

**VIOLENCE, CARE & JUSTICE: INVESTIGATING THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN  
EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN BLACK SOUTH  
AFRICAN STUDENTS**

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## DECLARATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of ..... in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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## ABSTRACT

Two moral orientations in men and women's reasoning about moral dilemmas have dominated the literature: an orientation to rights, fairness, and justice and another based on care, compassion and concern for others. It is widely accepted that exposure to violence has a number of adverse effects on children and adolescents' psychosocial development. Recent research has begun to explore whether, and how, exposure to violence impacts on moral development. Studies examining the nature of this association, however, have yielded contradictory results. While there is evidence to suggest that exposure to violence adversely affects moral development, it has also been shown that exposure to violence simply influences which moral reasoning style is likely to predominate – justice or care. Beginning with a brief review of moral development theories and of the psychosocial effects of exposure to violence, the present research explored the association between exposure to violence and moral development.

This study aimed to determine whether there is an association between gender, moral orientation, and exposure to violence. Based on the literature, it was hypothesised that men would exhibit a justice moral orientation, while women would exhibit a moral orientation based on care. Further, it was expected that men would show higher levels of exposure to violence than women. Exposure to violence was expected to be significantly positively correlated with justice reasoning. A significant association was anticipated between gender, exposure to violence and moral orientation. In particular, it was hypothesised that greater exposure to violence would have an adverse effect on moral development. This association, in turn, was expected to be significantly related to gender.

The Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure and the Moral Orientation Scale were administered to a sample of Black tertiary education students comprising 86 women and 85 men. Contrary to expectations, no significant gender differences in moral orientation were found. As expected, men showed significantly higher levels of exposure to violence than women. Significant correlations between exposure to violence and moral orientation were found for men only, with greater exposure to violence unexpectedly being associated with an increase in care

reasoning. The association between gender, moral orientation, and exposure to violence was not found to be significant.

The findings suggest that widely accepted theories of moral development, particularly as they apply to gender, may not be as universal as previously thought. Although there seemed to be some association between exposure to violence and moral orientation, the results suggest that this is not a simple linear relationship. Further research is required to determine the exact nature of the association between gender, moral orientation and exposure to violence in a uniquely South African sample.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, theories of human development have largely been moulded on the development of White, Westernised males, with the result that the development of women, non-White and non-Western groups are constructed as deviations from the norm (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990).

Kohlberg's theory of moral development emphasises autonomy, rules, and the equal distribution of rights and justice (Dierckx de Casterle, Roelens & Gastmans, 1998). It assumes that this model is applicable universally, across gender and culture. However, there is evidence to suggest that Kohlberg's justice perspective may not be relevant across all cultures or gender groups. In contrast to Kohlberg's morality of justice, Gilligan (1982) based her model of moral development on an ethic of care, with an emphasis on the contextual nature of relationships and the maintenance of care and connection within those relationships (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990).

It is widely accepted that moral development is determined by social, cultural and historical factors (Ferns & Thom, 2001; Gielen & Markoulis, 1994; Huebner & Garrod, 1991; Tappan, 1997, 2006), including education (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs & Lieberman, 1983) and racial and political conflict (Burman, 1986; Dawes, 1994b; Smith & Parekh, 1996; Tudin, Straker & Mendolsohn, 1994; Wilson & Ramphele, 1989). Previous research has also shown that individuals who are consistently exposed to violence could experience a range of psychosocial consequences (Brandt, Ward, Dawes & Flisher, 2005; Brennan, Molnar & Earls, 2007; Ratner, Chiodo, Covington, Sokol, Ager & Delaney-Black, 2006; Raviv et al., 2001). It is possible, then, that exposure to violence might also impact on moral development. A number of studies have found that exposure to violence in various forms has a negative impact on socio-moral development and moral reasoning (Garrod, Beal, Jaeger, Thomas, Davis & Leiser, 2003; Krcmar & Vieira, 2005; Kuther & Wallace, 2002). Kohlberg (1984) suggested that the moral atmosphere of a community has a significant impact on individual moral development. This implies that the moral development of individuals who grow up in politically conflicted and violent societies may be adversely affected.

It is possible that children who have grown up in such circumstances may reason differently when resolving conflict than those who have been relatively advantaged. Dawes (1994b), for

instance, argues that exposure to violence in politically conflicted situations could result in the internalisation of such violent behaviour as normal. Others have hypothesised that children living in politically violent and ethnically conflicted contexts show particular patterns of moral development compared to children who are not exposed to such violence (Garrod et al., 2003). The significant impact that exposure to violence has had on children – including impaired social development and diminished internalisation of moral values – has also been acknowledged (Aitken & Seedat, 2007).

South Africa's politically turbulent and violent past warrants further investigation into the impact that these circumstances may have had on young people's moral reasoning. Furthermore, South Africa continues to rate as one of the most violent countries in the world (Mthethwa, 2008). The issue of morality in South Africa is contentious and controversial and, "while we may argue its origin, nature and influence, morality is as important now as it ever was, if not more so. For this reason then, morality in South Africa needs to be further investigated" (Coetzee, Louw & Jooste, 2005, p. 23). It is for this reason that the current study aims to explore the relationship between students' exposure to violence and their ways of reasoning about moral dilemmas.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Moral Development**

Morality can be defined as the capacity to distinguish between behaviours that are right and wrong, while moral reasoning is the thinking process involved when deciding whether a behaviour is morally acceptable (Murray-Close, Crick & Galotti, 2006). The issue of morality is becoming an increasingly debated topic in South Africa (Richardson, 2003). The increase in rates of violent crime, HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancy and suicide, and corruption has caused many to declare a moral crisis in our nation (Rauch, 2005b; Zuma, 2003). While not all of these social concerns are moral in nature and most have complex origins, there is a growing trend towards linking the solutions to these and related social problems to the teaching of moral and social values (Murray, 1996). An examination of moral values requires an understanding of theories of moral development. Over the years, the general view in mainstream psychology has come to be that there are two types of moral reasoning: Kohlberg's morality of justice and Gilligan's morality of care.

#### **2.1.1 Kohlberg's Model of Moral Development: A Justice Orientation**

Building on Piaget's work, Kohlberg laid the groundwork for the current debate within psychology around moral development. Kohlberg believed that attaining moral maturity was a gradual developmental process in which understandings of concepts such as justice, rights and equality are mediated by experience (Murray, 1996).

Kohlberg (1969, 1976, 1981, 1984) used data from the analysis of responses given by men to hypothetical moral dilemmas to develop a six-stage model of moral development, based on Piaget's (1932, 1965) theories of cognitive and moral development. According to Kohlberg's theory, individuals proceed through three progressive levels of moral development – pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional – with each level representing a fundamental shift in the social-moral perspective of the individual. Each level consists of two stages.

At Stage 1, the preconventional level, children are regarded as essentially egocentric and unable to consider the perspectives of others. Children at this stage of development view social expectations and rules as external to themselves, and tend to make moral decisions based on expectations of punishment or reward (Gump, Baker & Roll, 2000). Stage 2, still in the preconventional level, emphasises reciprocity and pragmatism. Here, a child's moral reasoning is primarily dictated by the perceived consequences of their actions. As a child moves into the conventional level, the needs and expectations of others begin to play a role in moral reasoning. Interpersonal relationships are given priority over individual interests at Stage 3, where what is right or wrong is defined by the expectations of those closest to the child. Being good, at this stage, involves maintaining trust, loyalty and respect in immediate mutual relationships (Murray, 1996). A child at Stage 4 in the conventional level begins to shift consideration of what is right and wrong from those closest to them to broader society. The norms and laws of the larger social system begin to take on greater importance in defining one's social and moral responsibilities.

At the postconventional level, the highest level of moral development according to Kohlberg, the stages are defined by principled reasoning and ethical fairness. The universality of moral principles becomes evident at this level, where morality is understood in terms of the transcendence of regard for life and human welfare over particular cultural norms and conventions (Murray, 1996). Stage 5 emphasises utilitarian principles of the greatest good for the greatest number of people. The highest stage of moral development, Stage 6, requires individuals to have developed the capacity for principle-based, utilitarian reasoning, with decisions at the final stage based on universal principles of justice, individual liberty and equality, even if these violate social laws or norms (Gump et al., 2000).

Kohlberg's morality, therefore, emphasises autonomy, rules, and the equal distribution of rights and justice (Dierckx de Casterle et al., 1998), and it assumes that this model is applicable universally, across gender and culture. And yet, Kohlberg developed his theory primarily from research conducted exclusively on men in Western cultures. In one of his subsequent studies, he reported that most males from Western cultures reach a higher level of moral reasoning than females and individuals from non-Western cultures, who tend to function at the lower stages of the conventional level (Kohlberg & Kramer, 1969 in Bukatko & Daehler, 1995).

Following Kohlberg's studies, many have pointed to his theory's neglect of an entire domain of human activity and human emotion, such as care and relationality, thereby failing to address the concerns that have typically been associated with women's experiences (Benhabib, 1987; Sharpe, 1992). The only type of people that Kohlberg's model makes space for is those who have been detached from their context, rationalised, impartial, and abstracted. Because of its focus on cognition, rationality, and justice, other crucial aspects that Kohlberg's theory of moral development does not take into account include social and emotional experiences and those qualities associated with caring, responsibility and empathy (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001; Dierckx de Casterle et al., 1998). The inherent individualism of Kohlberg's theory seems to exclude those who focus on the interpersonal ramifications of moral decisions. As such, critics have argued that Kohlberg's theory of moral maturity is limited to an exclusively masculine ideal and is thus an insufficient model for describing women's moral development (Muthukrishna, Hugo, Wedekind & Khan, 2006). Gilligan (1982) contends that Kohlberg's theory has women fixated at Stage 3 of moral development, which represents interpersonal morality, and thus undervalues the contextual and relational value of women's moral reasoning (Gump et al., 2000).

There is also evidence to suggest that Kohlberg's justice perspective may not be relevant across all cultures. As opposed to the maintenance of justice and individual rights that is emphasised in Western morality, moral processes from an African viewpoint are primarily concerned with the maintenance of social unity and harmonious relationships (Mkhize, 2004; Verhoef & Michel, 1997). Ferns and Thom (2001) found that significant cultural differences exist in the stages of moral development of Black and White South African adolescents. Like the women in Kohlberg's (1976) study, the majority of Black South African adolescents in Fern and Thom's (2001) study only reached Stage 4 of moral development, which may be the result of the emphasis in their cultures on interdependence and communality rather than the individualistic principles of independence and self-actualisation valued in the West. Notably, too, the model on which Kohlberg's justice ethics is founded has been criticised as inappropriate for application in non-Western societies (Haste & Abrahams, 2008; Tappan, 2006).

This implies that the gender differences in moral orientation described above may be paralleled by similar differences between Western and non-Western cultures (Stimpson, Jensen & Neff,

2001). However, studies in some South African cultures have found that these gender differences may not extend across all cultures, possibly due to different socialisation practices (Maqsd, 1998) or to the social injustices experienced by minority groups – such as women and Black people – that have resulted in a greater concern with justice and rights (Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Knox, Fagley & Miller, 2004). Furthermore, the values of justice and autonomy that are presupposed in current theories of moral development continue to imply that individuals are separate and that relationships are hierarchical and contractual. In contrast, the values of care and connection, salient in different gender and cultural groups, present a view of morality as interdependent and relational (Gilligan, 1986). It is this morality of care that is described in the following section.

### **2.1.2 Gilligan's Model of Moral Development: A Care Orientation**

In 1982, Gilligan – a student of Kohlberg's – contested his theory of moral development, arguing that it was a model focused solely on the principles of rights and justice and based primarily on and applicable to men, at the expense of women and their experiences. Using women as her subjects, Gilligan (1982) used qualitative interview schedules to conduct her own research on moral orientation and decision-making strategies, and found that women proceed through a different process of moral development than the stages proposed by Kohlberg.

Claiming that it is not always possible to remain objective and impartial in moral reasoning, Gilligan (1986) argued against the stage model of moral development and instead proposed that there are two moral orientations: 1) justice (leading to equality of rights and fairness), and 2) care (leading to attachment, responsibility, dependency and loyalty) (Muthukrishna et al., 2006). According to Gilligan, a morality of care, with an emphasis on preserving interpersonal connections, is another equally valid moral orientation. While men may view morality as involving issues of conflicting rights, women view morality as involving issues of conflicting responsibility (Muthukrishna et al., 2006).

Beginning with the level of individual survival, Gilligan's moral development advances through selfishness to responsibility to self-sacrifice and, finally, to a morality of non-violence, where the

conflict between selfishness and responsibility to self is resolved (Brabeck, 1993). In contrast to Kohlberg's justice moral, then, Gilligan's model is based on an ethic of care. The emphasis on rights and autonomy emphasised in Kohlberg's moral development theory is superseded by the contextual nature of relationships, and the maintenance of care and connection within those relationships (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990). See Table 2.1 for a comparison of Kohlberg and Gilligan's theories of moral development.

The justice perspective is characterised by equality versus inequality, where morality involves the fair and dutiful mediation of conflicting claims between people and adherence to standards and principles. The care perspective, on the other hand, is characterised by attachment versus detachment. In contrast to the justice orientation, vulnerability is associated, not with oppression and inequality, but with abandonment. From this perspective, morality consists of nurturing connections, promoting individual welfare, and refraining from all forms of violence and exploitation (Self & Olivarez, 1993). Based on these distinctions, Self and Olivarez (1993) hypothesised that there would be significant differences in the moral orientations of men and women. Their findings supported this hypothesis, with a higher percentage of women exhibiting the care orientation and a greater percentage of men exhibiting the justice orientation. Their study follows on from other studies which yielded similar results (Gibbs, Arnold & Burkhart, 1984; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Lyons, 1983; Pratt, Golding, Hunter & Sampson, 1988; Rothbart, Hanley & Albert, 1986) and was followed by further research in which significant gender differences were found (Wolff, 1996).

**Table 2.1**

**Comparison of Gilligan’s Morality of Care and Responsibility and Kohlberg’s Morality of**

**Justice**

	<b>Morality of Care &amp; Responsibility – Gilligan</b>	<b>Morality of Justice - Kohlberg</b>
<b>Primary Moral Imperative</b>	Nonviolence/ Care	Justice
<b>Components of Morality</b>	Relationships	Sanctity of Individual
	Responsibility for self & others	Rights of self & others
	Care	Reciprocity
	Harmony	Respect
	Compassion	Rules / Legalities
<b>Nature of Moral Dilemmas</b>	Threats to harmony & relationships	Conflicting rights
<b>Determinants of Moral Orientations</b>	Relationships	Principles
<b>Cognitive Processes for Resolving Dilemmas</b>	Inductive thinking	Formal / Logical-deductive thinking
<b>View of Self as Moral Agent</b>	Connected, attached	Separate, individual
<b>Role of Affect</b>	Motivates care, compassion	Not a component
<b>Philosophical Orientation</b>	Phenomenological (contextual relativism)	Rational (universal principle of justice)
<b>Stages</b>	I. Individual Survival	I. Punishment & Obedience
	II. From Selfishness to Responsibility	II. Instrumental Exchange
	III. Self Sacrifice and Social Conformity	III. Interpersonal Conformity
	IV. From Goodness to Truth	IV. Social System & Conscience
	V. Morality of Nonviolence (goal: care)	V. Prior Rights & Social Contract
		VI. Universal Ethical Principles (goal: justice)

(Brabeck, 1993, p. 37).

The differences that appear to have existed between men and women in terms of moral development may have narrowed in recent years, with women becoming more justice-oriented and men more care-oriented (Lamborn & Steinberg, 1993; Marais, 2006; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). This could also be a reflection of the changing times, and of changing gender-role perceptions and expectations. Anderson, Worthington, Anderson and Jennings (1994) suggest that the lack of significant differences may be, at least in part, because the women's movement has altered past gender discrepancies in various aspects of psychological development. Layton (2004) suggests that since women have moved into the workplace and are doing the same work as men do, they also have the same difficulty with finding time for relationships as men do. Incongruity between women's relational, caring values and the individualistic, rights-based values of society may lead to identification with an ideal that contradicts gender identity and may have negative outcomes for women (Mensing, 2005; Steiner-Adair, 1990). Differences between men and women may not be as extreme or distinct as some theories propose, with both men and women becoming more androgynous in recent times. Furthermore, differences between groups may have been previously overestimated, and there may in fact be greater variation within groups (for example, women) than between groups (Ewing, 1990; Killen, 1997; Turiel & Wainryb, 1994).

Others have approached the issue from a different angle, arguing that the justice and care orientations described above not "only reflect different ways of thinking about dilemmas but also define the kinds of situations that are seen as dilemmas" (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990, p. 19). Yacker and Weinberg (1990) caution against dichotomising moral judgement and artificially assigning men and women to categories of care and justice. Along with others, they propose instead that men and women exhibit propensities for each orientation, rather than one or the other type of thinking (Björklund, 2003; Cook, Larson & Boivin, 2003; Mainiero, Gibson & Sullivan, 2008; Smetana, Killen & Turiel, 1991). Similar findings were presented by Jaffee and Hyde (2000), who conducted a meta-analysis to determine whether there were significant gender differences in the two moral orientations – justice and care. Their findings showed that females consistently used more care reasoning and men more justice reasoning. Their results also suggested, however, that the differences in effect sizes may be attributable to other specific moderator variables – such as age, socioeconomic status, type of dilemma, and gender of the

protagonist in the dilemma. Nonetheless, their findings demonstrated clear evidence in support of a distinct care orientation for women. The influence of other moderator variables on the results does not diminish Gilligan's larger point (Marais, 2006).

Subsequent to her earlier work, Gilligan emphasised that care and justice are complementary perspectives, and that neither orientation is superior (Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988). This was in response to increasing evidence against her finding that men and women differed significantly in their use of the two distinct moral orientations (Al-Rumaidhi, 2008; Aldrich & Kage, 2003; Baumrind, 1986; Beal et al., 1997; Forsyth, Nye & Kelley, 2001; Friedman, Robinson & Friedman, 1987; Galotti, 1989; Krebs, Vermulen, Lenton & Carpendale, 1994; Lifton, 1985; Pratt et al., 1988; Thoma, 1986; Walker, 1984, 1986, 1989; Walker et al., 1987). Against those who set out to show that there are no sex differences or biases in Kohlberg's theory, Baumrind (1993) argues that these findings do not warrant the conclusion that there are no sex differences in moral orientation but instead suggest that the source and specific nature of the differences have yet to be established.

The controversy over Kohlberg's morality of justice versus Gilligan's morality of care generated numerous empirical and non-empirical studies to further investigate the issue (e.g., Brabeck, 1993; Woods, 1996). Some studies put forward several variables, other than moral orientation, that could account for the gender differences found. These included personality (Glover, 2001), age (Aldrich & Kage, 2003; Gump et al., 2000; Pratt et al., 1988; Walker, de Vries & Trevethan, 1987), social status (Puka 1989; Tronto, 1987), and type of dilemma presented (Wark & Krebs, 1996). After reviewing the literature on both types of moral orientation, Woods (1996) concluded that the moral orientations posited by these two theories are far from universal, and are probably relevant only in Western cultures – and even then, only applicable to specific socioeconomic and educational groups. Others have also suggested that context is a particularly important factor in determining differences in moral development (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000; Schminke, Ambrose & Miles, 2003; Taylor & Walker, 2008; Weinberg, Yacker, Orenstein & DeSarbo, 1993). There is evidence to suggest, for instance, that women from minority or low socioeconomic status groups may have higher scores on measures of justice because emphasising

rights, justice and fairness is more likely to rectify the inequalities that they experience (Beal, Garrod, Ruben & Stewart, 1997; Ward, 1995).

Despite the lack of agreement on the existence or significance of gender differences in the care versus justice moral orientations, the value of Gilligan's work lies in its acknowledgement of a distinctive alternative orientation to Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Friedman, 2000). Furthermore, there are many similarities between Gilligan and other feminists' care theories and those of African ethicists. Characterised by similar ontologies, epistemologies, and moralities, these theories share a rejection of the individual autonomy emphasised in Western, male-dominated approaches, replacing this with individuals' relations to others and to nature (Cameron & Lalonde, 2001; Harding, 1987; Mkhize, 2004).

There has been general acknowledgment that Gilligan's ethic of care has brought an important contextual dimension to conventional models of moral development that have focused on justice. However, concern has arisen over dichotomising justice and care into two distinct types of moral reasoning that develop along two separate pathways (Jorgensen, 2006) and there has been a move towards integrating the two approaches (Berlin & Johnson, 1989; Gerson, 2002; Held, 1995; Tanner, 2001). This stems from a growing recognition in recent years that a morality of justice can and does co-exist with a morality of care (Baier, 2005; Brabeck, 1989; Carse, 2001; Crittenden, 2001; Dierckx le Casterle et al., 1998; Dillon, 1992; Higgins, 1989; Smetana et al., 1991; Waithe, 1989; Walker, 1992).

Ultimately, knowledge of both justice and care is probably necessary to resolve complex moral dilemmas because actual moral life presupposes moral integration, including the integration of care and justice – a contention that is supported by empirical evidence (Peter & Morgan, 2001). Children in traditional societies, for instance, do not necessarily subordinate individualistic goals to the concerns of the collective as has been previously suggested, but rather make judgements that take into consideration the features and demands of the context (Neff, 2001; Wainryb, 2006; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994). Wainryb (2006) demonstrates that children and adults across societies develop multiple social and moral concerns, and apply these concerns differently according to

the social context, sometimes giving priority to autonomy and justice, and sometimes to social harmony and care.

However, some feminist critics have pointed out the negative impact of accepting the care orientation without critical examination of its origins. Those who caution against these theories draw attention to the importance of context in determining moral orientation (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988; Mednick, 1989). Men, and Western culture in general, may tend towards an ethic of justice because this approach of rights and rational control supports their superior position in society, while women and minority groups appeal to the sympathy and mercy of a care approach because of their subordinate position (Clopton & Sorell, 1993). Such theories are consistent with research findings that the development of moral orientation is largely determined by social, cultural, and historical factors (Ferns & Thom, 2001; Gielen & Markoulis, 1994; Huebner & Garrod, 1991; Tappan, 1997). A comprehensive investigation into the justice and care models of moral development therefore requires an examination of the context in which moral development occurs. Research on moral development in the South African context will be presented in the following section.

### **2.1.3 South African Research on Moral Development**

Morality is not static and theoretical, or isolated from everyday life; it is influenced and affected by many variables to a greater or lesser degree (Coetzee et al., 2005). Moral development is not the end result of a single psychological process. An integrated theory of moral development recognises that morality is a multidimensional phenomenon that views intrapsychic development against a backdrop of historical and sociocultural forces (Ferns & Thom, 2001). Many who work in the field of moral development, Kohlberg included, have recognised that for morality to be fully understood, the social, cultural and historical context needs to be taken into account (Haste, 1996 in Ferguson & Cairns, 2002; Tappan, 1997, 2006). The importance of context in the development and expression of moral reasoning will be discussed in the following sections, with particular reference to the South African context.

Despite widespread agreement that the sociocultural context influences how moral reasoning is shaped, there have been few empirical studies exploring moral development in South Africa (Coetzee et al., 2005). In terms of the influence of gender on moral development, Maqsd's (1998) findings contradict Gilligan's (1982) contention that there are gender differences in moral development. The Batswana senior high school girls in Maqsd's study did not differ significantly from their male counterparts in how they used justice and care in resolving moral dilemmas. Maqsd (1998) proposed that this lack of significant gender differences in moral reasoning could be attributed to the socialisation of children and adolescents in Batswana society. Batswana boys and girls tend to be treated equally by parents, teachers and other significant adults, who do not expect different moral behaviours from girls and boys (Maqsd, 1998). In contrast, Coetzee et al. (2005) found that the variables that had the greatest bearing on morality were gender, culture and religion, with the most significant factor being gender. The female learners' responses were at a higher level of morality than the male learners' responses, while the White learners seemed to emerge with higher levels of morality on questionnaires than the Black learners did. This again points to the influence of contextual and sociocultural factors on moral development, bearing in mind that a certain type of morality (Kohlberg's) was being assessed.

Similarly, a previous study found no significant differences between Black men and women on measures of care and justice (Marais, 2006). Furthermore, the direction of difference on both the Care and Justice subscales of the Moral Orientation Scale (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990) was contrary to what was expected: Black women's scores on the Justice subscale were higher than Black men's scores, while Black men's Care scores were higher than Black women's Care scores. These results seem to contradict the notion that Black women are more relational and focused on interpersonal caring and Black men more autonomous and focused on individual rights. These findings also contradict previous research reporting that gender differences in moral preferences are consistent across cultures – that is, that women exhibit stronger tendencies towards care, and men towards justice. On finding a gender difference in moral orientation that seemed to be consistent across cultures, Stimpson et al. (2001) claimed that a caring morality is first biologically rooted and then culturally learned, and is more prevalent in women across cultures. The findings of Marais' (2006) study do not support this claim. Marais (2006) found

that the differences between Black men and women on measures of care and justice orientations were not consistent with expected gender differences. This may be partially attributable to differential socialisation practices within Black cultures in South Africa. This, too, points to the importance of cultural context in the development and manifestation of moral orientation (Marais, 2006).

Black women's inclinations towards justice and away from care in moral reasoning in Marais' (2006) study seem to support arguments about the contested nature of the care concept. It has been argued that the care orientation is based on the perspective of White middle class women and does not extend to Black women's experiences (Cockburn, 2005), and especially so in South Africa (Shefer, 1997). In South Africa, Black women's experiences have been historically shaped by the apartheid system, where poverty and legally-entrenched racial inequality forced Black women to take work that led them away from their families. Necessity thus dictated that work outside of the family had to take precedence over the needs of their families, and overshadowed interpersonal relations. "For Black women, it is the absence rather than the presence of the ability to care for one's own family that structures their experiences" (Cockburn, 2005, p. 80). This may also account for the higher-than-expected scores of Black women on measures of justice in Marais' (2006) study, as Black women have been, and continue to be, the victims of consistent and extreme injustice on gendered, sociocultural and political levels (Britton, 2002; Jobson, 2005; Hassim, 1991; Motsemme, 2002).

The finding that women, and Black women in particular, showed higher levels of justice reasoning (Marais, 2006), is consistent with other research reporting similar findings. Cook et al. (2003) found that a justice orientation was articulated more frequently than a care orientation by the majority of women in their study. However, they also reported that women's views tended to be more mixed than men's, with a combination of care and justice occurring more frequently in women. These and other theorists caution that current theories of gender differences in moral orientation may exaggerate inherent differences in men and women's dispositions, and underplay the differences in social structures that influence men's and women's behaviours (Baumeister & Sommer, 1997; Clopton & Sorell, 1993; Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988; Mednick, 1989). Because men are in the dominant position in society – as Whites have certainly been in South

Africa – they tend to support the rules, discipline, control and rationality (i.e., the justice approach) that maintain their position, while those in subordinate positions – Black people and women – appeal to mercy, sympathy and understanding (i.e., the care approach) (Clopton & Sorell, 1993). Similarly,

Harding (1987) and Stack (1986) have argued that Black males who live in conditions of economic deprivation develop a self-concept that emphasises profound interpersonal connection and that closely resembles the care orientation. Thus the care orientation may be more a reflection of lack of power in current situations than a gender-related difference resulting from mother-only parenting (Clopton & Sorell, 1993, pp. 86-87).

In a study of differences in moral development between Black and White students, Smith and Parekh (1996) found an overall absence of significant differences in stage of moral development. They attributed this to the similarities in socioeconomic class of the students. This implies that socioeconomic status may be influential in moral development. There were significant differences, however, in stages of moral reasoning in the 19-28 age group. Smith and Parekh (1996) suggest that exposure to a university environment may have impacted on this particular group. The university experience exposes students to a heterogeneity of people, ideologies, and politics, and critical thinking and debate is emphasised. In such an environment, reflection on moral issues is likely to be induced. Black students may be increasingly cognisant of the injustices shown towards them as a group and hence more concerned with maximising justice (Smith & Parekh, 1996).

Another reason for the differences in this age group may be the disparity in educational experiences. Smith and Parekh (1996) argued that Black and White students are likely to have attended government schools with different standards of education, and that the Black students in the 19-28 age group scored lower than their White counterparts because they had a more disadvantaged educational experience. This confirms previous research showing that differences in the educational experiences of the various cultural groups can result in variations in moral reasoning (especially at higher levels), since education and the ability to think logically are associated with the level of moral reasoning (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs & Lieberman, 1983). This may be particularly relevant in South Africa, where the standard of primary and secondary

education is still not consistent, and learners from previously disadvantaged groups are still at an educational disadvantage.

Others have argued that socialisation practices influence the moral reasoning of individuals from different cultural groups (Maqsd, 1998). Hence, Black adolescents' moral reasoning would be socialised according to African norms and value emphasis on the welfare of the group, even when they are exposed to Western cultural environments (Ferns & Thom, 2001). Consistent with previous research suggesting that moral development is determined by social, cultural, and historical factors (Gielen & Markoulis, 1994; Huebner & Garrod, 1991; Miller, 1994 in Ferns & Thom, 2001; Tappan, 1997), Ferns and Thom's (2001) study lends support to the hypothesis that Whites would be significantly higher than Blacks on justice, and offers some explanation for this. Ferns and Thom (2001) applied Kohlberg's justice model to a South African sample and found that, while White South African adolescents' moral development was in line with Kohlberg's theory, Black adolescents exhibited a different pattern. They found that the Black group seemed to move from Stage 2 to Stage 4, skipping Stage 3, and scored lower on justice than the White group. They attributed this to the influence of traditional norms and values, parenting styles, and socialisation practices that are aimed at making the Black adolescent into an ideal member of the community. As such, individuals in these communities may deviate from Kohlberg's morality of individual conscience to a stronger adherence to the collective conscience (Ferns & Thom, 2001).

A possible explanation for the differential patterns of moral development between Black and White groups in Ferns and Thom's (2001) study is that the types of moral situations to which individuals are exposed influence the values they apply when they interpret moral situations (Thomas, 1996 in Ferns & Thom, 2001). This points to the possible effect of historical factors, such as the previous apartheid government system and the current democratic system, on Black South Africans' moral development. Because of the exposure of Black individuals in South Africa to discrimination, where they were regarded as inferior on account of their ethnic identification and their individuality was not recognised, they had to turn to their cultural group in order to experience a sense of belonging and security within the traditional values and norms of their group. The data for the current study was collected 15 years after apartheid ended. One

might expect, then, that adolescents and young adults whose childhood overlapped with the apartheid era would have felt the effects of this institutionalised discrimination.

The importance of context in the development of moral orientation is further highlighted by studies that have found that individuals exposed to significant degrees of conflict appear to demonstrate bimodal patterns of moral reasoning as a means of reconciling conflicting messages from their internal and external worlds (Tudin et al., 1994). The process of coping in stressful environments – such as growing up in the context of apartheid South Africa – is complicated by the conflicting values and attitudes that an individual caught in the juxtaposition of two cultures has available as resources (Lazarus, 1984 in Anderson, 1991). Black adolescents in South Africa may have been particularly vulnerable to such conflict due to the breakdown of traditional families and loss of appropriate role models (Myburgh & Anders, 1989), denial of opportunity (Stevens & Lockhat, 1997), racial identity confusion (Bloom, 1994) and acculturative stress (Le Grange, Telch & Tibbs, 1998) resulting from the racial discrimination and subordination enforced by apartheid. This conflict and psychological and acculturative distress has been linked to suicidal behaviours (Wassenaar, Pillay, Descoins, Goltman & Naidoo, 2000; Wassenaar, van der Veen & Pillay, 1998) and eating disorders (Garner & Olmsted, 1984; Garner, Olmsted & Polivy, 1983; Hooper & Garner, 1986; Marais, Wassenaar & Kramers, 2003; Szabo & Le Grange, 2001; Wassenaar, Le Grange, Winship & Lachenicht, 2000) within these groups.

As a result of legally sanctioned racial separation and discrimination, many Black South Africans experienced disruption of the family, conflicted family relationships, loss of respect for parents and other adults, poor education and living conditions, and overpopulation (Ferns & Thom, 2001). These circumstances probably played a major role in the development of morality in adolescents (Wilson & Ramphele, 1989), and may have contributed to a lack of the kinds of role models necessary for the transmission of suitable moral values and norms for Black children. However, a study by Muthukrishna et al. (2006) of the variations in Kohlberg and Gilligan's moral orientations in the South African context indicated evidence of both justice and care in Black and White children's moral reasoning. This implies that Black and White South Africans may use principles of both care and justice in reasoning about moral dilemmas, but that the nature and outcome of this reasoning, as suggested by Ferns and Thom's (2001) findings, might

be influenced by social and cultural context. Although formalised apartheid has been over for more than a decade, the effects of racial separation and discrimination will probably continue for many years to come (Smith & Parekh, 1996). Some argue that the generation of post-apartheid youth is apathetic and materialistic and, as such, lack moral fibre (Rakate, 2007). Black South Africans were more exposed to political violence than White South Africans, which may have influenced the nature of their moral reasoning (Dawes, 1994b; Ferns & Thom, 2001; Smith & Parekh, 1996). The possible effects of such exposure will be discussed in the sections below.

In this section, Kohlberg's theory of moral development and its emphasis on justice and rights-based reasoning has been discussed. It has been shown that critiques of Kohlberg's justice orientation include arguments that it is abstract and individualistic and, as such, biased towards men. Gilligan's theory, on the other hand, emphasises the care and connection that appears to be more evident in women's moral reasoning styles. Evidence has been presented that shows gender differences in moral orientation. Recently, however, there is increasing evidence to suggest that gender has a negligible effect on moral development, and that other variables, including contextual factors, may be more influential. The conditions in which moral development takes place have been argued to play an important role in determining the rate and nature of such development. As will be shown below, growing up in violent circumstances is known to negatively affect psychosocial development and, therefore, could also be expected to affect moral development in a number of ways.

## **2.2 Exposure to Violence**

### **2.2.1 Impact and Effects of Exposure to Violence**

Previous research has shown that individuals who are consistently exposed to violence could experience a range of psychosocial consequences. These include emotional problems such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress; behaviour problems such as aggression and other externalising behaviours (including juvenile crime and the perpetration of violence); negative academic outcomes; and negative impacts on social development (Brandt et al., 2005; Brennan et al., 2007; Ratner et al., 2006; Raviv et al., 2001; Voisin, 2007). It is likely, then, that exposure to

violence might also impact on moral development. This will be further explored in section 2.5 below, following a brief review of international and local research on the effects of exposure to violence.

Exposure to violence has been identified as a major risk factor in the development of emotional and behavioural problems in young people, including the later perpetration of violence (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008). Being exposed to family and community violence can not only result in physical harm or death, but also in disruptions in psychosocial functioning (Voisin, 2007) and greater susceptibility to psychological distress and long-term physical or mental ill-health (Aitken & Seedat, 2007). Furthermore, living in such circumstances not only exposes youth to violence, but also provides them with fewer opportunities for developing positive relationships and protective support structures. Children who are exposed to violence on a daily basis lose confidence in their homes and communities as safe places, and are “forced to develop coping styles and strategies to respond to constant intimidation, threats to safety and well-being, and loss of personal control” (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008, p. 303).

In addition, there appears to be a consistent gender difference in individual exposure to violence, with evidence that men are more likely to be exposed to violence than women. Findings from a number of international studies have shown that men are at greater risk than women of being both victims and witnesses of violence, with the one exception being sexual assault (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008; Margolin & Gordis, 2000; Outlaw, Ruback & Britt, 2002 Scarpa, 2001; Scarpa et al., 2002; Selner-O’Hagan, Kindlon, Buka, Raudenbush & Earls, 1998; Weaver et al., 2008). As such, boys might be expected to exhibit significantly more psychological difficulties than girls as a result of increased exposure to violence.

As a result, growing up in violent homes and communities can critically jeopardise children’s developmental progress, with early and prolonged exposure placing them at risk for more severe problems because of effects on subsequent development (Garbarino, Kosteny & Dubrow, 1991; Holt, Buckley & Whelan, 2008). The cumulative effects of violence can thus be carried into adulthood and contribute significantly to the cycle of adversity and violence (Holt et al., 2008; Williams, 2007). Furthermore, childhood exposure to violence has not only been linked to

impaired development, but also to diminished internalisation of moral values, decreased altruistic and empathic behaviours, and increased aggressive and antisocial behaviour (Aitken & Seedat, 2007; Scarpa, 2001; Weaver, Borkowski & Whitman, 2008). Such children often become adults who then repeat the pattern of violence. From the research outlined above, it is evident that early detection of violence exposure and its negative effects is critical for preventing problems from becoming more ingrained during adulthood (Voisin, 2007).

### **2.2.2 South African Research on Exposure to Violence**

“Violence closely follows poverty as a pervasive threat to children’s well-being” (Barbarin & Richter, 2001, p. 2). Violence is a major public health concern in South Africa, not only causing injury and death, but affecting the cognitive, behavioural, social and emotional development of children and adolescents in local communities (Ensink, Robertson, Zissus & Leger, 1997; Govender & Killian, 2001; Seedat, Nyamai, Njenga, Vythilingum & Stein, 2004; Ward, Flisher, Zissis, Muller & Lombard, 2001). As has been previously discussed, exposure to community violence has been associated with a wide range of serious psychosocial problems, and South African studies have echoed international findings on the effects of community violence exposure. Studies focusing on, for example, the aftermath of political and taxi violence (Dawes, Tredoux & Feinstein, 1989; Peltzer, 1999; Zissis, Ensink & Robertson, 2000), and on groups exposed to community violence (Esterhuyse, Louw & Bach, 2007; Seedat et al., 2004) have documented a wide range of psychological difficulties associated with exposure to these forms of violence, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Depression, anxiety, and aggression have also been identified amongst violence-exposed South African children (Liddel, Kvalsvig, Quotyana, & Shabalala, 1994; van der Merwe & Dawes, 2000; Ward et al., 2001).

Others have acknowledged the significant impact that exposure to violence has had on children in this country compared with other peace-time countries throughout the world (Aitken & Seedat, 2007; Brandt et al., 2005; Seedat, van Nood, Vythilingum, Stein & Kaminer, 2000; Ward, Martin, Theron & Distiller, 2007; Zissis et al., 2000). In South Africa, the atmosphere of political conflict and high levels of violence are further complicated by the legacy of institutionalised racial discrimination. Bloom (1996), for example, explores the emotional impact

of apartheid on South Africans, while Maiello (2001) discusses the transgenerational transmission of trauma and violence in the context of South Africa. The effects of political violence, however, are not limited to observable clinical symptoms. Govender and Killian (2001, p. 1) argue that “individual children can be affected in much more subtle ways, which involve their moral and political socialisation.” Apart from the known adverse effects of political violence, children are placed equally at risk for psychological difficulties by other types of violence, including criminal, familial and community violence (Barbarin & Richter, 2001).

In accounting for the high levels of violence exposure in South African communities, Collings and Magojo (2003) identify three broad categories of causal factors: 1) The desensitising effects of exposure to community violence, 2) social disruption and widespread poverty and unemployment as an impetus to violent behaviour, and 3) personal factors as mediators of violent behaviour. They use social learning theory (Bandura, 1977 in Collings & Magojo, 2003) to explain the link between exposure to community violence and the development of aggressive behaviour. Evidence of the high levels of children’s exposure to violence at school (Burnett, 1998; Ramphele, 1997) and in the general community (Govender & Killian 2001) suggests that “the disinhibiting/desensitising effects of such exposure are likely to be of aetiological significance in the development of aggressive behaviour among South African youth” (Collings & Magojo, 2003, p. 125). Collings and Magojo’s (2003) finding that exposure to community violence was associated with more severe individual and group perpetration of violence supports this hypothesis.

Consistent with international research, local research has also found that boys both participate in and are witness to violent events with greater frequency than girls (Dawes, Long, Alexander & Ward, 2006; Govender & Killian, 2001; Morojele & Brook, 2006; Seedat et al., 2004), with the exception of sexual victimisation (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2004; Maitse, 1998) – although the discrepancy here is not as large as might be expected (Dawes et al., 2006). Regardless of stage of development, male children have been shown to be more likely than female children to have crimes committed against them (Dawes et al., 2006). In an attempt to account for this difference, Morojele and Brook (2006) argue that men have increased freedom of movement and association, which might lead to exposure to more potentially dangerous situations in general,

and actual violence in particular. It is also acknowledged, however, that men and women exhibit different responses to the same (violent) conditions at different ages. Pre-adolescent boys appear to be more adversely affected by exposure to violence, showing more stress-related symptoms than their female counterparts (Duncan & Rock, 1997).

During adolescence, however, this trend seems to be reversed. At this stage, girls tend to show higher levels of distress (Govender & Killian, 2001) and to exhibit symptoms such as depression and anxiety in situations characterised by high levels of violence (Dawes, 1990). In contrast, adolescent boys, although more likely to experience greater exposure to violence, generally appear to show less clinical distress compared to adolescent girls (Govender & Killian 2001). One explanation for this has been gender differences in socialisation practices (Duncan & Rock, 1997), which give rise to different responses based on discourses of masculinity and femininity (Anderson, 1997; Dawes, 1990). Such differences may allow boys to be more active during violent situations, thereby allowing them to feel more in control of their environments. This, in turn, could lead to the positive appraisals and attributions that may protect boys from the negative effects of violence exposure (Govender & Killian, 2001). Based on the findings above, therefore, it might be expected that men in this study will be more exposed to violence than women, but that the effects of this exposure will be differentially experienced and expressed by men and women.

In order for interventions to be better informed, there is a particular need to focus on those factors that increase the risk of multiple forms of exposure to violence or multiple victimisation in young people (Morojele & Brook, 2006; Outlaw et al., 2002; Saunders, 2003). Not only does direct interpersonal violence exposure increase youth violence and victimisation (Butchart & Emmett, 2000), but violence on television and in other media also plays a role (Anderson et al., 2003; Szabo, 2003). Studies have also found that merely witnessing violence can result in behavioural problems, suggesting that witnessing and victimisation may have similar effects (Barbarin & Richter, 2001; Osofsky, 1995). However, in Ward et al.'s (2007) study, victimisation was more likely to lead to conduct problems than indirect exposure to violence. They suggest that "while witnessing violence may lead to some aggression, victimisation may increase the probability of minor conduct problems becoming more serious" (Ward et al., 2007,

p. 181). This points to the importance of understanding the pathways through which exposure to violence might predispose individuals to negative psychosocial consequences and impact on moral development. Pathways of how exposure to violence may influence moral development will be examined in the next section.

## **2.3 Violence and Moral Development**

### **2.3.1 Exposure to Violence and Moral Development: Pathways of Influence**

#### **2.3.1.1 The internalisation of moral values: Social learning theories**

“Many acts of aggression are clear moral transgressions, and in turn, many moral transgressions involve either physical or verbal aggression” (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2004, p. 987). Many of contemporary society’s social problems are blamed on the failure of youth to learn moral values (Behre, Astor & Meyer, 2001; Hart & Carlo, 2005). In the following section, broad concepts from major theories of human development will be used to examine how moral values are internalised. Specifically, how individuals interact with their environment to internalise moral judgements will be discussed in relation to Piaget’s theory of moral development, Bandura’s social learning theory, Vygotsky’s mediated learning theory, socialisation theories and ecological theories.

In Piaget’s (1965) view, all development emerges from action. Shifts in moral reasoning accompany shifts in cognitive development, so that as the child moves from egocentrism to perspective taking, morality shifts from applying rules egocentrically to applying them based on goals of mutual respect and reciprocity. According to Piaget, then, individuals are constantly constructing and re-constructing their knowledge of the world and ideas of fairness, as a result of interpersonal interactions with their environment (Murray, 1996). Since Piaget’s work on stages of moral development, other researchers have examined how moral judgement develops and how cognitive, social and affective development can affect moral judgement (Fontaine, Salvano-Pardieu, Crouzet & Pulford, 2002).

“Bandura and McDonald's (1963) well-known social learning theory of morality presumes the transmission of socially accepted norms and values as a prerequisite to moral behaviour” (Elbedour, Baker & Charlesworth, 1997, p. 1054). Social learning theory posits that there are three main ways through which moral judgements are developed: 1) direct instruction about moral conduct; 2) evaluative reactions of others toward one's actions; and 3) modelling (Claborne, 1998). Modelling is given particular emphasis in this theory: children learn a multitude of social responses by observing and storing in memory the actions of salient models around them (de Witt, 2009). It is through these sources that individuals learn what is socially acceptable and, along with their cognitive development, can move from a one-dimensional view of morality to multidimensional rules of conduct (Claborne, 1998).

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of mediated learning emphasised the relationship between human (moral) functioning and the sociocultural and historical contexts in which it is embedded (Tappan, 1997). Moral functioning, according to Vygotsky (1978), is mediated through the medium of language, such that social communication and social relationships result in moral reasoning and moral actions. Before it can exist within the child, knowledge exists between individuals. Mediation enables this knowledge to become internalised. As such, the role of others is critically important to the child's development and learning – Vygotsky's is a theory not only of learning but of guiding, instructing and teaching (de Witt, 2009). Because words and other forms of discourse are “inherently sociocultural phenomena, the words that make an individual understand that his/her behaviour is “correct”/”wrong” or “good”/”bad” come from a specific social, cultural and linguistic milieu” (Ferns & Thom, 2001, p. 38).

Socialisation is the process through which the child learns to behave according to the moral standards for acceptable behaviour in society. Socialisation theories aim to understand the continuity of values from parents to children and the process through which culture and society are reproduced in each succeeding generation (Kuczynski & Navara, 2006). Although acknowledging the role of social interactions between parent and child in value internalisation, socialisation theories place emphasis on sociocultural and contextual processes. Berry, Poortinga, Segall and Dasen (2002) describe three methods of cultural transmission which vary according to the knowledge source: 1) vertical transmission (parent to child and child to parent),

2) oblique transmission (where other adults and cultural institutions are socialising agents), and 3) horizontal transmission (peers). These various sources constitute working models of sometimes competing ideas that must be integrated, managed or rejected (Kuczynski & Navara, 2006).

According to ecological theories (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the child is embedded in multiple concentric contexts. The microsystem includes the personal and most immediate factors that influence the child: family, school, peers. The next layer, the exosystem, is interwoven into the broader community and includes extended family, mass media and religious institutions. Operating at the macrosystem are the attitudes and ideologies of the broader culture. From this perspective, the child may be directly influenced by transmission of values from their parents, but they may also be affected by the impact of community violence on their family (Usta & Farver, 2005). Because of the complex interplay between each of these ecological contexts, socialising influences on children may be negatively affected by, for example, families' vulnerability to violence, level of parental education, financial and work stress, and parental absence – all of which may increase the likelihood of a child being exposed to, at best, the absence of positive role models and moral instruction and, at worst, domestic violence at home (Coetzee et al., 2005; Dawes, 1994a; Margolin, 2005).

When parents are no longer able to guarantee a safe environment for their children, children begin to see their parents as less dependable and may start to lose trust in and respect for them (Affouneh, 2007). Loss of parental authority not only leads to disruption in the transmission of moral values, but also results in children being confronted with conflicting social experiences of what is morally or socially acceptable (Wainryb, 2006). In trying to make sense of their conflict-ridden experiences, children may begin to adopt violent behaviours as a way of coping. Furthermore, a child who is exposed to violence, whether indirectly or directly, in his/her formative cognitive years, may come to believe that the use of violence is both acceptable and justified, and may thus learn to use it (Singh, 2005). By witnessing violence, for example, they may learn that aggression is in fact functional in interpersonal relationships, which in turn leads to greater use or tolerance of violence as adults, thereby perpetuating the intergenerational transmission of violence (Dawes, 1990; Holt et al., 2008; Singh, 2005).

### **2.3.1.2 The internalisation of moral values: Psychoanalytic theories**

Psychoanalytic theory provides a deeper understanding of the intrapsychic effects of violence and aggression. Following a brief discussion of key psychoanalytic ideas, the utility of psychoanalytic theory in providing insight into how exposure to violence might impact on the internalisation of moral values will be explored.

Freud (1957 in St. Clair, 2004) provided the foundation of early theories of conscience and moral development in his analysis of psychosocial stages. In describing the conflict between satisfying internal drives and desires, and the need to comply with the demands of society, Freud explored the concepts of identification, introjection, and internalisation, which are posited to play a dominant role in understandings of conscience and set the stage for much subsequent thinking about moral development (Grusec, 2006). Drive theory played a pivotal part in understanding the motivation behind people's behaviour. In this sense, internalisation is based not only on external reward or punishment, but also on intrinsically motivated values and desires. Instead of understanding socialisation as a unidirectional transmission of morality, Freud emphasised the child's active role in incorporating or ingesting their parents' values as their own (Grusec, 2006). Freud's (1957 in St. Clair, 2004) structural theory was based on the notion that personality is built on three basic structures – the id, ego and superego. The id is the retainer of all the sexual and aggressive drives. The ego develops out of the id and mediates between internal and external reality, and between the id and the superego. The superego is the internal representation of the external standards about what is expected and acceptable conduct. In the formation of the superego, the functions of the external object are instated within the psyche.

Building on Freud's work, Klein (1975 in St. Clair, 2004) suggested that, as development progresses, the child begins to discriminate between his/her own internal drives and the external object. Prior to this, the unconscious phantasy that is already attached to the aggressive drive is the primary means through which the child makes sense of these external objects. When parents, the external objects, are able to contain the aggressive unconscious phantasy, development can proceed as normal. But when the parent confirms the unconscious phantasy that the child and the world is bad, then the things the child fears most about the world appear to be true. Good mothering, therefore, lays the foundation for the self. If a good mother is available to the child,

the good mother is internalised and becomes the foundation of self. For Klein, the badness of an object, whether internal or external, derives ultimately from the child's own inherent destructiveness, projected onto others.

In contrast, "badness" for Fairbairn (1954 in St. Clair, 2004) means unsatisfactory responsiveness or deprivation from parents. In Fairbairn's view, the child with unavailable parents splits off the responsive part of the parent – the good object – and internalises the unresponsive part – the unsatisfying object – in an attempt to feel connected to the parent, who is unavailable in other ways (Mitchell & Black, 1995). "When the mother is unable to provide the kind of good-enough environment necessary for the consolidation of a healthy sense of self, the child's psychological development essentially ceases... He remains stuck in psychological time, with the rest of his personality growing past and around a missing core" (Winnicott, 1958 in Mitchell & Black, 1994, p. 129)

Children who have been subjected to adverse experiences in social environments characterised by rejection, violence and abuse, do not seem to have the good-enough mothering needed to enable them to hold a good object in their minds when it is absent in external reality (Stein, 1996). As a result, they do not seem to be able to think about either themselves or others, and appear unable to identify with or show sensitivity to the needs of others. Poor object relationships can result in the absence of an internal representation of pain, with regards to either themselves or others, which often translates into a lack of respect for others (Stein, 1996). Such individuals' subsequent lack of guilt for their misconduct can manifest as direct cruelty or indirect destructiveness. In other words, many of the internal conflicts of individuals growing up in adverse circumstances come to be acted out within society itself, and the transgenerational pattern repeats itself (Stein, 1996).

According to Rucker and Greene (1995), environments that are both dangerous and impoverished can evoke a sense of chronic anxiety and meaninglessness that poses grave threats to the integrity of self. Such threats cannot be easily tempered by environmental provisions when the environment itself is impoverished. "Inner and external deprivation, and internal rage and external violence, all co-mingle to construct a sense of self characterised by intense narcissistic

defenses, which frequently represent attempts at the mastery and control of chronic internal and external threats” (Rucker & Greene, 1995, p. 376).

Psychoanalytic theory provides a way of understanding how the trauma of apartheid may have distorted children's relationships with adults and, in the process, disrupted the formation of a benign superego and ego ideal (Bloom, 1996). Early unconscious identifications with parents exposed to trauma make it difficult for children to differentiate themselves from their parents, and result in a “fusional and confusional sense of identity” (Maiello, 2001, p. 22). In many cases, the parental generation may maintain the silence and deny events of the past in order to protect themselves and their children from conscious awareness of unthinkable atrocities (Maiello, 2001). As a result, the trauma of the past may not be transformed into meaningful or manageable events. Instead, it becomes estranged from the individual's conscious and unconscious psychic reality and only finds expression in ways of being and acting in the world (Maiello, 2001).

Bloom (1996) asserts that little is known about how apartheid might have disrupted children's psychic development, or how sadomasochistic sublimations and introjections were managed. “We know very little about how these processes operate in children in our violent and disrupted society so that they do not inevitably introject and act out the violence that they have experienced, vicariously or immediately” (Bloom, 1996, p. 59). Black children, treated as the ‘other’ by the dominant White culture, were both exposed to legitimised aggression and were at risk of receiving more severe aggression if they acted out a hostile response to the dominant regime.

At the same time, however, the normal conditions for enabling these children to integrate their naturally aggressive impulses into a fully developed ego and superego were not present in South African society during the apartheid years. As a result, they had to sublimate and repress their aggressive impulses and were therefore more likely to inherit forms of self control that were either slavishly over-controlling and over-conforming, or antisocial in nature (Bloom, 1996). There were thus few influences that could have prevented the development of a superego that symbolically represented the all-powerful and aggressive dominant society and could not prevent

uncontrollable emotions from being transformed into narcissistic destruction of people and property (Bloom, 1996).

“Witnesses as well as victims are subject to the dialect of trauma” (Herman, 1992, p. 2).

Although apartheid officially ended in 1994, Black individuals who are now reaching late adolescence would have been born into the end of that era, to parents who had mostly suffered greatly under the apartheid regime. The psychoanalytic theories summarised above provide a way of understanding how, despite having escaped the direct effects of institutionalised discrimination, these adolescents could have inherited and internalised the collective sadomasochistic object from the previous generation. As Bloom (1996, p. 62) asserts,

Children's violence was also modelled on adult violence and on the legitimisation of violence in a macho culture. The aggression shown by youth was not motivated simply by a superego distorted by society, but was an introjection of the terrifying violence and depersonalisation that was both the reality and a phantasy of most of the population.

Although mental health workers seem to readily accept the concept of secondary or vicarious traumatisation in their work with those who have been exposed to trauma, there seems to be less acknowledgement of the impact of such indirect effects on the families of traumatised individuals (Weingarten, 2004). The phenomenon known as intergenerational transmission of trauma refers to the belief that “a family member who has experienced trauma can expose another member to residues of that trauma” (Weingarten, 2004, p. 46). Weingarten (2004) argues that, although we typically think of exposure to violence in direct terms, a considerable amount of violence has witnesses, whether at the moment of impact, or later. It might be expected that the “impossibility of suffering the other’s suffering” (Hatley, 2000 in Weingarten, 2004, p. 47) could have an impact on children’s development, and, in turn, influence the transmission of values that are internalised to form the basis of their moral development.

In the sections above, concepts from Piaget’s theory of moral development, Bandura’s social learning theory, Vygotsky’s mediated learning theory, socialisation, ecological, and psychoanalytic theories have been briefly reviewed in an attempt to understand the pathways through which exposure to violence might affect moral development. Having examined how

exposure to violence might influence moral development, research documenting an explicit association between the two will now be explored.

### **2.3.2 Research on the Effects of Exposure to Violence on Moral Development**

A number of studies have found that exposure to violence in various forms has a negative impact on socio-moral development and moral reasoning (Anderson et al., 2003; Krmar & Vieira, 2005; Kuther & Wallace, 2002; Szabo, 2003). Kohlberg (1984) suggested that the moral atmosphere of a community has a significant impact on individual moral development. This implies that the moral development of individuals who grow up in politically conflicted and violent societies may be adversely affected (Cairns & Dawes, 1996). Despite this awareness, there is a dearth of research on the impact of economic deprivation and violence on children and adolescents' moral reasoning (Elbedour et al., 1997).

It is possible that children who have grown up in such circumstances may reason differently when resolving conflict than those who have been relatively advantaged. There appear to be two lines of thought in this regard. The first is that exposure to violence may limit or retard an individual's moral development, such that they may not reach the same level of moral reasoning as individuals who have grown up in more adaptive environments. These individuals may consequently be more predisposed to view violence as an acceptable way of resolving conflict. The second argument is that exposure to violence will influence the type of moral reasoning that one is more likely to adopt. It has been proposed, for instance, that higher levels of exposure to violence are associated with a stronger tendency to favour justice over care when resolving moral dilemmas. These arguments will be explored in further detail below.

Dawes (1994b) argues that exposure to violence in politically conflicted situations could result in the internalisation of such violent behaviour as normal. This, in turn, could lead to the use of violent behaviour across different situations in order to satisfy individual or collective needs and goals. In addition, the ability to consider multiple viewpoints, an important dimension of traditional theories of moral reasoning, may not be present in children who belong to an ethnic group whose viewpoints have consistently not been considered (Garrod et al., 2003). Some

studies have indicated that children living in politically conflicted and violent contexts could be expected to show an increased justice orientation – that is, a tendency towards principles of fairness and rights in reasoning about moral dilemmas (Garrod et al., 2003; Muthukrishna et al., 2006). South Africa’s politically turbulent and violent past warrants further investigation into the impact that these circumstances may have had on young people’s moral reasoning.

International research in this area has been mixed, with some studies showing that the moral development of children living in the midst of political violence is indeed truncated (Ferguson & Cairns, 1996), while other findings have suggested that the moral development of such youths is not negatively affected (Posada & Wainryb, 2008). In contrast to arguments that children who have consistently been exposed to violence would exhibit a moral orientation that is weighted towards principles of justice or simply restricted, some have proposed that such children may be more predisposed towards an empathic and caring moral response. Being exposed to the suffering of others may result in an increase in children’s pro-social reasoning and altruistic behaviour (Garbarino et al., 1991), such that their focus will be on solving problems in a way that shows compassion and concern for all parties (Garrod et al., 2003). Children living in politically violent societies have thus been hypothesised to possess an “enhanced capacity to see the world with sensitivity and moral astuteness” (Garbarino et al., 1991, p. 380).

It has also been proposed that being more exposed to violent conflict may result in a greater capacity for moral judgements characterised by empathy and concerns for reciprocity. In particular, Garbarino et al. (1991) argue that individuals who are witness to or victims of violence exhibit more altruistic behaviour than those who are not. Similarly, Macksoud and Aber (1996) observed that some of the children in their sample actually became more sensitive to altruistic issues as a result of their experiences with political violence. There is thus some evidence to suggest that exposure to violence might be associated with a greater tendency towards a care than a justice moral orientation. However, Elbedour et al. (1997) propose that this apparent increase in altruism under conditions of violence is a function of the types of dilemmas presented. In their study, children scored higher on moral reasoning characterised by mutuality when faced with purely hypothetical dilemmas. When presented with more real-life or personalised dilemmas, however, there were noticeable shifts towards more justice and in-group

based moral reasoning. The implication here is that the type of moral orientation demonstrated is variable depending on perceived conditions and circumstances (Wilson, 1983).

Other research has shown that physically maltreated children appear to have the same pattern of moral judgement as non-maltreated children when judging violent behaviour (Fontaine et al., 2002; Smetana et al., 1991). These studies suggest that being exposed to violent contexts does not seem to affect children's general cognitive processes of moral judgement. Similarly, Posada and Wainryb (2008) found that, contrary to expectations, war-affected children and adolescents displayed noticeable moral knowledge in spite of having been exposed to violence, poverty, and dislocation. They suggest that these children do not take their experiences of violence and injustice as the only measure of what is right and wrong. Instead, like children living in peaceful societies, they tend to make moral judgements according to what they perceive to be the universal and intrinsic features of moral violations (Posada & Wainryb, 2008). This is supported by research conducted in politically conflicted Northern Ireland which found that adolescents living in that society are developing normally in terms of their moral judgements (Ferguson & Cairns, 2002), and implies a more subtle relationship between living in sustained political violence and moral development than others have suggested.

Other studies conducted at different periods in the same region, however, found that moral reasoning was adversely affected by ongoing exposure to violence (Dorahy, Lewis, Millar & Gee, 2003; Ferguson & Cairns, 1996). Garrod et al. (2003) suggest that the specific moral orientation that children in politically violent societies adopt will reflect their experience of political displacement and their concerns with the role of power, physical force and violence in conflict resolution. Those who take this view assert that individuals who are unfairly treated and whose rights are consistently violated will be more likely to adopt a moral orientation based on Kohlberg's ideas of justice, fairness, and individual rights (Knox et al., 2004). Individuals who are subjected to political violence and the unequal distribution of resources are expected to focus on competing interests between 'us and them' groups, and thus be more concerned with just solutions to moral conflicts than with preserving relationships and maintaining harmony. The moral atmosphere of violent contexts may leave fewer opportunities for individuals to engage in social interactions outside the bounds of the group and its norms (Ferguson & Cairns, 1996). As

such, when presented with conflicting interests, such individuals would be more predisposed to favour their moral obligation to the group over other competing loyalties.

Evolutionary theory suggests that an individual's inner resources (including moral reasoning and behaviour) are correlated with the availability of external (particularly economic) resources (Charlesworth, 1991). The moral judgements (as well as the behaviours, affects and cognitions) of children living in conditions of violence and deprivation are more likely to be motivated by self-interest and competition with others for resources than those who are living under more favourable conditions. It has been shown that egocentricity increases and mutuality decreases in politically violent contexts (Elbedour et al., 1997). This is consistent with evolutionary theory, which argues that the ideals of reciprocity and cooperation under conditions of abundance are compromised when resources are scarce and competitive strategies take over (Charlesworth, 1991). As such,

children exposed to conditions of violence, poverty, lawlessness and displacement are likely to face situations in which their moral principles about, for example, not hurting others or not stealing come into potential conflict with other significant considerations, such as their own needs for food and shelter or their wish to secure justice or retribution for having been wronged (Posada & Wainryb, 2008, p. 883).

Consistent with the arguments above are those asserting that the socialisation of children is compromised in conditions of deprivation and violence (Hasuka, Sunar & Alp, 2008). Children living in a society where values of universal love and reciprocity are constantly in conflict with the demands of survival are faced with particular moral dilemmas that cannot be compared with conventional moral development theories (Punamaki, 1987 in Cairns, 1996). As such, children in violent societies cannot be "successfully socialised because the behaviour of their whole society is based on the denial of human values" (Punamaki, 1987 in Cairns, 1996, p. 93). In addition, it appears that children exposed to all forms of violence, which has become interwoven into the fabric of society, may be caught up in a cycle of reactive violence and socialised to accept violence as an instrument of empowerment (Burnett, 1998). Arguably, then, these conditions might alter both the level and type of moral reasoning that such children adopt when making judgements about what is right and wrong.

Furthermore, some studies have indicated that children's exposure to violence and deprivation may compromise their ability to adhere to high levels of moral functioning (Elbedour et al., 1997) and predispose them to becoming perpetrators of violence themselves (Brugman & Aleva, 2004; Sams & Truscott, 2004). These circumstances may act as a moral developmental ceiling (Kohlberg, 1984) which restricts moral progress and encourages individuals who are exposed to high levels of violence to seek solutions to conflict which are based on vendetta and vigilantism (Ferguson & Cairns, 2002). South African research has also suggested that, under conditions of political violence, there is little tolerance for different viewpoints (Smith & Parekh, 1996). As a result, children's ability to reach higher, more reciprocal levels of moral reasoning may be limited (Dawes, 1994b). This view is supported by research showing that children who have been exposed to violence and situations where rights may have been restricted unfairly may exhibit a predominant justice orientation – in other words, a caring moral orientation seems to be adversely affected by continued exposure to violence (Muthukrishna et al., 2006).

As discussed in the sections above, exposure to violence appears to affect moral orientation either by restricting it or influencing the particular orientation that individuals exposed to violence might adopt. Evidence appears to be weighted towards the notion that exposure to violence predisposes individuals to be more inclined to favour a justice moral orientation, emphasising rights and fairness when resolving conflict. The following section will examine conditions of conflict specific to South Africa in order to review the role that exposure to violence may play in shaping children's moral development in South Africa.

#### **2.4 Moral Development of Black South Africans: Has Violence Played a Part?**

On several occasions prior to becoming president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, in his capacity as leader of the Moral Regeneration Movement, commented on the effects of apartheid on the moral fabric of South African society. "Apartheid created a particular value system designed to deepen and perpetuate a twisted understanding of values and morality ...it introduced extreme intolerance, and because it had to be maintained through extreme violence, it encouraged violence at every level of society" (Zuma, 2000 in Singer, 2000, p. 6).

South Africa has historically been characterised by high levels of political violence (Chikane, 1986; Coleman, 1994; Dawes, 1994b; Duncan, 2005; Straker, Mendelsohn, Moosa & Tudin, 1996) and currently rates as one of the most violent countries in the world (Mthethwa, 2008; Stone, 2006; Thomson, 2004). There has been much research into the effects of political and other forms of violence on the psychological well-being of South Africa's youth (Barbarin, Richter & de Wet, 2001; Collings & Magojo, 2003; Dawes, 1990, 1994a; Stavrou, 1993; Ward et al., 2007). However, there seems to be a lack of comprehensive empirical information about the impact of violence on moral development specifically (Dawes, 1994b; Duncan & Rock, 1997; Mason & Killian, 1993). The question posed in this study is whether exposure to high levels of violence has impacted on the moral development of young people in South Africa.

Rauch (2005b) points out that the link between crime and moral breakdown dates back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. South Africa's Moral Regeneration Movement, she argues, is one response to the culture of violence, with an explicit appeal to morals, values and ethics in an attempt to reduce crime. The notion of *ubuntu* in some traditional cultures in South Africa is a philosophy and way of life that puts the person at the centre of all things (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005). It is a form of morality that is concerned with the character and behaviour of a person, and emphasises that "people in need have a right to be helped, while others have a duty and obligation to render their services...(it is) a human imperative and obligation" (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005, p. 236). According to Zuma (in Rauch, 2005b), however, apartheid initiated a breakdown in this moral fabric and brutalised both its perpetrators and victims, the consequences of which manifested itself in many ways and in all sectors of society. South Africa's reputation for being the most violent country in the world is frequently directly related back to the policies of apartheid, which contributed to the entrenchment of structural violence at every level of society (Burnett, 1998; Duncan, 2005).

Much of the research on moral development has been conducted in affluent societies such as the United States, where children have typically not been exposed to situations in which their rights have been consistently violated (Garrod et al., 2003). Children living in these circumstances have been argued to be more likely to adopt a care orientation rather than an orientation to justice (Muthukrishna et al., 2006). In contrast, South Africa's high rates of violent crime have created

circumstances that, even on an intuitive level, are likely to have impacted on children's modalities of care and justice. It is not clear, however, whether such experiences resulted in a hindrance or enhancement of moral reasoning (Muthukrishna et al., 2006). Some have demonstrated that apartheid's legitimised violence negatively affected the cognitive development, self-esteem and moral development of non-White children, severely compromising their psychological development (Hickson, 1992; Setiloane, 1991).

In line with studies in other politically violent countries, the children in Muthukrishna et al's (2006) study who had been exposed to high levels of crime and community violence showed a greater tendency towards a justice moral orientation. Muthukrishna et al. (2006, p. 51) suggest that South African communities that have "suffered rupture due to poverty and violence will tend to use a justice orientation in their moral reasoning because the intimate fabric of social caring (*ubuntu*) has been compromised." As such, children have reacted to their experiences in a way that has fostered a concern for issues of rights, fairness, unequal power, undeserved punishment, and justice. The authors recommend that further research should explore how a context filled with violence and poverty might impact on moral development.

Violence is inherent in both physical and symbolic ways in most South African communities. Given this context, there is reason to believe that the ways in which children and adolescents have learned to make everyday moral judgements would have been strongly influenced by the incidents of symbolic and physical violence with which they are consistently confronted (Muthukrishna et al., 2006). The apartheid system undermined the inherent dignity of Black people and marginalised the commitment to *ubuntu* as "more aggressive and abrasive competition for survival emerged (and) values such as compassion and respect for human life were severely dented" (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005, pp. 233-234). This view is supported by research showing that individuals who face poverty and violence in their daily lives exhibit a greater tendency towards a justice orientation (Muthukrishna et al., 2006).

Some have argued that, while cultural experiences may have resulted in a greater emphasis on care and connection in non-Western cultures, these traditional values may have been undermined in the past few decades by, among other things, acculturative influences (Ward, 1995). Based on

their findings, Knox et al. (2004) extend this to argue that, given the social injustices experienced by oppressed groups such as women and Black people, they may have developed a greater concern with fairness, rights and justice. This may be particularly true for Black communities in South Africa, a country with a long history of oppression and injustice against “non-White” groups. (It should be noted that while Black groups in South Africa are not a minority numerically, they have, until recently, been a political and social minority as a result of the long history of oppression and racial segregation in this country). Sideris (2005), for example, has shown that women from both rural and urban communities are beginning to adopt a stronger position against violation of their rights, in general, and against sexual violence, in particular. Others have argued, however, that Black men and women, while denied other forms of power due to the immediate and residual consequences of apartheid, had access to other types of power, such as interpersonal and relational power (Carli, 1999). One might expect, then, in contrast to the arguments above, that Black South Africans might have developed a stronger sense of care and reciprocity in response to being denied other forms of power. Men and women’s moral judgements might be thought of as contextual in nature, depending on the relative positions of power they occupy in different situations (Turiel, 1998).

From the discussion above, there appear to be two main lines of argument. First, individuals exposed to violence are likely to suffer a number of adverse psychosocial effects, including restricted moral development. Second, these individuals will show a greater tendency to adopt a justice style of reasoning when resolving moral conflicts. The relationship between the context of conflict and violence, and the tendency towards particular moral orientations (justice or care) in Black South African men and women will be further explored in the current study.

## **2.5 Summary**

In the sections above, theoretical and empirical literature regarding moral development has been reviewed. Two positions seem to dominate this field: Kohlberg’s justice orientation and Gilligan’s care orientation. Evidence in support of gender differences in moral orientation was presented, with women tending towards a care approach and men towards a justice approach. It was also shown, however, that there is increasing evidence to suggest that the polarisation of

men and women into justice and care orientations, respectively, is inaccurate. A review of the South African literature seems to indicate that differences between Black men and women in South Africa on measures of care and justice orientations are not consistent with expected gender differences – that is, women higher on care and men higher on justice. Similarly, the moral development of Black children and adolescents, as a whole, does not appear to follow the same justice-care pattern described by Kohlberg and Gilligan. The differences displayed by this group in terms of moral reasoning have been attributed to, among others, education, socialisation practices, socioeconomic class, exposure to a university environment, and contextual factors, including the unique historical and sociocultural conditions in South Africa.

In the sections above, recent evidence indicating that gender has a negligible effect on moral development was presented. It was suggested that other variables, including contextual factors, may be more influential, since the conditions in which moral development takes place appear to play an important role in determining the rate and nature of such development. The negative effects on psychosocial development of growing up in violent circumstances were explored, and links were made between these adverse psychosocial effects and how exposure to violence might affect moral development. Exposure to violence has been associated with a wide range of serious psychosocial problems, some of which were discussed above. It was shown that South African studies have echoed international findings on the effects of violence exposure, with boys at greater risk for violence exposure than girls. The pathways through which exposure to violence might predispose individuals to negative psychosocial consequences and impact on moral development were explored. Specifically, how individuals interact with their environment to internalise moral judgements was discussed in relation to major theories of human development.

It was demonstrated that exposure to violence in various forms seems to have a negative impact on socio-moral development and moral reasoning. Exposure to violence appears to affect moral orientation either by restricting it or influencing the particular orientation that individuals exposed to violence might adopt. Evidence appears to be weighted towards the notion that exposure to violence predisposes individuals to be more inclined to favour a justice moral orientation, emphasising rights and fairness when resolving conflict. South Africa currently rates as one of the most violent countries in the world, and research into the effects of political and other forms

of violence on the psychological well-being of South Africa's youth was reviewed. It became evident that there is a dearth of comprehensive empirical information about the relationship between violence and moral development specifically. The question posed in the current study, then, was whether exposure to high levels of violence has affected the moral development of young people in South Africa.

### 3. RATIONALE

The problem of declining morality, acknowledged worldwide, is particularly evident in South Africa, where regeneration of morals has become a matter of national and political attention (Coetzee et al., 2005). That there is a moral crisis in South African society seems to have achieved general consensus in recent years, with the high levels of crime in the country being blamed on this moral degeneration (Rauch, 2005a). South Africa's Moral Regeneration Movement<sup>1</sup> seems to be one response to the culture of violence, with an explicit appeal to morals, values and ethics in an attempt to reduce crime (Richardson, 2003; Zuma, 2003).

It is important to locate moral development research within the South African context. Despite widespread agreement that the sociocultural context influences how moral reasoning is shaped, there have been few empirical studies exploring moral development in South Africa (Coetzee et al., 2005). There is evidence to suggest that Black South Africans may deviate from Kohlberg's morality of individual conscience to a stronger adherence to the collective conscience (Ferns & Thom, 2001; Marais, 2006). Research has shown that apartheid has had a negative impact on children's psychosocial development, which implies that the cultural and political climate in which people live influences how they construct their moral orientations (Abrahams, 1995). Since South Africa became a democracy in 1994, the decline in political violence has been paralleled by a rise in violent crime (Altbeker, 2007; Hunt, 2003). Violence has become an issue of major national and public health concern due to its impact on the behavioural, social, and emotional functioning of those exposed to multiple forms of violence (Morojele & Brook, 2006).

Using Kohlberg's ethic of justice and Gilligan's ethic of care, this study aimed to investigate the moral orientations of young Black South Africans, and to further explore the relationship between exposure to violence and moral development amongst this group. Against the backdrop of South Africa's political and social situation, it was expected that the results of such an investigation could be particularly revealing, providing a unique example of a traditionally "non-Western" population that may not reason in the same way that other non-Western groups have been found to reason about moral dilemmas. It was hoped that the current study would provide insight into the moral reasoning of Black men and women in the uniquely South African context.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mrm.org.za/>

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Aims and Hypotheses

The primary objectives of this research were a) to determine the particular moral orientations of young Black men and women in an urban South African setting, and b) to examine whether exposure to violence has an effect on these moral orientations.

The main aims of the present study were:

1. To assess which type of moral orientation – Kohlberg’s justice orientation or Gilligan’s care orientation – this sample population exhibits more strongly
2. To investigate the levels of exposure to violence among a sub-group of Black tertiary education men and women
3. To explore the association between exposure to violence and Black South African students’ moral orientations

To meet these objectives, the following hypotheses were investigated:

1. Men will show a greater tendency towards a justice orientation than women, while women will show a greater tendency towards a care orientation than men
2. Men will be exposed to significantly more violence in general, and in all contexts (campus, home and neighbourhood), than women
3. Higher levels of exposure to violence will be positively correlated with a justice orientation and inversely correlated with a care orientation (cf. Elbedour et al., 1997; Knox et al., 2004) for the whole sample, as well as for men and women separately
4. Exposure to violence (independent variable) will have a significant effect on moral orientation (dependent variable, justice and care combined), and on a justice orientation and a care orientation, respectively

The results of this investigation were compared with the findings from a previous study assessing moral orientation in a group of Black and White students (Marais, 2006), and to related South African and international literature. Significant and non-significant results are discussed within the context of political conflict and violence and its impact on South African youth.

#### **4.2 Research Design and Methodology**

This research followed a simple, randomised, relational design that is congruent with the deductive-hypothetico model of research. Quantitative methodology was employed to explore the differences in moral orientations of Black South African men and women, and the degree to which they had been exposed to violence in their homes, neighbourhoods and on campus. A cross-sectional study using simple correlations was employed to examine the association between each measure. A multiple regression design was used as the main analysis to predict relationships between the two variables: moral orientation and exposure to violence.

#### **4.3 Sample**

The primary variable under investigation in this study was the moral orientations of Black men and women. Thus the study sample comprised 85 Black men and 86 Black women, drawn specifically from a student population at a tertiary education institution in KwaZulu-Natal. The current study is based on previous research conducted with Black and White students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which produced some contradictory findings regarding Black men and women's styles of moral reasoning in particular. Marais' (2006) study suggested that Black students engaged in different reasoning styles than those proposed by traditionally Western theories such as Kohlberg's (1976) and Piaget's (1965). Recommendations for further research included refining attempts to identify moral reasoning styles in Black men and women, and narrowing the focus to this race group only in order to identify gender differences within this group. As a result, it was decided to include only Black men and women in the current study to further explore their moral reasoning styles and, at the same time, how much violence they might be exposed to in their current contexts.

Power calculations to arrive at the sample size were as follows. Estimating a 10% variability ( $R^2$ ) in moral orientation that can be accounted for by exposure to violence, the effect size ( $f^2$ ) was calculated to be  $f^2 = .1111$ . Given this estimated variability of 10% and an alpha of  $\alpha = .05$ , requiring a power of .80 yielded a total sample size of 103. However, given that the variability in moral orientation accounted for by exposure to violence was unknown, it was decided to use the estimated sample size for a power of .80 for each gender sub-grouping. In other words, in order to ensure statistical power, 100 Black men and 100 Black women needed to be included in this study. By using a greater sample size, if the effect size or variation decreased to 5% ( $R^2 = .05$ ), the resultant power (.77) was still considered robust enough to justify conducting this study.

It was initially intended that the sample for this study would be comprised of 200 participants: 100 Black women and 100 Black men. However, due to poor response rate ( $n = 213$ ; 42.6%) and a large number of spoiled questionnaires ( $n = 42$ ; 19.72%), the final sample was made up of 171 participants in total: 86 women and 85 men.

#### **4.3.1 Demographics**

The demographic details of the study sample are presented below in Table 4.1.

**Gender:** As shown in Table 4.1 below, of the total sample group, 50.29% ( $n = 86$ ) were women and 49.71% ( $n = 85$ ) were men.

**Age:** Age of the sample participants was between 17 and 31 years of age. The majority ( $n = 160$ ; 93.57%) of the sample fell into the 17–21-year age category.

**Home language:** First-language isiZulu speakers comprised the largest language group ( $n = 154$ ; 90.06%), followed by first-language isiXhosa speakers ( $n = 7$ ; 4.1%). Other languages reported included English and other African languages.

**Table 4.1**  
**Demographics of Sample**

		<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>	Men	85	49.71
	Women	86	50.29
<b>Age</b>	17-21	160	93.56
	22-26	9	5.24
	27-31	1	.6
	Unspecified	1	.6
<b>Home Language</b>	isiZulu	155	90.6
	isiXhosa	7	4.09
	Other African	6	3.54
	English	1	.6
	Unspecified	2	1.17
<b>Race Group</b>	Zulu	155	90.6
	Xhosa	2	1.17
	Other African	1	.6
	Unspecified	13	7.63
<b>Course</b>	Science Access	132	77.19
	Psychology	12	7.01
	BSocSci	8	4.65
	BAgric	3	1.75
	BA	2	1.17
	Other	14	7.69

**Race group:** The largest number of participants ( $n = 154$ ; 90.06%) specified Zulu as their racial designation. Other racial groupings specified included Xhosa and other African, while 7.6% ( $n = 13$ ) were unspecified.

**Course:** The largest proportion ( $n = 132$ ; 77.19%) of the sample indicated that they were BSc degree students, primarily comprising of Science Access students (foundation year between matric and first year of BSc degree). Thereafter, participants were variously distributed between Psychology, BSocSci, BAgric, BA and BCom students. The majority of the participants were in science foundation or first year ( $n = 141$ ; 82.46%).

#### 4.4 Instruments

The assessment of moral orientation in the South African context is problematic because no measures of moral development adapted specifically for the South African population have been found to date. An extensive review of the literature yielded several possible scales that could potentially be used to assess moral orientation. From the various measures of moral development and moral orientation that were examined, the following three instruments were subsequently considered more closely for inclusion in this study: the Moral Justification Scale (Gump et al., 2000); the Measure of Moral Orientation (Liddell, Halpin & Halpin, 1992); and the Moral Orientation Scale (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990). Because the Moral Orientation Scale (MOS) by Yacker and Weinberg (1990) was used in the previous study on which the current research is based, it was decided to use the MOS in the current study. Using the same measure would allow for replication of the previous study's results relating to Black men and Black women's moral orientation, and comparison of findings across the two studies

The phenomenon of exposure to violence is complex and multidimensional (Brandt et al., 2005). An extensive number of instruments assessing exposure to violence have been developed. Almost all of these measures were developed in the United States, with the result that they are either difficult to locate or have yet to be standardised in populations outside of the United States (Brandt et al., 2005). Brandt et al. (2005) reviewed a number of the frequently used interview-based and self-report measures of children and adolescents' exposure to violence. All the instruments reviewed by Brandt et al. (2005) included measures of direct violence and indirect violence (hearing about violent events), as it is recognised that the manner in which one is exposed to violence is likely to affect the psychosocial impact of that experience.

Brandt et al.'s (2005) review of exposure to violence instruments was employed to identify a quantitative measure that would be relevant for use in the current study. Many of the instruments reviewed in Brandt et al.'s (2005) study, which employed quantitative methodology, were developed in the United States. In contrast, many of the existing instruments assessing violence exposure that had been developed specifically for the South African context were qualitative, in the form of interviews and focus groups. A review of South African research on exposure to

violence confirmed this trend. In the search for a quantitative measure of violence exposure, the following three instruments were reviewed for inclusion in this research: Negative Life Events Questionnaire (Mason & Killian, 1993); Survey of Exposure to Community Violence (Richters & Saltzman, 1990); and the Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure (Hastings & Kelley, 1997)<sup>2</sup>.

Mason and Killian (1993) developed the Negative Life Events Questionnaire (NLEQ) to measure the degree of direct and indirect exposure to violence – criminal, environmental and domestic. The scale was developed in South Africa, on a sample of Black adolescents, which supports the utility of administering this questionnaire on a South African population in the current study. Because the current study aimed to assess exposure to violence, items assessing participants' actual violent behaviour, as well as those unrelated to exposure to violence would have been excluded (Collings & Magojo, 2003). As a result of these exclusions, the NLEQ would have been reduced to a small number of items. It also fails to distinguish settings, types and severity of violence exposure. In attempting to obtain a copy of the full NLEQ, it was discovered that neither of the authors, nor others who had used the measure subsequently, were able to find the original measure. As a result, despite the relevance of the NLEQ to the South African context, it was decided not to use this measure in the current study.

The Survey of Exposure to Community Violence (SECV), developed by Richters and Saltzman (1990), measures the lifetime exposure to community violence by assessing the frequency of exposure to various types of violence. The SECV distinguishes between direct exposure (“you yourself”) and indirect exposure (“someone else”) to violence in the responses it requests. Respondents are also asked to report the perpetrator and the location of the violence on a scale of increasing frequency. Information regarding administration and scoring of the SECV, as well as permission to use the instrument, could not be obtained from the authors and thus it could not be included in the current research.

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<sup>2</sup> Other measures that were considered included the measure of Exposure to Violence (ETV, Brennan et al., 2007); the Life Experiences Survey (LSE, Singer, Anglin, Song & Lunghofer, 1995, in Carlson, 2006); and an 81-item self report measure assessing the relationship and degree of exposure to violence in three different settings: the media, home/community, and school (Joshi & Kaschak, 1998).

The Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure (SAVE) (Hastings & Kelley, 1997) was specifically developed to address deficiencies in previous measures of violence exposure. Attention was paid to developing an instrument that would be easy to administer, suitable for poor readers, have acceptable reliability and validity, and have utility as a socially valid and clinically sensitive measure of the experience of violent events (Hastings & Kelley, 1997). The scale development sample was predominantly African American youth. The SAVE appears to be a useful rapid screening test for quantifying severity of violence exposure by setting. It allows for differentiation of type, severity and context of violence exposure. Although the SAVE was developed for use on an adolescent population, the psychometric properties and item content of the SAVE were considered suitable for inclusion of this measure in the current study involving adolescents and young adults (tertiary education students). The two scales selected for this study are outlined more fully below.

#### **4.4.1 Moral Orientation Scale (MOS)**

##### **4.4.1.1 Description**

The Moral Orientation Scale Using Childhood Dilemmas (hereafter referred to as the MOS) is an objective test developed by Yacker and Weinberg (1990) to measure two distinct moral orientations as outlined in the work of Kohlberg and Gilligan. Concepts underlying the MOS were based on the hypothesis that individuals showing a stronger care orientation or ethic will place greater emphasis on responsibility towards others and the preservation of relationships; those showing a greater tendency towards a justice orientation will emphasise individual rights over relationships (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990). The MOS consists of 12 moral dilemmas that children (aged 8-10) typically face in their daily lives (see Appendix A). Although the scale was designed to measure adult moral orientation, childhood dilemmas were used in the assessment as they are relatively simple and universal, as opposed to the moral dilemmas that adults might face (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990). The childhood moral dilemmas were formulated in consultation with child development specialists, and were based on published and unpublished materials including curricula, moral judgement interviews, popular child-rearing texts, and interviews with parents (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990).

The MOS consists of two subscales: a Justice subscale (J) and a Care subscale (C). As hypothesized in the original validation study, there was a significant gender difference on the scores of the MOS, with men showing a stronger tendency towards a justice orientation and women showing a stronger tendency towards a care orientation.

#### **4.4.1.2 Reliability and validity coefficients**

The MOS was found to provide a valid assessment of preferred mode of moral thinking (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990). Initial validation showed the scale to have stable discriminant validity and good test-retest reliability (.71). No other reliability data was provided in the validation study. The MOS was used in a previous study on a South African sample of tertiary education students, which yielded an alpha value of .98, which was considered sufficient to justify re-use of the MOS in the current study.

#### **4.4.1.3 Administration and scoring**

As mentioned above, the MOS consists of 12 childhood dilemmas that require respondents to imagine that they are helping an 8-to 10-year-old child decide what to do in each situation. Each dilemma is followed by four choice alternatives that respondents must rank from 1 to 4, according to their preferences for choosing each consideration in helping a child decide what to do. Without being identified as such, two of the four choices presented with each dilemma are defined within the justice mode of moral reasoning, and two are framed within the care mode (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990). Only the first choice given for each dilemma is scored in the final analysis: a respondent's total score on the Care subscale is calculated by adding the number of care responses selected as first choices; the number of justice responses selected as first choices are added to obtain the total score on the Justice subscale.

Scores may therefore vary from 0 to 12, with higher scores on the Justice and Care subscales indicating a stronger orientation towards justice and care respectively. In order to avoid falsely dichotomizing moral thinking, the authors of the MOS did not designate cut-off scores for the scale, in line with Gilligan's own findings that individuals do not exhibit one or the other type of moral orientation, but rather stronger tendencies towards a care or justice orientation (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990).

## **4.4.2 Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure (SAVE)**

### **4.4.2.1 Description**

The Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure (SAVE) was developed by Hastings and Kelley (1997) to assess experiences of violence in youth. It is a 32-item self-report scale that measures exposure to violence by assessing the frequency of exposure to various types of violence in three different contexts: at my school, in my home and in my neighbourhood. The SAVE distinguishes between direct and indirect exposure to violence, which is operationalised in three subscales: Traumatic Violence (TV), Physical or Verbal Abuse (PA), and Indirect Violence (IV). Traumatic Violence includes items that assess severe victimisation experiences. Items on the PA subscale assess actual or threatened violent harm, and items on the IV subscale include witnessing or hearing of less severe interpersonal violence. Each subscale can be further broken down into the three contexts in which this type of violence may occur (school, home, neighbourhood). Total scale scores range from a minimum of 96 to a maximum 480, with higher scores reflecting greater exposure to violence.

### **4.4.2.2 Reliability and validity coefficients**

Reported Cronbach's alpha for the SAVE subscales ranged from  $\alpha = .65$  to  $\alpha = .95$ . Test-retest reliability ranged from  $\alpha = .53$  to  $\alpha = .92$ . Alphas for each setting scale (school, home, neighbourhood) ranged from  $\alpha = .90$  to  $\alpha = .94$ . This was considered an acceptably high level of reliability to justify inclusion of the SAVE in the current study. All the SAVE setting scales were considered to be successful in classifying participants according to low- and high-violence status. Convergent and divergent validity was deemed to be acceptable based on the SAVE's significant correlations with other measures of violence and low correlations with unrelated measures. The SAVE was also shown to have good internal consistency and acceptably high construct validity (Hastings & Kelley, 1997).

### **4.4.2.3 Administration and scoring**

Each item on the 32-item SAVE (see Appendix B) is rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale to reflect increasing frequency from never (1) to always (5). Respondents are also given the options of school, home and neighbourhood under each of the 32 items and asked to indicate the context

in which the violence occurs. Because participants in the current study are university students, the “at my school” context was changed to “on campus”. With three context options under each of the 32 items, the total number of responses adds up to 96 across the whole scale, with a maximum total scale score of 480 (96 x 5) and a minimum total scale score of 96 (96 x 1). Twelve item scores are added to calculate the Traumatic Violence subscale score (min: 36; max: 180); fourteen item scores are added to obtain the Indirect Violence subscale score (min: 42; max: 210); and six items are included in the final Physical and Verbal Abuse subscale score (min: 18; max: 90). The higher the score on each of these subscales, the greater the frequency of exposure to this type of violence.

#### **4.4.3 Demographic Questionnaire**

A demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) was included in order to obtain information about participants’ age, gender, home language, and other demographic details. This data provided another source of information against which significant findings could be compared.

#### **4.5 Procedure**

From January to March 2009, the author approached lecturers to request permission to use 20 minutes of lecture time to explain the research to students and ask them to complete the questionnaire in class. Permission was obtained from lecturers of psychology and the Centre of Science Access programme to hand out questionnaires at their lectures. Two research assistants were employed to go to different lectures, with prior approval from lecturers, to explain the research and hand out questionnaires at the end of lectures to those students willing to complete them. The researcher requested that time be allowed for a brief explanation of the nature and aims of the study, as well as confirmation of confidentiality and the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw. Some psychology lecturers also agreed to make questionnaires available to students during their lectures and to inform their students about the study and request volunteers to complete the questionnaires.

A brief explanation of the nature and aims of the study, as well as confirmation of confidentiality and the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw, was given as a precursor to the questionnaire (see Appendix D). Students were not required to put their names on the questionnaires and this ensured anonymity. It was also emphasised that completion of the questionnaires was not related to course requirements or assessment. Some students chose not to take questionnaires to complete. Those who took questionnaires to fill out were asked to hand them in on completion or, if they did not finish before their next lecture, were told to hand in to their lecturer or at the School of Psychology. Of the 500 sets of questionnaires that were distributed, 213 were returned, a response rate of 42.6%. Of the returned questionnaires, 171 (34.2%) were usable.

The questionnaires were scored and the results entered onto a spreadsheet. The data were subsequently analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 2004). Demographic information was analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics on SPSS (2004). The results obtained from analysis of MOS and SAVE subscale scores were correlated with the demographic data to determine if results were systematically associated with demographic variables.

#### **4.6 Analysis of Data**

The data comprises self-report questionnaire responses. The results were generated by the scoring of these responses. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the information obtained from the demographic questionnaire. Thereafter, the scores for each participant on the Moral Orientation Scale (MOS) subscales and the Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure (SAVE) subscales were calculated and analysed using inferential statistical procedures on SPSS (2004). A Bivariate Correlation Analysis was used to calculate correlations between the MOS and SAVE subscale scores of Black men and Black women respectively. Significant differences between Black men and Black women on the MOS and SAVE subscales were analysed using a Multiple Regression analysis. The significance level was set at  $p < 0.05$  throughout the analysis.

#### **4.6.1 Assumption Testing**

Levene's test for homogeneity of data was used to establish that the data were normally distributed. Parametric tests (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) could thus be used to test for significant differences because the data were normally distributed and had equal variances.

#### **4.6.2 Reliability Testing**

Reliability analyses were performed on the MOS and SAVE to establish the internal consistency of each of these measures. Previous data obtained from a similar sample using the MOS yielded an alpha value of .98 (Marais, 2006), which suggests that it was an appropriate measure for use on this population. However, reliability analysis on the MOS data for the current sample yielded an alpha value of .15, which suggests that this scale was not a sufficiently reliable measure for inclusion, and that the results should be interpreted with caution. However, the Kuder Richardson formula (a special form of Cronbach's alpha for dichotomous data) was used on *secondary* data. In other words, a new scale was created out of the existing scale when applying the scoring criteria (0 = Justice; 1 = Care) to the MOS raw data. Thus, it could be argued that performing a reliability analysis on this secondary data is not in fact viable, given that it would not yield an accurate representation of the responses of the original sample. The alpha (Cronbach) value of .94 for the SAVE subscales was sufficiently high to justify inclusion of this measure, compared to the alpha values (from  $\alpha = .65$  to  $\alpha = .95$ ) obtained in the original validation study (Hastings & Kelley, 1997).

#### **4.6.3 Descriptive Statistics**

The mean scores and standard deviations for each subscale of the Moral Orientation Scale and the Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure were calculated separately for men and women.

#### **4.6.4 The Moral Orientation Scale (MOS)**

An independent samples *t*-test was used to test for significant differences in average values between men and women on the MOS subscales, Justice and Care. It was possible to use this parametric test because the groups had equal variances.

#### **4.6.5 The Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure (SAVE)**

The differences between men and women on the SAVE subscales – Indirect Violence, Traumatic Violence, Physical/Verbal Abuse – were assessed using an independent samples *t*-test, as were significant differences between men and women’s total scale scores (Exposure to Violence Total) on the SAVE. The differences between men and women with respect to exposure to violence in different contexts – Home, Campus and Neighbourhood – was also assessed using the independent samples *t*-test.

#### **4.6.6 Correlations**

Using bivariate correlation (Pearson’s) analyses, the correlations between the MOS subscales and the SAVE subscales were computed, first for the whole sample, and then separately for men and women.

#### **4.6.7 Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)**

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was performed on the data to determine whether gender and exposure to violence had a significant effect on moral orientation (Justice and Care combined).

#### **4.6.8 Multiple Regression Analysis**

Multiple regression is a way of predicting linear relationships between the variables under investigation – moral reasoning, exposure to violence, and gender. It is a more stringent

procedure than a correlational technique as it decreases the possibility of Type I error. Multiple regression analyses (stepwise) were conducted separately for Justice and Care. These results were then examined to determine what effect gender and exposure to violence had on a justice orientation and a care orientation, respectively.

#### **4.7 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical clearance was obtained for this research from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Humanities Research Ethics Committee before commencement of the study (ethical approval number HSS/0306/08M). The researcher accepted responsibility for ensuring ethical practice for the duration of this study. The recruitment of participants for completion of the questionnaires was on an entirely voluntary basis. The participants were informed of their freedom to choose not to participate and their right to withdraw. The study was considered to be of relatively low risk: no direct risks or potentially harmful consequences of participation in this study were anticipated. However, questions on the Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure may have evoked feelings of distress in some participants. To protect against harm coming to participants as a result of potential distress caused by the questions asked, the informed consent sheet contained information about counselling services available to them should they require such assistance.

Each questionnaire was given an identifying code (A1, A2 etc) and will be stored in a secured cabinet at the School of Psychology for a period of five years. No information that might result in participants being identified was included in this thesis, or any future publications, presentations or reports that result from this research. Findings are discussed within the broader context of the UKZN student population. Questions surrounding the validity of employing Western theories and measures in the South African cultural context demonstrate the importance of developing culture- and gender-sensitive measures of moral reasoning and exposure to violence, and interpreting results with caution. Every effort was made to avoid any gender or cultural bias and insensitivity while conducting the study and reporting the findings.

## 5. RESULTS

This chapter will present the results generated by analysis of the data collected in the investigation. The variables that were analysed are as follows: the Indirect Violence, Traumatic Violence, and Verbal/Physical Abuse subscales of the Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure (SAVE), and the Justice and Care subscales of the Moral Orientation Scale (MOS). The results are presented in six sections. Firstly, the demographic data of the sample, followed by the mean subscale scores for the SAVE and MOS for both groups, women and men, are summarised. Thereafter, each of the four hypotheses of the study will be addressed.

### 5.1 Demographic Data

Of the 500 sets of questionnaires that were distributed, 213 (42.6%) questionnaires were returned, of which 36 (16.9%) were spoiled, 6 (2.82%) had missing data, and 171 (34.2%) were useable. Of the useable sample, 50.29% ( $n = 86$ ) were women and 49.71% ( $n = 85$ ) were men. Demographic data for this sample can be found in Table 4.1 on page 44.

### 5.2 Mean Subscale Scores

#### 5.2.1 Moral Orientation Scale (MOS)

The mean MOS subscale scores for men and women are presented in Table 5.1.

As shown in Table 5.1 below, the mean scores on the Justice subscale for both men and women in this sample were slightly higher than the male and female groups from a previous study on a similar population (Marais, 2006). The Care scores for the current sample were slightly lower than those for the sample from Marais' (2006) study. The means for men and women on both Justice and Care were almost identical. Women scored only marginally higher than men on Justice, while men scored marginally higher than women on Care.

**Table 5.1**  
**Means for Moral Orientation Scale Subscales\* by Gender**

	Gender	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Justice</b>	Men	85	6.91	1.84
	Women	86	6.93	1.72
<b>Care</b>	Men	85	5.09	1.84
	Women	86	5.06	1.73
<b>Justice (Black Sample, Marais, 2006)</b>	Men	95	6.62	1.84
	Women	100	6.79	1.75
<b>Care (Black Sample, Marais, 2006)</b>	Men	95	5.37	1.83
	Women	100	5.2	1.8

\* Total MOS score is equal to the number of care responses selected as first choice and may vary from 0, indicating a strong justice orientation, to 12, indicating a strong care orientation.

### **5.2.2 Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure (SAVE)**

Mean scores for men and women on the SAVE subscales are summarised in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2**  
**Means for Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure Subscales & Contexts by Gender**

	Gender	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Traumatic Violence</b>	Men	85	54.32	13.03
	Women	86	44.26	8.08
<b>Indirect Violence</b>	Men	85	90.27	19.3
	Women	86	78.76	19.61
<b>Physical/Verbal Abuse</b>	Men	85	26.45	8.07
	Women	86	24.7	6.6
<b>Campus</b>	Men	85	37.38	7.09
	Women	86	35.56	4.94
<b>Home</b>	Men	85	49.94	16.25
	Women	86	47.41	13.96
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	Men	85	83.72	22.35
	Women	86	64.74	19.35
<b>Exposure to Violence Total</b>	Men	85	171.03	36.1
	Women	86	147.71	31.3

As shown in Table 5.2, men scored higher than women on all the exposure to violence subscales. The greatest differences between means for men and women can be seen on Traumatic Violence, Indirect Violence, Neighbourhood and Exposure to Violence Total, with men obtaining the higher scores on these subscales.

### 5.3 Association between Gender and Moral Orientation

An independent samples *t*-test was used to test for significant differences between men and women on the Moral Orientation Scale subscales. The results are presented in Table 5.3 below.

**Table 5.3**  
**Comparison of Gender Means on the Moral Orientation Scale Subscales**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				Sig. (2-tailed)
		<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	
<b>Justice</b>	Equal variances assumed	.25	.617	.09	169	.929
	Equal variances not assumed			.09	168.01	.929
<b>Care</b>	Equal variances assumed	.2	.653	-.13	169	.895
	Equal variances not assumed			-.13	168.16	.895

Examining the significance values for Justice and Care in Table 5.3 reveals that there were no significant differences between men and women on either Justice or Care subscales.

### 5.4 Association between Gender and Exposure to Violence

Significant differences between men and women on the exposure to violence (SAVE) subscales were examined using an independent samples *t*-test, the results of which are shown in Table 5.4 below. Men obtained significantly higher scores on the Indirect Violence and Traumatic

Violence subscales than women, and scored significantly higher on Exposure to Violence Total scale scores than women did. No significant difference between men and women was found for the Physical/Verbal Abuse subscale. Men also scored significantly higher than women on exposure to violence in the Neighbourhood context. There were no significant differences between men and women with respect to exposure to violence on Campus or at Home.

**Table 5.4**  
**Comparison of Gender Means on SAVE Subscales & Contexts**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				Sig. (2-tailed)
		<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	
<b>Traumatic Violence</b>	Equal variances assumed	10.89	.001	-6.08	169	.001
	Equal variances not assumed			-6.06	139.98	.001*
<b>Indirect Violence</b>	Equal variances assumed	.36	.550	-3.87	169	.001*
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.87	168.99	.001
<b>Physical/Verbal Abuse</b>	Equal variances assumed	2.53	.114	-1.55	169	.122
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.55	161.83	.123
<b>Campus</b>	Equal variances assumed	8.64	.004	-1.95	169	.053
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.94	149.88	.054
<b>Home</b>	Equal variances assumed	1.13	.290	-1.09	169	.275
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.09	164.65	.276
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	Equal variances assumed	2.12	.147	-5.94	169	.001*
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.93	165.06	.001
<b>Exposure to Violence Total</b>	Equal variances assumed	.65	.420	-4.52	169	.001*
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.51	165.11	.001

\* The mean difference was significant at the .05 level

## 5.5 Correlations between Moral Orientation and Exposure to Violence Scores

Correlations between each of the subscales of the MOS and the SAVE were computed, first for the whole sample, and then separately for men and women. The results for the whole sample are shown in Table 5.5.

As would be expected, there were significant positive correlations between scores on all the subscales of the SAVE for the whole sample. Thus, an increase in exposure to violence in one form (traumatic violence) or context (home), for example, was significantly correlated with an increase in exposure to violence in another form (indirect violence) or context (campus). Scores on Indirect Violence and Traumatic Violence showed significant positive and negative correlations with scores on Care and Justice, respectively. Exposure to violence on Campus and in the Neighbourhood were also significantly correlated with Justice and Care scores, in a positive direction for Care and a negative direction for Justice, contrary to expectations. There were no other significant correlations between exposure to violence (SAVE) subscales and moral orientation subscales (Justice and Care).

With respect to gender, significant correlations between exposure to violence subscales and moral orientation subscales were found for men only, as shown in Table 5.6 below. For women, the only significant correlations were between the subscales of the exposure to violence scale, as would be expected. There were no significant correlations between exposure to violence and justice, or between exposure to violence and care for women. Consequently, only results from the correlation analysis for men have been included here in Table 5.6 for closer examination.

**Table 5.5**

**Correlations between MOS and SAVE Scores: Whole Sample**

		Violence (SAVE)						MOS		
		Traumatic	Indirect	Physical / Verbal	Campus	Home	N/hood	Violence Total	Care	Justice
Traumatic Violence	Pearson's Coefficient	1	.780(**)	.571(**)	.556(**)	.589(**)	.855(**)	.896(**)	.197(**)	-.196(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001	.010	.010
	N	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171
Indirect Violence	Pearson's Coefficient	.780(**)	1	.625(**)	.633(**)	.772(**)	.811(**)	.958(**)	.203(**)	-.203(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.001	.001	.001	.001	.001	.008	.008
	N	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171
Physical/Verbal Abuse	Pearson's Coefficient	.571(**)	.625(**)	1	.479(**)	.663(**)	.605(**)	.753(**)	.108	-.107
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001		.001	.001	.001	.001	.160	.165
	N	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171
Campus	Pearson's Coefficient	.556(**)	.633(**)	.479(**)	1	.557(**)	.366(**)	.644(**)	.244(**)	-.242(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.001		.001	.001	.001	.001	.001
	N	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171
Home	Pearson's Coefficient	.589(**)	.772(**)	.663(**)	.557(**)	1	.392(**)	.773(**)	.124	-.124
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.001	.001		.001	.001	.107	.107
	N	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171
Neighbourhood	Pearson's Coefficient	.855(**)	.811(**)	.605(**)	.366(**)	.392(**)	1	.872(**)	.170(*)	-.169(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001		.001	.026	.027
	N	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171
Exposure to Violence Total	Pearson's Coefficient	.896(**)	.958(**)	.753(**)	.644(**)	.773(**)	.872(**)	1	.204(**)	-.203(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001		.008	.008
	N	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171
Care	Pearson's Coefficient	.197(**)	.203(**)	.108	.244(**)	.124	.170(*)	.204(**)	1	-.999(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.008	.160	.001	.107	.026	.008		.001
	N	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171
Justice	Pearson's Coefficient	-.196(*)	-.203(**)	-.107	-.242(**)	-.124	-.169(*)	-.203(**)	-.999(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.008	.165	.001	.107	.027	.008	.001	
	N	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171	171

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Table 5.6**

**Correlations between MOS and SAVE Scores for Men**

		Violence (SAVE)						MOS		
		Traumatic	Indirect	Physical / Verbal	Campus	Home	N/hood	Violence Total	Care	Justice
Traumatic Violence	Pearson's Coefficient	1	.769(**)	.619(**)	.562(**)	.631(**)	.834(**)	.911(**)	.285(**)	-.285(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001	.008	.008
	<i>n</i>	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
Indirect Violence	Pearson's Coefficient	.769(**)	1	.574(**)	.689(**)	.764(**)	.745(**)	.941(**)	.376(**)	-.376(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.001	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001
	<i>n</i>	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
Physical/Verbal Abuse	Pearson's Coefficient	.619(**)	.574(**)	1	.562(**)	.597(**)	.605(**)	.754(**)	.250(*)	-.250(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001		.001	.001	.001	.001	.021	.021
	<i>n</i>	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
Campus	Pearson's Coefficient	.562(**)	.689(**)	.562(**)	1	.615(**)	.361(**)	.697(**)	.412(**)	-.412(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.001		.001	.001	.001	.001	.001
	<i>n</i>	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
Home	Pearson's Coefficient	.631(**)	.764(**)	.597(**)	.615(**)	1	.322(**)	.770(**)	.322(**)	-.322(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.001	.001		.003	.001	.003	.003
	<i>n</i>	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
Neighbourhood	Pearson's Coefficient	.834(**)	.745(**)	.605(**)	.361(**)	.322(**)	1	.835(**)	.217(*)	-.217(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.001	.001	.003		.001	.046	.046
	<i>n</i>	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
Exposure to Violence Total	Pearson's Coefficient	.911(**)	.941(**)	.754(**)	.697(**)	.770(**)	.835(**)	1	.360(**)	-.360(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001		.001	.001
	<i>n</i>	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
Care	Pearson's Coefficient	.285(**)	.376(**)	.250(*)	.412(**)	.322(**)	.217(*)	.360(**)	1	-1.000(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.001	.021	.001	.003	.046	.001		.001
	<i>n</i>	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
Justice	Pearson's Coefficient	-.285(**)	-.376(**)	-.250(*)	-.412(**)	-.322(**)	-.217(*)	-.360(**)	-1.000(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.001	.021	.001	.003	.046	.001	.001	
	<i>n</i>	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As for the whole sample, men's scores on all the subscales of the SAVE were significantly positively correlated. There were also significant positive correlations between men's scores on Care and the subscales Indirect Violence, Traumatic Violence and Physical/Verbal Abuse. Significant positive correlations occurred between Care and exposure to violence on Campus, at Home, and in the Neighbourhood. For men, too, Exposure to Violence Total was significantly positively correlated with Care. Similarly, there were significant negative correlations between men's scores on Justice and the following SAVE scores: Indirect Violence, Traumatic Violence, Physical/Verbal Abuse, exposure to violence on Campus, at Home and in the Neighbourhood, and Exposure to Violence Total. Thus, for men, all the scores on the SAVE subscales were significantly correlated with all the scores on the MOS subscales. However, the direction of these relationships were in the opposite direction to what was expected.

### **5.6 Association between Moral Orientation, Exposure to Violence and Gender**

The association between moral orientation, exposure to violence and gender was assessed using a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). As can be seen in Table 5.7, Wilks' Lambda tends towards or equals one in all cases. This suggests that gender and exposure to violence do not have any significant effects on moral orientation when treating Justice and Care as one variable – that is, moral orientation.

**Table 5.7**

**Multivariate Analysis of Variance Showing Association between Dependent Variable (Moral Orientation) and Independent Variables (Gender; Exposure to Violence)**

Effect		Value	<i>F</i>	Hypothesis <i>df</i>	Error <i>df</i>	Sig.
<b>Intercept</b>	Pillai's Trace	.998	50339.5	2.00	163	.001
	Wilks' Lambda	.002	50339.5	2.00	163	.001
<b>Gender</b>	Pillai's Trace	.013	1.05	2.00	163	.351
	Wilks' Lambda	.987	1.05	2.00	163	.351
<b>Traumatic Violence</b>	Pillai's Trace	.000	.(a)	.000	.000	.
	Wilks' Lambda	1.00	.(a)	.000	163.5	.
<b>Indirect Violence</b>	Pillai's Trace	.000	.(a)	.000	.000	.
	Wilks' Lambda	1.00	.(a)	.000	163.5	.
<b>Physical/ Verbal Abuse</b>	Pillai's Trace	.000	.(a)	.000	.000	.
	Wilks' Lambda	1.00	.(a)	.000	163.5	.
<b>Campus</b>	Pillai's Trace	.000	.(a)	.000	.000	.
	Wilks' Lambda	1.00	.(a)	.000	163.5	.
<b>Home</b>	Pillai's Trace	.000	.(a)	.000	.000	.
	Wilks' Lambda	1.00	.(a)	.000	163.5	.
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	Pillai's Trace	.000	.(a)	.000	.000	.
	Wilks' Lambda	1.00	.(a)	.000	163.5	.
<b>Exposure to Violence Total</b>	Pillai's Trace	.000	.(a)	.000	.000	.
	Wilks' Lambda	1.00	.(a)	.000	163.5	.

**5.7 Association between Justice, Care, Exposure to Violence and Gender**

Multiple regression analyses (stepwise) were used to assess whether there was any association between the independent variables – gender and exposure to violence – and the dependent variables – Justice and Care. Regression analyses were computed separately for Justice and Care. Results are presented and discussed separately below.

**5.7.1 Association between Justice, Exposure to Violence and Gender**

The effects of gender and exposure to violence on a justice moral orientation, as shown in the regression analysis, are summarised below.

**Table 5.8**  
**Regression Model Summary for Justice**

Mode	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> Square	Adjusted <i>R</i> Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.242	.059	.053	1.73

The adjusted  $R^2$ -of .059 in Table 5.8 suggests that the independent variables (gender and exposure to violence) account for only 5.9% of the variance in the dependent variable.

**Table 5.9**  
**ANOVA for Justice**

Mode		Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1	Regression	31.41	1	31.41	10.55	.001
	Residual	503.44	169	2.98		
	Total	534.85	170			

Results shown in Table 5.9 indicate that the only significant association was between Justice and exposure to violence on Campus. The independent variables (gender and exposure to violence) had no other significant effects on Justice.

**Table 5.10**  
**Coefficients for Justice**

Mode		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.
		<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta	<i>B</i>	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	9.47	.796		11.9	.001
	Campus	-.070	.022	-.242	-3.25	.001

The type of relationship between Justice and exposure to violence on Campus can be seen in Table 5.10. For a unit increase in justice, there is a negative shift of .07 units in exposure to violence on Campus. Thus, there is a significant negative association between Justice and exposure to violence on Campus.

### **5.7.2 Association between Care, Exposure to Violence and Gender**

The effects of gender and exposure to violence on a care moral orientation, as shown in the regression analysis, can be seen in the following tables.

**Table 5.11**  
**Regression Model Summary for Care**

Mode	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> Square	Adjusted <i>R</i> Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.244	.060	.054	1.73

The adjusted *R*-squared shown in Table 5.11 is .054. This suggests that the independent variables (gender and exposure to violence) account for only 5.4% of the variance in Care.

**Table 5.12**  
**ANOVA for Care**

Mode		Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1	Regression	32.04	1	32.04	10.7	.001
	Residual	505.97	169	2.99		
	Total	538.01	170			

As shown in Table 5.12 above, the only significant association was between Care and exposure to violence on Campus.

**Table 5.13**  
**Coefficients for Care**

Mode		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.
		<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta	<i>B</i>	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	2.50	.798		3.14	.002
1	Campus	.071	.022	.244	3.27	.001

Table 5.13 indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between Care and exposure to violence on Campus: for a unit increase in Care, there is a positive increase of .071 units in exposure to violence on Campus.

The results above suggest that the only variable influencing moral orientation – both care and justice – is the level of exposure to violence on campus. There are no other significant relationships between the independent variables (gender and exposure to violence), and the dependent variables (Justice and Care).

## 5.8 Summary of Results

One hundred and seventy one useable questionnaires were returned of the 500 that were administered. The final sample was comprised of 85 men and 86 women. While reliability scores on the Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure (SAVE) were acceptably high, reliability of the Moral Orientation Scale (MOS) was low, and therefore results on this scale should be interpreted with caution. There were no significant differences between men and women on the MOS subscales, Justice and Care. Men scored significantly higher than women on some, but not all, of the SAVE subscales. Specifically, men appeared to have been exposed to significantly higher levels of Indirect and Traumatic Violence compared to women, and seemed to be exposed to higher levels of violence in their Neighbourhood contexts than women. Men scored significantly higher than women on global exposure to violence scores, suggesting that men have been exposed to greater levels of violence in general than women. There were no significant differences between men and women on Physical/Verbal Abuse exposure, or on exposure to violence at Home or on Campus.

Correlations were calculated for the whole sample, and separately for men and women. There were some significant correlations between the moral orientation subscales (Care and Justice) and the exposure to violence subscales for the whole sample and for men alone. However, these correlations were in the opposite direction to what was expected. For men and the whole sample taken together, scores on Indirect Violence, Traumatic Violence, exposure to violence on Campus, exposure to violence in the Neighbourhood, and Exposure to Violence Total, showed significant positive and negative correlations with scores on Care and Justice, respectively. There were also significant positive correlations between men's scores on Physical/Verbal Abuse and Care, and between Care and exposure to violence at Home. Similarly, there were significant negative correlations between men's scores on Physical/Verbal Abuse and Justice, and between Justice and exposure to violence at Home. No significant correlations were found between the moral orientation and exposure to violence subscales for women.

An analysis of the association between moral orientation, exposure to violence and gender indicated that gender and exposure to violence did not have any significant effects on moral orientation when treating Justice and Care as one variable – that is, moral orientation. When treating Justice and Care separately, results showed that the only variable influencing moral orientation – both Care and Justice – was the level of exposure to violence on Campus. Furthermore, the associations between exposure to violence on Campus and Justice and Care, respectively, were relatively weak. There were no other significant relationships between the independent variables (gender and exposure to violence), and the dependent variables (Justice and Care).

In summary, the hypotheses of this study were only partially confirmed. Gender differences on the Justice and Care subscales of the Moral Orientation Scale were neither significant nor in the direction expected. Men were exposed to significantly more violence in general than women. However, this was not consistent across all exposure to violence domains. Men were exposed to significantly higher levels of Indirect Violence and Traumatic Violence than women. The only context in which men appeared to be exposed to more violence than women was in the Neighbourhood context.

There were no significant correlations between exposure to violence and Care or Justice for women. For the sample as a whole and for men alone, there were significant correlations between exposure to violence and Care and Justice, but these were in the opposite direction to what was expected. Higher levels of exposure to violence appeared to be positively correlated with a Care orientation and inversely correlated with a Justice orientation for the whole sample, as well as for men separately. This contradicts the hypothesised relationship.

Contrary to the hypothesis, exposure to violence (independent variable) did not have a significant effect on moral orientation (dependent variable, Justice and Care combined), or on a Justice orientation and a Care orientation, respectively. When treating Justice and Care together as moral orientation, neither gender and nor exposure to violence seemed to have any significant effects on moral orientation. When treating Justice and Care separately, the only variable influencing moral orientation – both Care and Justice – was the level of exposure to violence on Campus. There were no other significant relationships between the independent variables (gender and exposure to violence), and the dependent variables, (Justice and Care), lending no support to the hypothesis that gender and exposure to violence would have significant effects on moral orientation.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Most of the expected results were not significant, and many were not in the hypothesised direction. In the sections that follow, significant results on each of the hypotheses will be discussed. However, given that most results on all hypotheses were not significant, a number of explanations will be explored to account for why the expected differences were mostly non-significant.

### 6.1 Association between Gender and Moral Orientation

The Moral Orientation Scale (MOS, Yacker & Weinberg, 1990) was designed to measure two distinct moral orientations as defined in the literature and, as such, consists of a Justice subscale and a Care subscale based, respectively, on the theories of Kohlberg and Gilligan. Individuals with high scores on the Justice subscale show a greater tendency to emphasise individual rights and duties over relationships, while those scoring higher on the Care subscale place greater emphasis on the preservation of relationships and responsibility towards others (Yacker & Weinberg, 1990). It was hypothesised in this study that men would score higher than women on the Justice subscale, and women higher than men on Care.

In contrast to studies in which significant gender differences in moral orientation have been found (Gibbs et al., 1984; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Lyons, 1983; Pratt et al., 1988; Mainiero et al., 2008; Rothbart et al., 1986; Wolff, 1996), the findings of the current study indicated that there were no significant differences between men and women on either justice or care. Previous research in South Africa has shown that the variable with the greatest influence on moral orientation is gender (Coetzee et al., 2005). This was not confirmed by the current study. Furthermore, the slightly higher justice scores of women compared to men, and the marginally higher care scores of men compared to women, were not consistent with previous research showing that women exhibit a greater care orientation and men a greater justice orientation (Self & Olivarez, 1993). Possible explanations for the lack of significant gender differences in moral orientation are explored below.

One explanation for this is that moral reasoning is a function of perceived conditions and circumstances, rather than a stable, intra-individual response. Elbedour et al. (1997), for instance, found that, when presented with purely hypothetical dilemmas, individuals tended to score higher on care than when presented with real-life or personalised dilemmas. Men in the current study may have obtained higher than expected scores on care and women higher than expected scores on justice because the dilemmas presented to them were purely hypothetical. However, the dilemmas primarily involved children, framed in the context of parent-child relationships, so it might be expected that women would identify more strongly with the personal nature of such dilemmas and tend towards a care orientation in their responses. This was not the case in this study.

Nonetheless, it could be argued that the type of moral dilemma has more of an effect on how an individual responds than the gender of the respondent (Mainiero et al., 2008; Pratt et al., 1988). Some have shown, for example, that serious dilemmas with more apparent risk of harm are more likely to elicit a care response, regardless of gender (Björklund, 2003; Muthukrishna et al., 2006). The more complex the problem and the more serious the consequences, the more one might expect to see greater use of care reasoning. Given that the moral dilemmas presented in the current study were relatively innocuous (helping a child to decide whether or not to return a stolen toy, for example), this might explain the unexpectedly low care responses of women. It does not, however, explain the slightly higher care scores of men. The findings of the current study that women appeared to employ justice responses slightly (but not significantly) more frequently than men is supported by studies that have shown women to use a justice orientation as much as or more frequently than men (Cook et al., 2003; Jaffee & Hyde, 2000; Muthukrishna et al., 2006; Self & Olivarez, 1993; Wark & Krebs, 1996).

The absence of significant differences between men and women on care and justice in this study is contrary to the dominant schools of thought on moral development. However, a possible explanation for the apparent empirical support in favour of gender differences in moral orientation is that studies that support the null hypothesis – that no gender differences exist – are generally not published. Consequently, the theory that men differ from women in fundamental ways in moral orientation goes unchallenged, despite the fact that men and women have been

observed to be more similar than different (Brabeck, 1993). A similar argument has been put forward by Lifton (1985), who highlights the absence of publications of the null hypothesis, and lack of discussion about gender-related differences (or lack thereof) when gender was not the focus of the study. Upon reviewing the literature – including unpublished studies – she concludes that sex differences in moral reasoning are more the exception than the rule. Schminke et al. (2003) also present findings for and against the differences between men and women, and suggest that the vast amount of literature dedicated to the exploration of differences between sexes may be more a result of perceptions of gender differences than actual gender differences, and go on to suggest the importance of context in determining difference.

It should be noted that the non-significant results of this study do not necessarily imply that a difference in men's and women's moral orientations does not exist. It could be that men and women do differ in their experience of morality, but not as much as posited by previous theorists. These differences may have changed in the years since these theories were posited, or it could be that a tertiary education sample of men and women may be more androgynous than the general population. Differences between men and women may not be as extreme or distinct as some theories propose, with both men and women possessing the capacity for both justice and care responses in different situations. Furthermore, differences between groups may have been previously overestimated, and there may in fact be greater in-group variation (for example, women) than between-group variation (Ewing, 1990; Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1987; Killen, 1997; Turiel & Wainryb, 1994). The lack of significant differences between men and women in moral orientation in this study may in part be due to greater similarities between the sexes, and greater differences within the sexes for this tertiary education sample.

The fact that the use of both justice and care orientations did not differ significantly between men and women suggests that men and women may use both types of reasoning. Mainiero et al. (2008) found that men exhibited a care orientation to a greater degree than a justice orientation, but that, overall, women were more likely to adopt both a justice and a care response to a greater degree than men. They propose a model of moral reasoning that allows for the use of both moral reasoning styles by men and women, where women adopt a high combined orientation (high care, high justice) and men adopt a low combined orientation (low justice, low care). This

provides partial support for both the lack of significant differences between men and women on moral orientation in this study, and the unexpected direction (women higher on justice, men higher on care) of that association. Consistent with this argument, Self and Olivarez (1993) found that if women do use, or are required by the social system to use, a justice orientation, they do so better than men. This, they argue, is perhaps because women experience more pressure from the social context to become more masculinized and exhibit more male characteristics in order to succeed in the male-dominated professional world. It may be, as some have suggested, that men and women possess equal capacities for using care and justice orientations or, possibly, that some men are more articulate in care than women and some women more articulate in justice than men (Cook et al., 2003; Smetana et al., 1991). It appears, therefore, that the dominant pattern of moral reasoning is more complex and less dichotomous than proposed by previous researchers (Mainiero et al., 2008; Tanner, 2001).

Although the appeal of a theoretical position assuming a gender dichotomy in moral orientation remains strong (Gerson, 2002), there is increasing evidence to suggest that men and women do not differ significantly in their use of the two distinct moral orientations (Aldrich & Kage, 2003; Forsyth et al., 2001; Galotti, 1989; Jaffee & Hyde, 2000; Krebs et al., 1994; Walker et al., 1987). Even where gender differences have been found, researchers have often noted that men and women appear to use both types of moral orientation (Björklund, 2003; Lyons, 1983; Yacker & Weinberg, 1990). It may be that the previously assumed divide between men and women in terms of moral development has narrowed, with contemporary generations showing less difference and more similarity. This certainly seems to be the case for the current sample and is consistent with previous research (Lamborn & Steinberg, 1993; Marais, 2006; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). Men and women appear to be adopting a “growing diversity of moral orientations that defies dichotomous gender categories and affords them the opportunity to integrate the essential life tasks of achieving autonomy and caring for others” (Gerson, 2002, p. 25). It may be that the care and justice orientations are neither gender nor culture specific, but exist in fundamental ways in all individuals, such that men and women negotiate between the two responses depending on the situation at hand (Muthukrishna et al., 2006).

Furthermore, the tertiary education environment may have impacted on this particular group. The university experience exposes students to a heterogeneity of people, ideologies, and political debate – an environment in which reflection on moral issues is likely to be induced. Black students may be increasingly cognizant of the injustices shown towards them as a group and hence more concerned with maximising justice (Smith & Parekh, 1996). This would be consistent with the conflict that students in Tudin et al.'s (1994) study and in the current study may be experiencing as they enter university and their modes of moral reasoning begin to be challenged. It is also likely to be a function of the politically and socially conflicted context in which these students have lived, contexts where physical self-protection often becomes a priority and has, of necessity, to be considered in deliberation about complex moral problems (Tudin et al., 1994). Such a situation seems to create a split in individuals who have to choose between what they consider to be a moral solution to a problem, and what they are in reality able to do given the threats to their personal well-being, leading, potentially, to bimodal moral reasoning. While this cannot be confirmed by the results of the current study because Kohlberg's measure was not employed to test moral orientation, it can perhaps partially explain the ambiguous and contrary findings.

An interesting finding in Muthukrishna et al.'s (2006) study was that girls' use of a care orientation decreased with age, while their use of a justice orientation increased with age. This may be a reflection of developmental changes, or of the changing times, and of changing gender-role perceptions and expectations, particularly for women. South African society has undergone a series of rapid changes over the past decade. There is evidence to suggest that the demands facing Black men and women in South Africa's rapidly changing society are more overwhelming than those facing White men and women (Marais et al., 2003). Changing gender role expectations and increasing demands on women to compete in the same domains as men, may have altered and decreased past gender discrepancies in various aspects of psychological functioning (Anderson et al., 1994). Women moving into the workplace may be confronted with greater conflict between their relational ideals and individualistic, rights-based values (Gerson, 2002; Layton, 2004). In a tertiary education sample in particular, men and women might be considered to be more liberal or androgynous compared to the general population (Björklund, 2003). Differences between men and women in moral orientation may therefore not be as

extreme or distinct as some theories propose, with both men and women becoming more androgynous in the new millennium.

Furthermore, university campuses may be a site for political engagement and critical thought. In places where Black women, in particular, may be more likely to engage with these issues, they could be argued to be more confident about asserting themselves and standing up for their rights, in the wake of South Africa's relatively new democratic liberation for Black people in general. As women are emerging from the private into the public sphere and marking out their territory, men are being forced to re-position themselves (Sideris, 2005) and, as such, might adopt alternative positions as a means of justifying their less-powerful positions. This might account, at least in part, for the lack of expected gender differences on moral orientation in the present study, as well as for women's higher scores on justice and men's higher scores on care. With the new political freedoms and economic opportunities, some women are taking up powerful and independent positions that run counter to men's – and women's – ideas of femininity (Jobson, 2005; Motsemme, 2002). As such, there is increasing anecdotal evidence that Black men are casting themselves as the new victims of the young democracy (Motsemme, 2002).

Social scientists are also becoming interested in the discrepancies that may exist between shared cultural systems of meaning and individual beliefs (Neff, 2001). One study of this nature found that non-Western, traditional females believed that they should obey male authorities, as required by cultural tradition, but they also perceived this obligation to be unfair (Wainryb & Turiel, 1994). In a similar study, Neff (2001) found that Hindu Indians, a cultural group perceived by some as prototypical of collectivism, did not display the general tendency to subordinate personal to interpersonal concerns, but instead made diverse judgments about autonomy and responsibility. This further supports the possibility that men and women may possess the capacity for both care and justice reasoning, which could partially account for the lack of significant gender differences in moral orientation found in this study. Furthermore, the ambiguity of the results for Black men and women in the present study may be because these individuals are coming into greater contact with new role models, economic structures and Western values, and are encouraged to embrace the individualistic social norms and values that are in conflict with the collective values of their traditional cultures (Stevens & Lockhat, 1997).

The importance of sociocultural context in the development and manifestation of moral orientation has been highlighted by other South African researchers (Ferns & Thom, 2001; Maqsd, 1998; Marais, 2006). Universal notions of gender tend to mask differences between women in different contexts. In traditional African cultures, for example, women have typically occupied subordinate positions (Hassim, 1991). In South Africa, this oppression has been particularly pronounced as a result of the apartheid system. Black working class women have been argued to experience gender oppression differently to White middle class women (Cockburn, 2005; Shefer, 1997). Thus, depending on their position in society, women might be expected to experience the impact of gender on various aspects of their lives in different ways. The higher than expected justice scores of women in the current study may be because the low social status experienced by oppressed groups – in this case, women – promotes a concern with fairness, rights and justice because these are more likely to rectify the social inequalities that they experience (Aldrich & Kage, 2003; Beal et al., 1997; Knox et al., 2004). This is particularly pertinent in the South African situation, where there is a long history of injustice against women and other groups.

Thus, while most researchers no longer refute the notion that more than one mode of moral orientation exists, there is considerable disagreement about whether these orientations can be reliably associated with gender, as suggested by the lack of significant differences between men and women on care and justice in this study. If both care and justice do co-exist in males and females alike, one implication is that what brings each orientation out, or the way in which they are applied, depends on the context in which moral experiences are articulated (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000; Weinberg et al., 1993). Although formalised apartheid has been over for more than a decade, the effects of racial separation and discrimination will probably continue for many years to come (Smith & Parekh, 1996). As a result of ongoing structural and socioeconomic inequalities, many Black South Africans continue to live in contexts marked by high levels of poverty and violence, which may have influenced the nature of their moral reasoning (Dawes, 1994b; Ferns & Thom, 2001; Smith & Parekh, 1996). The results of the current study's examination of the association between moral orientation and exposure to violence will be discussed below.

## 6.2 Association between Gender and Exposure to Violence

The Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure (SAVE) measures experiences of violence exposure in youth (Hastings & Kelley, 1997). The SAVE distinguishes between direct and indirect exposure to violence, which is operationalised in three subscales: Traumatic Violence (TV), Physical or Verbal Abuse (PA), and Indirect Violence (IV). In addition to assessing the frequency of exposure to violence overall, the SAVE also allows for measurement of the various types of violence exposure in three different contexts: on campus, at home and in the neighbourhood. It was hypothesised that men would be exposed to significantly more violence in general, and in all contexts (campus, home and neighbourhood) than women. Similarly, it was expected that men would have experienced greater exposure to all three types of violence (traumatic violence, physical or verbal abuse, and indirect violence) than women.

The results of this study partially confirmed the hypotheses. Men scored significantly higher than women on global exposure to violence scores, suggesting that men have been exposed to greater levels of violence in general than women. Other studies confirm this finding, indicating that men report significantly higher levels of violence exposure than females, both in terms of witnessing and victimization (Selner-O'Hagan et al., 1998). Specifically, Outlaw et al. (2002) found that males, younger individuals, Blacks, and the poor were generally more likely than females, older individuals, Whites, and the non-poor to be victimized, especially by violence. Men also scored significantly higher than women on some, but not all, of the SAVE subscales. Specifically, men were exposed to significantly higher levels of indirect violence and traumatic violence compared to women. This is consistent with research showing that men were more likely to be exposed to indirect forms of violence than women (Scarpa, 2001; Weaver et al., 2008). The results of this study also confirm the findings of other South African research showing that men have higher trauma exposure than women (Seedat et al., 2004).

The men in this study were exposed to significantly higher levels of violence in their neighbourhood contexts than women, which is consistent with both local (Govender & Killian, 2001; Seedat et al., 2004) and international (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008; Margolin & Gordis, 2000; Scarpa et al., 2002) findings that men are more likely than women to be both victims and

witnesses of community violence. Morojele and Brook (2006) found that male adolescents were more likely than female adolescents to report being victimised in multiple ways. They argue that this may be in part due to the increased freedom of movement and association among men, which might lead to “exposure to more potentially dangerous situations in general, and actual violence in particular” (Morojele & Brook, 2006, p. 1172). As in the current study, however, they did not measure sexual assault, and suggest that their findings may have been weighted towards females had sexual violence been assessed.

In contrast to Dawes’s (2006) finding that boys were significantly more vulnerable to physical assault than girls, the findings of the current research on the physical abuse domain were not significant. There were no significant differences between men and women on physical/verbal abuse exposure, or on exposure to violence at home or on campus. Together, these findings might be indicative of higher levels of gender-based violence in these contexts and within this particular domain of violence, which explains why women reported higher levels of violence in these contexts compared with other contexts. This result is confirmed by previous research which has shown that, although boys generally experienced more violence and negative life events than girls, girls experienced more domestic violence, like physical abuse, and sexual assault (Govender & Killian, 2001; Scarpa, 2001; Scarpa et al., 2002).

The results of this study thus seem to confirm the hypothesis that men, in general, would be exposed to greater degrees of violence than women. The one area in which this hypothesis did not hold true appears to be in the domain of domestic and sexual violence. The measure used in this study did not assess sexual assault and gender-based violence. This could be argued to account for the higher levels of exposure to violence found among the male group in this study. Men’s higher levels of violence exposure seems to nonetheless be consistent with previous research in this field.

There is evidence to suggest, however, that although men seem to encounter more negative life events in general and more violence in particular, they appear to feel less clinically distressed than women (Govender & Killian, 2001). Research has consistently shown that while pre-adolescent boys seem to present with more stress-related symptoms than girls following

exposure to violence, this pattern is reversed during adolescence (Dawes, 1990; 1994; Duncan & Rock, 1997). Differential processes of socialisation may account for this. Dawes (1990) suggests that the influence of discourses of masculinity and femininity gives rise to different responses under the same conditions. Gender theory proposes that violence is a resource for constructing masculinity (Anderson, 1997). As such, men might be socialised to be more militant and may participate more actively in potentially violent situations (Govender & Killian, 2001), providing men with a greater sense of control over their environments. In the current study, men were generally found to have been exposed to higher levels of violence than women; however, the specific psychological impact of such violence exposure was not assessed. Therefore, it could be argued that although women seem to be less vulnerable to many forms of exposure to violence, the effects of any exposure may be greater on women than on men. If this hypothesis holds, then one might expect that women's exposure to violence, regardless of the degree, might have a greater influence on their moral reasoning than on men. Findings on the association between exposure to violence and moral orientation will be discussed further below.

### **6.3 Correlations between Moral Orientation and Exposure to Violence**

Based on previous research (Elbedour et al., 1997; Knox et al., 2004; Muthukrishna et al., 2006), it was expected that higher levels of exposure to violence would be positively correlated with a justice orientation and inversely correlated with a care orientation for the whole sample, as well as for men and women separately. This hypothesis was not supported by the results of this study. On the contrary, while there were some significant correlations between the orientations of care and justice, and the exposure to violence subscales, these correlations were in the opposite direction to what was hypothesised. Therefore, in contrast to the hypotheses, there appeared to be significant positive correlations between exposure to violence and a care orientation, as opposed to exposure to violence and a justice orientation. Possible explanations for these results will be explored in this section.

Those who support the view that exposure to violence promotes a sense of justice argue that the ability to consider multiple viewpoints, an important dimension of traditional theories of moral reasoning, may not be present in children who belong to an ethnic group whose viewpoints have

consistently not been considered (Garrod, et al., 2003). Some studies have indicated that children living in politically violent and ethnically conflicted contexts could be expected to show an increased justice orientation – that is, a tendency towards principles of fairness and rights in reasoning about moral dilemmas (Garrod et al., 2003; Muthukrishna et al., 2006). Individuals who are unfairly treated and whose rights are consistently violated may be more likely to adopt a moral orientation based on Kohlberg’s ideas of justice, fairness, and individual rights (Garrod et al., 2003; Knox et al., 2004). However, these results were not confirmed by the current study. In fact, the findings of this study were quite the opposite.

Where there were significant correlations between different types of violence exposure and moral orientation, the consistent pattern was that greater exposure to violence seemed to be associated with a greater tendency towards care reasoning. This is surprising, considering the conditions of violence, discrimination and inequality that many Black men and women continue to endure (Britton, 2002; Duncan, 2005). One explanation may be that sufficient changes have occurred since the abolition of apartheid to rectify some of the inequalities and poor conditions under which Black South Africans have typically had to live. Where violence in South Africa was previously a socially sanctioned form of state control primarily against non-White groups, it now appears to be endemic to South African society as a whole (Barbarin & Richter, 2001; Collings & Magojo, 2003; Duncan, 2005; Mthethwa, 2008; Stavrou, 1993; Stone, 2006). Consequently, one might not expect Black individuals to feel as targeted by violence as a group, and they therefore may not adopt as exclusively rights-based and justice positions as previously expected.

Much of the previous research conducted on South African populations investigated the impact of political violence on disadvantaged groups (Bloom, 1996; Dawes, 1990, 1994a, 1994b; Govender & Killian, 2001; Richter et al., 2001; Smith & Parekh, 1996; Ward et al., 2007). It may be that, with the decrease in political violence and increase in criminal violence, the previous associations between exposure to (political) violence and the adoption of a justice approach no longer hold. Indeed, many of the studies showing a link between violence exposure and a greater tendency towards a justice orientation have been in contexts of war and political conflict (Cairns, 1996; Elbedour et al., 1997; Ferguson & Cairns, 1996, 2002; Garrod et al., 2003; Macksoud &

Aber, 1996; Posada & Wainryb, 2008). When faced with moral dilemmas, an individual needs to resolve the conflict between self-interest and the interests of others. There is much evidence to suggest that exposure to situations of war and political strife may in many ways diminish a person's ability to achieve such a balance (Hasuka et al., 2008). What is less clear, however, is whether this holds true in situations of violent crime, rather than war or political violence. The results of the current study suggest not.

Individuals who are subjected to the unequal distribution of resources are expected to focus on competing interests between 'us and them' groups, and thus be more concerned with just solutions to moral conflicts than with preserving relationships and maintaining harmony. Evolutionary theory suggests that an individual's inner resources (including moral reasoning and behaviour) are correlated with the availability of external (particularly economic) resources (Charlesworth, 1991). The moral judgements of children living in conditions of violence and deprivation are more likely to be motivated by self-interest and competition with others for resources than those who are living under more favourable conditions. It has been shown that, as political violence increases, egocentricity increases and mutuality decreases (Elbedour et al., 1997). This view is supported by South African research showing that children who have been exposed to violence and situations where rights may have been unfairly restricted may exhibit a predominant justice orientation – in other words, a caring moral orientation seems to be adversely affected by continued exposure to violence (Muthukrishna et al., 2006).

However, the findings of the present research do not support these claims. Significant correlations were in the opposite direction to what was expected, indicating that, as exposure to violence increases, so do care responses. When correlations were performed separately for men and women, however, there were surprising differences. A predominant care approach seemed to be significantly positively correlated with exposure to violence for men, while exposure to violence was positively correlated with a justice perspective for women, although the latter result was not significant. Consistent with resource theory, it could be argued that women, who arguably lack more resources than men, may favour justice over care under conditions that foster violence, while men might arguably be threatened by the recent increases in women's status and

power and thus be less likely to favour a perspective that values equal rights for all (Britton, 2002). Further research is needed to explore this hypothesis.

The current generation of youth is perhaps far enough removed from the injustices of apartheid to experience less of the impact of legally entrenched rights violations. Children who have not been exposed to situations in which their rights have been violated have been shown to be more likely to adopt a care orientation than a justice approach (Garrod et al., 2003). Muthukrishna et al. (2006, p. 51) suggest that a justice orientation will tend to be favoured by social groups who have “suffered rupture due to poverty and violence.” While this was certainly the case during the apartheid years, a tentative hypothesis in support of the findings of the current study is that South Africa has moved through a process of healing and restoration. The injustices and inequalities of the past are still felt by millions of South Africans, but for those who are socioeconomically advantaged, the rupture may not be so keenly felt and the need for justice may not be so great.

Constitutional reform in South Africa has afforded Black men and women greater rights and equal access to socioeconomic opportunities, such that being at risk for exposure to violence may be less a function of race than of socioeconomic status and class (Burnett, 1998; Voisin, 2007). Another explanation for the significant negative correlations between exposure to violence and justice reasoning is that this group, as a sample of tertiary education students, may arguably be relatively more privileged and socioeconomically well-off than those living in rural areas with little access to education. This group may therefore be less likely to be living in conditions in which there is a greater probability of rights violations or of exposure to violence, and, as such, have less reason to adopt a predominantly justice-based approach to moral dilemmas.

This is in contrast to the view that individuals who belong to groups whose rights have been consistently violated may be predisposed to identify with the role of being a victim and may be more likely to expect reparations for perceived past injustices (Elbedour et al., 1997). This may, however, partially explain why the women in this study seemed to show a greater tendency towards justice as their exposure to violence increased. Consistent with this view, some have shown that growing numbers of women are pursuing legal rights, including rights to protection against violence (Britton, 2002; Sideris, 2005). It is also possible that the relationship works the

other way: perhaps because women in this group subscribe to values of justice and equal rights, they are less vulnerable to violence and situations in which they might be exposed to violence, because they are more likely to stand up for their rights and assert themselves and are less tolerant of violence. Such a view seems to be supported by research showing that South African women are rejecting traditional constructions of passive femininity in favour of positions of empowerment and active resistance against becoming helpless victims of violence (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2004). However, as the correlations for women were not significant, no further conclusions can be drawn in this regard.

In addition, it should be noted that the women in this study did not exhibit significantly high levels of exposure to violence when compared to men. Little can be said, therefore, about the (non-significant) correlations between exposure to violence and greater levels of justice in this group. As argued above, however, if this study had included a measure of sexual and gender-based violence, the correlations between violence exposure and justice orientations may have become more clear. Furthermore, this study only assessed being exposed to violence as witnesses or victims, and not as perpetrators – a distinction which might have yielded greater insight into the surprising findings of the women in this sample. In this sense, it might be hypothesised that, given a gender difference in the perpetration of violence, men and women might adopt different positions on moral dilemmas. Maitse (1998) argues that in post-apartheid South Africa, men are finding it hard to adapt to the changing positions of women in society, and are reacting with increased rape and violence against women. If violence is viewed as a means of doing masculinity (Anderson, 1997), violence will have different meanings for and evoke different reactions in men and women, as was evident in the present research.

In contrast to the arguments above, some have proposed that children who have consistently been exposed to violence may be more predisposed towards an empathic and caring moral response. This might explain why the men in the present sample, exposed to higher levels of violence than women, tended towards greater care responses. Being exposed to the suffering of others has been shown to result in an increase in pro-social reasoning and altruistic behaviour (Garbarino et al., 1991), such that the resolution of problems will centre on compassion and concern for all parties (Garrod et al., 2003). Children living in politically violent societies have

thus been hypothesised to possess an “enhanced capacity to see the world with sensitivity and moral astuteness” (Garbarino et al., 1991, p. 380). In contrast to the view that children living in violent societies cannot be successfully socialised because society as a whole advocates the denial of human rights (Punamaki, 1987 in Cairns, 1996), the results of the current research – for men in particular – seem to suggest otherwise.

The finding that severely abused children are in fact more sensitive to the wrongness of harmful acts towards others (Smetana, Kelly & Twentyman, 1984 in Dawes, 1994b) may shed further light on the correlations between care and exposure to violence in the current study. Evidence for the unexpected positive effects of war, violence and abuse has been provided by, for example, Macksoud and Aber (1996), who found an increase in pro-social behaviour in children and adolescents who had extreme experiences of violence. If one adopts this view, the greater exposure of men to violence in the present study might predispose them to a greater tendency for empathic responding. The significant positive correlations between exposure to violence and care reasoning among men confirms this. Similarly, the converse may be true for the women in the current sample who, as shown above, were not exposed to significantly high levels of violence, and showed weak correlations between, not exposure to violence and care, but exposure to violence and justice.

The present findings seem to counter the moral panic experienced by adults about children who are exposed to violence (Cairns, 1996). As such, they are consistent with the idea that children are not simply the passive recipients of moral values (Burman, 1986). Instead, children are active participants in reinventing society’s values and, over time, thereby altering society’s understanding and consciousness (Cairns, 1996). However, causal relationships cannot be inferred from correlational associations. The discussion above has simply attempted to present hypotheses that could enhance understanding of the association between moral orientation and exposure to violence. In the section that follows, attempts will be made to explain the statistical effects of gender and exposure to violence on moral orientation found in this study.

#### **6.4 Association between Moral Orientation, Exposure to Violence and Gender**

Following on from the correlational associations above, it was hypothesised that gender and exposure to violence would have a significant effect on moral orientation as a whole, and on a justice orientation and a care orientation, respectively. However, results of the multiple analysis of variance and multiple regression analyses showed that gender and exposure to violence had no significant effects on moral orientation when treating care and justice both separately and together. In other words, exposure to violence did not seem to account for any of the variance in either justice or care, or in moral orientation generally. When care and justice were treated separately, the only variable that had a significant effect was exposure to violence on campus, with greater levels of exposure to violence on campus being associated with an increase in care reasoning and a decrease in justice reasoning. Gender did not appear to have any significant influence on moral orientation. The findings of this study suggest, first, that exposure to violence did not significantly affect moral orientation and second, that the effect of exposure to violence on orientations of care and justice was weak, at best. Explanations for why care increased and justice decreased with higher levels of exposure to violence have been explored in detail above. The absence of a significant effect of exposure to violence on moral orientation as a whole will be discussed below in the context of previous research.

Given that no significant relationship between exposure to violence and moral orientation was found in this study, few conclusions can be drawn. It may be that the moral reasoning of this group has not been negatively affected by violence exposure – a finding that has some empirical support in the literature (Ferguson & Cairns, 2002; Posada & Wainryb, 2008). However, there is much evidence to suggest that the moral development of children exposed to ongoing violence is indeed truncated (Dorahy et al., 2003; Elbedour et al., 1997; Ferguson & Cairns, 1996; Hasuka et al., 2008). In view of these findings, some have argued that circumstances punctuated by violence and deprivation may act as a moral developmental ceiling (Kohlberg, 1984), which compromises children's ability to progress to high levels of moral functioning (Elbedour et al., 1997). South African research seems to have followed a similar trend, showing that children living in conditions of political violence have little tolerance for different viewpoints (Smith & Parekh, 1996) and, as a result, are unable to reach higher, more reciprocal levels of moral

reasoning (Dawes, 1994b). Interestingly, however, much of this research has focused primarily on political violence. Dawes (1994b, p. 202) suggests that “children in political conflict situations are exposed to moral discourse which is highly polarised and replete with militaristic rhetoric. Justice is meted out in a violent manner and there is little time for principled discussion.”

In contrast, other research seems to lend support to the results of the present research. There is evidence to suggest that being exposed to violent contexts does not seem to affect children’s general cognitive processes of moral judgement (Fontaine et al., 2002; Smetana et al., 1991), even in contexts of scarce resources (Elbedour et al., 1997). Posada and Wainryb (2008) found that war-affected children and adolescents displayed noticeable moral knowledge in spite of having been exposed to violence, poverty, and dislocation. This is supported by research conducted in politically conflicted Northern Ireland which found that adolescents living in that society are developing normally in terms of their moral judgements (Ferguson & Cairns, 2002), and implies a more subtle relationship between living in sustained violence and moral development than others have suggested. It might also be hypothesised that political violence might have particular effects on children’s moral development that may not be comparable to the effects of interpersonal and criminal violence. In the current context of high levels of criminal and interpersonal violence in South African society, there is much scope for further investigation into this area.

Tudin et al. (1994) hypothesised that a South African sample would show accelerated moral development compared to those growing up in more peaceful, less conflicted, and less socially and politically complex societies. They also hypothesised that increased exposure to social and political complexity within their South African sample would demonstrate higher moral development and, therefore, a greater tendency towards justice when resolving moral dilemmas. Although their results showed trends in this direction, the hypothesis was not statistically supported. It might be argued that the group showing higher levels of violence exposure in the current study (men) have in fact been adversely affected in terms of their moral reasoning. As discussed in the sections above, it was surprising that men exhibited greater care responses as exposure to violence increased. Women, on the other hand, were not exposed to significant

levels of violence compared to men, and tended to adopt more justice reasoning. If moral development is viewed in terms of Kohlberg's stage theory, then the highest form of morality consists – controversially – of judgements that are based on internalised principles of justice (Wilson, 1983). Based on this view, it is possible that men's moral development has indeed been restricted in terms of Kohlberg's theory of moral development, and that the lower stage they are at is reflective of more of a care style of moral reasoning. The men in this sample may adopt more care responses precisely because, in conventional theory terms, their stages of moral development have been retarded at the reciprocity stage. However, if one views morality primarily from a care perspective, or from the position that moral development involves an integration of both care and justice, then the argument above does not hold.

While Kohlberg (1984) spoke of a moral ceiling, Rest (1976 in Wilson, 1983) proposed that individuals develop predominant forms of moral reasoning, with the possibility of regression to earlier forms depending on situational or other criteria. Perhaps continued exposure to conditions of violence has placed Black men at Stage 3 of moral development – a morality that seeks to maximise the quality of relationships with others. Stage 3 reasoning might be more consistent with a care approach because it makes judgments with reference to “loyalty to groups or immediate friends, to not disappointing the expectations of others, and to disapproval of that which would hurt others” (Taylor & Walker, 1997, p. 22). Support for the argument that exposure to violence restricts progress through all Kohlberg's moral stages is evident in a study by Al-Rumaidhi (2008). This sample of Kuwaiti adolescents who had been exposed to high levels of conflict were found to be predominantly at Stage 4, which demonstrated a trend for resolving moral dilemmas in the socially approved direction. This suggests that individuals subjected to high levels of violence might develop a morality of collective conscience instead of a morality of individual conscience.

However, others have shown that Black adolescents in South Africa may exhibit different patterns of moral development whether or not they are exposed to violence. This is more consistent with the present study, which found no significant effect of exposure to violence on moral orientation. While Ferns and Thom (2001) also found that Black adolescents exhibited predominantly Stage 4 moral reasoning, they attributed this to differences in socialisation

patterns and sociocultural influences. The emphasis in traditional Black African cultures is on becoming an ideal member of a collective community, upholding the welfare of the group and fostering interdependent behaviour (Ferns & Thom, 2001). This might explain why the men in the current sample appeared to value care responses even in conditions of high violence. It does not, however, account for why the women, who were expected to exhibit higher propensities for care reasoning, seemed to value justice. As argued above, however, it may be that men and women utilise both types of reasoning in different contexts (Muthukrishna et al., 2006). The lack of significant gender differences in moral orientation found in this study lends further support to this possibility. Furthermore, the hypothetical nature of the moral dilemmas presented may have influenced the types of responses obtained for men and women (Elbedour et al., 1997). Further research is needed to explore this possibility. It could also be argued that the current sample is a more Westernised group than those living in rural, traditional communities and, as such, might exhibit moral reasoning styles and responses to violence exposure that are consistent with other Westernised societies.

There are, of course, a number of other factors that could influence both moral development and the levels of violence to which individuals might be exposed. It is generally acknowledged that the effects of exposure to violence on children's psychosocial development may be mediated by, for example, higher socioeconomic status (Duncan & Rock, 1997), age (Dawes, 1994; Govender & Killian, 2001), positive role models (Burman, 1986), and parental and social support (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008). The specific effects of education, Westernisation, socioeconomic status, South Africa's historical context, gender discrimination and oppression, may have contributed to the circumstances in which the current sample of men and women were raised, and to how they have experienced these conditions. It is possible that an examination of such factors might provide some explanation for women's higher justice scores and, similarly, for their relative lack of exposure to violence. This might also provide clues as to why the frequency of men's care responses in the current study seemed to increase as their exposure to violence increased. Moreover, the absence of a relationship between exposure to violence and moral development found in this study may be attributable to these other mediating factors.

The absence of a significant relationship between exposure to violence and moral orientation in this study may simply be because this group has not been exposed to the significantly high levels of violence evidenced in other South African studies (Collings & Magojo, 2003; Dawes et al., 2006; Govender & Killian, 2001; Morojele & Brook, 2006; Ramphele, 1997; Seedat et al., 2004). As such, there might not be an associated impact on their moral reasoning. It could be argued that had this group been exposed to greater levels of violence, they may have exhibited different patterns in their moral orientations of care and justice. Furthermore, as already stated, the combined effect of gender on moral development and exposure to violence may not be as great as previously believed. Dawes (1994b) argues, for instance, that moral development will inevitably be influenced by exposure to violence, but not in any simple manner. One question that needs to be addressed is what meanings morality in general, and justice and care in particular, take on in the context of continuing violence (Affouneh, 2007).

In addition, moral reasoning does not necessarily translate into moral behaviour (Cairns, 1996). There seems to be a difference between moral reasoning and moral behaviours and actions (Dawes, 1994b). Similarly, the effects of being indirectly exposed to or witnessing violence on moral reasoning are likely to be different from the effect on moral judgement of being a direct victim of violence. A number of factors can mediate or exacerbate the impact of violence exposure on later outcomes, including relationship to the victim, physical proximity to the event, severity of exposure, previous traumatic experiences and losses, and developmental status (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008). Muthukrishna et al. (2006, pp. 44-45) suggest that, on an intuitive level,

we cannot but point...to the wounds such violence must inflict on both a modality of care and justice, although it is not clear whether such experiences result in a lowering or improvement of moral reasoning. Certainly if one takes what happened in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission one would hesitate to categorically state that the victims showed an impaired moral ability when it was often the opposite that was indicated...It seems obvious that a care modality will come under strain with continued abuse, but such a point can be equally made out for a justice modality.

This could account, at least in part, for the ambiguous findings regarding moral orientation in relation to exposure to violence in the current study. It also suggests that, although exposure to violence appeared to have no effect on moral development, it may have had other effects that

were not assessed in this study. Similarly, violence exposure could have affected moral reasoning in some way, but perhaps in a form (of moral orientation) that was not assessed by tapping into only justice and care orientations.

Moral functioning, according to Vygotsky (1978), is mediated through the medium of language, such that social communication and social relationships result in moral reasoning and moral actions. Therefore, it might be argued that the responses of the current sample to exposure to violence or lack thereof is as a result of something other than the conventional Westernised concepts of morality – in simplistic terms, justice and care. Consideration should be given, for example, to the emphasis placed on *ubuntu* in traditional African cultures (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005). This again highlights the importance of critically examining the relevance and applicability of Western theories of morality, developed in resource-rich contexts, for non-Western communities with relatively little access to personal or economic security. As Ramphele (1997, p. 1190) asserts, “‘justice’ in South Africa has a great deal to do with privilege.” If we accept the notion that moral development is adversely affected by, for example, exposure to violence, we cannot but consider the questions, “Adversely affected on what terms? In whose moral perspective?” Perhaps Western theories of justice and care as moral positions are not universal. Who is to say that the moral development of Black South African men and women has been restricted – whether by violence or other factors – simply because they do not seem to adhere to a justice approach or a care perspective.

This underscores the importance of investigating theories of moral development that are applicable to persons outside of the Westernised, first-world context in which many contemporary theories were developed. Based on the results of this research, it seems probable that Black South African men and women’s modes of reasoning about moral dilemmas do not fit neatly into a justice-care framework. Furthermore, the ways in which these individuals respond to and deal with experiences of violence may point more to the resilience of South Africans than to a simple linear relationship between violence and (im)morality.

## **6.5 Summary, Limitations and Implications**

### **6.5.1 Summary**

Previous research on the moral orientations of Black and White South Africans suggested that Black men and women do not adhere to the justice-care dichotomy evidenced in Westernised theories of moral development. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that gender differences in this group do not follow the trends of international research. Rather, Black men and women in South Africa seem to make moral judgements that utilise both care and justice approaches. Part of the rationale for this study was to investigate the particular modalities of moral reasoning that young Black men and women adopt when faced with hypothetical moral dilemmas. Consistent with much of the recent research in this field, no significant gender differences in moral orientation were found. Further, Black men appeared to adopt a care approach with slightly more frequency than Black women, while Black women demonstrated a greater tendency towards justice than expected.

Against the backdrop of the high levels of violence in South Africa, research into the effects of such violence on children and adolescents is warranted. Due to the lingering effects of apartheid, inequalities on all levels of society still remain for many South Africans (Britton, 2002; Burnett, 1998; Duncan, 2005). The combined impact of these conditions on the psychosocial development of South Africa's youth has been the subject of much research. Some have attributed the crisis of morality in this country to a breakdown in moral values resulting from conditions of poverty and violence. High levels of violent crime, then, have been blamed on the disintegration of the moral fabric of society. On the other hand, youth exposed to violence on a daily basis are, it is argued, more likely to internalise moral values that promote the use of violence as an acceptable means of resolving conflict. As such, it is possible that such individuals will be more likely to adopt a justice approach that emphasises individual rights, as opposed to a care approach which values reciprocity and empathy. Given the adverse psychosocial effects of high levels of violence exposure on children and adolescents, it is also possible that moral development might be negatively impacted or restricted. This study aimed to

investigate the association between exposure to violence and moral orientation among Black men and women at a tertiary education institution.

As expected, men were exposed to significantly higher levels of violence than women. However, the hypotheses regarding the association between violence exposure and moral orientation were not confirmed. Exposure to violence appeared to have no significant effects on moral reasoning for this sample. Contrary to expectations, men exposed to higher levels of violence seemed to adopt a care approach with greater frequency, while women, who were not exposed to significantly high levels of violence, tended towards a justice approach. A number of explanations for these unexpected findings were explored in the sections above. These included changing gender roles in a society in flux, the likely different emphasis placed on different moral values in non-White cultures, and the possible effect that mediating factors, such as education and socioeconomic status, may have had in limiting the impact of exposure to violence on this group.

It was also suggested that the criminal and interpersonal violence that is so prevalent in many South African communities may affect children and adolescents differently from the political violence on which many of the studies in this area were based. The possibility that this generation is less affected by the inequalities and state-sanctioned violence of the past was also considered in accounting both for the observed styles of moral reasoning and for the experience of violence exposure in the current sample. The key conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that the relationship between exposure to violence and moral development is not a simple one. While intuitively one might expect high levels of violence exposure to have an inevitable impact on psychosocial and moral development, the effects appear to be more subtle and complex than previously assumed.

### **6.5.2 Limitations of this Study**

This study has several limitations, and the findings should be interpreted in light of these limitations. A relatively poor response rate was a major factor in the difficulty in obtaining a larger sample of questionnaires for this research. Furthermore, there were hundreds of

incomplete or incorrectly answered (scored) questionnaires that were returned and could not be used. This suggests some difficulty with comprehending the questions among the present sample, which is consistent with the low reliability of the MOS in the current study, as will be discussed further below. In addition, a larger sample size might have yielded results that might be more generalisable to the whole population. Problems with survey, self-report data are also acknowledged. The results on which this study is based, for example, may not be entirely accurate owing to the possibility of self-report bias. Furthermore, by investigating people's reasoning styles in this way, using their responses to hypothetical dilemmas, there is no way of knowing whether these responses would be congruent with behaviour in real-life situations. Thus, the validity of the findings may be questionable.

Participants in this study were predominantly second-language English speakers. In this regard, the biggest confounding factor appeared to be understanding, particularly with respect to comprehension, of some of the terminology by second language English speakers. It is believed that language was a major contributing factor: second language English speakers may have had difficulty understanding the Moral Orientation Scale (MOS) in particular, which consisted of text-heavy vignettes. The impact of the language barrier on comprehension appeared to be a major confounding variable on the results of this study and could seriously have impacted on the validity of the results. The length of the questionnaire was also a confounding factor – students complained that it was too long and many semi-completed questionnaires were returned. The contradictory correlations found on many of the subscales could be accounted for by the length of the questionnaires, as students may have checked off responses without properly attending to the questions, simply to finish the task more quickly.

Difficulties with comprehension and length seem to have affected the reliability of the data. The low reliability of the Moral Orientation Scale in both the validation and current studies suggest that the current results should be interpreted with caution. The problem of random responding, particularly as participants grew tired, seems to be confirmed by the results of the reliability analysis. Reliability of the SAVE for this sample, the first questionnaire presented, was very high, whereas the reliability of the MOS for this sample, the second questionnaire presented, was very low. In addition, the SAVE was specifically developed and standardised on an adolescent

population. While many of the current study's participants were adolescents, many others were older (young adults). Thus the age of this group may have been a confounding factor influencing these results. Similarly, neither the SAVE nor the MOS have been validated on a South African population. Because the two measures used were developed and tested for reliability on populations from Western, developed countries, the applicability of the measures used in the South African context may also have affected the validity of the results. Moreover, as the MOS was designed and based on concepts from Westernised theories of morality, the relevance of such concepts in the present sample may not be valid.

Treating the variables as too distinct and the groups as too homogenous may have produced problematic results. As suggested by some researchers, the similarities between men and women may actually be greater than their differences, while there may be more differences within each group than is usually alluded to. Furthermore, this study is limited in that it did not explore differences within cultural groups. As such, differences between Black ethnic groups such as Zulu, Tswana and Xhosa were not investigated. Forms of gender-based and sexual violence were not measured by this study, which is likely to have influenced the findings with respect to women in particular. Factors that might have a mediating effect on moral development were also not included, which limited the conclusions that can be drawn from this study.

### **6.5.3 Implications and Recommendations for Future Research**

This research has attempted to further understanding of moral orientation in the South African context, with particular consideration of how exposure to violence is associated with the tendency towards justice or care in Black men and women. The contrary findings presented here suggest that South Africa may offer a unique amalgamation of Western and non-Western cultures, where men and women from both groups have somewhat idiosyncratic experiences of moral development in the context of high levels of exposure to violence. Further research is needed to illuminate these differences. Perhaps a study using cross-culturally adapted and validated measures of Gilligan's care orientation and Kohlberg's justice orientation would be useful in confirming or refuting the results of the current study.

However, there also appears to be a need for a theory of moral development specific to different groups in South Africa, one that does not force individuals into either a care or a justice position. Research that allows for qualitative responses to real-life, personalised dilemmas by Black South Africans might provide greater insight into the ways in which these men and women resolve moral conflicts. Further research which looks at the differences within each group – male and female – with respect to the variables above is also expected to be particularly illuminating. This would require research that treats women and men as heterogeneous groups and examines how women and men may differ amongst themselves with respect to moral orientation and their experience of violence exposure.

Future research in this area might focus on rural participants. Individuals living in rural communities might be exposed to higher levels of exposure to violence in both men and women, as well as more typical care versus justice tendencies in male and female groups. In addition, replication of this study in an urban population that is not at a tertiary education level is expected to yield different results. The specific changes that accompany increased contact between cultures may have had a greater acculturative effect on the results of the more urbanized, Westernised sample in the current study than they would on a more rural population. The inclusion of a measure of acculturation could have yielded more conclusive support for this hypothesis.

Research that presents various forms of moral dilemmas might shed light on the influence of situational variables on moral judgement. Manipulating the nature of the dilemma from hypothetical situations to real-life conflicts between in- and out-groups, for instance, might be particularly illuminating. Furthermore, finding and using alternative measures of moral orientation and of exposure to violence may be necessary, since the findings of the current study suggest that the validity of the measures employed may have been questionable. Standardising and validating different measures within the South African setting would be of particular importance for future research.

It is important to note that moral development is a developmental process, and participants in this study might be argued to be at different points in their moral development. Longitudinal studies

are needed to assess the particular patterns of moral development in Black children and adolescents in South Africa. Similarly, the long-term effects of high levels of violence exposure on children's development need to be further explored. This research was only able to offer a point-in-time analysis of the impact of exposure to violence on this group. To the extent that psychosocial and moral development are processes that occur over time and involve multiple influences, future research might investigate the risk and protective factors that mediate the relationship between exposure to violence and moral development. Another neglected area in the current research is that of resilience. Based on the evidence that children are likely to exhibit greater or lesser degrees of resilience depending on their personal circumstances, the contribution of resilience to moral development in conditions of violence needs to be further explored.

Finally, there appear to be three directions that research into the specific effects of exposure to violence on moral development might take. The first is to look at the impact of violence exposure on the levels or stages of moral development. The second would be to investigate what effect exposure to violence might have on the modality – justice or care – of moral judgement. Thirdly, examining the underlying motivations for moral judgements might provide insight into how and why people adopt particular types of approaches to moral dilemmas. Research into the effects of exposure to violence on the development of children and adolescents is critical for effective interventions. It is hoped that, “in a world caught between poverty and plenty, we begin to seriously ask ourselves how this impacts on children's ability both to seek justice and care for others” (Muthukrishna et al., 2006, p. 52).

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A: Moral Orientation Scale (MOS)

(Yacker & Weinberg, 1990)

The following scale is a measure of moral reasoning style for adults using 12 dilemmas encountered by children between the ages of 8 and 10 years. In completing the scale, it is important that you imagine yourself to be the parent or older brother or sister of an 8-to-10 year old child. As you respond to each dilemma, think about how you would help your child / younger sister or brother (imaginary or real) decide what to do. That is, what you would most want the child to consider when deciding what to do.

After each dilemma, there are four options you might consider when helping this child decide what to do. Please rank them from 1 to 4 in order of your preference. Give a 1 to that choice which is the most similar to what your thinking would be on the dilemma – in other words, the one you most likely want “your child” to consider. Give a 2 to that option you would next want your child to consider, and a 3 to the one you rate next important after that. You would give a 4 to that option you would least likely want your child to consider.

Please place your ranking of each possible option in the boxes along side each option. Even if none of the options matches exactly what you would say or do, please rank them to fit your thinking as closely as possible. Be sure to rank each option. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers for any question. All responses will be kept confidential.

1. Your child is having a birthday party and wants to invite most of the children from their school class. One classmate, who lives down the street, is not popular with your child, or the other children in the class. Your child does not want to invite this unpopular neighbourhood child

RANK	
	Since the other child lives on the block, I would explore how my child would feel when he /she saw the child in the future if the child were not invited to the party, and how the other child would feel after being left out
	I would explain to my child that if most of the class is invited, the unpopular child must be as well. It is not fair to leave our one or two.
	I would remind my child that there are times when neighbours help each other. Especially because the child is unpopular, it would be best to be friendly with the neighbour child and invite him / her to the party.
	I would want my child to consider the reasons why the child is not popular. If the child is just shy, she / he should be invited. If the child is out of control or abusive, it would be unfair to the other children to include the child.

2. Your child accidentally broke a toy that belonged to another child. No one saw your child do this and your child does not want to admit that he/she broke the toy

RANK	
	I would explain to my child that honesty is the best policy and that the thing to do is to admit having broken the toy
	I would want my child to consider that by not telling the truth, someone else might get blamed and punished for breaking the toy.
	I would discuss how difficult it might be for my child to play with the other child in the future, having to live with the guilt about the toy.
	I would want my child to know that in this case there are no questions. If you break it, you offer to replace it.

3. Your child and another child were misbehaving in school while the teacher was out of the room. When the teacher returned, your child was caught misbehaving, but the other child was not. Your child wonders what to do – whether he/she should tell the teacher about the other child also misbehaving

RANK


I would want my child to be concerned about his / her own behaviour only, and to understand that this would not have happened if my child had behaved properly in the first place.  
 I would expect my child not to tattle. As for the other child, it is a matter between that child and the teacher  
 I would help my child understand that it would be unkind to get the other child in trouble and that the upset and anger at the other child for not being caught will not last long.  
 I would explore with my child what would happen to their relationship if my child told on the classmate.

4. Your child agreed to take part in a school production (play or musical), which requires rehearsals after school. As the day of the play nears, the weather becomes better for playing outside with friends. Your child no longer wants to take part in the play or help in its preparation.

RANK


I would want my child to consider the potential disappointment of others, as they are depending on his / her participation in the event.  
 I would help my child understand that a commitment is a commitment and that one must honour responsibilities that one agrees to.  
 My child made a promise. I would want my child to consider how he /she would feel if someone broke his / her word to my child.  
 I would want my child to be concerned with the selfishness of his /her wishes and I would point out that acting this way can make a person feel bad about herself / himself later.

5. Your child often plays with two other children and all three are close friends. For some reason, one of the friends becomes unhappy with the other, and wants your child to break off relations with that friend also. Your child feels caught in the middle and wonders what to do.

RANK


I would encourage my child to remain friends with both children, even if all three do not play together at the same time.  
 I would want my child to consider whether the two children could become friends again by helping my child understand what went wrong.  
 I would want my child to consider whether it is fair for someone else to determine who his/her friends should be.  
 I would want my child to consider how she / he would feel if she / he were in the position of the third friend. I would want my child to treat others the way she/he wants to be treated.

6. Your child agrees to pay for a relatively inexpensive household item that she / he broke despite warnings “not to touch.” Your child is saving some of his / her allowance (pocket money) to do this. As the savings increase, your child really wants to spend the money on something he / she has wanted for a long time, instead of replacing the item she/ he broke.

RANK


I would explain to my child that life is like this sometimes; we often have to do things we don't want to do. It's not always easy to play by the rules.  
 I would want my child to know that we can accommodate each other. I would allow a small portion of the saved money for his / her own purchase, even though it will take a little longer to pay back for the broken item.  
 I would want my child to consider the importance of priorities and to understand that the prior obligation must be satisfied before his / her wishes.

I would impress upon my child that even though the item was small, it was important to me and that for the sake of my feelings, I would like him / her to replace it before making his / her own purchase.

7. Your child admires a toy that belongs to a friend. The friend accidentally leaves the toy at your house. Because the friend does not seem to miss the toy or ask for its return, your child wants to keep the toy.

RANK

I would want my child to consider how the child who owns the toy feels about now having it. I would point out that just because the other child doesn't seem to care about the toy, this may not be the case.

I would want my child to consider how she /he would feel if someone kept a toy that was his /hers. The principle of not doing to others what you would not want them to do to you is key in this case.

I would want my child to consider who owns the toy. Regardless of the circumstances, the toy still belongs to someone else and the important thing is to return it.

I would want my child to consider the good feelings she / he would get from returning the toy, and the problems that might occur between the children if the friend remembers the toy later and it wasn't returned.

8. An afternoon has been set aside for the whole family to give the house a good cleaning. When the day of cleaning arrives, your child wants to watch a special programme on television. There is no video recording machine in the household.

RANK

I would want my child to realize that watching the TV show would not be very considerate to the other members of the family, and to imagine how they might feel.

I would want my child to understand that she / he is no more privileged than any other member of the family, and that therefore, he / she has to participate in the family chores.

I would stress all the important aspects of responsibility, togetherness, and belonging that go with "family" as well as the need to be able to depend on one another.

I would want my child to consider that a commitment has been made to the family in an almost contractual way. And that It would not be fair to change his / her mind at the last minute.

9. Your child finds a bag in the street containing some small items that he/she finds very interesting. Your child wants to keep some or all of the contents of the bag.

RANK

I would want my child to understand that ownership is an important concept. People have a right to their belongings, even though kids often say, "Finders keepers, losers weepers."

I would remind my child of the "Golden Rule": do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

I would want my child to consider that if he / she kept the bag without trying to locate the owner, she / he might feel guilty about keeping something that somebody else might need.

I would remind my child that these items are probably considered special to the person they belong to and that person would want them back.

10. Your child promises another child to help him / her with a school project due the next day. When your child tells you this, you remind your child that this was the day that the family had planned to visit friends who live in a town an hour away. Your child does not know what to do.

RANK

I would want my child to consider that promises made are promises kept unless good reasons prevent you from keeping your word. Since the commitment to the other family was made first, it takes precedence.

	I would want my child to consider that membership in the family is important and that when the parents make plans, I would like for us all to be together.
	I would discuss the problem of an individual's freedom within the group and that when the family makes plans, one family member does not have the right to make separate plans.
	I would want my child to consider the predicament of the other child. If the friend really needs help, I could see where my child might have to stay home and help the friend.

11. Your child has made long standing overnight plans with a good friend who moved out of town and who your child does not see very often. On the afternoon of this overnight arrangement, a neighbour phones to say there is an extra ticket to a music concert that night and invites your child to join them, Your child does not know what to do.

RANK

	I would want my child to consider that not only is the friend looking forward to the visit, the adults in the families had to make special plans for the overnight.
	I would want my child to consider the friend's feelings and find out if it might be possible to change the overnight plans without upsetting the friend.
	I would want my child to understand that the first commitment takes precedence.
	I would want my child to consider his / her priorities. Which is more important – friend or concert?

12. Your child was punished by one of the teachers at school for a misbehaviour that your child really did not commit. Your child wants to explain, but fears getting into more trouble for "talking back."

RANK

	I would want my child to understand that justice is justice and that taking blame unnecessarily need not be tolerated.
	I would want my child to consider how important it is to communicate with the teacher, not only to clear him / herself, but to maintain integrity and self-esteem.
	I would want my child to consider that teachers are human beings and they sometimes make mistakes. Unless my child was very upset, I would advise him / her to leave things alone this time.
	I would want my child to consider the importance of having the truth be known even when you think people don't want to hear it.

## Appendix B: Screen for Adolescent Violence Exposure (SAVE)

(Hastings & Kelley, 1997)

### Screen for Exposure to Violence

We are interested in hearing about your experiences of the bad things that you have seen, heard of, or that have happened to you.

Please read and answer the following statements about violent things that may have happened at home, in your neighbourhood or on campus. For each statement, please put a tick on the line that best describes how often these things have happened. For example, if you have never “seen someone carry a gun”...on campus, you would put a tick on the line that says never next to that statement.

Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.

	How often it happens:				
	Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1. I have seen someone carry a gun...					
on campus	—	—	—	—	—
in my home	—	—	—	—	—
in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
2. Someone has pulled a gun on me...					
on campus	—	—	—	—	—
in my home	—	—	—	—	—
in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
3. Adults older than me have beaten me up...					
on campus	—	—	—	—	—
in my home	—	—	—	—	—
in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—

		<b>How often it happens:</b>				
		<b>Never</b>	<b>Hardly Ever</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>
4.	Someone my age has threatened to beat me up...					
	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
5.	I have been shot...					
	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
6.	I have seen the police arrest someone...					
	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
7.	Someone my age hits me...					
	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
8.	I have seen someone get killed...					
	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—

		<b>How often it happens:</b>				
		<b>Never</b>	<b>Hardly Ever</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>
9. I have seen an adult hit a child...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
10. I have heard about someone getting shot...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
11. Someone has pulled a knife on me...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
12. Adults older than me often threaten to beat me up...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
13. I have had shots fired at me...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
14. I have seen someone carry a knife...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—

		<b>How often it happens:</b>				
		<b>Never</b>	<b>Hardly Ever</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>
15. I have seen someone get shot...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
16. I have been attacked with a knife...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
17. I have seen a child hit an adult...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
18. I have seen people screaming at each other...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
19. I have someone pull a gun on someone else...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
20. I have seen someone get beaten up...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—

		<b>How often it happens:</b>				
		<b>Never</b>	<b>Hardly Ever</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>
21. I have heard about someone getting killed...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
22. I have heard about someone getting attacked with a knife...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
23. I have heard about someone getting beaten up...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
24. I have seen someone pull a knife on someone else...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
25. I have been badly hurt...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
26. I have seen someone get attacked with a knife...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—

		<b>How often it happens:</b>				
		<b>Never</b>	<b>Hardly Ever</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>
27. I hear gunshots...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
28. I have seen someone get badly hurt...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
29. I have run for cover when people have started shooting...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
30. Adults older than me scream at me...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
31. I have heard of someone carrying a gun...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—
32. Adults older than me hit me...	on campus	—	—	—	—	—
	in my home	—	—	—	—	—
	in my neighbourhood	—	—	—	—	—

## Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire

### MORAL REASONING & SCREEN FOR EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE QUESTIONNAIRES

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. You are assured that all the details and responses that you give will be treated as confidential. I will be looking at overall (group) trends and will not focus on individual responses / questionnaires. You are not required to put your name on this questionnaire. The following data will be of great value to me, however. Before turning over, please complete the following details. Thank you for your assistance.

Gender:	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age in Years:	<hr/>			
Home Language:	<hr/>			
Race Group: (NB: Please DO NOT complete this questionnaire if you are White or Indian)	<hr/>			
Where did you Grow Up?	<hr/>			
Where are you Currently Living?	<hr/>			
Current Course of Study:	<hr/>			
Year of Study (1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , postgraduate):	<hr/>			
Father's Occupation (tick one):	Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Own Business	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Educator	<input type="checkbox"/>	Administrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Domestic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Labourer	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mother's Occupation (tick one):	Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Own Business	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Educator	<input type="checkbox"/>	Administrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Domestic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Labourer	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix D: Informed Consent & Information Sheet



Dear Student

### Information about this Study

My name is Debbie Marais, a Psychology Masters student at UKZN. I am conducting this research to try and explore whether there is any relationship between having been exposed to violence (directly or indirectly), and having a particular way of reasoning about moral dilemmas. My study is based on a previous study that I conducted with Black and White students at UKZN, which produced some interesting findings regarding Black men and women's styles of moral reasoning in particular that I would like to follow up on here. The findings of the previous study suggested that Black students engaged in different reasoning styles than those that have been proposed by traditionally "Western" theories. As a result, it was decided to include only Black men and women in the current study to further explore their moral reasoning styles and, at the same time, how much violence they might be exposed to in their current contexts. It is hoped that the current study will illuminate the pathways of moral development in the uniquely South African context, where exposure to violence is, unfortunately, commonplace.

**Please only participate in this study if you are a Black South African.** I am interested in finding out more about your personal experience (or lack thereof) of being exposed to violence during your life, and about how you make decisions when confronted with tricky moral questions. The results of this study will be released in a thesis. No details that identify you or reveal your responses to the questions will be released. If after reading this you decide that you would like to participate in this study, click on the link below to go to the online questionnaire. Your participation in this study is voluntary and the responses that you give will remain completely anonymous (that is, no one will be able to know it is you who answered the questions!).

If after reading this information, you decide you would like to complete this questionnaire, this will be taken to mean that you have consented to participate in this study. Although your input will be greatly valued and appreciated, should you wish to withdraw at any stage, you are free to do so. The questionnaire can be completed and submitted online by following the link below, and should take about 25 minutes to complete. You can also choose to complete this questionnaire online by going to [www.haemishkyd.info](http://www.haemishkyd.info)

During the process of completing the questionnaire below, if you feel distressed by any of the questions asked and would like to speak to someone about this, please contact the Student

Counselling Centre (033 260 5233) for assistance and support. If you have any other questions about this study, you can contact me via email ([maraisd@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:maraisd@ukzn.ac.za)) or my supervisor at the School of Psychology, Prof Doug Wassenaar ([wassenaar@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:wassenaar@ukzn.ac.za), 033 260 5373). If you have any concerns or issues regarding this study you may contact the HDSS ethics committee of UKZN at 031 260 3587.

## **CONSENT**

After reading the information provided above, I have decided to participate in this study about exposure to violence and moral reasoning. The purpose and nature of this study have been explained to me in the email above. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from completing the questionnaire at any time and that this decision will in no way impact upon me negatively. I also understand that this participation will not benefit me directly.

I have received the telephone number of a contact person/s should I have any issues or questions relating to this study. I understand that my responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

Student Signature: