CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING MALE INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY INTO THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR INVESTIGATING RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS TO MALE INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

RESEARCH REPORT
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .............................................................................................................. i

GLOSSARY ........................................................................................................................................ xiii

CHAPTER ONE .................................................................................................................................. 1
INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................... 1
  1.1 VIOLENT CRIME IN SOUTH AFRICA .................................................................................. 1
  1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES ................................................................................................. 3
  1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ............................................................................................ 4
    1.3.1 Literature Review ...................................................................................................... 4
    1.3.2 Document Analysis ................................................................................................. 8
    1.3.3 Development of a Conceptual Framework ................................................................. 9
    1.3.4 Trustworthiness and Challenges of the Study ............................................................ 10
  1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT ............................................................................................ 10

CHAPTER TWO ............................................................................................................................... 12
LITERATURE REVIEW ON PERSPECTIVES AND THEORIES TO UNDERSTAND MALE INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE ........................................................................................................ 12
  2.1 OVERVIEW ........................................................................................................................ 12
  2.2 PERSPECTIVES AND THEORIES ..................................................................................... 12
    2.2.1 Ecological Perspective ............................................................................................. 15
    2.2.2 Public Health Approach ......................................................................................... 17
    2.2.3 Critical Perspective ............................................................................................... 19
    2.2.4 Gender Perspectives .............................................................................................. 22
    2.2.5 Cultural Perspectives ............................................................................................. 25
    2.2.6 Biological and Psychological Perspectives ............................................................. 28
    2.2.7 Sociological and Criminological Perspectives ......................................................... 30
  2.3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION ....................................................................................... 34

CHAPTER THREE .......................................................................................................................... 38
ANALYSIS OF CRIME, VIOLENCE AND INJURY LEAD PROGRAMME’S CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS ................................................................................................................... 38
  3.1 OVERVIEW ........................................................................................................................ 38
  3.2 META-THEORETICAL PARADIGMS ................................................................................ 38
  3.3 ANALYSIS OF CRIME, VIOLENCE AND INJURY LEAD PROGRAMME’S PERSPECTIVES ................................................................................................................................. 39
    3.3.1 Document Analysis ................................................................................................. 39
    3.3.2 CVI Strategic Planning Discussions ........................................................................ 46
  3.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION ....................................................................................... 51
# CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 OVERVIEW

4.2 UNDERSTANDING MALE INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE TOWARDS A RESPONSIVE CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH FRAMEWORK

4.2.1 Literature Study on Risk and Protective Factors to Male Interpersonal Violence

4.2.2 Values Underpinning the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme’s Approach to Violence

4.2.3 Public Health Approach

4.3 NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: UNDERSTANDING MALE VIOLENCE

4.3.1 Respondent: Dr Garth Stevens

4.3.2 Open Discussion

4.3.3 Panel Workshop: Developing a Conceptual Framework for Understanding Male Violence

4.4 CVI DISCUSSIONS

4.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

# CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 OVERVIEW

5.2 SUMMARY

5.2.1 Literature Review on Perspectives and Theories to Understand Male Interpersonal Violence

5.2.2 Analysis of Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme’s Conceptual Foundations

5.2.3 Developing a Conceptual Framework to Understand Male Interpersonal Violence

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# REFERENCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

# APPENDICES:

A: Participants of the National Roundtable Discussion, October 2008
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This research project focused on identifying the risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence, for the purposes of developing a firm theoretical and methodological foundation for follow-up studies aimed at developing a prevention intervention framework for males involved as victims and perpetrators in interpersonal violence in South Africa. The specific objectives of the theoretical and literature study were to (a) source information on male interpersonal violence (men as victims and perpetrators) with regards to risk and protective factors; and (b) identify perspectives and theories used for the explanation of interpersonal violence, and more specifically, male interpersonal violence.

This report focuses on the second objective noted above: To identify perspectives and theories used to understand male interpersonal violence – for the purposes of exploring the development of a conceptual framework that could assist in our understanding of violence in general, and male interpersonal violence more specifically.

The World Report on Violence and Health (Krug, Dahlberg, Merci, Zwi and Lozano, 2002, p. 5) defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation”. Types of violence include self-directed, interpersonal violence, and collective violence; and violent acts include physical, sexual, psychological, and acts involving deprivation or neglect. In this study, violence refers to interpersonal violence only, and does not including self-inflicted or collective forms of violence.

Interpersonal violence includes (a) family and intimate partner violence – that is, violence largely between family members and intimate partners, usually, though not exclusively, taking place in the home; and (b) community violence – violence between individuals who are unrelated (including youth violence, random acts of violence, rape or sexual assault by strangers, and violence in institutional settings such as schools, workplaces, prisons and nursing homes). In this project, the focus is on male interpersonal violence which refers to violence involving youth or adult males as victims and/or perpetrators of all forms of interpersonal violence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The literature study aimed to explore and guide the development of a clear focus, a relevant conceptual framework, and an appropriate research methodology for follow-up studies in the
area of male interpersonal violence. The study included a ‘broad sweep’ review of literature and documents from the baseline disciplines relevant to violence: psychology, sociology, criminology and health. The review included an initial focus on interpersonal violence more generally, followed by an examination of the more specific literature on male interpersonal violence.

As a starting point for the literature study, the researchers obtained the most recent global assessment of violence from a public health perspective (WHO Report on Violence and Health: Krug et al., 2002), followed by literature and documents from the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme (CVI) and Institute of Social and Health Sciences (ISHS, University of South Africa) written over the last decade, as well as from other relevant Medical Research Council structures. This was then followed by an electronic search using relevant keywords. It should be noted that while literature from both international and local sources were deliberately accessed, the study did not compare international and South African views on male interpersonal violence. In addition the literature reviewed was limited to the documents available through the channels referred to above. A more thorough search on literature developed within the South African context would need to be pursued to ensure that all sources in this country are accessed and analyzed.

A qualitative, thematic content analysis process was then pursued. The focus for this analysis was to identify particular perspectives and theories used by various researchers to understand why males are victims and/or perpetrators of interpersonal violence. The researchers’ initial analysis of the literature was followed by a critical analysis of the findings. This included various discussions of the CVI and ISHS staff, within the context of strategic planning workshops during 2007-2009. It also included hosting a national roundtable discussion including approximately 30 key national informants, aimed at understanding male interpersonal violence at a deeper level, drawing on relevant perspectives and worldviews from South Africa. The proceedings of this discussion (Tonsing & Lazarus, 2009) were compiled, analyzed and included as a source in the findings and recommendations emerging from this exploratory study.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Literature Review: Perspectives and Theories to Understand Male Interpersonal Violence

The main purpose of the literature review conducted was to identify the main perspectives and theories used for studies on male interpersonal violence. The process included identifying key perspectives used for understanding interpersonal violence more generally, followed by a more focused study of the male interpersonal violence literature.

Three general points were highlighted in the theoretical study. First, it was noted that many perspectives and specific theories are used to explain violence, and male interpersonal violence in particular. Second, many authors argue for the need to pursue a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of violence in general, including male interpersonal violence. Third, the need for the development of integrated frameworks to understand the complex nature of this phenomenon,
and to be able to respond comprehensively, has also been highlighted by many researchers in this area.

The review revealed that the main perspectives used to frame studies on interpersonal violence more generally include:

- Ecological perspective
- Public health approach
- Prevention and health promotion
- Critical perspective
- Gender perspectives, including feminist and masculinity theories
- Biological and psychological perspectives
- Sociological and criminology perspectives
- Cultural perspective

It is interesting to note that the frameworks and theories that were emphasized in the more focused review of male interpersonal violence literature include the following:

- Critical perspectives and theories, including social constructionism
- Gender perspectives, including feminist and masculinity theories
- Historical and cultural approaches
- Socialization and social learning theories
- Intrapsychic and biological theories
- Biopsychosocial theories

In the general literature on interpersonal violence (particularly in the psychology discipline), the ecological perspective appears to be a dominant framework for understanding and responding to violence. A number of researchers have adapted this approach by including it, in various ways, with other approaches, for example, ecological-transactional, developmental-ecological, social-ecological and cognitive-ecological approaches. These frameworks are often directly or indirectly informed by systems theory.

It is interesting to note that while the ecological perspective tends to be strongly evident in the general interpersonal violence literature, studies focusing on males tend to limit the use of this perspective – although many authors refer to it as an over-arching framework that helps to keep the different levels of the system visible (individual, relationship, community and social levels).

While many authors recognize the need to examine factors at all levels of the system, there is little evidence of theoretical frameworks that look at the dynamics between and across levels of the system. This latter aspect is crucial if we are to understand violence, including male interpersonal violence, and be able to identify how and where to place resources to prevent this violence.

This literature study found that the analyses of male interpersonal violence focus primarily on individual and relationship levels of analysis – with challenges to masculine identity being located primarily at these levels. There is therefore minimal analysis at community and societal
levels. This tendency to minimize the community and social levels in the masculinity debates has been noted by some. There is a need to examine how masculinity expresses itself or is operationalized as a risk and protective factor at the community and societal levels so that this obviously important aspect can be addressed at political and structural levels.

The public health approach generally uses the ecological levels as an overall framework of analysis. Within this approach, various key aspects of prevention are evident, with the three levels of prevention being regularly noted (primary, secondary and tertiary prevention), and with risk and protective factors also being highlighted. However, the latter aspect (protective factors) is often noted but minimally pursued.

A health promotion approach is evident in those studies focusing more specifically on protective factors. This approach is also evident in the focus on peace or safety promotion, community resilience, social assets, and social capital. Various theories relating to these concepts are used and developed in the violence literature. Despite these trends, an overt reference to the global health promotion movement (based on the Ottawa Charter, WHO, 1986), is generally not visible however.

Critical perspectives used and developed in studies of violence, and male interpersonal violence more specifically, include various contextual analyses that focus on individual-social interactions and dynamics. Some researchers (particularly from developing countries) adopt and develop post-colonialism approaches which include historical analyses that emphasize the effects of colonization. Some of the researchers who adopt a critical perspective utilize social constructionism as a particular way of viewing people, and violence more specifically. Theories relating to social identity, and, in particular, masculine identity, are often used to explain interpersonal violence.

Gender perspectives are often included in analyses of interpersonal violence because of the interpersonal dynamic relating to this form of violence, and because of the high number of males involved in this type of violence. This includes feminist and masculinity theories. It is interesting to note that masculinity as a framework and concept used to understand violence is minimally discussed in the general literature on violence, or even interpersonal violence, accessed in this study, yet this constitutes a dominant perspective in articles and studies focusing on males. In many of the studies accessed in this research, most of the risk factors are related, in one way or another, to masculine identity issues.

Although gender perspectives are clearly evident in studies focusing on male interpersonal violence, it is not clear, from this limited study, whether a framework that crosses over and between (women-centered) feminist frameworks and (male-centered) masculinity frameworks has been developed – that is, a feminist masculinity framework. This is an important consideration, particularly in the face of backlash politics. The need to bring women and men together around these issues is highlighted by many.

Some authors make use of cultural perspectives, drawing on various relevant theories to help them obtain a culturally sensitive and relevant approach to understanding violence in general, and male interpersonal violence in particular. The reference to culture in this context relates to
two main aspects: (a) cultural theories that relate to the development of a subculture of violence, and/or (b) ‘traditional’ or indigenous cultural factors relating to specific ethnic or local community contexts. It is interesting to note that most of the literature utilizing or referring to a ‘traditional’ cultural approach was accessed through the more specific focus on male interpersonal violence. This was less evident in the general violence and interpersonal violence literature.

Although ‘traditional’ cultural factors are highlighted in the risk assessments of violence in general, and male interpersonal violence in particular, it is interesting to note that the perspectives and specific theories that are used to explain these factors are predominantly from mainstream ‘western’ disciplines. There is very little evidence in the literature that indigenous, local and/or community-embedded understandings and frameworks are being drawn in to transform our understandings, and responses to violence, in general, and male interpersonal violence in particular.

Also very prevalent in the literature on interpersonal violence are individualist psychological perspectives and theories. This includes a common use of social learning theory, and developmental and life-course theories that locate the risks, and sometimes protective factors, within people’s lifespan stages. The latter is mostly used in studies that focus on youth violence. Psycho-analytic and psychodynamic theories are also used, particularly in relation to the individual level risk factors. Studies that focus on the individual level also tend to include various psycho-biological and other intra-individual theories, particularly in relation to identifying pathological typologies of perpetrators. Some argue for a biopsychosocial approach. This latter aspect is an interesting development, where evolutionary and other biological factors are often the focus in explanations of males as victims and perpetrators of violence.

Psychological theories used in the male interpersonal violence focused literature include a strong focus on social learning and socialization theories. This includes a major focus on intergenerational transmission or cycling of violence, generally within the family-of-origin. However, there is little connection made between the latter family dynamic and broader societal historical colonization and trauma.

And finally, perspectives emerging primarily from the sociology and criminology literature bases include: Group relations theories, social conflict theory, exchange theory, resource theory, theory of urban inequality, social disorganization theory, social capital, and cultural/sub-culture theories. Social disorganization theories are used by many theorists when trying to understand violence. Directly linked to this framework is the concept of social capital, and other theories and concepts, for example, sense of community, social support, social cohesion, and community resilience. One particular use of the social capital framework that was identified in this study because of the focus of one of the expected follow-up studies, was that of spiritual capital or religious assets, which could act as a set of protective factors in violence prevention interventions.
Analysis of Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme’s Conceptual Foundations

The findings of the *document analysis* of CVI (and ISHS) articles, chapters and documents was presented under the following key headings: (a) a commitment to multi-disciplinarity and intersectoral collaboration, (b) multi-vocality: a commitment to inclusion and mainstreaming of indigenous knowledges and voices, (c) a ‘person-in-context’ approach, (d) a public health approach, (e) a critical perspective, and (f) the CVI’s approach to research.

The analysis of the relevant CVI documents revealed a clear commitment to and operationalization of a multi- and inter-disciplinary approach to understanding violence, and a comprehensive approach to violence prevention and safety promotion. The commitment to multi-disciplinary work, and intersectoral collaboration, relates directly to a commitment to multi-vocality – the recognition and utilization of various voices in attempting to understand and respond to social challenges. The need to draw on and mainstream indigenous and community-embedded voices and knowledges is emphasized within this general commitment. The role of religion and spirituality - and the need to transform the science-religion separation - is highlighted in a number of CVI sources. This includes identifying and drawing on religious assets and spiritual capital as protective factors in violence prevention programmes.

The need for a multi-dimensional and multi-level approach to understand and respond to violence relates to a view of violence that highlights the need for perspectives and theories that provide explanations that locate persons in their complex systems. This is in line with a community psychology approach which informs the work of the CVI. This is also congruent with the ecological perspective which overtly focuses on individual, relationship, community and societal factors.

The public health approach guides the work of the CVI. This includes a strong focus on identifying risk and protective factors relating to violence. Prevention and health promotion approaches also underpin the work of the CVI, with primary prevention and safety promotion being key areas of focus. The concept of community resilience has also emerged as a major focus, reflecting a ‘strengths’ approach in the work of the CVI. In line with other global trends, the public health approach has been adapted to include other approaches, resulting in various integrated frameworks to understand and respond to violence. In general, the public health approach has been linked to developmental and/or critical approaches within the CVI.

The CVI’s approach to understanding and responding to violence reflects a strong critical perspective. Key characteristics of this approach as it has developed in the CVI include: acting as a change agent to transform South Africa; utilizing a historical and contextual approach that attempts to understand ‘persons-in-context’; focusing on various issues of power and oppression, with a particular emphasis on racial dynamics, and feminist and masculinity within a gender perspective; inclusion of analyses of colonialism, particularly within the South African context; engaging with and mainstreaming marginalized voices, including indigenous and community-embedded knowledges; and adoption of a human rights perspective.

Key characteristics of the research conducted in the CVI reflect a commitment to ‘data to action’ which includes the principles of contributing to prevention of crime, violence and injury through
research that focuses on some form of social action or change, and where data is translated for social utilization purposes; disciplinary, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological diversity and pluralism, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods as appropriate; incorporating and mainstreaming indigenous knowledge systems within a commitment to facilitating multi-vocality, within a bricolage approach that utilizes various disciplines and perspectives; a commitment to collaboration with and participation of all relevant stakeholders and role players; researcher self-reflection within an acknowledgement of the politics of knowledge (reflexivity); and a commitment to conducting open and critical scientific investigations. All of these characteristics are congruent with the critical lens that guides the work of the CVI.

During a workshop presentation and discussion within a CVI/ISHS strategic planning meeting in September 2007, it was proposed that a Critical Public Health approach be explored as an overarching framework for the work of the CVI. This includes examining exactly how the public health approach and critical lens link to one another. It was also noted that an exploration of how a critical lens would impact on the various projects of the CVI needs to be pursued by all concerned. The need for a ‘gender lens’, including both feminist and masculinity theories, when focusing on male interpersonal violence, was also accepted. The concept of culture was also discussed. Although there is a nervousness relating to talking about culture given the way in which this concept was used to develop and maintain apartheid, it was agreed that issues relating to indigenous knowledges and culture need to be engaged in a sophisticated, sensitive and critical manner.

With regard to the concept and framework of health promotion, it was suggested that the CVI critically engage with the global health promotion debates. The need to explore how the CVI’s focus on safety promotion links to the international and national health promotion movement was also recognized.

Two further key areas of focus for the CVI were identified at this workshop. First, the rhetorical commitment to accessing, including and engaging with different disciplinary, sectoral, and philosophical worldviews and perspectives needs to be concretely pursued to ensure that marginalized knowledges and voices are heard and utilized. And, second, the need for a deeper analysis of the risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence was highlighted. This includes drawing on a dynamic ecological approach that takes the systems-thinking principle of interdependence seriously when considering relationships between factors at different ecological levels. It also means drawing on a critical perspective, including a gender perspective that uses both feminist and masculinity theories, to perform an analysis of power dynamics relevant to male interpersonal violence. Within this context, the issue of social identity as it relates to men in our society needs to have a central place, but it needs an analysis that highlights the community and societal factors that place men at risk for violence.

The strategic planning workshop held in August 2009, which included a discussion on the focus of the CVI and ISHS’s work, supported many of the points highlighted above. In particular, the critical perspective was emphasized as being a distinguishing feature of the work of this organization. The organisation’s emphasis on a ‘strengths’ approach was also highlighted, with safety and peace promotion being recognized as a growing focus in the work on crime, violence
and injury. This meeting took this discussion further, identifying how this perspective impacts on
the main areas of work of the organization. This included looking at the implications for
magnitude, determinants, and interventions in the research conducted.

Developing a Conceptual Framework to Understand Male Interpersonal Violence

This chapter focuses on the ongoing development of conceptual framework to understand crime,
vilence and injury, and male interpersonal violence more specifically. A paper (Ratele, Lazarus,
Suffla & Van Niekerk, 2008) was presented at a national roundtable discussion on
‘Understanding Male Interpersonal Violence’, held by the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead
Programme at the Medical Research Council on 2 and 3 October 2008. The purpose of the
national roundtable discussion was to deepen our collective understanding of violence in South
Africa, and more specifically, the role of males as victims and perpetrators within this context. A
small number of experts, champions and specialists from relevant government and non-
government research agencies, community organizations, universities, as well as individuals,
were invited.

The main aims of the paper by Ratele et al. (2008) were to: (a) enlarge on some key points
emerging from the literature study on male interpersonal violence (Lazarus, Tonsing, Ratele &
Van Niekerk, 2009); (b) develop a conceptual foundation towards understanding and preventing
male interpersonal violence in South Africa, responsive to local manifestations and dynamics of
the problem, and informed by both the public health approach and social science perspectives;
and (c) provide a basis for follow-up studies and prevention interventions focusing on the
involvement of males as victims and perpetrators in interpersonal violence in South Africa and
beyond.

The presentation covered the following areas: (a) aims and background; (b) summary of the
literature study on risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence; (c) values
underpinning the CVI’s approach to violence; (d) an overview of the public health approach; and
(e) bringing together disparate theories in developing a locally responsive, social science-
informed Critical Public Health framework on male interpersonal violence.

The developing conceptual framework discussed in this chapter represents an attempt to engage
in violence prevention work in a way that accommodates varied scientific philosophies,
theoretical diversity, methodological pluralism, and interdisciplinarity. It allows for the
conscious co-existence of varying ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies in the
prevention of violence. It also allows for evidence-led interventions to be structured across
micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of the system (using the four levels of the ecological
perspective), with both universal and specified populations and environments, at the primary,
secondary and tertiary levels of prevention.

The critical perspective was emphasized in the development of the Critical Public Health
approach. A key element of this approach is the conscious introduction of alternative and
complimentary perspectives of science. Furthermore, what the authors of this paper attempted to
do was to show that violence must be addressed at a macro-level as well as at the levels of
individuals, families and communities, allowing for the possibility of moving beyond the restrictive definitions of violence that are situation- and event-specific, to include political and ideological components that help to contextualize this phenomenon. It was argued that this form of interdisciplinarity is imperative to comprehensively understand the complex nature of violence that is located within the subjective, cultural, ideological, material and historical realms that help to constitution social realities.

The *national roundtable discussion* then focused on debates about theoretical explanations for understanding and responding to male interpersonal violence. After the CVI presentation by Ratele *et al.* (2008), Dr Garth Stevens, from the Department of Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand, provided a useful response. Stevens clarified the three central aspects of the CVI’s developing framework: the public health approach, the ecological perspective, and criticality. He suggested that these models should be revisited separately, before attempting an integration. He pointed out that the public health approach is a “how to” tool, rather than a theory, while the ecological perspective is very inclusive societally, but perhaps not detailed enough in its explanations of the different levels and their interactions. Incorporating the ‘critical lenses’, said Stevens, was the most difficult aspect of developing this framework, because the dynamics involved are less tangible. Stevens finally presented an alternative, integrated critical public health framework, with the graphic representation resembled a spider web. This model included different levels of the system, the different social circumstances in which violence can occur, as well as different ‘critical lenses’ or themes. Stevens’ presentation was very helpful in further developing participants’ understandings of the complexity of the task at hand.

During the open discussion that followed the two presentations, the following topics emerged as important. First, the definition of the concept critical was briefly debated. This was followed by a critique of the term capital in this type of work. The value of theorizing was then debated. One participant posed the question, “Do these attempts at theorizing really help us?” This was discussed, particularly with the focus on what is practical, and on the origins of any theoretical endeavours. Finally, it was reiterated that whatever theory is developed, we have to ensure that it is translated into practical solutions, and that theory and practice should not be seen as mutually exclusive. Several participants emphasized the importance of including community voices in violence research, theorizing and the development of prevention interventions.

The last part of the national roundtable comprised a panel workshop, during which a small number of participants was asked to come up with ideas that may assist in developing a conceptual framework for understanding male violence. The concepts that emerged from this part of the discussion included:

*Interpersonal space:* This concept was related to theory of conflict resolution and the need to redefine the way men are allowed to enter others’ spaces. It was stated that violence occurs when the perpetrator sees someone else’s space as his space.

*Power:* Power is linked to relational and spatial issues, as well as to a sense of entitlement with regards to women.

*Entitlement:* Men feel entitled, just because they are men. This links to the concept of masculinity.
Masculinity: There is a need to redefine what it means to be a male and what it means to be in relationships as a male. There is a pressure to adhere to what is often harmful forms of masculinity, especially when it is culturally prescribed or when culture is collectively misinterpreted.

Developmental pathways: In this discussion, this concept referred especially to the neurological development of small children. It was stated that research has shown that when small children are brutalized, their neurological pathways and emotional makeup are permanently altered.

Structural and ideological pathways: It was pointed out that, as a boy develops, there is a systematic accrual of structural and ideological teachings about what a ‘man’ should be like. These entrenched teachings automatically lead to an unrealistic sense of male entitlement.

Historical trauma: One participant carried over the notion of the developmental pathway and brutalization to the effects of colonization in South Africa, and the ‘brutalized Nation’.

In summary, the roundtable event facilitated a sense of collective engagement with this very pressing social problem. This collective engagement has hopefully brought a feeling of unity in our efforts to understand and curb the violence that is ravaging South Africa, and promises to encourage collaborative and increased efforts to research conducted in the area of male interpersonal violence, and to develop effective prevention interventions.

Finally, during a staff workshop, held in July 2009, further responses from the CVI staff to the Ratele et al. (2008) paper were provided. These responses supported many of the comments already received from the national roundtable, as well as other reviewers. Specific aspects that were highlighted during this conversation included an emphasis on the need for more clarity on various aspects of the proposed framework; the need for clearer rationales, and critiques, of all components of the framework (in particular, the use of a public health approach, an ecological perspective, and a critical lens); an exploration of how these lenses and approaches impact on the various projects within the CVI; and the need for caution, and courage, in the development of an integrated framework that will hopefully assist in understanding the crime, violence and injury challenges in this context.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proposed from this exploratory study and process:

Recommendation 1: The Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme’s (CVI) focus on the development of a responsive critical public health approach to understanding violence is an important initiative. There is a need and a place for integrated frameworks that intentionally bring together a systemic, multi-level approach with a critical analysis of power dynamics that cut across the levels. The key principles and characteristics of this framework needs to inform the development of more specific perspectives and theories to guide both understandings and interventions relating to violence.
Recommendation 2: An important challenge facing the CVI in its further development of this framework is to find out how best to integrate these different perspectives and approaches so that they complement rather than contradict one another, and so that they develop ‘something more’ than a loose mix of approaches. Within this challenge, it is important that further development of the conceptual framework avoid the need to ‘tie up all the threads’ in an integrated frame in a way that denies real contradictions where they exist, and the need for distinctive thrusts where needed. And, while the complexity of the problems being confronted is acknowledged, the framework developed needs to be ‘simple’ and accessible in its presentation and utilization.

Recommendation 3: With regard to strategies for addressing violence, the links between violence prevention, and safety and peace promotion, need to be examined, within the context of debates in health promotion. The shift in perspective from a primarily medical-oriented prevention approach to a salutogenic, health- or wellbeing-oriented approach needs to be considered in the development of frameworks and theories in this area.

Recommendation 4: Both feminist and masculinity research and theories, used by many of the authors and researchers focusing on male interpersonal violence, should be examined and appropriately utilized in the development of a more specific conceptual framework for male interpersonal violence. While masculinity may be a major focus in studies focusing on male violence, the long history of feminist theories and studies, in and outside of South Africa, need to be consulted. And, while it is useful to disaggregate these different traditions, it would be useful to see how masculinity and feminist theories ‘work together’ to understand violence involving males, and to point to strategies for violence prevention.

Recommendation 5: A major challenge with masculinity theory is to determine how risk and protective factors relate to masculinity theory, and how social identity and ideologies of masculinity express themselves at community and societal levels.

Recommendation 6: The ecological perspective, linked directly to systems thinking, is an important aspect of the framing our understanding of male interpersonal violence. In addition to directing one’s focus to the different levels of the system, a systems perspective also facilitates a ‘no-blame’ approach which is often needed to break through the barriers created by the ‘backlash’ phenomenon in gender debates. The cyclic nature of the dynamics in gender relations, and in the cycle of violence, is important to highlight, and further understand.

Recommendation 7: The critical nature of this developing framework is important to uphold. In particular, the ongoing focus on power dynamics, particularly as they relate to all forms of oppression of persons and communities, is crucial, especially within the South African context. This includes continuing to address the effects of historical colonization, and the ongoing effects of this, particularly through inter-generational historical trauma. The critical aspect is also an important element for the male interpersonal violence project because of the central place of power dynamics and role inequalities in the development of risk factors to male interpersonal violence.

Recommendation 8: A further challenge relates to looking at how one can bring the necessary different voices, disciplines, worldviews and perspectives ‘around the table’ in order to ensure a
multi-level analysis and response – in a culturally and philosophically sensitive way. Community voices, including indigenous and other forms of marginalized voices, should be included in research conducted to understand why men are so at risk of being involved in violence. This could be pursued as a particular focus and as a principle guiding such research.

Recommendation 9: Another challenge relates to the need for a critical, sensitive, open, and assertive engagement around the question of how culture and cultural frameworks relate to the understanding of and responding to the many violence challenges. In particular, this refers to the need to examine the power dynamics within the cultural debates. This is not a new debate or challenge, but there has been a tendency on the part of critical psychologists and others to exclude culture arguments because they often gloss over the power dynamics that result in the oppression of various groups of people, particularly women.

Recommendation 10: There is a need to examine and include relevant approaches and theories that aid in understanding the protective factors more. This includes exploring whether and how the social capital (including spiritual and cultural capital) framework can be used and further developed, and how the current focus of the CVI on community resilience can be further developed.

Recommendation 11: In addition to deepening our understanding of male interpersonal violence through theory development, there is a need for empirical research to test existing theories and contribute to understandings of this phenomenon. This is particularly important in South Africa where minimal work has been conducted in this area.

Many of these recommendations are already being pursued through a number of projects within the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme.
GLOSSARY

Community resilience

Ahmed, Seedat, Van Niekerk and Bulbulia (2004, p. 2) refer to the concept of community resilience, which they say: “includes those features of a community that in general promote the safety of its residents, that serves to protect residents against injury and violence risks, and which allows residents to bounce back after exposure to general adversity and injury risks”.

Health promotion

According to the Ottawa Charter (WHO, 1986) and the WHO’s Health Promotion Glossary (Nutbeam, 1998): “Health Promotion is a process of enabling people to increase control over and improve their health”. It is about: “helping people to gain and maintain good health through promoting a combination of educational and environmental supports which influence people’s actions and living conditions”. The Ottawa Charter (WHO, 1986) outlines five priority action areas for health promotion action: (a) Building healthy public policies, (b) creating supportive environments, (c) developing personal skills, (d) strengthening community action, and (e) re-orienting health services. The Ottawa Charter also includes three process methodologies or strategies through which to promote the health of individuals and communities: advocacy, enablement and mediation.

Historical Trauma

Duran and Duran (1995) have developed a hybrid approach to psychological and public health practice, focusing particularly on the phenomenon of historical trauma in the Native American context. They argue that it is important to understand the colonial history, particularly the ‘colonization of the life world’ of people in or from colonized contexts, and the severe spiritual and psychological injury (the soul wound) and intergenerational trauma that has occurred as a result. “The notion of soul wound is one which is at the core of much of the suffering that indigenous peoples have undergone for several centuries” (Duran & Duran, 1995, p. 24). This concept is directly linked to the process of internalized oppression, which refers to internalised despair and a sense of helplessness and self-hatred, where the oppressor has been integrated and interwoven into the fabric of the family. This often results in various forms of self- and other abuse, where shame and rage is turned in on itself and others.

Interpersonal Violence

Interpersonal violence “refers to acts that involve the intentional use of physical force on another person in order to achieve some objective” (Parker, Dawes & Farr, 2004, p.23). Stevens, Seedat and Van Niekerk (2003, p. 356) refer to interpersonal violence as encompassing “violent
behaviours that occur between individuals, but are not planned by any social or political groups in which they participate”.

Krug et al. (2002, p. 6) refer to the two main elements of interpersonal violence: (a) **Family and intimate partner violence** – that is, violence largely between family members and intimate partners, usually, though not exclusively, taking place in the home; and (b) **Community violence** – violence between individuals who are unrelated, and who may or may not know each other, generally taking place outside the home. “The former group includes forms of violence such as child abuse, intimate partner violence and abuse of the elderly. The latter includes youth violence, random acts of violence, rape or sexual assault by strangers, and violence in institutional settings such as schools, workplaces, prisons and nursing homes”.

Within the broad category of interpersonal violence, both intimate and sexual violence are central. These two forms of violence are defined by Krug et al. (2002) as follows: “**Intimate partner violence** refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship. Such behaviour includes: Acts of physical aggression – such as slapping, hitting, kicking and beating; Psychological abuse – such as intimidation, constant belittling and humiliating; Forced intercourse or other forms of sexual coercion; Various controlling behaviours” (p. 89). **Sexual violence** refers to “Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work” (p. 149). This includes: rape, unwanted sexual advances or harassment, sexual abuse, forced marriage/cohabitation, denial of right to contraception, forced abortion, violent acts against integrity including genital mutilation, and forced prostitution.

According to Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman and Laubscher (2004, p. 41), **gender-based violence** refers to: “A wide range of violations against women and girls, and includes any number of behaviours that serve to undermine the physical, sexual and emotional integrity of women”. This includes: “Physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and psychological abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, entry into complainant’s residence without consent where they do not share the same residence or any other controlling or abusive behaviour towards a complainant where such conduct harms or may cause imminent harm to the safety, health or well-being of the complainant (Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998, 1998, p. 4)”.

**Male interpersonal violence**

In this study, this term is used to refer to all forms of interpersonal violence involving males as perpetrators and/or victims. This includes violence between males, and between males and females.

**Masculinity**

Good, Heppner, Hillenbrand-Gunn and Wang (1995) refer to masculinity ideology as a set of beliefs and expectations about what men should and should not do. This relates to the concept of social identity, and more specifically, the socio-cultural construction of manhood (Katz, 1995).
Whitehead (2005, p. 411) says that: “Masculinity is defined as a common denominator of men, as men, across social divisions, as opposed to existing approaches to men’s identity, as men, which employ the concept of different ‘masculinities’ being produced by men in different social positions”. In South Africa, Ratele, Fouten, Shefer, Strebel, Shabalala and Buikema (2008) refer to masculinity in the following way: “This masculine male … is the individual whom, as the colloquialism goes, women want and other men want to be. The unblushing male is the imagined type against whom any individual male is measured by others, including females”.

Prevention

The aim of prevention approaches is to prevent the occurrence of, or minimize the damage from, human problems. Within public health, three levels of prevention (primary, secondary and tertiary) are usually utilized as a framework. Krug et al. (2002, p. 15) refer to primary prevention as: “approaches that aim to prevent violence before it occurs”. Parker et al. (2004, p. 17) state that: “Primary prevention is universal and population-based (for example, training all primary school children in non-violent conflict resolution skills)”. These authors also refer to the next level of prevention, secondary prevention, as: “programmes [that] target selected groups at high-risk for violent conduct due to the nature of their proximal extra-familial social contexts or interpersonal factors (e.g. boys in dysfunctional families in high crime neighbourhoods)” (p. 17). Tertiary prevention refers to “high cost- and treatment-based, targeting clinical populations who have already sought help and who have already been diagnosed with conduct or other antisocial disorders” (p. 28).

Protective Factors

The WHO Handbook for the documentation of interpersonal violence prevention programmes (Sethi, Marais, Seedat, Nurse & Butchart, 2004, p. 11) refers to protective factors as factors, “that reduce the risk of violence or its consequences”. Protective factors are defined by Small (2000) as individual or environmental safeguards that enhance a person’s ability to resist stressful life events, risks or hazards and promote adaptation and competence.

Risk Factors

Small (2000) defines risk factors as individual or environmental markers that are related to the increased likelihood that a negative outcome will occur. Risk factors can exist both within individuals and across various levels of the environment in which they live. Relating this to violence, Stevens et al. (2003, p. 366) refer to these factors as: “factors that are shown to increase the possibility of exposure or experience of violence”. Rosenberg, Butchart, Mercy, Narasimhan, Waters, and Marshall (2006, p. 759) refer to risk factors for violence as: “conditions that increase the possibility of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence”. Finally, the WHO Handbook for the documentation of interpersonal violence prevention programmes (Sethi et al., 2004, p. 11) highlights that “Risk factor identification looks at the why of violence”. Using the ecological
model, the WHO’s World Report on Violence and Health (Krug et al., 2002) identifies risk factors at four levels: individual, relationship, community, and societal.

Social Capital

Krug et al. (2002, p. 36) state that “Social capital … refers, roughly speaking, to the rules, norms, obligations, reciprocity and trust that exist in social relations and institutions”. Harpham, Grant and Thomas (2002, p. 106) say that social capital refers: “to the degree of connectedness and the quality and quantity of social relations in a given population. One model of social capital (Bain and Hicks 1998, cited in Krishna and Shrader 2000) disaggregates this resource into two components: structural and cognitive. The structural component includes extent and intensity of associational links or activity, and the cognitive component covers perceptions of support, reciprocity, sharing and trust … what people ‘do’ and what people ‘feel’ in terms of social relations. Ahmed et al. (2004, p. 4) point out that this concept is closely linked to the concept of a sense of community, which is “defined as a ‘process in which the members interact, draw identity, social support, and make their own contributions to the common good’”.

Spiritual capital

“Spiritual capital is the effects of spiritual and religious practices, beliefs, networks and institutions that have a measurable impact on individuals, communities and societies (Templeton, www.metanexus.org, January 2007). It is a ‘linguistic union’ of the concept of capital (both human and social) and the vague but popular notion of spirituality. and religious capital.

Violence

The World Health Organization (Krug et al., 2002, p. 5) defines violence as: “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation”. The types of violence identified by Krug et al. (2002, p. 6) include: self-directed, interpersonal violence, and collective violence. Violent acts include: physical, sexual, psychological, and acts involving deprivation or neglect.

Violence prevention

Within the context of interpersonal violence specifically, the WHO (Sethi et al., 2004, p. 1) refer to violence prevention programmes as: “a series of inter-related preventive activities, interventions or projects designed to reduce the level of interpersonal violence”. The authors of this book go on to say that: “Prevention means to stop acts of interpersonal violence from occurring by intervening to eliminate or reduce the underlying risk factors and shore up protective factors, or to reduce the recurrence of further violence and its ill effects” … “Universal interventions target everyone within the population … Selective interventions target people at
enhanced risk of violence only … Indicated interventions are applied to individuals and groups that have already demonstrated violent behaviour and/or been victimized by perpetrators in an effort to reduce re-victimization and repeat offending” (Sethi et al., 2004, p. 7).
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 VIOLENT CRIME IN SOUTH AFRICA

Violence in South Africa is not a new phenomenon. Even during the Apartheid period, violent crime accounted for far more of the violence in our country than political violence did. In post-1994, the incidence of violence is still high (Suffla, Van Niekerk & Duncan, 2004).

The need to develop a deeper understanding of the risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence has been exacerbated by the need to understand the causes for South Africa’s disproportionately high rates of crime and violence (Altbeker, 2006, 2007; Pelser, 2008). South Africa has one of the highest rates of violence in the world (Altbeker, 2006, 2007), with rates of interpersonal violence that are five times higher than the global average (Suffla et al., 2004). While violence (including suicide) has been estimated to constitute 26% of all injury deaths worldwide by the World Health Organization (Krug, Dahlberg, Merci, Zwi & Lozano, 2002), it accounted for almost 50% of all injury deaths in South Africa, as recorded by the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMSS, Donson, 2008).

Figure 1.1: Proportion of injury deaths caused by violence in South Africa, and proportion of male versus female deaths due to violence (based on 2007 data from the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System) (Donson, 2008).

Non transport, 2336, 10%

Undetermined, 2646, 11%

Transport, 6749, 29%

Suicide, 2509, 11%

Violence, 9076, 39%

Male, 7933, 87%

Female, 1143, 13%
In South Africa, deaths by violence have the following characteristics, according to the latest NIMSS Report (Donson, 2008): Most violent deaths occur between 20h00 and 00h00, on Saturdays and Sundays. Seasonally, most homicides occur during December, followed by September and July. Regarding the external cause of death, sharp force objects, such as knives, followed by firearms were the leading causes of death due to violence. These findings suggest a link between recreational times and periods and violent behaviour, but also point to knives, firearms as well as alcohol consumption as significant factors in the exacerbation of violence in our country.

According to the Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC) of the South African Police Service, South Africa’s crime rates have decreased over the past few years (Institute for Security Studies, 2005). However, during the year 04/2006 to 03/2007 the crime reduction targets set by government (a reduction of 7-10% for each contact crime, per annum) have not been met for six of the eight contact crimes1 (CIAC, 2007). According to Altbeker (2007) the total number of reported murders per year has fallen by 29% between 1995/6 and 2006/7 in this country, but the number of reported robberies has risen by 38% in the same period. Furthermore, while serious crime may have decreased since 2003, it is still higher than in 1995 (Lebone, 2006; Institute for Security Studies, 2005).

Some argue that South Africa’s social crime prevention policies, its criminal justice system, and violence prevention strategies have failed (Altbeker, 2007; Pelser, 2007, 2008). Altbeker (2007) speculates that government is seemingly in denial about the country’s crime problem because it simply has no solutions, rather than because it is uninformed. However, the South African government has promised to give the entire national justice system an overhaul, intending to bring more skill into the police and more up-to-date equipment and person power to other parts of the system, including the forensic services.

Despite some evidence that the South African government may slowly be winning the fight against crime, the public does not feel safe. Perceptions of the incidence of crime, especially violent crime, have steadily risen between 1998 (25%) and 2003 (58%). Robbery and murder are much less prevalent than is perceived by the public (Burton, 2004). A study among students shows that the top three “day-to-day fears of what might happen” are: being murdered, being hijacked, and being injured in criminal violence. Even though these fears may be excessive, they are not unfounded, as murder is the number one cause of death among 15 to 21 year old males in this country (Muloongo, Kibasomba & Kariri, 2005).

Young men are the predominant victims and perpetrators of violence in South Africa, and in other contexts (Krug et al., 2002; Altbeker, 2006; Pelser, 2008; Norman, Matzopoulos, Groenwald, & Bradshaw, 2007). Violence-related injuries and deaths are significant contributors to potential and actual years of life lost for South African males (Bradshaw et al., 2003; Matzopoulos, Van Niekerk, Marais & Donson, 2002; Suffla et al., 2004). According to the latest NIMSS report, men are approximately six times more likely to be victims of homicide than women (Donson, 2008).

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1 The eight contact crimes are: murder, attempted murder, rape, assault with grievous bodily harm (GBH), common assault, indecent assault, common robbery and aggravated robbery (CIAC, 2007).
In comparison, the World Health Report on Violence and Health (Krug et al., 2002) found that globally, homicide rates among males are more than three times higher than among females, accounting for 77% of all homicides. These authors state, “Almost everywhere, youth homicide rates are substantially lower among females than among males, suggesting that being male is a strong demographic risk factor” (p. 25). Males constitute the majority of victims of violent injury (Krug et al., 2002; Parker, Dawes & Farr, 2004). Additionally, men are most often the perpetrators of abusive and life-threatening injuries, of sexual abuse of female victims (90%), and even of male victims (63-86%), in most countries (Krug et al., 2002).

These statistics reveal that there is a need to focus on males for the purposes of understanding and responding to interpersonal violence. An understanding of risk and protective factors in this regard is an essential stepping stone on the pathway to more effective preventive action. Norman et al. (2007) state that violence prevention is a priority public health issue for South Africa, and that the determinants of violence need further research to be well-understood. To-date, violence research in South Africa has predominantly focused on women’s experiences, thereby neglecting the need for the identification of risk factors to male violence perpetration and victimization (Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman & Laubscher, 2004). “It is critical that further research be done to better understand men’s use of violence against partners and to develop effective prevention strategies” (Abrahams, Jewkes, Laubscher & Hoffman, 2006, p. 263).

From research globally, Kroner (2005) concludes that the time has come to answer the ‘why’s’ in relation to violence. Policy makers want to know why violence occurs. Carlson (2005), in his article on lessons learnt over the past 20 years in violence research, stresses the need for future studies on violence to focus on males and specifically on cultural aspects in relation to violence. Internationally there is a trend towards ‘risk and protective factor analyses’ of violence (Hanson, 2005).

Finding the root to this problem, including uncovering protective factors to male interpersonal violence, will undoubtedly prove a complex task. It is for this reason that an in-depth analysis of local and international research and theory in this field is important. Research into the causes of male interpersonal violence needs to be holistic, drawing on all relevant perspectives and world views.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research project focused on identifying the risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence, for the purposes of developing a firm theoretical and methodological foundation for follow-up studies aimed at developing a prevention intervention framework for males involved as victims and perpetrators in interpersonal violence in South Africa.

The exploratory study aimed to identify and understand the risk and protective factors to interpersonal violence in youth and adult men, and to investigate theoretical and meta-theoretical approaches linked to this focus, based on an analysis of national and international literature and documents. The specific objectives of the theoretical and literature study were to (a) source
information on male interpersonal violence (men as victims and perpetrators) with regards to risk and protective factors; and (b) identify perspectives and theories used to explain interpersonal violence, and more specifically, male interpersonal violence.

This report focuses on the second objective noted above: To identify perspectives and theories used to understand male interpersonal violence – for the purposes of exploring the development of a conceptual framework that could guide research in the area of violence. This report presents the findings of the literature review conducted; an analysis of the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme’s (CVI) approach to research in the area of violence; and the initial phases of the development of a responsive and critical public health approach.

The World Report on Violence and Health (Krug et al., 2002, p. 5) defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation”. Types of violence include self-directed, interpersonal violence, and collective violence; and violent acts include physical, sexual, psychological, and acts involving deprivation or neglect. In this study, violence refers to interpersonal violence only, and does not including self-inflicted or collective forms of violence.

*Interpersonal violence* includes (a) *family and intimate partner violence* – that is, violence largely between family members and intimate partners, usually, though not exclusively, taking place in the home; and (b) *community violence* – violence between individuals who are unrelated (including youth violence, random acts of violence, rape or sexual assault by strangers, and violence in institutional settings such as schools, workplaces, prisons and nursing homes). In this project, the focus is on *male interpersonal violence* which refers to violence involving youth or adult males as victims and/or perpetrators of all forms of interpersonal violence.

### 1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research aims and objectives of the theoretical and literature study constituted the frame for the research methodology pursued. This section provides a detailed overview of the research methodology employed, including:

- Literature review
- Document analysis
- Development of a conceptual framework
- Trustworthiness and Challenges of the Study

#### 1.3.1 Literature Review

It should be noted that this study was exploratory in nature, aimed at guiding the development of a clear focus, a relevant conceptual framework, and an appropriate research methodology for
follow-up studies. The methodology demanded rigorous but creative interventions to try to find previous research conducted, and theoretical frameworks developed, within an area of research that has thus far been neglected because males are not seen as a ‘vulnerable’ group.

This study constituted a ‘broad sweep’ review of literature from the baseline disciplines relevant to violence: psychology, sociology, criminology and health. Although other disciplines such as philosophy, anthropology, political science, and religious studies, drawing from mainstream as well as marginalized indigenous and local knowledges, were considered important in this study, it was not possible to include these perspectives in the pilot study. It is important, however, that these other perspectives be consulted in follow-up studies.

It should be noted that, while the sources accessed were from inside and outside of South Africa, this study did not focus on similarities or differences between South African and international studies. Further research would need to be conducted to perform such an analysis. This includes accessing local literature beyond electronic searches which do not tap into valuable and relevant sources in this context.

The literature review conducted in this study was not a systematic review of specific literature – such as the reviews of case control trials approach used in the medical field (refer Cochrane Centre). A more systematic review could be conducted in follow-up studies, once some aspects of the focus have been more clearly defined.

The study included an initial focus on violence, and interpersonal violence more particularly, before proceeding to examine the more specific literature on male interpersonal violence. This was considered to be an essential ‘first step’ based on the belief that factors relating to male interpersonal violence are likely to be interlinked with violence more broadly, and that theories used to explain violence in broad terms have relevance to this more specific focus on males. The findings of the study suggest that this hunch was correct.

The approach and methodology used in this pilot study’s literature study complied with the approach outlined in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2005). In particular, the study aimed “at contributing towards a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that has been identified” (De Vos et al., 2005, p. 123). It complied with all the functions outlined by these authors, and pursued the same strategy as outlined in their work. With regard to sources accessed in this study, the focus was on ‘existing scholarship’ and so it focused on accessing a range of research products produced by scholars in the field. A theme or construct strategy was used to organize the material. This complies with De Vos et al.’s (2005, p. 130) argument that one needs to “know what the central issues are that one wants to address, and then to identify any subthemes relating to the main issue. These might emerge in main and subheadings”. The process described in below will reveal exactly how this was pursued in this study.

**Data Collection Strategies and Procedures**

The literature was sourced via a key word search (through: UNISA library, Cochrane Centre, Internet, and collaboration with relevant government and non-government organizations) of
national and international peer-reviewed articles and a few books, as well as grey literature (such as conference papers and proceedings).

The search strategy used followed the procedure outlined below:

1. As a starting point, the researcher conducted a detailed analysis of the most recent global assessment of violence from a public health perspective (WHO Report on Violence and Health: Krug et al., 2002).
2. The next step was to identify and access grey and published literature from staff in the Crime, Violence and Injury (CVI) Lead programme over the last decade, for the purposes of identifying this organization/programme’s conceptual and theoretical framework(s).
3. This was followed by identifying and accessing relevant literature from other relevant Medical Research Council structures.
4. With regards to the library-led search, the researchers identified the main key words in consultation with the Cochrane Collaboration. The keywords used were limited to the main keywords of males and interpersonal violence. This limited keyword search was performed because the study constituted a pilot project, and because the intention was to perform a broad sweep, without too much focus on particular aspects of the phenomenon under investigation. In this way the searches were able to show the current status of research undertaken into male interpersonal violence, without placing any major biases on the search results.
5. Keyword searches (by an UNISA librarian) were then performed for the period (1995-2007), in English language only. The engines used included: MEDLINE, PsycInfo, CSA, Sociological Abstracts, PubMed, Criminal Justice Abstracts, as well as various smaller engines, such as Social Service Abstracts and ERIC.
6. A separate perusal of the contents pages of the Journal of Interpersonal Violence (1990-2007) was also performed to select further articles that may have been missed by the keyword searches.
7. The search for grey literature was pursued by contacting academic institutions and relevant NGOs in South Africa. This process was limited by time, resulting in an incomplete accessing of South African literature on the subject.

A total of 1230 abstracts from the electronic search results were perused, and 311 of these abstracts were selected for analysis. The amount of abstracts analyzed constituted more than half of all abstracts found for the various keywords. Of 52 extra documents analyzed in full, 44 were by South African authors.

Articles were selected by one team member by perusing title and abstract. A second team member independently examined the same electronic search results in order to make the final selection more rigorous. A research assistant supported the team where necessary (e.g. with listings, database management and ordering of literature).

The two researchers assessed the abstracts and documents for inclusion in the study using the following selection criteria:
• *Definite inclusion* (*: Clear relevance to the aims of the study: identification of particular perspectives or theories used to understand the involvement of males (as victims or perpetrators. A focus on males, and *interpersonal violence*, were central to this selection.
• *Possible inclusion* (√): Apparent relevance to the study – primarily through ‘reading between the lines’.  
• *Exclusion from the study* (x): No relevance to the aims of the study.

All abstracts and readings in the first two selection categories were included in the study. In the case of uncertainty or disagreement, consensus between the two researchers was sought.

**Data Analysis Procedure**

The following coding categories were used in the analysis process.

**Table 1.1: Categories of Analysis: Initial categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perspectives and Theories to Understand Male Interpersonal Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>WHO</strong> World Report on Health and Violence: Perspectives and theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>CVI</strong>: Developing conceptual framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Specific perspectives and theories emerging from literature study (Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>themes/ sub-categories)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.2: Categories of Analysis: Emergent categories**

- Ecological perspective
- Public Health approach
- Prevention and Health Promotion
- Critical approaches
- Gender perspectives, including Masculinity
- Biological and psychological perspectives
- Sociology and Criminology perspectives
- Social disorganization, social capital and resilience
- Cultural perspectives

A qualitative, thematic content analysis process was then pursued. The specific process of reading and analyzing the literature included the following steps:
1. Development of main categories for analysis. These constituted the categories for analysis (refer Table 1.1 above) which were framed by the research aims and questions.

2. Identification of emerging categories as they emerged from the reading and analysis of the literature (refer Table 1.2 above).

3. The researcher then highlighted key points, and noted useful quotations where relevant. These were typed into a Research Report Template, with reference being made to sources at all times.

4. A data base of all sources used was developed during the process. This eventually became the Bibliography in the main Research Report.

One important aspect of the study was to conduct a critical analysis of the findings of the literature review conducted. This was initially pursued by the two researchers responsible for the exploratory study after examination of the data emerging from the content analysis. A secondary analysis of the data was then pursued through a formal review of the study findings by the full project team. The final stage of the critical analysis was to share and debate the findings of this study with the staff of the CVI/ISHS, as well as key national stakeholders through a roundtable discussion (refer section 1.3.3 below).

1.3.2 Document Analysis

In addition to the literature review discussed in some detail above, the design of this study also included a document analysis including annual reports and articles or papers written by members of the CVI/ISHS staff employed in the organization over the last decade. The purpose of the documentary analysis pursued was to identify conceptual and theoretical frameworks used by researchers, including specific principles underpinning their work.

The thematic content analysis used resulted in the following emerging categories:

Table 1.3: CVI/ISHS Document Analysis: Emergent Categories

- Multi-disciplinarity and intersectoral collaboration
- Multi-vocality: Inclusion and mainstreaming of indigenous knowledges and voices
- A person-in-context approach
- Public Health approach
- A critical perspective
- Approach to research

The analysis of the documents was written up and shared with the staff of the CVI in September 2007. After presenting a summary of findings in relation to each of the categories highlighted in Table 1.3, the researcher reflected on the CVI’s work in the context of Guba and Lincoln’s (2005) five meta-theoretical paradigms: (a) positivism, (b) post-positivism, (c) critical theories,
(d) constructivism, and (e) participatory. The researcher also highlighted various trends in research highlighted by various authors in the Denzin and Lincoln handbook on research methodology (2005). Discussion on the researcher’s presentation highlighted a number of issues and challenges, discussed in some detail in Chapter 3 in this report.

The CVI and ISHS, within a **strategic planning held in August 2009**, revisited many of the issues highlighted in previous discussions around the focus, principles, values and theoretical perspectives of the work around crime, violence and injury. The proceedings of this meeting are also included in this report (Chapter 3).

### 1.3.3 Development of a Conceptual Framework

The development of a conceptual framework to inform the work of the CVI, particularly in relation to its understanding of and response to violence in South Africa, commenced in the meeting of the staff in September 2007. During this meeting some members of the staff were asked to compile an initial working document for further development within and outside of the CVI. A paper focusing on a developing ‘responsive critical public health approach’ to understanding male violence was prepared (*Ratele, Lazarus, Suffla & Van Niekerk*, 2008). This was first presented at a national roundtable discussion on understanding male violence, held in October 2008.

The purpose of the **national roundtable discussion** on understanding the risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence was to facilitate discussion that would *deepen* our collective understanding of the violence in South Africa, and, more specifically, the role of males as victims and perpetrators within that context: by sharing, engaging with, and debating theoretical explanations as well as the key risk and protective factors identified as central in both understanding and responding to the challenges.

While the findings of the literature study on risk and protective factors, as well as theoretical frameworks used to understand male interpersonal violence, was presented as a springboard for this exploration, a key aspect of this discussion was to ensure that the people sitting around the table brought the wisdom and insights of all relevant sectors, including those voices that are generally marginalized. This included 30 key people from various disciplines, professions and organizations. The roundtable was recorded verbatim and through notes. This facilitated accurate and rich descriptions of the process and outcomes which were captured in the proceedings of the meeting (*Tonsing & Lazarus*, 2009). Details of the outcomes of this process are outlined in Chapter 4 in this report.

In addition to the above national roundtable discussion, the paper presented by Ratele et al. (2008) was reviewed and closely examined by *staff of the CVI, in July 2009*. This review highlighted a number of important points relating to the development of a conceptual framework to guide the work of the CVI. A summary of the proceedings of this event is presented in Chapter 4 of this report.
1.3.4 Trustworthiness and Challenges of the Study

The research aims and objectives, as well as the main keywords used in the literature reviews, were developed in consultation with the research team, and submitted to wider scrutiny within the MRC research ethics process. The keywords were further developed and refined with the assistance of the Cochrane Centre at the MRC. Two researchers independently analyzed all abstracts and documents accessed, for the purposes of identifying those that were considered to be relevant to the aims and objectives of this study. Although only one researcher conducted the thematic content analysis, her framework and initial findings were submitted to scrutiny within the CVI research team, and later shared with other experts in the field.

The following challenges around the literature reviewing process are noted. Ways in which these challenges were addressed in this study are also outlined.

The focus of the research, while well defined, was very broad. Given the exploratory nature of this study, this breadth was considered useful for the study, but there will be need for more focus in the follow-up studies. Part of the purpose of this study was to find out exactly where the more specific focus should be.

In order to provide a solid conceptual framework, and to locate this research appropriately within global and national developments, a rigorous systematic literature reviewing process should be pursued. However, consultation with the MRC’s Cochrane Centre highlighted that this study does not meet the requirements of the kind of systematic reviewing process pursued within the medical framework. The researchers were advised to follow a normal electronic search process, using relevant keywords and search engines relevant to the disciplines, and to access other ‘grey’ literature wherever possible.

The selection of literature and other documents to include in this kind of study constituted a validity challenge. The procedure outlined earlier in this chapter was aimed at addressing possible biases in this process. Only one researcher conducted the detailed analysis of documents identified for inclusion in the study. However, as mentioned above, her analysis was made transparent to the CVI research team in various ways. This included making the raw data available to all concerned (in a Research Report Template format); and sharing the summarized findings with the team and the wider CVI staff and Board (through powerpoint presentations and conference papers). As mentioned earlier, the findings were also shared with other relevant role players at the national roundtable discussion held in October 2008, and will be disseminated through other conference presentations and publications in scientific journals.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

This chapter provided an introduction to the exploratory study, including an overview of the methodology pursued to achieve the research aims. There are four further chapters in this report. Chapter 2 presents the findings of the literature review on male interpersonal violence, outlining perspectives and theories used to understand interpersonal violence, and male interpersonal
violence more specifically. Chapter 3 provides an analysis of the CVI’s conceptual foundations and research commitments. Chapter 4 outlines the first attempts at developing an integrated framework, which was presented at the national roundtable in October 2008, and discussed within the CVI. Chapter 5 provides an overall summary of this report, and proposes some recommendations for research, and further development of theoretical frameworks to understand and respond to violence in South Africa.

It should be noted that the presentation of the findings from this study is somewhat different from the usual summative, narrative style used in most literature reviews. This report intentionally captures the findings in such a way that the original data (quotes) are kept intact in most places. The decision to pursue this unusual reporting style was informed by the need to make the original data available for use in further studies on risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence, both within and outside of the CVI.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW ON PERSPECTIVES AND THEORIES

TO UNDERSTAND MALE INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

2.1 OVERVIEW

Key perspectives and theories emerging from an analysis of all the literature, including those articles and abstracts relating to general violence and interpersonal violence, and more specifically, male interpersonal violence, were noted in the analysis of the theoretical study. This section of the report provides an overview of some general points relating to the perspectives and theories noted, followed by identification of and a brief discussion on each of the main perspectives found.

It should be noted that this analysis of perspectives and theories is limited to the documents sourced in this particular pilot study. An extension of this study may result in different emphases, although it is likely that the same trends will emerge. It should also be noted that this analysis does not distinguish between theories used to understand men as victims, and men as perpetrators of violence. Although a comparative analysis around these aspects may reveal similarities across the victim/perpetrator divide, it is expected that certain theories have been found to be more useful and relevant to either the one or the other aspect.

In this chapter, and other chapters in this report, key references sourced in this analysis are located at the beginning of the sub-sections concerned. This is an unusual format within a literature review, but it is hoped that it will help the Reader to more easily identify and access studies and articles relevant to the particular theme concerned. Likewise, the report includes a number of quotes to support various themes identified. Once again, this is done to provide researchers interested in this field with direct access to the sources concerned.

2.2 PERSPECTIVES AND THEORIES

Terms and concepts such as approaches, perspectives, paradigms, meta-theories, theoretical frameworks, conceptual frameworks, theories, and models are often used interchangeably! In this report, an attempt is made to limit the use of these concepts, and to focus primarily on perspectives and theories used by various researchers to understand violence, and more specifically, male interpersonal violence. Where authors have used other terms to refer to these two main concepts, they have been maintained.
In this context, the term *perspective* is used to refer to ‘ways of seeing’ or ‘lenses’ which are sometimes linked to the concept of paradigms. According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006, p. 6), “Paradigms are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology”. … “Paradigms act as perspectives that provide a rationale for the research and commit the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation, and interpretation” (p. 40). Within the context of each paradigm, and sometimes across paradigms, people have developed various *theories* to understand specific aspects of violence. Where appropriate, specific theories used by researchers to explain male interpersonal violence have been highlighted.

*Many perspectives and specific theories* are utilized to explain violence, interpersonal violence, and male interpersonal violence more specifically (Krug et al., 2002; Jackson, Veneziano & Ice, 2005; Stevens, Seedat & Van Niekerk, 2003). As Jackson et al. (2005, p. 471) say: “In the past, research on violence has theoretically adopted a plethora of schemas to account for violence in general and family violence in particular”.

Many of the studies either pursue or argue for the *need to pursue a multi-disciplinary approach* to the study of violence and interpersonal violence (Krug et al., 2002; Stevens et al., 2003) for the purposes of ensuring that all four ecological levels (individual, relationship, community, and societal levels) are included. For example, Stevens et al. (2003, p. 363) highlight the need to transcend disciplinary boundaries … promote greater collaboration across disciplinary, methodological and theoretical boundaries. This is particularly critical, given the complex causal pathways and constructed meanings of violence that may necessitate the broadest possible range of health and social-scientific inputs to comprehensively prevent and control this social phenomenon.

The *need for the development of integrated frameworks* that bring different disciplines, perspectives and theories together in some way, is also argued by many (Aberle & Littlefield, 2001; Durant, 1999; Feldman & Ridley, 1995; Fondacaro & Jackson, 1999; Heise, 1998; Jackson et al., 2005; Katz, 2000; Overstreet & Mazza, 2003; Tolan, Gorman-Smith & Henry, 2003, 2006). The following quotes highlight this need:

There has been no attempt to develop convincing, integrated, comprehensive theories until recently. … In fact, most of the ad hoc explanations of violence underscore the violence seen in behavioral expressions of persons, to the relative exclusion of institutional and structural expressions of violence (Jackson et al., 2005, p. 471-2).

The underlying theme of this article is that an integrated effort, incorporating basic research and clinical innovation, individual and interational perspectives, and differing theoretical orientations and advocacy positions, holds the greatest promise for effectively reducing this problem (Feldman & Ridley, 1995, p. 317).

It is maintained that family violence is a complex social problem that must be addressed from the interdisciplinary perspective of an ecological framework that encompasses
social, contextual, environmental, and individual factors, while avoiding overly intrapersonal explanations of human behavior (Fondacaro & Jackson, 1999, p. 91).

Overstreet and Mazza (2003, p. 66) highlight the need to integrate principles from various subdisciplines in psychology (e.g., developmental psychology, school psychology, developmental psychopathology) as well as disciplines outside of psychology (e.g., sociology, public health, medicine) … The development of such a model is necessary to identify the pathways, risk, and protective factors on which prevention and intervention programs can be built.

Tolan et al. (2006, p. 557) also highlight that “There is a growing recognition of an overlap in the patterns, causes, and effective interventions across types of family violence. … an increasing awareness of the value of greater integration of theory and research across areas into a family violence approach through an ecological perspective”. And finally, Heise (1998, p. 262) also encourages the adoption of an “integrated, ecological framework for understanding the origins of gender-based violence. An ecological approach to abuse conceptualizes violence as a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in the interplay of personal, situational, and sociocultural factors”.

This literature review suggests that the main perspectives and theories used to frame studies on violence, and interpersonal violence, appear to be:

- Ecological perspective
- Public health approach
- Prevention and health promotion
- Critical perspective
- Gender perspectives, including feminist and masculinity theories
- Biological and psychological theories
- Sociological and criminology theories
- Cultural and indigenous perspectives

It is interesting to note that the perspectives and theories that were emphasized in the more focused review of male interpersonal violence literature included the following:

- Critical perspectives and theories, including social constructionism
- Gender perspectives (including feminist and masculinity theories)
- Historical and cultural approaches
- Individual/intrapsychic and biological theories
- Socialization and social learning theories

The next section of the report will provide some details on each of these.
2.2.1 Ecological Perspective

The ecological perspective is widely used in violence research and literature (Almgren, 2005; Astor, Pittner & Duncan, 1996; Barber, 2001; Casique & Furegato, 2006; Clauss-Ehlers & Levi, 2002; Chui, 2006; Flake, 2005; Fraser, 1996; Harries, 1995; Heise, 1998; Krug et al., 2002; Lauritsen, 2001; Mackenzie, 2006; Parker et al., 2004; Peacock, McClure & Agars, 2003; Oetzel & Duran, 2004; Overstreet & Mazza, 2003; Shields & Pierce, 2001; Swift & Ryan-Finn, 1995; Tolan et al., 2003; Washington, 2006; Webber, 1997; Wilcox, Augustine & Clayton, 2006; Williams, Stiffman & O’Neal, 1998).

Although the ecological perspective is also utilised to explain and study male interpersonal violence in particular, it is used to a lesser extent in this more specific field of study (Abrahams et al., 2006; Jewkes, Levin & Penn-Kekana, 2002; McMurray, Froyland, Bell & Curnow, 2000; Silverman & Williamson, 1997; Tolan, Gorman-Smith & Henry, 2003).

Given that the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Report on Violence and Health (Krug et al., 2002) is a seminal, international report that uses an ecological perspective to frame its analysis and presentation of findings, a brief overview of their explanations for how this perspective views violence is presented below. The sources used to develop the ecological perspective used in the WHO Report, include Garbarino and Crouter (1978), Bronfenbrenner (1979), Garbarino (1985), Tolan and Guerra (1994), Chaulk and King (1998), Heise (1998), Schiamberg and Gans (1999), and Carp (2000) (all cited in Krug et al., 2002).

The WHO Report on Violence and Health (Krug et al., 2002, p. 3) reports that “Recent research suggests that while biological and other individual factors explain some of the predisposition to aggression, more often these factors interact with family, community, cultural and other external factors to create a situation where violence is likely to occur”. They argue that,

The ecological framework highlights the multiple causes of violence and the interaction of risk factors operating within the family and broader community, social, cultural and economic contexts. Placed within a developmental context, the ecological model also shows how violence may be caused by different factors at different stages of life (p. 13) ... [and that] ... The interaction between individual factors and the broader social, cultural and economic contexts suggest that addressing risk factors across the various levels of the ecological model may contribute to decreases in more than one type of violence (p. 15).

Throughout the WHO Report (Krug et al., 2002), risk factors to violence are located at each of the four ecological levels: individual, relationship, community, and societal levels. Individual level factors include: biological and personal history factors (e.g. biological, demographic factors, impulsivity, low educational attainment, substance abuse, prior history of aggression/abuse). The focus is on characteristics that increase the likelihood of the individual being a victim or a perpetrator of violence.

Relationship factors refer to proximal social relationships. This includes peers, intimate partners and family members. At the community level, settings include schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods. Risk factors at the community level include: residential mobility, heterogeneity,
population density, drug trafficking, unemployment, social isolation, poverty, physical deterioration, and limited institutional supports.

The societal level risk factors refer to the larger social factors that influence rates of violence, including “those factors that create an acceptable climate for violence, those that reduce inhibitions against violence, and those that create and sustain gaps between different segments of society – or tensions between different groups or countries” (Krug et al., 2002, p. 13). Risk factors identified at this level include cultural norms, attitudes, parenting norms, gender norms (male dominance), norms relating to conflict, as well as policies.

In South Africa, this approach has been used and further developed in various ways. For example, Jewkes et al. (2002, p. 1604) refer to Heise’s (1998) ecological approach, which premises that,

Abuse results from an interplay of personal, situational and socio-cultural factors at different levels in the social environment. Heise seeks to present the factors which are predictive at each level of the social ecology. At an individual level, factors include being abused as a child or witnessing marital violence in the home, having an absent or rejecting father; at the level of the family or relationship factors include use of alcohol, male control of wealth and decision-making in the family and marital conflict; at a community level factors include poverty and unemployment, social isolation of the woman and male participation in delinquent peer associations; and at a societal level factors include male ownership of women, ideas of masculinity linked to aggression and dominance, rigid gender roles, acceptance of interpersonal violence and acceptance of physical chastisement.

Parker et al. (2004, p. 24) also refer to and use the ecological perspective, but in a slightly different way. They refer to three linked influence systems: the macro-societal system, proximal social contexts, and the behavioural system of the individual. The macro-societal system provides cultural scripts that influence the use of interpersonal violence; proximal social contexts include the primary settings of development outside the family where conflict management styles are learnt (e.g. the neighbourhood, school, or peer group); the interpersonal systems include the various contexts of development (e.g. the family), where practices and attitudes are developed; and, at the individual level, the biological and psychological make-up of the person(s) is a focus.

In the psychology literature on violence and interpersonal violence, the ecological perspective appears to be a dominant framework for understanding and responding to violence. It is interesting to note that a number of researchers have adapted this approach by including it, in various ways, with other approaches. For example, there is reference to ecological-transactional, developmental-ecological, social-ecological and cognitive-ecological approaches. The ecological perspective is often directly or indirectly informed by systems theory.

Although this perspective has gained popularity in recent years, Jewkes et al. (2002, p. 1614) raise some important concerns about the ecological approach:
One problem inherent in the ecological framework is the difficulty in scientifically conceptualizing its different levels, in particular defining and distinguishing between ‘community’ and ‘society’. Both of these notions are highly contested in social scientific literature … The factors influencing intimate partner violence are found to operate at several, or all, of them. The process of allocation to any one level is essentially arbitrary and, perhaps more importantly, conceals the impact of one factor on others in the model as well as interrelationships between factors. For example, poverty is said to be a community level factor, but in the discussion above it has been mentioned that it may impact on an individual level through its impact on male identity as experienced by an individual man, at a relationship level through its impact on conflict over resources, and at a ‘community’ level through its impact on shared ideas of successful manhood.

These authors argue for an alternative model: “Such a model needs to present it as a constellation or web of associated and mediating factors and processes which are centrally influenced by ideas about masculinity and the position of women in a society and ideas about the use of violence” (Jewkes et al., 2002, p. 1615).

2.2.2 Public Health Approach

The public health approach has been applied to understanding and addressing interpersonal violence, and usually uses the ecological perspective as a basis (Ahmed, Seedat, Van Niekerk & Bulbulia, 2004; Butchart & Kruger, 2001; Krug et al., 2002; Parker et al., 2004; Ratele & Duncan, 2003; Stevens et al., 2003; Sethi, Marais, Seedat, Nurse & Butchart, 2004). This approach overtly focuses on prevention, and often also health promotion. The latter aspect is minimally made visible or directly noted in the literature on violence however.

Krug et al. (2002) and the recent WHO Handbook on interpersonal violence (Sethi et al., 2004) state that the public health approach is interdisciplinary and science-based, drawing upon knowledge from many disciplines, including medicine, epidemiology, sociology, psychology, criminology, education and economics. These authors argue that this approach emphasizes collective action, and “cooperative efforts from such diverse sectors as health, education, social services, justice and policy are necessary to solve what are usually assumed to be purely ‘medical’ problems” (Sethi et al., 2004, p. 3).

The four key steps of the public health approach are highlighted by Krug et al. (2002, p. 4):

In moving from problem to solution, it has four key steps: (*) Uncovering as much basic knowledge as possible about all the aspects of violence – through systematically collecting data on the magnitude, scope, characteristics and consequences of violence at local, national and international levels. (*) Investigating why violence occurs – that is, conducting research to determine: the causes and correlates of violence; the factors that increase or decrease the risk for violence; the factors that might be modifiable through interventions. (*) Exploring ways to prevent violence, using the information from the above, by designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating interventions. (*)
Implementing, in a range of settings, interventions that appear promising, widely disseminating information and determining the cost-effectiveness of programmes.

The WHO Handbook on Interpersonal Violence (Sethi et al., 2004, p. 10) provides a simplified explanation of these four steps: (1) Defining the problem (uncovering the size and scope of the problem, (2) Identification of risk and protective factors (what are the causes?), (3) Development and evaluation of interventions (what works and for whom?), and (4) Implementation (widespread implementation and dissemination).

In South Africa, Parker et al. (2004, p. 27) report that South Africans have adopted a public health approach to violence. These authors argue that public health practitioners tend to conceptualize violence “in terms of determinants, risk factors, incidence and cost consequences”, and that those engaged in interpersonal violence prevention have taken a similar approach. Parker et al. highlight the importance of working at the three levels of prevention based on problem and target group: primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

The CVI Annual Report (MRC/UNISA, 2006, p. 5) also refers to the development of violence prevention in the South African context: “The Violence Prevention theme reflects a historical focus on understanding and preventing violence in the South African context … [to] improve existing epidemiological data, to assess violence risks and determinants, and to identify, develop, evaluate and disseminate practices that have the potential to prevent violence”.

The Report on the National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey conducted in 2002 (Reddy et al., 2003, p. 11) provides a useful explanation of the health promotion framework as it has been developed in the South African context:

The Health Promotion Matrix provides a basis for the various strategies and levels of impact of health promotion activities, and can be applied to any single behaviour or cluster of behaviours that place young people at increased risk of morbidity and mortality. The strategies include health education and health information, provisions and facilities, and legislation and biotechnological interventions, while the levels of impact range are the primary prevention level, the early detection level and the patient care level”.

The aforementioned report outlines a model for planning and evaluating interventions, which includes the following steps: Problem – Behaviour – Determinants – Intervention – Implementation. These are clearly very similar to the steps outlined in the Public Health approach, referred to above.

The health promotion perspective is evident in those studies focusing more specifically on protective factors relating to violence. Concepts and approaches such as peace or safety promotion, community resilience, social assets, and social capital are often used within this approach. Various theories relating to these concepts are used and developed in this literature.

While prevention science, which tends to underpin the Public Health approach, has contributed positively to addressing a variety of biopsychosocial challenges in societies, limitations of this
approach have been recognized. This includes the dominance of a medical and pathological approach to problems and challenges, including violence; a focus on the negative rather than positive aspects of a situation; and the lack of clear visions for ‘what should be in place’, captured as ‘health determinants’ in the health promotion movement.

2.2.3 Critical Perspective

Critical perspectives used and developed in the study of violence, and interpersonal violence more specifically, include various contextual analyses that focus on individual-social interactions and dynamics (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Green, 2006; Hoppers, 2001; CVI Annual Report, MRC/UNISA, 2005; Seedat, 2006a; Stevens et al., 2003). This includes a human rights perspective, and a social constructionist perspective. Some researchers (particularly from developing countries) adopt and develop a post-colonialism approach.

The following two extracts refer to the development of a critical approach within the critical health movement, and more specifically, the Critical Public Health Journal.

The Critical Public Health Journal aims “to provide critical analyses of theory and practice, reviews of literature and explorations of new ways of working. ... CPH encourages an interdisciplinary focus and features innovative analyses. It is committed to exploring and debating issues of equity and social justice; in particular, issues of sexism, racism and other forms of oppression”.

Green (2006) highlights that the critical health movement constitutes the history to this journal and its focus. Green (2006, p. 171) refers to the early debates in this movement, which included “a debate on professional power in medicine, for participative democracy and active community engagement, for action on the determinants of health, and for those in public health to act as activists … these concerns have moved to the mainstream, with public policy now espousing a very similar agenda”. Green goes on to suggest that there is now a “readiness to engage with health issues that are rooted clearly in the social environment”. Given that this is now being addressed in the mainstream of public health, Green asks: “Where is the ‘edge’, and what role, if any, is there for a critical perspective?” Green’s own response to this question is that there is “a continued vital role for those on the margins, providing an explicitly critical voice as well as support for the progressive inclusion of public health at the center. This task is not only as essential as ever but also as uncomfortable, given the dominance of an evidence-based and increasingly rationalist public policy” (p. 171). Green also argues that public policy has as yet done little to address structural inequalities. Sh/e also argues that: “Health promotion policy, community interventions or environmental change, are often less progressive than they might appear, serving to further stigmatize those they were designed to help, or to increase safety at a cost to other social goals” (p. 172).

Green (2006, p. 172) suggests the following three immediate contributions of a critical public health approach. The first is a call “for a more global and holistic vision that links injury reduction with global warming, conflict, sustaining liveable communities and health”. Second,
there is a need to advocate for “genuine participation, which takes citizens’ knowledge seriously”. And, third, there is a need for a “cultural critique”.

**Post-Colonial Theories**

The following authors describe the central features of a critical and, more specifically, post-colonial approach, linking it to the understanding and response to violence in general.

Seedat (2006a) refers to Fanon’s (1967, 1968, cited in Seedat, 2006a) concern about the intransigence of colonialism and its inherently violent nature. Fanon “framed anti-colonial violence as an emancipatory act that serves to free the oppressed from physical and psychological occupation. As an act of psychological rehabilitation, resorted to when reason and non-violence fails, anti-colonial violence supposedly creates the space for the oppressed to regain their individual, social, and collective identities” (Seedat, 2006b, p. 179). Seedat (2006b, p. 179) goes on to say: “When physical survival leads to psycho-emotive dissonance and a dehumanizing reality that locks the occupied and colonized in oppressive scripts restricting their space, time, energy, mobility, and identity (Bulhan, 1985), violence, as the last option, is seen as a liberatory force bringing relief from the fear of physical death and psychological disequilibrium (Fanon, 1967, 1968)”.

Stevens et al. (2003, p.354) also refer to Bulhan (1985) who “emphasizes the historical connections between violence, oppression and racism, and argues that a ‘situation of violence is essentially a cauldron of violence. It is brought into existence and maintained by dint of violence. This violence gradually permeates the social order to affect everyday living. In time, the violence takes on different guises and becomes less blatant and more integral to institutional as well as interpersonal reality’” Stevens et al. (2003, p. 360) also refer to Fanon (1968) and Mannoni (1962), who

adopted approaches that attempted to understand violence within the framework of colonial oppression, racism and violence. They argued that the social conditions of structural, vertical violence gave rise to the generation of intra-personal, inter-personal and collective counter-violence. Others, such as Bulhan (1985), also focused on the social factors that constrained human development and ultimately resulted in violence amongst marginalised groups within oppressive contexts beyond colonial social formations.

Stevens et al. (2003, p. 360) refer to contextual approaches which “link violence prevention interventions to political and ideological processes that are aimed at fundamental and revolutionary social transformation”. These authors argue that,

Those interested in uncovering the discourses underlying our social constructions of violence may introduce critical theory to conduct an archival and historical analysis with a view to producing alternative explanations of violence” … “This form of inter-disciplinarity is not only desirable, but imperative for a comprehensive understanding of the complex underpinnings of violence that are located within the subjective, cultural,
ideological, material and historical realms that help to constitute social realities (Stevens et al., 2003, p. 367).

Social Constructionism and Social Identity Theories

Some of the authors who adopt a critical approach utilize social constructionism as a particular way of viewing people, and violence more specifically (Cock, 2001; Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Jewkes et al., 2002; Ratele et al., 2007; Seedat, 2006a; Stevens et al., 2003). Theories relating to social identity, and, in particular, masculine identity, are often used as a framework, particularly for interpersonal violence. This is often located within a social constructionist approach.

Campbell and MacPhail (2002, p. 332), using Tajfel’s (1981) theory of social identity, refer to the concept of social identity as: “The knowledge that we belong to particular groups, together with the emotional and value significance of group members”. Campbell and MacPhail refer to how “The social identity literature emphasizes how health-related behaviours are shaped and constrained by collectively negotiated social identities” (p. 332), and, “Social identities and their associated recipes for living are collectively shaped through debate and argumentation in everyday life contexts” (p. 333). Campbell and MacPhail discuss how the role of identities links to power relations, highlighting the role gendered power relations plays in shaping youth sexuality.

Identity is said to play a key role in the processes whereby unequal power relations (such as relations between men and women) are reproduced or transformed. Identities are constructed and reconstructed within a range of structural and symbolic constraints that often place limits on the extent to which people are able to construct images of themselves that adequately reflect their potentialities and interests (Campbell and MacPhail (2002, p. 333).

Cock (2001, p. 295) also highlights the social constructionist nature of identity: “Identity is neither fixed and neither essentialist, nor completely fluid and shifting, but rather historically and socially constructed in changing processes of social interaction. Identity depends on a sense of difference that distinguishes ‘us’ from ‘them’. ... The lines of ‘difference’ imply the boundaries of identity ... A crucial related question is how difference and identity are transformed into antagonism”.

Jewkes et al. (2002, p. 1614) refer to the post-structuralist literature on identity:

Moore (1994) has argued that experience of male identity is bound up with experiences of power. Challenges to the exercise of power by men are perceived as threats to masculine identity (and vice versa). She argues that intimate partner violence occurs when male self-representations and social evaluations are threatened by the behaviour of others (their female partner), although often the threat is perceived rather than real. … An inability to maintain the fantasy of power triggers a crisis of identity and violence is a means of resolving this crisis because it acts to reconfirm the nature of powerfulness
otherwise denied. … (Violence should be seen as) a sign of struggle for the maintenance of certain fantasies of identity and power, specifically those based on ideas of male superiority over women.

Ratele et al. (2007) argue that, from a constructionist point of view, there are competing masculinities influenced by the particular context concerned. However, these authors note that research suggests that there is always an ‘unblushing male’, related to the concept of hegemonic masculinity, against which all males and male practices are measured. “This masculine male … is the individual whom, as the colloquialism goes, women want and other men want to be. The unblushing male is the imagined type against whom any individual male is measured by others, including females”. According to Ratele et al. (2007),

Masculinity (singular) can be viewed as the commonly taken attribute implicating individual male-bodied persons in gendered social relations, qualities marking a male as a man in a given society (see Hearn, 1996) … masculinity thus signals socio-cultural discursive practices, otherwise ruling conceptions of identification, while simultaneously refracting the contests around identities.

Finally, Ratele et al. (2007) argue that masculinity “reflects the continued and entrenched binarism of masculine and feminine and the imperative to prescribe all human identity and practice within such an understanding. In this way, masculinity is most importantly defined through its opposition to femininity, through the normative gender binarisms of activity versus passivity, dominance versus submission, and so on”.

2.2.4 Gender Perspectives

Gender perspectives are often included in analyses of interpersonal violence because of the male-female dynamic relating to this form of violence, and because of the high number of males involved in this type of violence. Feminist and masculinity theories are often used as a basis for understanding interpersonal violence (Abrahams et al., 2004; Anderson & Umberson, 2001; Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Brown, 2002; British Journal of Criminology, Special Issue, 1996; Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Connell, 2002; Courtenay, 1999; Derné, 2002; Franklin, 2004; Funk & Brindis, 2006; Gadd, 2002; Gilgun & McLeod, 1999; Good, Heppner, Hillenbrand-Gunn & Wang, 1995; Greig, 2000; Hall, 2002; Hearn et al., 2002a, 2002b; Hong, 2000; Jakupcak, Lisak & Roemer, 2002; Jewkes et al., 2002; Jones, 1995, 2002; Katz, 1995; Klein, 2006; Krug et al., 2002; McHugh, 2005; McNeely, Cook & Torres, 2001; Mellor, 2004; Melzer, 2002; Messerschmidt, 1999, 2000; Mills, 2000; Orme, Dominelli & Mullender, 2000; Poling, 1999; Ratele et al., 2007; Riger & Kriegstein, 2000; Schubert, Protinsky & Viers, 2002; Shoemaker, 2001; Skelton, 1996; Snider, 1998; Stevens et al., 2003; Tomsen, 2002; Walden, 2002; Weis, Centrie, Valentin-Juarbe & Fine, 2002). In this review, a distinction is not made between ‘feminist’ and ‘masculinity’ theories, although such an analysis would be useful in further studies.
It is interesting to note that masculinity as a concept used to understand violence is minimally discussed in the general literature on violence, or even interpersonal violence, accessed in this study, yet it is a dominant perspective in articles and studies focusing on males.

The British Journal of Criminology, in its Special Issue in 1996, explores the linkages between changing social relations, competing masculinities and persistent crime. The editorial (1996, p. 337) refers to the various contributions in this edition:

Sparks considers connections between masculinity and heroism in popular films. Liddle examines connections among masculinity, social order and the state in English history. Kersten observes the variability of male-dominated criminal violence across cultures in Australia, Germany and Japan. Child homicide case studies analyzed by Alder and Polk (1996) yield a diversity of violent scenarios, and complexity in masculinity and its relationship to violence. Ethnographic fieldwork in New York City by Bourgois indicate that marginalized urban men who seek refuge in the drug economy become part of a misogynist, predatory street culture that sanctions gang rape, sexual conquest, and child abandonment. Collison’s analysis of biographical narratives of a group of young male offenders suggests that drug use, drug dealing, and ‘normal’ crime are suggested as important cultural and emotive resources for crafting a powerful masculine identity on the street.

Weis et al. (2002, p. 286) explore the construction of masculinity among poor and working class Puerto Rican men, focusing on the ways in which these men are staking out their identity on the mainland, as well as the social context in which this identity construction is taking place. It is argued that an affirmation of cultural citizenship is wrapped around notions of patriarchal authority and that a screaming to be heard ‘as a man’ on the mainland exists within a context in which these men are stripped of all the costumes and accoutrements that enable ‘men to be men’.

Hong (2000, p. 269) reports that: “Scholars from the men’s studies movement have documented a clear link between socialization into stereotypical norms of hegemonic masculinity and an increased risk for experiencing violence”. Connell (2002), often cited as the key theorist on hegemonic masculinity, has written on hegemonic masculinity and violence. In his response to Jefferson and Hall, he discusses the concept of hegemonic masculinity and how it operates in the analysis of gender relations.

Hall’s presentation of patriarchal violence misses a good deal of the complexity needed for examination because Hall drastically narrows what is taken into account as men’s violence. This commentary also tackles Hall’s idea that violence is always an expression of power, the fact that Hall does not make a serious attempt to develop a gender analysis, and comments on Jefferson’s psychosocial analysis of masculinity (Connell, 2002, p. 89).

In the African context, Barker and Ricardo (2005, Executive Summary) report on their study on young men and the construction of masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa. They state that “Gender
is increasingly used as an analytical framework in program and policy development for youth in Africa … (but usually) gender refers almost exclusively to the disadvantages that women and girls face. … A gender perspective and gender mainstreaming have too often ignored the gender of men and boys”. These authors argue that,

A gendered analysis of young men must take into account the plurality of masculinities in Africa. … manhood (is) socially constructed, fluid over time and in different settings, and plural. The key requirement to attain manhood in Africa is achieving some level of financial independence, employment or income, and subsequently starting a family. Older men also have a role in holding power over younger men … Initiation practices or rites of passage are important.

These authors refer to “alternative, non-violent versions of manhood and to elements of traditional socialization in Africa that promote non-violence, and more gender-equitable attitudes on the part of young men, and to forms of socialization and social control that reduce the vulnerabilities of young men and reduce violence” (Barker & Ricardo, 2005, Executive Summary).

Within South Africa, Jewkes et al. (2002, p. 1612) refer to Bourgois’ (1996) argument that poverty and unemployment reduce the ability of men to attain certain ideals of ‘successful’ manhood, particularly those based on ideas of men as providers for the family. A consequence of this is the emergence of new ideas of masculinity, which then are attainable, but emphasise misogyny, substance use and participation in the underground economy. Violence against women is normalized as men lash out at women they can no longer patriarchally control or economically support.

These authors argue that domestic violence is strongly related to conservative ideas about the position of women, and that in “societies where women’s status is in transition, violence is ‘needed’ to enforce male authority. It may also be used in these circumstances to resolve crises of male identity which are provoked by challenges to patriarchal control (Jewkes et al, 2002, p. 612)”.

Abrahams et al. (2004, p. 344) also highlight the links between sexual violence and ideas about gender relations. They refer to “patriarchal notions of masculinity involving distinctly hierarchical gender positions and definitions of male success in terms of controlling women”. Abrahams et al. (2006, p. 261) also refer to the feminist anthropologist Henrietta Moore’s (1994) argument that challenges to male power are experienced by men as challenges to their masculine identity, and that violence is used as an expression of power in order to restore an integral sense of manliness.

It is interesting to note that quite a few of the authors in this literature refer to backlash politics (Lucashenko, 1996; Mills, 2000; Poling, 1999; Riger & Krieglstein, 2000; Walden, 2002). Riger and Krieglstein (2000, p. 631) propose

Exchange theory and the feminist ‘backlash hypothesis’ as frameworks with which to assess the impact of welfare reform on violence levels in abusive relationships. Exchange
theory suggests that if a woman leaves welfare, and obtains employment, it will increase her economic resources and decrease violence against her. The backlash hypothesis makes a different prediction: violence will increase as men attempt to compensate for women’s enhanced status or independence.

Mills (2000, p. 221), discussing school programmess for boys, argues that,

Such programs may represent either a backlash politics, which argues that schools no longer cater to the needs of boys, or a (pro)feminist politics, which contends that the creation of a more just society will entail boys acknowledging and acting to undermine their privileged positioning within existing gendered relations of power. The former politics emphasize the importance of having male teachers working with boys and suggest that many of the problems associated with boys, e.g., their behavior, can be remedied through attempts to empower boys by improving their self-esteem. … a profeminist response to these arguments is provided … It is argued here that men need to work with boys on gender issues, not because they can do this work better than women, but because they have a responsibility to challenge the existing gender order.

Some concerns about or criticisms of the masculinities perspective have been highlighted by some authors. For example, Gadd (2002, p. 61) takes issue with the assumption that “Most men consider violence against women an acceptable means of ‘accomplishing masculinity’”. Gilgun and McLeod (1999, p. 167) argue that a broader definition of hegemonic masculinity that includes a ‘benevolent’ category is called for. Greig (2000) also calls for a need to inscribe a new, nonviolent masculine identity. And finally, Hall (2002, p. 35) highlights the minimizing of power dynamics in this perspective:

The concept of hegemonic masculinity (R.W. Connell, 1987, 1995) tends to downplay political economy and class power, which suggests that it is too far removed from historical processes and material contexts to either justify the use of the term hegemony itself or explain the striking social patterns of male violence.

2.2.5 Cultural Perspectives

Some authors draw on various relevant theories to help them obtain a culturally sensitive and relevant approach to understanding violence in general, and male interpersonal violence in particular (Almgren, 2005; Baron, Kennedy & Forde, 2001; Cassidy & Stevenson, 2005; Crichton-Hill, 2001; King, 1997; Klein, 2006; Kulwicki, 2002; Macey, 1999; Moghissi & Goodman, 1999; Polk, 1999; Ratele et al., 2007; Rydstrøm, 2003; Schiele, 1998; Weis et al., 2002; Yoshihama, 2005). Most of the literature utilizing or referring to a ‘cultural’ approach was accessed through the more specific focus on male interpersonal violence. This was less evident in the general violence and interpersonal violence literature.
The reference to culture in this context relates to two main aspects: (a) Cultural theories that relate to the development of a subculture of violence, or (b) ‘traditional’ or indigenous cultural factors relating to specific ethnic or local community contexts.

Moghissi and Goodman (1999, p. 297) also refer to cultures of violence. They link this to the dislocation and gendered conflict in Iranian-Canadian communities, examining whether uprootedness is a factor that contributes to violence against women in an Iranian community in Canada.

On another front, Klein (2006, p. 53), in her/his analysis of male hierarchies in schools, argues that,

Battles for cultural capital are a significant causal factor in the spate of school shootings across the United States between 1996 and 2002. The hallmarks of normalized masculinity-hypermasculine identification, athletics, fighting, distance from homosexuality, dominant relationships with girls, socioeconomic status, and disdain for academics – do not include alternative ways to build cultural capital when young men do not fit into rigid traditional social structures. Lacking such cultural capital, the perpetrators attempted to prove their masculinity through overwhelming violence-responses that in Michel Foucault’s theoretical framework, reinforced the very power structures they seemed to want to destroy.

King (1997, p. 79) uses an Afrocentric perspective to understand violence among young African American males. King examined violence from the historical, cultural, and social vantage point of African American community. This article presents “a culturally relevant and historically valid conceptual framework for understanding intraethnic and intragender violence among young African American males. The author discusses the violent history of American society and the impact of racial discrimination and poverty on African American males”.

Still in the US context, Schiele (1998, p. 165) presents a cultural alignment framework “which is used to examine the role both cultural oppression and cultural alienation play in the lives of African American male youths. The framework assumes that African American male youth violence is a function of these males’ internalization of alien concepts of manhood that reflect the impositions of European American culture and the nefarious legacy of slavery”.

In Vietnam, Rydstrøm (2003, p. 676) argues that,

Domestic violence is tied to a field of cultural forces that consists of a patrilineal tradition of ancestor worship, assumptions about females’ versus males’ character, Confucian virtues, and a history of war. Females are expected to encourage household harmony by adjusting themselves and, in so doing, make social life smooth. Males, on the other hand, are assumed to have a so-called hot character; a male might fly into a rage and even behave violently. These local ways of constructing females and males provide conditions for considering females as a corporeal materiality that can be manipulated into the right shape by the means of (male) violence. Domestic violence in rural Vietnam, therefore, must be addressed with reference to a specific context of cultural complexity, including:
ideas of female and male characters, a tradition of patrilineal ancestor worship, Confucian virtues regarding females’ ways of enacting themselves, and their experiences of war, which completely ignore the boundaries of humans’ bodies and minds. These cultural forces, which are at play within the local community, may stimulate some men’s imaginations about the ways in which their superiority and hot character should be manifested by the means of power and violence.

In the Japanese context, Yoshihama (2005, p. 1236) refers to tactics of intimate partners in the Japanese sociocultural context. This study investigated the function and the sociocultural reinforcements of male partner violence. The analysis conceptualized partners’ violence as a spider web. The author argues that: “The Japanese patriarchal clan system and underlying ideology of male superiority fosters the maintenance of this web”.

And finally, in South Africa, Ratele et al. (2007) report that, “Emerging very powerfully in the data is the way in which cultural, ethnic, religious and even local school cultures impact on the representation of masculinity (and femininity)”. They refer to the power of cultural normative practices in silencing or amplifying certain male speak.

Much of the above relates to the concept of historical trauma which is linked to a post-colonial approach. This concept relates to the ‘colonization of the life world’ of people in or from colonized contexts, and the severe spiritual and psychological injury (the soul wound) and intergenerational trauma that has occurred as a result. “The notion of soul wound is one which is at the core of much of the suffering that indigenous peoples have undergone for several centuries” (Duran & Duran, 1995, p. 24). This concept is directly linked to the process of internalized oppression, which refers to internalized despair and a sense of helplessness and self-hatred, where the oppressor has been integrated and interwoven into the fabric of the family. This often results in various forms of self- and other abuse, where shame and rage is turned in on itself and others.

Finally, with regard to the culture of violence, Almgren (2005, p. 219) refers to the 1980s revival of cultural theories,

The most notorious of these was the theory of a subculture of violence among urban African Americans living in the ghettos of central cities. The central notion of the subculture-of-violence theory was that high rates of interpersonal violence among urban African Americans are attributed to a legacy of generations of violent oppression of African Americans by Whites, in essence creating a subculture characterized by the acceptance of violence impulses and acts of interpersonal violence as a way of life (Curtis, 1975). … At same time there was a revival of the culture-of-poverty theory. William Julius Wilson (1987) played a key role in this time.

Almgren’s comments on and critique of the sub-culture of violence theory is important to note in the context of the development of the historical trauma hypothesis discussed in some detail above.
2.2.6 Biological and Psychological Perspectives

Also very prevalent in the literature on violence, including interpersonal violence, are individualist psychological perspectives and theories. This includes the use of social learning theory, particularly as it relates to intergenerational dynamics of interpersonal violence. It also includes developmental and life-course theories that locate the risks, and sometimes protective factors, within people’s lifespan stages. The latter aspect is mostly used in studies that focus on youth violence. Psycho-analytic and psychodynamic theories are also used, particularly in relation to the individual level risk factors. Studies that focus on the individual level also tend to include various psychobiological and intra-individual theories, particularly in relation to identifying ‘pathological typologies’ of perpetrators. And finally, some authors argue for a biopsychosocial approach, with evolutionary perspectives being a particular focus.

Intra-Psychic and Biological Theories

Many of the theories used to explain general violence, including male interpersonal violence, draw from theories that focus on intra-psychic dynamics, or biopsychosocial theories that have a strong emphasis on evolutionary factors (Gadd, 2002; Lackey & Williams, 1995; McKenry, Julian & Gavazzi, 1995; Mauricio & Gormley, 2001; Mirzeler, 2001; Moore & Stuart, 2005; Polk, 1998; Stevens et al., 2003; Violence and Victims, Special Issue, 1997; Wilson, 2005; Zosky, 2005).

Stevens et al. (2003, p. 358) provide an excellent summary of individualistic approaches to violence, stating that “the individualistic approaches tended to view violence as having an essentially intra-psychic basis”. They also argue that psycho-dynamic approaches, with strong racialized overtones, dominated understandings of violence in South Africa.

The development of biopsychosocial approaches to understanding interpersonal violence is an interesting development. In this context, hormones and other biological factors are often the focus in explanations of males as victims and perpetrators of violence. For example, McKenry, Julian and Gavazzi (1995, p. 307) developed a biopsychosocial model of domestic violence. Based on interviews and physical assessments of 102 married men, their study revealed that “biological and social domains yielded independent effects. Significant independent variables included alcohol use, family income, and relationship quality, with testosterone approaching significance”.

Polk (1998) and Wilson (2005) have focused on evolutionary explanations of male interpersonal violence. Polk (1998, p. 6) refers to Wilson and Daly’s theories that focus on the issue of masculinity, “grounding their explanation in evolutionary psychology, which argues that aggressive and violent masculinity evolved as a feature of reproductive success in ancestral environments”. Wilson (2005, p. 291), in her/his article on an evolutionary perspective on male domestic violence, discusses the concept of ‘paternity assurance’, describing “the role of reproductive success and the resulting male sexual jealousy on patterns of male aggression. Male violence toward women is examined in historical context, and a variety of risk factors tied to reproductive success are discussed”.

28
In their critique of individualistic approaches to violence, Stevens et al. (2003, p. 358) say that

> These approaches have been critiqued for the lack of historical, social and ideological content in their analyses of violence. They do not account “for the fact that violence occurs as a relational phenomenon in a specific time, space and context, and that the personal experiences and actions of individuals interact with temporal, spatial and contextual events and processes that are in turn shaped by broader historical, ideological and material conditions.

**Social Learning Theories**

The literature review revealed a common use of social learning theories to explain violence, in particular, interpersonal violence (Avakame, 1998; Capaldi & Clark, 1998; Corvo & Carpenter, 2000; Haj-Yahia, 1998; Jewkes et al., 2002; Kenway, Fitzclarence & Hasluck, 2000; Lackey & Williams, 1995; Reitzel-Jaffe & Wolfe, 2001; Rosenheck & Fontana, 1998; Skuja & Halford, 2004; Tolan et al., 2002). This was often linked to the concept of intergenerational transmission or cycling of violence. This link is briefly discussed below.

Jewkes et al. (2002, p. 1611) state that: “An important theory of domestic violence causation relates to the inter-generational cycling of violence. This is visible in Heise’s framework in her individual level factors and has been said to be more important for perpetration of violence than for victimization (Heise, 1998)”.

Tolan et al. (2002, p. 273) conducted a study focusing on the link between family violence and delinquency across generations, testing the theoretical model of the processes through which risk for violence is promoted by parental partner violence. Specifically, we tested a model in which parental partner violence affects discipline, monitoring, and parental harshness, which in turn affects youth violence. ... The results showed that maternal partner violence perpetration was negatively related to monitoring and harsh parenting and unrelated to discipline practices. Monitoring was negatively related to youth violence and harsh parenting was positively related to youth violence. The implications of these findings for understanding the multigenerational transmission of partner violence from a developmental-ecological perspective are discussed.

Social learning theory is commonly used to understand various forms of violence. One of its strengths is its focus on the cycling of violence. What is interesting to note, however, is that it appears that this theory has not been adequately linked to the intergenerational transmission or cycling of violence as it relates to the historical trauma hypothesis discussed in the previous section.
2.2.7 Sociological and Criminological Perspectives

Perspectives emerging primarily from the sociological and criminology literature bases include: Group relations theories, social conflict theory, exchange theory, resource theory, theory of urban inequality, social disorganization theory, social capital, and cultural/sub-culture theories (Jones, 1997; Mauricio & Gormley, 2001; McKendy, 1997; Rhodes, Allen, Nowinski & Cillessen, 2003; Riger & Krieglstein, 2000; Stevens et al., 2003).

Stevens et al. (2003, p. 361) provide an overview of sociological and criminological perspectives to violence: “The sociological approach to violence broadly suggests that violence is not necessarily exerted by an individual but by social structures, created and/or perpetuated by custom or by law”. They refer to classical sociological theories (e.g. Durkheim and Weber), where violence is viewed as a form of social deviance.

Discussing criminological perspectives, Stevens et al. (2003, p. 362) say that: “Violence is construed as the intentional and violent violation of law that is committed without defense or justification, and is sanctioned by the state as criminal, with the implicit consequence of enforcement and punishment through deterrence, incapacitation and incarceration (Keseredy & Schwartz, 1996)”. This perspective emphasizes the importance of individuals and/or groups’ intentional acts of violence in the context of contravening social codes. Psychological responses to social contexts are often the focus when trying to understand patterns of causation.

Criminology responses therefore often focus on processes and mechanisms that minimize behavioural deviance, primarily through deterrence and punishment.

Rhodes et al. (2003) use Athens’s (1992) conceptual model of violent socialization which explicates early developmental processes that lead individuals to employ violence as a preferred method of handling disputes, getting one’s way, and circumventing anticipated trouble.

Jones (1997, p. 81), in his study on violence and the politics of black male identity in postmodern America, examines violence as a societal construct. Emphasized in this approach is: “(1) The establishment of an unseverable link between race and class when studying marginalization; (2) the societal politicalization of black males in their struggle for identity, and (3) a societal approach to questions of freedom, identity, and violence where the black male is concerned”.

McKendy (1997, p. 135) focuses on the class politics of domestic violence. S/he examines the disjuncture “between universal risk theory of wife abuse and empirical evidence from the literature that indicates an inverse relationship between wife abuse and victim/perpetrator socioeconomic status”. This study shows how “certain ideological practices worked to keep class seen but unnoticed”, and that “the particular setting was bound to the ruling relations of patriarchal capitalism”. In conclusion, McKendy argues that: “The approaches of ‘peacemaking criminology’ and ‘restorative justice’ offer possibilities for alternative, more effective responses to men’s violence against women”.
Social Capital and Social Disorganization

Some studies are utilizing social capital and/or social disorganization theory as bases from which to pose research questions about violence (Almgren, 2005; Barber, 2001; Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Harpham, Grant & Thomas, 2002; Richardson, 2005; Wilkinson, Kawachi & Kennedy, 1998).

Social disorganization theory argues for the substantial influence of local community organization and social control on crime and violence. Social disorganization can be defined as the “inability of a community structure to realize the common values of its residents and maintain effective social controls” (Sampson and Groves, 1989, in Wilkinson et al., 1998, p. 581).

Almgren (2005, p. 220) traces social disorganization theory back to the Chicago school of sociology, but it is generally credited to Shaw and McKay’s (1942) work on juvenile delinquency and urban areas. “The central argument of this work attributed juvenile delinquency to the spatial convergence of structural as opposed to psychological factors. … The defining property of social disorganization, derived from Ruth Kornhauser’s Social Sources of Delinquency (1978), is described as the ‘inability of local communities […] to solve commonly experienced problems’”. According to Almgren (2005, p. 220), the revival of this theory in recent times has “provided a means to link the processes of racial segregation and economic displacement to the skewed racial and spatial distributions of interpersonal violence”.

Almgren (2005, p. 221) argues that sense of community is an important mediating factor. Related to this is collective efficacy, which refers to “the principal mediating construct between the ecological deficits associated with endemic interpersonal violence and the variation in rates of interpersonal violence”. Almgren (2005) refers to Sampson’s (1997) argument that collective efficacy is “an extension of an individual trait to an ecological property of neighborhoods. In neighborhoods with high levels of collective efficacy, neighborhood residents possess the motivation and capacity to act on behalf of the common good because of favorable conditions of mutual trust and solidarity among neighbors (Sampson, 1997, p. 919). It is the mechanism through which “social cohesion (mutual trust and solidarity) is translated to specific acts of informal social control. … The evidence is mounting that the construct of efficacy, expressed both in the individual sense and the collective sense, functions as a significant protective factor against interpersonal violence at both levels” (p. 221). Related to the above is the concept of social cohesion which has been named as a distinct protective factor to violence and crime according to Almgren (2005), although its measurement is a very complex, time-intensive challenge.

Emerging out of all of the above is the concept of social capital. Harpham et al (2002, p. 106) argue that: “With growing recognition of the social determinants of health, social capital is an increasingly important concept in international health research”. These South African authors describe social capital as “the degree of connectedness and the quality and quantity of social relation in a given population”. They refer to different components of social capital: structural and cognitive, with the structural component including extent and intensity of associational links or activity, and the cognitive component covering perceptions of support, reciprocity, sharing
and trust”. This refers to “what people ‘do’ and what people ‘feel’ in terms of social relations” (p. 106). An additional important construct highlighted by these authors is the difference between bonding and bridging social capital, attributed by Woolcock and Narayan 2000 to Gittell and Vidal 1998 (cited in Harpham et al., 2002).

Narayan (1999) describes ‘bonding’ capital as meaning social cohesion within the group structure, whilst ‘bridging’ capital refers to the type of social capital that links or cuts across, different communities/groups … [This overlaps with] the horizontal/vertical construct of social capital, which views social capital as either vertically based, meaning that it inheres in the relationships between different levels of society (e.g. community, local government), or horizontally based, meaning that it inheres in the relationships between similar individuals or groups in the same social context (Harpham et al., 2002, p.106).

Harpham et al. (2002) argue for the need to differentiate social capital from social networks and support. They refer to Lochner et al. (1999) who suggest that: “Social capital is a feature of the social structure, not of the individual actors within the social structure; it is an ecologic characteristic. In this way social capital can be distinguished from the concepts of social networks and support, which are attributes of individuals” (Harpham et al., 2002, p. 107).

Harpham et al. (2002) highlight a number of elements of social capital that have been linked to various public health problems, including: trust, reciprocity and membership of voluntary organizations. They refer to the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (Saguaro Seminar 2001) which identifies the following elements of social capital: social trust, inter-racial trust, diversity of friendships, political participation, civic leadership and associational involvement, informal socializing, giving and volunteering, faith-based engagement, and equality of civic engagement across the community.

Harpham et al. (2002) developed an Adapted Social Capital Assessment Tool (A-SCAT) which includes the following elements:

- **Structural (connectedness):** Participation in organizations; institutional linkages (connections to services, facilities and organizations); frequency of general collective action; specific collective action (whether people would get together to address named hypothetical situations); degree of citizenship (whether the respondent has voted/campaigned/taken part in other neighbourhood or city-wide activity); links to groups with resources (such as local government or aid agencies); links to parallel groups (namely other communities).
- **Cognitive (reciprocity, sharing, trust):** General social support; emotional support (enabling people to feel things); instrumental support (enabling people to do things); trust; fellow feeling; reciprocity and co-operation; social harmony; sense of belonging; perceived fairness (would others in the community take advantage of people); perceived social responsibility (would others in the community return lost items).

A particular form of social capital that has been identified is **spiritual capital.** This refers to the influence, knowledge and attitudes created by participation in a religious tradition (Berger &
Hefner, 2003). Spiritual capital is, however, more than a network based on shared religious affiliation; it includes both adhering to the shared precepts of knowledge inherent in a particular religion and the affective or emotional bonds between individuals and groups that directly result from interacting within an intrinsically shared religious meaning system (Finke & Dougherty, 2002; Stark & Finke, 2000).

**Community Resilience Theories**

This study found a few studies that make use of community resilience theory for male interpersonal violence research (e.g. Ahmed et al., 2004; Clauss-Ehlers & Levi, 2002).

Clauss-Ehlers and Levi (2002, p. 265), focusing on the vulnerability factors in Latino and Mexican youth, discuss an ecological approach to resilience. They refer specifically to cultural-community resilience which “acts as a buffer against violence. An ecological model is presented that incorporates community structures, the cultural values of familismo, respeto, and personalismo”. These authors argue that variables and values in particular ecosystems need to be examined to determine how the individual responds to the surrounding community.

Ahmed et al.’s (2004, p. 4) discussion on community resilience draws extensively from Clauss-Ehlers (2003) and Clauss-Ehlers and Levi (2002), who provide an ecological or systemic understanding of resilience. These authors refer to community level organization as a key contributor to positive outcomes.

Ahmed et al. (2004) note that the conceptualization of resilience appears to have promoted a general ‘strengths’ perspective to social problems. They refer to Masten, Best and Garmezy’s (1998) three types of resiliency outcomes: (1) positive outcomes despite high-risk environments; (2) competent functioning in the face of acute or chronic life stresses; and (3) recovery from trauma.

Ahmed et al. (2004, p. 3) refer to Freitas and Downey’s (1998) distinction between main and interaction effects when referring to the dynamic interaction between risk and resilience: “An interaction effect is when a protective factor has a particularly beneficial impact on high-risk individuals, relative to low-risk individuals. … they also suggest that protective factors could have an equally beneficial main effect across individuals, irrespective of their risk status”.

Ahmed et al. (2004) develop and utilize seven dimensions of community resilience in their study in Cape Town, South Africa: employment seeking behaviour; the ability to physically protect households; community networks and relationships; the presence of community structures and leadership; knowledge of the treatment of injuries; and hope and the ability to persevere in spite of adversity. When presenting the conclusions of their study, they report that there were “significant associations clustered around neighbourhood cohesion and community hope; community structures and leadership and social supports; and ownership of a business and physical security, and physical security social supports” (p. 13).
Critiques of these theories have been highlighted by various authors. Almgren (2005) indicates a basic flaw in social disorganization theory when he argues that there is considerable social organization in the intricate relationship networks within high-crime neighbourhoods, such as within violent gangs. He also refers to Sampson (2002) who argues that studies “collectively make the point that social disorganization theory fails to account for the existence of the complex interpersonal networks and mutual obligations that exist in high crime neighborhoods that are at the heart of any reasonable definition of social organization” (p. 221). Almgren (2005, p. 221) also critiques the reliance of this theory on “low socioeconomic status (SES), cultural heterogeneity, residential instability, family structure, and ties between residents”.

More generally speaking, Stevens et al. (2003) argue that sociological and criminology theories tend to de-emphasize the role of the individual, with the emphasis being on social structures and issues relating to unequally shared resources and powers. While the latter emphases are important, the limited focus on the individual (in-context) often produces a skewed analysis.

### 2.3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the findings of the exploratory literature review conducted in 2007. The chapter commenced with an identification of key issues relating to theories of violence, and male interpersonal violence more specifically. This included the need to pursue a multi-disciplinary approach, and the need for the development of integrated frameworks. The bulk of the chapter then focused on the main perspectives and theories identified in the violence literature review. When looking at the perspectives and theories used to understand violence in general, and comparing this with approaches dominant in research focused on male interpersonal violence, it is interesting to note the following key points.

First: The ecological perspective informs a great deal of current research on violence, particularly within the psychology and public health sectors. Adaptations of the ecological approach that are evident in the literature include the following combinations: Transactional-ecological, social-ecological, cognitive-ecological, developmental-ecological, and critical-ecological perspectives.

While the ecological perspective tends to be strongly evident in the general violence and interpersonal violence literature, studies focusing on males tend to limit the use of this perspective – although many authors have referred to it as an over-arching framework that helps to keep the different levels of the system visible (individual, relationship, community and societal levels). However, while some studies located within an ecological framework recognize the need to examine factors at all levels of the system, there is little evidence of theories that look at the dynamics between and across levels of the system. This latter aspect is crucial if we are to understand violence, including male interpersonal violence, and violence prevention.

Second: It is important to note that the public health approach as used in the violence literature refers primarily to a framework for research and action. It is therefore a ‘skeleton’ – with particular steps identified – that does not, in itself, reflect a particular perspective or theory.
However, prevention science generally informs this approach, and so it is important to note criticisms generally targeted at this approach, in particular, its biomedical approach to problems and solutions. An ecological perspective is often linked to a public health approach, providing a ‘systems’ framework including different levels of the system. While this has been usefully used in many studies, this perspective also needs to be interrogated in relation to its limited analysis of ‘cross level’ analysis, and its lack of radical analysis of dynamics such as power relations.

It is worthy of note that, although the public health approach focuses on both risks and protective factors, and places strong emphasis on primary prevention of violence, there is little overt, direct reference to the global health promotion movement and approach in the literature on interpersonal violence. The latter’s emphasis on the identification and development of health determinants provides an important shift towards a more competency or strengths approach that focuses on ‘what should be in place’, rather than only on what ‘needs to be removed’ (risks) or protected.

Third: While a critical perspective is minimally utilized in the general violence and interpersonal violence literature, this study has revealed that this approach is used frequently to understand male interpersonal violence. Feminist and masculinity perspectives, dominant in this literature, both focus on power and inequality issues – in terms of gender roles and in terms of broader socio-economic factors. A constructionist approach is often utilized, often incorporating social identity theories that focus on masculinity.

Fourth: As would be expected, gender perspectives are included in many studies on male interpersonal violence. The perspectives commonly used are usually framed by feminist and/or masculinity theories. In this study, a distinction was not made between these two sets of theories, but it is recognized that this is an important analysis to pursue, even though the need to ‘work together’ across the gender lines has been noted by many. It is not clear, from this limited study, whether a ‘gender framework’ that crosses over and between the feminist and masculinity frames has been developed. This is an important consideration, particularly in the face of ‘backlash’ politics in this research.

Fifth: Most of the studies focusing on males draw from some form of masculinity theory, often linked to social identity theory. The hegemonic masculinity theory is referred to by many in this regard. Other specific theories referred to include a focus on male dominance; the father-absent hypothesis; patriarchy and capitalism; and race and masculinity. Theories relating to masculine identity therefore constitute a key focus in the male interpersonal violence studies included in this research. In many of the studies accessed in this research, most of the risk factors are related, in one way or another, to masculine identity. It is interesting to note that this emphasis on masculinity in the male interpersonal violence literature is minimally highlighted in the general violence literature (e.g. Krug et al., 2002).

It is also noteworthy that analyses of masculinity/masculine identity within the context of male interpersonal violence focus primarily on individual and relationship levels of analysis. The risk factors (and the few protective factors noted) are therefore generally located at these levels, with minimal analysis at community and societal level. This tendency to minimize the community and social levels in the masculinity debates has been noted by some. There is a need to examine
how masculinity/masculine identity expresses itself or is operationalized as a risk and protective factor at the community and societal levels so that this obviously important aspect can be addressed at political and structural levels.

Sixth: In contrast to the general literature on violence and interpersonal violence, the literature focusing on male interpersonal violence seems to focus more on cultural aspects, including (a) general social norms and values, and (b) specific cultural norms, values, beliefs and practices. The latter includes a focus, for example, on male honour, which is usually linked to particular cultural worldviews and practices. Various cultural approaches are used to frame these studies, including a cultural alignment framework, a cultural-development-gender framework, and a focus on cultural capital.

Although ‘traditional’ cultural factors are highlighted in the risk assessments in violence in general, and male interpersonal violence in particular, it is interesting to note that the theories that are used to explain these factors predominantly come from mainstream ‘western’ disciplinary perspectives. There is very little evidence in the literature reviewed that indigenous, local and/or community-embedded perspectives are being drawn in to transform our understandings, and responses.

Seventh: Perspectives used in the male interpersonal violence-focused literature include a strong focus on social learning and socialization theories, including Athen’s conceptual model of violent socialization, and inter-generational learning theory. Although the literature study revealed that there is a great deal of focus on inter-generational trauma, relating primarily to witnessing or experiencing violence in one’s family-of-origin, there is virtually no critical, historical focus on this set of risk factors for violence, despite evidence (particularly in indigenous communities and previously colonized contexts) to suggest that the process of colonization that has occurred in the world over the last 500 years or so has had a major impact on people, particularly males. This relates to the concept of historical trauma, identified as a major risk factor to violence and other burden of disease categories in previously and currently oppressed contexts. This is an area that needs further research and development – for the purposes of identifying whether and how this plays itself out in the context of male interpersonal violence, particularly within communities and societies that have a long history of colonialism.

Eighth: Approaches and theories that emerge primarily from the sociological and criminology searches include: socio-political theory, resource and power theories, exchange theory, general theories of crime, patriarchy and capitalist frameworks, and structured action theory. It is interesting to note that these perspectives – which tend to focus on more social and structural aspects of violence - are less emphasized in the studies that focus more specifically on men. This links to the emphasis on individual and relationship factors rather than on risks at the community and societal levels in studies focusing on men, highlighted by some authors.

Ninth: The need for an integrated and multi-level approach to understanding male interpersonal violence has been confirmed in this study. Besides accessing and engaging with different disciplines and perspectives that help us to understand male interpersonal violence at and across all the ecological levels, the need to develop integrated frameworks has been highlighted. The development of an integrated framework is informed by a call for analyses and programmes that
bring together the elements of multiple voices and different theories and meta-theories into a coherent framework. Such an endeavour would assist in radically examining the challenges of male interpersonal violence as it would help one to make the necessary connections – particularly in relation to how the community and social context interacts with violence behaviour of men in our society. Such a framework could utilize different ‘lenses’ for the purposes of viewing the problem, and solutions, in different ways. A layered multifocal approach, which engages with the intersections between different lenses, would assist in our attempts to understand the complex dynamics involved in violence.

The need for integration should not ignore the constraints and difficulties likely to be encountered in such an endeavour. In the move towards synthesis, contradictions between different paradigms need to be interrogated (and accommodated if possible), and relevance of particular theories to specific phenomena needs to be evaluated. It is also important, in this attempt to develop a more holistic perspective and comprehensive approach to violence, and violence prevention, that any frameworks developed remain simple enough to ensure that attempts to address these challenges are enhanced, rather than ‘overwhelmed’!

In conclusion, it should be remembered that the literature search pursued in this study was limited by a number of factors and to mainly four disciplines: psychology, sociology, criminology and health. The intention was to go beyond this, but that challenge constitutes the main work of follow-up studies. It is possible that the findings relating to theoretical perspectives and theories will shift once a more comprehensive approach to accessing literature is pursued. Other disciplinary or philosophical approaches and worldviews that need to be incorporated in order to provide a more comprehensive view of male interpersonal violence include: social anthropology, philosophy, religious/spiritual perspectives, and various indigenous knowledge systems.
CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF CRIME, VIOLENCE AND INJURY LEAD PROGRAMME’S CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

3.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter commences by providing a summary of meta-theoretical paradigms that inform most social research. This is followed by an analysis of the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme’s (CVI) approach to research – based on a documentary analysis and focused literature review, and workshops with the organization held between 2007 and 2008.

3.2 META-THEORETICAL PARADIGMS

Foundational thinkers such as Habermas, and one of his interpreters, Brian Fay, have provided us with a framework for understanding meta-theoretical frameworks that inform our choice of theories and practices. Guba and Lincoln (2005) have recently extended this framework, providing us with five broad meta-theoretical or paradigmatic perspectives. These are summarized in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Five Meta-Theoretical Paradigms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paradigm</th>
<th>Key Characteristics of this Paradigm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positivism</td>
<td>Naïve realism, dualistic/objectivist, experimental, quantitative methods, verified hypotheses and facts, generalizations, cause and effect, validity and reliability, value-free scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-positivism</td>
<td>Modified positivism (modifications of all of the above), critical realism (probably true), quantitative and qualitative methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical theories</td>
<td>Historical realism, subjective/transactional, dialogic/dialectical, generalization by similarity, historical situatedness, values recognized, scientist as transformative intellectual, empowerment and liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructivism</td>
<td>Relativism, co-constructed realities, subjective/transactional, hermeneutical and dialectical, trustworthiness and authenticity, scientist as passionate participant, facilitating multivoice reconstruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Participatory reality, critical subjectivity/participatory transactions, political participation/collective action enquiry, practical knowing, community knowledge, action and transformation, self-reflective scientist, learning research through the process

Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) and Guba and Lincoln (2005) highlight some recent trends in research. The boundaries between the above mentioned meta-theoretical approaches or paradigms are shifting, with many people drawing from more than one perspective in an attempt to understand and respond to social problems. In some cases, this has resulted in a blurring of genres. This phenomenon links to a movement towards a *bricolage* approach which refers to interdisciplinary work that crosses traditional disciplinary borders, utilizing multiple perspectives and methods in the pursuit of ‘truth’. This results in a blending of elements of paradigms, and in mixed methods being used within particular paradigms or frameworks.

The above trend results in multivocality (drawing in different voices), contested meanings, paradigmatic controversies, and new textual forms. There also appears to be a trend towards combining social action with research, with reflexivity (critical self-reflection within the research process) as a key characteristic. These are characteristics of a critical approach which seem to have become mainstreamed. The authors referred to above also suggest that we have entered ‘an age of spirituality’, with an emphasis on ecological values.

### 3.3 ANALYSIS OF CRIME, VIOLENCE AND INJURY LEAD PROGRAMME’S PERSPECTIVES

In this section, the findings of the documentary analysis conducted within the theoretical literature review are presented. The aim of this analysis was to identify the perspectives and theories used by the CVI and ISHS (Institute for Social and Health Sciences, University of South Africa) in their work around crime, violence and injury. As mentioned earlier, this included articles or chapters written by staff members over the last ten years, as well as annual and other reports of the organization.

In addition to the documentary analysis, a summary of proceedings of two strategic planning meetings of the staff of CVI and ISHS, in 2007 and 2009, are presented. These summaries capture the discussions around the conceptual foundations of the work of the CVI/ISHS.

#### 3.3.1 Document Analysis

Multidisciplinary exchanges, intersectoral collaboration, the principles of non-sectarianism, democratic development, the ongoing search for excellence and the urgent need for applied research and evidence-led interventions and policies … guided by the
principles of epistemological pluralism, methodological independence, open and critical scientific investigation, and intellectual integrity and co-operation … endeavour to serve as a change agent, facilitating participation at all levels of society, empowerment of marginalised groups and mainstreaming the value of indigenous systems of knowledge production (CVI Business Plan, 2002, p. 2)

This section focuses on the conceptual perspectives and theories used within the work of the CVI, based on an analysis of a number of documents, articles, and book chapters written by leading researchers in the CVI over the last ten years. This analysis is presented under the following sub-headings:

- A commitment to multi-disciplinarity and intersectoral collaboration
- Multi-vocality: A commitment to inclusion and mainstreaming of indigenous knowledges and voices
- A ‘persons-in-context’ approach
- Public health approach
- A critical perspective
- Approach to research

**Multi-Disciplinarity and Intersectoral Collaboration**

The analysis of the CVI documents (CVI Business Plan, 2002; CVI Annual Report, 2005; Stevens et al., 2003) reveal a clear commitment to and operationalization of a multi- and inter-disciplinary approach to understanding violence, and a comprehensive approach to violence prevention and safety promotion. Stevens et al. (2003, p. 363) refer to the way in which a public health approach, utilized by the CVI “facilitates interdisciplinarity, methodological pluralism, theoretical diversity, community empowerment, and sectoral and inter-sectoral coalition-building”. These authors go on to say:

Given public health’s multi-disciplinary orientation, a feminist perspective may be introduced to understand how, for instance, patriarchy, gender inequality, and poverty contribute to femicide. … Those interested in uncovering the discourses underlying our social constructions of violence may introduce critical theory to conduct an archival and historical analysis with a view to producing alternative explanations of violence. … This form of inter-disciplinarity is not only desirable, but imperative for a comprehensive understanding of the complex underpinnings of violence that are located within the subjective, cultural, ideological, material and historical realms that help to constitute social realities (Stevens et al., 2003, p. 367).

**Multi-Vocality: Inclusion and Mainstreaming of Indigenous Knowledges and Voices**

The commitment to multi-disciplinarity and intersectoral collaboration relates directly to a commitment to multi-vocality – the recognition and utilization of various voices in attempting to understand and respond to social challenges. The need to draw on and mainstream indigenous
and community-embedded voices and knowledges is emphasized within this general commitment (CVI Annual Report, 2001; CVI Business Plan, 2002).

The role of religion and spirituality, and the need to transform the science-religion separation, is highlighted in a number of CVI sources (e.g. CVI Annual Report, 2005; Seedat, 2006b). This includes drawing in voices from communities and people who reflect different philosophical views of the world, as well as drawing on religious assets and spiritual capital as protective factors.

The following extracts from some of the CVI documents accessed provide evidence to support the above.

Following the traditions established by the ‘indigenisation of knowledge’ movement, the proposed study contains two broad aims: First, it aims to contribute to the emerging indigenous perspective to safety promotion and injury prevention. Second, through an appropriation of indigenous traditions and a close study of associated classical, religious and contemporary texts, the study will highlight the value of indigenous safety promotion ideas and practices. [It will] aim to generate an indigenous theoretical framework for safety promotion so as to address the distinctions provoked by the secular-spiritual polarity (CVI Annual Report, 2001, p. 14).

The CVI Business Plan (2002, p. 2) commits the organization “to serve as a change agent, facilitating participation at all levels of society, empowerment of marginalised groups and mainstreaming the value of indigenous systems of knowledge production”.

In the 2005 CVI Annual Report, the organization commits itself to initiating “an ecologically designed, multi-disciplinary research project that will seek to investigate the role of religion and spirituality in mediating the risks for violence in a majority African country”.

And finally, Seedat (2006b, p. 171) challenges the view that the study of theology, spirituality, creation, and the divine be limited to religious studies and institutions. This article endeavours to “consider culturally relevant ways of knowing and voicing that are not necessarily located within the parameters of a single disciplinary boundary or cast within the mould and language of the secular sciences, including peace psychology”.

**Person-in-Context Approach**

The need for a multi-level approach to understanding and responding to violence relates to an approach to violence that highlights the need for frameworks and theories that provide explanations that locate persons in their complex systems (Butchart & Kruger, 2001; Stevens et al., 2003). This is in line with a community psychology approach which informs the work of the CVI. This is also congruent with the ecological approach which overtly focuses on individual, relationship, community and societal factors.
Public Health Approach

The public health approach, evident in much of the literature on violence, guides the work of the CVI (Ahmed et al., 2004; Butchart & Kruger, 2001; CVI Pamphlet, 2001; CVI Annual Report, 2001; CVI Strategic Programme and Project Document, 2002; Matzopoulos, 2002; CVI Business Plan, 2002; Seedat, 2006a; Stevens et al., 2003; Van Niekerk, Suffla & Seedat, 2004). This includes a strong focus on identifying risk and protective factors relating to violence. Furthermore, prevention and health promotion approaches to violence underpin the work of the CVI, with primary prevention and safety promotion being key areas of focus. The following extracts from relevant documents are provided as evidence.

The public health logic, assumed by the Lead Programme and other successful prevention work, upholds the idea that safety promotion is contingent on problem definition, risk factor identification, development and testing of pilot initiatives, and widespread implementation and ongoing measurement of effectiveness (CVI Pamphlet, 2001, p. 2).

The Lead Programme’s injury research is primarily conceptualised around the four-phased public health approach to violence and injury prevention: What is the problem (data collection: surveillance and epidemiology) – What are the causes (risk factor identification) – What works (evaluation research) – How do you do it (community demonstration programmes, training, public awareness). Within the public health oriented multi-disciplinary approach, work within the different areas of investigation is guided by subject-specific theories. However, the Lead Programme’s emphasis on research for primary prevention and injury control means that theories which highlight the social aetiology of violence and accidents, and which help to identify policy-sensitive risk and resiliency factors, are favoured as may be appropriate (CVI Pamphlet, 2001, p. 3).

A multi-faceted and holistic approach is needed to address the foundational issues of crime and violence. The first step using the public health model would be to define the nature, extent and profile of the problem, and therefore on-going surveillance studies in conjunction with victimisation studies are crucial. Appropriate interventions should be pilot-tested and evaluated on an on-going basis. Priority should be given to addressing the macro-level contributors to homicide rates, such as housing, water, electricity, employment, land, and health care. Education to prevent and control homicide should be directed as widely as possible (Matzopoulos, 2002, p. 21).

The projects utilise a multi-level approach – the projects may be directed at macro and micro level risk factors – and may incorporate primary, secondary and tertiary interventions or combinations of these (CVI Strategic Programme and Project Document, 2002, p. 57).

It should be noted that while Stevens et al. (2003) acknowledge that the public health approach cannot just be transposed to the South African context, they highlight the value of this approach. It offers a four-step logic, “representing an interactive process to focus on the magnitude and causes of violence (step 1 and step 2). In step 3, the focus is on developing and testing prevention interventions and in step 4 implementation of what works on a large scale” (p. 363).
This approach also “allows for an analysis of violence and the development of appropriate preventative interventions across two dimensions”, with violence being determined by both risk and resiliency factors (e.g. age, gender, physical strength, psycho-social skills), agent factors (e.g. perpetrator and weapon) and environmental factors (e.g. lack of socio-economic opportunities) ... And, thirdly, “The public health approach accommodates for conscious inter-disciplinarity (e.g. criminology, economics, psychology, urban planning, history) and cross-sectoral perspectives (e.g. health, criminal justice, transport, housing, NGOs, business) in our attempts to study violence and its magnitude, causes and prevention (Stevens et al., 2003, p. 364).

In line with the Public Health approach, the concept of community resilience has also emerged as a major focus in the work of the CVI, reflecting a ‘strengths’ approach to addressing challenges relating to crime, violence and injury (Ahmed et al., 2004; CVI Annual Report, 2001; CVI Annual Report, 2005; Seedat, 2006a).

Ahmed et al. (2004, p. 2) argue that: “The examination of community resilience may help realign professional values away from a focus on pathology towards the development of a strengths perspective in the study and prevention of violence and injury”.

In line with other global trends, the public health approach developed within the CVI has been adapted to include other approaches, resulting in various forms of integrated frameworks to understand and respond to crime, violence and injury. In general, the public health model has been linked to developmental and/or critical approaches (Seedat, 2006a; Stevens et al., 2003).

Seedat (2006a, p. 19) argues that,

We may therefore consider locating the public health model’s four-step focus on injury magnitude, injury risk determination, what works and the implementation of good practices within a theory of social change that allows us to ‘surrender to the unexpected’ (Melville, 1998, p.43), uncover the ‘truth’ of good prevention practices, and expose the fabrications inherent to the current global order, which subvert the ‘health and safety for all’ agenda. The theory that informs our safety promotion agenda ought to shed light on the intricacies involved in marshalling human compassion and solidarity so that we may innovatively give substance to the slogan indigenous to the South African struggle “an injury to one is an injury to all.

Critical Perspective

Babbie, Mouton, Vorster and Prozesky (2001), Bishop (2005), Fine and Weis (2005), Kincheloe and McLaren (2005), and Smith (2005) refer to the following key critical theorists in their work: Marx, Sartre, Habermas, Fay, Frankfurt School, Foucault, Derrida, Freire, Fanon, Willis, Collins, Matsuda, Thorne, Smith and Harding. According to these authors, a critical approach:

- Provides a historical, contextual analysis
- Focuses on the political economy, and economic relations in particular
- Emphasizes power relations, particularly within racial and gender social relations
- Often has an emphasis on structural and relational identity, with feminism and masculinity being particular areas of focus in gender perspectives
- Seeks to address oppression of various kinds, including a focus on colonialism
- Utilizes strategies to uncover and overcome alienation through deconstruction of ideologies
- Aims to support processes of empowerment and transformation, with participation and collaboration being key values and actions
- Takes seriously indigenous and local knowledges, with some emphasizing the need for reclamation of local knowledge, language and culture
- Engages with the tension between ‘culture’ and ‘power’ dynamics, focusing on addressing oppressive rules of power within cultural formations
- Often reveals a *bricolage* approach with an emphasis on the need to engage with different knowledges and ways of seeing and knowing
- Draws on positivist and hermeneutic/phenomenological perspectives, adding an emancipatory interest that aims to contribute to social action for social justice in various ways, and includes a self-conscious criticism of oneself as a researcher

It is interesting to note that, contrary to some peoples’ beliefs that indigenous knowledge approaches are conservative and often insensitive to the power dynamics within cultural emphases, some of the above mentioned authors (Bishop, 2005; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Smith, 2005) show how indigenous approaches are located within a critical perspective.

*The Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme’s (CVI) approach* to understanding and responding to violence reflects a strong critical lens (CVI Business Plan, 2002; CVI Annual Report, 2005; Seedat, 2006a; 2006b; Stevens et al., 2003). Key characteristics of this approach as it has developed in the CVI include:

- Acting as a ‘change agent’ to transform South Africa
- Utilizing a historical and contextual approach that attempts to understand ‘persons-in-context’
- Focusing on various issues of power and oppression, with a particular emphasis on racial dynamics, and feminist and masculinity within a gender perspective
- Including analyses of colonialism, particularly within the South African context
- Engaging with and mainstreaming marginalized voices, including indigenous and community-embedded knowledges
- Adopting a human rights perspective

The following extracts from relevant documents provide evidence of this predominantly critical perspective within the CVI.

The CVI Annual Report (2005, p. 3) says that: “The ISHS will continue to provide critical perspectives to the discourses underlying knowledge production related to injury prevention and safety promotion”.

44
An example of a project that clearly utilizes this perspective is the study pursued by one of the staff members (CVI Annual Report, 2005, p. 12): Discourses of power in the narratives of homicide in South Africa. This study constituted a:

Discursive analysis of the narratives of the participants’ homicidal encounters, in an attempt to elicit their articulations of power relations and the manner in which these are infused into homicide as a particularly violent and fatal social interaction. The study aims to identify particular forms of power, to elicit the social content of these forms of power, and attempts to highlight the social and ideological significance of these forms of power. In so doing, it hopes to contribute to understandings of homicide in which the concept of power is addressed centrally, directly and overtly. This will hopefully enhance our understandings of homicide as being an interaction that is socially embedded, reflective and reproductive of power relations within society more broadly, and a phenomenon that needs to be understood beyond existing criminological and public health perspectives that tend to focus on descriptive or inferential studies linking homicide to particular forms of social disorganisation.

The CVI Annual Report (2005, p. 14) is report also maintains that: “The ISHS has historically maintained a critical perspective on the ongoing assessment of inequality and difference in the social sciences in South Africa and in Africa more broadly. ... In each instance ISHS aimed to reflexively explore these issues and processes within historically oppressive contexts such as South Africa”.

Seedat’s (2006a) paper on ‘Data to action: Mobilising compassion and merging voices in safety promotion’ provides insight into how the sector may benefit from a more substantive critical engagement of the work done. Seedat’s key argument is that the interacting local and global contextual systems undermine safety and increase levels of injury. He argues that economic inequality, the North-South divide, globalization, militarization and the operation of powerful ideologies work to compromise safety. However, he also argues that these systems can generate human agency, solidarity and human compassion, which can be powerfully utilized to develop the sector. Seedat shows how data collection and utilization is located within particular local and global contexts, highlighting that we are not neutral scientists and practitioners.

A further example of how a critical approach is used in the work of the CVI is Seedat’s (2006b) article on ‘Wahiduddin Khan and peace in contemporary Islamic thought’. Seedat draws on “Fanon (1967, 1968), who focused on violence in the context of oppression, and on various contemporary scholars of Islam” (p. 170). The approach adopted in this article reflects a “commitment to uncovering prevailing oppressive discourses, a critical focus on the psychology of both dominant and marginalized groups, a drive towards indigenisation in the study of context-specific psychosocial phenomena, and countering the tendency to restrict ideas and discourse to what is regarded as their appropriate place” (p. 171).
Approach to Research

An analysis of the CVI documents (CVI Business Plan, 2002; Seedat, 2006a) highlight the following key characteristics of the research conducted in this organisation:

- A commitment to ‘data to action’ which includes the principles of contributing to prevention of crime, violence and injury through research that focuses on some form of social action or change, and where data is translated for social utilization purposes
- Disciplinary, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological diversity and pluralism, utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods where appropriate
- Incorporating and mainstreaming indigenous knowledge systems within a commitment to facilitating multi-vocality, within a bricolage approach that utilizes various disciplines and perspectives
- A commitment to collaboration with and participation of all relevant stakeholders and roleplayers
- Researcher self-reflection within an acknowledgement of the politics of knowledge (reflexivity)
- A commitment to conducting open and critical scientific investigations

The following extract from the CVI Extract of Business Plan (2002, p. 2) sums it up, describing the CVI work as being “informed by multidisciplinary exchanges, intersectoral collaboration, the principles of non-sectarianism, democratic development, the ongoing search for excellence and the urgent need for applied research and evidence-led interventions and policies”. The document goes on to say that the CVI’s work is “guided by the principles of epistemological pluralism, methodological independence, open and critical scientific investigation, and intellectual integrity and co-operation”. And, the Business Plan highlights the CVI’s “endeavour to serve as a change agent, facilitating participation at all levels of society, empowerment of marginalised groups and mainstreaming the value of indigenous systems of knowledge production”. All of the above clearly reflects the critical perspective favoured in the CVI.

3.3.2 CVI Strategic Planning Discussions

Strategic Planning Meeting: September 2007

The points highlighted in the discussion above were presented by the project researchers to the CVI (and ISHS) staff in September 2007. After the presentation, the following questions were raised by the researchers:

- How does the public health approach dialogue link to the critical approach evident in the CVI?
- There is clear evidence of an acceptance of an ecological approach in most of the work of the CVI, but no mention is made of particular ecological or systems theories?
- Although there is a clear commitment to prevention and safety promotion, the health promotion literature and framework (World Health Organization, Ottawa Charter, 1986)
is not evident, and the concept and framework of health determinants does not seem to be used?

- There is a commitment to focusing on protective factors, but most of the work focuses only on risks?
- The view of health that seems to be informing the work of the CVI appears to be holistic, with a notable inclusion of spiritual aspects of health, and a comprehensive approach to violence prevention?
- It is unclear how the individual-society relationship is understood or theorized in the CVI?
- Cultural factors are recognized in risk analyses conducted in the CVI, but they do not seem to be identified as important protective factors, nor included as a particular area of violence prevention?
- There is a clear commitment to engaging with indigenous and local knowledges, but it is unclear as to ‘whose voices’ and ‘what knowledges’, and ‘how to access and engage with these voices’?

The following main points were highlighted in the discussion that ensued:

It was noted that the CVI should integrate theory into its work more, articulate its own theoretical position(s), remain on the ‘edge’ of relevant theory and research development, and provide theoretical leadership. It was proposed that a Critical Public Health approach be more overtly developed as an over-arching framework for the CVI work. This would entail making more direct links with UNISA’s Institute of Social and Health Science’s focus on ‘science and politics’. It would also include examining exactly how the public health approach and critical lens link to one another. It was agreed that an exploration of how a critical lens would impact on the various projects of the CVI needs to be pursued by all concerned.

The need for a ‘gender lens’, including both feminist and masculinity approaches, when focusing on male interpersonal violence, was also highlighted. The discussion then went on to look at the issue of ‘men-at-risk’, with a question about how one looks at males as a group at risk. There was a general feeling that focusing on males constituted a sensitive area that needs to be dealt with carefully in the South African context where some people and groups may react to a focus on men, when women and children are clearly victims of so much violence. Yet, it was agreed that there was a need to address this matter openly. This would have to be done in a way that challenges all power dynamics and vested interests.

The concept of culture was also discussed. It was accepted as being loaded in the South African context as there is a nervousness about talking about culture in a context where this concept was used to develop and maintain apartheid. However, it was agreed that issues relating to indigenous knowledges and culture need to be engaged in a sophisticated and sensitive way, drawing on a critical perspective.

With regard to the concept and framework of health promotion, it was suggested that the CVI needs to engage with and critique the global health promotion debates. This includes, in particular, including marginalized views from developing contexts. It was suggested that it is also important to locate these debates solidly within an African and South African context, and
thus contribute to local, regional understandings and debates in this area. The need to explore how the CVI’s focus on safety promotion links to the international and national health promotion movement was also recognized. Three particular issues or questions relating to this framework were raised in this discussion: (a) the concept of empowerment needs to be critically reviewed, (b) the notions of prevention need to be clarified within the context of the CVI’s work, and (c) the notion of change underpinning the work of the CVI needs to be articulated.

The final part of this discussion focused on the *CVI’s approach to research*. There was a feeling that the CVI’s knowledge production focus is very important. It was suggested that there is a need to develop more nuanced methodologies to deepen the analytical work of projects. The applied value of data also needs to be enhanced. In this regard, it is important to interrogate the data translation processes and knowledge transfer challenges, and to develop different communication strategies. The CVI also needs to clarify its meta-theoretical position, reflecting on all levels of involvement. Finally, it was suggested that it needs to focus on theory development, methodological innovation, and model-building, particularly in relation to violence prevention.

In conclusion, while there are many issues to be addressed, debates to be pursued, and challenges to meet, the project researchers highlighted the following two key areas of focus. First, the rhetorical commitment to accessing, including and engaging with different disciplinary, sectoral, and philosophical worldviews and perspectives need to be concretely pursued to ensure that marginalized voices are heard. This includes the debatable ‘indigenous’ and community-embedded knowledges and voices. And, second, within the context of a broader framework, including the knowledges and voices referred to above, there is a need for a ‘deeper’ analysis of the risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence. This includes drawing on a dynamic ecological approach that takes the systems-thinking principle of interdependence seriously when considering relationships between factors at different ecological levels. It also means drawing on a critical perspective, including a gender perspective that draws on the strengths of the feminist and masculinity theories to perform an analysis of power dynamics relevant to male interpersonal violence. The issue of social identity as it relates to men in our society needs to have a central place, but it needs an analysis that does not minimize any of the ecological levels of analysis, and finds a way to highlight the community and societal factors that place men at risk for violence.

**Strategic Planning Meeting: August 2009**

During this strategic planning meeting, the staff of the CVI (and ISHS) spent some time discussing their ‘focus’ with a view to clarifying their underlying perspective on crime, violence and injury. The following main points were highlighted in the context of this conversation.

A reflection on the work of the CVI suggested a clear shift towards the positive conditions of safety and peace promotion, rather than only on challenges of crime, violence and injury. This reflects a *paradigm shift*: from a medically-oriented ‘prevention of crime, violence and injury’ approach towards a positive approach that focuses on building peace and promoting safety. This shift was linked to a broader *health promotion* approach which focuses on *well-being* (rather than
disease), including physical, psychological, social, environmental and spiritual well-being. The first three elements come from the WHO definition of health. The latter two elements were added in the South African health promotion policy (Department of Health draft). The group felt that safety and peace promotion, the specific focus of the CVI, fell under the broader wellbeing focus of health promotion. The latter broad focus reflects the overall mission of the Medical Research Council. The CVI’s focus therefore fits well within this mission.

It was noted that while this shift was ‘away from prevention towards a health promotion approach’, it does not mean that crime, violence and injury prevention should not still be a focus of the CVI. It was argued that links between prevention and health promotion should be maintained. This means that there should still be a focus on ‘stopping’ crime, violence and injury, but that the focus should be on moving from this ‘problem-definition’ towards analyses and interventions that focus on identifying, utilizing, building on and developing positive determinants of peace and safety. The real problems that exist (which are often the focus for community action – the ‘spur’ for social change) should not be ignored, but rather there should be a move from there towards the positive factors that would help to address these challenges in the context of a radical (primary prevention) approach that focuses on building the conditions needed (safety and peace determinants).

The brief discussion on peace promotion highlighted the following three aspects: Peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. It was noted that the first two aspects relate to areas generally associated with conflict resolution and management, while the latter concept refers to more radical community and societal interventions that focus on building a ‘culture of peace’ and ‘safe communities’ – focusing on macro-structural aspects.

Finally, the ISHS’s historical focus on peace though the Centre for Peace Action was brought to the fore in the general discussion. Thus, it was recognized that the CVI was moving closer to its original roots rather than to something new.

The conversation then focused on the distinctive nature of the CVI’s work. There are many other governmental and non-governmental institutions, organizations and groups focusing on safety and peace, thus it is necessary to identify the distinctive contribution of the CVI’s work to the country, and globally. Some suggestions emerging from the group are outlined below:

- We are a research organization(s) – our focus is therefore on research to support peace and safety promotion.
- We conduct research to support the work of the government and social movements – where the goals of peace and safety are congruent with our approach. We are therefore committed to developing partnerships with relevant organizations for the purposes of ensuring that our research assists in the transformation of our country.
- We contribute to surveillance of homicide in the country (NIMSS). We need to expand this important surveillance or ‘magnitude’ arm of our work to include the ‘positive’ aspects (highlighted below), and to look at ways in which we can make these surveillance statistics more relevant to both government and social movements in this country, and on the global stage.
Our critical lens should inform the way we ‘make sense’ of our surveillance data so that we point to the macro/structural elements involved in perpetuating crime, violence and injury, as well as in promoting safety and peace.

Our contribution to understanding the determinants of crime, violence and injury will also be distinctive in its strong emphasis on analyzing the statistics within a macro framework that locates the analysis of specific findings ‘in context’. This includes a historical lens, central to a critical approach (e.g. the focus on historical colonization, apartheid, trauma and male violence). This also includes a systems approach that attempts to understand problems and solutions to crime, violence and injury within a comprehensive framework that locates factors at all levels of the system.

Our contribution to understanding determinants will also be characterized by a focus on ‘positive’ determinants linked to both peace (in relation to violence) and safety (in relation to crime and injury).

We conduct research that informs community and social interventions, and therefore community responsiveness and engagement are key principles in our work.

Our approach to intervention research is guided by the principles of community-based participatory research / action research. Part of our contribution to the research sector is to document and develop this type of research in the South African and global context.

In our efforts to conduct research that focuses on magnitude, determinants and interventions linked to building peaceful and safe communities, we are committed to intentionally drawing from various disciplines, including public health and social sciences, as well as currently marginalized indigenous and community-embedded knowledges relating to the areas of peace and safety promotion. We intentionally contribute to theory building that is relevant to our context, within a praxis framework.

The implications for the above focus were then identified. The above shift in focus (or emphasis) means that studies that focus on magnitude should include statistical analyses of both risk factors and protective factors. The latter includes developing specific determinants and indicators – those things that need to be in place to provide a safe and peaceful environment. This data could then be used for various purposes (e.g. building instruments to guide the development of safe communities). It could also include community mapping of assets – which could focus on broad social ‘capital’ or resilience factors, or specific mediating factors such as religious assets.

The critical lens that ‘runs through’ the safety and peace promotion thrust will result in macro-analyses of data obtained through various surveillance and other research methodologies – focusing on questions of reflexivity (self-reflection that includes addressing the question of ‘whose interests are being served’); power relations and dynamics (particularly in relation to any form of oppression, or empowerment); socio-economic factors (e.g. social class analyses); gender equality; and so on.

Once again, in addition to a focus on the negative or risk factors relating to crime, violence and injury, the determinants of safety and peace need to be identified and understandings of these conditions need to be clarified so that interventions and evaluations can be aimed at building peaceful and safe communities. The critical lens will highlight those determinants particularly relevant to addressing any form of oppression – with a particular emphasis on social determinants. (This includes analyses of how these determinants shape our individual and
collective identities and behaviour.) It will also result in drawing in indigenous and other forms of community knowledge in attempts to understand both the challenges and potential solutions relating to crime, violence and injury – towards developing peaceful and safe communities.

The shift towards more of a focus on safety and promotion takes us more strongly into the *safe communities* framework. The ‘peace’ side of the CVI’s thrust will need to be integrated into this in some way. The *critical lens* requires that the WHO agenda and framework for safe communities be examined and ‘transformed’ where appropriate. This includes looking at the criteria and indicators used to develop a safe community, ensuring that they address the macro factors that are linked to developing a just and ‘equal’ society.

A *critical perspective* suggests an approach to research intervention that is *community participatory action research* based. In summary this approach is guided by principles that ensure that the power dynamics between the ‘researcher-researched’ reflect the very values the organization is trying to support! The research agenda, its process, its outputs, and its outcomes (utilization of the research) all need to be developed with these values in mind. The latter aspect (utilization of the research findings) implies a commitment to research translation, advocacy, and action for change.

### 3.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an analysis of the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead programme’s (CVI) perspectives and approach to research. This analysis was presented under the following key headings: (a) A commitment to multi-disciplinarity and intersectoral collaboration, (b) multivocality: a commitment to inclusion and mainstreaming of indigenous knowledges and voices, (c) person-in-context approach, (d) public health approach, (e) critical perspective, and (f) the CVI’s approach to research.

The *analysis of the relevant CVI (and ISHS) documents* revealed a clear commitment to and operationalization of a multi- and inter-disciplinary approach to understanding violence, and a comprehensive approach to violence prevention and safety promotion. The commitment to multi-disciplinary work, and intersectoral collaboration, relates directly to a commitment to multivocality – the recognition and utilization of various voices in attempting to understand and respond to social challenges. The need to draw on and mainstream indigenous and community-embedded voices and knowledges is emphasized within this general commitment. The role of religion and spirituality - and the need to transform the science-religion separation - is highlighted in a number of CVI sources. This includes identifying and drawing on religious assets and spiritual capital as protective factors in violence prevention programmes.

The need for a multi-dimensional and multi-level approach to understanding and responding to violence relates to a view of violence that highlights the need for perspectives and theories that provide explanations which locate persons in their complex systems. This is in line with the ecological perspective which overtly focuses on individual, relationship, community and societal
factors. This is also in line with a community psychology approach which informs the work of the CVI.

The public health approach guides the work of the CVI. This includes a focus on identifying risk and protective factors relating to violence. Prevention and health promotion approaches to violence also underpin the work of the CVI, with primary prevention and safety promotion being key areas of focus. The concept of community resilience has also emerged as a major focus, reflecting a ‘strengths’ approach in the work of the CVI. In line with other global trends, the public health approach has been adapted to include other approaches, resulting in various integrated frameworks to understand and respond to violence. In general, the public health model has been linked to developmental and/or critical perspectives within the CVI.

The CVI’s approach to understanding and responding to violence reflects a strong critical perspective. Key characteristics of this perspective as it has developed in the CVI include: acting as a change agent to transform South Africa; utilizing a historical and contextual approach that attempts to understand ‘persons-in-context’; focusing on various issues of power and oppression, with a particular emphasis on racial dynamics, and feminist and masculinity within a gender perspective; inclusion of analyses of colonialism, particularly within the South African context; engaging with and mainstreaming marginalized voices, including indigenous and community-embedded knowledges; and, adoption of a human rights perspective.

An analysis of the CVI documents highlight the following key characteristics of the research conducted: a commitment to ‘data to action’ which includes the principles of contributing to prevention of crime, violence and injury through research that focuses on some form of social action or change, and where data is translated for social utilization purposes; disciplinary, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological diversity and pluralism, utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods where appropriate; incorporating and mainstreaming indigenous knowledge systems within a commitment to facilitating multi-vocality, within a bricolage approach that utilizes various disciplines and perspectives; a commitment to collaboration with and participation of all relevant stakeholders and role players; reflexivity: researcher self-reflection within an acknowledgement of the politics of knowledge; and, a commitment to conducting open and critical scientific investigations. These features of research methodology link directly to the critical perspective discussed above.

During a strategic planning workshop presentation and discussion with CVI staff members in September 2007, it was proposed that a Critical Public Health approach be developed as an overarching framework for the CVI work. It was noted that this should include examining exactly how the public health approach and critical lens link to one another, and how a critical lens would impact on the various projects of the CVI. The need for a ‘gender lens’, including both feminist and masculinity approaches, when focusing on male interpersonal violence, was also accepted. The concept of culture was also discussed. Although there is a nervousness relating to talking about culture given the way in which this concept was used to develop and maintain apartheid, it was agreed that issues relating to indigenous knowledges and culture need to be engaged in a sophisticated, sensitive and critical manner. With regard to the concept and framework of health promotion, it was suggested that the CVI critically engage with the global
health promotion debates. The need to explore how the CVI’s focus on safety promotion links to the international and national health promotion movement was recognized.

Two further key areas of focus for the CVI were identified at this workshop. First, the rhetorical commitment to accessing, including and engaging with different disciplinary, sectoral, and philosophical worldviews and perspectives needs to be concretely pursued to ensure that marginalized knowledges and voices are heard and utilized. And, second, the need for a deeper analysis of the risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence was highlighted. This includes drawing on a dynamic ecological perspective that takes the systems-thinking principle of interdependence seriously when considering relationships between factors at different ecological levels. It also means drawing on a critical perspective, including a gender perspective that uses both feminist and masculinity theories, to perform an analysis of power dynamics relevant to male interpersonal violence. Within this context, the issue of social identity as it relates to men in our society needs to have a central place, but it needs an analysis that does not minimize any of the ecological levels of analysis, and finds a way to highlight the community and societal factors that place men at risk for violence.

The strategic planning workshop held in August 2009, which included a discussion on the focus of the CVI and ISHS’s work, supported many of the points highlighted above. In particular, the critical perspective was emphasized as being a distinguishing feature of the work of this organization. The organisation’s emphasis on a ‘strengths’ approach was also highlighted, with safety and peace promotion being recognized as a growing focus in the work on crime, violence and injury. This meeting took this discussion further, identifying how this perspective impacts on the main areas of work of the organization. This included looking at the implications for magnitude, determinants, and interventions in the research conducted.
CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter commences by capturing the main points highlighted in a paper (Ratele et al., 2008) focusing on a developing conceptual framework to understand crime, violence and injury, and male interpersonal violence more specifically. This paper was presented at the national roundtable discussion on ‘Understanding Male Interpersonal Violence’, held by the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme (CVI) at the Medical Research Council on 2 and 3 October 2008.

This is followed by a summary of the proceedings of the national roundtable discussion held in October 2008. This includes both a response to the paper as well as further deliberations around challenges relating to understanding male interpersonal violence. Some key points raised by members of the CVI staff in response to this paper - at a staff workshop held in 2009 - are then presented. This entire process, including the strategic planning meetings reported on in the previous chapter, capture the process of developing a conceptual framework that can more adequately inform the work of the CVI in its attempt to contribute to building safe and peaceful communities in the South African context.

4.2 UNDERSTANDING MALE INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE: TOWARDS A RESPONSIVE CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH FRAMEWORK (Ratele, Lazarus, Suffla & Van Niekerk, 2008)

The presentation of the Ratele et al. (2008) paper covered the following areas:

- Aims and background
- Literature study on risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence
- Values underpinning the CVI’s approach to violence
- A public health approach
- Bringing together disparate theories in developing a locally responsive, social science-informed Critical Public Health framework on male interpersonal violence

The main aims of this presentation at the roundtable event were to:

- Enlarge on some key points emerging from the literature study on male interpersonal violence
Develop a conceptual foundation towards understanding and preventing male interpersonal violence in South Africa, responsive to local manifestations and dynamics of the problem, and informed by both the public health approach and social science perspectives.

Provide a basis for follow-up studies and prevention interventions focusing on the involvement of males as victims and perpetrators in interpersonal violence in South Africa and beyond.

This paper emerged out of a larger study whose main focus was to identify the risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence, based on an analysis of local and global empirical and theoretical literature (Lazarus, Tonsing, Ratele & Van Niekerk, 2009). Two main objectives drove the larger study: (a) to source information on risk and protective factors for male interpersonal violence, and (b) to identify perspectives and theories employed to explain male interpersonal violence.

4.2.1 Literature Study on Risk and Protective Factors to Male Interpersonal Violence

The study conducted by Lazarus et al. (2009) highlighted that several perspectives and theories are used to account for interpersonal violence, generally, and male interpersonal violence more specifically. Many authors have argued for the need for multi-disciplinarity in approaching violence, and the need for the development of integrated frameworks to understand the complex nature of violence so as to enable more flexible and comprehensive responses.

In the context of public health, the ecological perspective was found to be a dominant framework informing research on violence. This framework sees factors related to violence as being located at a number of levels: individual, relationship, community and societal. It was interesting to note that, in literature focusing on males in the context of interpersonal violence, this theoretical perspective was minimally utilized. It was also interesting to note that, from the vantage of the ecological perspective, analyses of male violence focused less on the community and societal levels, and more on the individual and relationship levels of analysis.

An analysis of the dominant theoretical frameworks adopted in studies of interpersonal violence generally, versus male interpersonal violence more specifically, revealed that, in contrast to the general violence literature, the literature focusing on males in interpersonal violence emphasized the following perspectives or theories:

- Social constructionism, located within a critical perspective
- Gender perspectives, including feminist and masculinity theories
- Historical and cultural perspectives
- Intrapsychic and biological perspectives
- Socialization and social learning theories
The literature study revealed a strong emphasis on masculine identity and masculinity more broadly speaking, with masculinity theories often being directly or indirectly linked to social identity theories.

In addition to a strong emphasis on masculinity, this literature study revealed a strong focus on culture, including norms, values, and ‘traditional’ beliefs and practices. However, although these local norms, values, beliefs and practices have been identified in numerous risk assessments for male interpersonal violence, most of the theoretical frameworks used to explain them are mainstream ‘western’ perspectives. There is therefore little evidence in the literature that African, indigenous and community-embedded understandings have been taken into account in understandings and responses to violence.

4.2.2 Values Underpinning the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme’s Approach to Violence

In this section of the presentation, the values underpinning the CVI’s approach to violence were presented. Important values that were highlighted included: Multi-disciplinarity, intersectoral collaboration, inclusion, and the mainstreaming of indigenous knowledges and voices (including religious and spiritual worldviews). With regard to meta-theoretical biases, it was noted that the CVI places an emphasis on prevention, risk and protective factors, and safety promotion. In addition, there is a strong critical approach in the CVI’s work which is characterized by: A human rights perspective, commitment to transformation, historical and contextual sensitivity, and engagement with power and oppression. With regard to the latter point, racial dynamics, feminism and masculinity are key areas of focus, and analyses of colonization, particularly in relation to the effects of apartheid, are particularly prevalent in the theoretical foundations and analyses used in projects focusing on crime, violence and injury, particularly in South Africa.

4.2.3 Public Health Approach

In this section of the presentation, an overview of key aspects, and a rationale for the use of a public health approach to violence, was presented. Prof Kopano Ratele stated that this approach was centralized because:

- More than other approaches, the public health perspective emphasizes violence prevention
- It is a population-oriented approach, in contrast to a focus only on smaller groups or individuals
- It is adaptable to a wide variety of settings and topics
However, he acknowledged again that, within the literature focusing on male interpersonal violence, little reference is made to the public health approach, even though this is a dominant approach in studies on violence and interpersonal violence more generally.

An overview of the four steps in the public health approach was then presented:

**Table 4.1: Four Steps in the Public Health Approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th>Step 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define the problem</td>
<td>Identify risks and causes</td>
<td>Design, implement and evaluate</td>
<td>Disseminate widely and measure effectiveness and efficiency</td>
</tr>
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<th>Primary questions during this step are: What is the nature of violence, who is affected as perpetrator or victim, when does it occur, and where is it concentrated?</th>
<th>The question in this step is: Why? For instance, why does violence occur more to some groups than others, in certain places more than others, and at certain times more than other times?</th>
<th>What works? For example, programme designers need to respond to whether the programme will work with all or only some target groups, and in all or only some settings.</th>
<th>The questions here are: What is the impact of the programme, and can it be disseminated to the larger population?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This step involves the collection of data on nature, magnitude and extent of violence, e.g. through epidemiological surveillance and monitoring.</td>
<td>The concern here is with the identification of risk factors and causes, e.g. through a variety of epidemiological studies, including rate calculations, cohort studies, and case control studies.</td>
<td>The focus here is on programme design, implementation, evaluation and refinement, e.g. with the help of randomized control studies.</td>
<td>This entails diffusion, replication and impact assessment of intention, e.g. by undertaking impact assessments through examining incidences, as well as by conducting effectiveness and efficiency studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A central challenge, when working with the above framework, is to determine its value and appropriateness for South Africa and other low-income countries (Stevens et al., 2003).

**Developing a Responsive Critical Public Health Framework**

Ratele reported that a number of theoretical and practical demands have been considered in developing the CVI’s approach to understanding crime, violence and injury, and male interpersonal violence more specifically. This includes contextual challenges, especially history and power inequalities; the need to work across disciplines and to include all relevant voices.
(multivocality) in the process of trying to understand the violence in our country; and the need to respond to the many criticisms leveled at the public health and other approaches highlighted by authors (e.g. Stevens et al., 2003).

As a result of the above challenges, the authors of the paper felt that they needed to address the challenge of being responsive to local, changing conditions; pay attention to structures of social and political power and not only focus on individuals or relationships between individuals; engage with cultural understandings within a multicultural context; and address socio-economic challenges such as highly unequal income levels, widespread poverty, and unemployment.

In response to the above mentioned challenges, a conceptual framework was developed (Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1 Developing Conceptual Framework to Understand Male Interpersonal Violence**
The core dimensions of the Critical Public Health approach to male interpersonal violence outlined above is discussed in some detail below. Two major areas highlighted for this purpose include: (a) the need for a critical perspective, and (b) the use of different lenses to understand violence.

Core dimensions of a critical perspective


The critical perspective central to the Critical Public Health approach presented above is characterized as follows. This perspective:

- Provides a historical and contextual analysis
- Focuses on the political economy, and economic relations in particular
- Emphasizes power relations, particularly within racial and gender social relations
- Places emphasis on structural and relational identity, with feminism and masculinity being particular areas of focus in gender perspectives
- Seeks to address oppression of various kinds, including a focus on colonization
- Utilizes strategies to uncover and overcome alienation through deconstruction of ideologies
- Aims to support processes of empowerment and transformation, with participation and collaboration being key values and actions
- Takes seriously indigenous and local knowledges, with some emphasizing the need for reclamation of local knowledge, language and culture
- Engages with the tension between ‘culture’ and ‘power’ dynamics, focusing on addressing oppressive rules of power within cultural formations
- Often reveals a bricolage approach with an emphasis on the need to engage with different knowledges and ways of seeing and knowing
- Draws on positivist and hermeneutic/phenomenological perspectives, adding an emancipatory interest that aims to contribute to social action for social justice in various ways, and includes a self-conscious criticism of oneself as a researcher

It is interesting to note that, contrary to some peoples’ beliefs that indigenous knowledge approaches are conservative and often insensitive to the power dynamics within cultural emphases, some of the above mentioned authors (Bishop, 2005; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; and Smith, 2005) show how indigenous approaches are located within a critical perspective.
Using different lenses

The development of this framework is also informed by a call for analyses that bring together the elements of multiple voices, different theories and meta-theories, systems thinking, dynamism and a critical outlook – in a coherent framework. This includes drawing in local knowledge as well as relevant public health and social science studies on violence.

A key feature of this model or approach is therefore the recognition of the need to use different ‘lenses’ for the purposes of understanding and responding to the complex nature of interpersonal violence, and male interpersonal violence more specifically. Some of these lenses are identified in the diagram (Figure 4.1): race, gender, economy, age, history, disability, culture, religion, and sexuality. This list is not exhaustive, but rather an indication of the particular emphases that may be chosen in any particular study and intervention. These lenses are usually used individually. While this may be legitimate from a research focus point of view, there is a need for a layered, multifocal use of these lenses for the purposes of understanding the complex dynamics involved in violence. These lenses are often overlapping, dynamic, and interactive in nature, thus a more complex analysis that engages with these intersections is required. And all of this needs to be contextually responsive.

Some final reflections on this developing framework

This framework uses the public health steps in violence research and prevention, as well as the ecological perspective which provides a systems view of both risks and protective factors, highlighting the individual, relationship, community and societal levels.

It also places a strong focus on the role of power. Although the role of power dynamics in violence is perhaps obvious, it is not always included in analyses conducted, although, in studies on male interpersonal violence, this is often a strong feature of explanations. Within the South African context, considerations of power must include a reflection on the effects of history, of inter-generational colonial and apartheid trauma, as well as on effects of employment, income, gender inequities, and infrastructural and racial inequalities.

There are two other issues that cannot be disregarded when using the framework constituting a focus in this presentation. First, there is a need for relative openness as far as the ‘lenses’ chosen to view violence, and the interventions designed, are concerned. One of the challenges in this context is that we need to formulate ‘something more’ than a loose mix of approaches. It is thus important that, in employing this foundation, researchers and practitioners see the relationships between the various elements of the framework as being dynamically related to each other.

A further challenge relating to the above mentioned point is to find the best way to integrate the different paradigms so that they complement rather than violently contradict one another. In this regard, it is important to underline that, even while accommodating for diverse philosophical foundations of science, public health research often assumes a stance of scientific neutrality. This is a weakness the developing Critical Public Health approach is trying to address.
4.3 NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: UNDERSTANDING MALE VIOLENCE

The roundtable discussion, including approximately 30 key informants in the area of male violence in South Africa, focused on debates about theoretical explanations for understanding and responding to male interpersonal violence. The discussion commenced with a presentation on ‘Understanding male interpersonal violence: Towards a responsive critical public health framework’ (Ratele et al., 2008 – refer Section 4.2 above) which reflected an initial attempt on the part of the authors to develop a theoretical framework that could be used to guide research focusing on male interpersonal violence and other related areas in the CVI.

This was followed by a response from Dr Garth Stevens, outlined in some detail below. A summary of the open discussion succeeding these two presentations is then provided. The latter summary is presented under the key themes emerging from the discussion. Thereafter, key points highlighted during the panel workshop which focused on developing an appropriate framework for understanding male violence are presented.

4.3.1 Respondent: Dr Garth Stevens

Dr Garth Stevens, from the Department of Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand, was the respondent to the draft paper on developing a conceptual framework for understanding male interpersonal violence.

Stevens commenced his response by mentioning that this development of a critical public health framework constitutes a movement towards blending forms of pragmatism, criticality, interdisciplinarity, methodological pluralism and theoretical diversity. He noted that there have been various attempts to do this, with varying degrees of success. The main stumbling blocks associated with this have been: (a) tensions between different ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies, disciplines, and theories; (b) different philosophies of science and application of scientific methods; and (c) a range of vested interests.

The main question is: How do the three central aspects involved in understanding male interpersonal violence (public health, ecology, and criticality) speak to each other? The phenomenon at hand is a very complex one, yet frameworks often tend to be simplified.

Stevens recommended that a further analysis of critical public health literature be conducted for the purposes of refining and sharpening the conceptual framework. Currently, argued Stevens, the developing framework under discussion was too overwhelming. He suggested that it may help to look at the three different elements (public health, ecological approach, and criticality) separately again, before attempting any further articulation between them.

Steven’s own analysis of the three different frameworks revealed that (a) the public health approach is a “how to do” approach to a health event or psychosocial problem; and (b) the systemic, ecological perspective is useful for examining the nexus points for male interpersonal
violence, so that it can be understood holistically at the levels of predisposing factors, protective factors and intervention levels.

Steven’s presentation went on to show various diagrammatic representations of relevant theories, starting with the four-step public health logic (Surveillance, Risk factor identification, Implementation, and Development and evaluation of interventions). Refinements of specific elements within the public health model were shown in the Epidemiological Model (with host, agent and vector in a given environment), and the Haddon Matrix (which plots the host, agent, and physical and socio-economic environment on one axis and the Pre-event, Event, and Post-event on the other axis of a matrix).

These approaches imply an underlying ecological framework, but Stevens cautioned against a slippage of viewing these generic, structured approaches as theoretical explanations for violence. The ecological framework, with its four levels, speaks of ‘complex linkages’ between the levels, but there is little in-depth explanation of the linkages and interactions. It is also difficult to locate violence and male interpersonal violence within the four systemic levels, which are more fluid than any diagrammatic representation can express. It is therefore not recommended that such sub-systems be rigidly applied to understand the involvement of males as victims or perpetrators in interpersonal violence.

With regard to the third element, the critical lenses, Stevens argued that this is more difficult to incorporate, particularly because the dynamics involved are less tangible.

Integrating different models and approaches to reach a greater understanding of male interpersonal violence can be a real challenge. Stevens suggested that perhaps there should be some integration, but also some distinctiveness. Some diagrammatic examples of past attempts at model and theory integration by members of the ISHS and CVI show that this can easily lead to overly complex and overwhelming frameworks which may easily be disregarded because they are too intricate and impractical.

In conclusion, Stevens presented a diagram consisting of concentric circles and an overlaid web (Figure 4.2).
Figure 4.2: Stevens’ diagram towards developing a critical public health framework for male interpersonal violence

The circles represent the different social circumstances in which violence can occur (intrapersonal, interpersonal, collective or group, and collective or social), while each “wedge” of the web represents a different level, context or system (e.g. relational, community, socio-structural, and socio-historical). Stevens argued that the web ‘quadrants’ could be populated with risk and protective factors, predisposing factors, and so on; and also with “lenses”/themes, such as race and sexuality.

Stevens’ presentation was very helpful in further developing participants’ understandings of the complexity of the issues involved in developing an integrated theoretical framework that would speak to male interpersonal violence. Several participants pointed out that this presentation clarified what the CVI was grappling with, and that it shed new light on the matter.

4.3.2 Open Discussion

The open discussion following the two presentations summarized above allowed participants to raise issues and engage in debates. The topics listed below emerged from a content analysis of the proceedings.
Language and Terminology

Two terms were debated during this open session. This included (a) what do we mean by critical, and (b) should we use the word capital.

What do we mean by ‘critical’?
The need to define what was meant by critical in the context of a ‘critical conceptual framework’ or a ‘critical public health framework’ was raised. One participant noted that, according to Derek Hook, criticality is an orientation to the world; a form of reading the world. One of the key elements of this is how one orientates oneself to power in the world. The question “why?” is central to many explanations of what criticality is. A different view of criticality, reported another participant, would be to see it as the act of challenging people’s assumptions, which may in turn be contradicted and challenged. And finally, one participant stated that when we engage in critical science, we endeavour to unmask the way power operates. It is clear from the abovementioned comments that this term holds different meanings for different people.

Should we use the word ‘capital’?
In the presentations during the roundtable discussion, presenters made use of the concepts of social capital, spiritual capital and religious capital. In the open discussion, participants cautioned against the use of the word capital, which originates from the language of economics. Using the word capital in this way insinuates a very particular ideological set of meanings, led by very influential global bodies, such as the World Bank. While the point was made that the South African government has bought into this terminology, and that it may be wise to use the same concepts in appropriate contexts, it was agreed that different terms should perhaps be used to describe these concepts in certain instances. It was pointed out, however, that this terminology is always criticized, but that nobody has come up with useful alternatives.

The value of theorizing

One participant raised an important question: “Do these attempts at theorizing about male interpersonal violence really help us? What purpose does it serve?” The point was made that the impulse towards finding a final explanation only provokes more questions. Several responses to the questions on the value of theory, including its value in addressing practical challenges, were offered. One participant argued that theory was not only taught and valued in academic classrooms. For example, members of the apartheid struggle utilized complex Marxist theories to assist them in assessing and responding to particular political challenges. Another participant argued that it was important to clarify one’s theoretical frameworks for the purposes of self-reflection and self-honesty, as theories inform our practices, whether we are aware of it or not. These points were supported by another participant, who added that: “When the pressures are so great in a community, a hunger for theory naturally develops”. Another participant posed the question: “Why am I not violent, even though I grew up without a father?” In his case, theorizing led to the realization that he had a number of ‘social fathers’ (father figures or positive role models) who came into his life and were really important in his development. Thus, theorizing
helped him to understand and to explain his and others’ responses to violence, which in turn, helped him to develop appropriate interventions.

Despite the recognition of the value of theory, highlighted by many referred to above, there was a call for a move away from academic debate to practice: to focus on addressing practical solutions relating to male interpersonal violence. Others felt strongly that theorizing and the development of a conceptual framework may lead to a deeper understanding, and thereby, to more effective interventions. In conclusion, it was repeatedly reiterated that this debate around theory and practice should not be seen as either/or situation, but rather as an opportunity to develop effective prevention interventions relating to the involvement of males in interpersonal violence. Finally, there was a suggestion that the CVI finalize their Critical Public Health framework and test its value in a relevant practical context.

Community involvement

Several participants emphasized the need for community inputs and involvement in violence research, theorizing, and violence prevention intervention development. One participant referred to the community as the ‘unheard voices’. It was argued that academics need to learn from local communities, including incorporating their indigenous knowledges into violence theory and intervention practice.

4.3.3 Panel Workshop: Developing a Conceptual Framework for Understanding Male Violence

After the open discussion summarized in the section above, a panel was selected to workshop together, within the larger group of roundtable participants, to add to the developing conceptual framework for understanding male interpersonal violence. The panel consisted of Prof Don Foster, Dr Garth Stevens, Ms Nondumiso Mvinjelwa, Mr Eldred de Klerk, and Dr David Bruce. Panel members were provided with newsprint, post-its and marker pens to aid in their creative process. The following key issues arose during this workshop.

Interpersonal space

The role of interpersonal space in male violence was pointed out. This was related to theory of conflict resolution and the notion of “taking charge of one’s space”. It was argued that there is a need to redefine the way men are allowed to enter others’ spaces: ways that exclude automatic acceptance of bullying and violent behaviour. Violence occurs when the perpetrator feels that somebody else’s space is “his space”, and thus is linked to entitlement and a lack of boundaries. It was further argued that it is important to move the thinking about personal space beyond geography and the physical. In conclusion of this contribution, the following question was raised: “How do we include the concept of personal space into theory about male interpersonal violence?
Prof Don Foster used the available newsprint to assist him in portraying his thoughts for a model for male interpersonal violence. He initially wrote down four concepts: Power, Entitlement, Developmental Pathways, and Structure.

He stated that violence is about power. Power is linked to relational and spatial issues, because of men’s sense of entitlement vis-à-vis women and children. Men violate others because they feel entitled to; because they are ‘men’. The concept of entitlement is therefore at the centre of this model, and goes hand-in-hand with masculinity. Foster referred to a recent study by Jewkes et al. (2002) on rural perpetrators which found that rapists reported a much greater number of so-called ‘consensual’ sexual partners; consensual - not because the women actually gave consent, but because the perpetrator felt entitled to these women. The concept of having a voice was later added to the diagram, to explain that when young people do not have a voice or opportunity to express themselves - even though they feel entitled to one - they can become violent.

Another aspect that was later added to the diagram was masculinity, with the argument being that there is a need to redefine what it means to be a male and what it means to be in relationships as a male. It was pointed out that as a boy’s development continues, there is a systematic accrual of structural and ideological teachings about what a ‘man’ should be, and this is supported by other men. There is a pressure to adhere to these harmful ways of masculinity, especially when it is culturally prescribed or when culture is collectively misinterpreted.

The model that was developed in this workshop also included the effects of developmental pathways. It was noted that a longitudinal study in New Zealand, conducted by Moffit et al., focusing on repeat offenders and their neurological and biological make-up, found that brutalizing (‘knocking around’) young children permanently alters their neurological pathways and thus their emotional make-up. This brutalization of men in the home from a young age is considered to be a major predisposing factor in male interpersonal violence.

In a world where vastly contradictory structural and ideological pathways intersect, things can play out in many ways. A study by Foster et al. was cited in this regard. This study found that, especially in the gang-infested areas of Cape Town, masculinity has three characteristics: toughness, success, and control. One interesting finding from this study was that the one thing that young men wanted most was ‘to be a gentleman’. This reflects their views of and beliefs regarding masculinity. The contradiction in this situation, however, is that, structurally, becoming a gentleman - with a suit, a high-profile job, and respect - is improbable for many men. Men will then often find another vehicle to obtaining these objects of desire, for example, by committing crime or carrying a gun.

The issue of self-worth was raised by another panelist in the context of an argument that violence is linked to an ‘inflated self-esteem’. This argument was challenged, with another member of the panel saying that violent men’s self-esteem is fragile rather than inflated, and that it is a threatened masculinity rather than an entitled masculinity that we should be talking about. In response, the original contributor explained that the inflated self-esteem is an artificially inflated one, which leads to an inflated sense of entitlement (referring to Baumeister). That is to say, a
man with a low self-esteem would not necessarily act violently towards others. It is rather the man who has created an ‘unreal’ inflated self-esteem who will not tolerate being disrespected or shamed. Being ‘dissed’ by somebody can then be so intolerable that it can result in violent behavior, including murder. In this context being ‘dissed’ can refer to more than just disrespect; it can include disempowerment and disaffection. This was then related to shame which was considered to be a central component in understanding male interpersonal violence, and was thus added to the diagram.

Finally, one participant in the workshop carried over the notion of the developmental pathway and brutalization to the effects of colonization. Participants were reminded that the brutalization of local people in South Africa was severe. In postcolonial societies there is a struggle to reverse the internalized oppression and the inequalities, but often these efforts end up making the schism even wider. The following question was then raised: “How do the notions of entitlement and relational power work in the societal-level application of this developing model? Is the Nation the brutalized child?”

4.4 CVI DISCUSSIONS

In this section, a summary of key points raised by the staff of the CVI in July 2009, in response to a presentation of the paper by Ratele et al. (2008), is presented. This constitutes the most recent response to the ideas presented in this paper. Only those points relevant to the conceptual aspects (rather than editorial considerations) are presented below.

Reviewers and the staff as a whole raised the need to distinguish between frameworks, perspectives, theories and models. This legitimate concern has been discussed and hopefully addressed at the beginning of Chapter 2 in this report.

A question of whether or not one conceptual framework could be developed for all aspects of crime, violence and injury work was raised. While it may be possible to identify specific paradigms or perspectives that should guide the work of the CVI, specific phenomena would require particular theories.

A discussion on the public health approach highlighted in the paper resulted in a number of important points being raised. It was noted that the public health approach, as it is presented in this paper, is a framework or model, and not a perspective or theory. Its value lies in providing steps for research and intervention. It was suggested that the rationale for including this approach should be more clearly articulated, and critiqued. The authors and the other staff members concurred that this aspect of the conceptual framework being developed was over-emphasized.

The ecological perspective, which is one component of the developing conceptual framework (Ratele et al., 2008), needs to be disconnected from the public health approach, even though it is often used together with this approach. Its use as a perspective should be emphasized (including its links with systems thinking), and a rationale and critique for the use of this perspective should
be included. Staff members recognized that this perspective is helpful in helping to focus research on the different levels of analysis, but its limitations need to be recognized.

The critical lens, emphasized in the conceptual framework (Ratele et al., 2008), needs more emphasis, and explanation. In particular, the particular characteristics and assumptions linked to this perspective need to be clarified for all concerned, with examples of how this ‘works in practice’ demonstrated in the various projects of the CVI. One example that was given was the study on ‘Colonization, apartheid, and historical trauma as risks for male violence’ which uses a critical lens to understand risks for male violence – particularly in contexts of historical (and current) oppression. Other examples used to illustrate how this critical lens would impact on ones’s research included a study on female strangulation, and burns. Finally, it was noted by one of the authors of the paper that this perspective needs to be linked to a human rights approach more clearly.

When looking at the Responsive Critical Public Health approach developed by Ratele et al. (2008) thus far, it was suggested that there is a need to look at how peace psychology and health promotion link to the current framework. This is particularly relevant given the CVI’s ‘shift’ towards a more positive approach that focuses on safety and peace promotion (refer Chapter 3 in this report). It was also noted, by the authors and others present, that the current diagram in the paper would need to be re-designed in the light of all the feedback received thus far. The diagram needs to remain simple, and links between the different parts need to be clearly articulated.

The latter point links to a discussion on developing an integrated framework – which is clearly what this exercise reflects. It was noted that such an endeavour is not without its challenges! We need to clarify what we mean by an ‘integrated framework’, and we need to include a rationale for, and critique of, this approach to theory building. Furthermore, the synthesis process needs to be carefully considered. As mentioned earlier, the framework needs to be simple, and must, in the end, assist in understanding and responding to crime, violence and injury, in the context of building peaceful and safe communities in South Africa.

4.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is well known that violence is a serious problem, both locally and globally. It is also clear that there is a need for theoretically sound, locally-grounded, better-integrated understandings of violence, and male interpersonal violence more specifically.

The developing conceptual framework discussed in this chapter represents an attempt to engage in violence prevention work in a way that accommodates varied scientific philosophies, theoretical diversity, methodological pluralism, and interdisciplinarity. It allows for the conscious co-existence of varying ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies in the prevention of violence. It also allows for evidence-led interventions to be structured across mirco-, meso-, and macro-levels of the system (using the four levels of the ecological perspective), with both universal and specified populations and environments, at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of prevention.
The critical perspective is important to emphasize, given the erroneous belief that the public health model is in and of itself an all-encompassing and scientifically neutral framework that accommodates for a range of diverse perspectives. A key element of the Responsive Critical Public Health approach developed here is the conscious and critical introduction of alternative and complimentary perspectives of science.

What the authors of this paper attempted to do was to show that violence must be addressed at a macro-level as well as at the levels of individuals, families and communities, allowing for the possibility of moving beyond the restrictive definitions of violence that are situation- and event-specific, to include political and ideological components that help to contextualize this phenomenon. This form of interdisciplinarity is imperative to comprehensively understand the complex nature of violence that is located within the subjective, cultural, ideological, material and historical realms that help to constitution social realities.

At the national roundtable discussion, held at the Medical Research Council in September 2008, two presentations on ‘Understanding male violence’ were presented (Ratele et al., 2008; Stevens, 2008). These presentations tabled ideas, criticisms of and suggestions for a conceptual framework. The respondent’s remarks and examples went a long way towards clarifying many issues, challenges and shortcomings when faced with theorizing in this way.

Although the discussion that ensued thereafter initially ventured into the realm of the philosophy of science, this step was considered to be of utmost importance. While initially attending to the clarification of concepts, the proceedings culminated in a lively debate about which core ‘ingredients’ could help to explain the involvement of males as victims and perpetrators in interpersonal violence. Key concepts highlighted included: (a) entitlement, (b) masculinity, (c) power, (d) developmental pathways, (e) brutalization, (f) voice, (g) structure and ideologies, (h) shame, and (i) the effects of colonisation. These interrelated concepts incorporate many other related issues which may well lead the way to a more focused and coherent conceptual framework for understanding male interpersonal violence in South Africa and beyond.

Finally, during a staff workshop, held in July 2009, further responses from the CVI staff to the Ratele et al. (2008) paper were provided. These responses supported many of the comments already received from the national roundtable, as well as other reviewers. Specific aspects that were highlighted during this conversation included an emphasis on the need for more clarity on various aspects of the proposed framework; the need for clearer rationales, and critiques, of all components of the framework (in particular, the use of a public health approach, an ecological perspective, and a critical lens); an exploration of how these lenses and approaches impact on the various projects within the CVI; and the need for caution, and courage, in the development of an integrated framework that will hopefully assist in understanding the crime, violence and injury challenges in this context.
5.1 OVERVIEW

This final chapter provides a summary of the literature study that focused on identifying the main perspectives and theories used to understand male interpersonal violence. This is followed by an overview of the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme’s (CVI) developing conceptual framework, and more specifically, the studies focusing on male interpersonal violence. A summary of the proceedings of a national roundtable discussion with key South African informants, and the proceedings of a CVI staff workshop that focused on the Ratele et al. (2008) paper on developing a conceptual framework for male interpersonal violence, is then presented. These summaries are succeeded by a list of recommendations relating to research and the further development of a conceptual framework to inform the work of the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme.

5.2 SUMMARY

5.2.1 Literature Review on Perspectives and Theories to Understand Male Interpersonal Violence

The main purpose of this part of the study was to identify the main perspectives and theories used for studies on male interpersonal violence. The process included identifying key perspectives used for understanding interpersonal violence more generally, followed by a more focused study of the male interpersonal violence literature.

Three general points were highlighted in the theoretical study. First, it was noted that many perspectives and specific theories are used to explain violence, and male interpersonal violence in particular. Second, many authors argue for the need to pursue a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of violence in general, including male interpersonal violence. And third, there is a need for the development of integrated frameworks to understand the complex nature of this phenomenon, and to be able to respond comprehensively.
The review revealed that the main perspectives used to frame studies on interpersonal violence more generally include:

**Table 5.1: Main Perspectives and Theories on Interpersonal Violence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives/Approaches</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecological approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public health approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention and health promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender perspectives, including feminist and masculinity theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological and psychological perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological and criminology perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural perspectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that the frameworks and theories that were emphasized in the more focused review of male interpersonal violence literature include the following:

**Table 5.2: Main Perspectives and Theories on Male Interpersonal Violence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives/Approaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical perspectives and theories, including social constructionism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender perspectives, including feminist and masculinity theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical and cultural approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization and social learning theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapsychic and biological theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biopsychosocial theories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the general literature on interpersonal violence (particularly in the psychology discipline), the ecological perspective appears to be a dominant framework for understanding and responding to violence. A number of researchers have adapted this approach by including it, in various ways, with other approaches, for example, ecological-transactional, developmental-ecological, social-ecological and cognitive-ecological approaches. These frameworks are often directly or indirectly informed by systems theory.

It is interesting to note that while the ecological perspective tends to be strongly evident in the general interpersonal violence literature, studies focusing on males tend to limit the use of this perspective – although many authors refer to it as an over-arching framework that helps to keep the different levels of the system visible (individual, relationship, community and social levels).

While many authors recognize the need to examine factors at all levels of the system, there is little evidence of theoretical frameworks that look at the dynamics between and across levels of the system. This latter aspect is crucial if we are to understand violence, including male
interpersonal violence, and be able to identify how and where to place resources to prevent this violence.

This literature study found that the analyses of male interpersonal violence focus primarily on individual and relationship levels of analysis – with challenges to masculine identity being located primarily at these levels. There is therefore minimal analysis at community and societal levels. This tendency to minimize the community and social levels in the masculinity debates has been noted by some. There is a need to examine how masculinity expresses itself or is operationalized as a risk and protective factor at the community and societal levels so that this obviously important aspect can be addressed at political and structural levels.

The public health approach generally uses the ecological levels as an overall framework of analysis. Within this approach, various key aspects of prevention are evident, with the three levels of prevention being regularly noted (primary, secondary and tertiary prevention), and with risk and protective factors also being highlighted. However, the latter aspect (protective factors) is often noted but minimally pursued.

A health promotion approach is evident in those studies focusing more specifically on protective factors. This approach is also evident in the focus on peace or safety promotion, community resilience, social assets, and social capital. Various theories relating to these concepts are used and developed in the violence literature. Despite these trends, an overt reference to the global health promotion movement (based on the Ottawa Charter, WHO, 1986), is generally not visible however.

Critical perspectives used and developed in studies of violence, and male interpersonal violence more specifically, include various contextual analyses that focus on individual-social interactions and dynamics. Some researchers (particularly from developing countries) adopt and develop post-colonialism approaches which include historical analyses that emphasize the effects of colonization. Some of the researchers who adopt a critical perspective utilize social constructionism as a particular way of viewing people, and violence more specifically. Theories relating to social identity, and, in particular, masculine identity, are often used to explain interpersonal violence.

Gender perspectives are often included in analyses of interpersonal violence because of the interpersonal dynamic relating to this form of violence, and because of the high number of males involved in this type of violence. This includes feminist and masculinity theories. It is interesting to note that masculinity as a framework and concept used to understand violence is minimally discussed in the general literature on violence, or even interpersonal violence, accessed in this study, yet this constitutes a dominant perspective in articles and studies focusing on males. In many of the studies accessed in this research, most of the risk factors are related, in one way or another, to masculine identity issues.

Although gender perspectives are clearly evident in studies focusing on male interpersonal violence, it is not clear, from this limited study, whether a framework that crosses over and between (women-centered) feminist frameworks and (male-centered) masculinity frameworks has been developed – that is, a feminist masculinity framework. This is an important
consideration, particularly in the face of backlash politics. The need to bring women and men together around these issues is highlighted by many.

Some authors make use of cultural perspectives, drawing on various relevant theories to help them obtain a culturally sensitive and relevant approach to understanding violence in general, and male interpersonal violence in particular. The reference to culture in this context relates to two main aspects: (a) cultural theories that relate to the development of a subculture of violence, and/or (b) ‘traditional’ or indigenous cultural factors relating to specific ethnic or local community contexts. It is interesting to note that most of the literature utilizing or referring to a ‘traditional’ cultural approach was accessed through the more specific focus on male interpersonal violence. This was less evident in the general violence and interpersonal violence literature.

Although ‘traditional’ cultural factors are highlighted in the risk assessments of violence in general, and male interpersonal violence in particular, it is interesting to note that the perspectives and specific theories that are used to explain these factors are predominantly from mainstream ‘western’ disciplines. There is very little evidence in the literature that indigenous, local and/or community-embedded understandings and frameworks are being drawn in to transform our understandings, and responses to violence, in general, and male interpersonal violence in particular.

Also very prevalent in the literature on interpersonal violence are individualist psychological perspectives and theories. This includes a common use of social learning theory, and developmental and life-course theories that locate the risks, and sometimes protective factors, within people’s lifespan stages. The latter is mostly used in studies that focus on youth violence. Psycho-analytic and psychodynamic theories are also used, particularly in relation to the individual level risk factors. Studies that focus on the individual level also tend to include various psycho-biological and other intra-individual theories, particularly in relation to identifying pathological typologies of perpetrators. Some argue for a biopsychosocial approach. This latter aspect is an interesting development, where evolutionary and other biological factors are often the focus in explanations of males as victims and perpetrators of violence.

Psychological theories used in the male interpersonal violence focused literature include a strong focus on social learning and socialization theories. This includes a major focus on intergenerational transmission or cycling of violence, generally within the family-of-origin. However, there is little connection made between the latter family dynamic and broader societal historical colonization and trauma.

And finally, perspectives emerging primarily from the sociology and criminology literature bases include: Group relations theories, social conflict theory, exchange theory, resource theory, theory of urban inequality, social disorganization theory, social capital, and cultural/sub-culture theories. Social disorganization theories are used by many theorists when trying to understand violence. Directly linked to this framework is the concept of social capital, and other theories and concepts, for example, sense of community, social support, social cohesion, and community resilience. One particular use of the social capital framework that was identified in this study because of the focus of one of the expected follow-up studies, was that of spiritual capital or
religious assets, which could act as a set of protective factors in violence prevention interventions.

5.2.2 Analysis of Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme’s Conceptual Foundations

The findings of the document analysis of CVI (and ISHS) articles, chapters and documents was presented under the following key headings: (a) a commitment to multi-disciplinarity and intersectoral collaboration, (b) multi-vocality: a commitment to inclusion and mainstreaming of indigenous knowledges and voices, (c) a person-in-context approach, (d) a public health approach, (e) a critical perspective, and (f) the CVI’s approach to research.

The analysis of the relevant CVI documents revealed a clear commitment to and operationalization of a multi- and inter-disciplinary approach to understanding violence, and a comprehensive approach to violence prevention and safety promotion. The commitment to multi-disciplinary work, and intersectoral collaboration, relates directly to a commitment to multi-vocality – the recognition and utilization of various voices in attempting to understand and respond to social challenges. The need to draw on and mainstream indigenous and community-embedded voices and knowledges is emphasized within this general commitment. The role of religion and spirituality - and the need to transform the science-religion separation - is highlighted in a number of CVI sources. This includes identifying and drawing on religious assets and spiritual capital as protective factors in violence prevention programmes.

The need for a multi-dimensional and multi-level approach to understand and respond to violence relates to a view of violence that highlights the need for perspectives and theories that provide explanations that locate persons in their complex systems. This is in line with a community psychology approach which informs the work of the CVI. This is also congruent with the ecological perspective which overtly focuses on individual, relationship, community and societal factors.

The public health approach guides the work of the CVI. This includes a strong focus on identifying risk and protective factors relating to violence. Prevention and health promotion approaches also underpin the work of the CVI, with primary prevention and safety promotion being key areas of focus. The concept of community resilience has also emerged as a major focus, reflecting a ‘strengths’ approach in the work of the CVI. In line with other global trends, the public health approach has been adapted to include other approaches, resulting in various integrated frameworks to understand and respond to violence. In general, the public health approach has been linked to developmental and/or critical approaches within the CVI.

The CVI’s approach to understanding and responding to violence reflects a strong critical perspective. Key characteristics of this approach as it has developed in the CVI include: acting as a change agent to transform South Africa; utilizing a historical and contextual approach that attempts to understand ‘persons-in-context’; focusing on various issues of power and oppression, with a particular emphasis on racial dynamics, and feminist and masculinity within a gender perspective; inclusion of analyses of colonialism, particularly within the South African context;
engaging with and mainstreaming marginalized voices, including indigenous and community-embedded knowledges; and, adoption of a human rights perspective.

Key characteristics of the research conducted in the CVI reflect a commitment to ‘data to action’ which includes the principles of contributing to prevention of crime, violence and injury through research that focuses on some form of social action or change, and where data is translated for social utilization purposes; disciplinary, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological diversity and pluralism, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods as appropriate; incorporating and mainstreaming indigenous knowledge systems within a commitment to facilitating multi-vocality, within a bricolage approach that utilizes various disciplines and perspectives; a commitment to collaboration with and participation of all relevant stakeholders and role players; researcher self-reflection within an acknowledgement of the politics of knowledge (reflexivity); and, a commitment to conducting open and critical scientific investigations. All of these characteristics are congruent with the critical lens that guides the work of the CVI.

During a workshop presentation and discussion within a CVI/ISHS strategic planning meeting in September 2007, it was proposed that a Critical Public Health approach be explored as an overarching framework for the work of the CVI. This includes examining exactly how the public health approach and critical lens link to one another. It was also noted that an exploration of how a critical lens would impact on the various projects of the CVI needs to be pursued by all concerned. The need for a ‘gender lens’, including both feminist and masculinity theories, when focusing on male interpersonal violence, was also accepted. The concept of culture was also discussed. Although there is a nervousness relating to talking about culture given the way in which this concept was used to develop and maintain apartheid, it was agreed that issues relating to indigenous knowledges and culture need to be engaged in a sophisticated, sensitive and critical manner.

With regard to the concept and framework of health promotion, it was suggested that the CVI critically engage with the global health promotion debates. The need to explore how the CVI’s focus on safety promotion links to the international and national health promotion movement was also recognized.

Two further key areas of focus for the CVI were identified at this workshop. First, the rhetorical commitment to accessing, including and engaging with different disciplinary, sectoral, and philosophical worldviews and perspectives needs to be concretely pursued to ensure that marginalized knowledges and voices are heard and utilized. And, second, the need for a deeper analysis of the risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence was highlighted. This includes drawing on a dynamic ecological approach that takes the systems-thinking principle of interdependence seriously when considering relationships between factors at different ecological levels. It also means drawing on a critical perspective, including a gender perspective that uses both feminist and masculinity theories, to perform an analysis of power dynamics relevant to male interpersonal violence. Within this context, the issue of social identity as it relates to men in our society needs to have a central place, but it needs an analysis that highlights the community and societal factors that place men at risk for violence.
The strategic planning workshop held in August 2009, which included a discussion on the focus of the CVI and ISHS’s work, supported many of the points highlighted above. In particular, the critical perspective was emphasized as being a distinguishing feature of the work of this organization. The organisation’s emphasis on a ‘strengths’ approach was also highlighted, with safety and peace promotion being recognized as a growing focus in the work on crime, violence and injury. This meeting took this discussion further, identifying how this perspective impacts on the main areas of work of the organization. This included looking at the implications for magnitude, determinants, and interventions in the research conducted.

5.2.3 Developing a Conceptual Framework to Understand Male Interpersonal Violence

This chapter focuses on the ongoing development of conceptual framework to understand crime, violence and injury, and male interpersonal violence more specifically. A paper (Ratele et al., 2008) was presented at the national roundtable discussion on ‘Understanding Male Interpersonal Violence’, held by the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme at the Medical Research Council on 2 and 3 October 2008. The purpose of the national roundtable discussion was to deepen our collective understanding of violence in South Africa, and more specifically, the role of males as victims and perpetrators within this context. A small number of experts, champions and specialists from relevant government and non-government research agencies, community organizations, universities, as well as individuals, were invited.

After providing an overview of the paper presented by Ratele et al. (2008), a summary of the discussion at this roundtable is presented, followed by a summary of the proceedings of an authorship workshop held in July 2009, including all members of the CVI staff.

The main aims of the paper by Ratele et al. (2008) were to: (a) enlarge on some key points emerging from the literature study on male interpersonal violence (Lazarus et al., 2009); (b) develop a conceptual foundation towards understanding and preventing male interpersonal violence in South Africa, responsive to local manifestations and dynamics of the problem, and informed by both the public health approach and social science perspectives; and (c) provide a basis for follow-up studies and prevention interventions focusing on the involvement of males as victims and perpetrators in interpersonal violence in South Africa and beyond.

The presentation covered the following areas: (a) aims and background; (b) summary of the literature study on risk and protective factors to male interpersonal violence; (c) values underpinning the CVI’s approach to violence; (d) an overview of the public health approach; and (e) bringing together disparate theories in developing a locally responsive, social science-informed Critical Public Health framework on male interpersonal violence.

The developing conceptual framework discussed in this chapter represents an attempt to engage in violence prevention work in a way that accommodates varied scientific philosophies, theoretical diversity, methodological pluralism, and interdisciplinarity. It allows for the conscious co-existence of varying ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies in the prevention of violence. It also allows for evidence-led interventions to be structured across
micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of the system (using the four levels of the ecological perspective), with both universal and specified populations and environments, at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of prevention.

The critical perspective was emphasized in the development of the Critical Public Health approach. A key element of this approach is the conscious introduction of alternative and complimentary perspectives of science. Furthermore, what the authors of this paper attempted to do was to show that violence must be addressed at a macro-level as well as at the levels of individuals, families and communities, allowing for the possibility of moving beyond the restrictive definitions of violence that are situation- and event-specific, to include political and ideological components that help to contextualize this phenomenon. It was argued that this form of interdisciplinarity is imperative to comprehensively understand the complex nature of violence that is located within the subjective, cultural, ideological, material and historical realms that help to constitute social realities.

The national roundtable discussion then focused on debates about theoretical explanations for understanding and responding to male interpersonal violence. After the CVI presentation by Ratele et al. (2008), Dr Garth Stevens, from the Department of Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand, provided a useful response. Stevens clarified the three central aspects of the CVI’s developing framework: the public health approach, the ecological perspective, and criticality. He suggested that these models should be revisited separately, before attempting an integration. He pointed out that the public health approach is a “how to” tool, rather than a theory, while the ecological perspective is very inclusive societally, but perhaps not detailed enough in its explanations of the different levels and their interactions. Incorporating the ‘critical lenses’, said Stevens, was the most difficult aspect of developing this framework, because the dynamics involved are less tangible. Stevens finally presented an alternative, integrated critical public health framework, with the graphic representation resembled a spider web. This model included different levels of the system, the different social circumstances in which violence can occur, as well as different ‘critical lenses’ or themes. Stevens’ presentation was very helpful in further developing participants’ understandings of the complexity of the task at hand.

During the open discussion that followed the two presentations, the following topics emerged as important. First, the definition of the concept critical was briefly debated. This was followed by a critique of the term capital in this type of work. The value of theorizing was then debated. One participant posed the question, “Do these attempts at theorizing really help us?” This was discussed, particularly with the focus on what is practical, and on the origins of any theoretical endeavours. Finally, it was reiterated that whatever theory is developed, we have to ensure that it is translated into practical solutions, and that theory and practice should not be seen as mutually exclusive. Several participants emphasized the importance of including community voices in violence research, theorizing and the development of prevention interventions.

The last part of the national roundtable comprised a panel workshop, during which a small number of participants was asked to come up with ideas that may assist in developing a conceptual framework for understanding male violence. The concepts that emerged from this part of the discussion included:
Interpersonal space: This concept was related to theory of conflict resolution and the need to redefine the way men are allowed to enter others’ spaces. It was stated that violence occurs when the perpetrator sees someone else’s space as his space.

Power: Power is linked to relational and spatial issues, as well as to a sense of entitlement with regards to women.

Entitlement: Men feel entitled, just because they are men. This links to the concept of masculinity.

Masculinity: There is a need to redefine what it means to be a male and what it means to be in relationships as a male. There is a pressure to adhere to what is often harmful forms of masculinity, especially when it is culturally prescribed or when culture is collectively misinterpreted.

Developmental pathways: In this discussion, this concept referred especially to the neurological development of small children. It was stated that research has shown that when small children are brutalized, their neurological pathways and emotional makeup are permanently altered.

Structural and ideological pathways: It was pointed out that, as a boy develops, there is a systematic accrual of structural and ideological teachings about what a ‘man’ should be like. These entrenched teachings automatically lead to an unrealistic sense of male entitlement.

Historical trauma: One participant carried over the notion of the developmental pathway and brutalization to the effects of colonization in South Africa, and the ‘brutalized Nation’.

In summary, the roundtable event facilitated a sense of collective engagement with this very pressing social problem. This collective engagement has hopefully brought a feeling of unity in our efforts to understand and curb the violence that is ravaging South Africa, and promises to encourage collaborative and increased efforts to research conducted in the area of male interpersonal violence, and to develop effective prevention interventions.

Finally, during a staff workshop, held in July 2009, further responses from the CVI staff to the Ratele et al. (2008) paper were provided. These responses supported many of the comments already received from the national roundtable, as well as other reviewers. Specific aspects that were highlighted during this conversation included an emphasis on the need for more clarity on various aspects of the proposed framework; the need for clearer rationales, and critiques, of all components of the framework (in particular, the use of a public health approach, an ecological perspective, and a critical lens); an exploration of how these lenses and approaches impact on the various projects within the CVI; and the need for caution, and courage, in the development of an integrated framework that will hopefully assist in understanding the crime, violence and injury challenges in this context.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proposed from this exploratory study and process:
**Recommendation 1:** The Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme’s (CVI) focus on the development of a responsive critical public health approach to understanding violence is an important initiative. There is a need and a place for integrated frameworks that intentionally bring together a systemic, multi-level approach with a critical analysis of power dynamics that cut across the levels. The key principles and characteristics of this framework need to inform the development of more specific perspectives and theories to guide both understandings and interventions relating to violence.

**Recommendation 2:** An important challenge facing the CVI in its further development of this framework is to find out how best to integrate these different perspectives and approaches so that they complement rather than contradict one another, and so that they develop ‘something more’ than a loose mix of approaches. Within this challenge, it is important that further development of the conceptual framework avoid the need to ‘tie up all the threads’ in an integrated frame in a way that denies real contradictions where they exist, and the need for distinctive thrusts where needed. And, while the complexity of the problems being confronted is acknowledged, the framework developed needs to be ‘simple’ and accessible in its presentation and utilization.

**Recommendation 3:** With regard to strategies for addressing violence, the links between violence prevention, and safety and peace promotion, need to be examined, within the context of debates in health promotion. The shift in perspective from a primarily medical-oriented prevention approach to a salutogenic, health- or wellbeing-oriented approach needs to be considered in the development of frameworks and theories in this area.

**Recommendation 4:** Both feminist and masculinity research and theories, used by many of the authors and researchers focusing on male interpersonal violence, should be examined and appropriately utilized in the development of a more specific conceptual framework for male interpersonal violence. While masculinity may be a major focus in studies focusing on male violence, the long history of feminist theories and studies, in and outside of South Africa, need to be consulted. And, while it is useful to disaggregate these different traditions, it would be useful to see how masculinity and feminist theories ‘work together’ to understand violence involving males, and to point to strategies for violence prevention.

**Recommendation 5:** A major challenge with masculinity theory is to determine how risk and protective factors relate to masculinity theory, and how social identity and ideologies of masculinity express themselves at community and societal levels.

**Recommendation 6:** The ecological perspective, linked directly to systems thinking, is an important aspect of the framing our understanding of male interpersonal violence. In addition to directing one’s focus to the different levels of the system, a systems perspective also facilitates a ‘no-blame’ approach which is often needed to break through the barriers created by the ‘backlash’ phenomenon in gender debates. The cyclic nature of the dynamics in gender relations, and in the cycle of violence, is important to highlight, and further understand.

**Recommendation 7:** The critical nature of this developing framework is important to uphold. In particular, the ongoing focus on power dynamics, particularly as they relate to all forms of oppression of persons and communities, is crucial, especially within the South African context.
This includes continuing to address the effects of historical colonization, and the ongoing effects of this, particularly through inter-generational historical trauma. The critical aspect is also an important element for the male interpersonal violence project because of the central place of power dynamics and role inequalities in the development of risk factors to male interpersonal violence.

**Recommendation 8:** A further challenge relates to looking at how one can bring the necessary different voices, disciplines, worldviews and perspectives ‘around the table’ in order to ensure a multi-level analysis and response – in a culturally and philosophically sensitive way. Community voices, including indigenous and other forms of marginalized voices, should be included in research conducted to understand why men are so at risk of being involved in violence. This could be pursued as a particular focus and as a principle guiding such research.

**Recommendation 9:** Another challenge relates to the need for a critical, sensitive, open, and assertive engagement around the question of how culture and cultural frameworks relate to the understanding of and responding to the many violence challenges. In particular, this refers to the need to examine the power dynamics within the cultural debates. This is not a new debate or challenge, but there has been a tendency on the part of critical psychologists and others to exclude cultural arguments because they often gloss over the power dynamics that result in the oppression of various groups of people, particularly women.

**Recommendation 10:** There is a need to examine and include relevant approaches and theories that aid in understanding the protective factors more. This includes exploring whether and how the social capital (including spiritual and cultural capital) framework can be used and further developed, and how the current focus of the CVI on community resilience can be further developed.

**Recommendation 11:** In addition to deepening our understanding of male interpersonal violence through theory development, there is a need for empirical research to test existing theories and contribute to understandings of this phenomenon. This is particularly important in South Africa where minimal work has been conducted in this area.

Many of these recommendations are already being pursued through a number of projects within the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Medical Research Council and the University of South Africa’s Institute for Social and Health Sciences have made this study possible through their financial and academic support. The research team (Sandy Lazarus, Susanne Tonsing, Kopano Ratele and Ashley Van Niekerk) are also particularly grateful to other members of the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme and the Institute for Social and Health Sciences for their very insightful and supportive input on the process and product of this research. Jessica Paulse’s assistance with the final editing of this report is particularly appreciated. Various other people and units within the Medical Research Council have also played a central role in supporting this work. Prof Tammy Shefer from the University of Western Cape and Dr Garth Stevens from the University of Witwatersrand are also thanked for reviewing this report. And finally, the participants of the national roundtable on understanding male interpersonal violence, held in October 2008, are also thanked for their invaluable contributions in response to the findings of the theoretical and literature study.
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Cape Town: UCT Press.*


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### APPENDIX A

#### List of Round Table Participants & Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Ms Shahnaaz Suffla</td>
<td>CVI/MRC</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Ursula Lau</td>
<td>CVI/ISHS</td>
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<td>3 Lu-Anne Swart</td>
<td>CVI/ISHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Prof Kopano Ratele</td>
<td>CVI/ISHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Dr Ashley van Niekerk</td>
<td>CVI/MRC</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Prof Sandy Lazarus</td>
<td>CVI/MRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Susanne Tonsing</td>
<td>CVI/MRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Dr Niresh Bhagwandin</td>
<td>Executive Manager of Strategic Research Initiatives, MRC (Opening Address)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Dr Sibusiso Sifunda</td>
<td>Health Promotion Unit, MRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Dr/Ms Shanaaz Mathews</td>
<td>Gender UNIT, MRC</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Dr Debbie Bradshaw</td>
<td>Burden of Disease Unit, MRC</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Dr Cathy Ward</td>
<td>Child, Youth, Family and Social Development (HSRC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Mr David Bruce</td>
<td>Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Ms Barbara Holtmann</td>
<td>CSIR Crime Prevention Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Richard Matzopoulos</td>
<td>School of Public Health and Family Medicine, UCT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Prof Jim Cochrane</td>
<td>University of Cape Town/ARHAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Prof Don Foster</td>
<td>Dept. Psychology, UCT</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 Prof Tony Naidoo</td>
<td>University of Stellenbosch</td>
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<td>19 Dr Lindsey Clowes</td>
<td>Gender Programme, UWC</td>
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<td>20 Mr Umesh Bawa</td>
<td>Dept Psychology, UWC</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Dr Garth Stevens</td>
<td>Dept Psychology, Wits</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 Dr Mthobeli Guma</td>
<td>IKS (Academic, UWC, and traditional healer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Prof Norman Duncan</td>
<td>Dept Psychology, Wits</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 Dean Peacock</td>
<td>Sonke Gender Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 Mr Mbuyiselo Botha</td>
<td>Sonke Gender Justice</td>
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<td>26 Nondumiso Mvinje1wa</td>
<td>Men as Partners (MAP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 Capt. Van Rensburg</td>
<td>SAPS/Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC)</td>
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<td>28 Capt. Malete</td>
<td>SAPS/ Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC)</td>
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<td>29 Mr Eldred De Klerk</td>
<td>U Managing Conflict (UMAC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Mr Kenneth Lukuko</td>
<td>Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR)</td>
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