared.)

Adding variables for the home environment during childhood—model (2)—improves slightly on the R-squared value. Paternal absence during childhood predicts violence against strangers, even controlling for the economic and educational variables already considered. The presence of someone with a drinking or drugs problem at home during childhood was a stronger predictor of violence against strangers in later life. The economic and educational variables remain significant with the addition of these childhood environment variables. Model (3) adds variables for drinking and drug-taking in early adulthood, showing that they also predict violence against strangers. The economic variables

continue to have weak effects with respect to violence against strangers; the presence of a drinker or drug-taker during childhood continues to be significant, even controlling for similar behavior on the young man's own part later in life.

Finally, model (4) shows the conditional correlations when we add in variables for whether the young man is (self-reportedly) impulsive or short-tempered, has "bad" kin (i.e., kin who take drugs, do things that could get them into trouble with the police, or are actually in jail) and lives in a "bad" neighborhood (i.e., one in which the respondent knows personally people who sell drugs, steal, or are in jail). All of these are variables from wave 5, not from previous waves. Bad kin is not significant, but temper or impulsivity and bad neighborhood are statistically significant. The one economic variable ("gone without food"), the presence of a drinker or drug-taker in the childhood home, and heavy drinking remain significant. The R-squared for model (4) is higher, at 8 percent. Although not shown, adding dummy variables for race does not improve the models, and the relationships between race and violence are not significant.

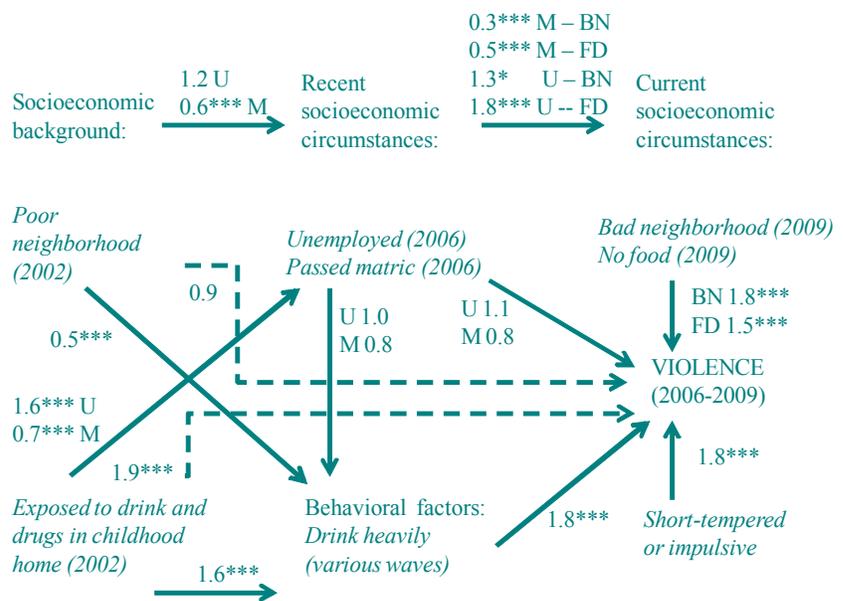
In summary, this preliminary multivariate analysis corroborates the picture from bivariate analyses: Past poverty and unemployment are not strong predictors of the perpetration of violence by young men against strangers. Drinking, both by others in the childhood home and by the young man in adolescence and early adulthood, is a predictor, and factors linked to the immediate context ("gone without food" and the neighborhood) also correlate significantly and conditionally with violence against strangers. None of these models include any variables measuring the perceived efficacy of the criminal justice system, discipline or respect, or norms and beliefs.

One problem with this kind of multivariate analysis is that the correlations are conditional on the other variables included in each model. If there are important relationships between independent variables, then the model might serve to disguise

**Table 2: Correlation matrix for independent variables**

	V	BG	CDD	U	M	DH	FD	BN	STT
V	1.00								
BG	-0.03	1.00							
CDD	0.09	-0.05	1.00						
U	0.03	0.01	0.08	1.00					
M	-0.01	0.09	-0.06	-0.06	1.00				
DH	0.10	0.14	0.10	0.03	0.02	1.00			
FD	0.05	0.31	0.03	0.10	-0.10	-0.02	1.00		
BN	0.19	0.06	0.07	0.07	-0.16	0.01	-0.01	1.00	
STT	0.12	0.04	0.04	0.02	-0.09	0.03	-0.03	0.12	1.00

Notes: V=Violence against strangers; BG=Background in poor neighborhood (2006); CDD=Childhood home drink or drugs (2002); U=Unemployed in 2006; M=Passed matric in 2006; DH=Drink heavily (various waves); FD=Gone without food (2009); BN=Bad neighborhood (2009); STT=Short-tempered or impulsive (2009).



**Figure 1: Modeling the correlates of the perpetration of violence against strangers.**  
 Note: For variable abbreviations, see Table 2.

both direct and indirect effects between any independent variable and the dependent variable. While there is no overall problem of multicollinearity with the regression models reported in Table 1, an alternative approach can more fully set out the causal pathway leading to the outcome of perpetrating violence against strangers. Table 2 shows the correlations among the variables. For most pairs, the correlation coefficients are less than 0.1.

To investigate the causal pathways involved, a series of regressions were undertaken to identify the manner in which the individual variables affect the final outcome of violence. Figure 1 reports the result of a path analysis. Odds ratios and statistical significance are reported for the relationship between each pair of independent and dependent variables, controlling for all of the previous variables in that pathway. For example: Controlling for the influence of (1) exposure to drink and drugs in the childhood home, (2) living in a poor neighborhood in 2002, (3) being unemployed in 2006, and (4) passing matric (i.e., completing secondary school) by or in 2006, drinking heavily in various waves increases the odds of perpetrating violence by 1.8 units of measurement (and is statistically significant at the 1 percent level). Codes are explained in Table 2.<sup>15</sup>

It appears that socioeconomic background has no direct effect on violence, and if there is an indirect positive effect, it is very indirect indeed, while background affects educational attainment but not unemployment. Neither educational attainment nor unemployment have direct effects on violence, but they do affect whether the young man lived (in 2009) in a bad neighborhood or in a household where someone has gone without food. Only indirectly, through the latter factors, might socioeconomic background, unemployment status in 2006, or educational attainment in 2006 have any effect on subsequent violence against strangers. Socioeconomic background does have an indirect negative effect, however. Drinking predicts violence, and socioeconomic background has a significant but negative effect on drinking. We do not know the reason for this relationship, but it is likely to be in part because heavy drinking is not easily afforded by young men in poor neighborhoods. Exposure to drinking and drug-taking in the childhood home does have strong direct effects on the perpetration of violence in later life, might have indirect effects through the young men's own drinking histories, and might also have indirect effects through recent and current socioeconomic circumstances.<sup>16</sup>

Our results do not necessarily corroborate the finding by Demombynes and Özler, using district-level data from 1996, that the relationship between income and violence in South Africa has the shape of an inverted U. Their data are national, and at the level of districts, whereas ours are limited to Cape Town, and are at the level of individual young men. But it is striking, nonetheless, that neither study finds that deep poverty is associated with most violence against strangers.<sup>17</sup>

## Conclusion

South African provides a valuable case study for the effect of economic and behavioral factors on violence. In this study of

areas around Cape Town, panel data provide little support for the hypothesis that a poor background or unemployment are direct causes of violence by young men against strangers, although immediate poverty might be. Experiencing violence during childhood does not predict perpetrating violence later in life, but growing up in a home where someone drank heavily or took drugs does predict subsequent violence. A history of drinking or taking drugs oneself also predicts violence, as does living in a bad neighborhood. Our multivariate analysis suggests that the evident effects of immediate poverty and neighborhood are unlikely to reflect the indirect effects of past economic conditions. Overall, deep-rooted social and economic factors are less important, directly or indirectly, than is commonly imagined. We are struck by the importance of behavioral factors (notably drinking and drug-taking) and the immediate context.

Our findings do not mean, however, that socioeconomic background has no importance. It might be the case that the inter-individual differences in background simply pale into insignificance in the current context of high levels of everyday violence. Almost everybody in Cape Town is growing up in an environment that is both violent and, to some extent, is normatively tolerant of violence. Good longitudinal data at the district-level would make it easier to identify the macro-determinants of violence. There is neither evidence nor reason to suspect that increased levels of violence in the 1990s can be linked to increased drinking. Rather, it is heavy drinking which explains why some people have been more violent than others in circumstances that seem to have been generally conducive to rising violence. What the micro-level data suggests is that few young people in South Africa in the early 2000s come from backgrounds that strongly predispose them against the use of violence. Across society, therefore, young men from diverse backgrounds are making similar choices about the use of violence.

These findings are constrained by the limits of our data and our sample. While the detailed longitudinal data on the lives of individual young people allow us to identify the antecedents of violence for some perpetrators, compared to non-perpetrators, we need to exercise some caution in inferring more general conclusions about the overall population. Thus our findings, while contributing to a better understanding of the drivers of violence in Cape Town, also highlight the need for further research.

## Notes

1. Appallingly prevalent: See the Conflict Crime and Violence (CCV) datasets compiled by the Department of Social Development, World Bank Group. Nostalgia for apartheid:

- Kynoch (2003).
2. United States: See, e.g., Glaeser, Sacerdote, and Scheinkman (1996). Global South: For example, for Indonesia see Tadjoeeddin and Murshed (2007); Tadjoeeddin, Chowdhury, and Murshed (2012).
3. National Youth Survey: See <http://www.colorado.edu/ibs/NYSFS/>. Factors and pathways: Elliott (1983; 1994); Heimer (1997); Brezina, *et al.* (2004).
4. African neighborhoods: Under apartheid, individuals were classified as white, African, colored, or Indian. Even fifteen years after the end of apartheid, most neighborhoods remain racially segregated.
5. The wave 5 data used here are still subject to various quality checks. Results reported in this article are not weighted. No longer representative: Lam, *et al.* (2011).
6. Alternative marker of masculinity: Campbell (1992).
7. Poverty and unemployment: Agreement that poverty and unemployment lead to violence was stronger among respondents who said that they were poor, sometimes went without food, and faced poor opportunities. Young people who were working at the time of the interview were significantly less likely to agree with the statement, while those young people who were unemployed at the time of the interview were neither more nor less likely to agree. Not inevitably: There is no doubting the scale of the employment crisis in South Africa. Unemployment rates are particularly high among young men and women, at least in part due to their low levels of qualification. Many young people leave school, either without sitting the public examination at the end of the 12th grade or with a poor pass, and spend long periods in unemployment. In September 2007, for example, the official Labour Force Survey found that the unemployment rate (using the broad definition favored by everyone except the government) was 74 percent among 15-19 year-olds, 60 percent among 20-24 year-olds, and 43 percent among 25-29 year-olds (our calculations).
8. See Burton, *et al.* (2009).
9. Important gap: Bray, *et al.* (2010). Recognize fewer obligations: Harper and Seekings (2010).
10. Behaviors widely associated with violence: See, e.g., Elliott (1994, pp. 11-12); Otero-Lopez, *et al.* (1994); Parry, *et al.* (2004).
11. Highest rates of hazardous drinking: Peltzer and Ramlagan (2009). By province: Harker, *et al.* (2008, pp. 7-9).
12. One study: Parry, *et al.* (2004, p. 178).
13. Jewkes: Jewkes, *et al.* (2006). Abrahams: Abrahams, *et al.* (2006). Weekend peaks: Matzopoulos, Mathews, Bowman, and Myers (2007).
14. South African studies: Abrahams, *et al.* (2004; 2006); Jewkes, *et al.* (2006).
15. For further detail, see Seekings and Thaler (2010).

16. Figure 1: Detailed results are available from the authors on request.

17. Demombynes and Özler (2005).

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