

Chapter 4

Comparing Violence-Related Norms



Simon Howell and Steffen Zdun

4.1 Introduction to the Field of Cross-Cultural Comparison

Youth violence, violence-related norms, and the relationship between the two has received considerable attention in the literature (see, for instance, Hawkins et al. 1998: 106–146; Mercy et al. 2002: 23–56), with particular attention being paid to these concerns as they occur in urban settings (see, for instance, Dahlberg 1998: 259–272), with a broad swathe of these touching on the topics when focusing on socioeconomic exclusion and poverty (Resnick et al. 2004: 424–434), social marginalization and structural forms of isolation (Herrenkohl et al. 2000), and in terms of political disenfranchisement and powerlessness (Braga et al. 2001: 195–225). These topics are in themselves fairly extensive debates, encompassing factors ranging from economic development to problem-orientated policing (Resnick et al. 2004; Braga et al. 2001). Presenting an exhaustive list of these larger debates would have little analytical utility, and so in this chapter, we undertake a selective literature review of the most salient works and arguments as they are applicable to the central concepts and cohorts, particularly as they pertain to violence-related norms and the countries in which the empirical research was conducted. While many works make mention of how there may be forms of resemblance with other contexts or places (Farrington 1998), far fewer substantively engage with these comparisons or the reasons for their existence at the macro level (Zimring 2000), and even fewer do so, using fresh empirical data drawn from different cohorts (Osgood and Chambers 2000).

As explored in the first section of this chapter, there are of course a number of works that consider and utilize that methods and methodologies of cohorts of young people and violence (both behaviorally and conceptually) are on the whole inversely related to the distance between places or groups compared (Osgood and Chambers 2000). Perhaps one of the most significant barriers to comparative research, especially in a qualitative capacity, is the difficulty in maintaining methodological rigor while drawing on data that is often subjective and itself changing, with a variety of novel conceptual approaches having been experimented with (see, for example, Brookmeyer et al. 2006). The merits and requirements of qualitative comparative

research have been debated for some time more broadly—indeed, so much so that the debate on the whole encompasses a range of fields and disciplines—and while directly applicable to this book, we here primarily focus on those works that are relevant in terms of conceptual purpose or place. As such, while a detailed engagement with the primary concerns is engaged with specifically in chapter four, the second section of this chapter provides a brief overview of this as it directly relates to comparisons of youth violence and violence-related norms. Indeed, relevance and utility are frequently central to the wider debate on qualitative forms of comparative research, derivative of the aforementioned concern with rigor and analytical focus (see, for example, Tremblay 2006). While these concerns are explored more holistically in relation to the fieldwork and analysis conducted here in chapter nine, the penultimate section of this chapter traces out the primary features and works of this ongoing debate. With these in place, finally, the chapter sharpens focus on Anderson's *The Code of Streets* (1999) and its place in the literature as both source of and tool for analysis (as seen, for instance, in Brezina et al. 2004), before the following chapter presents the text's salient features and their place in the current analysis.

4.2 The Need for Comparison

Researchers from a range of disciplines in the social sciences and humanities have been interested in violence as a social issue for several years, although particular focus has been paid to the subject in the US and UK. However, while there has been a significant amount of research on urban youth violence in these and some other industrialized countries (see, for example, Blumstein 1995; Carlie 2002; Decker 1996; Decker and Weerman 2005; Hazlehurst and Hazlehurst 1998; Klein et al. 2000), comparative analyses have been limited to those countries which share broadly similar socioeconomic, political, and societal configurations (see, for instance, Brookman et al. 2011; Gunter 2008; Zdun 2008). Resultantly, analysis which seeks to compare dissimilar contexts or countries have been limited by this 'western' bias (see, for example, Junger-Tas 1996; Zimring 2000), despite many countries in the 'global South' featuring far higher levels of violence, as expressed for instance in terms of homicide rates. Moreover, such a bias in analytical focus is also visible in terms of the vast majority of analyses focusing on urban contexts, even with regards to populations living in highly developed countries or contexts (Osgood and Chambers 2000). While such studies are sorely needed in and of themselves, the possibility of further comparative analysis by which to understand the wider parameters, drivers, and perhaps even predictors of youth violence remain untapped. Moreover, such perspectives and comparative results are especially valuable to policy makers and in informing government planning at the macro level, in which such differences and dynamics must frequently be accounted for. This has two significant consequences, which principally informed the research agenda underpinning this book.

In the first instance, and as Klein (2011) notes, the lack of comparative research on violence among young people in high-risk urban neighborhoods is in general one of

the primary issues related to the study of violence itself, and a principle reason for the subject remaining insufficiently addressed. This is echoed by a number of authors, from a diverse range of disciplines (see, for example, Dahlberg and Potter 2001; Dodge 2001). An implicit result of this ‘bias’, despite it rarely being made explicit, is that contemporary violence-related research typically engages with the related concerns in a singular manner—such as with respect to individual cities or countries—with comparative or cross-cultural studies remaining far rarer and frequently limited to quantitative overviews (Krug et al. 2002). Klein (2011) further argues that as a result of substantive comparisons, even with regards to well-developed research areas such as with regards to gangsterism (Rios and Vigil 2017), has resulted in a paucity of knowledge that is often filled by deeply embedded assumptions (Welch et al. 2002). While more limited in academic studies, such stereotypical portrayals of young people and violence find endless caricature in the wider media, film, and advertorial industries. In short, the lack of comparative analysis and data (such as with regards to longitudinal frameworks, geospatial/political comparisons, cross-cultural reviews, and methodological variances) has inevitably resulted in well-worn and hackneyed assumptions finding further proliferation, however undeliberate (Males 1996). An immediate example of this can be seen in relation to gangs and gangsterism, the majority of the depictions of which are based on idealized understandings of urban black North American gangs as they existed in the 1980s (Klein et al. 2000; Males 1996; Welch et al. 2002). Despite innumerable other configurations, forms, and types of gangs being possible, these ‘non-hegemonic’ forms are only now coming under sustained analytical focus (Bushman et al. 2016). Moreover, for many, neither drug trafficking nor violence itself are their principle concerns and their structures, rituals, and symbolism may be entirely different. While such assumptions remain intellectually inappropriate and politically dangerous, it is only by further studying other youth cohorts and, moreover by comparing them, that alternative understandings can be generated. Such a concern is not simply academic, as such research informs the manner in which state responses may be structured, as well as informing legislative frameworks and rehabilitation efforts (Albrecht 1991; David-Ferdon et al. 2016). Comparative studies can furthermore be plumbed for dynamic responses that are, in their very design, cognizant of diversity, and difference. Comparative research, in this guise, has for instance generated important understandings in mapping out structural inequalities in African and South American cities (Taylor 1997), and provided the basis for a number of strategic responses to high levels of violence and abuse (Polèse and Stren 2000).

Second, Klein (2011) draws attention to the need for such knowledge to be generated using comparative methodologies/methods that are rigorous and consistent. As such, the ongoing study of young people, violence, and the norms related to both cannot then be solely informed by the preceding literature, but must aim to further define and refine the body of knowledge by undertaking fresh empirical research and by drawing on research from other disciplines and perspectives (Bushman et al. 2016). Furthermore, it is primarily through comparative research, especially in understudied or new contexts, that more nuanced understandings of the underlying drivers and reasons for youth violence can emerge (Turner et al. 2016). Such comparisons

are however both difficult to undertake empirically and methodologically, although recent contributions do show the importance of such efforts (see, for example, Atienzo et al. 2018). Direct comparisons of very different contexts, for instance, may result in the artificial characterization of similarities solely so as comparisons can be undertaken (Cohen et al. 2016; Morrel-Samuels et al. 2016). As a result, many qualitative comparative methods have been questioned, with several authors expressing considerable doubt over their plausibility and rigor as a whole (see, for example, Cassidy et al. 2016). While we focus more extensively on these concerns in chapter four, it is worth noting here that we do not aim to dispel such doubts but rather aim to show that accurate comparison is possible if the right conceptual tools and markers are employed (McAra and McVie 2016). Conceptually, for instance, a norm is applicable to a cohort despite their differences and thus possible to compare even if the subjects are themselves very different (Heise and Kotsadam 2015). Such a model, we argue, can be understood as a comprehensive rather than as a singular approach, and explicitly aims to engage with and understand difference as both a key generator of social phenomena and as an essential tool of analysis—rather than exclude difference, as we hope this book shows, it is difference itself that can form the basis of study.

4.3 Shared Methodological Concerns

The term ‘violence-related norms’ is employed here in a broad sense, and as such refers to the norms, attitudes or beliefs held by an individual in relation to violence (including symbolically, ritually, behaviorally, and conceptually) as employed by a number of authors cited here and touched upon in the following chapter. We have termed this a “comprehensive” definition as it is not limited to an individual concern with behavior or normativity, although these are important facets, but also seeks to understand when an action, experience, attitude or belief is understood to *become* representative of violence (Jewkes et al. 2015; Ozaki and Otis 2017). Such a distinction is important to clarify from the outset, as the distinction may inform when, how, and why individuals may pursue specific actions or hold certain beliefs, and further provide a rationale for their decisions and give insight into how they may view and respond to those they deem a threat or enemy (Wright and Fagan 2013). Violence-related norms may, in this last format, help serve as guides to behavioral patterns or practices, and further offer avenues which can be strategically formulated in the development of critical responses to violent or destructive actions, especially insofar as individuals may justify their actions by understanding them in terms of these norms (Brookman et al. 2011; Seddig 2014; Wilkinson 2011). Gaining insights into such drivers allows, at least in the context of policing, for predictive modeling. While there remains the danger of profiling, when correctly used in a critically self-reflexive manner, such knowledge becomes a useful tool with which to further engender community safety. Considering the centrality of this concept and its extensive use throughout the book, it is then important to both acknowledge and review its own

analytical heritage. While the broader literature on norms is vast, we here primarily focus on the body of work pertaining to the structuring effect of norms, their role in positionality, and their use as markers of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1980: 81–96). In following Bourdieu's thesis then, violence can act as a sociocultural marker with which to indicate and demarcate an individual's knowledge of and ability to meet implicit social distinctions, and in doing so, is empowered through the process of acquiring legitimacy. Such 'capital', while not monetary, is vital and as powerful in defining the space from which to project a legitimate identity. In contexts such as those studied, where respect is itself a potent symbol, the importance of such cultural capital is magnified. It is perhaps for this reason that violence, and acts of violence, become established as cultural norms and become embedded in the daily habitus of many young people.

Moving from a macro- to micro-oriented perspective, Foglia (1997) argues that norms prescribed through the legislative architecture of state are a primary means by which adolescents and their behaviors are understood and regulated. Indeed, in terms of deviance, such a distinction is made legally tangible by differentiating between adolescents and juveniles, the latter of which is also emboldened with various moral scripts (Ryan et al. 2013). Such structurally embedded norms also then act as the points from which various forms of disciplining surveillance may take place, and as a result, the location of pushback or dissent (Caldwell 2011). Examples abound, with more obvious examples including the use of slang terminology and language (both in response to formal language practices and as a means of preventing access to social networks), dress codes or practices, tastes in music and other forms of art, and so on. Such examples are also used to symbolize and are indicative of deeper structural norms relating to gender distinctions/expectations, class divisions, and racial disparities (Fattah and Camellia 2017; Kimani 2007). Embedded in such practices are also norms which signify more nuanced distinctions, often only visible to those who possess the requisite knowledge to engage with the in-group. Of particular importance here, and which emerged frequently in the data collected for this book, include norms related to respect, beliefs, violence, and public forms of behavior. In many instances, such distinctions were also the primary means by which social organization and hierarchy were entrenched, and individual status and reach accorded (Jewkes et al. 2015). The use of violence, in speaking to the latter, is a particularly potent means by which such authority can be expressed, especially in terms of an individual's willingness to forgo norms and employ more extreme forms. In such instances, it may be argued that violence may in itself come to constitute a form of entertainment or indeed leisure (Carlie 2002). Along with material possessions, furthermore, the spectacle of violence can itself become a means of defining both tastes and cultural capital more broadly (Dowdney 2002). Violence can then not only become a means of acquiring economic capital but a means of acquiring and indicating social capital, thus making it a potent and important tool in contexts in which either or both of these are scarce.

The use of violence, and the strategic negotiation of violence-related norms so as to empower or protect, does not operate in isolation but rather is informed and informs a multitude of embedded scripts through which the individual is constituted

by, and constitutes, themselves (Kimani 2007; Jewkes et al. 2015). Gender dynamics as such are a primary concern in the literature and indeed were reflected in the fieldwork for this book, although often by negation. The feminine and women, it seems, exist in relation to masculinity as either targets or as property (Rebellion 2006). In such a guise, violence, or the strategic use of the threat of what may be considered violence, is a mechanism by which to both project a masculinized identity while also a powerful tool with which to instill obedience, as has been noted before in the South African context for example (Hatcher et al. 2014). The conscious and purposeful use of violence-related norms is however not solely limited to direction by men, and as other authors have investigated (see, for instance, Brookman et al. 2011), groups of young people whose membership is exclusively reserved for females are a feature of numerous societies and cultures, however hard they may be to access in terms of research (Chesney-Lind and Hagedorn 1999; Ness 2004). Some such groups, furthermore, will use violence as a mean of addressing gender disparities and as a weapon by which to establish themselves in relation to groups primarily constituted by men (Connell 1995). It is for this reason that some research has noted the extreme levels of violence that these female-based groups are willing to enact—by taking violence to the extreme, they construct for themselves a hyper-masculinized identity with which to compete with male-dominated groups positions (see, for instance: Goffman 1977; Zaluar 2012). Such differences are visible within groups of young men too, with many using rhetoric that invokes feminine concepts in order to delegitimize and provide structure to the in-group hierarchy (Dardis et al. 2015). This is especially problematic, and has the potential for extensive harm, in societies in which violence has become more widely endemic. South Africa is here a paradigmatic example, in which violence-related norms have come to structure not only acts but relationships, the result of which is extremely high levels of sexual violence, rape, and domestic abuse. In contrast, father figures may be idolized as paradigms of imagined masculinity (Enzmann et al. 2004; Zdun 2007b), in which success is both deemed legitimate economically and in terms of longevity (Gilmore 1990).

Beyond this, Kersten (1996) points to the culturally different interpretations of masculinity and assumes that the legitimate interpretation within a given culture defines that culture's hegemonic and subordinate masculinities. In many instances such scripts are both reproduced and highlighted through the use of various symbols, motifs, and rituals, ranging widely in form from the wearing of jewelry, to tattoos, owning specific brands of clothing which are deemed fashionable, other material objects such as cars or weapons, the ability to consume a large quantity of substances such as drugs or alcohol, and so on (Dinges 2005; Dowdney 2002). It is important to note that while the material objects, acts, or symbols may vary greatly across cultural contexts, countries, and societies, the logic of their acquisition, display, and use follows a singular logic in which status is bestowed on those who are able to meet and perform the scripts associated with such objects, and those who cannot are positioned as weaker and may be subject to various forms of violence and antagonism as a result. Also, the motives for violence may be many and varied, and the construction of masculinity may be only a superficial justification for using it (Bereswill 2003).

The study of masculinity is of course very advanced, and there are a number of methodological lessons that can be drawn from such analyses, as is explored in the following chapter. Such studies have also been particularly effective at informing policy and legislative prescriptions, and have resulted in more inclusive and just frameworks in a number of countries. Furthermore, and as a result, preventative and/or responsive strategies vary widely in form, focus, and purpose (as documented by DeGue et al. 2014).

The same too is often applicable to the use of age as a marker of identity, although it should be noted that this also has a material realization in that older males tend to be stronger than their younger counterparts (MacYoung 1992). Problematically, the use of violence as a symbolic marker of status may result in such individuals and groups conflicting with the legislative sphere and law-enforcement agencies around them. The need to demonstrate a willingness to engage in and perpetuate forms of violence, qua symbolic marker of status, increases the prevalence of risky forms of behavior, and ultimately the likelihood of imprisonment. This is especially concerning when prison itself becomes a marker of masculinity, of status, or as a rite of passage. In the South African context, for example, the primary prison gang has provided the symbolic narrative and markers by which the ‘street’ gangs are now configured. While this process has lent legitimacy to these gangs, it has also transmitted a framework in which structural violence is endemic. Age, and the status accorded to older individuals, is of course a feature of a wide number of societal and cultural configurations (Nydegger et al. 2017). It is as such important to remember that while individual acts or forms of expression by young people may seem different, often these are structured by very familiar logics that underpin the design of a society more broadly. Such deeper structural frameworks are of course also useful for analysis, and it is precisely these that this book draws attention to and compares. The use of age as a defining feature and ordering principle, and its relationship to violence and risk taking, has of course been noted widely (see, for instance, Boers et al. 2006; Bottoms 2006; Moffitt et al. 2002; Sampson and Laub 1993; Stelly and Thomas 2005). Moreover, it is important to note that even in relation to relatively simple norms, as exist around concerns with age, these are neither static nor immutable.

As has been noted previously, groups of young people are invariably heterogeneous in form, may be temporary in terms of formulation, and indeed may only exist when individuals inhabit shared spaces that are recognized by the group as the “stage” on which actions not used in other arenas become legitimate (Klein et al. 2017). Furthermore, such groups and individuals do not exist in isolation from the contexts which they inhabit, and these contexts may both shape and are reflected in the configurations that the in-group adopts. In point of fact, the empirical data collected for this book is remarkably consistent in refracting deeper concerns and structures that define the broader societies in which the work was undertaken. What may be deemed deviant or criminal behavior by these groups then may, for those undertaking them, be forms of defense against perceived or real threats. Such groups then, may not only be concerned with delinquent behavior but may actually exist as a means of resilience against systematic forms of violent exclusion or repression

(Murray 2008). In certain instances, such is the power of these groups that individuals who attempt to remain beyond them may face social sanction or the threat of violence (Langa 2011), while others may also find the basis for their friendships with others under threat (Zdun 2008). As Zdun (2007a) has noted, young men who explicitly reject the violence of peer groups may either become subject to such violence, or may selectively draw on the narratives created by the group in order to defend themselves and as a form of protection. One can of course question whether such configurations are the basis for ‘true’ friendship, but much like the use of violence itself, such examples may be born out of necessities created by the world they inhabit. These are, in short, violent contexts and cultures which often require a culture of violence in defense (Wright and Fagan 2013).

Such “cultures of violence” have themselves been subject to interpretation and debate in the scholarly literature. Waldmann (2007), for example, provides a broader definition of the term so that it encompasses the impact that systemic forms of violence may have on the structures of a society and frames the daily behaviors and rhythms of life for those who exist amidst it (Lee et al. 2014). Using the case of Colombia, he shows how the violent acts perpetuated by resistance movements and the state military have become normalized and accepted by broader society. In so doing, such behaviors find symbolic use and acceptance, filtering into the behaviors and expectations of individuals so as to further increase the overall prevalence of violence-related acts and crimes in the society (Koepeke et al. 2014). Such a conception may however lose analytical utility in the process of broadening its scope, so that the relevant actors and forms of violence are so generalized in conception that they lose the explanatory power in understanding individual actions. The result is a portrayal of society in which violence has not only become an everyday part of life, but a part of the everyday actions of individuals, a general picture of which is not particularly accurate.

An alternative, perhaps more focused, explanation of cultural violence is outlined by Stickley and Mäkinen (2005), who use the example of the former Soviet Union to explain their definition of a culture of violence. They argue that a culture of violence is one that presents a framework in which actions can be not only understood, but deemed appropriate as a form of response. Their analysis then focuses on the manner in which violence-related norms are formed, the product of violent acts becoming so frequent that they become normalized and then morally framed as an appropriate means by which individuals may respond to one another. As they note, the normalization of violence is itself often superseded by a history of state reprisals and oppression, so that state violence provides the generalized basis on which non-state violence becomes embedded and ultimately accepted as legitimate. In such instances, state violence may make illegitimate those institutions usually mandated with the legitimate use of violence, such as the police. As a result, individuals and the collective turn inwards and seek to develop their own structures by which to resolve conflict and disagreement (Zdun 2007a). The reconfiguration of such institutional structures, and the movement away from a state which through its oppression becomes seen as an enemy, may result in violence becoming the de facto tool with which to limit conflict and harm. Placed within a normative frame-

work in which state-sanctioned violence is seen as illegitimate, non-state violence becomes legitimate if only because it is one of the only means by which individuals can negotiate confrontation.

Violence is of course not limited to solely behavioral outcomes, but may itself be entrenched within and further perpetuated by semiotic systems. In this vein, Cobb (1993) draws on examples from Chile to reveal how violence can become established as the constitutive element of state power. As such, it becomes entwined with state identity and so is further proliferated forcefully by a culture, artificially defined by the state, in order to self-reflectively legitimate its own violence. Violence thus becomes generative of further violence, in which the parameters which constitute the norms of a society may be widened and thus make legitimate ever more extreme examples. Such a culture of violence is consciously created and manipulated, and so can be both immediate and artificially designed, such as seen in examples across the world following coups or regime changes. Fortunately, such cultures are often personality-driven by a single and very powerful leader, and once removed from a controlling position, quickly ebb away.

Williams (2001), on the other hand, defines a culture of violence as a product of acceptance of tolerance for acts which may themselves become more extreme over time. In antagonistic or unstable societies, such a culture is especially problematic as it may serve to actively increase the levels of violence amongst a population so as to destabilize and isolate a specific cohort or group—apartheid South Africa is here an immediate example. Drawing on examples of racism from North America, he shows how violent acts, such as lynching, became normalized and acceptable by being packaged and disseminated using communication channels that were already perceived as legitimate, such as the press. In such a guise, a culture of violence relies on the creation and magnification of artificial differences so as to delegitimize one cohort and legitimate the actions of another. As such, strategic rhetorical descriptions are, however, carried by channels that may otherwise be legitimate; they become portrayed as objective facts when in fact are thoroughly strategic. As in all the above other conceptions, what is important to note is that a culture of violence is a product of the positioning of specific actors and acts so as to normalize what would otherwise be seen as forms of violence, and in so doing, make such acts acceptable.

Of final importance is a cultural-based understanding of violence, as coined by Riekenberg (2003). His analysis seeks to find a midpoint between state and non-state forms of violence. In so framing violence as epiphenomenal on community configurations, he argues that cultures of violence can become generational, the accepted outputs that may have been relevant once, which remain accepted even when the wider society may have changed. Such acts may also centrally feature in the construction of historical narratives, such as those expressed in oral histories, and imbued with legitimacy because they are framed as constitutive cultural knowledge and passed on by legitimate narrators, for example by the elderly, of such a history. Riekenberg thus raises the interesting and often neglected aspect of violence related to narratives, and the importance of symbolic metaphor and myth-making in further perpetuating norms which may allow for or encourage violence. As shall be explored,

such traditions are employed by gangs and have come to form the core means by which to express a shared identity (Sutterlüty 2002).

4.4 Comparing the Literature on the Three Countries

In addressing the need for more comparative studies that specifically highlight the perspectives held by young people in relation to and because of violence, our focus on the three countries can be understood thus:

1. Germany is largely representative of an industrial nation and liberal society;
2. South Africa may be seen as an example of a highly violent and historically polarized country, and;
3. Pakistan as emblematic of an emerging democracy faced by terrorism, authoritarian forms of control built on a colonial legacy and weak economic growth.

A comparison of these three very different examples promises a better understanding of violence and the violence-related norms which define and make meaningful violent behaviors, rituals, symbols, and cultures. Through extensive comparison this book then aims to both compare and contrast the extant literature, and Anderson's assertions, against a far more diverse backdrop, drawing on fresh empirical data that takes seriously the dynamism of young people and their intricate relationships with the violence of their immediate surroundings. Before undertaking a more detailed comparative analysis, based on the empirical findings drawn from the three countries, it is important that a brief, albeit structural, overview of the contexts is developed. While these pictures are further developed in the following chapters, one might begin by individually noting the broad economic, political and social configurations which make each different from the other.

Recent studies show that violence-related norms are more significant and central in Germany amongst cohorts of young people who reside in and/or are from homes in the lower economic strata. As a result of their economic position, they are however more vulnerable and more likely to come into conflict with the law (Zdun 2007a). Overall, the sense of social deprivation, linguistic alienation, and pervading concern with economic insecurity are drivers of violence, whereas respect, recognition, honor, and the ability to distinguish oneself are the primary structural facilitators of young peoples' membership to groups that employ violence in a systematic manner (Klein et al. 2017; Zdun 2008). Spatial and ethnic segregation in Germany's urban areas further entrenches these differences, and may indeed act as triggers for the further sense of alienation that young people may feel and express through antisocial forms of behavior themselves justified through artificial cultural claims (Roberts 2014). While the country is still widely perceived as relatively equal in socioeconomic terms, perhaps a result of both its economic growth and significant social welfare expenditure, many young people who live or have grown up in areas economically segregated from broader urban areas are more likely to have difficulties in school—thus undermining their potential ability to join the formal economy—and

are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviors so as to occupy themselves and because alternative activities by which to garner recognition may not be available to them (Zdun 2007a, 2008; Seddig 2014). Parental neglect and a lack of parental responsibility as well as the institutional failure to compensate for individual deficits with regards to child rearing have further magnified these issues, with only a relative minority overcoming these hurdles. Indeed, the international school achievement test, PISA recorded far more defined relationships between academic performance and socioeconomic background in Germany than any other OECD country (Ray and Margaret 2003), which is of particular relevance to ethnic minorities and unintegrated Germans.

South Africa is regarded as an extremely violent society, with crimes such as homicide remaining very high, despite decreasing for a time with the onset of a democratic political dispensation. For example, from April 2015 to March 2016, 18, 693 homicides were recorded in that 12-month period, with the total crimes recorded during the same period standing at 218,3001 nationally (SAPS Crime Statistics 2017). South Africa is regarded as a developing country, yet such general development masks the high levels of inequality that structure the urban areas, with 48% of people living below the poverty line in 2008 and the richest 20% of people earning approximately 70% of income (National Planning Commission 2011: 8–9). Inequality typically mirrors artificial racial differences derived by the apartheid government, having first been institutionalized during colonial rule (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999). Such differences have been structurally embedded into the fabric of the physical and social context, and have proven difficult to redress despite considerable efforts by the post-apartheid dispensation (Manganyi and Du Toit 1990). Such failures have magnified the levels of antagonism towards government agencies and services, bringing individuals and communities into conflict with the law—the result of which is overcrowding in prisons and an overburdened criminal justice system (Marks et al. 2016). Violence in such a context has both historical roots and contemporary need, the result of which is not only high levels of predatory forms of crime but very high levels of interpersonal violence, such as domestic abuse and rape (Fleming et al. 2015). In terms of violence-related norms, some studies have engaged previously with the attitudes of criminals (Irish-Qhobosheane 2007; Segal et al. 2001; Zinn 2010) and in reflection of rationalizations by those who commit violence against women (Wood and Jewkes 2001). There is however a need for far more research to be undertaken in this context, although this can be limited by the difficulties associated with doing so.

The literature on violence in Pakistan primarily focuses on forms of collective and group violence in relation to ethnic, religious, and political divisions. Empirical research and statistics related to youth violence are almost nonexistent, despite the fact that Pakistan has high prevalence levels of violence and violence-related criminal acts (Haleem 2003; Lindholm 1986; Marri et al. 2006; Wilke et al. 2011). The paucity of research may on the one hand be the result of research frequently focusing on the more well-studied political violence, while on the other, may be a result of the difficulty in undertaking empirical studies. Those that have been undertaken do however show that the use of violence is rapidly becoming more acceptable, especially among younger cohorts who use it as a strategy by which to garner economic

resources and power. According to Marri et al. (2006), of the total number of violent acts recorded in the city of Peshawar, some 62% were committed by the 20–39 years age group, while a similar age cohort (20–40) committed 74% of the total violence in Karachi (the largest city of Pakistan) (Chotani et al. 2002). This age group is ironically also understood to be the primary pool from which victims of violence are drawn. A study by Farooq et al. (2010) reveals that victims of violence in Rawalpindi (the adjacent city to the capital Islamabad) were primarily between the age of 16 and 45 in 77% of recorded incidents. Despite this, Pakistani society is heavily focused on familial relationships and forms of control, yet despite this, such features have become reflected in a manner which justifies the use of violence by young people (Yousaf 2014). Some research has however been completed on aspects relating to gender-based violence (see, for example, Ali et al. 2015; Aslam et al. 2015). This is primarily due to the significant levels of poverty, illiteracy and the limited opportunities for social engagement between young people, and are a major source of violence in high-risk neighborhoods (Iqbal 2008; Yousaf 2014). Rapid urbanization has further magnified these concerns (Vogel 2013). In terms of violence-related norms, there is little literature on the topic, accepting those that touch on the subject in relation to violence against women and honor killings (Amnesty International 1999), although the latter primarily occurs in rural arenas. Beyond this, there is little if any comparative empirical research on the topic.

This book primarily focuses on young men living in urban contexts. The literature on cities is in itself noteworthy and can provide a useful lens with which to view violence and violence-related norms. In some cities in Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America, criminal–political relationships have advanced to unprecedented levels of complexity and sophistication. The rhetoric of international policy increasingly emphasizes the convergence of certain trends, both licit and illicit. In economics, globalization is seen as a force that has brought the world together, broken down borders and facilitated a much freer exchange of goods and ideas. In development sectors, the emphasis is on cultural linkages, global norms, the movement of people, and ideologies. On the negative side, however, the growing links between organized crime and terror groups are often highlighted, as one example of detrimental convergence. The interconnections and overlaps between politics, business, and criminal networks are another. These channels, these forces, both negative and positive stretch out through the countries in which they are situated, but often reach far beyond political and social boundaries, whereby large cities connect with each other in a myriad of ways.

In all cases, rebuilding linkages between citizens and the state is the only means by which the alternative governance framework can be redressed. The central message of the 2011 *World Development Report* is that “strengthening legitimate institutions and governance to provide [...] security, justice, and jobs is crucial to break cycles of violence”. While this message is preceded by the acknowledgement that “confronting this challenge effectively means that institutions need to change”, it is still these institutions that are seen as the fundamental drivers and facilitators of any strategies. However, while possessing the structures and institutions, the *World Development Report* emphasizes that these countries and cities often do not possess

the power and influence (or to put it differently “the reach”) needed to effect substantive change (World Bank 2011). Not only are these societies far less rigorously structured, far more dynamic and fluid, and often still under contestation, but they are often still highly interdependent with neighboring countries, regional conflict systems, or subject to transnational forces. At the local level, all of this suggests that simply putting visible signs of “government” or straight forward provision of services into communities that are under the control of organized crime and terrorist groups will not be effective in addressing governance deficits, unless the issue of legitimacy is considered. Instead, a new framework of responses is required that will explicitly address the alternative or competing governance structures that these groups represent (Reitano and Hunter 2016). Such a framework will necessarily require data drawn from comparative research, such as presented in this book.

There is a need to shift away from either accommodating criminal interests wherever they manifest or trying to outgun them with militarized, “security first” approaches. Rather, the challenge for urban institutions will be to find ways to realistically engage in supporting communities and citizens both nationally and locally to build viable and trustworthy propositions of governance (Whaites 2015) and to provide the necessary oversight and transparency that will prevent these being subverted by illicit interests. The way that the international community supports service delivery, development, and governance, and engages in efforts to counter organized crime will need to be rethought, with a focus on genuine governance and a better understanding of how legitimacy is earned and retained. It is in this light that cities can easily be seen as fragile, and at times may seem to be unable to effectively engage with the global criminal networks operating in and undermining their stability. Such drivers do not operate in isolation, and are increasing enmeshed with and shaped by global forces, resulting in new forms of fragility both in terms of structure and identity itself. However, and as systems-based ideas frequently highlight, such environments are also vital spaces for the creation of new opportunities. Those communities that have become unstable—far from equilibrium one might say—may often seem to be teetering on the brink of disaster. However, it is precisely because of this instability that opportunities exist for quicker and more substantive reforms. Those communities that are very stable are also slow to change should a problem or concern emerge, however communities that lack this stability may become pilot sites for important projects, the effects of which can be measured more rapidly and more genuinely than in more stable environments. It is critical then that difficult situations, complex dynamics, and unstable communities are not isolated and forgotten because of the risks they present but are seen as opportunities for leadership. To make effective changes in these places is critical for city governments, but requires an understanding as to why they are unstable, and prioritizing projects aimed at championing their efforts to become safer and better places to live.

This brief review of the literature on high-risk youth, however, portrays an unsettling picture of the literature in which the study of violence-related norms has remained side-lined worldwide. There is a direct need then for the comparison of violence-related norms in different urban contexts and different social conditions, not only in preparing violence mitigation policies and systems, but also as a means of pro-

ducing an analytical framework with which to understand the differences between societies and the mechanisms by which they may operate, so that they might be understood in the wider context of an increasingly interconnected world.

4.5 Functional Comparisons and Codes

Violence, violence-related norms, and indeed the crime that may be generated as a result of these are not strange or alien to any society, however there remain significant differences in the forms, levels, intensity, and focal points of such phenomena, who may undertake to commit them, respond to them, and whether such actions are legitimated through the sovereignty of the state, exist in opposition to it, or indeed beyond it (Whitt 2014). In reviewing the worldwide literature, it does however seem that the in the main most violence and most street-based crimes are committed by a considerable minority of the wider population. Despite this, the fear or concern that such limited actions may cause can be felt by the whole of the society in which they occur. One need only look to the individual countries on which this study is based to note that while it is a minority of the population that is engaged in violence and violent forms of behavior, they have captivated the national media and form a staple of the daily news reporting cycle. More importantly, it is also clear that violence by these groups is driven by social alienation, economic exclusion, and political disenfranchisement, so that such actions become a violent reprisal in the quest for social recognition, power, and purpose (Zdun 2007c). Formulating new responses to such behaviors and norms cannot be the sole preserve of policing, but rather should aim to focus on institutional arrangements that can impact on and reshape such norms themselves, such as community-based interventions and responses. It is only when their histories, shared identities, and reasons are understood that such situations, all too often seen across the globe, can be prevented. The same can and should be said for gender, and the undermining of patriarchal and heteronormative structures.

To sum up, one can say that all the norms listed in this section serve the *functional, status-guaranteeing character* that violence has in such contexts (Rimal and Lapinski 2015). That is why those who reject these norms are themselves violent to those excluded from the in-groups (Zdun 2007a). As Miller already noted in 1958, it must be assumed that the starting point for most conflicts in such contexts are personal, but their final purpose is aimed at garnering a reputation by which to identify, and be identified, by the larger community. Felson (1987) further cements this teleological pursuit in the use of the concept of *routine activities*. He assumes that encounters between motivated perpetrators and suitable victims, in the absence of mediating or protective agents at a given time and within a given space, increases the likelihood of violence. From this, it follows that particularly people who are interested in engaging in conflict deliberately put themselves in situations and go to places where they expect their need for conflict to be satisfied, thus defining through practice the norms (Morris et al. 2015). Since these are usually likely to be locations where they meet other people

who are also interested in conflict it is not surprising that many conflicts take place between like-minded members of street cultures (Kennedy and Baron 1993).

According to both explanations, it is no surprise then that a large proportion of conflicts occur with other street-based groups; this reduces the risk of attracting the attention of state law-enforcement authorities, which would impair the functionality of violence and expose those involved to the risk of being arrested and sentenced. Where the opponent and victim come from the same cohort the risk of an incident being reported to the police can be expected to be lower, because the respective reactions can be better estimated. This applies in particular because the general empirical finding that perpetrator and victim often know one another will also apply in such milieus (Atehortúa 2002; Fattah 1991). It is important to note that both the use of mimesis and the resulting mimetic rivalry, as well as the employment of strategies aimed at scapegoating rival groups or individuals, is certainly not limited to marginal deviant groups, but may indeed be the fundamental basis for western societal configurations (Girard 1986). At one level, these can be the many conflicts that occur between friends, relatives, and acquaintances. On another, it may be that the perpetrator and victim can know one another because they live in the same area, attend the same school, or belong to conflicting cliques. As well as bearing potential for conflict, such constellations also make it easier to estimate whether a particular person is suitable as an opponent or victim (Zdun 2007d). Topalli (2005) notes, however, that to naively assume that street-based youth groups would never report one another to the police nor betray one another, present such behavior in the guise of a “social-romanticizing of thieves’ honor”. In so presenting such groups, one may inadvertently be causing violence to the self-same groups who commit violence. Such concerns, both methodologically and with regards to methods, are now further explored and engaged within the following chapter.

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