

# Anger, hatred, or just heartlessness?

## Defining gratuitous violence

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*Violent crime in South Africa is sometimes said to be unusual, because it is perceived to frequently be gratuitous. This article engages with the question of how to define gratuitous violence. If the term gratuitous is understood to mean 'for nothing', gratuitous violence should be understood as violence that is 'low on expressive and instrumental motivations'. Whilst the evidence is that much violence is 'instrumental', violence in South Africa may be unusual but it may be better to articulate this in terms of the concepts both of 'expressive' and gratuitous violence. Gratuitous violence and the apparent cruelty that characterises some acts of instrumental violence also appear to imply that 'empathy deficits' might be a characteristic of many perpetrators of violence.*

It is widely known that South Africa suffers from high levels of violent crime. But concern about violence in South Africa is not limited to the frequency with which incidents of violence take place. Many people appear to believe that violent crime in South Africa is itself unusually violent. This perception is referred to by different people in different ways. For example, in a question to the Minister of Police in parliament, a Member of Parliament indicated that the key issue of concern, for him, was the high level of 'cruelty' distinguishing some incidents of violence.<sup>1</sup> More frequently, however, this idea is articulated as being a problem of 'gratuitous violence'. The concept of 'gratuitous violence' was for instance given emphasis by government officials when they initiated a study into violence in 2006.<sup>2</sup> A 2006 article on violent crime states that violent crime

often involves 'actions which seem to be sadistic or gratuitous'.<sup>3</sup> In another example, a 2010 *Economist* special report on South Africa, released to coincide with the opening of the soccer World Cup, stated that '[m]ore than the level of crime it is the sheer gratuitousness of the violence that is shocking'.<sup>4</sup>

It should be acknowledged that these ideas may serve an ideological function for some. In other words, they may be a way of expressing or reinforcing racialised beliefs that the cruel nature of violence in South Africa is linked to the attributes of some or other South African population group. Whether ideological or not, they may also be part of the 'mythology' of violent crime in South Africa.<sup>5</sup> The fact is that in the vast majority of robberies people are not physically harmed.<sup>6</sup> Most robbers do not engage in actual physical violence for no reason. Consistently where people are killed or otherwise harmed in robberies this is related to resistance or non-cooperation.<sup>7</sup> Reports of robbery highlight the fact that many robbers operate on a 'professional' basis. The threat of violence is used to establish control over their victims but once they have established control the victims are not hurt.<sup>8</sup>

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But even if the general rule is that victims are not harmed in robberies, and that most violent criminals use violence in a largely 'rational' way to achieve control or get cooperation, there are nevertheless incidents where violence is used in a way that seems disproportionate, excessive or even purposeless. For example, in one incident a man's ears were cut off by a group of robbers, ostensibly to punish him for not having money or a cellphone for them to take.<sup>9</sup> In another incident it was reported that a shopkeeper was shot after 'pleading with robbers to take everything he has but spare his life.'<sup>10</sup> These types of incidents are among the incidents of violence which people find most distressing and that contribute most to feelings of fear and anxiety about violence.<sup>11</sup>

This article is therefore intended as a contribution to exploring the idea that violence in South Africa is 'unusual'. It does this by grappling with the concept of gratuitous violence. In order to differentiate violence that is gratuitous from other violence it is necessary to define what is meant by the term gratuitous violence. After referring to 'objective' definitions of the concept, the article motivates for use of a 'subjective' definition, which defines gratuitous violence in relation to both instrumental and expressive violence. The article argues that the perceptions that violence in South Africa is unusual in some way would better be articulated as a perception that much violence is 'expressive or gratuitous'.

Ultimately it may be very difficult to answer questions about whether or not violence in South Africa is disproportionately gratuitous or expressive or unusual in some other way. Nevertheless, this article is intended to take forward attempts to answer this question, partly because perceptions to this effect appear to be particularly widespread. Answering the question may also be helpful in efforts to address violence and crime in South Africa. For instance, 'anger management' programmes are provided to many perpetrators of violent crime in prisons in South Africa.<sup>12</sup> But if the principal issue with many perpetrators is something other than anger, this would motivate for reconsidering the types of rehabilitation programmes that are provided.

## INSTRUMENTAL AND EXPRESSIVE VIOLENCE

In analyses of violence, the standard terms that are used to differentiate acts of violence from each other relative to their motivation are 'instrumental' and 'expressive'.<sup>13</sup> In discussing definitions of gratuitous violence it is necessary to refer to these and therefore necessary to define them.

**Instrumental violence** is orientated towards a practical purpose. For instance, during the course of a robbery the robbers might threaten their victims with the use of violence. Where they actually use physical violence this is often for one or other practical purpose, such as to defend themselves against violent resistance from the victim, or force the victim to cooperate with them (for instance to provide information on where valuables or firearms might be found), or to defend themselves against police officers who are trying to prevent their escape.

**Expressive violence** has been defined as 'emotionally satisfying violence without economic gain'.<sup>14</sup> Expressive violence may include violence that expresses anger, hatred or the need to feel respected or in control, or (particularly in the case of sadistic violence) satisfies the urge to obtain gratification by hurting other people.

As will be discussed further, a key issue in the definition of gratuitous violence relates to the understanding of expressive violence. It seems valid to say that in the same way that instrumental violence can be seen to fulfil a practical purpose, expressive violence might be said to fulfil an emotional purpose. The emotional purpose that is fulfilled by expressive violence may be more subconscious than the more conscious practical purposes associated with instrumental violence. For instance, research indicates that people with 'unstable high self-esteem' are more likely to react aggressively in relation to criticism or disrespect. This appears to be due to the fact that this causes 'losses of self-esteem', which 'evoke negative emotional responses such as shame and so these people

become aggressive as a way of warding off these very unpleasant feelings'.<sup>15</sup> It is not that these individuals decide to 'ward off unpleasant feelings' but that aggression and violence fulfils a purpose for them, even if they are not overtly conscious of this. Violent behaviour by persons with 'unstable high self-esteem', related to their anger at being criticised or disrespected, is then not 'for nothing'. If, as is argued below, gratuitous violence is violence 'for nothing' then violence of this kind, or other expressive violence, is not gratuitous violence.

One issue that needs to be emphasised is that acts of violence are not necessarily purely instrumental or expressive but often involve a mixture of instrumental and expressive motives. For example, robbers may act in a way that is fairly controlled, and not use violence in a way that is clearly unnecessary, but still find the act of carrying out a robbery exciting and get satisfaction from being able to control, and have authority over, other people through the threat or use of violence and the sense of power derived from wielding a gun. Individuals who are prone to 'explosions' of anger and apparent expressive violence are often those who have found that such explosions help in intimidating and obtaining compliance from other people. Their explosions of anger may in fact not be completely uncontrolled but take place in selective circumstances with specific people. While they do in fact become very angry and aggressive (they are not pretending), their outbursts are directed to situations where it seems to them (subconsciously perhaps) that it will be productive for them to act in this way.<sup>16</sup>

This is important to the discussion of gratuitous violence below, where it will be argued that, in a similar way, violence might be partly gratuitous whilst also being to some extent expressive or instrumental.

## OBJECTIVE DEFINITIONS OF GRATUITOUS VIOLENCE

It appears that there is no established standard definition of gratuitous violence. Analytical literature using the term does not always define

it,<sup>17</sup> or does not do so in any detail. For instance, one article on the subject merely indicates in parenthesis that gratuitous violence is 'unprovoked'.<sup>18</sup> A study that does provide a more detailed definition defines gratuitous violence as 'excessive violence that went beyond the level that would be necessary to accomplish the homicide and/or caused the victim unnecessary pain and suffering'.<sup>19</sup> Another study indicates that the term is used 'if the amount of violence clearly exceeded the degree of force that that would have been necessary to merely control the victim'.<sup>20</sup> In the latter definitions violence is not gratuitous if it seems to be necessary to carry out a certain crime (the principal offence), but comes to be seen as gratuitous once it goes beyond that which is necessary for this purpose.

The above definitions may be described as objective in the sense that they assume that whether violence is gratuitous or not is a question that can be answered through knowledge of the course of events of which the act of violence formed a part, or through knowledge of the physical details of the act of violence itself. Thus Porter *et al* indicate that their methods for establishing whether such violence was present involved consulting 'official police, forensic/autopsy, prosecutor, and court reports.' Though these sometimes include information on the offender's version of events, the information that they regard as relevant to ascertaining whether violence is gratuitous, is evidence of 'torture/ beating, mutilation or "overkill" and use of multiple weapons' from the crime scene. Foreman-Peck and Moore state that 'a person who resorts to gratuitous or unwarranted violence will have a subjective reason or "provocation" and that their definition of gratuitousness 'stems from a notional dispassionate observer'.<sup>22</sup> In terms of their approach therefore the 'subjective reason' is not relevant to ascertaining whether violence is gratuitous or not.

But if it is valid to say that much violence which is not primarily instrumental nevertheless fulfils an emotional purpose, then it may be argued that these 'objective' definitions are in many ways merely definitions of 'non-instrumental' violence and that much of the violence that they are

defining as gratuitous could be described as expressive violence.<sup>23</sup> These definitions could therefore be criticised for failing to differentiate between, and for conflating, 'gratuitous' and 'expressive' violence. Thus, for instance, Porter *et al* indicate that 'sadistic violence' was indicated by evidence that the 'offender obtained enjoyment/pleasure from the homicidal act', emphasising that this was 'enjoyment *from engaging in violence*'.<sup>24</sup> They go on to note that:

For some cases of gratuitous violence (e.g., the victim was stabbed numerous times with inference of nonfatal intent), it is not possible to determine whether the motive for the excessive violence was pleasure seeking or to (sic) another affective state such as rage.<sup>25</sup>

The implication then is that for them sadistic violence is a type of gratuitous violence. Gratuitous violence might be for sadistic purposes, but might also serve other emotional purposes, such as acting out rage. But if the motivation for violence is 'pleasure seeking' or 'rage', this is its purpose. The perpetrator is not engaging in violence 'for nothing'. Though the emotional purpose here might be seen as perverted or unbalanced it seems reasonable to argue that these should be understood as forms of expressive violence.

## A SUBJECTIVE DEFINITION OF GRATUITOUS VIOLENCE

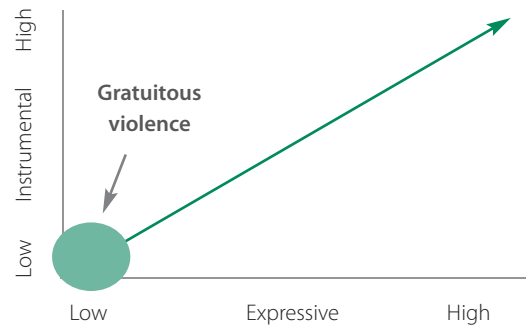
The subjective definition of gratuitous violence that is put forward here is based on an understanding of the word gratuitous as meaning 'for nothing',<sup>26</sup> and therefore excludes violence that has a well established purpose, whether this is instrumental or expressive in nature. Knowing whether an act of violence was carried out 'for something' or 'for nothing', and therefore whether it is gratuitous or not, seems to require, however, that we understand the motivations of the perpetrator. This raises the question of how gratuitous violence is different from violence that has instrumental or expressive motives.

Hypothetically, it is possible to map acts of violence on a graph in terms of the degree to

which they are 'instrumental or expressive'.<sup>27</sup> Thus, using the graph provided as Figure 1:

- Acts of violence that are high in instrumental but low in expressive motives would be mapped on the top left hand corner of the graph;
- Acts of violence that are high in expressive but low in instrumental motives would be mapped on the bottom right hand corner of the graph;
- Acts of violence that reflect some combination of relatively strong expressive *and* instrumental motives would be mapped on the top right hand corner of the graph.

**Figure 1:** Gratuitous violence – graphic representation



Acts of gratuitous violence would therefore be acts of violence that fit into the bottom left hand corner of the graph. They would be *acts of violence that are low on both instrumental and expressive motives*.<sup>28</sup> Just as acts of violence are not necessarily purely instrumental or expressive, however, acts of violence are not necessarily purely gratuitous. An act of gratuitous violence is perhaps likely to involve (perhaps must involve) some type of instrumental or expressive motivation, but this would be relatively weak. Whether or not an act of violence is gratuitous or not is therefore a matter of degree. Some acts of violence might be committed with very little expressive or instrumental motivation (and therefore be 'highly gratuitous') whilst others might have moderate expressive or instrumental motivations (and therefore be understood as partially gratuitous).

This approach to defining gratuitous violence also raises the question of how to factor consideration of the degree of violence used into an analysis of gratuitous violence. In general it might be said that the question of whether violence is gratuitous or not becomes much more significant when the violence involved is of a much higher degree (such as killing or torture). Where violence is of a more modest degree (such as restrained physical punishment of a child), gratuitousness might also be a factor, but an act of violence may potentially only qualify as 'highly gratuitous' when a high degree of violence is involved, accompanied by the relative absence of distinct instrumental or expressive motives.

Consider the example of cases where people are killed in a robbery in which the value of the money or property that is taken is relatively low.<sup>29</sup> Some of these acts are not necessarily acts of gratuitous violence. If the perpetrator is desperately poor, there may be a strong material motivation to commit the robbery. If, for instance, the perpetrators' actions are shaped by emotions such as anger, this may also be relevant to understanding their motivation.

It may however be valid to characterise some of these cases as acts of gratuitous violence if there is not a strong motivation to acquire money or property, or no other specific reasons for the use of violence. If the person is hurt, or even killed, for something which is of low value to the perpetrator this *may* indicate that his or her violent acts were without any substantial motivation, though one would still have to consider whether other instrumental or expressive motives did not play a significant role. The importance to the perpetrator of the goods to be obtained is not the only factor defining whether instrumental motives are present or not. In some cases other factors shape the motivations of the perpetrator to use violence during the course of a crime, such as a robbery.<sup>30</sup>

But is there in fact any reason to believe that gratuitous violence, as defined in this way, might be part of the problem of violence? Does this 'subjective' concept of gratuitous violence in fact

make any sense at all? Why would a person engage in violence 'for nothing'? Does it not make more sense to assume that violence which is not essentially instrumental is then expressive in nature?

## The inhibition against harming others

The answer to this question raises a more general question of why violence is not more widespread in society. Many of us experience similar instrumental motivations or emotions to those who act violently. Is it purely because of a concern about social disapproval or penal sanction, or fear of potential opponents, that violence in fact takes place so infrequently? A comprehensive answer to this question might acknowledge the relevance of the aforementioned factors. However, in addition to this it seems that most emotionally well-developed people have internal inhibitions against using violence against other people. The inhibitions against violence might also be assumed to be much greater (for the emotionally well adjusted) when it comes to acts of violence involving the infliction of much greater levels of pain or harm. A theoretical perspective that would help to make sense of this is, for instance, the idea that 'the main evolutionary heritage on the biological level' is that 'humans are hard-wired towards interactional entrainment and solidarity; and this is what makes violence so difficult.'<sup>31</sup>

Confrontational tension and fear... is not merely an individual's selfish fear of bodily harm; it is a tension that directly contravenes the tendency for entrainment in each other's emotions when there is a common focus of attention. We have evolved, on the physiological level, in such a way that fighting encounters a deep interactional obstacle, because of the way our neurological hard-wiring makes us act in the presence of other human beings.<sup>32</sup>

Whatever the explanation, the idea that harming others is not emotionally 'easy' for most people is endorsed by others. One writer for instance states that 'the findings of experiments in which the

intensity of victims' suffering and pain are systematically varied show that expressions of pain typically inhibit rather than reinforce aggressive conduct.<sup>33</sup> Another indicates that, 'Absolute cruelty – brutality inflicted on innocent victims for sadistic pleasure – is rare.'<sup>34</sup> A third states that those who engage in the most violent conduct are to some degree people with specific pathologies. 'Aggressive-sadistic personality disorder, which involves the derivation of pleasure from another's physical or emotional suffering, or from control and domination of others can be related to "neuropsychological deficits".'<sup>35</sup>

## An absence of empathy

Where there are strong expressive or clear instrumental motives for using violence these are part of what enable some individuals to overcome their inhibitions.<sup>36</sup> But if it is true that humans are 'hard-wired' in such a way that they find violence difficult, it may be that there are some who find the barrier to violence easier to overcome because their 'hard-wiring' for emotional entrainment and solidarity is not strong. In other words, people who commit acts of gratuitous violence may tend to be people who have weak inhibitions against using violence, and therefore act violently without having strong motivations to do so. If Collins' concept of 'emotional entrainment and solidarity'<sup>37</sup> can be equated with a natural disposition towards empathy then it would make sense that gratuitous violence tends to be exhibited by individuals who have a personality that might be described as callous and unemotional or lacking in empathy.

Individuals who have personality profiles of this kind might include those who would be classified as, for instance, psychopaths, sociopaths or people with attachment disorders or dissocial personality disorder.<sup>38</sup> The quality of empathy (or its converse callousness or 'emotionlessness') is not uniformly distributed in any population. People with empathy deficits may not necessarily be restricted to those afflicted by psychopathy or one of the other pathologies mentioned. Social and historical factors, as well as the cultural, community, organisational or peer group context obviously

also play a role in shaping violent behaviour. Some have argued that 'the capacity for empathy and identification is merely a potential, and one that may or may not be brought into being through the appropriate facilitating environment.'<sup>39</sup>

Also, empathy deficits might not be general attributes of an individual's personality but be selective or situational. Thus with some offenders the lack of empathy might reflect 'cognitive distortions', which enable them to ignore the distress of their victims though they retain the capacity for empathy in their interactions with others, an issue that has implications for the type of treatment programmes which are appropriate (if such programmes can be provided).<sup>40</sup> If 'empathy' and 'sensitivity' are equivalent concepts then evidence suggests that alcohol abuse might also be an issue that should be considered here. Thus Holcomb and Adams 'found that intoxicated murderers had higher personal sensitivity scores than did sober murderers, suggesting that alcohol may help to nullify a person's sensitivity.'<sup>41</sup>

In characterising the motives of perpetrators of violence it is therefore not adequate to distinguish only between 'instrumental' and 'expressive' motives, which provide a positive incentive to commit acts of violence. It is necessary to add a third dimension, potentially involving a 'lack of empathy' or being 'callous/unemotional', which is relevant to understanding the relative absence of inhibitions against violence. Violence then often involves some type of interaction, not only between 'instrumental' or 'expressive' motivations, but also the presence or absence of 'empathy'. It makes sense that when a 'lack of empathy' is prominent as a factor, 'instrumental' or 'expressive' motivations need not be as strong.

But this does not mean that they would be entirely absent. In a review of literature on the characteristics of violence committed by psychopaths, Porter *et al* cite evidence that violence committed by psychopaths is often partly instrumental in nature. Psychopaths are, for instance, often 'motivated by material gain or revenge and less likely to have been in a state of heightened emotional arousal at the time of the

violent act than non-psychopathic offenders.' They also suggest that 'thrill seeking' may be a factor in some psychopathic violence.<sup>42</sup> However, as indicated, it is not only these instrumental or expressive motives that characterise psychopathic violence, but also that it is 'unemotional' and 'cold-blooded'. Psychopaths 'consistently commit more violence' and 'perpetrated the most severe ... acts of physical abuse.'<sup>43</sup> However, it would appear that the lack of empathy that characterises psychopaths does not only, as they state, facilitate 'the perpetration of more extreme violence against the victim.' This lack of empathy may be seen to facilitate violence by psychopaths per se, whether violence is extreme or not.

It is therefore likely that, when a lack of empathy is a prominent factor, violence may to some degree be gratuitous. The absence of empathy would not necessarily manifest itself in 'excessive' violence but might be significant in any incident where it seems that violence is used for little reason. As reflected in the following section, the absence of empathy might not, however, only be significant in incidents of this kind.

## THE RELATIONSHIP TO CRUELTY

The idea that violence in South Africa is unusual is not always expressed in relation to the concept of gratuitous violence. It has also been expressed in relation to the idea that violence in South Africa is characterised by a high level of cruelty.<sup>44</sup> If cruelty is defined as 'disregarding or taking pleasure in the pain or suffering of others' it seems that cruelty would be a prominent factor in sadistic violence, where the perpetrator's motivation is related to the pleasure or gratification to be obtained from the pain of others. Other expressive violence motivated by anger or hatred might also include an element of gratification at the victim's suffering and therefore also be 'cruel'.

Is cruelty then more relevant to the characterisation of expressive violence and less relevant to instrumental violence? Violence might be committed to overpower, subordinate, or force compliance or cooperation, and therefore the

infliction of pain might not be a principal objective. But this does not necessarily mean that such violence is not cruel. If a person is tortured because the perpetrators think the victim is withholding information from them about money which they believe is hidden in his home, the motive for the use of violence is instrumental, but the willingness to subject someone to torture still reflects cruelty.

Cruelty, then, would seem to be a factor associated with many acts of violence, whether the violence is instrumental or expressive in nature. Nevertheless, in many cases where violence is used instrumentally, it might be the case that 'indifference to suffering or pain' is much more of a factor than malice or sadistic pleasure. Such indifference might also then be most significant in characterising the cruelty of acts of gratuitous violence inflicted 'for nothing'. If indifference to harm reflects a lack of empathy, this in turn suggests that an absence of empathy might not only be linked to gratuitous violence and might have a broader relevance. A violent act that reflects a high degree of cruelty, even where there are clear instrumental motives for it, might also be facilitated by an absence of empathy.

## CONCLUSION

As indicated, there is a widespread perception that violence in South Africa is in some way unusual, that perpetrators are disproportionately violent, and that they engage in violence unnecessarily. This concern is often articulated by means of a concept of gratuitous violence. This terminology may be appropriate if an 'objective' definition of gratuitous violence is used. However, this article argues that the term 'gratuitous violence' needs to be distinguished from 'expressive violence' – something that objective definitions fail to do. If this is done, these perceptions might better be articulated as beliefs that 'expressive and/or gratuitous violence' plays a prominent role in the overall phenomenon of violence in South Africa.

However, even this formulation does not necessarily fully capture the issues of concern,

namely those extending to acts of instrumental violence that appear to be characterised by a high degree of cruelty. If it is true that gratuitous violence is a significant aspect of the problem of violence, both of these phenomena may reflect the fact that 'empathy deficits' play a significant role in violence in South Africa.

It is possible that there is some element of truth to the idea that violence in South Africa is unusual, in that expressive violence, gratuitous violence, or empathy deficits make a relatively more substantial contribution to violence than they do in some other countries. At the same time it should be remembered that among the narratives of violence in many countries are stories of extreme cruelty. Due to their exceptional nature it is consistently the acts involving the greatest degree of cruelty that receive the most attention. Paradoxically, for this reason, they sometimes tend to be seen as the norm and as representative of violence more generally, and play a particularly prominent role in contributing to public fear.

In order to engage further with the issues raised in this article it would be necessary to understand much more about the psychological attributes and motivations of perpetrators of violence in South Africa, and to access much better information about the interactions of rationality, emotion and personality that contribute to violence and violent crime in South Africa. These questions might partly be answered through better information on the role personality disorders such as psychopathy or dissocial personality disorder play in violent crime in South Africa, information that might be obtained through the resource- and skills-intensive process of systematic psychological profiling of perpetrators. It should be remembered, though, that such profiling might at best provide an indication of individual dispositions to gratuitous or other violence, rather than answering the more specific question about the types of interaction between instrumental or expressive purposes, and the presence or absence of inhibitions against violence in relation to specific acts of violence. It should also be remembered that there may be profound limits in terms of our ability to 'obtain accurate

understandings of why people engage in cruel and violent acts'.<sup>45</sup>

Our motives often elude us; many of us are well defended against seeing ourselves in a bad light. People who commit wrongful acts that are blatantly against norms of a society are even more likely to deflect their own motives.<sup>46</sup>



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## NOTES

- 1 National Assembly question No 152 addressed to Minister of Police from Mr P J Groenewald (FF Plus), 12 June 2009.
- 2 In response to increasing public anxiety about high levels of violent crime the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster recommended to Cabinet that the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr) be commissioned to carry out a study on the violent crime. The work by CSVr as well as by the HSRC (see note 12) which is cited below was work produced as part of this study.
- 3 D Bruce, Racism, Self-Esteem and Violence in SA: Gaps in the NCPS' Explanation? *SA Crime Quarterly*, 17, 2006, 31–36, 33.
- 4 Geddes, Special report on South Africa, *Economist*, 5th June 2010, 1–16, 12.
- 5 Another manifestation of such mythology is the belief that houses that are to be robbed have a cold drink tin placed outside them. See R Zinn, Inside information – Sourcing crime intelligence from incarcerated house robbers, *SA Crime Quarterly* 32, 2010, 27–35, 32. Also in R Zinn, The Modus Operandi of House Robbers in Gauteng Province, *Acta Criminologica*, 21(2) (2008), 56–69, 59.
- 6 G Newham, Reclaiming our homes – Tackling residential robbery in Gauteng, *SA Crime Quarterly*, 23, 2008, 7–12.
- 7 Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Streets of Pain, Streets of Sorrow – The circumstances of the occurrence of murder in six areas with high rates of murder, 2008, 70. [http://www.csvr.org.za/docs/crime/murder\\_final.pdf](http://www.csvr.org.za/docs/crime/murder_final.pdf) (accessed 19 November 2010).
- 8 See for instance 'Polite' gang robs Aus tourists, 28 June 2010, <http://www.sport24.co.za/Soccer/WorldCup/NationalNews/Polite-gang-robs-Aus-tourists-20100628> (accessed 23 November 2010).
- 9 Man's ears cut off for not having cash, *Sowetan*, 22 May 2007.
- 10 Geddes, Special report on South Africa, 1–16, 12.
- 11 In addition to the nature of violence used, or its apparent motivelessness, the identity of the victims, for instance when they are young or elderly, are also factors that sometimes provoke particular concern. See The Violent Nature of Crime in South Africa – A concept paper prepared for the Justice, Crime



- Prevention and Security Cluster, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2007, 102–103. [http://www.csvr.org.za/docs/crime/compatibility\\_mod\\_e.pdf](http://www.csvr.org.za/docs/crime/compatibility_mod_e.pdf) (accessed 19 November 2010).
- 12 Case studies on perpetrators of violent crime, Democracy and Governance and Child, Youth and Family Development Units of the Human Sciences Research Council, 2008, [http://www.csvr.org.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1373&Itemid=200](http://www.csvr.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1373&Itemid=200) (accessed 23 November 2010).
  - 13 M Levi and M Maguire, Violent Crime, in M Maguire, R Morgan and Reiner (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, 810.
  - 14 Ibid, 811.
  - 15 R Baumeister and B Bushman Emotions and Aggressiveness, in W Heitmeier and J Hagan (eds), *International handbook of violence research*, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003, 479–493, 484.
  - 16 Based on Levi and Maguire, Violent Crime, 810.
  - 17 M Juodis, M Woodworth, S Porter & L Ten Brinke, Partners in crime: A comparison of individual and multi-perpetrator homicides, *Criminal Justice and Behaviour* 36(8) 2009, 824–839, 837.
  - 18 J Foreman-Peck and S Moore, Gratuitous violence and the rational offender model, *International Review of Law and Economics* 30, 2010, 160–172, 162.
  - 19 S Porter, M Woodworth, J Earle, J Drugge & D Boer, Characteristics of sexual homicides committed by psychopathic and nonpsychopathic offenders, *Law and Human Behaviour* 27, 2003, 463.
  - 20 J Nitschke, M Osterheider and A Mokros, A cumulative scale of severe sexual sadism, *Sexual Abuse: A journal of research and treatment*, 21(3) (2009), 262–278, 268.
  - 21 Porter et al, Characteristics of sexual homicides, 463.
  - 22 Foreman-Peck and Moore, Gratuitous violence and the rational offender model, 163.
  - 23 A question may also be raised as to whether 'objective' methods are adequate for distinguishing 'instrumental' and 'expressive' motives. Instrumental motives such as the concern to eliminate potential witnesses may be known to the perpetrator but not apparent to an external viewer or even (surviving) victims.
  - 24 Porter et al, Characteristics of sexual homicides, 464, emphasis in original.
  - 25 Ibid.
  - 26 For instance one dictionary defines gratuitous, inter alia, to mean "Given or obtained *for nothing*", L Brown (ed.), *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 1993, italics added.
  - 27 This is assumed to be only hypothetically possible as in practice it would be difficult to assign a numeric value to instrumental and expressive motives.
  - 28 This definition originally in Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, The Violent Nature of Crime in South Africa.
  - 29 See for instance Man stabbed to death for R350 pair of shoes, IOL news, SAPA, 28 June 2010, <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/man-stabbed-to-death-for-r350-pair-of-shoes-1.488297> (accessed 23 November 2010).
  - 30 Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Streets of Pain, Streets of Sorrow – The circumstances of the occurrence of murder in six areas with high rates of murder, 70, [http://www.csvr.org.za/docs/crime/murder\\_final.pdf](http://www.csvr.org.za/docs/crime/murder_final.pdf) (accessed 19 November 2010).
  - 31 R Collins, *Violence – A micro-sociological theory*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, 26.
  - 32 Ibid., 27.
  - 33 A Bandura, A murky portrait of human cruelty, Commentary on V Nell, Cruelty's rewards: the gratifications of perpetrators and spectators, *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, 29(3) 2006, 225–226, 226. See also Kosloff et al in the same commentary, 231–2.
  - 34 Baumeister, 1999 quoted in D Stein, Sadistic cruelty and unempathic evil: Psychobiology and evolutionary considerations, Commentary on Nell, Cruelty's rewards, 242.
  - 35 A Ruocco and S Platek, Executive function and language deficits associated with aggressive-sadistic personality, Commentary on Nell, Cruelty's rewards: 239–240, 239.
  - 36 According to Collins it is not merely the motivations which dictate whether or not violence in fact takes place. 'Those individuals who are good at violence are those who have found a way to circumvent confrontational tension/fear, by turning the emotional situation to their own advantage and to the disadvantage of their opponents.' (R Collins, *Violence – A micro-sociological theory*, 20). However Collins does not give attention to the psychological or emotional disposition as facilitating or inhibiting factors for violence.
  - 37 R Collins, *Violence – A micro-sociological theory*, 26.
  - 38 Hare's Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) records 'callous/lack of empathy' as one of the attributes characteristic of psychopaths ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hare\\_Psychopathy\\_Checklist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hare_Psychopathy_Checklist). Accessed 19 November 2010). The World Health Organisation's ICD-10 indicates that *dissocial personality disorder* is characterised by at least three of a list of seven attributes or qualities including 'Callous unconcern for the feelings of others and lack of the capacity for empathy ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antisocial\\_personality\\_disorder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antisocial_personality_disorder) Accessed 19 November 2010); J Copley, Causes of psychopathy – theories on sociopathic personality disorder, Jul 30, 2008, indicates that 'children who suffer from a lack of attachment due to early deprivation and neglect often exhibit symptoms similar to those of the psychopath including law breaking and cruelty', ([http://personalitydisorders.suite101.com/article.cfm/causes\\_of\\_psychopathy](http://personalitydisorders.suite101.com/article.cfm/causes_of_psychopathy) accessed 19 November 2010). Sociopaths are understood by some to be equated with similar attributes to those characteristic of psychopaths, with the differences in diagnosis being linked to questions of causality (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychopathy> Accessed 19 November 2010).
  - 39 A Collins, Taking on Altbeker – A Country at War with itself: the debate continues, *SA Crime Quarterly*, 28, 2009, 35–38, 37. The wording of the original is in fact 'though (sic) the appropriate facilitating environment'.

- 40 W Marshal, K Hamilton and Y Fernandez, Empathy deficits and cognitive distortions in child molesters, *Sexual Abuse: A journal of research and treatment*, 13(2) (2001), 123–130, 124.
- 41 Holcomb and Adams (1985) quoted in T Walsh, Psychopathic and nonpsychopathic violence amongst alcoholic offenders, *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 43(1) (1999), 34–48, 35. The authors infer that sober murderers are more likely to be psychopathic with alcohol serving as a catalyst for violence in non-psychopathic personalities.
- 42 Porter et al, Characteristics of sexual homicides committed by psychopathic and nonpsychopathic offenders, 460–461.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 National Assembly Question No 152 op cit.
- 45 N Potter, Shame, violence, and perpetrators' voices, *Commentary on Nell, Cruelty's rewards*, 237.
- 46 Ibid.