



**An exploration of ‘Gurans’ phenomena: The face of Youth  
Violence in Khayelitsha Township**

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# Abstract

Youth violence has been troubling the South African society ever since the country's transition to democracy in 1994. Although the problem has been a countrywide phenomenon, certain provinces and cities, predominantly black inhabited townships in the City of Cape Town, have been most afflicted by the new form of youth violence, code-named 'Gurans'. Cases of Gurans-related violence first appeared in the City of Cape Town's townships around the year 2000 and have exponentially increased. Of these townships, Khayelitsha has been the most afflicted. While there has been significant scholarly attention to this new form of violence, little has been done to expose the finer grains of the factors that cause the problem. Moreso, little attention has been channelled towards documenting the perspectives and feelings of the perpetrators, victims, school children, community members, and educators working in those communities. Lack of such detailed investigations has derailed its eradication. As such, the aim of this study was to proffer new understandings on how youth-related violence have suddenly morphed into the new Gurans phenomenon and how this has affected the community of Khayelitsha in its entirety. This study therefore highlights the centrality of the theories of Social Identity and Violentisation to analysing and understanding violence among youths in contemporary South Africa. A qualitative research design was applied, involving eight focus group discussions with 106 affected youths, 10 interviews with crew members in Gurans, 5 educators from four different schools in Khayelitsha, and 5 community members of Khayelitsha township. This thesis documents Gurans as a new type of youth violence with specific focus on its meaning, causes, effects, as well as the issues and key players that have been involved in its sustenance. This study culminates in policy implications and initiatives that take on board how the violent youths, families, communities and government must conduct themselves to alleviate the problem. It is further suggested the most critical step necessary in the quest to eradicate the scourge of youth violence from communities is for the society to first understand the personal experiences of youth living in malignant communities, which encourages youth to become violent and to associate with violent groups. Such an approach will help to understand the underlying circumstances on why more youth are turning to violence, why they are devising new methods to mete such violence and as well as the broad effects of the violence.

# Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to myself Sisanda Millicent Mguzulwa for all the anxieties, stress and depression, that I have gone through in the quest to become the first PhD holder in my family and also to be counted amongst the holders of the qualification in my field of study. Coming from a family that has no background of higher education was my motivation for completing postgraduate studies. I come from a family of seven siblings, and I am the fourth child. We were raised by a single parent (maternal), who is a retired domestic worker. My mother always believed that I stood a better chance of succeeding in life, because of my determination and spirit of perseverance. This PhD thesis has been one of the most challenging and worthwhile projects in my life. Days were different; some were good, and some were bad. I would like to dedicate this PhD dissertation to myself for not giving up, even when odds were against me, and when I felt so tired and lost, but I pushed until the end. I will forever be grateful to the village that strongly believed in me.

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>AY</b>	Affected Youth
<b>CBOs</b>	Community Based Organisations
<b>CM</b>	Crew Members
<b>CMK</b>	Community Members of Khayelitsha
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organisations
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education
<b>EDR</b>	Educational Design Research
<b>EE</b>	Equal Education Report
<b>FGDs</b>	Focus group discussions
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Government Organisations
<b>NPC</b>	National Planning Commission
<b>NYP</b>	National Youth Policy
<b>PTSD</b>	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
<b>SA</b>	South Africa
<b>SANCO</b>	South African National Civic Organisation
<b>SAPS</b>	South African Police Services
<b>SMT</b>	School Management Team
<b>TRC</b>	Truth Reconciliation Commission
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>WYR</b>	World Youth Report

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study**

## **1.1 Overview**

This chapter offers the contextual background to the study. It discusses the state of violence in South Africa with specific reference to one of its largest townships located in its oldest city, the City of Cape Town. This is followed by an outline of the problem statement, motivation of the study, including a self-narrative of personal experience of the effects of youth violence in black townships, research questions, research objectives, clarification of concepts, and the potential value of the study. The chapter concludes by outlining the general structure of the thesis.

## **1.2 Apartheid and the State of Violence in South African Townships**

Violence is not unique to South Africa, nor is it a new phenomenon. Many people have experienced and witnessed violence and experienced its impact in various forms around the world (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2002; Walsh, 2019). There is no standard definition of violence. However, in general terms, it is defined as a deliberate behavior with intention to cause serious harm to the next person using a physical force (Greene, 2008). Violence has been a social concern for a longest period (Kolak, 2016) both on the African continent and globally (Gokler, Arslantas and Unsal, 2014; Benbenishty and Astor, 2008). In cases where it occurs, it usually leads to violent crime and breaking of the law through aggressive and deviant behavior (Felson, 2009; Jones, 2000). The prevalence of violent crimes contributes to homicide rates and adds to the global burden of premature deaths, injuries, and disabilities (WHO, 2002; WHO, 2014). In addition, global data indicate that a certain proportion of young people below the age of 24 years old die due to violence, with many others incurring severe injuries (UNICEF, 2017; WHO, 2014). However, about 60% of countries globally do not have usable data on homicides from civil or vital registration sources (WHO, 2014). Much of the data that contribute to overall estimations of homicide victims are collected through media reports and daily newspapers (WHO, 2002). Globally, in 2012, the

estimated number of homicides was 475 000, with an overall rate of 6.7 per 100 000 population (WHO, 2014). Of the global estimations, males account for 82% of victims (WHO, 2014). Of those, 18.2 per 100 000 are in the 15-29 age group, closely followed by the 30-44 age group, at 15.7 per 100 000.

Although interpersonal violence, “which is that type of violence comprised of” maltreatment, youth violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and elder abuse” (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, et al. 2002, cited in Mikton, et al. 2016: 652) is a global problem, South Africa seems to be one of the leading countries reporting some of the highest rates of violence in the world (WHO, 2016). Of these cases, the most affected communities tend to be the underdeveloped and previously segregated black and coloured communities in the country’s urban areas (Hinsberger, Sommer, Kaminer, Holtzhausen, Weierstall, Seedat, Madikane and Elbert, 2016). As Hamber (2000) observed, the people living in these impoverished areas are more likely to be victims of violence than their counterparts living in the developed suburban parts of the urban settlements (Hamber, 2000). According to statistics, the cases of violence in these African populations constitute about 82% of all reported violent incidents (Ward et al., 2012). According to Matzopoulos et al. (2015) the rates of homicides are the most reliable indicator of interpersonal violence in South Africa. About 40% of this form of violence occur in the cities, with the City of Cape Town being the highest. Also, youths between the ages of 15-24 years old, predominantly in Black and Coloured communities in Cape Town, have been the major victims of reported fatal injuries and homicide (Norman et al., 2007). Some of these youths have been associated with gangs and gang-related activities (Pinnock, 2016; Edelstein, 2016).

There is a rich history of gang scholarship in South African and many have produced written works on youth participation in gangs and delinquent activities in Cape Town (Pinnock, 1984; Kinnes, 2000; Pillay, 2002; Standing, 2003; Dixon and Johns, 2001 and Samara, 2011). Their work mostly focused on issues such as gang structure, drug trade, criminal social networks, power, and the culture of gangs. These gangs have been defined as “an ongoing, organised association of three or more persons, who collectively engage in or have engaged in criminal activity” (Conly, 1993:6). With respect to violence, the research of these various scholars discovered that most marginalised youths on the Cape Flats are members of different gang groupings, which use different names,

languages and rituals as ways of fostering unique identities (Kinnes, 1995; Dissel, 1997; Pinnock, 1984; Pillay, 2002; Pinnock, 2016). The high exposure of these youths to drugs and alcohol, especially 'Tik' (methamphetamine), has been cited as an exacerbating factor for the prevalence of gangsterism in the Cape Flats (Jefthas and Artz, 2007). Dixon and Johns (2001:3) offer a more comprehensive reason for this behaviour by the youth to join gangsterism by stating that, "the origins of gangsterism, drug dealing and violence on the Cape Flats lie deep in the unique social structure of the Western Cape, which has to be seen in the context of the 'skollie' (young hooligan or law-breaker)".

Given the ample evidence of youth tendencies to associate with violent groups, one of the common questions that has been asked is, 'what does it mean to be young in a society that is still suffering from the effects of a troubled past?' (Wood and Dennard, 2017). "Does being a young and energetic person in a fractured community serve as important ingredients for the youths to turn towards violence?" (UNDP, 2006:17). For South Africa, obtaining appropriate and comprehensive answers to these questions requires a revisit to the country's history. A review of the country's history exposes its intricate connection with the violence of slavery, colonisation, and apartheid (Reddy, 2015). Whereas the colonisation of the African continent seems to have been a uniform phenomenon, the South African scenario was more extreme, as evidenced by racial segregation policies implemented after its colonisation (Reddy, 2015; Melkote, 1993). This resulted in many Black youths resorting to fighting for their liberation and using physical violence to resist structural violence and white domination (Ward et al., 2012).

The apartheid system promoted White privilege, meaning a system wherein white people enjoyed all the benefits of the country without equitable sharing with other racial categories such as the Blacks and the Coloureds (Reddy, 2015). This resulted in the two underprivileged racial categories being dislocated and systemically marginalised (Reddy, 2015). Following the Group Areas Act of 1950, a large population of Black South Africans were forced to move out of their native lands to settle in urban townships; this was a form of control and oppression to serve the interests of the White society (Kynoch, 1998; Dissel, 1997). This Act limited the socio-economic activities of the Black population. It also dislocated them and broke the social fabric of those Black communities. The end result of this formed the groundwork for political and social divisions in the country

(Kynoch,1998). Mbembe (2008: 12) adds that the Act also facilitated a “cheap labour system and an exclusion from property ownership by the Black communities whilst facilitating an accumulation of wealth, land, and power by the White race”.

Generally, black people’s struggles with structural violence associated with their race is renowned. Perhaps the most encapsulating description of such a struggle is the one given by the theorist turned liberation fighter, Frantz Fanon. As he observed, the idea of a ‘Black’ person as a subordinate of a White superior is related to the White man’s ideal of a Black African man (Fanon, 1967). Fanon’s concern was the Black man’s dilemma of inferiority in a world where Whiteness was associated with innocence and purity, whereas Blackness was regarded as a sign of evil and darkness (Fanon, 1967). In line with Fanon’s observation, when the apartheid regime came into power in 1948, they continued to associate Blackness with inferiority. The regime’s fascination with issues of race superiority and inferiority resulted in their creation of racial categories such as Black, Coloured, Indian, and White within the diverse population. Of these, the White race was regarded as the most superior and the Black majority being the most inferior. In addition to this structural violence brought about by racial categorisations, the ultimate intention was to undermine supposedly racially inferior categories, both socially and economically. Racial categorisation caused unbearable living conditions, such as lack of access to decent shelter and basic needs (Lamb, 2019). This further includes “widespread malnutrition, poor or non-existent health systems, ill-equipped and overcrowded schools, inadequate or non-existent social security and high levels of unemployment” (Chikane, 1986 as cited in Breetzke, 2018: 1197).

During the period of resistance and liberation struggles in South Africa, the majority of Black youths were subjected to structural state violence, which took both physical and psychological forms. On the one hand, their peers, the white youths, were raised to fear the ‘other’, for example, Black youths. Further, White youths were continuously reminded that it was their duty to sustain the system of white privilege and domination (TRC, 1998). This resulted in a spate of structural violence in South Africa that has not only left the majority of the society in extreme poverty, but whose traits (especially those of apartheid) are seen in criminal and violent activities that are now prevalent in South Africa as evidenced by numerous police and media reports. Ward (2007) points

out that poverty may not be the cause of violence, but children who come from poverty-ridden areas are more likely to engage in violence.

According to Burnett (1999:3), “the more violent the societal structures, the higher the physical violence at micro-level”. While the apartheid government was dislocating people from their original habitats, young men began forming their own ‘communities’. During the late 1960s and 1970s, the use of the *toyi-toyi* in groups (*Toyi-toyi is a South African dance originally created in liberation camps in Zambia and is commonly used in political protests in South Africa*), boycott organisation and gang groups formed by these young men were mainly anti-apartheid resistance groups, especially in the Johannesburg and Durban black townships (Pinnock, 1984; Steinberg, 2004; Kinnes, 1995; Dissel, 1997; Kynoch, 1998; Glaser, 2000; Glaser, 1998). Accordingly, marginalised races were pushed to construct their own identities as a form of resistance to the government. In some cases, they formed social networks including, *inter alia*, ‘Amapantsula’ and ‘Tsotsis’, to strengthen their resistance against apartheid (Hurst, 2009; Dissel, 1997; Standing, 2006). Over time, marginalised communities were strongly loyal towards these young men, as they supported their aggressive demonstrations against the government (Dissel, 1997; Kynoch, 1998; and Steinberg, 2004). However, such support from the communities indirectly resulted in more violent behavior of the youth. This was because the people who were violent during the days of the struggle and received considerable support from the communities did not change their violent behaviour and thereby contributing in influencing the next generation of youth living in those communities.

Although not all youths in townships were drawn into gangs or similar groups, those who did so were driven by the need for liberation and societal recognition. They “understood social prestige in terms of territory, physical prowess, street wisdom and style” (Glaser, 1998: 14) and fought for their own independence, territories, and mobility (Glaser, 1996; Dissel, 1997). None of them owned the social space, but they claimed it as part of identifying themselves while growing up in their neighbourhoods. However, although most of the early adherents to gangs had participated in these violent social groups (Pinnock, 1996), some of them were nevertheless not entirely immersed in such activities. Instead, some of them continued with their education and became professionals afterwards (Glaser, 1998). There were some, however, who did not choose this route but decided

to devote most of their time to gang activities. The consequences were however disastrous as some of them ended up being killed or jailed whilst some became habitual criminals.

Consequently, to understand youth engagements in violence in South Africa and Africa at large, it is important to broaden the conception of the experience of African youths to accurately reflect the realities of a twenty-first century Africa in the throes of a global crisis in which violence is escalating significantly (Buwa, 2017). It is also important to understand that the youths who are largely deemed responsible for this violence are in the phase of their lives where they need protection, shelter, and guidance from the older generation (UNDP, 2006). A number of youths between the ages of 14-24 years (Hall, 1904 as cited in Sawyer, Azzopardi, Wickremarathne and Patton, 2018) engage in violent activities either to seek protection, supposedly offered by membership of violent groups, to fill a void in their lives, or to find a sense of belonging, pride, and honour (Esperanza, 2010). While this might make some sense, “no single factor explains why some individuals behave violently toward others, or how some communities are more violent than others” (Moser and Mcilwaine, 2006:95). However, what is clear is that some poor communities in South Africa are still suffering from the effects of a troubled past in which violence played a central role. Just like in the past, people growing up in such communities still regards violence as the means to an end. As a result, young people in such communities are also following in the footsteps of their seniors by becoming violent and associating with violent groups and also modifying the ways in which such violence is deployed.

### **1.3 Youth Identity and Violence in Democratic South Africa**

South Africa has an estimated population of over 56 million people. Of these, 51% are youths between the ages of 15-34 years (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Although youths constitute most of the population, they remain the most vulnerable group in the country. Since the 27<sup>th</sup> day of April 1994, which marked South Africa’s transition from an oppressive system of apartheid, not much has changed as far as issues of equality, employment creation and peaceful societies are concerned. Twenty-five years into democracy, youths, especially in disadvantaged communities, are still struggling to discover their identities and place in society. In several ways, violence has culminated in some of them having to drop out of secondary school, with no hope of going back to school

(Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019). As a result, they end up joining delinquent groups and start to regard such groups as their important social groups, which forms part of their identity (Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019; Ward et al. 2012; Swartz et al. 2012).

Young people's sense of identity, belonging and citizenship are formed through personal agency, a sense of ownership, structural support, appropriate bridging relationships, and identity-affirming rituals or traditions (Swartz et al., 2012). In some communities, rituals, or traditions, such as circumcision, affirm one's manhood and belonging in the community (Burns et al., 2015). In the broader South African context, youth identities are linked and embedded with current structural aspects of society (Hadland et al., 2008). As these authors further noted, youth seem to have played a more dominant role in the recent history of South Africa than was the case in many other societies, and those momentous events that led to the liberation of South Africa. The youths born during and after the first free elections of 1994 were called the "Mandela children" as a sign of hope (Barbarin and Richter, 2001). However, it seems like these youths still struggle for survival, while trying to retain their humanity (Swartz and Scott, 2014). Ward et al. (2012:7) opine that "socio economic factors including unemployment and deep long-term poverty in a context of significant economic inequality, together with poor-quality schooling, high levels of drop out and family vulnerability, have been regarded as important in explaining how youths are drawn into crime, violence and gang membership". This means that the barriers set during apartheid era still exist. Contemporary youth challenges remain silently attached to broken family life, failed education, violence, and crime. Pondering on this, one must ask, how do we create a culture of security for a better future (Panday et al., 2012) and successfully negotiate barriers around the person of the youth? A lack of understanding of the present realities of youths has allowed society to regard youths as the 'lost generation'. According to media reports, "these youths (majority Black) have no future no hope and are busy destroying everything in their way: homes, shops, schools, infrastructures, and traditions" (Sitas, 1991:6).

The fundamentals for youths to successfully transit into responsible adulthood include completing an education, starting work, staying healthy and engaging in civic life (McGorry, Mei, Chanen, et al. 2022). Since these life-building blocks instil self-control and regulation, failure to complete or engage in any of them has negative impacts, especially on how transitioned youths integrate

themselves in society. Ironically, youths from marginalised communities are required to negotiate their way around a life that was predetermined for them, based on poverty, toxic masculinity, and a lack of opportunities (Soji et al., 2015). Of these factors, poverty and lack of opportunities are problems that are caused by exterior factors normally beyond the resolve of the community where the concerned youths will be growing up in. On the other hand, toxic masculinity is dominative behaviour inherent in the male gender of given communities (Bhana, Janak, Pillay, and Ramrathan, 2021). Such dominative behaviour is normally enforced through deployment and exhibition of violence. What this means is that youths growing up in such communities whereby the adult male population therein tends to exhibit dominative behaviours, they too are most likely to be influenced by such behaviour (Dery, 2021). However, in addition to the effects of poverty, toxic masculinity and lack of opportunities, lack of social development blocks is also another problem that affects the youth. As Ward et al. (2012:101) observed, lack of important social development blocks in marginalised communities causes “social disintegration, resulting in young people seeking for alternative systems to develop their identity, self-belonging and status, which is often in the form of joining gangs and participating in violent and criminal activity”. When they are not in school, or have issues within their homes, these groups provide companionship and support. Also, their inclination to violence is heightened by a lack of material and symbolic capital, such as a good education and a permanent job, to affirm their masculinity. Here again, the legacy of apartheid is evident - youths adopt any means that increases the likelihood of their survival emotionally and physically, “whether or not the strategy the youth employs are socially acceptable or devoid of appreciable risk” (Soji et al., 2015:124). Norgaard (2015:2) suggests that “the youth carry the burden of an identity forged in the wake of apartheid and live their lives in a country whose geography is a persistent reminder of apartheid’s continuing legacy”. Social changes in South Africa provide a unique set of circumstances in which to assess post-apartheid aspects of group identity development, especially the emergence of a new collective national identity among South African youth (Norris et al., 2008).

## 1.4 From Gangs to Gurans violence groups

To date, there are at least four gang typologies that are known to exist in the Western Cape Province. These are: Crew, Clique, Street Gang, and Prison Gang, depending on geographical location (Roloff, 2014). According to Roloff (2014), it was significant to understand the formation of these gangs and their purpose. For instance, street gangs are associated with lower levels of education (Pyrooz, 2014). Because of their educational status, they create their own society by gaining respect and enhancing their status by acting tough (Mitchell, Fahmy, Pyrooz and Decker, 2017), while engaging in criminal violent behaviour (Curry, Scott, Decker and Pyrooz, 2014).

On the other side, prison gangs are convicts, who have their own set of informal rules that guide acceptable behaviour, which calls for loyalty exclusively within prisons boundaries (Mitchell, Fahmy, Pyrooz and Decker, 2017). If some do not abide by the prison code/rules, there will be consequences. Both street and prisons gangs' processes are "strongly associated with forming alliances, adhering to belief systems, and engaging in risky behaviours" (Mitchell, Fahmy, Pyrooz and Decker, 2017: 1201). Street Gangs, and Prison Gangs which are two types of gangs that operates in the streets and from the prison respectively are mostly visible in Coloured areas such as Hanover Park, Lavender Hill, Elsies River, Mannenberg, and Mitchell's Plein, to name a few. These groups of gangs are more structured and organised. They engage in lethal activities and are in consistent conflict with the law (Pinnock, 1996; Roloff, 2014; Standing, 2003). Although Street and Prison gangs are similar, there are slight differences in terms of organisation. Street gangs are informal and smaller in size than the Prison gangs. Prison gangs are highly organised with high criminal social, political and intra prison networks, while Street gangs are more operational within their communities with extensive community and police networks (Roloff, 2014).

However, in addition to the gang problem that has been bedevilling Cape Town's poor communities, the city has also been faced with another challenge of groups of violent youth that have recently emerged in its townships, calling themselves Gurans or Crew Members. Although this gang mirrors the street gangs in the use of violence, it is nevertheless different. This is because whereas street gangs entirely comprised of people who would have either dropped out from school or left school completely, membership of these crews is comprised of young people who would have either dropped out from school or are still attending high school. As such, they also operate

in school yards where educators and learners alike have been its victims (Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019). Its target areas have been the Black townships around Cape Town. In terms of description, ‘Gurans’ is a general term used to define social groups comprised of youths from different locations within Cape Town’s Black townships. The youths in Gurans are not the typical gangsters found more commonly on the Cape Flats and Coloured communities of the Western Cape of South Africa. It is generally known that youths in Gurans are mainly male secondary school learners who mostly meet for social interactions on weekdays (especially on Fridays), during school holidays and matric dances. They often engage in fight matches, between different Gurans groups and their activities have been linked with the increase of violence and terror in the townships where they operate. Conflicts could arise during these interactions and evolve into violent escapades. Each unique group of young boys is called a ‘crew’. There might be several crews in a township, each one defining the boundaries of their territory within the township. Figure 1-1 provides a broad depiction of the structure of Gurans and Figure 1-2 shows sections of Khayelitsha, a township where the activities of Gurans is most prevalent. These Gurans groups present an interesting novel case for research that aids an understanding of youth violence in relation to the construction of identities, socioeconomic contexts, and geographical location. More descriptions on Gurans and crews are given throughout the thesis.

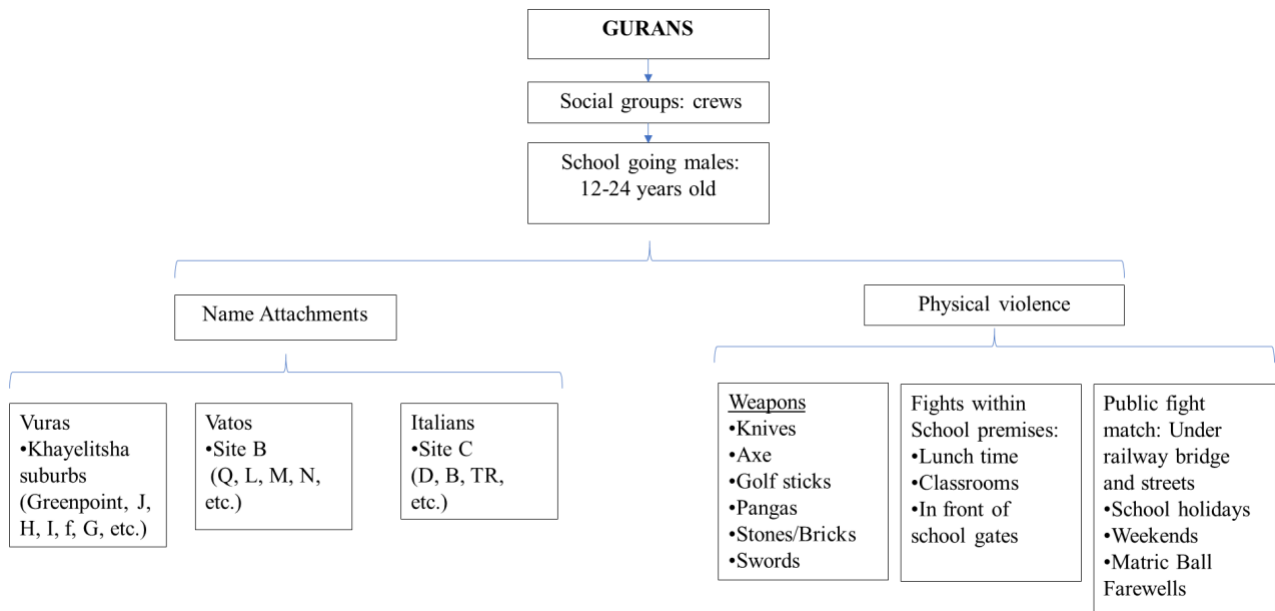


Figure 1-1: Broad overview of Gurans<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This diagram of Gurans was designed through the systematic approach derived from the community of Khayelitsha

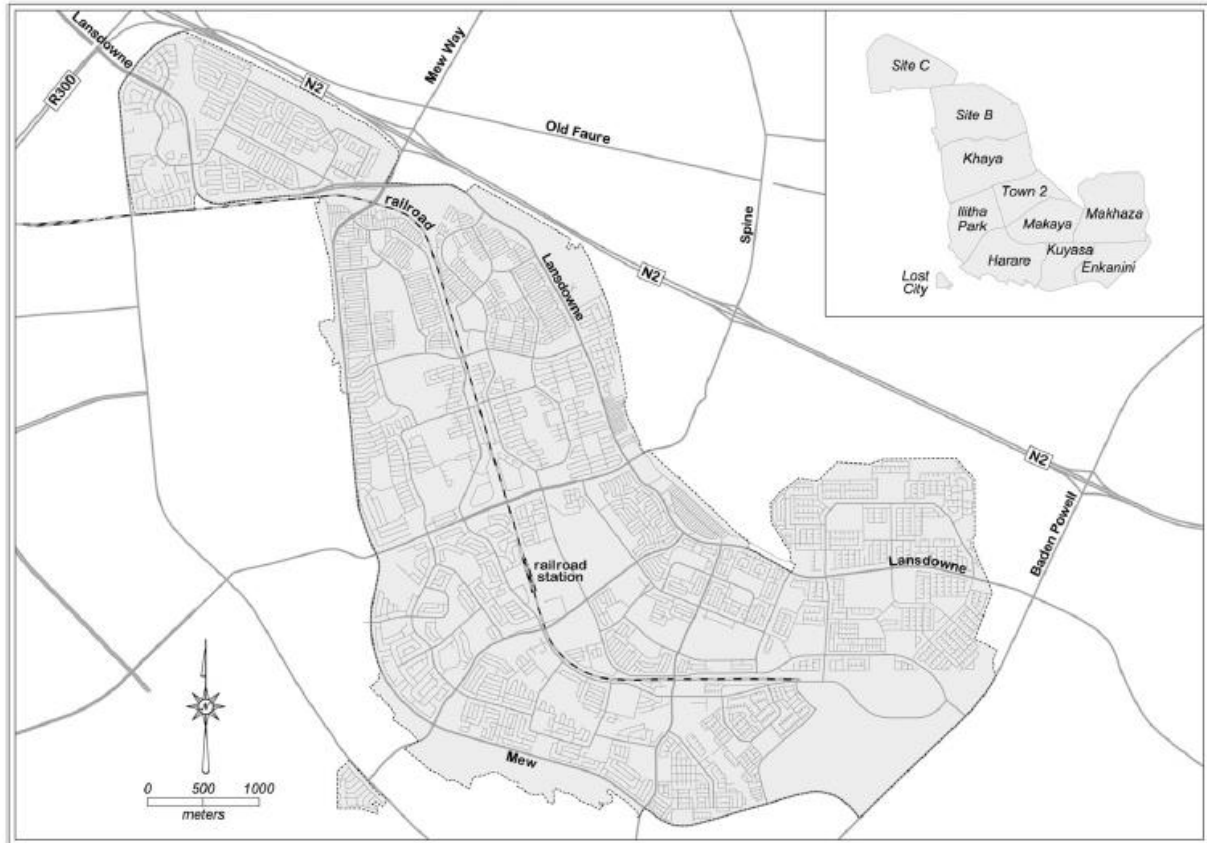


Figure 1-2: Sections of Khayelitsha (Brunn and Wilson, 2013)

Khayelitsha was established in 1983, and forms part of the many problems that the Group Areas Act of 1950 created. This Act was part of the apartheid regime's strategy of separate development, which was implemented to allow the white minority to remain supreme and to control African labour (Pernegger and Godehart, 2007). The Act designated specific urban areas towards groups that were created through the Population Registration Act: Africans, Indians, Coloureds, and Whites. Its results are still evident in contemporary times. Furthermore, the Act came into existence because of the white minority's anxieties about African people and tribal communities' procurement of land (Baldwin, 1975). As such, many people were removed from their respective areas and forcefully placed into squatter camps, in areas such as the Eastern Cape and the Western Transvaal. This happened between 1960 and 1970 (Baldwin, 1975).

According to the report of O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry (2014), Khayelitsha was identified as the second largest township in South Africa and forms part of the City of Cape Town's Metro South East Region, which is commonly known as 'Cape Town's poverty trap'. According to the results of the 2011 census, Khayelitsha had a population of about 400 000 inhabitants. However, this figure could have changed since then as the township received new immigrants over the years (Seekings, 2013). The black African age group distribution shows that 12.0% are between 0-4 years, 16.3% between 5-14 years, 21.43% between 15-24 years, 48.7% between 25-64 years, and 1.6% are 65 years and older (City of Cape Town, 2013). Furthermore, only 47.4 % have attended secondary school and of these, 30.8% have completed Grade 12, while 4.9% have a higher education (City of Cape Town, 2013). The average income per household is approximately R1 600 per month. Khayelitsha has both formal and informal housing. Shack settlements, which trace back to the Apartheid regime, account for 46.6% of shelters in the community (City of Cape Town, 2013).

Muller (2013) argued that the socio-economic power structures that were created by the South Africa's Apartheid regime, enriched those in privileged positions. The impacts of these socio-economic power structures are still felt by many families (Viljoen and Sekhampu, 2013). Thus, among most of the population for this study, there is a continual struggle of unemployment, substance and drugs abuse as well as crime (Super, 2010). Consistent with most of the youths in disadvantaged communities, the youth of Khayelitsha are also exposed to drugs and alcohol (Daniels and Adams, 2010), and some have resorted to crime when they cannot find anything sensible to do. The risk of anti-social or deviant behaviour, which is perpetuated by poverty and psychological trauma (Samara, 2003), is also prevalent among community members. Such a situation is consistent with Meikle's (2002:37 cited in Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002) observation that "the livelihoods of the poor are mostly determined by the context in which they live and the limitations and opportunities this location presents". As she further observed, this is because the economic, environmental, social and political backgrounds largely determine the assets accessible to people, how to make use of these, and their ability to obtain secure livelihoods (Meikle cited in Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002).

Indeed, it is a reality that most of the people who live in Khayelitsha are marginalised, vulnerable, weak, and powerless. These realities are coupled with the devastating effects of deep poverty, setup of this township, and a hard environment for all who live and work there. Moreover, its crime rate is very high. Khayelitsha remains in the top 30 police stations for murder and crime (SAPS, 2021/2022). In fact, more than 80% of people who live in Khayelitsha do not feel safe in their homes or on the streets (O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014). Thus, youth in Khayelitsha have emerged as a significant form of social organisation. These violent youth social groups are therefore shaping the nature and meaning of public space in places and institutional spaces, such as recreational parks and schools.

## **1.5 Problem Statement**

This study was triggered by the need to understand and mitigate against the high levels of violence in Khayelitsha township. Apart from reporting just being a violence hotspot, another worrying trend in Khayelitsha has been the emergence of a new form of youth violence known as Gurans. However, not much is known about the social dynamics of the crews that constitute Gurans. What is known is that the arrival of these new violent groups has resulted in the cases of violent crimes in Khayelitsha increasing instead of decreasing. Although nothing much is known about Gurans, what is known is that its operations have affected everyone in the community. All members of the Khayelitsha community, who include ordinary residents, other youth members, school going children and even the educators in schools have not been spared by this new violence scourge. Its either people are stabbed, robbed or even killed within the community and in school yards. However, in terms of statistics, the township has been recorded as one of the leading sites of violent hotspots in South Africa (Institute for Security Studies Crime, 2019; Institute for Security Studies Crime, 2018), and it contributed 30% of all violent activities in South Africa (Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Police Inefficiency and a Breakdown in Relations between SAPS and the Community of Khayelitsha, 2014 (hereafter referred to as the O'Regan-Pikoli Commission)). In 2014, it was reported that murder rates in Khayelitsha were between 76 and 108 murders per 100 000 of the population at different police stations in the area (Institute for Security Studies Crime, 2014) and Khayelitsha police station has reported 49 murders between April 2021 and June

2022 (SAPS, 2021/2022). In terms of policing the area, Khayelitsha has only three police stations, which serve its entire population (O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014; Institute for Security Studies Crime, 2018). This also partly explains why there has been a limited availability of statistics on youth violence in Khayelitsha (Kinnes, 2017). For instance, the police are struggling to keep up to date with accurate murder statistics within this community because some of the cases go unreported (O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014).

While crimes such as attempted murder, murder, common assaults, robbery with aggravating circumstances were reported to be high in 2017 (SAPS, 2017), and between 2021-2022 (SAPS, 2021/2022), there is limited statistics on youth-related violence in Khayelitsha. Moreover, very little has also been recorded on the manifestation of new forms of youth violence, such as the Gurans. Ensink, Robertson, Zissis and Leger's (1997) findings reveal that 95% of children between the ages of 6 and 16 years old, residing in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, were exposed to violence and some experience post-traumatic stress disorder. Christodoulou et al. (2019:8) estimates that "one in five young men is reported as being a gang member in the townships of Cape Town and over half of all young men report committing at least one violent act". According to Groenewald et al. (2008), Khayelitsha has been recorded as one of the townships in the world with high mortality rates amongst young men because of violence.

## **1.6 Motivation for the Study: Personal Experiences of the Effects of Youth Violence**

Swartz and Scott (2014:326) suggest that "very few studies in South Africa focus on the ways in which youth violence is socially embedded". Thus, there are still gaps to be filled in the academic literature regarding youth violence in South African communities. While this is a significant motivation for the current study, the primary motivation for this study is the researcher's experience of growing up in Khayelitsha and seeing the occurrence and impacts of Gurans on youths and the rest of the community.

## **Self-Reflection**

*Growing up in Khayelitsha, I witnessed groups of young people at street corners on Fridays and weekends participating in gang-related violence which led to the deaths of many of them. My brother and his friend were part of Gurans and victims of youth violence. They were killed on 30 May 2010. I remember that day as if it were yesterday. Looking through the window, I saw the police vans flashing blue lights outside our house. Immediately, everyone wondered what had happened. I could see my mother's face shrivelling as she awaited the news to be delivered by the police officers. We always knew that one day we might receive news about my brother being caught up in something, but we were not ready for the bad news so soon. It was only 40 minutes after my brother had left the house with his friends, around 20h00, when the police knocked on our door. We all said, "Come in", and tears started rolling down our faces with no reason, because we feared what we might hear from the police officers. Immediately they asked, "uMandisi no Khaya lethu bahlala apha?" (Do Mandisi and Khaya lethu stay here?). They had not finished talking when my mother screamed, "Bakawenzi abantwana?" (What have they done now?). Then, all of us became silent, waiting to hear what the police had to say.*

*The police proceeded: "Azintlanga ezindaba siniphathele zona" (the news that we have for you is bad). We knew one of the police officers. Their faces looked dismal, as they focused on my mother. They took their caps off (as a sign of respect) and said, "Sifumene uMandisi edundulizile ngakoTR ematyotyombeni" (We found your son lying dead close to TR informal settlements). After that statement, the house became a mess; there were screams all over the house. I suppose we could not help ourselves. We felt overwhelmed by the news. At that time, I could feel the pain felt by a single parent who just lost her child, regardless of the circumstances he died in. The police told us that he had been shot, but they had not found the person who killed him. While digesting the news about Mandisi's death, we asked about Khaya lethu because he was staying with us as well. My mother let him stay with us to avoid him being a street kid, because his parents were both deceased. The police told us that he had died in hospital because his wound was very deep. He could not survive.*

*There are many families in Khayelitsha, who have found themselves in similar situations as my family did the day my brother and his friend died. As time passed, I realised that many young males*

*in Khayelitsha have died because of their involvement in gang-related rivalries, but these were not recorded in the academic space. I then saw the importance of exploring these fights between young people in black townships. My interest in, and curiosity about Gurans and their involvement in violence in Cape Town's black townships were piqued. I began my inquiry with a broad exploration of the literature on youth violence within and outside South Africa to establish the context and focus of my study and went on to formulate my research topic and questions.*

## **1.7 Research Aim**

The overall aim of this research study is to explore the Gurans phenomenon and the experiences of Khayelitsha residents regarding the influence of Gurans on their lives. The study considers the dynamics, manifestations, and the effects of this phenomenon on the community from the perspectives of the crew members themselves, the affected youths, educators, and community members. It also examines the factors that causes the problem, such as family and community structures. Accordingly, in-depth one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions were held with members of the community (teachers, affected youth and parents) and the crew members. This helped to establish measures to address the social problems posed by Gurans and youth violence in general. In creating an understanding of the dynamics of the evolution youth violence in South Africa's townships, the study aims to develop and implement effective policies to curb youth violence in South Africa.

## **1.8 Research Questions**

1. What are the factors driving the youth in Khayelitsha to become violent and associate with violent groups such as Gurans?
2. What is it that must be done to mitigate against the rise of cases of youth violence in Khayelitsha from the perception of residents and educators?
3. What are the effects of Gurans on the youth and other community members in Khayelitsha?

## **1.9 Research Objectives**

To achieve the overall research aim, the following objectives were formulated:

1. To explore the effects of Gurans on identity of self in a violent community.
2. To explore the perceptions of the effects of Gurans violence on schooling and the community and reactions of the local community members towards Gurans.
3. To explore what those affected by Gurans would like to see happening against the rise of youth violence in Khayelitsha

## **1.10 Potential Value of The Study**

Youth violence has blighted communities in South Africa with social problems for years (Pinnock, 2016; Ward et al., 2012). Ludwig and Shah (2014:7) further state that “the problem is particularly acute for Black children, given the fact that adverse schooling outcomes and other risky behaviours are more prevalent in disadvantaged areas.” The city of Cape Town located in the Western Cape Province, is one of the cities that has been affected by youth violence in recent times (Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019; Pinnock, 2016; O’Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014; Ward et al., 2012; Kinnes, 2017) and hence the decision to focus this current study on one of the city’s townships that has been badly affected by such violence, Khayelitsha. The township in question is the largest township in Cape Town. This township was not only chosen just to narrow the scope of the current study. It has also been the subject of a commission of inquiry regarding the prevalence of violence in the city of Cape Town (O’Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014).

As mentioned in the previous section, the Gurans phenomenon has not been fully explored in the academic space. The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of Khayelitsha residents regarding the influence of Gurans on their lives. The question is about the uniqueness and the influence of Gurans’ violence on the community members of Khayelitsha, including the crew members. The distinctive contribution of this study is the critical engagement with affected Khayelitsha residents’ perspectives and experiences to examine a phenomenon that has not been entirely examined in this manner. An in-depth examination of crews and their activities in Khayelitsha will generate the necessary literature and information currently limited in South Africa

on how youth social interactions evolve to become violent in Black townships. This phenomenon requires the urgent attention of researchers.

Furthermore, the study attempts to reveal the Gurans phenomenon in the literature on youth violence, contributing to the body of knowledge on the uniqueness of these violent groups, that have emerged in Black townships of Cape Town. The public will gain an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon and also on what is it that is being done to curb delinquent behaviour among young people. The study recognises that the issue of violence is not an isolated one but is interlinked with other social issues that have been studied over the years, including poverty. The current study suggests that it is essential that policymaking and initiatives on curbing youth delinquency have a bottom-up approach, grounded in local meanings and understandings, rather than addressing the global situation. It is important for society to understand the complexities of youth violence, instead of using a blanket approach.

## 1.11 Concept Clarification

1. **Youth:** a transitional period between childhood and adulthood (Spence, 2005), between the ages of 16-25 (Valentine, 2003). In this study, youth also connote young men in secondary school and involved in Gurans, in which they are referred to as ‘crew members’. However, the study does not exclude youths affected by this phenomenon. The ages of the youths studied are between 14 and 24 years, as defined by Hall (1904 cited in Sawyer, Azzopardi, Wickremarathne and Patton, 2018). The study focuses on youths residing in marginalised communities, such as Khayelitsha township.
2. **Gurans:** the general description of social groups of youths from different locations within the same township who often engage in fight matches, and whose activities have been linked with the exacerbation of violence in these townships (Sefali, 2014). Furthermore, Gurans violence is also comprised of children and youth, some of whom are still school learners. Gurans use knives and sharp dangerous objects in their fights as tools of their trade. In this current study the word ‘Gurans’ can be used in so many different ways in a sentence: it can be an adjective - Gurans violence; it can be a verb - Guransing, and the word is frequently used as a noun - the ‘Gurans can happen at any time’, or the crew

members of the Gurans. Gurans is used as slang by members of the community including youth in a particular geographical area like Khayelitsha.

3. **Crew:** A unique group of 15 – 35 young boys who are part of the Gurans groups. Crews have been in existence for about 10 years (Roloff, 2014), and have been mostly referred to as gangs in most Black townships in the Western Cape. Crew is used as a codename for youth who are involved in Gurans violent groups. When you belong to those groups you are called a ‘Crew member/ part of the Crew’.
4. **Violence:** the “intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, or deprivation” (World Health Organisation, 2002:5). This description or definition of violence by the WHO will be understood as constituting the full meaning of the word ‘violence’ in this thesis.

## 1.12 Structure of the Thesis

This chapter provided a background on youth violence in the South Africa and an overview of the current study, including the problem statement, motivation for the study, research aim, objectives and questions, potential value of the study, and clarification of some recurrent terms in the study. A synopsis of the issues that are discussed in the succeeding chapters is presented below.

**Chapter 2** begins by discussing the theoretical framework that underpins the discussion of findings from literature and the fieldwork. It also discusses literature on youth violence in South Africa, and that which is focused on Khayelitsha. The chapter also discusses general literature on youth experiences with violence in South Africa and the psychological effects of youth violence on youth. The chapter concludes by analysing existing government institutions and policies for youths, and the collaboration of key role players against youth violence. The chapter notes the research gaps in existing studies.

**Chapter 3** discusses the methodological approaches used to collect data for this study. The chapter also explains how the research was designed, how the data was collected, analysed, and verified.

It concludes by explaining how the research findings were categorised into various thematic groups for purposes of presentation.

**Chapters 4, 5 and 6** focus on the interpretation of the data that were collected during the two-year fieldwork period in Khayelitsha township. Chapter 4 explores the perspectives from the Crew members and affected youth. It explores the onset and persistence of Gurans in Black townships to develop an understanding of the rationale for youth participation and the influences on their frequent violent conflicts. Findings related to the broad effects of Gurans-related violence are discussed further in Chapters 5. Chapter 5 explores the perspectives from teachers and community members of Khayelitsha. Lastly, Chapter 6 presents a synopsis of all the respondents' perspectives and experiences to unearth similarities and uniqueness in an in-depth and insightful manner.

**Chapter 7** summarizes the research findings and makes some implications. The understanding of the Gurans phenomenon, which is grounded in the lived experiences of the residents of Khayelitsha, is explained. The chapter also highlights current initiatives and policies that are working towards resolving and eliminating the issue of violence among young people in the black communities of South Africa. Arguments in support, and critiques of these initiatives and policies are presented. Accordingly, recommendations on adaptations to existing strategies and new points of action on mitigating youth violence are made. Lastly, the success and limitations of the study are discussed.

# **Chapter 2: Theoretical Framing and Review of existing literature**

## **2.1 Introduction**

This thesis is an exploration of Gurans violence, in the City of Cape Town's township of Khayelitsha. It specifically questions why the youth of Khayelitsha have been associating with violent groups at a time when the country is supposed to be peaceful, especially when given the democratic transition that happened in 1994. Indeed, after 1994, many cases of violence, some of which have been fatal, have been reported in many parts of South Africa. Of these, the highest figures have been recorded in the Western Cape Province of the country, with the township of Khayelitsha being reported as one of the leading sites of such incidences (Institute for Security Studies Crime, 2018; Super, 2016; Gillespie, 2013; Ward et al., 2012; Lancaster, 2013). Although most of the cases of violence that were reported in the Western Cape province before the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and in early 2000 were mostly gang related (Norman, 2007; Lancaster and Kamma, 2016), this period additionally saw new forms of violent groupings, known as Gurans, appearing in Khayelitsha, which had different operation modes from those of gangs (Sefali, 2014; Mguzulwa, 2014).

Whilst in gang conflicts the feuding parties fight over control of things like drugs and even money, the Gurans' violence is different. Unlike the gangs, the main driver by the Gurans to fight is the desire to inflict harm on the perceived enemies or even to eliminate them. Gang violence is usually confined to the spaces where the gang members reside, however, Gurans violence even takes place in unusual spaces such as school premises and under railway bridge and train stations. Thus, the actions of these groups raise the question: 'what is it that is driving these youth to be so violent?' It is against this background that this chapter concerns itself with explaining the theoretical frameworks driving this study in the quest to understand the forces behind youth decisions to resort to violence. The two frameworks that have been selected to underpin this study are Violentisation Theory and Social Identity Theory. Discussions on theoretical framings in this chapter will then be followed by a critical review of existing literature on youth violence in South Africa before

concluding by an interrogation of key policies and legislation that have been promulgated in South Africa to date to cater for the needs of the children and youth in the country.

## **2.2 Violentisation and Social Identity Theories**

The two theoretical frameworks underpinning this work are Violentization Theory and Social Identity Theory. These two theoretical frameworks were selected because there was a need for guiding vehicles that might help to explain the violent actions of youth, in association with groups such as Gurans, from both the perspective of their individual selves and collectively as group members. More so, there was also a need for the selected frameworks to help in giving directions on measures that can be taken by societies to address problems caused by Gurans-type violence. Violentization Theory was selected to account for the actions of an individual youth, whereas Social Identity Theory was selected to account for the actions of the same youth as part of a social group to which they had elected to associate.

In terms of its tenets, Violentisation theory was penned by Lonnie Athens who deployed it to guide a number of his works (Athens, 1992, 1997, 2003). Locally, the theory has been used by Holtzhausen in his studies on youth violence in two Cape Town townships, Gugulethu and Khayelitsha (Holtzhausen, 2016). Although conceptualised more than a decade ago, Athens is a contemporary violence theorist. He conceived the term ‘violentisation’ by combining two concepts; ‘violence’ and ‘socialization’ (Athens, 1989, 2005). Athens’ Theory of Violentization remained relatively unknown until Richard Rhodes popularised it in *Why They Kill: The Discoveries of a Maverick Criminologist* (Rhodes, 1999/2002). Athens’ Theory of Violentization is based on four key assumptions. The first assumption is that “dominance and subordination are the common denominators of all human conflict”, including violence (Athens, 1998: 686). Secondly, that people always strive to make their lives more predictable by “institutionalizing” critical social experiences across a life span. Thirdly, violent and ultra-violent people undergo a special form of socialisation, which Athens calls the “violentization process” (Athens, 1998/2015). Athens feels that people “are what they are as a result of the social experiences that they have undergone in their lives” (Athens, 2008: 7).

Most social experiences, however, are trivial; they pass in an almost endless stream, quickly over and quickly forgotten. Conversely, some social experiences are significant consequential and unforgettable, and those have a lasting impact upon people's lives and are remembered weeks, months, and years afterward, leaving a permanent mark upon people, regardless of their wishes (Athens, 2008). Among significant social experiences, are those that make people dangerous violent criminals (Athens and Rhodes, 2017)

In line with the above, the other theory informing this study, Social Identity Theory, was developed by Henri Tajfel, a social psychologist and his student, John Turner in the early 1970s, (Vinney, 2019; Hogg and Abrams, 1988). Over time, SIT has been used in the academic space to understand social groups' behaviour and relationships (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). It is a concept that was "developed in order to produce a non-reductionist social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes which focuses on the articulation of psychological and social processes" (Abrams and Hogg, 1990; Hogg and Abrams, 1988). In developing the SIT, Tajfel and Turner (1979) explored group setups with regard to their interactions and relationship status. Groups could consist of two or more people sharing common social identification within the same category. In terms of structure, the theory is premised on three cognitive components, namely social categorisation, social identification, and social comparison (Vinney, 2019; Hogg and Abrams, 1988). In this case, social categorisation refers to the process in which individuals are organised into social groups such as churches or clubs, (Vinney, 2019). On the other hand, social identification is defined as a process in which individuals are identified as group members (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). This will enable the concerned people to emotionally invest in their group membership (Vinney, 2019; Tajfel, 1981). Whatever is done in that group or whichever values or norms are instilled there, they imbibe them because they belong there. Lastly, social comparison refers to the process whereby group members compare their own group to other social groups (Vinney, 2019; Tajfel, 1972). According to Moya (2005), the opposition always seek for superiority over one another. This means that the group's identity is defined through trust, commitment, and loyalty, including the benefits of being in the group as opposed to outside the group. Thus, group members realise the value of their group and hold it dear to their hearts.

Tajfel and Turner (1986) allude that people join groups because they want to boost their self-esteem; if they are not satisfied, they find ways of achieving more positive distinctiveness for it. This means that groups are a means for the individuals to evaluate themselves and others via their

membership status. Tajfel (1972) further explains that when someone becomes a member of a social group, they find ways of adapting to the group membership. In generalised terms, to an individual these processes can be summarised as the knowledge of a particular individual to know that they belong to social groups and that he/she shares some emotional value significance derived from their membership of the concerned group (Abrams and Hogg, 1990). To a group, these processes are revealed more in intergroup conflict situations. This is because when such situations arise, individuals who are members of opposing groups will behave toward each other as a function of their respective group memberships, rather than in terms of their individual characteristics or inter individual relationship (Tajfel, 1972; Tajfel and Turner, 1986). This then becomes their day to day lives; slowly but surely, their lives start changing drastically.

### **2.3 The applicability of Violentization Theory to Gurans' violence in Khayelitsha**

Several studies have highlighted the importance of environment for young people while they are growing up. It is important to note that there is a strong relationship between certain types of communities and high levels of violence. This is because an environment can influence a young person's decision to associate with bad and violent social groups at a later stage of their lives (Ward et al., 2012; Swartz et al., 2012; Pinnock, 2016; Seekings, 2011). Indeed, in environments such as Khayelitsha township, which have already been identified as violence-ridden areas (Super, 2015; Edelstein, 2016; Pinnock, 2016; Holtzhausen, 2016), the chances of the youth growing up in those areas being influenced by such an environment are also high. This is further exacerbated when the same youth are faced with a situation where violent groups, such as Gurans, are the dominant social groups in their areas (Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019). This then becomes a cycle by means of socialisation, motivating young people to stay in those violent groups longer than anticipated. We can only get detailed understandings about why individuals elect to become violent when the problem is studied from the perspective of the individual. As already explained, Violentisation Theory is one such framework that can help create an understanding of how individuals, such as the youth, choose to be violent while others do not.

Athens has been developing his violentization theory over a period of more than 40 years with the aim to explain how people become violent criminals (Winton, 2011; Athens, 1989/1994). Athens (2008) recognises violence as a developmental process during which most ultimate violent offenders move through four stages of developing into violent actors, namely, “brutalization, defiance, violent performances and virulency” (Athens, 2015:625). A fifth stage, ‘extreme virulency’ was added to the original four in his later development of the theory (see Athens, 2017; Athens and Rhodes, 2017). First, the brutalization stage is comprised of three different types of experiences, namely, violent subjugation, personal horrification, and violent coaching. In simple terms, this involves the teaching and demonstration of violent behaviour, which includes threatening to use physical force, observing the use of physical force, and learning how to use physical force. According to him, these experiences involve the process of individual coercion into violence, and also witnessing violence being inflicted on close people, such as siblings or parents. For instance, the first experience is *violent subjugation*; “where the individual is subjected to either coercive or retaliatory violence” by someone they trust (Johnson, 1990: 294). For example, violent families use physical force to discipline, intimidate, control, or hurt the child, intentionally or unintentionally (Rhodes, 1999). This “gives rise to fear, and eventually to terror and panic that can be relieved only by submission” (Ismaili, 1993: 137). The second experience is *personal horrification*; this experience “gives rise to feelings of impotence, as the person refrains from helping the victim because of concerns for personal safety” (Ismaili, 1993: 137). During this experience, the child witnesses one of the parents beating the other, which creates a sense of helplessness and guilt over the failure to assist or intervene when the incident was taking place. The last experience, *violent coaching*, is the “tacit instruction of violence” (Johnson, 1990: 294), against the other person (Athens, 2008), which involves a “variety of emotions, including fear and various enjoyment may be aroused” (Ismaili, 1993: 137).

In the case of Khayelitsha’s Gurans violence, some of the individual youth who went on to become violent criminals, (as will be discussed in the succeeding chapters of this study), started by witnessing episodes of violence either inside their homes, through friends or close relatives becoming victims of violence, sometimes participating in violence. This paved the way for such youth to becoming violent, as this was the only way they could also protect themselves from the

violence that was surrounding them. This led to some moving from fear to the enjoyment of such violent activities.

Following Athens' stages of violentisation, the brutalised youth in the case of Khayelitsha enters the second stage of violentization, which he described as that of defiance, when they come to terms with the crisis of their brutalisation (Athens, 2017, 2016, 2015; O'Donnell, 2003). They become convinced that participating in violent activities, indeed offers the protection they need from the existential threats they are facing. This becomes a commitment to violence to avoid being a victim, observer, or being humiliated (Ismaili, 1993). This stage is used as a "reflective process, which involves self-deprecation, and a resolve to use violence if needed in the future" (Johnson, 1990: 294). In Khayelitsha, this stage is characterised by the youth indulging in malpractices such as the use of intoxication substances, like marijuana and alcohol, (Pinnock, 2016; Holtzhausen, 2016 O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014; Ward et al., 2012; Swartz et al., 2012) as a means of gaining courage to commit their violent acts. During this stage, the youth on the path to become violent might even start moving around carrying dangerous weapons, which are regarded means for self-protection, such as knives, pangas, and axes (Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019; Sefali, 2014).

The second stage is further followed by an entrance into stage three, which Athens referred to as that of violent dominance engagements. According to Athens (2003), it is at this stage that the violentized individual will put their newly acquired resolve to the test. It is a situation of win or lose (Rhodes, 1999; James, 2004 in Holtzhausen and Heath, 2014; Johnson, 1990), or it becomes a draw (Johnson, 1990). In these violent acts, a win shows that violence worked, while losing is a motivation to start another violent act, with an intention to win (Johnson, 1990). Some drop out at this stage, as they fail to complete all the developmental stages in becoming the feared dangerous violent criminal (Athens, 2015; Rhodes, 1999; Ismaili, 1993; Johnson, 1990). In Khayelitsha, this stage is reached when the youth on course to becoming violentized takes part in the various clashes between the inter- Gurans group violence that he would have joined and other Gurans groups operating in the same community. Such clashes can even take place over quests by the concerned youths to assert their certain rights in communities, which they regard as their niches. In the case of Khayelitsha, the most prevalent platform for clashes between various Gurans groups is territory. In Khayelitsha, territory for these youth is considered to mean controlling the land and most of the

things that matter to the youth within the boundary confines of an area that they would have demarcated as their territory. For instance, if a youth from a rival group from a different location proposes to a girl that lives in a territory regarded by another rival group as theirs, such an action will definitely be interpreted as unwarranted transgression, which can only be resolved by violence against the transgressing youth. This will also lead to further clashes between the group to which the violated youth belong, and the one that would have violated him. Such a clash will normally happen in the event of the harmed youth deciding to avenge his previous violation. This encounter results in dominative breakout, which, in this case, is an act of dominance against one another (Athens, 2015; Athens and Rhodes, 2017). The continuation of this breakout depends on how far the youth will go in proving their dominance over the other. Those who reach the last stage are considered dangerous violent criminals (Athens, 2015; Winton, 2011; O'Donnell, 2003; Ismaili, 1993).

Virulency is the fourth stage which is mentioned in Athens' model. In summary, this phase refers to the situation where the violentized youth reaches a stage of invincibility. In this stage, the perpetrators of violence start to have a sense of the fear they engender in others, and this "perception marks a climax to the subject's experience of violent notoriety" (Johnson, 1990: 295). The excess violence that is displayed in this stage is sometimes regarded as "mentally imbalanced" (Ismaili, 1993: 137). There is a lot of adjustment that needs to happen as part of this self-perception, as the person views themselves as untouchable and invincible (Athens, 2015; Poythress, 1993; Johnson, 1990) and commits to stay for longer with a "more aggressive posture" (Ismaili, 1993: 137) that is unprovoked (Johnson, 1990). Meaning that "the subject has gone full circle, from hapless victim of brutalisation to ruthless victimizer" (Johnson, 1990: 295). They live and die by this motto "Do unto others as they have done unto to you, but do it to them first" (Athens, 2015: 631). Their presence in the community carries fear; a person to be avoided at all costs so as to protect yourself from unprovoked harm (Athens, 2015).

In the case of Khayelitsha, the youth who reach this stage are those who feel that they are now invincible and demonstrate this by embarking on wanton attacks on fellow youths in schools and on ordinary people in public utilities, such as trains and even shopping malls. In general, a key manifestation of this stage is the disregard for authority in both the public spaces they will invade

and in schools where they might decide to hunt down their enemies. If intervention methods are deployed before the final stage is reached, chances of attaining virulency will be avoided (Athens, 1989/1992; Sutherland, 1973). As Athens noted, any individual that finally reaches and completes the virulency stage, becomes a dangerous violent criminal with intentions of causing severe harm and death (Athens, 1992 in O'Donnell, 2003).

Finally, in the case of the Khayelitsha situation, the violentized youth enter the last stage of Athens' model, which he referred to as that of extreme virulency; when they reach a point of no return. At this stage the violentized youth will be fully convinced that their whole lives were permanently entrenched in being violent. For such violentised youth, violence was the only means to an end and the key form of personal security. In Khayelitsha, (as will be revealed in the succeeding chapters of this thesis), violent youth that reach the final stage are represented by two categories. The first group is represented by those who will commit acts of murder or grossly injure their rivals such that they will have a feeling that their personal security will be under severe threat if they discontinue their membership of the Gurans grouping. In this case, they remain in the groups to avoid being attacked by rival groups, whilst having no support at all. Staying in the Gurans groups make them to engage in more violent behavior by expressing their extreme virulence acts towards their opponents. The second category of the youth who reach the last stage are those who go all the way to consult traditional healers who will give them charms to either fence them from possible harm or to enable them to attain an aura of total invincibility. In Khayelitsha, the youths who attain this level always demonstrate extreme bravery during running battles with their rivals. They are also revered by their peers for emerging from most battle contests almost unharmed whilst they themselves would have inflicted gravely or fatal harm on their opponents. In this township, the youth who attain the level of extreme virulency are admired by their peers, who will harbour ambitions to attain the same powers to inflict harm on opponents and even to commit murder with impunity. According to O'Donnell (2003: 750) "violent crime is at once ugly and exciting, and it cannot be fully understood unless its intensity is captured".

Athens' theory can indeed explain violent situations, such as the Gurans violence of Khayelitsha, by analysing the violent youth using the various stages detailed above. Another important intervention that Athens also proffered in building his theory was the aspect of delimiting different

kind of communities, based on how they deal with violence. As Winton noted in his reading of Athens, communities are an important avenue in the quest to understand violentized individuals, for they act as departure points for members to develop violentized self-images (Winton, 2011). As such, it therefore becomes important also to understand community perceptions of violence when investigating the rise of violence cases. In this case, Athens came up with three different types of communities based on how they perceive violence. Accordingly, people living in these communities constantly witness societal evils, such as violence on the streets, schools and within their homes (Pinnock, 2016; Holtzhausen, 2016; O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014; Ward et al., 2012; Swartz et al., 2012; Canada, 1995). Athens argues that violent crime differs in every community; in some it becomes more acute than others (Athens, 2017/2003). This is supported by Sutherland (1936/1973 in Athens, 2015: 632), who states that each community “differs from the other with respect to the degree to which it is organised for or against violence or partly both”. As Athens further elaborates, no matter the difference within communities, the urge for dominance amongst its members continues unabated (Athens, 1998).

According to Athens, the first type of community is the civil minor community, a category which refers to that type of community where the members therein will always try to use civil means to resolve violent situations (Athens, 2015), “non-violent dominance engagements” (Athens, 2015: 632). These communities are not condoned to violent acts, (Athens, 2015). The second type of community is the turbulent minor community, which, according to Athens, use both violent and non-violent strategies to resolve conflicts (Athens, 2015). The last group is the malignant minor community, which is made up of members who use ultraviolent means to settle any disagreement (Athens, 2015). These communities are violent by nature (Athens, 2003), an ‘eye for an eye’, no matter the cost; communities that respond to violence with violence (Nel, 2016). Yet, the evolution of these societies into violent societies is not well understood.

Using the above classifications, Khayelitsha is tilting towards being a malignant minor community. Its malignant elements are caused by Gurans in Khayelitsha. This is because the community, as this study will show, is comprised of both community members who want civil means to prevail as a way of diffusing the violent situation, and those who regard violence as the solution to violent situations. Khayelitsha is made up of community members like educators as

well as other parents still subscribing to civil means of non-violence in defusing Gurans in the community. The other group is comprised of parents and other community members, like taxi drivers, who think Gurans violence can be controlled through deployment of superior violent means as a way of controlling the problem. The third group is comprised of those parents who have given up on their children ever reforming. Such parents decide that the only way out is to assist in protecting their violent children, thereby allowing them to continue their violent activities. As such, this group of parents, who are now firm believers in their children's violence, are the ones who also go out of their way to consult traditional healers to provide charms to their children so that they are protected whilst they remain violent. Thus, if all these categories are summarised, it means that Khayelitsha is now a community that is tilting towards being a malignant minor community. This is because the Gurans violence is so obvious in the community, it means that most of the community have given up on trying to solve problems peacefully and have resorted to solving the Gurans problem with violence only. Athens argues that individuals in these communities use violence for their own benefit against something that they find unacceptable (Athens, 1997/ 1998/ 2015/ 2017). They use physical force with intentions of harming and killing other people who they feel are in their way (Athens, 1998). This does not only affect those engaged in such behaviour but witnesses or observers of such violent acts are also left horrified and helpless.

Residents of malignant communities live in anxiety, fearing for their lives (O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014). They "endure the harsh reality that either they or one of their loved ones could at any time become additions to the list of victims that fall prey to their violent and ultraviolent neighbours during dominance disputes" (Athens, 1998:682). The concerns about violence in these malignant communities is that it affects the entire community (Ward et al., 2012; Athens, 2003). Residents are less likely to look after the other and there is no sense of community (social cohesion) in working together against delinquent behaviour (Furstenburg, 1993). The statements above are clear description of South African townships. Residents of these communities are reminded daily that their lives are in danger.

Comprehensive answers to the following important questions are still lacking: what makes one community more dangerous than the other? At what stage does one community become dangerous, and imbedded with crime and violence? What do we expect of children growing up in such areas?

To obtain holistic answers to these important questions, which enable an understanding of the basis of the violent nature of South African townships, it is necessary to apply the Violentization theory. Indeed, in trying to understand the historical genesis of violence in townships, it is important to note that communities do not become violent in an abrupt manner. Instead, there are underlying factors that lead to such situations which must be studied and understood. Lonnie Athens' work represents one such lens that sought to understand the different stages that a society goes through before reaching the violentization stage. The basis of his argument was that before criminalising individual behaviour we should start by looking at the social composition of the communities from whom they come (Athens, 1998; 2016). The author argues that people become violent because of the experiences that they have endured during their lifetime (Athens, 2015). In some cases, this may be a result of growing up in broken homes and violent societies. Athens' conclusion was also corroborated by Rhodes (1999), who found out that people learn their behaviour from the community and act according to the expectations of that community.

To conclude this section, violentization theory is indeed a model that provides a framework to approach violent case studies, such as that of Khayelitsha. This is because it provides the necessary means to understand both the violentized individual committing acts of violence and the community from which they come. More so, Athens also provided policy recommendations to mitigate each stage of the violentization process. Such policy recommendations are also important in this current study, especially when it will also propose policy recommendations necessary to mitigate the Khayelitsha Gurans problem.

## **2.4 Applicability of Social Identity Theory to Gurans Violence in Khayelitsha**

As stated previously, another theory that has been applied in this thesis, to complement the tenets of violentization theory, is the Social Identity Theory (SIT). Just like the violentization theory, which has been going through a series of developments for a period of over 40 years, STI has been undergoing development for a period of over 50 years. The theorists, Henri Tajfel and John Turner were influenced by the need to explain how group behaviour influences or controls its members (Tajfel, 1982). As Tajfel (1969) explained in his formulations of the theory, its basis is that it starts

by acknowledging that individuals belong to certain groups or community. For Tajfel, societies shape the individual. As such, it is important to study the concerned individuals from the perspective of the same communities that they belong to or grew up in. SIT is used in this study to also explain what happens when a youth elects to join a violent group amongst other social groups in their communities. These groups, to which different people associate, “can be conceptualised as a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category”, who “share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and their membership in it” (Tajfel and Turner, 1979:59).

In the context of this study, SIT informs us that the youth who join violent groups, such as Gurans, consider themselves as being members of social groups. This means that for as long as they are members of that group, their actions and behaviour will be controlled by their membership. In other words, their allegiances will be to their groups and not to their personal selves, relations or opposing groups. Also, as youths and children grow, they are exposed to a complex space with a variety of social sources of information, which may prod them towards developing their own moral standards (Ward in Burton, 2007). Cornbleth (2003: viii) accentuates this view by stating that, “adolescents can be seen as forming and transforming themselves by ‘trying on’ various identities, both off-the-rack and custom-made, as they create their social selves”. This reflects in young people trying to navigate who they are, where they belong, and what resonates with them individually, collectively and within the society.

Group comparison is also another aspect of what it means to be a member of a specific group. As Tajfel and Turner further observed, social groups or categories and the membership of them are associated with positive or negative value connotations (Tajfel and Turner, 1982). This means that individuals within specific groups always compare their own group with other groups. In the event that their ‘social identity’ in that group becomes unsatisfactory, the concerned group members will strive to either join some more positively distinct group and/or to make their existing group more positively distinct (Tajfel and Turner, 1982).

In the Khayelitsha context, what this means is that the youth who join violent groups will always try to remain in that particular group for as long as they perceive it to be the one that serves their interests better than what they can get from other social groups in the same vicinity. In this regard, it can be stated that social identity theory informs us that if more positive and non-violent social groups are created in violence-ridden communities there is a possibility that the youth in such communities will abandon the violent groups and join the positive ones, although these groups might not be able to protect them from the violent groups in those communities.

In several communities, historical experiences of violence underpin and drive current and contemporary experiences of violence. Supporting this position, Ward, van der Merwe and Dawes (2012:4) add that “South African history is steeped in violence, from pre-colonial times through colonisation, slavery, and apartheid”. South Africa’s post-apartheid violence is not attributed to a history of previous full-scale wars. Rather, its contemporary situation emanated from its history of oppression and the apartheid system, which subsequently spurred violent agitations among marginalised communities (Abrahams, 2010; Norman et al., 2007; Dissel, 1997). Stevens and Lockhat (1997) argue convincingly that the socio-political transition in South Africa had profound effects on social, political, economic, and cultural life in general, but these were mostly deep at the micro-level. They further allude that “the resulting oppressive conditions have had profound psychological consequences for the majority of black people in South Africa, especially in black adolescents” (Stevens and Lockhat, 1997:51). Psychological consequences included identity reformation and identity development, as they needed to adjust to the new South Africa, forgetting the former, while embracing the latter (Stevens and Lockhat, 1997). Thus, as Jansen (2017) observed, it might take a long time to create a peaceful functioning state given South Africa’s long history of violence.

## **2.5 The Relevance of the two theories to the study**

The violentisation theory and SIT interact at different points within this study (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Broadly, distorted, or malformed social identities disrupt the normalcy of societal structures and influence the formation of inimical social identities. Resultantly, there is a precipitation of violence at different levels and in different forms within the society. The

violentization theory and SIT allow for a social contextualisation of youth violence in black townships. These theories further aid the understanding of the meaning of Gurans in a wider context. By considering these young boys individually, within their groups, and within the communities they reside in, SIT and the violentization theory describe how their violent activities are attached within social systems, their relationship between themselves and their communities and how these then influence their behaviour. Thrasher (1963) opines that young people, in search of excitement, creativity and play, tend to engage in risky behaviours as a means of testing out their social identities. To some, this is part of their childish fantasies, and being in a group serves as a social function of transition from childhood to adulthood (Thrasher, 1963). Thus, this could be merely a period of readjustment.

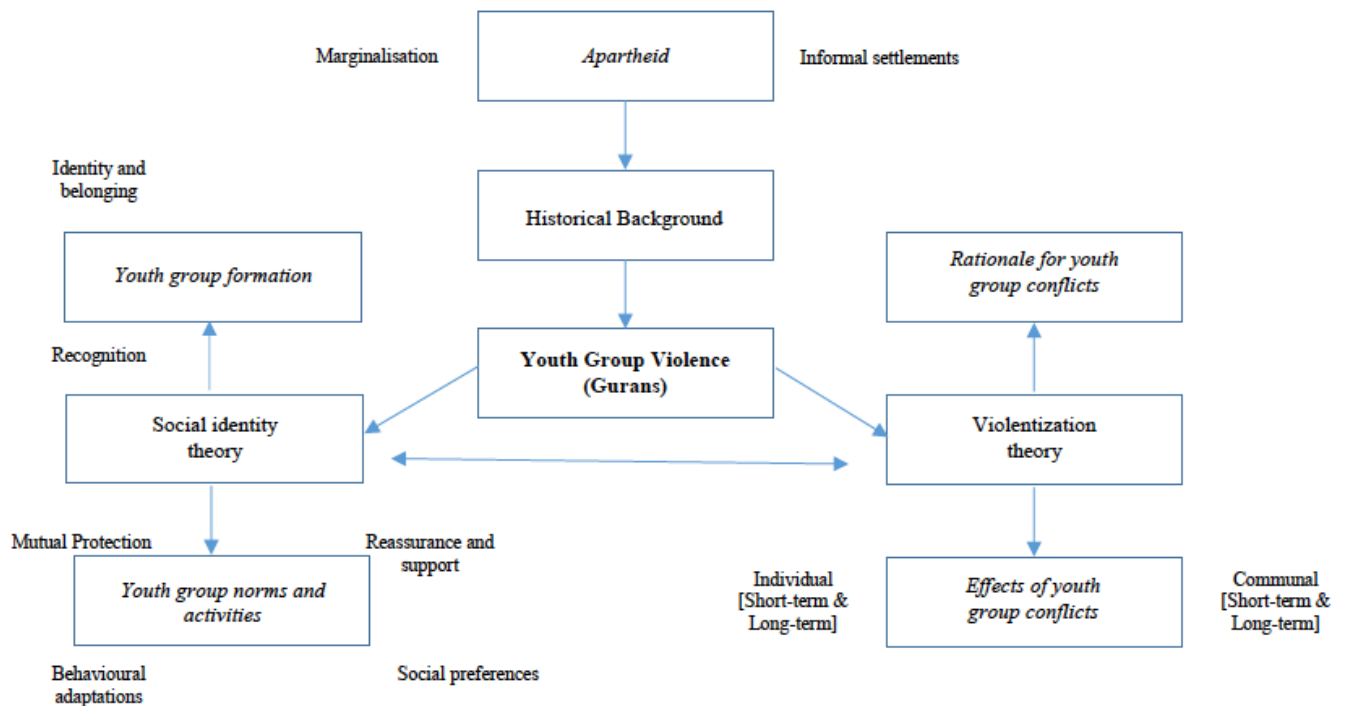


Figure 2-1: Theoretical Perspectives of Gurans and youth violence<sup>2</sup>

Young people growing up in violent communities’ struggle to find good role models, parental supervision, support, and guidance. The absence of family, school, and community support may

<sup>2</sup> This diagram shows South Africa contemporary situation emanated from its history of oppression and the apartheid system. When combined, repression and apartheid initiated a cycle of burgeoning poverty, which subsequently spurred violent agitations among marginalised communities (Abrahams, 2010; Norman et al., 2007; Dissel, 1997).

draw youths into risky behaviour, such as youth violence (Moon, Patton and Rao, 2010). Furthermore, living in a contemporary society that encourages the pursuit of status embeds an identity crisis in young men (Young, 2003). Subsequently, several young men conform to prevalent norms, values or cultures determined socially by the spaces they find themselves in as they develop individual or collective identities.

Bloch and Niederhoffer (1958) and MacCallum (1994) discovered that violence is part of the range of many behaviours that young people are part of, be that 'legal or illegal'. Part of their daily activities include time spent in school, hanging out on street corners and playing soccer (Mguzulwa, 2014). In trying to make sense of what is normal or not, they replicate acts that are frequently done around them or those that appeal to them and drag others into the same. In view of the above, this study looks beyond violent activities and young people as perpetrators to the core of the problem within communities. It offers that there has been some disregard of the role of the community in perpetuating youth violence amongst young men. The lack of a 'sense of community' in communities such as Khayelitsha results in several isolated and ineffective efforts to curb youth violence and the far-reaching effects of this violence lingers. Accordingly, youth violence should be considered as a social problem requiring holistic and effective solutions that are relevant to the affected communities. It is significant to note that while searching for solutions, it is better to understand the intricacies and conflicting identities of the young people growing up in these violent communities.

## **2.6 Review of the literature on youth violence**

Although this current study concerns itself with the issue of cases of youth violence in a given community, Khayelitsha, violence as a societal problem in South Africa has not been confined to this specific community alone. In fact, youth violence is a problem that has been affecting the South African society as a whole (Ward et al., 2012; Swartz et al., 2012; Edelstein, 2016). Moreover, it has also affected many communities worldwide. Against this background, this section specifically examines the manner in which youth violence as a subject of concern in South Africa has been researched and captured in written literature. By carrying out an examination of how such cases have been depicted in written sources, the section explores five questions. These are: What

sort of approaches were used to study the concerned trails of violence? What sort of issues were discussed in such literature? What sort of recommendations were proffered thereafter? Have such recommendations succeeded? What sort of factors have caused such recommendations to fail? All this is done to find the missing links in the quest to deal with the societal problem of youth violence in South Africa, especially when considering its contemporary manifestation in the form of this new violent phenomenon known as Gurans currently bedevilling the township of Khayelitsha. As such, this section starts by examining the literature sources written to date on youth violence in South Africa. This will be followed by an examination of literature perspectives on the same subject in the community of Khayelitsha itself. The section will then conclude by undertaking a review of other selected literature perspectives on the general effects of the problem on the youth in South Africa.

### **2.6.1 Mapping literature on Youth Violence in South Africa**

In terms of tracing the literature on violence in South Africa, especially with regards to the one that informs this current study, perhaps the most important starting point is Jasmina Brankovic's article on the subject that was published in 2019 (Brankovic, 2019). The reason why this article serves as an important point of departure in the quest to trace how violence has both been researched and depicted in South African literature is because it is an in-depth analysis, especially with regards to the history of the subject in South Africa and how research and writing on the topic has been approached over the years. Indeed, when writing about the history of violence research in South Africa, Brankovic's article made two important points that are critical to this current study. First, the article took note of a specific shift that has characterised the concerned literature to date. Secondly, it also managed to identify the violence category under which youth violence in South Africa falls. In terms of Brankovic's main observations, the most notable shift that took place in South Africa's violence research was the one that was a result of the changes that happened in 1994 when the country transited from apartheid rule to a democratic dispensation.

When this transition took place, research on violence shifted from addressing matters of political violence towards those of preventing violence between individuals and remedying its social, economic, and psychological effects (Brankovic, 2019). In other words, for Brankovic, political violence is the typology of violence that had previously characterised research on the subject in

South Africa. This means that it was the main focus of academic attention before the 1994 shifts. However, after the completion of the transition to democracy, South African researchers were also said to have been forced to abandon the practice of developing grand theories of violence and concentrated instead on the ecological approach to understanding and preventing violence (Brankovic, 2019).

In line with the above, it has indeed been the ecological approach that has been central to most academic research and literature produced on the subject matter of violence in South Africa post 1994. However, before moving into detailed analyses of forms of literature that were produced on violence in South Africa using ecological approaches, perhaps it is also important first to mention what this ecological approach that was adopted by South African researchers to research violence after 1994 really entailed. According to Brankovic, the ecological approach referred to a model that was premised on a public health approach to violence prevention. More so, it was also premised on the understanding that violence can be categorised in three different categories namely, self-directed, interpersonal, or collective (Brankovic, 2019). For Brankovic, self-directed violence referred to that type of violence that is directed on the personal self and leads to suicides in its extreme. Interpersonal violence refers to that type of violence that involves family, community members and intimate partners inside the home. Interpersonal violence may also be perpetrated by people who may not know each other (Brankovic, 2019). Lastly, collective violence hand refers to that violence which is motivated by political, economic, and social factors (Brankovic, 2019). Thus, to use Brankovic's categorisations, youth violence in Khayelitsha, is part of interpersonal and collective violence that South African researchers have been seized with since the demise of apartheid. That interpersonal violence is the main form of violence bedeviling South Africa is a view that Brankovic shares with other researchers, such as Rosana Norman et al. (2007), Lancaster and Kamman (2016) and Edelstein (2018) all of who mentioned it as the most pressing challenge that South Africa is currently facing.

Indeed, the perception that violence was a threat to public health and the social well-being of South Africa that needed to be identified and remedied motivated most South African researchers to treat interpersonal violence as a subject requiring serious academic attention. This is evident in the earliest published research and literature on the subject in the post-apartheid era, such as the work

of Lea Gilbert (1996). In line with Brankovic's observations, Gilbert's work was informed by the need to "review the various forms of urban violence and their health consequences" (Gilbert, 1996:873). Although she did not specifically mention youth violence as a category requiring attention, Gilbert's work was important in that it managed to expose Cape Town as a city that had higher homicide mortality rates than most industrialised nations. She also pointed out that most incidences of homicide were associated with Black and Coloured communities and that urban violence was linked to poverty, drug trafficking and its use (Gilbert, 1996). Thus, from an analytical point of view, all these factors mentioned by Gilbert remain relevant in the quest to understand the manifestations and continued prevalence of contemporary cases of violence in South Africa.

However, following Gilbert's observation of the City of Cape Town as a hotspot for violence, Lerer, Matzopoulos and Phillips (1997) too identified the City of Cape Town as a hotspot of violence-related crimes. In carrying out their research and in line with the focus of violence as a threat to public health, Lerer et al. (1997) noted that there was a need to describe accurately the violence and injury mortality rates in Cape Town. Using a cause of death coding system that was based on the 1975 International Classification of Diseases, which refers to non-natural death as death by injury either intentional or unintentional. Lerer et al.'s study found that 60% of all reported homicide cases that had occurred in the Cape Town Metropole around 1994 had taken place in the city's township areas, with Khayelitsha being the leading site (Lerer et al., 1997). Of these homicide cases, the majority were people aged between 15 and 34. According to further findings of Lerer et al., of the homicide cases recorded during the period of their review, the greatest cause of death had been due to what they referred to as sharp force use. Firearms and blunt forces accounted for the second and third highest numbers (Lerer et al., 1997).

The above trend of youth as a subject of concern in research on violence was to continue in the post 2000 period, when the youth continued to be identified as a category of concern in such discussions. Just like Lerer et al. (1997) and before them, Samara's work, whose results were published in 2005, also focused on Cape Town and put the youth therein under the spotlight when he identified them as an age category that was both vulnerable to violence yet culpable of causing the greater number of cases of violence (Samara, 2005). As such, for Samara, when given such a

background, “multifaceted interventions among the youth” were therefore “widely recognised as essential for long term crime reduction and development strategies” (Samara, 2005:209). In terms of the youth being both a vulnerable and culpable group, Samara’s findings were also echoed by those of Norman et al. who found that homicide/interpersonal violence had dominated the South African injury profile for the year 2000 (Norman, Matzopoulos, Groenewald and Bradshaw, 2007). For Norman et al., such violence was more prevalent in the 15-29 age group for males, translating to 184 injuries per 100 000, which was “nine times the global rate” (Norman et al., 2007:653)

Thus, it is also important to analyse the research specifically centred on Khayelitsha so that we can find out why new forms of violence that have subsequently emerged creates an academic gap warranting attention.

## **2.6.2 Youth Violence in Khayelitsha township: An analysis of literature perspectives**

Although the issue of violence in South Africa remained a critical discursive topic at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, much of the academic focus on the problem has been directed at the country’s Black townships. Of these townships, Khayelitsha has been identified as the most violence riddled township in the City of Cape Town and in South Africa as a whole (Institute for Security Studies Crime, 2018; Makanga, Schuurman and Randall, 2017; Super, 2015; Gillespie, 2013; Ward et al., 2012). This status resulted in scholars from different academic disciplines, such as criminology, sociology, and social development to descend on the township to study aspects of violence. The aim of these various scholars was to create knowledge to enable the problem to be understood from several angles, and to help in the formulation of policies aimed at curbing and eradicating the problem. The most notable of the angles in which the problem of violence in Khayelitsha has been approached, which are important for this study, includes those who attempted to map the specific areas of Khayelitsha that were targeted by the violence, those who deployed different methodological approaches meant to understand different specifics of the problem, as well as those who attempted to study the impacts of the problem in schools and amongst young children. Those who attempted to scrutinise some of the disciplinary methods that were being deployed by both communities and the state to curb the problem, completes the list.

Studies that proposed or emphasised the deployment of new methodological approaches to examine violence in Khayelitsha include the respective works of Leon Holtzhausen, Kelly Gillespie, and Ian Edelstein. Holtzhausen, who studied both Gugulethu and Khayelitsha, applied Lonnie Athens' theory of violentization in a bid to understand why some youth who experienced high levels of victimisation and abuse went on to commit crime and become violent criminals, whilst others do not (Holtzhausen, 2016). Additionally, he also wanted to understand the factors contributing to youth being violentized at different levels (Holtzhausen, 2016). To pursue such goals, Holtzhausen interviewed a total of 78 youths. As part of his study's findings, Holtzhausen went on to find that young people from high-risk communities in the Western Cape province move through Athens' four stages of violentization. Holtzhausen concluded by asserting that the theory of violentization offered a way to make distinctions among violent juvenile offenders, by examining the social experiences of offending (Holtzhausen, 2016). Although Holtzhausen made interesting discoveries on the processes of violentisation, which examined individual violent youth and the violentisation development stages, the current study wanted to explore at what happens when those same youth operate in unison as Gurans social groups and the perceptions of the community.

On the other hand, and within the same scope of proffering methodological approaches that can help create better understandings of Khayelitsha violence, Kelly Gillespie (2013) is another researcher who deployed ethnographic approaches in a bid to understand the phenomena of vigilante justice as meted out to violent offenders. Gillespie's findings were useful especially to the quest of thinking about the broad meanings of violence and what it meant to the well-being of the concerned community. Indeed, thinking about methods of justice as part of attempts to understand the whole meaning of violence in Khayelitsha is also an aspect that informed other authors such as Super (2015) and Maringira and Gibson (2019), whose respective works were also modelled along Gillespie's line of thinking. Firstly, Maringira and Gibson's work documented the manner in which communities in Khayelitsha were both using violent and peace-making opportunities and strategies in their unending struggles with young violent offenders (Maringira and Gibson, 2019). However, like Gillespie, Super's concern was also that of community forms of punishment on violent offenders. In this regard, Super saw the concept of community as one

that was riddled with problems. For Super, a community was a shallow and dangerous form of uncooperative that does not live up to its promises of full participation (Super, 2015). This is because, despite a community being regarded as a tool to connect the state to the population, vigilantes also claimed to act in the name of the same community when meting out informal justice to violent offenders (Super, 2015). This means that instead of eradicating the problem, violence will remain entrenched as part of the social fabric of that particular community. Hence to reinterpret Super, the concept of community in violence-related situations is a concept still requiring further interrogations.

Scholars who attempted to map the phenomena of violence in Khayelitsha constitute another dimension studied to date in that particular community. The leading scholars who attempted to study Khayelitsha violence in this way includes Nleya and Thompson (2009), Manaliyo (2014), Manaliyo and Muzindutsi (2013) as well as Edelstein and Arnott (2019). In this regard, Nleya and Thompson's (2009) research initially sought to find out the three most important problems facing Khayelitsha. According to the results of their study, violence and crime alongside unemployment emerged as the most pressing problem that was bedevilling the community. In fact, as the results of their study revealed, the murder statistics for Khayelitsha were two and a half times the national average (Nleya and Thompson, 2009). Thus, what such statistics meant was that Khayelitsha was a real cause for national concern. Nleya and Thompson's study was also important in that it managed to bring to light the real problem in Khayelitsha and nationally. Previously, before their study, the existing national perception was that crime did not really pose serious challenges to South Africa (Nleya and Thompson, 2009).

Manaliyo and Muzindutsi (2013) are the other scholars who also attempted to deploy the aspect of mapping as a strategy to study violence in Khayelitsha. Situating their research in the Site B section of the township, Manaliyo and Muzindutsi's study also made significant findings in the field of violence and crime in both Khayelitsha and South Africa. According to one of their key findings, apart from crime being perpetrated by the youth and young adults, some of the perpetrators were as young as 10 years old (Manaliyo and Muzindutsi, 2013). Such a revelation resulted in Manaliyo and Muzindutsi concluding that the main reason why young children were involved in crime was due to a breakdown of informal social controls. For them, when a community has strong and

effective informal social controls, crime rates are minimised (Manaliyo and Muzindutsi, 2013). That a breakdown of social structures, such as family, church and community cause a rise in crime rates is a view that was also shared by Lancaster and Kamman (2016), who made similar discoveries when examining the causes of high murder rates in South Africa. However, since violence is an issue that can be caused by multiple factors as demonstrated by the respective works of the authors discussed above, what it means is that violence itself still remains a subject requiring thorough investigations to understand its different forms.

In addition to the researchers mentioned above, another researcher who also advocated for thinking about the broad meanings of violence and how the subject should be approached was Ian Edelstein. While also emphasising the importance of methodology in approaching a subject matter such as the violence in Khayelitsha, Edelstein stated that “a full understanding of the aetiology of violence” is one that “requires longitudinal research” and approaches that involve “following potential perpetrators over time, to understand where individual propensities for extreme violence originate” (Edelstein, 2018:33). Thus, it is in line with Edelstein’s thinking that this study is also premised on the need to understand the broad meanings of violence in Khayelitsha, especially when given the academic gap that has been created by the emergence of a new form of youth violence, the Gurans. Furthermore, with youth violence seen in this light, it is important to also look at school experiences of youth violence in Khayelitsha township. Educators and learners have lived in fear because of such violence in Khayelitsha and this has an impact on educational attainment and progress in these schools (O’Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014; Mguzulwa, 2014; Equal Education, 2012).

### **2.6.3 Mapping township schools’ experiences of youth violence**

Even before democracy, education was valued as a positive influencer of the development of an individual and a society. Consequently, of the various studies that were carried out in Khayelitsha with the intention of understanding the prevalence of the problem in schools, it is important to state that they were following in the footsteps of Flisher and his colleagues who had carried out such a study in Cape Town schools in 1993, (Flisher, Ziervogel, Chalton and Robertson, 1993). In their findings, Fisher and his colleagues noted that schools in that city were becoming sites of violence. The results of their study had shown that 10% of secondary school males and 1.5 %

females in those schools carried knives to school (Flisher et al., 1993). Such a discovery prompted Fisher and colleagues to declare that there was an urgent need to address the effects of exposure to violence in schools and to prevent the development of violent tendencies in the young (Flisher et al., 1993). In the post 2000 period, Flisher and his colleagues' call to urgently study the manifestation of violence in Cape Town township schools has been heeded by scholars such as Hartnack (2018), Mguzulwa and Gxubane (2019), Flisher and Gevers (2012) and Liang, Flisher, Lombard (2007).

First, although, Hartnack's study was focused on a single school, Manyano High School, the study's findings are nevertheless important to my study, especially on the need to trace the origins of the current form of violence, its effects and why it is important to fight for its complete eradication. Indeed, according to the particulars of Hartnack's findings, between 2009 and 2012, Manyano school experienced a phenomenon called *Amakhubalo*, meaning that learners involved in gangsterism would acquire *muthi* from a *sangoma* or traditional healer. This *muthi* enabled the concerned students to become possessed for the purpose of fighting rivals (Hartnack, 2018). The fact that students, who acquired *muthi*, seemed to have gained extra powers tempted other students to acquire similar *muthi* to protect themselves. What this means is that all the involved students were preparing themselves to become violent. However, of particular interest in the Manyano case was that the authorities intervened and managed to eradicate the problem from the school (Hartnack, 2014: 6). Nonetheless, although violence was removed from Manyano school premises, the problem nevertheless remained prevalent in other Khayelitsha schools. As, Mguzulwa and Gxubane's study later revealed, cases of learners either repeating grades, dropping out from school, or being expelled from school due to absenteeism, caused by fear of violent acts within school premises were still a common occurrence in Khayelitsha (Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019). Although discussing the value of education is not necessarily the focus of this study, it is important to mention that lack of prioritisation of children's education is one of the factors that contribute to the phenomena of violent youths.

#### **2.6.4 Profiling education institutions and Khayelitsha township participation in mitigation of youth violence**

Several scholars, including Ward et al. (2012), Swartz et al. (2012), Jeftas and Artz (2007) have highlighted that Black youths have to navigate their living and learning spaces, despite several disadvantages. Their insufficient resources prod them to ‘take control’ of their education and the township culture for survival (Swartz et al., 2012). The situation is worsened by the seeming apathy of some educators and parents, who struggle to acknowledge the challenges that youths go through each day. Instead, government is used as ‘scape goat’ for not being able to control the escalated violence in townships like Khayelitsha (Manaliyo and Muzindutsi, 2013).

Santiago, Lee, Lucero, and Wiersma (2017) suggest that youth behaviours may be shaped by good neighbourhood and norms enforced by the community. Youths’ transition to adulthood and the attainment of a good education is either helped or hindered by external influences, such as schools and community. When these external forces fail it, may result in youths being confronted with option of joining delinquent groups, which in turn spur school dropout, teenage pregnancy, and drug abuse (Panday et al., 2012). According to Manaliyo and Muzindutsi (2013), it is the role of the community, including parents, to control the delinquent behaviour of the youth living in those communities. However, it is suggested that in order for the parents to take full control of the lives of their children, it is significant that they monitor their children’s behaviour (Srivastav and Mathur, 2021).

However, we also need to acknowledge that people from townships like Khayelitsha are already faced with multiple and complex challenges, such as the levels of poverty and inequalities. As Kanbur and Squire (2001) observed, inequality and poverty have been shockingly persistent over a long period, which can make it difficult for such communities to take full control and monitor their children’s behaviour, as the entire community is fighting for ‘survival’ each day. It is then argued that this increases the chances of young people’s people involvement in violence, as long as they live in those communities (Cooper, De Lannoy and Rule, 2015; Smith, De Lannoy, Dover, Lambert, Levitt and Watson, 2015). Some parents develop parental anxiety of what might happen to their children outside their homes or on their way to school (Srivastav and Mathur, 2021).

## **2.7 Summary**

This chapter discussed the theoretical frameworks that informed this study, which are Violentization Theory and Social Identity Theory. It was found that whilst Violentization was useful in studying the violent youth, Social Identity Theory accounted for the actions of the group collective. Thus, when put together, the two theories are also useful in explaining what happens when youth at different levels of violentisation coalesce into group and begins to commit violent crimes. The chapter also analysed the existing literature on youth violence in South Africa as well as that which focused specifically on the township of Khayelitsha. It was found that whilst scholars have indeed been engaging with the problem of violence in townships, there is much to be done to trace the problem's new manifestations. Also discussed here are the causes and psychological effects of youth violence on other youth. It was found that the problem affected the youth especially in spaces of learning, such as schools. A brief overview of existing legislation relevant to children and youth in South Africa was also set out. However, despite adequate legislation, most of the policies to give practical effect to the legislation were formulated to address past legacies. there is thus the need to formulate new policies informed by new research on new forms of violence and based on challenges that the present-day youth are currently facing.

# **Chapter 3: Methodology**

## **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapters discussed the rise of violent youth groups known as Gurans in the township of Khayelitsha in the city of Cape Town, South Africa. It was also found that Violentization and Social Identity Theories were the best placed frameworks to be applied to explore all the discussive elements pertaining to recent behaviours by the youth of Khayelitsha township participating in a new form of youth violence known as Gurans. However, this chapter continues to explore this issue of Gurans violence by discussing the methodological approaches that were used to collect data in this thesis. In presenting the methodological approaches, the chapter also gives an outline of the steps that were undertaken during fieldwork. Furthermore, elements of the methodological approaches, such as research design, population and sampling, data collection and research tools, data analysis, verification of findings, ethical considerations, as well as the researcher's own conduct during fieldwork are also presented. In addition, the complexity of working with multiple different personalities, which required patience, understanding, perseverance and determination are also described in detail in this chapter.

## **3.2 Research Design**

A qualitative research approach was adopted for this study. This approach was adopted due to the need to understand the problem at hand and as well as to effectively collect data that will answer the research questions set for the study (Creswell, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Furthermore, this method was also chosen for the sole reason that the study wanted to have an in depth understanding of the phenomena by giving preference to all submissions volunteered by the participants. In other words, a conversation with the participants was very important for the current study. As such, in terms of how a research design for this study was crafted, the first step taken into consideration was to map the area under study. This was done for the purposes of creating an understanding of the area under investigation. This stage was then followed by the outlining of the data collection methodologies that were meant to understand the effects of Gurans problem from the perspective of both the perpetrators and their victims. Thus, the other data collections methods

that were devised for this study with the aim of getting insights on the problem of youth violence included individual interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. In this regard, these methods were applied in this study to get information from both the perpetrators and victim participants in this study, who were comprised of the youth Gurans members, ordinary community members, educators, and as well as other youth and learners from the various schools in Khayelitsha.

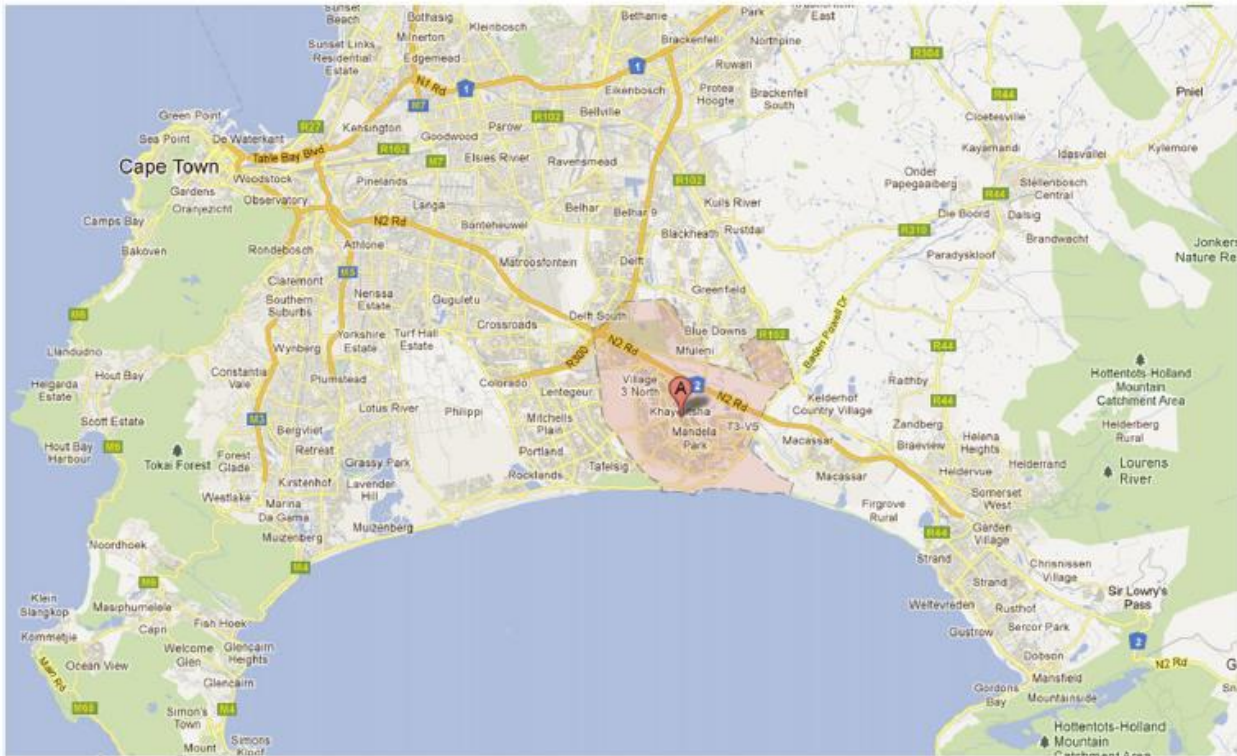


Figure 3-1: Map of Khayelitsha (Google Maps, 2012)

### 3.3 Data Collection Methods and Tools

A triangulation approach was used in this study to ensure thoroughness when conducting this qualitative study. As a study that used semi-structured in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation (pre-study phase), the three methods complimented each other in the quest to explore the question of what the Gurans violence phenomenon entails. This is despite the fact that data from participant observation was not included in the analysis, since the method had not been one of those selected for data collection in this study.

The method was only used in the preparatory phase of the study. Nonetheless, despite this, it was extremely useful to the researcher in that it contributed to revealing the meanings of Gurans violence and its effect on the entire community from different but complimentary angles. Information derived from the two techniques (FGDs and Interviews) analysed together with that derived from a document analysis of secondary sources such archival records, journal articles, books, newspaper articles, and reports to ensure a detailed production of knowledge about the problem of youth violence in Khayelitsha. In doing so, this was motivated by Orlikowski and Baroudi's (1991) relativistic convictions, which advocated for the application of a multiplicity of approaches in any quest to understand a given research problem. According to their observation, a single perspective for studying phenomena is by nature restrictive and hence the need for multiple perspectives (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991). Thus, in this regard, the researcher applied these various data collection tools in order to thoroughly examine the social interaction and the reality of the Gurans phenomenon in Khayelitsha. The combination of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), and participant observation, including the secondary sources allowed for cross examination, reliability, and validation of the current research study findings.

### **3.3.1 Interviews**

The research used a semi-structured approach because it provided the richness of the participants' interpretation and the reality of their world. According to Collins and Hussey (1997), a semi-structured interview is an engagement between the researcher and participants of the study. It allows the use of a set of key questions prepared by the researcher in the study (Yin, 2016). Thus, to provide a framework for engaging with the participants, this current research used a semi-structured interview guideline, which included open-ended questions.

In their form, in-depth individual interviews are a qualitative data collection method with open-ended questions, which help explore respondents' points of view, experiences, feelings, and perspectives on a situation or phenomenon (Boyce and Neale, 2006; Silverman, 2016). Greeff (2005) describes semi-structured interviews as ideal for collecting comprehensive and comparable data. Thus, according to Newton (2010), an interview schedule guideline must have a list of fairly specific questions to which interviewees must respond in ways they feel like. In other words, in

semi-structured interviews, interviewees are not limited in their responses by the parameters that normally guide the structured ones.

In this study, in-depth interviews were used with educators, members of the community, as well as crew members involved in Gurans violence. One of the benefits of individual in-depth interviews is that they help discover valuable insights of the real story about the phenomenon under study from the people 'in the know' (Boyce and Neale, 2006). Therefore, in this study, in-depth individual interviews with crew members assisted the researcher in obtaining rich data from crew members. They also allowed for the interviewees and the researcher to build trust, which was an essential element of the research process. Furthermore, the in-depth one-on-one interviews worked quite well with other sample groups (members of the community and educators). They indeed provided richer and in-depth information, as the participants felt relaxed and comfortable judging by their body languages during the interviews. The interviews with each sample group took place in convenient and central spaces. They were further conducted during times when the interviewees and researcher felt comfortable and safe. The interviews with educators, members of the community and crew members were nevertheless conducted at schools, homes and other places that were deemed convenient to both researcher and the interviewees.

As far as the interview process was concerned, a voice recorder was used to record all the proceedings of the interviews. This gave the interviewer the ability to analyse other key elements during the interview process, such as non-verbal indications and body language. Notes were only taken at regular intervals to enable the researcher as a backup in case the recorder developed some technical faults. Nonetheless, the use of a recorder during the interviews was in tandem with Smith et al.'s (1995 cited in De Vos et al., 2011:359) observation that its use as the main recording technique offers more flexibility than entirely depending on taking notes. However, in line with ethical considerations, the researcher asked for the participants' permission to record them during the interviews before commencement of each interview. Although the questions in the semi-structured interview guide were written in English (which is a second language to the participants), the researcher sometimes had to translate some of the questions into their own language (isiXhosa) during interviews every time they showed signs of struggling to understand the questions. However, in terms of responding, the participants were free to respond in a language with which

they were comfortable. For those who responded in isiXhosa, who also constituted the majority, their responses were transcribed in that language and later translated into the English during the thesis write up exercise. Transcripts were handwritten by the researcher.

### **3.3.2 Focus Groups Discussions**

The focus group discussions were scheduled for three groups namely: affected youth, educators, and community members. The researcher thought it would be beneficial to separate the groups because their FGD guidelines were different, which was due to the differences in questions that each group was supposed to respond to. However, the researcher managed to have FGDs only with affected youth due to challenges encountered in gathering other sample groups.

FGDs are an efficient qualitative data-collection method involving discussions held with groups of approximately 6 -12 people. These people have a common interest or characteristics and are brought together by a facilitator for group discussion (Wilkinson, 2016). FGDs provide an opportunity to collect data related to the topic of the researcher's interest (Freitas et al., 1998; Marczak and Sewell, 2007 cited in Masadeh, 2012; Silverman, 2016). Among the benefits of focus groups is that the researcher can discover how different groups think and feel about a given subject. The researcher can also ascertain why groups hold certain perceptions and opinions. This will yield detailed information about personal and group feelings in a short space of time (Threlfall, 1999). The challenge with FGDs is that some members of the group will be reserved and quiet while others are talkative and dominant within the group. To overcome this challenge, the researcher used FGD guides, which had rules that allowed an opportunity for everyone to speak, without feeling out of place

The approach used to collect data during the FGDs involved getting participants' personal and background information, experiences, feelings, knowledge, and interpretations of Gurans violence. The group discussions were scheduled according to participants' own schedules together with the safety and convenience for both parties. The appropriate time for the learner groups was after school hours, for the benefit of all the group participants. However, the educators allowed the use of free periods that were not allocated for teaching, which were convenient for both the affected youth and the researcher. In addition, it was difficult to engage with the affected youth (hereafter

referred to as AY) at certain times. This is because the free periods occurred after the lunch break or before school ended, and learners were usually too exhausted to concentrate.

A voice recorder was also used for the focus group discussions. In this regard, the duration for each FGDs discussion was between 30 and 60 minutes. In contrast to other participant groups, AY were comfortable with both English and isiXhosa. However, although most of the FGDs flowed smoothly, some of them were disrupted and had to be discontinued due to sporadic eruptions of youth violence both inside and outside the school premises. The classroom where the interviews were being conducted were locked, and, sometimes, the focus groups were dismissed because learners did not feel safe and were curious to know what was happening to their peers. Some of the youth/learners were thrilled that they were released early from school on that particular day. There was an incident where a learner was attacked inside the school premises by school dropouts or bunkers who used a hole in the fence to enter. They took his school back-pack and scattered his belongings and ran to the staffroom for safety. The researcher was warned that those attackers would come back for the student, but fortunately he was using private transport for safety, which was organised by his father for him to travel to and from school. This learner was not even part of the youth violence but was assaulted because of his friend, who was also innocent. Their only 'sin' was to defend themselves when they were attacked on their way home, because they lived in a location different from the school's. It is worth mentioning that more incidents happened during the focus group interviews with the affected youth, which will be further explained in chapters 4 and 5.

### **3.3.3 Participant Observation**

Before the data collection, the researcher did some participant observation for a year, as a pre-study phase. This was of great benefit to the study because it helped in confirming whether youth violence was an ongoing activity in the community or not. During this time, informal group discussions were held with some youths in the community, which were not recorded since permission was not granted by the group. The youth would allow the researcher to walk with them while meeting with their peers on street corners, which included some crew members (herein referred to as CMs) and AY. However, this meant that they belonged in the same location (see figure 1.1: Broad overview of Gurans) to avoid any conflicts with rivals. One Friday, some of the

boys came running to the researcher's place because there was a fight that was happening between the rival groups. They called the researcher to watch how Gurans happen, and when we got there, they were fighting, throwing stones, pangas, and using golf sticks. During this fight, there were community members of Khayelitsha (later referred to as CMK) and police vans on the far end watching the fights, while taxi drivers tried to resolve by shooting in the sky to scare the CMs away. This observation provided the researcher with deeper knowledge on how the Gurans groups engaged with each other in their fights especially with regards to the tools that were used as on the determination the different groups had to inflict harm on each other.

The researcher also attended a few street committee meetings that happened once a month for a year to discuss the social issues that were affecting the community, especially the issue of crime and youth violence in the community. Unfortunately, during these meetings audio devices were not allowed inside, as the CMK were worried about their safety. However, the researcher was allowed to write notes to capture some of the issues raised during the meetings and this helped to validate the views shared by the research participants. Most of these street committee meetings were attended by community leaders, and a few members of the community, as some were less interested, especially the youth. These meetings allowed participation of all attendees to ask questions, contribute with comments, in whatever was discussed that day. Attending these meetings as a pseudo community member allowed the researcher to get a better understanding of how the community resolved certain issues in the community in relation to the local-based justice system.

## **3.4 Population and Sampling**

### **3.4.1 Study Population**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) a study's population consists of all the subjects that the study seeks to research and is also of interest to the researcher. Thus, the researcher should be able to identify individuals with experiences, perspectives, behaviours, practices, identities, and personalities pertinent to a study (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010).

The population for this study was based in Khayelitsha. Khayelitsha is one of the segregated communities in Cape Town, with 99% black African residents, most of whom are immigrants from the Eastern Cape Province (Pijper, Breetzke and Edelstein, 2021; Seekings 2013). Accordingly, the dominant language in the community is isiXhosa. The researcher specifically selected the crew members, affected youth (consisting of secondary schooling learners from Khayelitsha), Educators from the same schools, and Community members of Khayelitsha.

### **3.4.2 Sampling Technique and Procedure**

A non-probability sampling technique was used to select the participants for this study. Non-probability sampling is a process whereby only a certain portion of the individuals are purposely or judgmentally selected by the researcher from the population (Battaglia, 2008). The type of non-probability sampling technique that was used to select respondents in this study was purposive sampling. This technique involves the identification and location of individuals with specific characteristics as specified by the researcher. This kind of sample was selected because of its relevance to the purpose and objectives of the study (Johnson and Christensen, 2008; Denscombe, 2010). Furthermore, snowball sampling technique was helpful, in that the first research participants that were identified went on to refer and connected the researcher to other participants who met the selection criteria (Abubakar, Etikan, and Alkassim, 2015; Sedgwick, 2013) for the purpose of obtaining the non-probability sampling.

The research sample consisted of local schools (both educators and learners), crew members and community members (which included ordinary members). Eight formal focus group interviews (involving a total of 106 learners), five individual interviews — which comprised five educators from different schools in Khayelitsha — and 10 individual interviews with crew members, including five community members, were conducted. In all, a total of 116 participants in the study. This was completed after the research interview guideline was modified to suitably address the objectives of the research.

The different groups of participants are described below.

1. **Crew members:** This group included youths, who were high school learners, and those who had dropped out. This group provided insights into the main activity of Gurans, especially their experiences and involvement. This helped the researcher gain knowledge and have a better understanding of youths' involvement in violence.
2. **Affected youths:** This group comprised of youths who do not participate in Gurans but are directly and indirectly affected by the violence perpetrated by crew members. The O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry (2014) reported that children and youths are among the most vulnerable victims of violence in Khayelitsha. They do not feel safe on the streets and even in their own homes. Therefore, this group provided insight into what it feels like to grow up in such an environment and how youth violence has influenced their well-being.
3. **Educators:** This group is made of educators in Khayelitsha's schools. The input from these educators provided insights about their experiences with youth violence within the school context. It is worth noting that educators spend about half of the day with these youths. The O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry (2014) also revealed that educators and learners live in fear and panic because of youth violence in Khayelitsha and this could have an impact on the learning and development of children.
4. **Community members of Khayelitsha:** This group included ordinary members of the community. A previous study conducted by the researcher revealed that some children had to relocate to other areas or schools because Khayelitsha's residents were worried about the safety of their children. Furthermore, some of the homes were vandalised by crew members and children were injured or murdered because of youth violence (Mguzulwa, 2014).

The researcher intended to have separate focus group interviews with both the educators and members of the community, but this was not possible. This was not possible because some of the community members and educators were not interested in participating in the study. Nonetheless, the researcher was able to acquire relevant and in-depth information from a purposefully selected

sample. Furthermore, the researcher was able to accomplish focus group discussions (FGDs) with affected youths only. These were very helpful discussions. These FGDs were conducted with both male and female learners, because it was going to be insightful to hear the different dynamics from both genders concerning the phenomena (Gurans). The participants had the options of answering in either English or in the indigenous isiXhosa language. The FGDs were used to further interrogate the issues and themes that were generated during the interviews. There were responses from the individuals that came out strongly, which the researcher wanted to interrogate further as a matter interest and value to the study. One-on-one interviews with the members of the community were conducted with due consideration of age, marital status, education, and length of stay in Khayelitsha. It was important to ensure that those who took part in this study have been affected by the conflict. The slight differences in the composition of this sample were to observe if differences in age, marital status, education, length of stay or gender, do have an influence on the experiences and perceptions of community members.

### **3.4.3 Gaining Entry**

Every research has its own unique method of gaining official access to research sites. Gaining entry to the research field has been one of the drawbacks in research processes, especially if the study involves a sensitive topic (Johl and Renganathan, 2010). According to Feldman, Bell and Berger (2003 cited in Wanat, 2008:192), “negotiating access is based on building relationships with gatekeepers, which is an ill-defined, unpredictable, uncontrollable process”. This view is shared by Burgess (1991) and Maruyama and Deno (1992). The researcher gained access through the official gatekeepers of every sample that was chosen for the study (members of the crew, affected youths, ordinary members of the community and local school educators). However, it was more difficult to interview community members and educators than the affected youth and crew members. It took months to gain access for conducting the interviews, although working with the gatekeepers was not as difficult as anticipated.

Table 3-1: Sampling, Gaining entry, Data collection

SAMPLE GROUPS	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	GAINING ENTRY	CRITERIA
GROUP 1 Crew members	Semi-structure individual interviews	They were approached in bigger groups at their usual spots, e.g., street corners	Young men (14-21 years old) who are involved in a Gurans violent group
GROUP 2 Affected youth	Focus group discussions	Selection was in four different schools in Khayelitsha (Gatekeeper: principals and WCDE)	Learners from 14-19 years (Grade 8- 12)
GROUP 3 Educators	Semi-structure individual interviews	Selection was in 4 different schools in Khayelitsha (Gatekeepers were the principals and WCDE)	Educators
GROUP 4 CMKs	Semi-structure individual interviews	They were approached through street committee	General members of the community

### 3.4.3.1 Accessing Crew members

The researcher negotiated the entry with this sample by approaching one of the crew members who she knew before who directed the researcher towards their usual ‘spot’. This crew of young boys gather in specific places where they meet to discuss various issues such as, targets, soccer, girls, dress codes, and how to win a battle over their opponents. In most of the cases, the school leavers or dropout crew members (hereafter referred to as dropouts) usually arrive first at such places. They will wait until most of their peers arrive so that they can start their discussions or proceed to fighting engagements. The process of approaching the crew members themselves was done either in big and small groups or individually. For those who were approached individually this was because some of them felt uncomfortable being approached in public or full view of others

During the process of identifying the crew members, the purpose of the research was explained further to the gatekeeper and other members, who had already agreed to participate in the study. This enabled them to understand their role in the study and gave an opportunity to voluntarily partake in the study or not. The majority of those who declined to participate were the highly

violent ones who thought participating in these discussions was likely to expose them. The researcher, while on the fieldwork, witnessed some of the crews' fights, but it was too dangerous to take pictures or approach them because of the severity of the fights. The researcher applied all the necessary ethical considerations to safeguard the participants' interests and these considerations were also applied to all the sample groups of the study.

### **3.4.3.2 Affected youth and educators**

Gaining access to the affected youths and educators was negotiated with school principals and school coordinators. The researcher first requested permission from the Western Cape Department of Education (WCDE) before approaching school principals to interview the educators and affected youth. The principal was the right person through whom to gain access, working together with life orientation educators. School is a better and appropriate place to approach the affected youths and educators, since they spend most of their time there. Furthermore, it is much safer than meeting at random street corners, in malls, or homes. Once that was successfully negotiated, the researcher called for a meeting to explain the purpose of the research to the educators and the affected youth separately. This was done successfully with a few hindrances, which were expected. It is worth noting that the researcher separated the meetings with the educators and learners to allow for both sample groups to feel comfortable if they decided to voluntarily partake in the study.

It was not difficult to conduct focus groups with affected youth, but the task was harder with the educators. As such, the research resorted to individual interviews. The educators raised objections with their principals, stating that they were too busy to sit down for interviews. The researcher understood their concerns, as they were not expected to participate involuntarily. However, this put the principal in a very difficult position, because some of the educators spent most of their time in the staffroom chatting. In one of the schools, for instance, the principal had to insist that they return to the classrooms. By and large, the educators had no problem with the researcher interviewing the affected youth, but it was almost impossible to interview them as educators.

### **3.4.3.3 Community members of Khayelitsha**

It was assumed that the easiest and most appropriate way of approaching the community members was through the street committee, since they have been appointed as the gatekeepers of the community. In fact, they are the first point of contact towards the community, especially for research purposes. However, the researcher found it very challenging to approach the street committee and engage with them due to issues of bureaucracy. The researcher requested permission from the street committees to conduct the research in the community of Khayelitsha, with community members from different sections within Khayelitsha, as this would help in strengthening the findings of the study. The criteria for the CMK were to get perspectives from parents, guardians, and general community members, which would give varied responses from the participants about their experiences regarding Gurans.

An easy access to the street committee would have allowed the researcher to proceed with the interviews sooner, but they were delayed. Finally, the researcher was able to meet with street committees, explained the purpose of the study, and requested a meeting with members of the community to inform them about the study. Unfortunately, this meeting never took place. As a consequence, the researcher approached the members of the community individually, and through referrals from those that have been interviewed already in the study. Initially, the researcher hoped to have FGDs with CMK, but ended up conducting individual interviews. In this case, the selection criteria were based on availability. However, this process was time-consuming as it was difficult to find participants who were willing to take part in the study and were available. Overall, the individual interviews produced conclusive and detailed information, though the initial plan was changed to suit the participants of the research study.

## **3.5 Data Analysis**

### **3.5.1 Eight steps of Tesch**

De Vos et al. (2005:333) define data analysis as “the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data”. In other words, data analysis transforms collected information into findings. The 20 in-depth individual interviews and FGDs recordings from the data collection were thoroughly transcribed and interpreted according to certain themes created by the researcher to analyse data for this study. The 20 individual interviews included educators, CMs and CMK. The FGDs included 106 AY (57 males and 49 females) from four different schools in Khayelitsha. The thematic content analysis of the transcribed data was manually hand coded for each sample that participated in the study. From these samples, recurring themes were established from common words that were said by participants from the key questions of the study that were asked during data collection.

The data analysis was based on Tesch’s (1990) data analysis procedure, cited in De Vos et al. (2011:490). Using Tesch’s framework, analysing data for this study was done according to the following steps:

1. Each of the individual interviews and FGDs documented verbatim from the digital recorder. Most of them were in isiXhosa, with a few in English. Those in isiXhosa (the participants’ mother tongue) were translated into English (their second language) for subsequent analysis.
2. The researcher went through interviews and FGDs in order to make sense of the data. The interviews were clear and simple, which helped the researcher in making some notes. The researcher repeatedly went over the recorded and transcribed interviews to make sure that nothing was missing. After transcribing the interviews and discussions, the researcher created a mind map by hand and drafted some notes according to the objectives of the study, towards identifying common ideas from the transcribed interviews. Subsequently, themes were developed and coded into categories and sub-categories.
3. The transcripts were marked with colours according to the headings and uniqueness. This was organised using a table format, grouping together common elements of the transcribed

interviews. This approach was very helpful in clustering everything together into the common themes that emerged from the interviews.

4. The findings were written up using the coding framework, looking for the interrelationships between themes, categories, and sub-categories. The coding process helped the researcher to define and understand the data that were collected. This brought out the uniqueness and similarities of the respondents' narratives regarding each objective and the questions asked concerning the study.
5. Concrete quotations were used to clarify the themes, categories, and sub-categories that emerged, and these were related to various works in the literature review.
6. The data were analysed based on the themes, categories, and sub-categories, in order to provide critical understanding of the study.
7. Finally, the information was compared with the transcriptions for completeness and a deeper level of understanding.

### **3.5.2 Thematic Coding**

The data analysis was based on thematic coding, which involved organising the data from the open-ended interviews and FGDs (Vaughn and Turner, 2016). Thematic coding aids interpretative phenomenological analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019). The themes that arise from the coding, provide insight on issues that are important about the data in relation to research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2008). A theme shows, to an extent, a pattern in the responses. However, the importance of the theme is not about the frequency or prevalence in the data set but about how pertinent it is to the research question (Braun and Clarke, 2019). The process of thematic coding shows a movement from simple description to interpretation, which is the movement to theorising the data.

The data was organised according to the research questions. In organising the data, the researcher came up with codes. These codes were based on two categorisations: theoretical and substantive categories. According to Maxwell (1996), theoretical categories are derived from the literature review and the theory part of the study, and substantive codes or categorisation arise from the data set. In carrying out the thematic coding, the researcher followed the strategy elaborated by Vaughn and Turner (2016). In this strategy, the process of thematic coding is divided into three core stages:

- Category identification.
- setting exclusion criteria of themes that are not useful to the study; and
- relationship mapping, conceptualisation of themes and linking the relationships that exist between the themes.

### **3.5.2.1 Category identification**

The researcher created the codes of the themes and provided definitions to the themes. For example, some of the themes were youth participation in Gurans violence, its effect on the community and mitigation against the rise of Gurans cases. The categories under these themes included but not limited to protection and survival, revenge, territoriality, emotional and psychological distress, fear of Gurans within school premises and in the community, collaboration and partnership against Gurans.

### **3.5.2.2 Exclusion Criteria**

The exclusion criteria enabled the researcher to focus on the data that is relevant to the study (Vaughn and Turner, 2016). In this regard, the exclusion criteria used in this study was determined by the fact that participants either had to be crew members, affected youth and community members residing in Khayelitsha township. Such an exclusion criteria helped the researcher to concentrate on participants belonging to this category and residing in Khayelitsha.

### **3.5.2.3 Relationship Mapping**

After identifying the specific themes, the researcher drew the relationships from the themes and analysed them in detail, with the aid of the literature review and a theoretical framework.

## **3.5.3 Data Verification**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), data verification involves questioning data applicability, consistency, and neutrality. They propose four principles for data verification: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. They believe that these principles reflect the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm more accurately.

### **3.5.3.1 Credibility**

According to De Vos et al. (2011), credibility is concerned with the accuracy of that which identifies and describes the phenomenon being studied. The researcher ensured credibility by comparing various participants' responses. The findings of the study were linked with the literature review to show the accuracy and credibility of the study based on what was studied and what was being discovered. Furthermore, the researcher verified that the sample was connected with the selection criteria and strictly defined.

### **3.5.3.2 Transferability**

De Vos et al. (2011:420) define transferability as “the degree to which findings can be applied or generalised to other contexts”. Transferability always presents a problem in a qualitative study because of small sample sizes. As a matter of fact, a study could consist of 20 participants, but it might be possible to generalise the findings to ensure transferability. This usually requires a comprehensive literature review that is related to the study. The transferability of this study was established by adopting general research design principles and finding interpretation methods that allow the study to be repeated in other localities (other than Khayelitsha), where the Gurans phenomenon is prevalent.

### **3.5.3.3 Dependability**

Dependability is achieved when a research process is logical, well documented, and audited. This means that a study must provide its audience with evidence such that its findings would be similar, should it be repeated with the same participants and in a similar setting (Babbie and Mouton, 2001; De Vos et al., 2011). Accordingly, to obtain tangible, consistent, and dependable findings in this study, the interviews were done at places and times that were suitable for the researcher and participants, and with an effective data collection tool — a voice recorder. The careful transcription of the recorded data minimised note-taking errors.

### **3.5.3.4 Conformability**

Conformability has to do with the traditional concept of objectivity. According to De Vos et al. (2011; De Vos et al., 2005), conformability is concerned with the ability to compare and confirm the findings of the study with other studies or literature. Thus, the researcher made sure that

personal biases did not jeopardise the research process as well as the collection of valid and concrete findings.

## **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

This study adhered to ethical standards of social science research. These ethical standards ensured that the research caused no harm to participants (Babbie, 2007). The same ethical considerations also state that all information gleaned from participants can only be used for any purpose with the full consent of the participants themselves. The University of Cape Town ethical clearance was obtained through the ethics committee of the Department of Social Development, where the researcher is registered. The ethical issues which were considered in this study, are discussed below.

### **3.6.1 Informed Consent**

Before proceeding with the study, the researcher asked permission from the participants. The informed consent document carried information such as the reason for the study, the process of the study, the voluntary participation, the maintenance of privacy, and how retrieved information would be used. The informed consent was obtained either verbally or in writing because of the nature of the study. The reason why verbal consents were accepted in this study is because some of the respondents were not comfortable with signing any written document despite being comfortable with participating in the study. These respondents had also made it clear that signing a document almost tantamounted to putting their lives at risk because of their outlaw nature as violent people. Thus, allowing verbal or written consent, helps to protect and safeguard the rights of people participating in any given study (Ali and Kelly, 2012). This is because they will be participating in those studies whilst being fully aware of the nature of the study and what the information was going to be used for. In line with the ethical considerations regarding minor children under the age of 18, the researcher negotiated for the consent of such minors with their parents and guardians. This was done both in line with the dictates of the national laws and as well as the need to safeguard the rights of such minors.

### **3.6.2 Deception of the Respondents**

Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that researchers must neither hide the main purpose of a study nor hide the experiences that the subjects will go through. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants before starting the interviews. Participants were informed that the study was being conducted for academic purposes. The researcher checked that no promises were made, and no false expectations were raised amongst the participants.

### **3.6.3 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality implies that the researcher does not disclose to the public the information revealed by the research participants (De Vos et al., 2005). Therefore, as an assurance of the privacy of the participants, the researcher emphasised the importance of confidentiality to the participants before the interview took place. The participants were assured that the information shared would not be disclosed to other people except to the researcher's supervisors for supervision purposes.

### **3.6.4 Debriefing of Respondents**

According to De Vos et al. (2005), debriefing of participants at the end of a research session may help reduce the harm that can be caused by the interview process. These "debriefing sessions are the ideal time to complete the learning experience that began with agreeing to participate" (Strydom, 2011 cited in De Vos et al., 2011:122). The researcher was aware of some issues that may cause discomfort and unwillingness from the participants, in responding during interviews. Thus, after each interview, the participants were given an opportunity to debrief about their experience of the interview. However, none of the participants were interested in debriefing as they saw no need for it. According to them, the interviews were comfortable and thoughtful.

## **3.7 Positionality**

My study draws on my familiarity with the research site (Khayelitsha). I spent all my teenage years in the current research site. My mother relocated from the Gugulethu township to Khayelitsha in the early 1990s and I was still young then. Thus, I am very familiar with the language and

socialisation of the research site. This enabled me to interview the participants in either English or in the indigenous isiXhosa language. Furthermore, having established early relationships with youths involved in Gurans during my MSc research, I was able to build a relatively good and reliable network of contacts among them. As such, drawing from my own experiences of growing up in Khayelitsha, I began to engage more in an ethnographic observation of the area and with a view to gaining entry.

During the first few months of the fieldwork, I was able to gain access into the areas that were relevant to my research objectives. This whole process helped me gain a detailed and nuanced insight into the lived day-to-day experiences, practices, feelings, thoughts, and interactions of my sample, especially the youths involved in Gurans. As someone who grew up in the neighbourhood, the initial difficulty I had with gaining access and the trust of participants soon began to subside. Having gained an entry point to the community, I was able to expand the participants for the study using snowballing. The methods adopted in the study were much influenced by my experiences of fieldwork during the entry gaining process.

Despite current challenges of violence, Khayelitsha remains a complex but close-knit community. Affected youth, teachers, and other members of the community have several points of contact to share thoughts and “relax” (as they say in the local parlance). With this intra-community connection, the first research participants were useful in linking me to other affected members of the community. This provided insights on the discourse of youth violence in black townships. Regardless of my familiarity with the research site, I took adequate measures to ensure both my safety and that of the participants. This included avoiding unnecessary contact, meeting the youths, teachers, learners, and community members only during the day and in secured public spaces (such as school premises and a hired community hall), and always informing my support network (family and my supervisor) about my field movement. Building on the existing networks, I also expanded on the number of guardians/parents of those who were underage.

As described in the section above, data for this research were collected using in-depth interviews and FGDs. The study proposed having eight FGDs with learners (affected youths), and 40 one-on-one in-depth interviews with teachers, parents, and other relevant actors. However, the priority

was placed on the areas that had been highly affected by Gurans, since the research site was broad and resources to cover the whole location were limited. With this selection of locations within the community, it was expected that the selected participants from the identified locations would be able to provide useful and nuanced information on the experiences of those that live in youth-violence prone areas. Interviews from the sample gave insights on Gurans, its influence, and the reaction of the Khayelitsha community towards it.

### 3.8 Profile of Participants

#### 3.8.1 Crew Members

The comprehensive profile of crew members retrieved during the interviews is depicted in Table 3-. As far as the age distribution is concerned, all the crew members interviewed were black males between 14 – 24 years old, as laid out in Table 3-. Given the criteria for the sample selection and the observations from existent literature on youth violence, this finding was not surprising as this was consistent with what had not noted by other scholars. Thereafter, it was found that the crew members joined Gurans at various points in their lives. The majority of them (about 90%) joined Gurans before the age of 17. The youngest and oldest crew members in the sample who joined Gurans, were 12 and 18 years respectively, as displayed in Table 3-.

Furthermore, only four out of 10 crew members were still schooling at the time of the study and were between grades 8 to 12. The majority (six out of 10) dropped out of school before reaching grade 12, as presented in Table 3-. This high dropout rate was consistent with observations in the O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry (2014). Respondents' reasons for dropping out are analysed in a later section to identify the central reasons for the high dropout rate observed.

Table 3-2: Demographic Profile of crew members

<b>Respondent's Name <sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Age when joining Gurans</b>	<b>Family Structure</b>	<b>Education Attainment</b>
<b>Bonga</b>	17	12	Extended family	Currently enrolled in grade 9

<b>Bathini</b>	22	16	Single parent family (maternal)	Passed grade 12
<b>Sebenza</b>	19	15	Extended family	Dropped out in grade 9
<b>Onke</b>	18	16	Single parent family (maternal)	Dropped out in grade 10
<b>Lizo</b>	19	15	Single parent family (maternal)	Dropped out in grade 11
<b>Lubabalo</b>	24	18	Single parent family (maternal)	Dropped out in grade 11
<b>Themba</b>	21	14	Stays with young sisters (between 19 and 17 years old)	Dropped out in grade 8
<b>Luvuyo</b>	16	14	Single parent family (maternal)	Currently enrolled in grade 10
<b>Senzo</b>	14	12	Extended family	Currently enrolled in grade 8
<b>Luxolo</b>	18	14	Single parent family (maternal)	Dropped out in grade 11

<sup>a</sup> Respondents' names listed here are pseudonyms.

Table 3-3: Distribution of the age of crew members during the study

<b>AGE (Years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
14-16	2	20.00
17-19	5	50.00
20-22	2	20.00
23-25	1	10.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 3-4: Distribution of the age when crew members joined Gurans

<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
12-14	5	50.00
15-16	4	40.00
17-19	1	10.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 3-5: Distribution of education level of crew members

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Dropped out (Grade 8)	2	0.20
Dropped out (Grade 10)	1	0.10
Dropped out (Grade 11)	3	0.30
Enrolled (Grade 8)	1	0.10
Enrolled (Grade 9)	1	0.10
Enrolled (Grade 10)	1	0.10
Completed Grade 12	1	0.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.00</b>

None of the interviewed crew members lived with their fathers. In fact, some of their fathers passed away and others were not involved in their lives. At the time the interviews were conducted, six out of 10 crew members lived with their mothers, while four out of 10 lived with either their grandparents, aunts, or siblings, as depicted in Table 3-. This meant that none of these interviewees stayed with their fathers.

Table 3-6: Distribution of the family structures of crew members

<b>Family structure</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Single parent family (maternal)	6	60.00
Extended family	3	30.00

Living with siblings	1	10.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### 3.8.2 Affected Youths

Four schools out of the five schools that were approached in Khayelitsha agreed to participate in the study. Each school had various numbers of affected youths that participated in the study, although the aim was to have a standard number of participants for each school. The demographic profile of the group of participants in each school was consistent throughout the sample, as presented in Table 3-. The overall number of those that participated in the study was 106 (49 females (F) and 57 males (M)). It must be noted that the schools were ordered in Table 3-, according to their percentage representation in the sample. As a matter of fact, Schools 1 and 2 made up about 30% and 24% of the sample respectively, and Schools 3 and 4 made up 23% each of the sample. All of them were black Africans who had isiXhosa as their first language. This was not surprising and did not indicate a bias in the sample, as most of the residents of Khayelitsha are from the Eastern Cape (refer to Section 3.3.1). In addition, their ages and grades were between 14 – 19 years old and grades 9 to 12, respectively.

Table 3-7: Profile of affected youths in FGDs

Variable	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	Total
Number of males	20	10	16	11	57
Number of females	12	16	8	13	49
Participants' age range (years)	14 – 18	14 – 19	15 – 17	14 – 19	-
Participants' grade range	9 – 10	9 – 12	10 – 11	9 – 12	-
Percentage of sample	30.2%	26%	22.6%	22.6%	100%

### 3.8.3 Educators

Five educators from four different schools participated in the study, as displayed in Table 3-. There were three males and two females, aged between 40 – 60 years. It is worth mentioning that all the educators have taught for more than five years in township schools and have never taught in multiracial schools. The educators from School 1 and School 2 have extensive teaching experience. In addition, they have been in practice for more than 20 years and have taught in primary and secondary schools in the townships. The educator from School 1 has only been in the school for two years. He was appointed in 2015 after a long break from teaching. School 2’s educator has taught for 30 years, and she is in a process of retirement. Another educator from School 2 has taught for 18 years in Khayelitsha schools. She started teaching in one of the secondary schools in Khayelitsha in 1998. She then taught grade 10s and 12s for eight years, after which she was appointed as a deputy head in another school. Thereafter, she became deputy principal in the same school for three years. In the current school, she has been a principal for seven years. However, because of administrative responsibilities, she is only teaching grade 8. The educator from School 3 has taught in his current school for 21 years and has no experience of other schools. He has been an acting principal for a few years and teaching only two grades. The educator in School 4, has only been teaching for eight years, and this is the only school she ever taught in. According to the educators’ experiences with teaching in black township schools, their current schools (at the time of this study) were the most challenging schools.

Table 3-8: Profile of educators

Position	School	Years of teaching		Gender	Age
		In township schools	Current school		
<b>Educator</b>	School 1	23 years	2 years	Male	Mid 50s
<b>Educator</b>	School 2	30 years	10 years	Female	Early 60s
<b>Educator</b>	School 2	18 years	7 years	Female	Mid 40s
<b>Educator</b>	School 3	21 years	21 years	Male	Late 40s
<b>Educator</b>	School 4	8 years	8 years	Female	Early 40s

### 3.8.4 Community Members of Khayelitsha

The profiles of community members who availed some of their personal information to the researcher, are summarised in Table 3-. It includes males and females in their early 30s, mid 40s, and mid and late 60s. Two community members (community members 1 and 2) in their 60s were primary school dropouts. Community member 1 relocated from Gugulethu to Khayelitsha in early 1980s, and Community member 2 from the Eastern Cape to Khayelitsha in the mid-1980s. Furthermore, Community member 1 has never worked in her life because of lack of education. She has survived through her husband’s casual jobs and her small business of selling snacks. Community member 3 is a retired domestic worker.

It was also found that one of the women is among the many parents who have lost their children in Gurans-related violence, inside and/or outside school premises. Her child was stabbed and died on the crime scene. The woman declared that she felt abandoned by the state after her child’s death. The investigations were not conclusive, and she never obtained justice. Moreover, she never received help for healing as a traumatised parent.

Three participants had grade 12 certificates but could not further their studies because of financial constraints. Furthermore, two among them dropped out of college and university because they did not have financial support to pursue their studies. However, both said they wished to continue if an opportunity presents itself. Overall, these three participants have been doing contract or casual jobs for survival, while applying to get better jobs.

Table 3-9: Profile of the community members of Khayelitsha

<b>CMK</b>	<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Years in the township</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>
Community member 1	University drop-out	Unemployed	Married	15 years	Female	43 years

Community member 2	Primary school drop-out	Unemployed	Married	31 years	Female	65 years
Community member 3	College drop-out	Part-Employed	Single	8 years	Male	40 years
Community member 4	Grade 12 certificate	Employed	Single	20 years	Male	55 years
Community member 5	Primary school drop-out	Retired Domestic worker	Single	33 years	Female	60 years

### **3.9 Framework for Presentation and Discussion of Findings**

An analysis of the data from the in-depth interviews with crew members, focus group discussions with affected learners, in-depth interviews with educators and residents of Khayelitsha led to identifying several themes. These findings presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, are discussed based on these themes and in line with the research objectives addressed.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the research design and methodological approaches applied in this study. The discussions centred around the steps that were taken to come up with a thesis of this nature. The nature of the population group under study was also discussed. As part of data collection methodologies, explanations were also given with regards to approaches that were taken by the researcher to enable her gain entrance into the research site, Khayelitsha. Ethical considerations and data analysis approaches were also some of the issues that were discussed in this chapter. It was found that ethical considerations are an important pillar in studying a phenomenon such as Gurans as they help guide the researcher on how to respect the research subjects. Lastly, the chapter ended by presenting and describing the profiles of the participants in the study as well as the methods that were used in presenting and discussing the findings.

# **Chapter 4: Presentation of findings from Crew Members and Affected Youths**

## **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the individual interviews and focus group discussions that were conducted with the crew members and affected youths (AYs). It provides a deeper understanding of the meaning of the Gurans culture and its effects on issues of community safety and security in Black townships. It uses the testimonies of interviewed crew members (CMs) to provide in-depth understandings of their engagement in violent activities and why they always find it difficult to change their behaviour. The chapter also uses responses from focus group discussions (FDGs) with the AYs to answer questions related to why the youth are becoming violent and goes on to associate with violent groups. It also examines the various ways in which the Gurans culture impacts the individual lives of both the violent youths and their communities. The aim of the chapter is to demonstrate that society can only be able to deal with emerging violent cultures through revealing the factors fuelling the problem. The chapter is divided into two sections: the first section presents the findings from an analysis of the data from the individual interviews with the CMs. The second section presents findings from the analysis of the data from focus group interviews with the AYs.

## **4.2 Findings from Crew Members**

Table 4-1 below presents the findings from the analysis of the interviews with CMs. The analysis yielded five major themes, namely: *the origins of the Gurans in Cape Town townships; Black youths' participation in Gurans; Practices behind Gurans violence; factors Perpetuating Gurans; effects of Gurans on CMs' development and well-being*. The findings related to each of these themes are presented and discussed subsequently.

Table 4-1: Thematic framework for presenting the findings from CMs

Major Themes	Categories	Subcategories
<b>The origins of the Gurans in Cape Town townships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gurans in Khayelitsha</li> </ul>	
<b>Black youths' participation in 'Gurans'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire for brotherhood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Emulating older brothers</li> <li>○ Emulating peers and becoming family</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection and survival</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Negotiating safety</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Retribution for self or a loved one</li> </ul>
<b>Practices behind Gurans violence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Territoriality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Spatial boundaries</li> <li>○ Dating egos and boundaries</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possession and use of sharp objects/weapons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Demonstration of weapons, a sense of power</li> </ul>
<b>Factors perpetuating Gurans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cyclical vengeance</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familial influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parents' ignorance of their children's daily activities</li> <li>○ Parents' helplessness in attempts to dissuade youths' participation in Gurans</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Inconducive environment with negative role models</li> <li>○ Indifference and bias of community members</li> </ul>
<b>Effects of Gurans on CMs' development and well-being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional and psychological distress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Substance abuse</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict with the law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sabotage of future opportunities</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical assaults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hospitalisation and injuries</li> </ul>

#### 4.2.1 The Origins of the Gurans in Cape Town Townships

Although there is no available literature that outlines the historical origins of the Gurans culture in the townships around the City of Cape Town, the data collected from the interviews with CM (youths participating in Gurans and known as crew members) exposes the violent culture as a post-2000 phenomenon. Its founders or initiators were the young male residents of the townships. CMs' perspectives on the start of Gurans in Khayelitsha are discussed subsequently.

#### 4.2.1.1 Gurans in Khayelitsha

When asked when the Gurans culture in Khayelitsha started, some of the CMs responded thus:

*Gurans started in 2000. There is that one called Amadararoto from Litha Park Khayelitsha. Gurans is a group of guys in a street corner, busy with your own things. We meet at a different place like a forest where we bring our sharp weapons to fight. I will say it's our brothers that come in and out of prison that fueled this Gurans. Our big brothers do not help at all to stop violence. {CM: Themba, 21 years old}*

*Gurans started in 2009. I decided to join because of my brother. It is still happening even now. We will attack others and they will do the same, we are just fighting. {CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}*

*This [Gurans] started with our old brothers around 2013 and they stopped because of the police, and we continued with it. These fights happen mostly on Fridays. Sister, Gurans, I mean we will be chatting in our spots, these boys will chase us even if we negotiate to stop the fight. {CM: Onke, 18 years old}*

*I can say it [Gurans] started in 2013. It started in Langa Township. Langa was fighting with Khayelitsha and then Khayelitsha started fighting based on locations and some died along the way. It then stopped in 2014 and then started again beginning of 2016 in June until now in September. It has started in some of the schools around Khayelitsha. {CM: Lizo, 19 years old}*

The narratives of the CMs above jointly indicate that Gurans started in Khayelitsha after year 2000, but they differ on the exact year of the culture's emergence. While Themba reckons that Gurans started in Khayelitsha in 2000, Onke, Lubabalo and Lizo allude that it only started between 2009 and 2013, and the tone of their narratives are similar. The slight differences in the CMs' perspectives of the origins of Gurans culture in Khayelitsha can be attributed to the differences in their ages and the number of years of their participation in Gurans. For instance, while Themba and Lubabalo were over 20 years old, their compatriots were below the age of 20. Also, Themba and Lubabalo have been CMs for more than five years while Lizo and Onke have only been CMs

for two and four years, respectively. Therefore, it can be stated that Themba and Lubabalo are better positioned to know the earlier origins of the Gurans and that they originated in Khayelitsha around early and mid-2000, and not 2013.

The contention that the Gurans culture has earlier origins than year 2013 was also revealed in the work of scholars such as Walsh and Mitchell (2006) who reported about groups of young people who were participating in violent activities in Khayelitsha. Although these writers did not specifically refer to the violent behavioural characteristics of such groups as Gurans, they nevertheless linked the problem to the wider gang problem which had been affecting the City of Cape Town. However, the findings presented in this chapter indicate that the violence perpetrated by Black youths in Gurans is not only relatively recent in Khayelitsha but also has different characteristics to those of the gang groups found in Coloured areas and older ones that existed during apartheid (Pinnock, 2016, Pinnock,1984; Rodgers and Jensen, 2008; Kynoch, 1999, Kynoch, 1998; Steinberg, 2004; Standing, 2003; Kinnes, 2000; Kinnes, 1995). What this means is that the Gurans culture is indeed a post-apartheid phenomenon as pointed out in the CMs' narratives despite the slight differences on dates and period of origin. That the Gurans violent culture might be a product of the post-apartheid state means that it is a problem that requires critical examination. As the narratives in this study will show, the emergence of the culture alludes to the failures of the post- apartheid state to address or deal decisively with problems affecting youths and disadvantaged communities such as Khayelitsha.

The above call to critically examine the emergence of radical or violent groups in disadvantaged communities is not a new idea. Similar calls that make sense in the present study have also been made elsewhere. In their respective works, Venhaus (2010) and Botha (2013) have also emphasised the need for examining the rise of such radical groups. For instance, Venhaus, whose work was on Al Qaeda, opines that defeating the culture requires an understanding of those who sought to join it and why (Venhaus, 2010). Similarly, Botha, writing on the radicalisation of the youths in Kenya, emphasised that there was a need to understand the forces that were driving them to join radical and extremist groups (Botha, 2013). Against this background, the section that follows presents the findings from this study which indicate why youths in Khayelitsha participate

in violent groups. These findings also highlight important nuances between crews and gangs, especially with respect to the dynamics and rationale behind the formation of each group type.

## **4.2.2 Black Youths Participation in Gurans**

The findings related to the theme on why Black youths participate in Gurans were grouped into three thematic categories: *desire for brotherhood*, *quest for protection or survival*, and *vengeance*.

### **4.2.2.1 Desire for Brotherhood**

As a concept or notion, brotherhood implies a relationship or bond between people who share similar backgrounds and beliefs (Jackson, 2012). In the interviews with CMs in Khayelitsha, the concept of brotherhood emerged in two different subcategories: *emulating older brothers* and *emulating peers*. The narratives that are related to each subcategory are presented and discussed below.

#### ***Emulating older brothers***

As discussed in the previous section, the Gurans culture has been in existence for close to two decades. As such, there are indications that it is a behaviour that has been imparted to younger youths through coaching by the older ones, the brothers of the current CMs. We first get insights on how the Gurans culture has been transmitted over the years from the narratives of CMs who explain how their quest to emulate their older brothers had influenced their eventual conversion to the culture:

*This started with our old brothers around 2013. We continued with it* {CM: Onke, 18 years old}

*I decided to join because of my brother, who was part of Gurans.* {CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}

*I will say it's our brothers that come in and out of prison that fuelled this Gurans. Our big brothers do not help at all to stop violence.* {CM: Themba, 21 years old}

An analysis of these narratives indicate that older brothers had significant influence on the participation of their younger siblings in Gurans. This conforms with the profile of the CMs in Table 3- in the previous chapter, where several CMs indicated that they joined Gurans from as early as 12 years of age. Engaging with older brothers meant that they learnt certain behaviours, which influenced them to participate in Gurans. However, that the young people in Khayelitsha learnt about the violent behaviour of Gurans from their older brothers resonates very well with Lonnie Athens' investigations into how people became violent. As Athens found out in his studies, the aspect of how individuals later become violent is a process that does not "occur instantaneously." Rather, it is something that happens over a relatively lengthy yet contingent process that unfolds over five stages (Athens, 2017). Thus, in this case, what is happening in Khayelitsha is that the older brothers, who are already convicted criminals are responsible for teaching their younger brothers that Gurans was the only way of life in the township. As Themba's narrative above elaborates, it was those who come in and out of prison who continued to preach the message of Gurans violence in the community. As such, what this means is that there is a danger of Gurans violence being transmitted from one age group to another through these formats such as from older brother to the younger ones.

For young people growing up in a community where there is no guidance from adults and good role models, the end result will be youths who keep on emulating wrong behaviour and do not take responsibility for their actions. This finding conforms to previous ones in research on youth delinquency in South Africa. Despite the limited nature of such literature, a few scholars, who nevertheless studied the problem, found that youths in both black and coloured townships have been surrounded by violence most of their life (Pinnock, 2016; Kinnes, 2000; Pillay, 2002). However, the culture of gang-related violence that has been more prevalent in Coloured areas (Pinnock, 2016; Kinnes, 2000; Pillay, 2002) is something relatively new in the Black communities in the post-apartheid South Africa (Sefali, 2014; Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019).

### *Emulating peers and becoming family*

In addition to the influence of older siblings discussed above, several youths in Khayelitsha also join Gurans due to peer pressure or the need to emulate friends. For instance, a youth might be influenced to join Gurans by peers with whom he has had long-standing relationships. This was confirmed in the oral narratives of some CMs:

*I joined because I grew up with these guys smoking candy and I decided yaaaaah. I was arrested with my friend, and we came together to Gurans. {CM: Themba, 21 years old}*

*Gurans affected my friends, they started to Gurans, even though they didn't want to be part of it. Some they got injured. Here in Site B, you get influenced by your peers.*

*{CM: Bathini, 22 years old}*

A study of the textual details of Bathini's narrative above indicate there are two issues that are evident in terms of how he eventually decided to be violent. Firstly, he joined because of the emotional security provided by relationships with peers. As such, he was forced to relinquish whatever reservations he had about joining and participating in Gurans. The second factor that played a role in his choice resonates again with Athens' tracing of the stages that violent people undergo in making such a choice. For instance, what is clear in Bathini's narrative is that he was once involved in some violent skirmishes that resulted in some of his peers being injured. Additionally, he has also been arrested. Thus, analytically, Bathini's experiences resonate well with those of an individual who would have undergone a stage of violentization known as "personal horrification." According to Athens (2017), such a stage falls under the broader stage of "brutalisation" of the violentization process (Athens, 2017). However, in Bathini's case, being brutalised in this way also contributed to galvanising his choice to be violent.

However, reverting back to the role of a sense of togetherness as part of the factors that contributes to youth making a choice of becoming violent, the responses that were given by some of the CMs were able to reveal more about how this happened. For instance, according to CM Bonga, Gurans even offered a sense of family and identity equal to his own family. According to him:

*I consider them as family, they helped me in so many things and when I have problems at home, I speak to him (my friend). He is like a family to me. I am always with him.*

{CM: Bonga, 17 years old}

This assertion by Bonga was ably collaborated by his fellow CMs who provided more detailed explanations of why they thought CMs' relationships offered identities that equalled family relationships. According to them:

*I consider them as family, because we grew up and stayed together, some of us we even coming together from the Eastern Cape/rural areas, we know each other, and we even went to the same school. We are big friends; we can even die for each other. We can't betray each other. I take them as my family.* {CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}

*I consider them as family, I bring them closer, because I don't want to fight with them. I take them as family because we know each other very well.* {CM: Lizo, 19 years old}

*I take them as my family. Because this is our life as street kids, we rob and commit crime.*  
{CM: Themba, 21 years old}

*I consider them as family, we are one, because we protect each other.*  
{CM: Bathini, 22 years old}

*I consider them as family, because it is not nice to see your friends being stabbed and they also don't feel good when you are stabbed. We will die for each other.*  
{CM: Sebenza, 19 years old}

These narratives indicate that there is a strong sense of family among CMs. Some grew up together, had several shared experiences, and became very good friends, over time. They help and provide emotional support to one another in a variety of ways, such as listening to the problems another faces at home and standing in solidarity to protect one another. They demonstrate a strong sense of commitment to each other and hold the view that, being family is when one is willing to take

care of the other, by protecting and dying in the other's stead if necessary. However, the profile of these CMs (Table 3-1) indicates that they lack a sense of the traditional biological family; the feeling of safety and protection was relatively non-existent in their families. Consequently, the gap left by their biological families was filled by Gurans.

The participation of youths in Black townships in Gurans on the basis of familial relationships or friendship aligns with a general supposition of Tajfel and Turner (1986) that people derive some social value or emotional incentive – loyalty and solidarity – from joining groups, especially when this is lacking in their immediate families. Swartz et al. (2012) further allude that the need for a sense of identity and belonging results in youths forming certain relationships such as negotiating positive and negative partnerships within their society. This means that they adapt to group membership of that social group, and this forms part of their identity (Tajfel, 1972; Jenkins, 2008). The emotional incentive that township youths derive from being members of crews makes them willing to adapt to the norms and values of their crews, even if doing so might have drastic consequences for their lives. Indeed, the sacrificial commitment which these youth show toward one another is something that is intrinsically good but used to achieve wrong purposes.

#### **4.2.2.2 Protection and Survival**

A desire for protection and survival amidst township hostilities was one of the dominant driving rationales for a youth's participation in Gurans. Almost all the CMs who participated in this study indicated that they had no choice but to join a crew. They perceived that crew membership afforded them some form of safety and protection from other violent youths within and outside their locale, and a 'cover' when they sought vengeance against those whom they deemed to have wronged them. Whereas the quest for safety, protection, and survival were general motivations among CMs, there are nuances in which of these factors dominates an individual's rationale for associating with a violent group such as Gurans.

#### ***Negotiating safety and protection***

The following narrative indicates that one may join Gurans mainly for personal protection from looming threats that affect attendance of key regular activities, such as attending school:

*It was difficult to attend school, so I decided to join because of that, this thing was already happening, so I was like what's the point, so I carried an axe in my school backpack every time I go to school just for protection. Those boys were always there, before and after school, so I needed to join the Gurans. {CM: Bonga, 17 years old}*

*I didn't want to be part of Gurans but had no choice since I was staying in Khayelitsha, so it affected me. I wanted to be something in life and look after my parents before they die. {CM: Lizo, 19 years old}*

*As I said earlier on that, my school is in my opponents' territory, so when I am at school I get attacked. They say I am not welcomed, so that's why I dropped-out of school and joined Gurans. We are still fighting. {CM: Onke, 18 years old}*

*We were being chased on our way to school and back, so we were being affected even though we were not part of the violence. I just joined, because I couldn't attend school very well, and we had no choice but to join as a way of protecting yourself, instead of dying. At least when we walk in groups it will be safer than alone. They will even wait for us outside school premises. People died because of the fights, (Coughing) when I think about Gurans it brings bad memories. {CM: Bathini, 22 years old}*

Like his compatriots, Bonga, Lizo and Onke, CM Bathini also saw crew membership as a shield from looming threats and harassment from other youths when commuting to school. However, unlike Bonga who carried a personal weapon, Bathini mainly derived his sense of protection from surrounding himself with fellow CMs. However, analytically, further lessons on understanding violent people can also be deduced from both CMs experiences. For instance, when CM Bonga decided to carry an axe on his journeys to and from school, such behaviour can be interpreted as that of an individual who had reached stage two of the violentization process, that of defiance. In this regard, what is clear is that Bonga had now chosen to be both violent and to deploy violence whenever such situations arose. The same also applies to CMs Lizo and Onke who also regarded violence as a source of protection from other violent people. Nonetheless, as for the other CM, Bathini, his narrative differs from his compatriots in that it is reminiscent of individuals who had

reached stage three of the same violentization process. This is because his narrative shows that he had engaged in numerous “violent dominative engagements” (Athens, 2017) with loss of life in some of them. According Athens, when individuals reach this stage of violence, their only aim is to win battles (Athens, 2017). In this case, the behaviour of Bathini in his narrative signifies his belonging to this stage of the violentization process. However, as for Bonga, although there has been loss of life in the battles that he had engaged in, he was nevertheless yet to reach the more advanced fourth stage of violentization, which Athens identified as that of virulency. The reason for this is that Bathini was still showing remorse for some of the memories of his violent engagements. This is because, according to Athens, when violent people reach the stage of virulency, they become notorious for their violent activities. Instilling fear in the whole community will be their preoccupation and they don’t show remorse for their activities. Instead, they will react to any provocation with extreme violence or harm (Athens, 2017). Thus, in showing remorse Bonga was nevertheless still in the third stage of the violentization process.

However, that protection and survival amidst the adversities in communities has been a major underlying reason why youth join gangs is something that has also been confirmed in previous studies on the same subject of youth and violent groups. Key amongst such studies are Taylor (2013) and Lenzi et al. (2015). Of Taylor’s nine reasons why youths associate with delinquent groups like gangs, two major ones are that:

- i) gangs offer safety and protection from other gangs; and
- ii) belonging to a gang [was seen] as a quick path to gaining respect from other youths in the community, especially through the intimidation of other community children.

Taylor’s findings are confirmed by Lenzi et al. (2015) who emphasised that when students personally perceive that their school is not a safe environment, they may decide to join a gang to receive protection. Also, Cooper and Ward (2012) argue that youths growing up in segregated marginalised townships seek recourse in gang-related social groups as a survival strategy, to live another day. Indeed, when coupled with the CMs’ narratives above, the assertions of these scholars correspond to the situation of Black youths in Khayelitsha who regard Gurans membership as necessary for one’s protection. For these young men, escaping violence has not been an option (Edelstein, 2016; Traynor, 2016; Swartz, 2017; Ward et al., 2012); either you kill or get killed

(Pinnock, 2016; Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019; Sefali, 2014). This could be the reason why some of the young men in these townships have committed at least one violent act (Pinnock, 2016; Sefali, 2014).

#### **4.2.2.3       Retribution**

The violent nature of the Gurans culture usually results in the attacking of non-participating youths. The attacks might be personal, or on loved ones or a relative. An innocent youth who is a victim of such attack might be compelled to join a crew to seek revenge on his attackers or those of his relations. Thus, he becomes initiated into the Gurans culture.

##### ***Retribution for self or a loved one***

The following narratives indicate how the suffering of some youths (who had not been part of Gurans) and their relatives at the hands of CMs resulted in their initiation into Gurans:

*I was chased from school and stabbed in the face, and I decided to join because I wanted revenge. It is painful. The way I was stabbed was very deep. I ended up in hospital and stayed for two days. I wanted nothing but revenge. {CM: Sebenza, 22 years old}*

*I decided to join because of my brother and this other boy that was murdered from BM section. He was killed in H section, they chased him until they got him, also his head was chopped off. I wanted revenge because this boy was innocent.*

*{CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}*

Sebenza became a violent person for personal reasons. As his narrative indicate, he had previously suffered deep injury and pain at the hands of some CMs. This made him become more violent and forced him to want to seek revenge and to win against adversaries. The same reasons that made CM Sebenza a more violent person were also the ones that influenced CM Lubabalo to behave in a similar manner. However, Lubabalo's case was slightly different in that he wanted to achieve what can be referred to as 'jungle justice', whereby wronged individuals exact justice on behalf of a loved one – friend or brother – or other individuals deemed to be innocent victims of other violent groups. When jungle justice happens, the perpetrators ensure that they get justice (vengeance) for

wrongs, injuries, or pains suffered at the hands of another. According to Kivivuori, Savolainen, and Aaltonen (2015), vengeance, in most cases, is recognised as a rationale for crime. The authors suggests that “revenge, when expressed in criminal behaviour, entails potentially extensive costs to victims and third parties. Indeed, as a motive of crime, retaliation has the potential to set in motion cycles of violence” (Kivivuori et al., 2015: 2). While the CMs in this study did not regard exacting vengeance as crime, they were drawn into cycles of violence without realising it. Hence, it is not advisable to praise or celebrate an act of revenge, since vengeance could become persistent and habitual (Kivivuori et al., 2015; Lowe, Ellonen, Miller and Peltonen, 2020). McCullough (2008) points out that it is important that we understand the role of revenge in human life, since it is tangled in so many social problems, such as youth violence.

### **4.2.3 Practices behind Gurans Violence**

The previous section discussed the primary individual rationales for the participation of Black youths in Gurans, but not much was delineated about the logic behind their violent disposition. An analysis of the narratives of CMs yielded two main thematic categories related to the question of why CMs always resorted to violence: *territoriality*, and the *possession and use of sharp objects/weapons*.

#### **4.2.3.1 Territoriality**

Within the context of human interactions, territoriality is “the attempt by an individual or group (x) to influence, affect, or control objects, people, and relationships (y) by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area.” (Sack, 1983:56). For Khayelitsha, the quest for territoriality has been the source of major dominative engagements between rival violent groups. However, CMs’ descriptions of the territoriality of crews were grouped into two main thematic subcategories: *spatial boundaries* and *dating egos and boundaries*.

##### ***Spatial boundaries***

In describing their perception of Gurans, CMs indicated that crews have a strong sense of ownership of the areas where they hangout or live.

*Youth violence it's about fights between guys, stabbings, etc. We kill each other. It is about territory. {CM: Onke, 18 years old}*

*The reason for this [Gurans] is that every location wants to rule, they don't want people to come and do whatever they like in their locations. {CM: Lizo, 19 years old}*

An individual CM belonging to, say, location A, puts himself at significant risk should he traverse the 'territories' of his opponents, even for benign reasons like attending school:

*We couldn't enter certain places like S section. Gurans comes from fighting, being a group of gangsters from different locations. {CM: Themba, 21 years old}*

*As I said earlier on that, my school is in my opponents' territory, so when I am at school, I get attacked. They say I am not welcomed, so that's why I dropped-out of school and joined Gurans. We are still fighting. {CM: Onke, 18 years Old}*

*When I am on my way home or to school, there is a must to fight because there is no other way. I was schooling in Khayelitsha where my opponents are. I was doing grade 11 and after that I got transferred to another school. Even there, there was no difference, I ended up dropping-out in September 2015. {CM: Lizo, 19 years old}*

These CMs narratives indicate that youths in communities like Khayelitsha have a strong sense of entitlement over locations that they deem to be their rightful territory. CMs in one location do not have any regrets when attacking youths from other locations who might just be passing through or visiting their location without having any bad motives. The attachment of youths in Khayelitsha to their locations and their protectiveness of the same seem to be the mapping peg of their existence in this township. It can be argued that our present circumstances, including our location, shape who we are and what we resonate with (Cornbleth, 2003), and this is determined through identity dynamics (Jenkins, 2008). Identity involves our human capacity, who we are, the people around us, and people's perceptions about us (Jenkins, 2008). For young Black men under apartheid, identity markers played a significant role in their resilience in the struggle against the apartheid

government (Glaser, 1998 and Dissel, 1997). Such identity markers sounded a clear note of opposition to the government. A similar rationale seems existent among the youths in Gurans: define yourself or group in a way that your opponents (perceived or actual) do not take you for granted. However, “someone’s identification is never clear-cut and unambiguous, and the relationship between interests and identification is too complex for individual behaviour to be predictable in these terms” (Jenkins, 2008:13).

According to the CMs, the spatial boundaries imposed by crews do not only put one at the risk of being attacked outside one’s primary location in the township, but also limits one’s access to public services and amenities in other locations:

*These territorial conflicts will never end, and they are now affecting all aspects of our lives. I cannot go to Home Affairs to apply for an ID; if the Vuras see me, they will kill me. They don’t want to see us in their area; once I am spotted there, I am dead. And they also know that this area belongs to us; it’s a no-go area for them. If ever I see any of the Vuras here, he will pay with his life... We just know this is our area and they (the Vuras) have no right to be here. We don’t even visit the mall, it’s in their area. We stick to our area; they stick to theirs. {CM: Thabo, 18 years old}*

*The rate of Gurans is very high in Khayelitsha like I section have new developments, recreational centres, but they cannot be used because of Gurans. People cannot access those places because these boys are everywhere. The problem is that if you attempt to move around, you can meet your opponents somewhere. {CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}*

The narratives above indicate that the conflicts around territories often result in deprivations. In this case, youths from one community will be unable to access public services, socioeconomic facilities, or cultural heritage centers in other Black townships due to the fact that they are from an opposing territory. As Thabo indicates, his membership of the section L – based ‘Vatos’ crew deprived him the opportunity to apply for his SA identity document (ID) because the Home Affairs office is located in section D, an area under the control of the rival ‘Vuras’ crew. Corroborating Thabo’s narrative, Lubabalo indicated that due to territorial conflicts, youths cannot easily access

new developments in areas other than their own locale. Because of the potential for violent disputes, Black youths' access to public services institutions becomes difficult despite their entitlement to them. In communities such as Khayelitsha, movement restrictions do not only affect youths. Most of the residents also have places that they cannot go to at certain times of the day because such places will either be in territories regarded as belonging to enemies, or the youths in such places are known to inflict violence on non-residents (O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014).

The issues of territory as discussed above goes back to apartheid-era policies that encouraged social divisions among races (Kynoch, 1998). The 'Dompas' (identity document) was used to determine the freedom of movement of South Africans: certain races or ethnicity were not supposed to go to certain locations or places if they did not belong there; the facilities or attractions in those locations only benefited those who had the 'right of access'. In the case of ethnicity, one's tribe determined where one belonged and which areas one was not supposed to go. These social constructs were replicated by gangs, which used territory markers to limit people's movements (Pinnock, 1984; Dissel, 1997). Most of the members of these gangs were from marginalised and oppressed communities that bore the brunt of apartheid.

Crews may not be gangs per se, but the youths therein have adopted a notion of neighbourhood territory: they walk around their block (neighbourhood), hang around on its street corners, and create their own names that align with their social groups and activities (Swartz et al., 2012). Consequently, they limit their freedom of movement, and those of other youths (Mguzulwa, 2014). Although, as with the end of apartheid, there might be some external changes in the structures that subjected a certain population to oppression and marginalisation, without major rehabilitation aimed at mind renewal, and continued efforts at reconciliation and restorative justice, those who are oppressed are likely to replicate the inhumane treatment they received at the hands of their oppressors over others to whom they feel superior. This subsequently perpetuates physical violence at the micro-level (Burnett, 1999).

### *Dating egos and boundaries*

The territoriality tendencies of CMs also leads to the establishment of dating boundaries. They do not only negotiate spatial belonging, but they also claim girls (young ladies) as part of fixing rivalries. In so doing, girls also became sites of dominant engagements among violent rival groupings. Thus, in their revelations of why girls were an important component in Gurans conflict, CMs narrated that:

*Gurans is a group of guys in a street corner, busy with your own things. While you are there, some guys from another location will come to date girls from your location, but they cannot do that because even us we are not allowed to do that. {CM: Themba, 21 years old}*

*I had no intention of joining the gang. It all started when I was chased by the Vuras with pangas and sticks for dating a girl from site B and I told my Dumo (elder brother) what had happened. The following day there was commotion in the street and Dumo called me out. When I got to the street, there was a serious clash of the gangs and my brother asked me to help his gang and threw me a panga. The Vuras were already throwing stones at me so I joined the fight. Since that day, I have always attended and participated in the fights. It all started because some boys from site B wanted my girl and attacked me; the only way I can protect myself is to be part of the Vatos. {CM: Bathini, 22 years old}*

As the narratives indicate, CMs establish and maintain dating boundaries to enhance their masculinity and social respect. This provides them with leverage in controlling their territory. Evidently, the contravention of one crew's dating boundaries — whether clear or unclear — by another could spur major conflicts and fight matches. Within the same narrative of CM Bathini, what is also clear is the issue of how he was coached to become violent. According to him, he was asked to help his brother's group in its violent engagement with a rival one. Through such coaching, Bathini eventually became a violent person and has remained as such. However, that girls and dating provide sites of engagements is something that is prevalent in the Gurans battles in Khayelitsha. The CMs further described the influential nature of girls thus:

*Girls bewitch us, they will scream while we are fighting, and you end up on the floor because a brick was thrown on your face. They create confusion, they even date those who are good fighters. {CM: Onke, 18 years Old}*

*Girls become cheerleaders and we end up dying. They do not even call the police. They will want to see their boyfriends winning than seeking for help. {CM: Lizo, 19 years old}*

*People join Gurans for different reasons. Also, it is the girls' boyfriends that die in this Gurans. It affects them because they love their boyfriends. Even when we rob them, they tell their boyfriends, and they avenge. {CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}*

As in the previous discussions on factors that spur the Gurans culture, these narratives from the CMs' indicate that notions of territoriality extend beyond claims of physical spaces. In fact, the notion of territoriality is seen here as including girls. The violence that takes place because of girlfriends means that young women participate indirectly in crew rivalries. Lubabalo's narrative reveals a cycle of male - female influence on violent spats. In this interplay, the young women act as cheerleaders, thereby influencing or perpetuating Gurans in that way. Expressed differently, the young women's cheerleading feeds into the male egos of their boyfriends during fights, thereby escalating the violence. On the other hand, the girls also capitalise on their closeness to those in Gurans by using them for their own protection. Thus, it can be interpreted that the girls derive some benefits from their relationships with CMs. This kind of an interplay between males participating in delinquent behaviour and females is not peculiar to Khayelitsha alone. As Kingsley (2014) observed, females were known to play roles like seducing males, concealing weapons, and instigating fights between rival male gangs. Kingsley also observed that beyond playing these secondary roles, females were also becoming gangsters (Kingsley, 2014). This is supported by a few studies which suggest that girls enjoyed the benefits of gang groupings, formed a sisterhood within the gangs, were hostile to outsiders (Hughes, Botchkovar and Short, 2019), and engaged in criminal behaviour (Deuchar, Harding, McLean and Densley, 2020; Huey, 2016).

Although we do not dispute that women have some influence in perpetuating violence, as indicated in this study and a few other studies, male peer groups have a way of influencing their

female counterparts in participating in delinquent behaviour (Timchenko, Rima, Mukhamadiyeva, Duzbayeva, and Beaver, 2020; Giordano, 1978). Campbell (1990) suggests that young women's participation in criminal social groups has always been associated with their relationships with the young men in those groups.

#### **4.2.3.2 Possession and use of sharp objects/weapons**

The previous sections highlighted that CMs possess and use dangerous weapons in their fights. A further analysis of their narratives indicated that their use of weapons gives them a sense of power against the opponents.

##### ***Demonstration of weapons, a sense of power***

Crews with strong territorial instincts tend to resort to whatever means available to defend their territories or exert their egos. In fact, for CMs, what defines the Gurans culture is the weapons they wield. This is evident in the following narratives:

*Gurans is about the weapons we carry, it is still happening even now. We will attack others and they will do the same, we are just fighting.* {CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}

*We meet at a different place like a forest where we bring our sharp weapons to fight.*  
{CM: Themba, 21 years old}

*Youth violence it's about fights between guys, stabbing using sharp dangerous weapons, you see... We kill each other.* {CM: Onke, 18 years Old}

As the narratives clearly show, CMs derive a sense of superiority from possessing and using dangerous weapons in a fight match, and regard this as being a key component of being in Gurans. The logic is to instil fear and exert dominance over rival crews with inferior weapons by inflicting serious injuries on them, or in extreme cases, killing several of their members. However, when violent people begin to behave in this manner, what it means is that they would have reached the fourth stage of the violentization process, which Athens identified as that of virulency. Indeed, in adopting an aura of invincibility and notoriety the intention of the concerned violent individuals is

to inform all rival groups and community members that they will not tolerate anyone challenging their ambitions. However, in some cases, demonstrating superiority is not only shown in killings and inflicting injuries on rival CMs; disarming and confiscating rival weapons is also a sign of prevailing. CM Bonga explained how this is so:

*We don't buy axe, when we chase our opponents and they are carrying tools/sharp objects, we make sure that they drop them, and we take them, we got one of the boys and we injured him using sharp objects, he got injured very badly.* {CM: Bonga, 17 years old}

Thus, the possession of more dangerous weapons does not always assure a crew of victory in a fight match. In this case, there are also other factors that can determine victory. According to one crew member, group X might have inferior weapons than another crew, Y, but this does not mean that Y is automatically assured of victory. This is because with their inferior weapons, X might outnumber Y significantly, and as a result, they will be able to dispossess Y of their weapons and thereby attain victory in the process.

However, analytically, crews, as Swartz (2017) noted, do not have the level of organisation and 'networks' of major gang groups that can easily access sophisticated weapons such as guns. This limitation in accessing guns means that crews have to resort to the use of sharp objects, such as knives and pangas that are readily available as their weapons of choice. Swartz's findings are supported by Gillespie (2016), who opines that crews resemble proto gangs because of their methods of operation and lack of use of sophisticated weapons. For Gillespie, this means that crews are not fully formed gangs, despite sharing many characteristics with them.

The use of sharp objects as weapons by crews has a history dating back to earlier similar groups. According to Hausse (1990), Dissel (1997) and Kynoch (1999/1998), early 20<sup>th</sup> century violent groups, such as the Ninevites, Amailata, and Abotsotsi, were renowned for fighting using sticks, knives, pangas, and stones during their time. Thus, in this regard, crews could also be drawing inspiration to use similar weapons from these early groups. CMs might also possess and use dangerous weapons during rivalries – in both public spaces and predetermined locations – to demonstrate auras of invincibility. This display of invincibility is a major reason why crews are

generally perceived as gangs. But, as Malisha (2020) discovered, display of invincibility does not imply invincibility in reality. Young people in South Africa have died due to the use of sharp objects, “rising from 1.9% in 2001 to 7.6% in 2016” (Malisha, 2020:88). Young people from the ages of 15-19 years old are most at risk (Malisha, 2020).

#### **4.2.4 Factors perpetuating Gurans**

The findings from CMs strongly point to difficulties in attempts to eradicate the Gurans culture. There are multiple reasons that make such attempts almost impossible. These reasons can be categorised as: *individual influences*, *familial influences*, *community influences*, and *state influences*.

##### **4.2.4.1 Individual Influences**

Individual influences refer to considerations made by individuals on whether to participate in Gurans activities or not. In this study, only one thematic subcategory that is related to individual influences on the perpetuity of Gurans emerged from the narratives of CMs: *cyclical vengeance*.

##### ***Cyclical vengeance***

Cyclical vengeance is defined as a situation wherein a single incident of violence can act as an initial trigger to a chain of others. For instance, in Khayelitsha, some CMs witnessed their friends getting injured or dying in front of them. This in turn triggered numerous violent battles in the community. The CMs explained thus:

*My best friend and most of my friends died in this Gurans. My other friend died in front of me, he was stabbed, and I couldn't help him, because the police were after me. My heart is broken because I am left alone. These things come and see yourself cry. Eish [Breathing so hard] sister, you cannot even rest, the only thing you do, you just grab your axe under the bed and go fight, that's how others died. I even go and smoke with my friends just to forget. {CM: Themba, 21 years old}*

*It is not nice to see your friends being stabbed and they also don't feel good when you are stabbed. We will die for each other. {CM: Sebenza, 19 years old}*

*It is not nice sister, especially when you see one of your friends slaughtered, but what can we do, it's a way of life. {CM: Lizo 19 years old}*

As the narratives reveal, the negative experiences of seeing a loved one hurt or killed causes accumulated feelings of resentment and a desire for vengeance. Themba's narrative reveals that the young men in crews do not really find intrinsic pleasure in violent frenzy. Sadly, one's quest for vengeance might easily lead to a cycle of vengeance. First, the victim's colleagues will plan the revenge expedition. In turn, the target of vengeance will plan his own defence and retaliation, thus completing the cycle of violence initially triggered by a past event. As the following narratives show, this cycle of vengeance makes it almost impossible for CMs to quit Gurans, despite a desire to do so.

*Think I can [quit] sister, but the problem is that when you meet your opponents somewhere. {CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}*

*I think I can quit, like now for an example, but still I can't go to other places, because I might be attacked. {CM: Lizo, 19 years old}*

From these narratives, it is clear that the cycle of violence in Gurans is destined to continue despite acknowledgements by the participants that violence is bad. As long as the concerned youths are still staying in the same community, their past deeds will always entail that they need to remain on guard almost on a permanent basis. As Percy Qoboza (1986 cited in Pelsler, 2007) and other researchers (Sefali, 2014; Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019; Ward et al., 2012; Pinnock, 2016) discovered, knowing that you once attacked someone will always mean that that particular individual or his peers are also planning to take revenge whenever the opportunity to do so arises. Consequently, this will lead to CMs contemplating being part of Gurans forever so that when others strike for revenge, they will have their crew with them to fight against the other. Also, young people from townships like Khayelitsha are already faced with multiple and complex challenges

and their participation in violence increases their insecurity as long as they continue living in such a community (Cooper, De Lannoy and Rule, 2015; Holtzhausen, 2015). Choe et al. (2012) add that exposure to violence is something that cannot be avoided in South Africa regardless of whether one is the perpetrator, victim or witness.

#### **4.2.4.2 Familial Influence**

Another issue contributing to the never-ending problem of Gurans is that of family influence. As the CMs' narratives indicate, parents, guardians and other family members influence the perpetuation of Gurans. The manner in which this happens can be explained in two thematic subcategories: *parents' ignorance of their children's daily activities*, and *failed attempts to dissuade youths' participation in Gurans*.

##### ***Parents' ignorance of their children's daily activities***

In Khayelitsha, the failure of parents and guardians to monitor the activities of their children is one of the major contributing factors to the perpetuation of the Gurans culture. According to CMs, parents (or guardians) are sometimes not aware of their participation in Gurans and delinquent activities. They explained thus:

*My family didn't know, even now they do not know. I stay with my aunt and brother, my parents passed away. I didn't want my parents to know that we are killing each other out there. {CM: Sebenza, 19 years old}*

*My family did not know, but they suspected that I was Guransing. But, never said anything. At home I stay with my mother and siblings, my father passed away {CM: Lizo, 19 years old}*

Whereas the youths participating in Gurans make deliberate attempts to conceal their participation and their malevolent acts from their parents, there is also reluctance by concerned parents to investigate the behaviour of their children after suspecting unbecoming behaviour. This problem is further exacerbated by the issue of non-traditional families, which most of the CMs come from.

These families are usually headed by a single parent, grandparents, or older siblings. Only a few come from traditional structured families where both parents are available.

***Parents' helplessness in attempts to dissuade youth participation in Gurans***

According to some CMs, another way in which parents and guardians contribute to the perpetuity of Gurans is their feeling of helplessness or inability to completely stop their children's participation in Gurans after attempting to stop them from participating in Gurans.

*My parents knew, because when we Gurans, people know, and sometimes other parents will recognise you and tell your parents. But I will deny to my parents, but eventually they saw me. My parents had to transfer me to Worcester after schools were closed. At home I stay with my mother and siblings. {CM: Bathini, 22 years old}*

*My family was aware. At home I stay with my sisters. The parents passed away. My sisters do not like the fact that I am part of this, even when I am in hospital. {CM: Themba, 21 years old}*

*My parents knew after our neighbour informed my mother that I was part of Gurans, but my mother could not believe, and I denied it myself even though she kept on asking. She found out eventually when we were fighting. After that my mom got stressed, she said what if I get killed who is going to bury me, I am her only child. I told her not to stress. My father passed away some time ago. {CM: Onke, 18 years old}*

*My mother was aware, but there was nothing she can do, because my father passed away in 2011. This stresses my mother, because she is working full time. Sometimes she even admits me to hospital and at times even calls police van to arrest me. Sometimes I get admitted for three months, when I am not good. {CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}*

*My parents knew [of my involvement in Gurans] after I was hit by a car while Guransing and hospitalised for 4 months...I stay with my grandparents and aunt; my mother is in JHB and my father in Mitchells Plain. I don't care about my father because he is not playing a*

*role in my life. My parents told me to stop, but I was like. I am like this, injured, so I won't be able to stop...so they gave up on me. {CM: Bonga, 17 years old}*

The narratives above indicate that the problem of Gurans has become so dire that families are now appearing helpless. Single parenting, especially in households headed by mothers, has been blamed for youth delinquent behaviour (Condry, 2013), however, we lack an in-depth knowledge and understanding of what these parents go through in raising children with anti-social behaviour (Yakhnich and Walsh, 2020). According to Srivastav and Mathur (2020), some of these parents develop parental anxiety, which keeps them worried of what might happen to their children while participating in outside activities, on their way to school and when they spend time with their friends. This may lead to feelings of regret if, when they noticed changes, they missed the opportunities that might have prevented or controlled certain negative behaviour in their children (Srivastav and Mathur, 2020). In the case of Gurans in Khayelitsha, it might be that parents made few or no attempts to stop the problem in its infancy. This has resulted in Gurans becoming an almost inescapable community scourge at the moment.

#### **4.2.4.3 Community Influence**

As with familial influence on the perpetuation of Gurans, two main modes of community influence on the perpetuation of the Gurans culture in black township were identified from CMs' narratives: *inconducive environment with negative role models*, and *indifference and bias*.

##### ***Inconducive environment with negative role models***

CMs opined that the inconducive environment in black townships contributes to an intergenerational cycle of the Gurans culture:

*It's better to stay in town. Township is a bad influence. {CM: Lizo, 19 years old}*

*The generation after us is copying the same tactics. They have started Gurans as well". {CM: Bathini, 22 years old}*

*I have never seen someone from another place coming here to kill us, only us from Khayelitsha. Staying in the township has influenced us to be part of Gurans. The environment is bad.* {CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}

*I will say it's our brothers [in general] that come in and out of prison. They do not want to change, they want to rob, kill, even last week someone was killed. Our big brothers do not help at all to stop violence. This thing cannot be stopped sister.*

{CM: Themba, 21 years old}

*Saturday there was a fight next to the local tavern. Everyone ended up joining.*

{CM: Onke, 18 years old}

*Gurans affected my friends, they started to Gurans, even though they didn't want to be part of it. Some of them got injured. Here in Site B, you get influenced by your peers. The generation after us is copying the same tactics. They have started Gurans as well.*

{CM: Bathini, 22 years old}

*Gurans affected my peers a lot, I don't know how but it did affect them. We sold each other in order to be safe. I have noticed these young boys they are copying what we were doing.*

{CM: Sebenza, 22 years old}.

In the narratives above, CMs emphatically regard living in black township as having a bad influence on youths. They give significant insights into how deeply black townships are entrenched in violent activities and the fate of young children growing up in these townships. The older males, some of whom are brothers to the concerned CMs were once prisoners and often frequent prisoners. Their lifestyles have not been good role models for their younger brothers. After serving sentences, some of them continue their anti-social behaviours, including robbing and killing. Several CMs indicated that some young boys regard them as role models and copy what they do, thinking that it is 'cool'. This confirms Walker's (2007) finding that young boys that have been surrounded by negative role models, like their older brothers or community members, tend to follow similar paths. In most of the cases, such trends are common in impoverished backgrounds

(Pinnock, 2016; Kinnes, 1996; Spergel, 1995). Consequently, in Khayelitsha, there might be a perpetuation of the Gurans culture because youngsters regard the practice as the perfect lifestyle.

### ***Indifference and bias of community members***

A CM also identified indifference and bias as ways in which community members contribute to the perpetuation of the activities of youths involved in Gurans:

*The people of the community are snitches. I do not like my community; I can even watch while one of them is being beaten up. As a community we are not united. Some people watch while one of us is being slaughtered in front of them. Most people are part of Gurans.*  
{CM: Bonga, 17 years old}

As the narrative indicates, lack of community unity and reluctance by community members to restrain feuding Gurans are some of the factors that continue to fuel the violence. The indifferent behaviour of communities towards Gurans violence, especially the failure to take a stand against feuding crews, is something that has the potential to affirm the activities of CMs. Moreover, as Bonga pointed out, this also has the potential to make youths develop perceptions that spectating community members are actually part of Gurans. The contention that the stances taken by community members play an important role in shaping youth behaviour has also been documented in literature elsewhere, especially in the work of Santiago, Lee, Lucero and Wiersma (2017). Writing on the issues of youths' violent behaviours and marijuana drug use, Santiago et al. (2017) noted that youth attitudes, values, behaviours, and expectations maybe shaped by good neighbourhood adult role models and norms enforced by the community or local culture. However, in Khayelitsha, these attributes are somehow absent as suggested by Bonga's narrative. This has contributed to the breaking down of the community's social values, and further resulted in its malignancy. Piquero, Farrington, and Blumstein (2003 cited in Fox Perez, Cass, Baglivio and Epps, 2015: 165) observed from criminological and public health research that a traumatic background increases the chances of adolescents engaging in serious, chronic, and violent offences. Exposure to violence in and outside gang setups heightens the vulnerability of adolescents as they grow or mature, which poses a major threat to their immediate and long-term psychosocial functioning (Edwards, Holden, Felitti and Anda, 2003; Raby and Jones, 2016).

Psychosocial impairments include, inter alia, suicidality, substance abuse, psychological trauma, PTSD, having sex while intoxicated and overdosing on strong deadly drugs (Ford, Hartman, Hawke and Chapman, 2008; Petering, 2016). These conditions are more prevalent in youths involved in the juvenile justice system and may include those who have gang affiliation (Ford et al., 2008; Becker and Kerig, 2011). The conditions persist when there is no family and community support, signalling that they are not cared for, loved, or wanted (Sharaf, Thompson and Walsh, 2009).

#### **4.2.5 The Effects of Gurans on Crew Members' Development and Well-being**

The narratives from CMs related to the thematic category of the consequences of Gurans on CMs were grouped into three subcategories: *substance abuse*; *conflict with the law*; *hospitalisation and death*. These are discussed subsequently.

##### **4.2.5.1 Emotional and Psychological Distress**

CMs, who are both frequent witnesses and participants in the violent conflicts in their township, experience significant emotional and psychological distress, which predisposes them to substance abuse.

##### **Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse was identified as a mechanism used by CMs to ease their emotional and psychological distress and gain courage to face their fears.

*It is not nice sister, especially when you see one of your own being slaughtered, but what can we do, it's a way of life: I can only sleep when I smoke weed. When I think about all what has happened, like the blood, tears, I cannot even concentrate in class. I only concentrate when I smoke. We do use drugs (Hesitant,) hey sister and others weed. It depends on the person. People have their own things. {CM: Bonga, 17 years old}*

*I can't sleep properly because you hear gunshots. People get robbed. There are many things happening. For instance, I sleep alone in the backyard; anything can happen. The only way to cope is to sleep. {CM: Sebenza, 22 years old}*

*At home I stay with my mother and siblings, my father passed away this year, it is a problem; because most people died, others dropped-out of school, others relocated, and others hospitalised... I cannot sleep at night, because I think of what is going to happen the next day, maybe I might be stabbed. Even at school, I can't concentrate. The only way I can cope is to sleep and take sleeping tablets. {CM: Lizo, 19 years old}*

*There is nothing wrong in Gurans because it happens now and then. Sometimes you forget about it, but when it happens it becomes a problem. When these memories come sister, I take pills to forget. Sometimes, when these memories come, they make you mad. {CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}*

*Some of the visions come back; you start to remember when others were stabbed/slaughtered in front of us and others being hospitalised, and that does not make you feel good, you feel very bad. {CM: Bathini, 22 years old}*

These narratives indicate that although CMs put up a bold front during their violent conflicts, they are frequently haunted by nerve-unsettling anticipations of fights in which they might die like several of their peers. Academic concentration and peaceful rest or sleep become elusive because their minds are tainted and agitated by the unpleasant memories of deep injuries, bloodshed, and deaths, to which they have become accustomed. This results in CMs resorting to substances like weed, drugs and sleeping pills to suppress the memories of Gurans violence. According to Lambert, Gale and Hartley (2008), young people between the ages of 18- and 25-years old living in urban areas are at higher risks of substance abuse. Patel et al. (2007) posit that substance abuse among youths between 12-24 years of age could be associated with mental health challenges, which, in some, may be because of their engagement in violent and criminal activities (Waller, Gardner and Cluver, 2014). As stated by Stewart, Steinman, Cauce, Cochran, Whitbeck and Hoyt (2004), the issue of substance abuse and violence is a social problem that places, such as

Khayelitsha, have been dealing with for quite some time. In South Africa, it is difficult to separate gang-related groups and substance abuse, as this combination complement each other (Pinnock, 2016; Kinnes, 2017; Legget, 2002). Although this relationship is still complex and unclear (Wijnberg and Green, 2014), substance consumption is a significant contributor to high crime rates in South Africa, and it should not be taken for granted (Manaliyo, 2014).

#### **4.2.5.2 Conflict with the law**

Another consequence of the delinquent behaviour of most youths practicing Gurans culture is that of having criminal records. The CMs that participated in this study narrated that they have criminal records, which have blighted their future prospects.

##### ***Sabotage of future opportunities***

CMs explained their continual conflicts with the law and its ramifications on their future aspirations thus:

*I was arrested, but I did not go to prison. The police chased us while we were fighting and took us to the police station and disciplined us. {CM: Bathini, 22 years old}*

*I was arrested once; the police caught us from the bridge with my fellows. They found a knife I was using to fight. I stayed for three days. {CM: Onke, 18 years Old}*

*Police vans sometimes transported us home. I was arrested once, they [police] found knife in my pockets. I stayed in police station for one day and I got bail the following day. I would have loved to be a lawyer; I am not sure if it's still possible. I am thinking of going back to school next year. I have applied to this other school in Mfuleni, another township. {CM: Sebenza, 22 years old}*

*I was arrested recently; I will be in court on 14/11/2017. I was arrested because of robbery with firearm. It was my first arrest and I'm on bail. {CM: Bonga, 17 years old}*

*The reason I stopped this [Gurans] is because the police are after me, I have cases that I still need to go to court for. My case for Gurans was stopped when I lost my mother, they pitied me since I don't have a parent anymore, and my case cost R8,000. I have four pending cases, robbing, rape, murder. I just came out of prison, but in some of these I got a bail. I wanted to be a policeman, a chief policeman; I can only achieve this by going back to school. Even so, I might not achieve that goal. I love school, I was never absent. I only dropped-out because of Gurans, I was informed that I am the most wanted. I was never expelled at school though. {CM: Themba, 21 years old}.*

*I was arrested in 2015; the police arrested me from home. They were collecting everyone that was part of Gurans. It was a punishment so we may stop Guransing. Gurans affected the community a lot, even soldiers came to stop this but it's still the same. {CM: Lizo, 19 years old}*

*I wanted to work for the government, but I cannot be employed because of my criminal records. {CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}*

All the CMs in the narratives above had at least one police arrest due to their involvement in Gurans. The exact reasons for their detention by the police varied across their narratives: public fighting, possession of dangerous weapons like knives, robbery with firearm, and mass corporal punishment for Gurans' participants. Two of the CMs had multiple criminal cases. For instance, Themba mentioned having four pending cases for robbing, rape, and murder. Despite the gravity of the offences, Themba, like other CMs, was always allowed bail after his multiple arrests. Upon the loss of his mother, his Gurans case was dropped out of pity for him. However, CMs cannot always count on being pitied, as Bonga who is only 17 years old can confirm. Bonga was arrested for robbery with a firearm and unlike Themba, he was given a firm date to appear in court.

The narratives also generally indicate that being arrested and sent to prison did not immediately result in quitting Gurans. Some of the respondents who had been arrested before were still CMs during the time when this study was conducted. Themba, who had multiple pending cases, only decided to quit because of his increasing number of cases which had put the police on his trail. By

the age of 21, several CMs already had numerous inerasable criminal records. Some had considered the long-term consequence of their criminal records. For instance, Themba indicated that his dreams of becoming a chief policeman had been dented by his pending cases. Lubabalo also indicated that his criminal record had sabotaged his future hopes of working for the government. When CMs entrenched in the Gurans culture consider the long-term effects of their criminal records while weighing the pros and cons of quitting, they are more likely to remain in their crews and continue holding their norms. They do this because they think that continued participation in Gurans activities guarantees them support and protection by their fellow CMs. This is despite the possible hostilities and rejections that they will suffer from their respective communities.

According to South Africa's National Youth Policy, youths are perceived as the changemakers and pioneers of socio-economic and political transformation (NYP, 2009-2021, 2015-2020). However, society has struggled to solve some of the pressing matters (such as youth violence and crime) which might prolong the process of developing youths to become what has been envisioned by the NYP. Anti-social behaviour and crime is fuelled by a number of factors, including poverty (Lundgren and Scheckle, 2019; Sibanda and Kezia, 2021), dysfunctional families (Pelser, 2008; Burton, 2007) and malignant communities (Athens, 2015). According to section 28 (1) of the South African Constitution of 1996, imprisonment should not be the first step taken when a child/youth is in conflict with the law, but rather a last resort when we have exhausted all the other options.

#### **4.2.5.3 Physical assaults**

An issue that has already been mentioned in the previous sections is that of the physical assaults that CMs suffer due to their involvement with the Gurans culture.

##### ***Hospitalisation and injuries***

The following narratives indicate the nature of the several physical assaults and injuries that CMs have suffered due to the intensity of Gurans-related violence.

*The way I was stabbed was very deep, ended up in hospital and stayed for two days. {CM: Sebenza, 19 years old}*

*I have been injured but not hospitalised. But my friends have been injured and some died. {CM: Bathini, 22 years old}*

*I was just injured in my hand, but never hospitalised. I only got hospitalised when I was beaten by community members. They broke my leg and I stayed for a month. My friends ran away, I was the only one caught. {CM: Lubabalo, 24 years old}*

*I was stabbed in 2013 by six guys before I joined Gurans. My friend came to the rescue. I was admitted to Tygerberg hospital for five weeks because my wound was deep. I used a wheelchair, because couldn't walk, I was weak. My friends asked if I was okay, I told them I want revenge. {CM: Onke, 18 years Old}*

The narratives above indicate that the physical assaults and injuries by CMs is quite visible in Khayelitsha. They harm each other in broad daylight and public spaces. Being part of a crew increases the risk of physical assault and injury. In most of the cases, just knowing that a person was a part of a rival crew was enough reason to attack and inflict injuries on him, to the extent that hospitalisation is required. This is also indicative of the fact that the crew members involved in the numerous running battles, stabbings and killings have reached the violent predation stage of violentization (virulency) with a readiness to use extreme violence despite minimal or no provocation. Consequently, the mortality rate of these youths has been increasing (Groenewald et al., 2008). This is supported by Leeper, Lahri, Myers, Patel, Reddy, Martin and Hoving (2019) who further discovered that a great number of youths are found in Khayelitsha 24-hour emergency centres due to injuries from physical assaults. Leeper et al. (2019) indicate that youths who are most at risk of being injured are between 14 and 24 years – the age category of CMs that were interviewed in this thesis.

### 4.3 Findings from Affected Youth

This section presents the findings from the focus group discussions (FGDs) with the affected youths (AYs). It examines their experiences of Gurans violence within their communities and their schools. Table 4-2 below shows the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data derived from the FGDs with the youths affected by the activities of their peers in Gurans.

Table 4-2: Thematic framework for presenting findings from AYs

Major Themes	Categories	Subcategories
<b>Instilling fear</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of Gurans within the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Negotiating safety between school and home</li> </ul>
<b>Safety concerns inside school premises</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gurans in the school yard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fear and insecurity in the school yard</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gurans in the classrooms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fear and insecurity in the classroom</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators' inability to safeguard learners</li> </ul>	
<b>Effects of Gurans on school going youth and within the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruption in education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School Absenteeism</li> <li>○ Poor performance</li> <li>○ Dropping out</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High crime rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Public robbery</li> <li>○ Aggravated assault</li> <li>○ Gross physical assaults and homicide</li> <li>○ Gender-based violence</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychological trauma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individual and Secondary trauma</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversion in to Gurans</li> </ul>	—
<b>Factors contributing to the perpetuation of Gurans violence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familial influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing access to traditional healers</li> <li>○ Vengefulness and bias</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Supporting the use of occult powers</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Inadequate law enforcement and security</li> <li>○ Lack of recreational, sport, and development facilities</li> </ul>

### 4.3.1 Instilling Fear

When the AYs were asked about their experiences of Gurans violence, many of them gave varied narratives detailing how they were affected either directly or indirectly by the violence associated with the Gurans. For the indirectly affected, it is important to note that their narratives were shaped by the compassionate attachment they had with their victimised loved ones. As the respective studies of Rauvola, Vega and Lavigne (2019) and Salston and Figley (2003) noted, individuals can be affected by compassion fatigue, resulting from a passionate connection of feeling the pain of others. Youths who have, or whose loved ones, friends and relatives have been affected by Gurans experience such feeling and relay them in their narratives. These narratives, presented in this section, show traces of compassion fatigue in the narrators. While some of them were not direct victims of Gurans violence, they had strong empathy for their loved ones who had been affected.

Overall, one major thematic category emerged from their narratives, i.e., *fear of Gurans within the community*. The AYs shared that they always felt unsafe within their communities in Khayelitsha due to the fear of being caught between the violent clashes of different crews. Their narratives show that they were affected while they were within the vicinities of their homes and when they were travelling to and from school. In these areas, it was normal for them to be entangled in Gurans violence without prior warnings.

However, when communities descend into situations where the probabilities for anyone to become entangled in violence at any given moment reaches unprecedented levels, it means that such communities have attained high levels of disorganisation. Thus, for Khayelitsha, using provisions of the violentization theory underpinning this study, it is clear from the narratives of the learners that it is a society that has reached the malignant phase of community organisation identified by Athens. For Athens, and as already discussed elsewhere in this study, communities can be organised in three different phases or categories, namely malignant, turbulent and civil (Athens, 1998 and 2017). According to him, communities that are organised according civil principles always advocate for civility and against violence. Those that are in the turbulent phase are organised both for and against civility and violence. Lastly, those that are in the malignant phase are organised for violence and against all forms of civility (Athens, 1998 and 2017). Therefore, if

we are to consider the information emanating from the narratives, Khayelitsha denotes a community that has all the characteristics of malignancy. In other words, Khayelitsha represents a community gripped by fear of Gurans and act according to the dictates of its resultant violence. Its impacts have permeated all aspects of life in the community. However, the details of how learners negotiate such fear and how the whole community has been reorganised around the violence are discussed in the sub-themes below.

#### **4.3.1.1 Fear of Gurans Within the Community**

For many youths in Khayelitsha, the fear of Gurans developed as a result of their daily encounters with the violence of Gurans. One female learner narrated how she had been affected by this fear of Gurans thus:

*It affects us Miss, because at times you would want to go in the mall, but you can't because they are Guransing and you get affected and injured. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}*

Others also concurred and explained the seriousness of the fear of Gurans:

*I stay there in the Greenpoint Section. I witness this [fight matches] most of the time when it is happening. It happens closer to where I stay. So now it limits our movement. {AY, School 4: Grade 11 male learner}*

*I get affected Miss, because we stay in different locations and it happens that these locations do not like each other based on the territories and you happen to visit your friend from that location, in P section, they will stab you because you do not belong in their vicinity, although you are not even part of this Gurans. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}*

Indeed, experiencing fear to the extent of one having to restrict one's own movements within the community was not the only way in which such fear manifested in the youths of Khayelitsha. Some

of the youths even ended up having the dual fear of their community itself, as well as that of interacting with peers. They explained thus:

*We do not feel safe at all in our communities.* {AY, School 3: Grade 11 female learner}

*I do not feel safe, because sometimes it happens that we are standing and chatting with my friends next to the Somalian shop and these guys just come to attack us.* {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}

*I do not feel safe Miss, because it will happen that while I am walking, Gurans will start happening, someone will come out of nowhere and you will be attacked.* {AY, School 4: Grade 9 male learner}

*I would say Miss I do not feel safe, because closer to my home they are Guransing. I'm closer to the main road, you will hear stones hitting the house and it is not safe to go out and check because you might get injured.* {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}

*For example, yesterday here at Phase 1 in Greenpoint they were Guransing, they entered the streets and that threatened the life of the community members, because they were throwing stones and their sharp weapons were flying all over. It was not easy to run away, and we do not feel safe because of that.* {AY, School 2: Grade 10 female learner}

Gurans has made the Khayelitsha community so dangerous that some of the youths even ended up being affected by the mere fact of being youths. This is because youth violence in Khayelitsha has now reached such proportions that every youth is considered a potential CM. This has resulted in all youths in Khayelitsha having to permanently live with the fear of being mistaken as CMs and subjected to the violence to which opposing CMs are always subjected. One AY explained how he has been gripped by this fear thus:

*I am scared Miss. I might get affected; because we are in the same age group, they might assume that I am part of them.* {AY, School 3: Grade 11 male learner}

While most of the youths had been affected only by a fear of the violent circumstances around them, there were others who had actually been direct victims of such violence. In some of the situations, one can be subjected to Gurans violence after having had one's identity mistaken for a crew's enemy. One male youth narrated his experiences of being subject to such Gurans violence after being mistakenly identified.

*I was beaten last year by the Gurans (CMs), they thought I was my friend, they used sharp objects, I fought back and stabbed one of them. [Everyone laughs] They were five of them and I was alone, after that I went back home. {AY, School 3: Grade 11 male learner}*

Overall, the above narratives point to a community that is now permanently gripped by fear of violence. They live with such fear either because they have been victims, or they witnessed such violence.

#### ***Negotiating safety between school and home***

Whereas the narratives in the previous section have shown that Gurans terror can be avoided if one abstains from moving around the community or avoiding places where episodes of such violence might be prevalent, study participants have proven, however, that it is difficult to avoid Gurans when travelling between school and home. Since the attainment of democracy in South Africa, education has been one of the sectors considered a basic priority and human right by the government. It is both a right and a need for every child in the country to attend school on daily basis. Moreover, most children are now aware that there are more after-school benefits for those who succeed in their education. Thus, with such an impetus and belief, most children no longer want to miss school. However, in Khayelitsha, with the prevalence of the Gurans violence, reporting for school and returning home safely afterwards is one of the major challenges that the youths face.

According to the narrations of the AYs, in Khayelitsha learners are always faced with the threat of Gurans and how to negotiate this threat every day. Learners who can afford safe transport, like

private vehicles, to move between home and school have a chance of avoiding Gurans, but the less privileged ones do not, as indicated in the following narratives:

*I was wounded by an axe (panga) on my way home from school between Town-Two and J-Section. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner}*

*It is escalating now, every Friday next to Yomelela P.P School there is Gurans, we cannot even pass there from school on our way home to Greenpoint. {AY, School 4: Grade 11 male learner}*

Nor is the use of public transport a means to avoid Gurans terror. One learner explained how he was affected by Gurans violence on a public transport thus:

*You can be attacked on your way to or from school. I was attacked twice on the train by the Vuras on my way home. Even the adults who were on the train scurried for cover and there was nowhere I and my friends could hide. We were not even members of the Vatos or any group for that matter, but we were attacked, nonetheless. One of my friends was badly beaten, he fractured his arm during the incident. I no longer feel safe.*

{AY, School 4: Grade 11 male learner}

Some other learners have had to adopt creative methods to negotiate the Gurans terror:

*You see Miss since the school finishes early on Friday, they will be waiting for us in the robots and that prevents us from going home, if we manage, we need to take a long route so that they do not see us. {AY, School 3: Grade 10 male learner}*

*We do not feel safe at all, some of us are always worried on our way to school and back, we even ask teachers to give us a lift. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner}*

Overall, these narratives indicate that youths in Khayelitsha are always affected by the need to negotiate their way around crew members on their way to and from school. That these youths are

always thinking about what will happen to them if CMs pounce on them means that they are somehow stressed by the effects of Gurans violence. As the next section shows, this has negative consequences on their schooling. De Wet et al. (2018) have also shown that youths feared travelling to and from school, because of violence in their community. Also, McGill et al. (2014) indicate that exposure to violence among school-going youths might have negative effects on their schooling.

### **4.3.2 Safety concerns inside school premises**

As stated in the introductory remarks of this section, the two main places where youths are affected and feel the impact of Gurans violence in Khayelitsha are around their homes and within their schools. This subsection concerns itself with safety of learners within their school premises. While school environments might seem impenetrable to Gurans violence, results from this study show that the problem is also prevalent within school premises. The narratives of learners about their experiences of Gurans within their school premises were grouped into thematic categories: *Gurans in the school yard*, *Gurans in the classroom*, and *educators' inability to safeguard learners*.

#### **4.3.2.1 Gurans in the School Yard**

Similar to their feelings of being unsafe within their communities, the major thematic subcategory that emerged from the narratives of AYs' narrations of their experiences of Gurans within their school yard was *fear and insecurity*. These narratives are presented below.

##### ***Fear and insecurity in the school yard***

Several learners explained their feelings within their school yards thus:

*I do not feel safe Miss, because the guys from H-Section come inside school premises to abuse and rob us.* {AY, School 2: Grade 9 female learner}

*We are still not safe, because others can enter school premises while we are here, let us say one of us wants to relieve himself/herself and goes out while those ones have entered the school premises, so you end-up attacked.* {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}

*I am saying we are not safe, because here at school there was a learner who got stabbed that was involved in Gurans, so we are not safe here. {AY, School 4: Grade 12 male learner}*

*When we come to school, they take our money. I have an experience and that affects me. One of us was robbed two days ago close to school premises. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 male learner}*

*Last year (2016) it almost happened in front of the school gate and everyone ran, they were carrying sharp objects. {AY, School 3: Grade 10 female learner}*

*We do not feel safe, because our school is close to the shacks and there are so many things happening next to our school. {AY, School 4: Grade 12 Female learner}*

The narratives above paint a bleak picture of safety in the schools in Khayelitsha. Recurrent in the narratives of the learners are phrases such as, “*we do not feel safe...*”, “*I do not feel safe.*” Being at school is even more difficult for learners whose schools are in the territory of their opponents, as they are easy targets for attacks. Also, learners felt agitated each time they had to visit toilets or the bathroom as they could be attacked by their opponents any time. As such, they had to remain vigilant all the time. Some learners mention unpleasant experiences of being physically assaulted and robbed of their possessions. For several learners, such experiences dispelled the notion of schools as safe places.

*I agree [we do not feel safe], because here we are in the township. It happens that Gurans are in Masiyile and people come here as well and damage the school, because it is easy to jump the fence. {AY, School 4: Grade 12 Female learner}*

*There is also a hole here at school that they [youth involved in Gurans] use to enter. [noise at the back on the same subject] {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}*

*I think here at school since Gurans happens as well in the premises, there should be a system that they use to search us when we enter school premises to avoid people Guransing in school premises. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 Female learner}*

*During lunch they come to the front or stay at the back yard and when it is class period, they come to the classrooms that are at the back. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 female learner}*

*Even that thing of closing us out of the school gate, it is not good, there is a friend of mine who got stabbed in front of the school gate, while we were outside, these guys came and stabbed him, at least he did not die. {AY, School 4: Grade 11 male learner}*

*Even a crew/group can enter the premises. The police forum or patrol officers come late, after the incidence. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}*

*The securities do not carry anything like a weapon to protect us. People even jump the school fence and enter here, so we are not safe. {AY, School 4: Grade 12 male learner}*

Broadly, dilapidated school infrastructure, holes in walls and collapsed slabs, and fences that can be easily jumped over, allow easy access to school premises. Also, easy access into schools is aided by poor school surveillance and ineffective security personnel. Learners are easily robbed, assaulted, and stabbed in the school premises because security and law enforcement personnel were not doing their jobs properly. Even when security personnel find dangerous weapons on learners and attempt to confiscate them, they are faced with resistance from the learners who regard such weapons as needful for their protection. One learner attributed the ineffectiveness of the school security personnel in protecting them to their lack of weapons. The conditions in township schools have not been conducive for learning even in post-apartheid South Africa. Many schools in marginalised communities lack security, have poor infrastructure and resources, and are bedevilled by violence (Xaba, 2006; Boqwana, 2009; Equal Education, 2012) This has impacted the progress and development of these schools (Xaba, 2006). According to Ngqela and Lewis, (2012: 87) “in order to develop effective strategies that will prevent school violence and improve

learners' safety at school, it is important for policy makers and educators" to understand the impact of this violence on learners (Ngqela and Lewis, 2012).

Delinquent youths (some of whom might have been expelled from school or are dropouts) exploit the faulty protective structures and poor surveillance in schools by disguising as learners to gain easy entry into schools to assault other learners. As the narratives below show, some of them exchange school uniforms with other learners who attend their schools.

*...there are learners who dropped out of school so since they dropped out, if they want to come and stab someone here at school, they can do that by wearing school uniform, maybe by borrowing a school uniform from one of the learners and pretend that they are schooling here, by doing so they get opportunity to attack and stab someone, while they are not schooling here. {AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner}*

*Some of those who are Guransing are able to get inside school premises wearing school uniforms that they got from their friends, and they will take our food." [everyone started laughing]. {AY, School 3: Grade 10 male learner}*

*They even use the main gate to enter, they have friends within the school, so what happens is that they will exchange school uniforms with their friends, e.g., school ties. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 female learner}*

*We do not feel safe, because Miss, gangsterism was still here even last year [2016]. There were those who were expelled from school, so Miss they can come here at any time if they want to, especially if they have used drugs. {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}*

Some learners who confessed being involved in Gurans indicated that they always felt unsafe at school, highlighting that members of rival groups had the tendency of coming to schools to mete out revenge for previously lost fights. These learners and their colleagues could be stabbed, robbed, or subjected to other forms of physical assaults. In the following narratives, some learners explained why rivals would decide to bring fights to school.

*It is easier to attack someone while they are at school; that's when your enemy is vulnerable. It would be a surprise attack hence there is no time to prepare for defence; it is difficult to mobilize your crew members in time to respond to the attack. Furthermore, if you retaliate while on the school premises, you risk expulsion; What will you tell your parents back home? {AY, School 1: Grade 9 male learner}*

Thus, while certain crew fights might have begun outside school premises, vengeful CMs might consider seizing the opportunity to launch an unexpected attack on their opponents while they are at school. Burton and Leoschut (2013) suggests that school-based violence cannot be separated from the violence and crime that South African communities have been experiencing. Some of the fights that learners describe happen in the community but extend to school premises if the rivals still seek revenge. This reflects external factors, such as violent communities (Burton and Leoschut, 2013), which have affected the learning spaces (Statistics SA, 2016). This violence within the school premises has been very disruptive to academic development (Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013; Ngqela and Lewis, 2012).

#### **4.3.2.2 Gurans in the classroom**

Under this thematic category, *fear and insecurity in the classroom* emerged as the major subcategory. The narratives here are similar to those discussed directly above; the major differences are in the context of each set of narratives.

##### ***Fear and insecurity in the classroom***

Beyond entering school yards, CMs and other delinquent youths also found it easy to access classrooms. While having FGDs, learners mentioned that they were not feeling safe because some of the youths involved in Gurans may just come in. They only felt safe when the classroom was locked:

*We feel safe now at the present moment {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}*

*We feel safe for now, because we are in this class and it is locked. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 female learner} [While we were talking some boys got into the school premises, using some hole from the slabs that are broken. It was during lunch time]*

Also, during an FGD in school 2, a group of young boys entered the premises, using one of the holes in the back of the classrooms. It was lunch break, and the teachers were in the staffroom. We paused for a moment to check what was going to happen, and it seemed like they were after one of the young boys schooling there. They chased him and he ran to the staff room. They grabbed his school bag and threw out his books on the floor and started tearing them up. After doing that, they left the school. One of the AY commented:

*“You see what we are talking about Miss, they beat us.” {AY, School 2: Grade 10 learners}*

Immediately after the incident, we had to stop the discussion because learners were afraid and no longer concentrating. We scheduled for another day. The victim was a grade 9 learner whose friend was attacked and stabbed by the same group. Since the boy saw everything, his attackers wanted to keep him quiet by possibly killing him. His friend had relocated to another city as a measure of protection. The only reason this learner was still safe was because his parents had organised transport for him, to and from school. Thus, his attackers decided to get him while he was on the school premises.

#### **4.3.2.3 Educators’ Inability to Safeguard Students**

Like the boy who was attacked in the incident described in the previous subsection, other learners also resort to seeking safety in their teachers’ offices when there are violent outbreaks in the school yard or their classrooms:

*When you are at school, you are still not safe, because your opponent’s come to class and look for you. You end up staying in teachers’ offices because you are scared even after school.” {AY, School 2: Grade 9 female learner}*

However, even educators might not be always able to protect learners from looming danger:

*No [we do not feel safe], because the teachers stay in the staffroom and our classrooms are at the back, so these guys manage to get inside school premises by jumping the school fence and enter the classes without the knowledge/awareness of the teachers, then someone get stabbed and injured. {AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner}*

*I agree with what my peer is saying, they come into classrooms to rob our phones and sometimes you have to negotiate with them, and it depends whether you know them or not.” {AY, School 2: Grade 9 female learner}*

*We are not safe in this school whether the gate is closed or not when we leave after school or coming to school the tsotsies/skollies will be waiting for us and they will rob us in front the gate and when we run to get inside the premises, we will be chased out and our principal wouldn't care even if we are robbed and stabbed. He cares about his safety alone. [everyone nods] {AY, School 3: Grade 10 female learner}*

*It happens sometimes when we go to the school toilets (bathroom) we meet these groups of guys. They start to ask us for money and when we inform that we do not have, they start to search us and when we leave after school, we see the other group from maybe Manyano Senior Secondary school and when we run back to school, we find teachers closing themselves in the staff room [start laughing] so we are not safe. {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}*

*Even teachers leave us alone in classes and stay in the staff room because they are also scared. {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}*

These narratives indicate that educators are unable to protect learners because of concerns for their own safety. While educators hasten to protect themselves from the violence of crew rivalry at school, learners are subjected to robbery and physical assaults. Some learners had to negotiate their safety, and the success of such negotiation was dependent on their level of acquaintance with the

robber(s). Learners are therefore left to arrive at their own methods and strategies to protect themselves. Thus, some learners carry weapons just to protect themselves (Traynor, 2016; Wilcox, May and Roberts, 2007; Watkins, 2008). Bipath (2017:79) discovered that learners smuggle weapons such as “knives, pangas, sticks, screwdrivers, axes, pair of scissors, needles and hammers into school”, to attack others in violent fights or to protect themselves. To prevent learners’ possession and use of weapons, Sprague and Walker (2005) suggest that there should be permanent security systems, which include cameras, locking of school gates, and volunteers from the community to patrol. This is supported by Wolfe, Chrusciel, Rojek, Hansen and Kaminski (2017) who suggest that alarms, security services, should be active in schools. Although these suggestions make sense, they present extra costs to the Department of Education and might be difficult to implement in township schools; successful implementation might take a long time.

Bipath (2017) argues that School Management Teams (SMTs) should be involved in these processes of making sure that schools are free from violence, and learners’ and teachers’ safety is not compromised in any manner. However, SMTs find it very challenged to implement a proper and clear system to monitor safety in schools that are in impoverished communities (Bipath, 2017). According to Mapaya, Litshani and Sinthumule (2021), different management strategies that meet the needs of the schools are required. They further state that “although ensuring safety in schools is general challenging, the safety of learners is mandatory” (Mapaya et al., 2021: 128). When learners and teachers have to negotiate their safety in the classrooms or staffrooms of their schools, learning and teaching time is compromised (Hurwitz, 2006). School should be a space for learners to grow and flourish (Reiss and White, 2013), but for this to happen, safety at schools must be prioritised (Fennelly and Perry, 2014).

### **4.3.3 Effects of Gurans on school going youth and within the community**

As noted in the previous section above, Gurans violence has almost permeated all aspects of the youth lifestyles in Khayelitsha, with several major effects. This section discusses these effects under three thematic categories: *disruption in education*, *high crime rate*, and *psychological trauma*.

#### 4.3.3.1 Disruption in Education

One prominent aftermath of the breakdown of safety and security precipitated by Gurans is the disruption in the education of youths in Black townships. This is associated not only with the general lack of safety in public spaces within these townships, but also the lack of safety and security within schools. The subcategories that emerged from the narratives of learners related to disruption in education include, *absenteeism*, *poor school performance*, and *dropping out*.

##### *School absenteeism*

The importance of education was recognised by several learners, and there were indications of love for schooling. However, the hostilities and adversities posed by Gurans was a major impediment to regular school attendance.

*Gurans makes us scared to come to school, because we do not want to die, others get stabbed and die.*” {AY, School 3: Grade 10 female learner}

*I do not feel-good Miss, because we come to school in order to feel/be safe, when people who have sharp objects have access to school premises that means we are not safe, so rather we stay at home and not attend.* {AY, School 3: Grade 10 male learner}

*Every Friday after lunch, we do not attend other class periods because you are scared that you will be attacked after school, so you decide to jump the school and go home.* {AY, School 4: Grade 11 male learner}

*I have a friend. If I can make an example, he is studying at Qhayiya (which is in the I and Greenpoint section) so there was Gurans happening and he could not go to school because of that.* {AY, School 4: Grade 12 male learner}

*Our attendance is very bad Miss, because these guys sometimes start this thing in the morning, when the class periods are starting, and the teachers have to let us go home for our safety and that delays us from our schoolwork. We come to school with big bags full of schoolbooks, when we arrive it's either the gate is closed or we cannot even resume*

*classes, because these guys are fighting inside school premises. {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}*

*This thing of Gurans affects us big time even here at school, sometimes it happens here and the following day there will be no school and the community will protest against that, for the school to be closed. Now we end-up not attending school maybe for two days and we will be delayed from our module. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}*

*It affects us miss as we are schooling, let's say Qhayiya as one of the schools that like Guransing a lot, it affects learners from there, you do not know what happens, they start fighting and you start not to feel safe, your life becomes in danger, anything can happen anytime inside school premises and that affects your attendance and performance, you can't even attend class period, you will be told to go home and that affects your education. (AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner)}*

These narratives indicate that frequent absence at school among youths in Black townships is largely forced than voluntary. Two of the quotes above indicate that violent clashes that significantly affect learners are more likely to occur on Fridays. The anticipation of being attacked while commuting to, or from school, or while at school causes heightened feelings of unsafety and dissuades many youths from regular attendance at school. Some CMs were unavoidably absent from school due to injuries inflicted on them by other CMs. Also, learners who come to school, prepared to learn, are forced to go home when fights erupt within the school premises; this causes delays in their schoolwork and affects their education.

Several learners deemed missing and bunking school to be a reasonable measure to ensure their safety from Gurans-related violence, especially in schools where it is prevalent, and the school security is inadequate. Some of the learners, especially those who were involved in Gurans, stay away from school for two or three times a week, especially on Fridays, because that is when Gurans-related violence escalates. Sometimes, learners will come to school but will miss several class periods, as they will miss the classes just before school closes to avoid being attacked. Missing classes seemed to be done in groups or individually. According to Venter and Jeffries

(2020), if a learner has been absent from school for more than seven days, the head of the school is legally required to remove the learner's name from the class register. However, findings in this study indicate that several learners get away with absenteeism since it was justified by their fear and anxiety of the outbursts of violence inside school grounds and the school's inadequate security. These findings are supported by Druck and Kaplowitz (2005) who further state that absenteeism of some learner is due to fear of being attacked while at school.

### ***Poor performance***

The ensuing backlog of schoolwork due to frequent absence or intermittencies in school operation due to Gurans detracts from focused and effective learning, and results in poor performance among youths in Khayelitsha, whether they are in crews or not.

*It affects others because they even fail, because they cannot concentrate in class... {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}*

*It affects even our performance, because sometimes, for example last year in grade 10, it will happen that while we are in class in the middle of the class period, we will hear noise outside and we will be asked to go home and it might be the whole week. We will be behind with our module and we will need to start over the following week what we were supposed to do last week. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 female learner}*

*Sorry Miss, I would like to speak about myself, last year I was doing grade 10 and it is my second time doing it this year. It happened that I failed grade 10 last year because I was involved in Gurans, because my friends (my accused) will pick me up sometimes from school around 10h00 am before school end, because school only end at 15h00 pm, we will go to another school to attack others that affected me a lot. {AY, School 1: Grade 10 female learner}*

The specific effects of Gurans on school were voiced by a few AYs but it is very plausible that these effects are homogeneously experienced by many youths in Khayelitsha and other townships where the activities of Gurans are persistent. These effects include missing class tests, poor

concentration in class, disruption of lessons, and repeating grades. What is more devastating is failing grade 12, just when some thought they were about to complete high school and move on to pursue other goals.

*You know what Miss, Gurans used to happen when we were about to write exams and when school is closing and others will end-up be failing because of that and repeat school grades, especially grade 12. {AY, School 1: Grade 10 female learner}*

*Miss as children who grew up in townships, so when I look at you and start to like your style and that motivates me to be like you, for example here in Khayelitsha there is no one who was once in Gurans and became a good role model. Those who did bad things end up dead and that does not motivate you to progress with your life, because you have others dropping out of school and nothing has changed. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}*

*As you walk to school, you like...I will never be what I want to be in life, because you are always scared and sometimes you worry that something will happen anytime. I might be stabbed, shot while going to school. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}*

Failing the national senior certificate (NSC) exam in grade 12 could be due to the inability of township youths to complete the curriculum required to pass the exam, strong feelings of inadequacy to take the exam, and lack of support/motivation from peers and older persons in the community. Also, persistent fear of harm while going to school demotivates township youths from completing their high school education and aiming for higher goals in life.

A strong commitment to regular attendance at school and academic excellence was evident in the narratives of several learners. However, while at school, their concentration is compromised by persistent fears of being attacked after school by peers waiting for them in front of the school gate to harm them. Accordingly, township learners find it difficult to engage with their teachers or their class exercises, and struggle to do their homework or write class tests, as their energy is directed to staying alive. In the long run, disruptions in focused learning prolongs or stifles the educational aspirations of learners. In several narratives, learners mentioned repeating grades or even giving

up hopes of completing their high school education. Learners spend a considerable amount of time at school – approximately seven hours in each weekday (Monday-Friday) – especially those who are in secondary school; it is unlikely that they will be academically productive and progress if their schools lack adequate security infrastructures and system that assures them of safety while they attend classes (Ngqela and Lewis, 2012).

This study’s findings on the impacts of youth delinquency on learners’ academic performance are similar to findings in past research. According to Nesor (2005), violence at school compromises a learner’s educational attainment, which violates the learner’s right to education, freedom, and security. Weybright et al. (2017) opined that if youths do not drop out of school, they will either repeat grades because of their low academic performance. By the time these youths reach Grades 10 – 12, they would have repeated some grades three times and more. Also, Kim (2020) argued that youths’ involvement in delinquent behaviour impacts their educational outcomes. Furthermore, “while there are many causes for persistent educational failure in areas of concentrated poverty, compulsory school attendance laws combined with staunch district boundaries have created a system where disadvantaged children often have no choice but to attend chronically failing schools” (Catuzzi, 2014:322). This indicates that it is inappropriate to expect the academic performance of learners in township schools to be on par with learners in other schools with better learning conditions and environment.

### ***Dropping out***

Although there were no explicit statements of intentions to drop out of school by AYs in the discussions, it is clear that attendance and learning irregularities disincentivise continuance of schooling and could be a significant catalyst for dropping out, even when one was not suspended or expelled.

*There was a learner (Nliziye’embi) that used to school here, he used not to come to school, the reason he could not attend, because his opponents would be waiting for him every day at the school gate, so he decided to drop-out of school that’s why he was affected. {AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner}*

*Gurans mostly cause school dropouts, let's say for instance you stay at Q-Section and you are schooling in L-Section and you are not supposed to enter that section, so when you go and come back from school, they will wait to attack you. {AY, School 4: Grade 12 male learner}*

*Okay, first and foremost, for some of us it is hard to come to school because of this Gurans. You know for a fact that something is going to happen while coming to school. Sometimes we do know what is going to happen, because there are certain areas or street corners that you cannot pass. It's either you will get robbed or attacked that is why others end-up banking school or dropout, they are running away from Gurans. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}*

Notwithstanding the minor differences in these narratives, heightened feelings of insecurity and danger within school or when commuting to and from school were the central reasons for the high dropout rate among township learners. Mguzulwa and Gxubane (2019) found that youths' involvement in gangs or similar groups is a major influence for dropping out from high school. Males were regarded as being at a higher risk of dropping out. Naidoo's findings are confirmed in this study. Learners indicated that they were scared to attend school due to fears of being attacked by their peers while going to school or inside school premises. These fears, which caused frequent absenteeism and poor performance, also incentivised dropping out before Grade 12. According to the Department of Basic Education (2015), the dropout rate in South African has become a national crisis. It is plausible that township schools contribute significantly to these statistics as they lack strategies or ways to assist learners to stay in school until they complete Grade 12 and during the National Senior Certificate exams amidst recurrent youth group rivalries.

The fundamentals of successful transition into adulthood include completing an education, getting employment, being healthy and participating in civic life (Ward et al., 2012). Failure to complete or engage in these building blocks has negative impacts on an individual's life, especially on the youth, as it affects how they integrate into society. Township youths who are dropouts have lower chances of obtaining gainful employment (Seekings, 2013), thus their capacity for improving their

socioeconomic condition is limited. It is insensitive and inappropriate to judge these youths as ‘failures’ without considering factors like youth violence that caused them to drop out of school (Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019).

#### **4.3.3.2 High Crime Rate**

The breakdown of safety and security in Khayelitsha caused by Gurans also reflects in high crime rates within the community. This has been repeatedly hinted in the findings presented hitherto. From the narratives of AYs, four main thematic subcategories of the crimes committed by the youths involved in Gurans and other delinquent youths in the township were identified: *public robbery, burglary and vandalism, physical assaults and homicide, gender-based violence, and youth conversion to Gurans*. The findings on each of these subcategories are presented subsequently.

##### ***Public robbery***

In the previous sections, several learners mentioned that they were robbed by crew members and other delinquent youths while in school, however these incidents were not only limited to school premises:

*I was robbed here [everyone giggled and laughed]. Do not laugh guys, I got robbed in J-Section corner (where mostly skollies gather), it was long since I have been in Cape Town. I was from Port Elizabeth; two guys came with a knife and they took my phone with my sister and her friend. [Everyone giggled and laughed]* {AY, School 1: Grade 12 female learner}

*Even when your parents are going to work, in the morning or evening they get affected most as well of the time, especially in trains and buses, because these guys fight there and rob the parents.* {AY, School 1: Grade 12 female learner}

The narrations demonstrate that, one might also be robbed in public transport vehicles like trains and buses as these delinquent youths also infiltrate these vehicles. Some learners have been robbed by their delinquent peers while walking in the streets, and parents who commute to work using

public vehicles are endangered. According to the first quote, some learners have first-hand experience of being victims of crime, in which they lost their belongings and almost got hurt in the process. Surprisingly, while this learner was narrating the incident, some other learners in the discussion laughed and giggled. This suggests that crime has become a norm in townships like Khayelitsha to the extent that youths no longer take it seriously when one has been a victim. Could this mean that Khayelitsha has lost the sense of knowing right from wrong? The laughing and giggling could be interpreted in so many ways, such as *“this is a way of life, get over it. Or, this is normal, get used to being robbed while living in this location. Or, there is nothing new about being robbed, etc”*. Manaliyo (2014) discovered that townships such as Khayelitsha have justified crime as means of making a living, which means that Khayelitsha has lost its responsibility for guiding and preventing children from normalising criminal behaviour. This behaviour in Black communities can be linked to their socio-economic status in SA; many youths live in poverty, and lack social support (Maringa, 2015; Mtyala and Villette, 2016; Swartz et al., 2012; Ward et al., 2012).

A few studies that were conducted in South African impoverished townships discovered that most youths spend time on the streets. There, they form groups, or ‘work’ to earn income by robbing and stealing people’s valuable stuff in order to meet their own needs (Pinnock, 2016; Maringa and Gibson, 2019; Swartz et al., 2012). While some youths mug people to satisfy their needs, including food, branded clothing, and other substances that amuse/elate them, other youths mug others to live lifestyles that give them some form of prestige within their communities. Neighbourhood disparities (existent even in townships) has influenced youths’ quest for a ‘good life’ in impoverished communities (Maringira and Masiya, 2018). The case of youths mugging to meet their needs is indicative of youths’ quest for survival in a malignant community, while the case of youths mugging to afford expensive lifestyles is indicative of youths trying to establish their social identity in a marginalised community.

### ***Aggravated assault***

Even homes in Khayelitsha are not spared from the malicious and violent activities of CMs. Some of the AYs narrated their experiences of seeing their families, friends, and peers, subjected to assaults by CMs thus:

*Sometimes it happens that you run to a certain house, but these guys are not scared to enter that house and get you. {AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner}*

*We do not feel safe Miss, because sometimes others come and do house breaks in your home and you do not feel safe. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}*

*For example, Miss, when they are looking for your sibling and they end-up not getting him, sometimes they come and burn your household/home down or get inside to look for themselves in the presence of your family. If they don't get him then they take one member of the family, just to spite (cause him pain) the one that is Guransing and that's how it is affecting us. {AY, School 3: Grade 11 female learner}*

*It affects our families, because firstly it makes our parents to be stressed, it happens that if the guys who are Guransing do not get you, they vandalize your home, break the windows, and sometimes put it on fire, especially the rebels. {AY, School 4: Grade 12 female learner}*

*It does affect our families, because once your opponent's see that you were one of those who attacked and stabbed one of them, while you were fighting. They will go to your family house and try to demolish it, break windows, etc. They can even slaughter your mother inside, yes. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner}*

These narratives generally indicate that homes and families in Khayelitsha are not safe. At home, one could be unexpectedly attacked if a fleeing CM seeks refuge there. CMs, whose family homes are known by their opponents, place the lives of their loved ones at significant risk. When there is a conflict, some CMs could go as far as demolishing the homes of their opponents or ill-treating

their family members. Family members were sometimes injured, raped, or in extreme cases killed during the crossfire of crews. As stipulated above, some of the AYs were mistaken for CMs, which led to some of them and their families being affected by the wars between CMs.

More so, the mere fact that the violent youths exhibit no signs of respecting homes of community members which they can break into with impunity during their violent skirmishes also denotes the malignant status of the Khayelitsha community. In other words, such behaviour further confirms a society that is violent and has also lost all civil manners. However, when violent acts become regular, community members' vulnerability and unpleasant daily lived experiences also increases (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Athens, 2017). This, however, is contrary to the Bill of Rights, which states that every person has a right to freedom and security and should not be treated inhumanely (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). However, those living in communities like Khayelitsha experience a daily violation of these rights (Pinnock, 2017; Hallman, Kenworthy, Diers, Swan and Devnarain, 2015; Ward et al., 2012).

### ***Gross physical assaults and homicide***

Some findings in the previous sections already indicated that Gurans-related violence in Khayelitsha has caused several injuries. More findings from the AYs which highlight the intensity of the assaults from Gurans-related violence are specifically presented here, under the thematic subcategory, *gross assaults, and homicides*.

*You know sister, in this Gurans, when someone stabs you, it is like they did nothing. it is like they were killing a chicken, or I do not know. They do not care about the shedding of blood. {AY, School 2: Grade 9 male learner}*

*For example, my brother before he passed away there was a process of reconciliation. Therefore, he decided to join a party in Site B that he was invited to by one of the guys in Site B and this Guy from Site B, did not know that the guys from Site C were carrying sharp weapons. He thought they stopped Gurans and that is where he was killed. {AY, School 2: Grade 9 male learner}*

*I was one of those chased, so while I was jumping over this other house, I used my hand to balance, and they hit me with a panga and my hand is currently not working properly, still recovering, and this other Guy Wanda [got] hit and injured so bad than me. Even though he was not Guransing. {AY, School 2: Grade 9 male learner}*

*I do not feel-good Miss, because others get killed brutally with axes (Amazembe), for example this other one got killed. {AY, School 3: Grade 10 male learner}*

*There was this Guy (Mjita) they went to look for in his home and they found his mother...what they did they started beating and stabbing his mother and it seems like there were three children in the house, who got affected. They were also slaughtered. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner}*

*I had a friend who was doing grade 8. He was attacked and when he ran to this other house, he was pulled out of the house and killed. [AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner]*

These narratives paint a picture of a general inclination of CMs to savagery characterised by gross physical assaults on other youths and community members. The participants indicated that youths in Gurans prefer the use of sharp objects like axes and cutlasses for brutally injuring or killing the other. In their descriptions, phrases such as, ‘...one of your own being slaughtered.’, ‘...it is like they were killing a chicken...’, ‘They slaughter people like they are goats...’ indicate the grossness of the physical assaults meted out by CMs on others. A female learner indicated that these youths had grown so inhumane to the point that they no longer cared about the shedding of blood. In one learner’s narrative, three siblings of a member of one crew were slaughtered by members of another crew in the name of vengeance. This kind of behaviour (normalising violence) in Black and Coloured townships could have been accepted during the apartheid government, as a form of resistance (Pinnock, 2016), however, in post-apartheid South Africa, the leading cause for such violence must be questioned. Some, like Standing (2003) and Kinnes (2017) argue that this kind of behaviour continues in new South Africa because of the ramifications of a long history of violence. In corroboration, Ethans (1997; 2003; 2015) argues that youths who have experiences of living in violent malignant communities deem violence as a normal and common behaviour that

people use to resolve issues. Over time, this becomes a habit/culture that they live with, without realising its intensity. This is supported by Curcio and First (1993) who allude that the culture of violence in these communities becomes an everyday thing, which the members get used to it.

### ***Gender-based violence***

The dating egos of CMs and the dating boundaries that they impose on the young ladies within the areas that they ‘control’ significantly contributes to gender-based violence in Khayelitsha:

*Also, Gurans has to do with dating girls, they cannot date someone outside their location, if that happens it becomes a problem. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner}*

*I agree with what others have said, like the dating thing, you cannot just date whoever. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner}*

*It affects us Miss, let’s say you are dating a guy from a different location, you cannot just go there, you will get affected because of your boyfriend. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 female learner}*

*It also affects us as girls since we are dating, so you meet this Guy and start dating him and that affects you. Let me make an example about guys who are staying at K-Section [mentioned names] and I stay in BM-Section, so I start dating one of them and it happens that he is Guransing and when I start dating one of them, I cannot date someone from my area. They will start attacking guys from your area. If you dump that one, you need to date from the same crew/circle, and that affect your movements as well. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}*

*There are some girls I know who were raped by Gurans members as punishment for dating dudes from other locations. These gangs [crews] treat us like we are their property over which they can make decisions. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 female learner}*

*My friend was forced to set up her boyfriend under the threat of assault. When the Gurans discovered that Anne (Not real name) was dating this guy from Greenpoint, they instructed her to invite him to our neighbourhood (K-Section). They threatened to beat her if she did not invite him. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}*

According to these narratives, young ladies are subjected to the ills of the dating restrictions imposed by CMs' territoriality. It is a problem for them to date males outside their locale. Should this happen, it can precipitate violent conflicts that endanger their lives. Some ladies were even raped as punishment for dating males in other locations. As one respondent puts it, "*these gangs [crews] treat us like we are their property over which they can make decisions.*"

However, a lady might predispose herself to rape through naivety:

*It happens, for example this girl was staying in Town-Two and dating in J- Section and she will always take some information from Town-Two gang to J-Section without their knowledge and all along she thought they (J-Section) liked her. This other day they invited her into this party, and they said it will be hosted in one of the guys places and she accepted...when she got to the place, there was no party...they raped [her] and made a video, and it circulated in the community. She went to open the case at the police station and the guys got arrested, but they showed the police the video that the girl had consented to sex as evidenced by the fact that she did not cry during intimacy.' She should have cried if she didn't want it. So, they won the case. {AY, School 3: Grade 11 female learner}*

The victimised girl in the narrative aimed to derive some favour (perhaps affection) from the crew to which she provided some 'intelligence'. However, she ended up being sexually abused and victimised by her supposed 'beneficiaries'. Questions can be raised on why a crew that this young girl sought to be amicable with would violate her in that manner. Plausibly, they regarded her disloyalty to the crew in her location as an indication of her lack of trustworthiness and decided to 'punish' her through rape. What is more surprising is that the sexually abused and victimised girl's quest for justice did not yield any result, simply because the perpetrators claimed consent to the

whole act. This indicates how the weakness of the law enforcement agency and justice system in malignant communities detracts from efforts to curb gender-based violence.

Sadly, girls who join the delinquent activities of their boyfriends end up being seriously injured or raped. This might even extend to other females in their families. These findings are supported by Vetten (2000) who argues that women have been repeatedly subjected to sexual assault, violence, and rape because of their partners who belong to gang-like social groups. Those who are not even in relationships with crew/gang members are at a higher risk of being raped by males from other locations (outside the females') seeking to settle scores with their rivals. Thus, young girls and women living in malignant communities with a high prevalence of youth violence are constantly at risk.

Broadly, on the persistence of violence against girls and women in African communities, the African culture is usually blamed due to its patriarchal inclinations. Traditionally gendered cultural protocols were deemed responsible for violence against women (Ushie et al., 2011; Medie, 2019), but they are now being replaced by new practices due to modernity (Medie, 2018). The invisibility of young women's association with delinquent groups is also argued by few scholars, who suggest that females have always been the shadow of males who belonged to gangs (Batchelor, 2009; Spergel, 1995; Crowell and Burgess, 1996; Vetten, 2000). This is due to the patriarchal values that are always demonstrated in these social groups (O'Neal, Decker, Moule and Pyrooz, 2016; Peterson and Panfil, 2014; Peterson, 2012). This male domination over the female extends to females being forced to fight with other females as a sign of commitment and loyalty to their spouses/partners (Sutton, 2017). Furthermore, according to Sutton (2017), females who are part of these groups become easy targets and victims of the opponents of their spouses in rival groups, who seek to settle scores. However, they do not only fall victim to rivals; they could also be raped and abused by men within the same group (Sutton, 2017; Miller, 2001). This makes them more vulnerable than their male counterparts (Marshall, DeBeck, Simo, Kerr and Wood, 2015; Hayward and Honegger, 2014).

Other scholars (Nicolaidis, 2015; Chisale, 2018) argue that in traditional societies, both males and females were all considered as significant in maintaining societal order, and that gender biases

only manifested themselves due to colonialism. Further, Nicolaidis (2015) averred that colonialism, by promoting capitalism, led to the marginalisation and side-lining of women. While there is some plausibility in the attribution of the spate of violence against girls and women in African communities to the patriarchal nature of the African culture or the subtle effects of colonialism, it is more apt to submit that the compound interactions of these two plausible causes and other latent or confounding factors have influenced the persistence of violence against girls and women by young and old men alike.

#### **4.3.3.3 Psychological Trauma**

Psychological trauma was another a major thematic category that emerged from the analysis of the narratives of AYs related to the consequences of Gurans on school-going youths, and the community of Khayelitsha. This psychological effect manifested itself in a complex form as both individual and secondary trauma.

##### ***Individual and secondary trauma***

The following narratives of AYs reveal the nature of the emotional and psychological trauma that Gurans causes in the youths and other residents of Khayelitsha:

*When they are looking for your sibling and they end up not getting him, sometimes they come and burn your household/home down or get inside to look for themselves in the presence of your family. If they don't get him then they take one member of the family, just to spite (cause him pain) the one that is Guransing and that's how it is affecting us. {AY, School 3: Grade 11 female learner}*

*I also feel sad Miss, because this does not only affect them alone but also their families as well, because when their opponents do not get them, they take revenge on their families who are innocent. {AY, School 3: Grade 11 female learner}*

*There was this Guy; they went to look for in his home and they found his mother... they started beating and stabbing his mother and it seems like there were three children in the*

*house, who got affected. They were also slaughtered with the mother and thereafter, they set the house on fire. His mother is still alive, but paralyzed/ disabled, she is mentally disturbed.* {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner}

*That's true some of us are attacked for no reason and the parents get worried when they do not see you.* {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}

*What I can say again Miss, is that when the parents see their children being stabbed it is a pain to them. They do not even know why their children have been stabbed. it is not nice for a parent to see his/her child stabbed for no good reason, especially those who are not even involved in these things.* {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}

According to these narratives, the emotional and psychological distress caused by Gurans has not only affected CMs and their families, but also the community of Khayelitsha at large. Youths who did not participate in Gurans, were constantly worried about their safety in the community, not knowing whether they were the next to die or be injured. Others saw some of their loved ones harmed in front of them and that did not sit well with them. The families of these youths did not have the capacity to protect their children from Gurans, and family members were also traumatised.

Parents of other youths in Khayelitsha continually live with the uncertainty of the safety and life expectancy of their children. One might bid his / her child farewell to school in the morning, not knowing whether that might be the last farewell. If, as one fears, the child ends up being severely injured or killed, the emotional pain can be significant. The pain could be worsened when a culprit or culprits cannot be identified or apprehended. These traumatic effects spill over into the entire community because when families are psychologically and emotionally affected by Gurans, the community's stability will also be affected. According to Henrich, Schwab-Stone, Fanti, Jones, and Ruchkin (2004), the violence in these communities will probably result in psychological trauma for the residents of these communities. Psychologically, trauma is an inevitable experience, which can happen unexpectedly, because of overwhelming external events beyond one's control (Prager, 2008). It is further argued that "trauma can generate powerful emotions, such as fear, anger, mistrust and betrayal, which can in turn bind societies and communities together by

generating a culture of resentment and anxiety” (Hutchison and Bleiker, 2008:397). This can then create a cycle of violence and hatred within the community, rather than finding ways of dealing with the situation and the much-needed process of healing (Hutchison and Bleiker, 2008). On the other hand, Nussbaum (1994), argues that in circumstance of grievance, when one has been wronged, anger and hatred is justifiable. But, responding to a wrong in anger, resentment, and vengefulness can cause further wrongdoing and more ill effects in the parties involved (Muldoon, 2008). In the case of Khayelitsha, one can aver that those affected by traumatic violence have no alternative response than to mete vengeance for personal reasons or on behalf of their loved ones.

#### **4.3.3.4 Conversion of the innocent youth to Gurans**

Perhaps one of the saddest consequences of the effects of Gurans in Khayelitsha and similar communities is that of innocent youths being forced by prevailing circumstances to join crews and adopt the Gurans culture as a way of responding to persistent victimisation. One youth from Khayelitsha testified his conversion to Gurans in this way:

*Miss, I was going to my friend's place in R-Section, and I was walking alone behind the school, and I was chased with an axe (panga) and I ran afterwards I came back with my friends for revenge and we started Guransing and some died in the process, but he was not killed by us. {AY, School 3: Grade 10 male learner}*

Whereas this narrative is a clear that innocent youth can be forced by the prevailing circumstances to join violent groups such as Gurans, the same narrative also reflects the levels of violentization such people can attain after conversion. As the affected AY's narrative clearly show, he is a former innocent youth who has now been involved in a major violent engagement resulting in a loss of life. More so, it also reflects how the rate at which the same youth was able to identify himself with violent people who he now refers to as “his friends.” However, this decision of a youth to join Gurans as a way of responding to Gurans victimisation was also ably supported by other youths who testified why most youths deemed it necessary to undertake such conversions:

*I do not think it will be over. Miss it happens that they killed your brother and maybe let's say at that time I was church goer an innocent person, but since I have a grudge that they killed my brother and I keep on seeing this same person that kill my brother I will then seek for revenge at the right time. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}*

*My sibling was walking, he stays in G-Section and there was a Gurans in D-Section, while he was walking, they attacked him, when he got home, he was bleeding. Ever since then he joined Gurans for revenge and he is still part of it as we speak. {AY, School 2: Grade 9 Female learner}*

*What happens Miss, it's when your friend has a disagreement with a Guy from a different location. Greenpoint and Site B, and they start to fight, and others will interfere. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 female learner}*

The above narratives indicate that victimised youths deemed joining Gurans as necessary for meting vengeance on those who have assaulted them or their loved ones. While such a response might be justified in the eyes of these youth, it exacerbates the problems of violence within the community. Overall, converting to Gurans as a way of responding to victimisation is not a solution but a poor response that ultimately results in a violentized community (Holtzhausen, 2015). According to Holtzhausen (2015), as the number of violent offences committed in this community spikes, the more violent in nature that community becomes over time. This then, increases the possibilities of many young people engaging in gang-related activities (Pinnock, 2016) with continued high levels of violent crime (SAPS, 2014). Hence, Khayelitsha is rated as one of the most crime-ridden townships in South Africa (SAPS, 2019).

#### **4.3.4 Factors contributing to the perpetuation of Gurans violence**

As youths, who live in a community rampaged by Gurans violence, the AYs also shared their sentiments on what they think are the main issues behind the continued rise of Gurans violence in their community. The main reasons they raised were familial, community, and state influences. Against this background, this section discusses youth concerns on factors contributing to the

perpetuation of Gurans violence under these three thematic categories, *familial, community, and state influences*.

#### **4.3.4.1 Familial Influence**

This subsection explores the narratives of AYs with regard to how parents, guardians, and other family members influence the perpetuation of Gurans. However, although these narratives indeed reveal family influences in perpetuating Gurans violence, the overall meaning of such behaviour is that it denotes the malignant status of the community under consideration. As already stated in the opening remarks of this subsection, the behaviour of family members cited above shows how the whole society has been reordered around violence. As the narratives will show, violence itself or ways that promote violence is the most preferred response to the Gurans violence in the community. To discuss the interplay between family members and Gurans violence, two thematic subcategories characterising such discussions were identified: *providing access to traditional healers, and vengefulness and bias*.

##### ***Providing access to traditional healers***

One issue that emerged from the responses of AYs to the question of whether parents were doing enough to prevent their children from participating in Gurans was the inimical approaches that concerned parents adopted to protect their children from possible harm while practicing Gurans. This approach refers to parents enabling their children to access traditional healers for ‘protection’:

*They get money from their mothers, they (mothers) protect their children.*

{AY, School 1: Grade 12 female learner}

*Parents give children money to go seek help from Amagqirha (Witchdoctors/traditional healers).* {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}

*Others even go to their parents and ask for money to pay traditional healers. Like when I go to school and Guransing is happening, I won't be stabbed.* {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}

*What I can say Miss is that the parents are wrong in a way that they give their children money to consult the traditional healers. I think like when the parents start to hear about the involvement/danger of their children in Gurans, they should just transfer them to another place. {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}*

*They get money from their parents [to consult traditional healers]. Yes, Miss they know [it] is for protection. {AY, School 2: Grade 9 female learner}*

*I blame the parents because they take their children to them (traditional healers) so they can get muti for protection. {AY, School 1: Grade 10 female learner}*

*I do blame the parents, because the parent takes their children there (Traditional healers), that makes the child to engage in more antisocial/rebellious behaviour and that increases the crime rate. {AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner}*

*As my peer has said that the mothers have influenced their children to use these things. These things go like this, if I do not want to be stabbed, I will go to this traditional healer and ask for help. I will mention that I need safety from my 'ghosts' or a problem even without mentioning that I am part of Gurans. {AY, School 2: Grade 9 male learner}*

*The traditional healers get involved through the parents of the children/youth that is involved in Gurans. They take them to traditional healers for protection.*

*{AY, School 4: Grade 12 female learner}*

These narratives confirm that parents aid their children's involvement in Gurans through providing financial or other forms of assistance to consult traditional healers for protection. More so, the same narratives also show how everyone, including professionals such as traditional healers, are now embroiled in Gurans violence. However, despite the alarming capability of Gurans violence in influencing the behaviour of the whole Khayelitsha community, there were some parents who were nevertheless not complicit in their children's access to traditional healers.

*Others get money from their parents. Some parents know, and others they do not know.*  
{AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner }

*Miss, my sibling saves his pocket/lunch money to pay traditional healers.* {AY, School 4:  
Grade 9 female learner }

Other parents are directly involved in their children's consultation of traditional healers and such practices are encouraged within the family.

*Some encourage their children to go to the traditional healers.* {AY, School 2: Grade 10  
male learner }

*Some they have their family traditional healer, so they explain to them their involvement  
in Gurans, so they may be protected.* {AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner }

*Others, their mothers are traditional healers, so they assist them.* {AY, School 2: Grade 9  
male learner }

*There are also those mothers who are witches that like Gurans, so they bewitch us so that  
Gurans can continue and not stop.* {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner }

*On my side Miss, my uncle's wife is a traditional healer. I had rumours in the village that  
she said, her own children will never be beaten or touched, she protects them, and those  
boys from my neighbourhood told me that my aunt's children are untouchable.*  
{AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner }

*Sometimes within the family jealousy arises, because they do not want to see the other  
one's child progressing in life and that is where witchcraft starts.*  
{AY, School 4: Grade 9 male learner }

The above narratives highlight that some youths come from families that already practice traditional healing. If such parents or relations hear about their child's participation in Gurans, they do not dissuade such a child from continuing this culture. Instead, they facilitate or provide occultic protection for the concerned child. However, there are some bizarre cases where a youth's participation in Gurans comes as a result of a curse cast upon the youth by people harbouring ill feelings towards the concerned youth's progress in life.

While most of the AYs in the above narratives blame parents for aiding their children's Gurans activities through facilitating consultations with traditional healers, one of them did not:

*I do not blame the parents, because when your child starts Guransing you address him to stop this behaviour and when he does not do that, the only thing as a parent is to take him to the traditional healers for protection, so he may not die prematurely.* {AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner}

While it is difficult to blame parents whose concern for the security of the lives of their children (who are involved in Gurans) result in resorting to some traditional means to protect their children, this action is more likely to further entrench these youths in the Gurans culture. According to the South African Police Service report in the Free State province, youths who are involved in gang violence are most likely to be involved in African witchcraft, Satanism and the occult, which include ritual muti/medicine murders (Phillips and Maritz, 2015). Similarly, it is argued that "officers have become experts in specialised fields such as gang violence, organised crime, terrorism, or arson, which has forced them to become acquainted with the occult, cults, and various forms of ritualistic violence" (Eterno and Robertson, 2015:231). Petrus, Roelofse, Phillips, and Maritz, (2018) aver that the issue of the occult and youth gang-related violence is a global issue, and South Africa can benefit from an internal literature regarding these issues. In their view, "perspectives on the relationship between occultism and crime should be reframed to include the influence of occultism on youth gang subcultures, particularly in South Africa" (Petrus et al. 2018: 169). The current study agrees with this view; occultism, traditional healing, and the use of *umuthi* by youths at risk is something that should be considered as a matter of urgency. Although, general knowledge regarding the use of traditional medicine, and supernatural powers and its significance

in Black community has been around for decades, its relevance and relations to youth violence is something worth investigating further.

### ***Vengefulness and bias***

Some AYs also highlighted that some parents may contribute to the perpetuation of the Gurans culture by developing strong feelings of vengefulness or bias after watching their own children suffer painful injuries or die because of Gurans. Again, just like in the discussions of the previous sections, the behaviour of parents who sides with their violent children also reflects the levels in which violence now determines behaviour in Khayelitsha. How violence now influences some of the parents was explained thus:

*Sometimes it happens that maybe her child has been hospitalised or die because of Gurans, so she makes sure that she seeks revenge so that it is not only child that has been affected even other children, even taking her child to the traditional healer. Others they even ask their children to go and fight. [becomes emotional] [Everyone start laughing] {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner}*

*If we can be honest, parents are not truthful [everyone laughs] even though they see someone else's child is dying they will just pass without helping that child, which is not fair. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 male learner}*

*I agree with that, because what happens is that when our peers fight, some mothers will say that those boys will never be anything, they have no future, my child is not Guransing so there is no need for me to stop those who are Guransing. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}*

So, youths' ardent quest for vengeance, which has been identified and presented in previous sections could be significantly driven behind the scenes by parents who are embittered by the loss or injury of their own child/children. Some other parents are just plainly indifferent to the plight of youths who are not their children but involved in Gurans. A grade 9 male learner in school 4 narrated that some parents will even watch or pass someone's else child who is at risk without

blinking twice to assist them, even when this could have saved the child's life. This kind of treatment is regarded as bias because if their children were in a similar position, they would have acted differently. Thus, youths may die in the presence of community members, as some residents do not even regard some of these youths as important and valuable to the community. A grade 9 female learner in School 4, confirmed this by stating that some community members consider them as a generation with no future. This could discourage some youths from becoming and aspiring for a better life. According to Clark (2012), exposure to violence in South African communities is a "significant casual factor of youth violence in South Africa" (Clark, 2012: 78). When parents within the community turn a blind eye to youths at risk of such violence, the problem only becomes worse.

#### **4.3.4.2 Community influence**

As with familial influence on the perpetuation of Gurans, *supporting the use of occultic powers* was identified as the main mode (subcategory) of community influence on the perpetuation of the Gurans culture in Black townships.

##### ***Supporting the use of occultic powers***

The following narratives of AYs show the attitude of traditional healers within Khayelitsha towards the Gurans culture and the youths involved:

*Let me tell you about my own community. I stay in G-Section and we fight with Site B and where we fight you can see a lot of stone bricks, but when you wake up in the morning there are no bricks. That woman who is a traditional healer from Tsepetsese (one of the locations in Khayelitsha) has taken them and you can even see her while we are fighting but she is untouchable. She works with all of us, that woman is still alive, and no one is doing anything about that. [Everyone start laughing] {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}*

*What I can say Miss, Phantsi ngo Baba uDlamini with Gurans. He is a traditional healer that works with Gurans. {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}*

*“You are mentioning his name, he is going to kill you.” [Everyone starts laughing] {AY, School 1: Grade 10 learners }*

*They (traditional healers) know what you are there for, even before you speak, they know you. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner }*

These narratives clearly indicate that, rather than speaking against a culture that terrorises the community, the concerned traditional healers have aided its continuity. According to some narratives, the traditional healers’ failure to speak against the violent nature of Gurans has given CMs faith in the occultic powers they are believed to provide and to freely consult their services.

*They go to traditional healers, like if they want to be powerful in Gurans {AY, School 2: Grade 10 female learner }*

*They go to traditional healers so that you do not get stabbed and be protected most of the time. {AY, School 1: Grade 10 female learner }*

*You consult the traditional healers so that you can overpower/defeat the other one and be not stabbed and be able to kill the other one. {AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner }*

*You go also so that you cannot be shot by a gun. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner }*

*So, Miss there is this thing called Amakhubalo. Someone will go to a specific traditional healer to give him Amakhubalo and after going to that traditional healer, there will be time that he (the boy) will want blood. So, what happens he will awaken the Amakhubalo and then you need to run away from him. If it happens, he stabs one of the opponents or a wrong person that one will go and call his friends and they will also have Amakhubalo and it becomes like that and never stops. {AY, School 1: Grade 10 female learner }*

*You get Amakhubalo from traditional healers. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 female learner }*

*There is this thing called Amakhubalo, so those guys from Gurans they consult traditional healers for protection. {AY, School 4: Grade 12 male learner}*

In the last three narratives above, AYs unanimously mentioned “*Amakhubalo*” as the main substance that CMs procure from traditional healers. According to them, *Amakhubalo* is a herbal concoction that one drinks. It is thought to invoke demonic spirits and uncontrollable behaviour in anyone who takes it.

*It is something that you drink, they are inside your body, it awakes at times and becomes powerful and not ordinary. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner}*

*Amakhubalo are demonic spirits that cannot be controlled. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner}*

*Listen Miss, they bow and start groaning and when they stand up their eyes are red and he is no longer himself, especially the facial expression. They do not know even if they are climbing the walls, because that ‘thing’ is a spirit. {AY, School 2: Grade 9 male learner}*

*I will just say protect me, when you say that the traditional healer will put the ‘Thing inside’ even if it’s “Amakhubalo” Amakhubalo Miss is like they are spiritual is something inside your stomach, when you are angry like they rise. They climb the wall Miss. {AY, School 2: Grade 9 male learner}*

From the narratives above, *Amakhubalo* contributes to the persistence of the problem of Gurans. Also, the following narratives suggest that the substance causes transitions into animal-like shapes or induces animal-like behaviours.

*Let’s say Miss, you have Lion ‘Amakhubalo’, since you have them your voice will be a lion’s voice, although you are still the original you, but your behaviour will change and become a lion. If you are a spider, we will see you climbing the wall although there are no hooks to help you and we have seen that happening. {AY, School 2: Grade 9 male learner}*

*Others become like spiders. We have seen them at school. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 female learner}*

*They are different, others are like snakes. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 female learner}*

*Amakhubalo* was also regarded to have the ability to make those who have it to ‘connect’ in uncertain ways and do unspeakable (possibly licentious) things to themselves:

*Even when you are in class and some of you have these (amakhubalo) you can feel each other, but you just do not know who that is. Once you discover each other you will leave the class and go to the bathroom and you must not have something that is tight on you, so you will take off the belt, shoes and the shirt and your tie, then they will start their thing. [Everyone laughs] {AY, School 2: Grade 9 female learner}*

Besides *Amakhubalo*, traditional healers also provide several other forms of occultic powers and artefacts to youths in Black townships:

*There are kinds of umuthi Miss, others are belts. {AY, School 2: Grade 10 female learner}*

*This kind of Muti, sometimes they draw an invisible line and sometimes you do not see it, and once you step over it that is when you become dizzy. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}*

*They have Miss, it might happen that the person that is a traditional healer is in the same neighbourhood, and he is aware of another traditional healer who is influential in Gurans and he/she gives you umuti, even if it's not a good one just to compete and kill your opponent who is using a different traditional healer. {AY, School 2: Grade 9 female learner}*

*Miss, you put [traditional] belts, they make you strong and powerful. Those attacked they become deeply injured or maybe hospitalized, they might need to consult their own*

*traditional healers, or a pastor pray for you it depends on what you believe in.* {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}

*Belts, Iziphondo (Small horns) And Small bottles.* {AY, School 2: Grade 10 male learner}

*They use traditional belts, beads and others use small horns and get small, medicated cuts in the body (using blade razor).* {AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner}

*Many people come to her (mentioned one of the traditional healers) for these (medicated) belts, belts made of snakeskin in order to be strong. This even works for taxi drivers because they (some) do not have driver's license, but they do not get arrested. Just bribe or walk free.* {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}

*Some Miss they put arm beads for protection. It makes them invisible, so they can walk freely.* {AY, School 4: Grade 9 male learner}

From these narratives, several occultic power artefacts which youths and even some other community members (say, taxi drivers) use can be identified: *umuthi/muti*, traditional belts (sometimes made from the skin of snakes), beads, small horns, small bottles, and bodily incisions — called medicated cuts.

It was also found that there were so many myths associated with the occultic powers provided by traditional healers. These myths reinforced beliefs that the powers really worked. One such myth revolves around payment of services rendered for the provision of occultic powers. According to the responses given, non-payment for occultic powers makes such powers ineffective.

*Once you get the muti, maybe you need to pay at the end of the month and once you do not pay, you get stabbed, because you did not pay. You must not owe traditional healers.* {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}

Youths who use occultic powers think highly of their potency and are convinced that nothing will happen to them. The occultic powers were so revered that some thought they provided protection that was unimaginable.

*When some of these are being stabbed, the knife does not go through.* {AY, School 2: Grade 10 female learner}

*You cannot be stabbed as well.* {AY, School 2: Grade 9 female learner}

*These mutis from traditional healers, sometimes help you not to be recognizable and invisible.* {AY, School 1: Grade 12 female learner}

*After they have been in those traditional healers and done everything, and got the mutis, they realize that they are invisible, they can do anything, they are unstoppable.*  
{AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}

*Yes, it does (work), you put the Muti, so as you are putting it, it helps you to become invisible. They only see you after you have passed.*  
{AY, School 2: Grade 9 male learner}

*I believe Miss that thing works, because there is this sister that stays at home who is a traditional healer, many people come to her for these (medicated) belts, belts made of snakeskin in order to be strong. They don't usual get defeated, they always defeat their opponents. You have the power to overpower others.*  
{AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}

Also, the belief in the powers of traditional healers was so deep such that some AYs thought that such powers protected criminals from being sentenced to jail, or from being tried at all.

*Others go to the traditional healers to make their murder case documents to disappear.*  
{AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner}

*They are unstoppable, that thing works on the inside of your body, sometimes they even kill, but the case will be dismissed/closed, records get lost without being arrested and they are being protected because of that [Amakhubalo].* {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}

However, other AYs gave varied responses on the powers of the occultic artefacts given by traditional healers for protection. Some reckoned that there was a possibility that the artefacts are ineffective, short-lived, or their efficacy depended on the powers possessed by the respective traditional healer administering them:

*This thing is not working, only the Mighty (God) works. The traditional healers are fooling you; they make as if they are protecting you and once you get to the fight, you get stabbed.* {AY, School 4: Grade 12 male learner}

*Speaking about being stabbed, when they stab you the wound will not be deep, like someone who is not using muti.* {AY, School 4: Grade 12 male learner}

*You see the thing with these mutis/traditional herbs, it depends. Sometimes they do not just work. It might happen that you get hit by a brick, you become dizzy and afterwards you get stabbed. Sometimes you do not get stabbed, it depends on nature of the muti/herb, how strong it is.* {AY, School 4: Grade 11 male learner}

*I am saying, this thing of traditional healers is working. It depends which traditional healer you got, how powerful he/she is, like the herbs/muti that he gives, so when you get there you don't get hurt, even if you do but it is a minor injury that does not get you hospitalised.* {AY, School 4: Grade 12 female learner}

*It works Miss, but it fades along the way, for example you go to the traditional healer, so let's say you start stabbing each other and you are using different mutis. So, while you are fighting, the other one will move backwards, and you start stepping on his footsteps and*

*you become dizzy. It is the muti that makes you like that, and they start killing you at that point because you have no power to fight.* {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}

While most of the AYS in all the narratives presented above did not directly regard traditional healers as significant contributors to the perpetuity of Gurans in Black townships, a few, mainly females, did:

*I blame the traditional healers that they are wrong because, [she gets disturbed because others were laughing at her, so had to intervene] I blame them because they are increasing crime, because these guys consult them so that it may be hard for them to be stabbed and then Gurans continues and increase.* {AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner}

*I believe that the traditional healers make the Gurans to continue/exceed, because if they did not give them things to protect themselves in Gurans, it would have not been like this.* {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}

*[In an angry and loud voice] “they make it to continue, because they are not supposed to help them with umuti, because when other get stabbed and dies, it will make them scared and want to stop Gurans, but if they get protected by traditional healers it will not stop, because all will want to use traditional healers for protection and not die and this will continue.* {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}

*I am not agreeing or disagreeing to what she is saying, this is just a debate, but what I can say is that others like skollies we can see even here in Cape Town are being beaten and killed and their friends witness that, even so they will want to continue with that life. They will tell themselves that my friend did not have a style, or he was weak that’s why he was caught, so as for me I will do better, even though he sees others dying. It is the same with Gurans, they will think that the traditional healer they went to was weak so they can choose or go to a different one and that continues/ escalates, you see.* {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}

Some of the youths who spoke openly against traditional healers pointed out that the traditional healers' love for money outweighed their desire for peaceful non-violent communities.

*Miss, you can go to the traditional healer and he/she knows that you need a certain muti and the traditional healer will do it for you because they are in need of money. To traditional healers it is all about money. {AY, School 2: Grade 9 male learner}*

*I agree as well that traditional healers make Gurans to continue, but at the very same time they are also making money for themselves for survival, so they cannot push them away. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}*

However, some other AYs did not think that traditional healers' influence on the perpetuity of Gurans is significant and, in some cases, the concerned traditional healer might even be ignorant of the reasons why youths consult them for their services:

*I do not think traditional healers have an influence. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}*

*On my side Miss, I wouldn't say they make them continue, all would say is that people go to places even if they do not want to, but because they feel safe going to enyangeni (traditional healer) and that works for them and when they go there, they do not specify the reason and they get assisted. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 male learner}*

*I have this problem, I do not like blaming the traditional healers a lot, because the traditional healer did not come to you and force the muti on you, you the one who went to seek for help from them and also blame the parents for allowing their children to use these mutis (herbs). Why do you give your child the money to do this? {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}*

Despite the nuances in the narratives from AYs, the narratives strongly indicate that the activities of traditional healers significantly perpetuate Gurans. Generally, all the narratives presented in this section indicate that youths in Black townships are aware of the availability of traditional healers

or practitioners of some form of occultism within their community, and the nature of the services and artefacts they provide, and they employ the services of these people to gain some form of advantage in their violent conflicts. Interestingly, even though female youths are not largely involved in Gurans, they demonstrate significant knowledge of the value-chain of dark powers within their community and how these powers are leveraged by those participating in Gurans for protection and invincibility. The providers of these dark powers in the community seem to be indifferent to the effects of their services on the lives of the youths and the broader community. This might be because they are earning an income from providing these services, even when the powers that they offer are not always effective. Collectively, most of the narratives above confirm that the availability of traditional healers and the use of occultic powers in Black townships is enabled by the community as no transaction can take place without a buyer and a seller.

The existence of traditional/indigenous medicine and the consultation of traditional healers has long existed in the black African communities (Zaffira and Ganis, 2005; Sanders, 2003). Traditional medicine and consultation might be considered as ‘witchcraft’ (Zaffira and Ganis, 2005; Sanders, 2003; Ciekawy and Geschiere, 1998). Police reports in the 1980s and 90s reported that people during that time were killed due to witchcraft-related violence (Harnischfeger, 2000). According to Hamrin-Dahl (2003), many people have been victims of witchcraft due to the using of body parts in order to obtain and secure spiritual powers. Some of the body parts include, but is not limited to nails, hair, animal fats (Hamrin-Dahl, 2003) and other parts of the body (Swantz, 1970). The perspectives of these scholars only partly resonate with the narratives of the AYs in this study. Although some of these youths blamed the traditional healers as practitioners of witchcraft, because of the supernatural powers that they provide to youths who escalate Gurans in Khayelitsha, their narratives show that the consultation of traditional healers may not be regarded entirely as witchcraft. Moore and Sanders (2001) suggest that witchcraft is as an umbrella of various activities, which include magic, occultism, and enchantment. According to Pavanello (2017:104), spiritual powers might be “possessed by an individual, that is believed to be able to affect other people even physically”. This is a power that is claimed to “produce effects by supernatural causes, whether regarded as witchcraft, conjuration, sorcery, incantation, divination, or magic” (Vasconi in Pavanello, 2017:84). Pavanello’s description of spiritual powers is a more fitting general

description of those displayed in Gurans, e.g., *Amakhubalo* (spiritual animals), that give youths power over others.

#### **4.3.4.3 State influence**

This section explores the perspectives of AYs on the influence of the state on the perpetuation of Gurans in Black townships. According to the responses of the youths, *lack of development facilities, inadequate law enforcement and security* were key issues that supported the rise of Gurans culture in Khayelitsha. These identified problems are now discussed as thematic categories below.

##### ***Inadequate Law Enforcement and Security***

When asked for their perspectives on their safety within their communities as well the role of the security agencies in ensuring safety, some AYs indicated that the state was instead central to the rise of Gurans culture in the townships. According to them, the lack of supervision of law enforcement and security operatives in townships rendered the state complicit to the problems.

*People go to report their concerns to the police, but they (the police) don't investigate. They just record and take their time, if ever they decide to attend the scene. Issues like theft, domestic violence, burglary are not taken seriously. As such, people end up approaching the Gurans [crews] to recover stolen property or exact revenge in cases of assault.*

{AY, School 2: Grade 10 female learner}

*There is nothing that the police are doing, they just come and do nothing.* {AY, School 2: Grade 10 female learner}

*There is nothing that can be done, for example the other time I was witnessing Gurans in Y-Section, the police just passed, and they are selective about who they take/arrest. There is no use of police or soldiers, they have favouritism. [Majority of the group agrees]* {AY, School 3: Grade 10 female learner}

These narratives indicate that, because of perceived ineffectiveness of the police and the penal system, community members have resorted to seeking street justice by requesting crews to mete out vengeance on their offenders. The second narrative highlights that the police do not do a continuous surveillance of the community to ensure the maintenance of law and order, thus youths in the community have become a ‘law unto themselves’. The police react slowly in making arrests or to conduct investigations even when the cases are serious and involve grievous bodily injury or murder. As the last quote above indicates, even when the police arrive at crime scenes to make arrests, they sometimes showed signs of favouritism and conduct selective arrests.

One AY attributed the ineffectiveness of the police to fear:

*The police are scared too; they stop far from Gurans. They are scared of the bricks that are going to hit their cars. There is nothing they are doing.* {AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner}

Still yet, another learner claims that the criminal justice system also does not have solutions as far as the issue of fighting and eradicating Gurans was concerned:

*The criminal justice does not know as well what to do.* {AY, School 2: Grade 9 female learner}

Collectively, the narratives above indicate that the state has contributed to the perpetuation of Gurans in Khayelitsha through indifference (to the plight of residents who are faced with the insecurity posed by frequent dangerous violent conflicts) and inadequate law enforcement and security. According to O’Regan et al. (2014) some of the crime that happens in Khayelitsha, goes unreported. This could be due to police under and mis-reporting and poor investigation (Lamb, 2021; Foster, 2012). According to the O’ Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry (2014), the majority of young people in Khayelitsha might not report violence and crime-related issues, because they regard youth involvement in violent activities as normal. Reporting to the police might be a waste of time, and stigmatised.

### *Lack of Recreation, Sport, And Development Facilities*

Several AYs strongly opined that the lack of recreational and sport facilities within the community contributes to the perpetuation of Gurans. According to the AYs, the state's reluctance to address the wrongs of the apartheid regime that resulted in the underdevelopment of Black townships was a clear demonstration that it was behind the growth of violent cultures in these townships:

*Blacks are not exposed to opportunities such as having poker and chess programs. {AY, School 1: Grade 12 female learner}*

*If there were projects in the community, maybe acting, dancing? {AY, School 4: Grade 11 female learner}*

*I would say Miss because here in Khayelitsha there are no parks or extra-mural activities (dance, sports, debate clubs) that will keep us busy, people who will motivate us, that's why some of us end up occupying ourselves with things like Gurans. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}*

*In other places there are (extra-mural activities), but in others there are not. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 male learner}*

*Sports is scarce, you will find maybe only five boys playing by themselves and no one is guiding or supporting them and that demotivates them. {AY, School 4: Grade 9 female learner}*

*They have nothing to do Miss, there are no sports here, if there were sports or other things to do, for example if we had a community hall so that after school youth can go there, the community will be fine. {AY, School 1: Grade 10 male learner}*

*Youth/children living in the township have nothing to do, the government does not keep the youth occupied with activities, for example to have a program after school or certain days of the week, just to gain experience, so what happens is that after school we lack something*

*to do and we end-up standing in street corners, or Somalian's shops that's what you do basically every day.* {AY, School 1: Grade 12 male learner}

*I will say Miss that there are no sports in the township, after school you have nothing to do.* {AY, School 4: Grade 9 male learner}

*There are projects around, but people still leave those projects and go to Gurans. It is up to a person.* {AY, School 4: Grade 11 male learner}

In one of the narratives above, an AY indicates that the responsibility for the provision of recreation, sport, and development facilities and personnel lies with the government, stating that, *'the government does not keep the youth occupied with activities.'* However, another youth offers a slightly different opinion, indicating that there are projects within the community to keep youths productively engaged but some still decide to join Gurans. Thus, while there is a general perception among AYs regarding the unavailability or inadequacy of sport, recreation and development facilities in Khayelitsha to dissuade youths from joining Gurans, there is also a need to note that the available facilities are being underutilised. As such, there is a need to facilitate their utilisation. As some AYs noted, there is need for the state to provide qualified personnel who will promote the use of sport and recreational activities among township youths.

It has been 26 years since South Africa became a liberated country, however the country is still struggling to put in place equitable measures to serve the most vulnerable population. Although South Africa promotes youths' participation in sports and recreation (Edelstein, 2016) there are many youths who are not benefiting from such opportunities; the Black community has not benefitted much (Breetzke and Edelstein, 2020). Black youths, like the ones in this study, have challenges accessing available sports and recreation facilities, especially because the facilities that are available in their community are not sufficient to serve the needs of all the youths therein.

Particularly, sport and recreation facilities are significantly required in schools in marginalised Black communities, as youths spend most of their time there. According to Harvey, Gil-Arias and Claver (2020), sports in schools contribute positively to educational attainment. Also, schools

could play a very vital role in facilitating youth empowerment programmes. Such programmes could include open debates/forums and skill acquisition workshops. These would instil the value of education in youths, shape their mindsets to see themselves as agents of change in their communities, and equip them to add value in their communities through beneficial social initiatives.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the issue of how of the youths of Khayelitsha are becoming violent through associating with violent groups like Gurans. Using both Lonnie Athens's theory of violentization and Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity theory, the chapter has produced critical knowledge about the Gurans form of violence in Khayelitsha. First, it was found that although Gurans started to emerge in Khayelitsha around early 2000s it has continued to be transmitted to the younger youths by their older brothers who are already repeat offenders. More so, it was also found that after associating with the violent groups, the concerned youth went on to reach different stages of the violentization process identified by Athens. Furthermore, it was found that once the youth join the violent groups, they became more attached to them than any other activity. Lastly, it was also found that due to the presence of the Gurans violent groups, the whole society of Khayelitsha is now a malignant community where every aspect of life is now influenced by violence

# **Chapter 5: Presentation of Findings from Secondary School Educators and Community Members**

## **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter is a continuation of the discussions started in the previous one. Whereas the discussions in the previous chapter were aimed at showing how the youth of Khayelitsha were simultaneously engaging in violence as members of Gurans groups while others were being concerned with the manner in which such violence was affecting them. This current chapter aims to show how other community members and educators in Khayelitsha have also been affected by the same violence. In other words, the chapter will continue to show how Gurans violence has destroyed the social fabric of Khayelitsha community and rendering it malignant as revealed in the previous chapter. Thus, to discuss how the educators and community members have been affected by the presence of Gurans amongst them, the chapter presents the data in the form of themes that emerged from the narratives of these two sample groups.

## **5.2 Findings from the Educators**

The analysis of the findings from the educators' individual interviews yielded four major themes, which are presented alongside their categories and subcategories in

Table 5-1 and discussed subsequently.

Table 5-1: Thematic discussion framework for understanding the perspectives of educators on Gurans

Major Themes	Categories	Subcategories
<b>Factors contributing to Gurans and its effects in Khayelitsha township schools</b>	• Toxic spaces for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Breeding ground for violence and demonstration of dangerous weapons</li> <li>○ Diversion from the core values of learning</li> </ul>
	• Resource constraints for violent and toxic education spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Overcrowded classrooms</li> <li>○ Disorganised leadership structure in schools</li> <li>○ Poor infrastructure and crime</li> </ul>
	• Constraints of teaching in Gurans afflicted schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Substance abuse and Gurans violence in schools</li> <li>○ Lack of parents' participation in youth educational issues</li> </ul>
	• The problem of dealing with inadequately parented youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Non-Traditional families</li> <li>○ Guardians' lack of control over their children's misbehaviour</li> <li>○ Difficulty in educating youths under negative peer influence</li> </ul>
	• Challenges of educating youths in under-resourced communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lack of specialists dealing with youth issues</li> <li>○ Inadequate security personnel and law enforcement</li> </ul>
<b>Educators' perceptions on mitigating measures against Gurans violence</b>	• Collaboration and partnership of schools in Khayelitsha	

### 5.2.1 Factors contributing to Gurans and its effects in Khayelitsha Township Schools

When asked to provide their experiences and expert overviews on the status of the contemporary education system in Khayelitsha and youth violence, the educators also noted the prevalence of Gurans and the associated violent activities as the main challenges faced by schools in Khayelitsha. The responses of the educators are grouped into five main thematic categories: *toxic spaces for*

*learning; technical reasons for violent and toxic educational spaces; constraints of teaching in Gurans afflicted schools; the problem of dealing with inadequately parented youths; challenges of educating youths in under-resourced communities.*

### **5.2.1.1 Toxic Spaces for Learning**

A common issue that emerged from the narratives of educators who participated in this study from different schools in Khayelitsha was that of the inconducive nature of the present-day space of the schools in townships as a place of learning. For them, these schools were a largely toxic space, that served as a *breeding ground for violence and demonstration of dangerous weapons and caused diversion from the core values of learning*. These issues form the subcategories for this subsection, and the findings related to each are presented subsequently.

#### ***Breeding ground for violence and demonstration of dangerous weapons***

The educators explained youth-induced transformation of the school environment from being a space of learning to something resembling militarised spaces thus:

*I left in 2008 and came back in 2015 (to teach again in township secondary schools) and I was shocked to see the state of education and the type of learner you have in class. It is bad, not all schools are like that, but where I am teaching, youth violence is causing a havoc in the school and the educators are traumatised. The blood that you see in the school environment is not acceptable, to see kids carrying big knives and using scissors to stab each other and to call emergency services for learners that are closer to dying.*

{Educator, School 1}

*They have illegal weapons, and they have these golf sticks and when they fight it's like they are being possessed. The kids bring weapons, and we confiscate them when we have these police searches, some of them will tell you that, "I am protecting myself because on my way home or school If I'm confronted by gangs, I should be able to fight for myself". This puts the school in a difficult position because that child wants to protect themselves, but the child can use the same weapon to attack other students inside the school. {Educator, School 3}*

*They are not scared to carry guns and other sharp weapons. You will never find the gist of why they are fighting each other. You just never get the tangible reasons behind these fights.*  
{Educator, School 4}

Indeed, the militarised environment of the school led to both the educators and learners living in perpetual fear of the violence that surrounded them. It is now a common occurrence for youths to bring weapons into the school yard and classroom and engage in violent conflicts and assaults that sometimes necessitates the intervention of law enforcement and emergency services. These regular incidents of violence have left both educators and fellow learners traumatised. One of the educators even recounted witnessing such violence unfold within the school yard:

*The staircase fell on me (laughing). I was coming from class and by the corner I saw from the gate, one of the learners (who goes to the same school but was absent on that day) being chased by another with a sharp object, but the learner did not run towards me. Before I knew it, a crowd came from nowhere towards me and I just stood there and did nothing. They never caught the learner because educators and police came to his rescue.*

{Educator, School 4}

Another educator also remembered making efforts to save the life of one of the affected learners and how he was shocked thereafter:

*I had to call emergency services because this boy was on the verge of dying, his eyes were rolling and his breathing was very shallow, so I was almost like what I normally see on television 911 programmes where you assist. I was actually doing this thing, calling the emergency services and then when I saw there was no response, and I called the police and instructed them to take the boy away. He had to be resuscitated at the casualty because yhooo. The boy was in the passage, lying across the passage. He was stabbed outside the gate of the school premises, but he was brought inside the school. He was a learner as well. He was stabbed on his way to school. So, that is the kind of environment we teach in; it's very traumatic. I had to go for therapy because the department told me to go get help from the wellness programme because that was terrible. All these cases are brought to the principal. I am not a first aider, you know you have to handle them,*

*but sometimes you see your colleagues petrified when they see these learners almost turning into wild animals because their eyes change, and you can see when they are carrying a knife and wanting to assault. {Educator, School 1}*

The above narratives depict the school environment as a polluted, violent, and traumatising space, which has not always been the case. Instead, this was a result of a negative transformation that has taken place within youths. In contemporary South Africa, educators find themselves in predicaments of watching learners losing their lives. They are further forced to try to save learners' lives, despite not being trained and equipped to do so. They are expected to deal with violent learners, security challenges and threats, which is above their own trained skills (Hylton, 1996). These increasing incidents of violence within South African school leave others vulnerable to this violence (Parkes, 2015; van Jaarsveld, 2008). Schools have become a dangerous war zone and unsafe institution for learning (Sapa, (2006), which result in death, and severe injuries (Ozmen, Dur and Akgul, 2010).

### ***Diversion from the core values of learning***

Some of the educators succinctly captured how the delinquency of contemporary youths has diverted learners from the core values of learning and contributed to the present-day decay of the education system in Khayelitsha thus:

*I think when I started teaching way back in the late 1980s, I would say that certainly there was a culture of learning and teaching in the schools and the school environment was very safe. We did not have the kind of challenges that we have now. Yes, we had a problem of resources, schools weren't well resourced as they are now, but I think because we were very eager to teach and there was a culture of learning and teaching so we managed to produce good results under very difficult circumstances. It was still under the apartheid era, so you could clearly see that our schools did not get the kind of funding that a school needs in order to deliver the curriculum. Let's say two decades after things started to change, the type of students we faced was a different one, a student that is not so keen to learn and it wasn't all of them. You had to beg them to stay in class and there was also violence coming into the*

*education system; finding learners challenging the codes of conducts of schools, learners fighting with educators, so there was a lot of breakdown of discipline in our schools. I do not know what caused that but that is what we began to see in high schools. Because I went to a primary school, I moved away from the situation that was happening in high schools. When I came back after 6 years, I was shocked. {Educator, School 1}*

*I think Gurans is one of the reasons that learners misbehave and also the calibre of students I spoke about who do not like their books; their interest is low toward finding information and studying and they have no drive-in terms of what they want to become, only a few students would have the drive, particular individuals who know themselves. They do not have that zeal “I want to do this because I want to become this in life”, and I do not know what went wrong. {Educator, School 3}.*

*My expectation is that...a Black child becomes successful and becomes what they want to be and get all the good things. Today’s youths have no mercy, no value which is one of the most important things in life and, their attitude, calibre is not the same as that of the old generation. I am not saying it should be the same but at least it should be there. They do things without thinking. {Educator, School 4}*

It is clear from the above narratives that some schools in Khayelitsha have become ungovernable, with educators struggling to control the violent behaviour that is demonstrated by the learners in the school premises. This is why one of the educators is convinced that the culture of learning has changed compared with the older generation. In the past, even under difficult circumstances, the learners were very interested in their education. This is different from those of contemporary South Africa who are not as focused. The learners in current times are even challenging the code of conducts in the schools to best fit their own interest rather the needs of their educational attainment. Learners with aggressive and violent behaviour not only fight amongst themselves, but with their educators. Other scholars discovered that the presence and level of violence in South African schools is a devastating social problem (Mthiyane; 2013; Ngqela and Lewis, 2013). According to Mncube and Harber (2013), the level of violence has impacted negatively on the school development and education system.

Given this dilemma, Wolhuter and van der Walt (2020) state that educators live in constant worry and anxiety because they do not know what is going to happen next, as they are troubled with learners that do not abide by the code of conduct of their schools. Masitsa (2011) notes that if educators are not safe, it will be hard for them to protect their learners from any foreseen or unforeseen danger, as their lives are also in danger. Some earlier studies that were conducted in South Africa showed that educators live at the mercy of the learners; for instance, some educators have been stabbed, threatened, and beaten by learners (Slatter, 2018; Dhlamini, 2018; Daniel, 2018 cited in Wolhuter and van der Walt, 2020). Indeed, several schools have failed to protect or keep learners safe while under their care (Longobardi, Orino, Fabris and Settanni, 2019; Da Silva and Da Silva, 2018). Nonetheless, the Department of Education (DoE) (2000) argued that it is the responsibility of the school to make sure that learners are safe while in the school premises.

### **5.2.1.2 Resource constraints for Violent and Toxic Education Spaces**

Notwithstanding the above narratives that apportioned blame of the violent nature of today's learners on the youth themselves, the educators also pointed that there were technical issues to consider when analysing the violence that is affecting the schools in Khayelitsha.

#### ***Overcrowded Classrooms***

According to the educators, one issue requiring close interrogation, in terms of understanding why the youths of Khayelitsha are inclined towards violence and why educators are failing to weed out such behaviour, is the state of the classrooms in the high schools of Khayelitsha:

*I teach plus/minus fifty-five learners per class. It is not a nice thing to teach those learners because you get tired and, secondly also the learners cannot concentrate because they are too many, our classes have enclosed windows because of the burglary that happens often... and you do not give individual attention and you end up generalizing because time is against you, and you need to finish the topic. Time frame becomes an issue, and the brain gives in. By looking at them, you also become strained. {Educator, School 4}*

*The number is still a problem, in any township school irrespective of any school that you teach. There is an expectation that you have to meet in terms of delivery from the department of education. As far as the educator and learner ratio is concerned, we are not yet close. Only grade 12 has a number of learners, which is less than 30 in a class. The classes I teach range between 45 and 50 learners. You must be able to read their faces know their names and recognize their voices, but it becomes difficult when the class is large and that allows you to be able to do referrals as a result. Our education system is failing in that regard, unfortunately. {Educator, School 2}*

*We have 958 learners our learner educator ratio has dropped, we normally teach 40 learners per educator, but because of the violence, the numbers have dropped. I am over staffed now by 8 educators, we have 8 educators on excess or 8 educators redundant but 2 years ago we had 1200, last year we had 1153 and now we have 958 the numbers are coming down. Grade 10, you see learners start to act funny in grade 10 so looking at the register from at the beginning of the year till the end, grade 9 and 10s are the ones that often drop out. If a learner is on their own it is more likely that they drop out of school because there's no one to look after them. Association with violent groups also cause Learners to leave school because they feel unsafe. The high rate of absentees, you see our learners don't come to school enough, out of 200 days when we do our schedule at the end of the year you would find that a student was absent for 20 days or 25 and sometimes 30 days, those days are too many. Abstention contributes to the poor academic performance. Bunking, learners are at school, but they do not go to class instead they run around so that contributes to the poor performance at the school. Late coming is a major challenge at our school, learners pitch up at 8:30 or 9:00 so that is a challenge. {Educator, School 1}*

These narratives from the educators paint a bleak picture of overcrowded classrooms. Recurrent in the narratives are phrases such as “*not being able to give individual attention to the learners*” “*feeling strained and tired*”. What comes out clearly is the fact that the overcrowded condition of the classrooms is a direct inhibition for the educator to carry out their responsibility. As pointed out, the educator-to-learner ratio makes it impossible for educators to engage with all their students, know them fully, or attend to their individual problems.

Overcrowded classroom problem has been well researched by scholars (West and Meier, 2020; Biyela, 2019; Matsepe, Maluleke and Cross, 2019; Khan and Iqbal, 2012; Knaus and Brown, 2016) to name a few. In their studies, they argue that low educator-learner ratio makes it difficult for educators to deliver the curriculum effectively, and learners might find it difficult to perform as expected. Also, such overcrowded classroom can create a breeding ground for violence within the learners (Siddiqui, 2018; Mguzulwa, 2014). Kaminer, Hardy, Mosdell and Bawa, (2013) discovered that 75.8% of learners have experienced violence while at school. They experience this violence even while being under the supervision of the educators (Boqwana, 2009). While Ngqela and Lewis' (2012) study reported that most of the fights that happened in classrooms happened in the absence of educators. Classrooms were one of the breeding grounds for violence (Ngqela and Lewis, 2012). However, under the conditions of overcrowded classrooms, it will be hard for the educators to be able to notice incidents that precipitate violence. Besides, even when they take note, it might be challenging to control or dissolve any conflicts successfully without being potentially affected. This then disrupts the safety of the learning environment.

### ***Disorganised leadership structures in schools***

The narratives of educators also indicated that the leadership structure of township high schools also aids similar delinquent youth behaviour. For instance, in normal circumstances a complete structure of a school is one that has the necessary leadership at all levels, from the class educator to the principal. However, in some cases, schools sometimes experience long periods of leadership vacuum. As a result, in the absence of a principal, the educators who occupy the first level of educators in schools also end up being unsupervised or lack guidance on how to instil discipline in learners. Two educators narrated their experiences of working in such a school environment that had been devoid of a complete leadership structure and the problems they faced thereafter thus:

*July 2010, I started here as a principal. Being principal came after a couple of years, I inherited a school where there was no principal for 3 years so there was no order from the educators' side as well as the learners. Learners would do as they please. Learners that would dropout at school because they smoke dagga would be registered with no questioning and they become the responsibility of the school without questioning why*

*they were dismissed from their previous schools so one needed to handle all of those problems. {Educator, School 3}*

*These schools have made it difficult to do our job. The kind of environment that we work in is very challenging. The management of the school is paralysed, to see a grown man run as learners are stabbing each other is an indication that we have a sick society, and our schools need a proper management to deal with such issues. If a learner commits a small transgression, the educator needs to talk to that learner, you give them a verbal warning which can be a written warning through what we call progressive disciplinary procedures and people don't want to go through all of that, why? Because they don't like the paperwork (administration). {Educator, School 4}*

In other cases, some principals also fail to effectively supervise the teachers under them.

*I know it's not nice, but I don't have a choice as a principal, I have to write these reports, but the educators make it difficult for some of us to do our job. The children we have are different maybe I'm over simplifying things. Educators don't report some of these things to me because I ask for a report, they tell me stories, and the report is not available. How do we then report these things that are happening if ourselves are not organised? It would be pointless for me to change careers in this age although I will be doing this reluctantly. I don't really have a choice because of my age, A career age after 50 is not a wise decision. Who is going to hire a 50-year-old? {Educator, School 1}*

*I was part of the conflict resolution committee. I have picked up a lot from the educators as well. We might claim to be a team, but we do not share the same vision because we are people of different characters and that is part of nature. I cannot challenge a learner's absence when I am always absent as an educator. My presence in class should give me grounds to challenge absenteeism. At the end of the day, we ought to understand and learn from each other. This has prepared me a lot when it comes to engaging with educators and learners, especially in these chaotic and disorganised schools. But we are trying to make things better as educators. {Educator, School 2}.*

The above narratives reveal the implications of teaching in high schools with a disorganised structure of leadership in townships like Khayelitsha. The mismanagement of these schools allows learners to do as they please because they are not under supervision. This creates a chaotic environment, where educators cannot even account for learners' enrolment in their schools. The lack of administration and inadequate support structure in these schools has been one of the problems that has made it difficult to run them (Knaus and Brown, 2016). According to Biyela (2019), leading and teaching such schools requires collaboration and teamwork to create a conducive space for learning and improving the morale of the school. Good leadership skills and teamwork (Bredson, Klar and Johansson, 2011) are best in the context of this study. When the school has a strong leadership and a good understanding of the value of education, it will create a conducive environment to overcome the issues of violence and other issues that have been raised above. Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) argue that a conducive school environment is necessary, although this has not been possible because of the culture of violence that has escalated in recent times (Burton and Leoschut, 2013).

### ***Poor infrastructure and Crime***

According to educators, the lack of security and poor infrastructure make the schools vulnerable to, and are accessible to strangers and criminals:

*The infrastructure was a mess in this school. A school with no windows, chairs and graffiti on the walls. Perpetrators could easily enter school premises because the school is not well secured. I had to write several letters to the department so they can come and assist with everything that the school need especially concerning the safety of the learners. The government needs to do a lot to make us feel safe; we don't feel safe at all. We are being robbed at school, hijacked at school. Government is not doing enough. {Educator, School 3}*

*Our school has been really in a bad state, with broken infrastructure, scratched walls, collapsed slabs and no windows for fresh air. The school has no security and doors are not secured as well. I remember appealing to the school governing body to help while still waiting for the department of education to respond to our demands. {Educator, School 1}*

These narratives indicate that most township schools have poor school infrastructure that discourage teaching and learning and allow easy access to school premises. Also, easy access into schools is aided by poor school surveillance and ineffective security personnel. It is easy for learners and educators to be assaulted and stabbed in the school because of the ineffectiveness and insufficiency of security and law enforcement personnel as argued in the next paragraph.

Xaba (2006) states that safety and security in a school environment is significant for effective teaching and learning. Crawford and Burns (2015) suggest that the issue of safety and well-being of learners in school has been of interest and special significance in the past years. Similarly, Xaba (2006) and Ngqela and Lewis (2012) discovered that schools in poor urban areas (townships) have no proper infrastructure to keep educators and learners safe and secured. School fencing was not sturdy enough, with lack of security guards and cameras (Connell, 2018). Some schools had cracked walls, broken doors, and collapsed school gates (Xaba, 2006), including broken windows (Kennemer and Knaus, 2019). These schools were not properly secured to prevent strangers from entering school premises as they pleased (Mampane and Bouwer, 2011; Connell, 2018). These findings resonate with the current study, as the research participants mentioned that the school premises were not properly secured and had bad infrastructure. This confirms that school structures in disadvantaged communities are in unacceptable conditions (National Planning Commission, 2011), and learners and educators' lives are in danger. Tshatshu (2016) highlight that when the school is located in a dangerous and high-crime neighbourhood zone, it is worth investing in safety and security measures to protect both educators and learners.

Beyond stirring feelings of lack of safety and insecurity in learners and educators, the poor infrastructure and inadequate security measures in township schools has resulted in the escalation of crime in these schools, even among younger youths. This is emphasised in the following narratives by educators:

*Crime was commonly associated with older people being perpetrators. Now they start at the age of 12 and 15 years. Yesterday, there was a burglary. They bent the burglar inside. The person came through the window, and you can try to picture it. Obviously, it was a child*

*given how small the window is. They use these young people for burglary. They are just not interested in school. They are not doing what they are expected to do. They only write occasionally on their schoolbooks. They just enjoy coming to school to eat and play, and you find others bunking". {Educator, School 2}*

*Crime is another problem. For instance, we had computers stolen by Friday and yet you find out they were sold nearby (a community area named TR). The bathroom windows were also stolen. If a learner has committed an offence, the sanction would be issued but we struggle to find ways of disciplining the child. {Educator, School 4}*

*Some of these learners when they drop out of school, a number of things happen, they turn into crime to make a living and they can become very disruptive member of a community. The same learner might come break at the school and take the resources that are used to teach the learners. They get up to wrong things, some of them become criminals and they disrupt the community by robbing people and breaking houses, they also disrupt the school because they break in the school and they take the resources that are needed to teach so it has a really negative impact on the community development. {School 1, Educator}.*

*There is no safe school; that is because we teach murderers and kids that are involved in many criminal activities; you become strong because you like the profession. We are not guaranteed any safety, we do it because we need to... That thing [Gurans] is really killing our kids and communities, I do not know who started that devil and what was going on in his or her mind. Dropouts roam around the community having nothing to do and the next thing they rob you and the other step they will go to prison and it's not forever so that they come back to the same communities and when they come back from the prison they repeat the same mistakes that made them to go to prison so it really does affect the community. {School 3, Educator}*

From the above narratives, besides Gurans violence, crime is another pressing problem that these schools have been battling with. Within Khayelitsha, crime has become so normalised that young people between the ages of 12 and 15 years are increasingly becoming culprits. Many youths have

committed crimes like school burglary — entering through the already broken windows or breaking them to gain entry to school premises — with neither shame nor remorse. An educator in school 2 further states that youths prefer crime and indolence than committing to their schoolwork. To them, school is just a place for fun, and to fulfil other needs that they might have, such as eating — through the feeding scheme in some schools. Masitsa (2008: 235) gives a more comprehensive perspective on learners’ misbehaviours, alluding that learners misbehave because of different, yet similar factors such as, “poor learning and teaching culture, poor motivation, poor role models and the negative influence of peers, the community and the media.” The educator in school 3, states that, although they are affected by the delinquent behaviours of the learners they teach, they have to remain strong because of their profession, even when their safety is jeopardised. They are expected to be active and responsible in managing the matters of the schools even under difficult conditions.

Indeed, violence, insecurity, and indiscipline in township schools have affected their educators in more ways than one (Zulu and Wolhuter, 2013), and made it difficult for educators to effectively help learners achieve desirable educational outcomes (Cornell and Loper, 1998). It is argued that the indiscipline of learners is escalating, and has become out of control (Mashau, Mutshaeni and Kone, 2015; Maphosa and Shumba, 2010) and this is a national concern (Mgijima, 2014). This issue will haunt us in the future (Zulu and Wolhuter, 2013), if it is not dealt with now.

### **5.2.1.3 Constraints of Teaching in Gurans Afflicted Schools**

Apart from the traumatic experiences of having to contend with witnessing learner-induced episodes of violence in schools, educators also have to deal with several challenges involved with teaching learners whose behaviour is greatly influenced by the violent environment that surrounds them. These challenges were grouped into two sub-categories: *substance abuse and Gurans violence in schools, and lack of parents’ participation in youth educational issues.*

### ***Substance abuse and Gurans violence in schools***

According to the educators, they are sometimes stressed by witnessing some of their learners suffering from violent encounters with wayward fellow learners who were under the influence of toxic substances. Educators shared their concerns about how the unruly behaviour of learners within their schools sometimes affects both themselves and fellow learners:

*We had a situation of rape, and the girl was under the influence of alcohol, the victim and the perpetrators were under the influence of alcohol, so drug abuse and alcohol contribute to the violence. Alcoholism also contributes to lack of discipline because most of the offences are committed under the influence of alcohol and drugs. In our community I think these two are the major. It traumatises the community, because I mean to see children killing, shooting each other, children raping one another, since they are the future of the community so seeing them doing these things traumatises the community. {Educator, School 1}*

*Our children do not have a vision pertaining to their future of where they want to be. You look into the high levels of drugs consumption and just see that nothing is taken seriously these days. Violence is associated with Coloured people because they believe that being a man means successfully navigating through the stage of being a gang member. Us on the other hand, we are trying to imitate their ways of living. They want to smoke, it starts as small as smoking cigarettes to having talks about fighting each other, they are hype, because that gives them energy and when they are high in drugs, they see things that do not exist and get the satisfaction that people fear them. They will be brave enough to take a knife out and stab another person because they are under the influence of drugs. These boys weigh each other... they should be able to see if it is safe for them to kill. Killing someone is that easy for them. In grade 8A, there was a learner who was caught smoking dagga and I still need to meet with his parents, some of them are repeaters and others are still coming from primary school. {Educator, School 2}*

*You find that some are selling cigarettes within the school premises, and some carry sharp objects. Most of these learners do not have manners, they do all of these things Infront of us. {Educator, School 4}*

*There will not be any growth if the children are not exposed to right or positive things. If you telling me a 15-year-old child would be found at a shebeen drunk at 3am, what outcomes would you expect out of that child? Do you expect full participation in class come Monday? Huh? Development is only apparent to those few students with drive because they come from families with both parents. {Educator, School 3}*

According to the educators, substance abuse has had a negative influence in their schools. Their narratives indicate that youths often commit serious offences due to alcohol consumption. Some of the offences included violence and rape cases. Educators face significant stress when learners misbehave under the influences of substances and refuse to comply with school rules and regulations. The issue of substance abuse in schools has been recognised entirely to cause unrest in some schools (Omboto, Ondiek, Odera and Ayugi, 2012). These authors also claim that substance abuse has influenced some youths to commit crime (Omboto et al., 2012). These youths are more likely to get involved in fights, stealing, and hurting others, while committing other delinquencies (Holtzhausen, 2015). According to the Gaines, Markowitz and Evans (2016), the consumption of substances reduces self-control and increases emotional impulsivity. This behaviour poses a danger to other learners including educators, while inside school premises.

### ***Lack of parents' participation in youth educational issues***

There is little that educators in public schools can do to address youth delinquency and safety in schools without adequate cooperation from learners, parents, and the broader community including the government. It is far-fetched to expect educators in malignant schools to fully deliver their syllabus and take full responsibility for the learners' educational attainment. The youths in this study have parents (some are single), but their parents are just not active in their lives. In this case, if such youths start to engage in delinquent activities, the end result is that they will trouble the educators. Some of the educators explained how they are affected by the uncooperative tendencies of some parents thus:

*Even though we know Gurans can happen anytime we try to also involve the parents, learners, and everyone. But sometimes parents are not cooperative. Some parents do not*

want to cooperate, so far, the relationship has been poor. Development is only apparent to those few students with drive because they come from families with both parents. The principal comes out as a strong person and will send the learners home to go and fetch their parents. The principal happens to be familiar with the parents and can tell when a learner has brought their real parents. We as educators, we are not trying to be police, social workers (Phone rings and is switched off). The role being played by educators is huge, but parents do not want to take accountability and they expect us to make unimaginable changes. {Educator, School 4}

I taught at different schools, but I will tell about this one. Of all the schools I have taught at, this school parents are the worst when it comes to participation in the education of the learners. There is not a single meeting since 2015 where I had 150 parents, I mean we had 1153 learners but there has never been a meeting with 200 parents. When I look and ask the educators it has been a problem. Parents are not involved all of them but very few are involved and even when you call them it's difficult to get them to come to school, even if you withhold the reports and say you will only issue the report if the parents come, you still have a low turnout of parents. So, I think that's another reason why we have problems and that is just to come to the meetings. When it comes to financial contributions, they are nowhere to be found. I do not think it is a question of ignorance; it is maybe a question of not caring enough for the education of their kids. For some, they register them at the beginning of the year, and they only pitch up in June to come fetch the report. Sometimes we have reports that are never collected. {Educator, School 1 }

I would plead with the parents to inquire about their children's behaviour in the school from the caretaker, educators, aunties, and from the security by the gate to determine the common trend in the responses solicited from all these people. Not a single parent has ever done that, but when the time comes where we ask the SGB to have these learners expelled for misbehaving, parents do not understand. Then the question remains when you have been called to the school concerning your child's behaviour, what steps did you take to remedy the problem? They do not want to seek ways to find the underlying cause of whatever is happening with their children and end up blaming educators. The parents have failed

*somehow to work with educators. People tend to take advantage of the situation, because there is no school fees school required; the government must always provide. They are also supposed to contribute as parents in the education of their children. What are they prepared to contribute? Nothing. Their contribution forms part of their children's development. When they fail to contribute towards their children's schooling, they are also failing the learners.*  
{Educator, School 2}

*Parents of today are a major challenge as they don't value the education of their own kids as much as we value it, they expect us to teach and learn and study for their kids. The educator can only teach but when the child is at home it becomes the responsibility of the parent to make sure that the child studies.* {Educator, School 3}

These narratives of the educators emphasise that the parents of township learners are not keen on ensuring the well-being of their children, specifically their (children's) educational attainment. It appears that the parents are either ignorant or just do not care. The majority of the parents in these schools, as narrated by *an* educator in school 1, have not participated in school meetings regarding their children's learning progress and behaviour. Some of the parents even fail to collect the academic reports, let alone make financial contribution for the needs of their children. There is also no common relationship between the educators and parents regarding learners' educational achievement and development. Some parents go to an extent of blaming educators for the children's behaviours and educational achievement, while not taking full responsibility as a parent. When there is no full cooperation and support from the parents, educators find themselves with learners that have disciplinary problems (Mestry, Moloï and Mohamed, 2007). It is therefore important for parents to take full responsibility for the discipline of their children, while living under their supervision as well as being active in the activities both of the child and the school (DoE, 2000).

Educators reckon that parents' indifference towards their children's education complicates teaching. The situation of neglect becomes more difficult for children coming from single parent or child-headed households. According to Visser, Bolt and Van Kempen (2015:112), the "social outcomes of youth are a result of a successful or less successful parenting styles and strategies".

According to Roman et al. (2015), parenting style is crucial in the development of the child, how the parent respond to the needs of the child and their interests will determine how they will behave and succeed. Furthermore, instilling discipline and supervision of the child requires commitment. When the parents neglect their responsibilities, the development of the child is affected, because they feel neglected (Underwood and Rosen, 2011). This then motivates the child to find ways of fitting into the society (Tajfel, 1972) and these children are more likely to have behavioural problems (Sigelman and Rider, 2012).

Not dismissing the above, parents from impoverished neighbourhood have greater ‘challenges and obstacles’ than parents from less deprived neighbourhoods (Visser et al., 2015), which make them only marginally involved in their children’s lives. Ward (2007) complements this view by pointing out that it is difficult for parents in large and less educated families to monitor their children, but this “does not mean that they are bad parents but is just to say that these situations make parenting much harder to handle.” (Ward, 2007:20). Thus, socioeconomic contexts can be reckoned to influence parent availability, parenting styles and their effectiveness on youth development. Perreira, Harris and Lee (2006) discovered that youths growing up with both parents have lower chances of dropping out of school than those from unstructured families. This is supported by Konate, Gueye and Nseka Vita (2003) who established that living away from their parents or having absent parents influenced children’s school performance.

#### **5.2.1.4 The Problem of Dealing with Inadequately Parented Youth**

In the previous chapter, one of the major problems cited as a contributor to the rise of a culture violence in Khayelitsha is non-traditional families. In most of the cases, children from non-traditional families are sometimes not guided properly by their guardians, if any. Such lack of parental control ends up affecting the educators who are supposed to guide these children in schools.

##### ***Non-Traditional families***

There are a lot of problems associated with the non-traditional families that somehow force the concerned children to resort to criminal activities. The educators also noted these problems and commented thus:

*Contributing factors of Gurans are single parents, child headed households. Poverty, frustration with various diseases such as HIV, one child never accepts the situation at home, the fact that their mother is sick and cannot do anything for themselves though they go to the clinic. The only way to bring food on the table would sometimes be to steal chairs from the school and sell them by the scapyard in order to get money for food. They will never say why they are stealing those chairs and you will see them as criminals not knowing their underlying background. {Educator, School 4}*

*We are a community with no backbone and direction when it comes to our children. They have parents but they do not see them as protectors. Part of the community, the truth is you know your child as a parent and you can see when they are changing, irrespective of what is happening parents can pick these things up. So, when the report would come about a child being a perpetrator, I would call the parent to have them sort out the problem at home for the child to be able to come back to school. We as the school cannot fully protect the learners. We would thus call parents to come and fetch their children. Last year, there were learners who were suspended by the department because they were terrorizing the school. I was lucky to be in that disciplinary committee because when it first started, we did not care how and why it happens, but we decided upon ourselves as the school that we will not have such learners in the premises. We would thus call parents to come and fetch their children. But they will take time to respond. The learners cannot go home and report these things. For them, the parents are just non-existent in terms of being there to protect them. They would rather have a friend protecting them than their parents. Because the group went to fight for their battles, so they have no choice but to stay in the groups. Gurans is part of our lives. {Educator, School 2}*

*I think its broken families, a lot of the boys that come to me for disciplinary actions, when I interview them, I find out that they are from single parented households. There's no father, the boy does as he pleases, and I think that really contributes. The fact that there is no father in the home usually becomes a problem when a boy turns 15. At that age it becomes difficult for the mother to control a boy like that. As I said to you there are parents who don't come*

*when you ask for their assistance. Before a learner is expelled or suspended, attempts are made by the educator to get the parent involved in managing the discipline of the learner.*

{Educator, School 1 }

Although parenting is not the main focus of this study, it is important to take note of educators' emphasis on its impact on the lives of the children and youths living in marginalised communities such as Khayelitsha. The level of parents/ or guardians presence and involvement in the lives of their children can determine their development and progress. The nature of parenting, according to these narratives has contributed to the culture of Gurans in Khayelitsha community. An educator in school 4 indicated that some of the children growing in these communities have to accept challenging situations in their homes, like having parents who are absent emotionally and physically, who cannot take care of them, while facing adversities. This has influenced these youth to engage in crime, as a means of survival, to provide for themselves and their families, since their families are not able to do so. This is supported by an educator in school 2, who stated that these youths are not protected by their families; parents do not even take notice of the changes that are happening in their children's life. For some of these children, their parents are non-existent, since they are not able to protect them, they can only rely on their social groups like Gurans for protection. This then makes it difficult for them to exit the groups, as their life will be in danger if they are no longer part of the group. Also, the narratives above indicate that most of the learners within township schools are from single parent households, including child-headed families.

According to Patel (2015), the number of children that need care and protection has increased. These children are without care from their parents, either dead or non-existent, while faced with underlying issues such as poverty and sicknesses in their families. At the same time, these children need to take care of their siblings and take full responsibility for their home, while their parents are sick (Soji et al., 2015). These children lack emotional support and are reminded daily that they don't have support (Soji et al., 2015). The situation is even more dire for the male children who need a father figure and support from older males in their lives — it is difficult for a mother to play both parental roles. While being without parents or coming from a dysfunctional family is not

the overarching factor influencing youth participation in Gurans or delinquent behaviour, it is important for the healthy development of young people.

Sumter et al., (2009) note that youths drift away from their parents when approaching adolescence, as they find their independence. However, it can be argued that some of the factors that could lead youths to drift from their families towards their peers is a lack of proper social and emotional support from their families. According to the educators, parents have lost sight of what is happening in the life of their children, which could open an opportunity for teenagers to find refuge in their peers. This is supported by Bistamam et al. (2019: 2500), who discovered that “social support was an important variable in predicting adolescent involvement in crime risk behavior.” The perceptions of the educators in this study concurs with these theories, such as when youth lack emotional support, or feel neglected and rejected by their families or the society at large, they find ways of surviving, like joining social groups and engaging in criminal activities as a way of fitting in (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Tajfel,1972).

### ***Guardians’ lack of control over their children’s behaviour***

While absence of parents in the lives of their children contributes to their children’s involvement in delinquent groups, being present but not exercising adequate parental control or encouraging toxic behaviour is also a major contributor. The educators explained how this lack of parental control functions in perpetuating the Gurans culture and their suffering as educators:

*When we had this violence (Gurans) problem. Some of the parents were involved; it just didn’t happen in my presence, but I was told that when the boys were fighting, some of their parents came and they forced their way through, and they said to their children, go and kill them. If a parent does that, it can’t be right, what used to happen was when the learners come in through the school gates, we would ask some of the community members but there were complaints from the learners that the parents didn’t search all the learners especially those they knew they had knives. There was favouritism so they were actually encouraging learners to come to school with weapons. {Educator, School 1}*

*You see, the problem in this location is that some of the parents, or should I say community members have no better way of raising their children. You will see of them watching these children fighting, instead of assisting to stop them, they will just say, yoooooh siboyika abantwana, owam umntwana akekho pha (We are scared of these kids, anyway my child is not there); I will not fight the battle that is not mine. Sometimes, you hear some of them on the background, shouting “Subaligwala, yilwa, anizubethwa ngabantu abangengobalapha” (fight, stop being weak, you cannot be defeated by people who do not belong in this location). A child can die in front of them; this has happened in front of our school gate, while the community and parents were watching. {Educator, School 2}*

*Most of the learners who were there are still young, and they are easily influenced, and that is the difficult situation we are facing. One of those boys came to my office saying that he wants to stop but there are things that hold him back because he is living with his parents. They are drinking and always fighting. I get worried to be honest thinking of their future and looking into our townships and wonder how the situation will be in years to come. They easily give in to peer pressure. {Educator, School 2}*

These narratives show that some of the parents encouraged the involvement of their children in Gurans. They motivated their children to fight back to an extent of killing their opponents. According to the educators, even when the schools involved parents and the community in fighting against Gurans, it was not successful, because some of the parents were biased in resolving the matter, as they favoured their children over others. Parents also encouraged and allowed learners to carry weapons into school premises. Coupled with the challenges of teaching youths with a violent inclination, educators also narrated experiences of having to be responsible for youth coming from families and communities affected by violence. In most morally upright communities, the task of educating a youth lies with both educators and their parents (Bray et al., 2010:20), but this is not the case in a Gurans afflicted community such as Khayelitsha. Instead, as the educators noted, parents and guardians in the community seem to be uncooperative when it comes to educating the youth and eradicating delinquent behaviours.

### *Challenges of educating youth under negative peer influence*

Educators also complained about learners being in a community of peers who cannot positively influence the learners:

*We have learners that get to be influenced by peer pressure because friends are smoking dagga and tik so I will be seen as an outsider if I don't do those things. There are varieties of issues that need to be tackled. Some become emotional because the parent is absent in the life of a child {School 3, Educator}.*

The narratives of these two educators jointly indicate that youth are easily influenced. They imitate almost everything that their peers are doing, and some start earlier than others. This is supported by other studies that confirm that youths are vulnerable to peer pressure very early and in the middle of their teenage years (Bell and Baron, 2015; Sumter et al., 2009). Achhab et al. (2016), add that youths struggle to make life choices and patterns when transitioning to adulthood, and this affects their present and future.

According to Malatjie and Dube (2017), the teenage youths need to be accepted by the society as people who are growing and developing. Their teenage years is when they start to learn certain behaviour and become easily influenced by their peers. Similarly, at this stage of development, they are confronted with issues of self-identification (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Swartz et al., 2012). They are expected to comply with certain beliefs and to participate in the society effectively (Swartz et al., 2012). Some scholars regard this as an identity crisis, as they are still figuring out who they are and where they belong in the society (Erikson, 1968; Swartz et al., 2012), hence they readily adapt to certain delinquent behaviours (Sefali, 2014; Mguzulwa, 2014; Maseko, 2009). According to Van der Walt and Oosthuizen (2007), some learners engaged in gang-related violence to please their peers, to an extent that they fight inside school premises as an assurance of their loyalty to them. This then fuels the violence in school premises, among the opponent groups within the same school (Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019; Sefali, 2014). This is one of the reasons that youth violence is so prevalent in schools (Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013). In the case of the current study, such behaviours include joining social groups such as Gurans and getting involved in crime and violent activities.

#### 5.2.1.5 Challenges of educating youths in under-resourced communities

The findings presented and discussed hitherto have strongly emphasised the rising spate of youth violence in Khayelitsha (and similar townships), and the need for concerted efforts to mitigate this trend and its impacts on the social order of these communities. However, several narratives of the educators in this township indicates that the key resources required to mitigate youth violence in these communities are inadequate. The major resource inadequacies were grouped into two subcategories: *lack of specialists dealing with youth issues* and *inadequate security personnel and law enforcement*. The findings related to each of these are presented and discussed subsequently.

##### *Lack of specialists dealing youth issues*

The issue of insufficient health services such as psychologist and social workers, was highlighted by the educators in this study when they were explaining why the Gurans violence affecting them continues to be a huge challenge. According to the educators, specialists such as health professionals and psychologists were needed in these schools that have been afflicted by youth gang-related violence. This intervention relates to mental health, especially among adolescents in under-resourced communities:

*We don't have enough psychologists and psychiatrists. If the government would place a psychologist that is resident at work so that we have resident psychologists at the hotspot, if there is a problem you can refer and don't have to write a letter to the district because the person is on site. I think that would help because we had that last year. We had a social worker for 9 months and a lot of problems were solving on site you know we would refer cases straight to her so if they could have that and school nurses too. {Educator, School 1 }*

*Unfortunately, we are not trained to detect 'learner psychological issues' those kinds of challenges, I was just trained as a normal educator that teach at a classroom, I was not taught how to read the mind of a child but because sometimes we get kids that you know the behaviour of them since grade 9 and suddenly it changes in grade 11. Definitely there is something that is going on whether there is substance abuse, or the learner has a challenge at home. It is very difficult because these kids don't talk, they don't share but because we*

*happen to learn some of these tendencies so we then suspect that this learner might be going through some stuff. There are a variety of issues that need to be tackled. Only people who are trained and went to school for such will be able to know how to deal with these issues, not us. Same for the whole district; you might find that there are 8 social workers for the whole district, advantaged and disadvantaged. Black, Coloured and White. The school is supposed to have 8 permanent social workers in the school. Some learners become emotional because the parent is absent in the life of a child {School 3, Educator}.*

The narratives of these two educators jointly indicate that there is an insufficient number of health professionals in Khayelitsha, hence their continued suffering at the hands of Gurans aligned youths. One of the educators stated that when they had a social worker in their school, there was a positive difference in their school. But the problem is that there are not enough social workers to accommodate all the schools in Khayelitsha. The educators further explained that they cannot do the work of health professionals, as they do not have the requisite training. According to what is narrated by these participants, these learners need emotional and psychological attention, as they are challenged by so many things, and Gurans violence is just one of them. This violence, in most cases, has long-term psychological implications (WHO, 2002), which includes depression, fear, lack of performance and school attendance (Alaappar, Len, George, Lee and Wong, 2005), hopelessness and anxiety (Songca, 2018). These issues cannot be overlooked.

Madden (2013), with Wood and Dennard (2017), posit that the mental health issues of youths involved in gang-related violence have been overlooked until now. Particularly, Black communities in South Africa have lacked mental health facilities (Lupuwana, Simbayi and Elkonin, 1999) and the few health professionals in them have struggled to deliver quality services to these communities (Freeman, 1992). Yet, these services are very essential to maintain the social fabric of these communities. McDaniel (2012) suggest that public health aims to prevent youth from developing violent behaviour at a young age and that this will help to decrease gang-related violence. This prevention strategy helps us to mitigate the underlying causes of violent behaviour and risk factors within a community, while focusing on the individual (Matzopoulos and Myers, 2014). This approach helps to improve services delivery directed to a community in need by advocating against anything that is potentially harmful to the community (Patel, 2015). Overall,

an adequate and diverse team of health workers, including professionals such as doctors, psychiatrist, psychologists, etc. are required in South Africa to make prevention strategies successful, as social workers are taking strain, with increased number of cases (Ziyambi, 2020). Without diverse staff working in these communities, youth will struggle with having a sense of belonging, because they are not guided correctly (Malatjie and Dube, 2017). Foster (2012:25) avers that “the human costs of violence are beyond calculation, but are clearly considerable in terms of loss, grief and pain, but also infecting communities with a climate of fear, anger, suspicion and terror”. Thus, it is important to have sufficient and capable health workers working in communities like Khayelitsha to prevent social problems like violence.

### ***Inadequate law enforcement***

Educators also explained that they were continuously suffering the effects of Gurans due to the inadequacy of law enforcement and security personnel in their schools:

*It’s a luxury the government cannot afford but if you look at the problems the school is facing and place the people there, I think it might help to employ patrollers, because currently in my school I have 7 school patrollers and not all schools have this privilege, because our school is a hotspot of Gurans. So, I’m saying that you identify hotspots, and you deploy people there so you can reduce this thing there from here to other schools. If you contain it where it is, you might be solving other problems. {Educator, School 1 }*

*We do not have law enforcement, but we always need it because anything can happen at any given time in township schools. Another thing, a police would find a learner outside of school premises during school hours and walk past, if the police could adopt a thing where they confront a learner and say “why are you here this time? If you have permission, show me” and in that way, they force learners to account for their absence during school hours and the community too, the fabric of the community has broken down even a parent can’t ask a learner that “kuthen ulapha ngexesha lesikolo” (why are you here during school time). That’s no longer a case which was in the past, maybe that would also assist in reducing this Gurans thing... It traumatises educators and learners. Searching procedures are something we must do but they are not very nice, it’s not nice for me to search a child that I’m going to*

*go teach a minute later but if a situation demands that then you have to do it but it's not desirable. If the police could maybe be visible around schools and search learners and not let us do that, you know man it's not nice. {Educator, School 2}*

The above narratives suggest that the inadequacy of law enforcement and security personnel in schools was the reason why both educators and learners have continued to suffer at the hands of Gurans. For example, learners would be found on the streets during school hours, and they won't be asked why they are not at school. As such, there is an urgent need for law enforcement and patrols in places that are hot spots of Gurans in Khayelitsha. Educators indicated that having more patrols and enforcement will help to reduce Gurans in this township. Further, they opined that having police visibility around schools and normalising search and seizures will help to keep everyone safe. This means that law enforcement and security should be one of the important prevention measures against Gurans, and this should be taken as matter of urgency. Van Jaarsveld (2008:180) supports this, stating that "security is a fundamental element that should, to some degree, be implement in all schools in order to prevent and reduce school violence as much as possible". According to van Jaarsveld (2008), very few township schools in South Africa have effective working security systems in place. Some schools are not well prepared to prevent the issues that have been mentioned above, because of security problems (Perumean-Chaney and Sutton, 2013).

### **5.2.2 Educators' perceptions on mitigating measures against Gurans violence**

In order to eradicate the problem of Gurans in Khayelitsha, there is need for schools to adopt innovative measures that will ensure the teaching and development of focused youths whose minds are not inclined to violent and criminal activities. This will be achieved through the collaboration of all stakeholders involved in the development of the children in Khayelitsha.

### 5.2.2.1 Collaboration and Partnership of Schools in Khayelitsha

The intervention that educators mentioned included collaboration of the schools involved in the development of youths in Khayelitsha. These include, educators, members of the community, and the government:

*School do assist when it comes to Gurans, somehow. The safety community does always liaise with those schools that are affected by Gurans. For instance, our school principal would get a call from a principal in Bulumko or Masiyile to caution him. The school principals do communicate when Gurans has started to prepare each other. MR Ngubelanga, as the coordinator of safety, would go as far as he can to search for the victims within the community and bring them to the school, more especially where there are leads. {Educator, School 4}*

*To be honest there is no formal partnership between this school and other schools but what we do have a platform as principals where we share our problems and advice each other. I do pick up a phone and call a neighbouring school about a possible thing that's happening and sometimes you hear rumours that a certain thing is going to happen. We do phone each other as principals so yeah. So, I can say there is although it is not formalised but there is a relationship. There is a school transport in place but that is for learners that live 5 km away from the school so if a learner lives between that radius of 5 km then they have to walk to school. What we do is we ask the police to maintain a high profile in and around the school so that learners feel relatively safe because the police are visible so that is the best that we can do, if they live too far, we have a bus in place that brings the learners to school and take them back, otherwise for those learners that live a kilometre from school then they walk to school. {Educator, School 1}*

*Few years ago, Gurans was affecting the school. But even now it has not yet reached that critical stage but if things remain the way they are, it will be in years to come. You might not see change that is effective in our current situation. I fear that things might get worse going forward. We have a platform as schools whereby all the schools affected or not can gather to share ideas. Secondly in some other schools, the politics of the school seem to hinder any*

*collaboration in terms of addressing such things. We would provide rooms whereby a police officer would be brought in and escort the learners to their communities to identify others who are also involved in this. We would have those meetings about the Gurans with them and report to the police station to create that momentum, but in terms of securing a space for other learners who want to attend here, we do not have the powers, but we can only accommodate and protect registered learners from the outsiders. The schools fear to take children from very far areas as that will victimize them. The police station played a role, you build partnership and try to encourage police visits in the school, there was a roaster, and it was common back then. {Educator, School 2}*

The above narratives show that educators have tried their best to reduce poor behaviour and violent events in the school premises, through disciplinary hearings, working together as schools by appointing safety committees, trying to involve parents in the lives of their children, and engaging the police to improve the security around the schools. They highlighted that even though they are pushing to fight against Gurans in the schools, it remains work in progress. Govender and Killian (2001:1 as cited in Ngqela and Lewis, 2012) suggest that there can be serious long-standing physical, emotional and psychological implications for educators and adolescent learners as well as those in the community” as long as youth violence is not treated as a matter emergency.

### **5.3 Findings from the Community Members**

As indicated in chapter 3 of the study, it was challenging to get the community members of Khayelitsha to participate in the study. The study’s initial plan included interviewing the parents and guardians of youths who are potentially involved in Gurans, but this was not possible. The researcher ended up interviewing just general community members; one of them was a mother who lost her son due to violence at school. From the narratives of this sample, the researcher considered the effects of Gurans violence on community members — their personal experiences of the violence as well as individual perceptions on what should be done to deal with the phenomenon. The thematic categorisation of the narratives of community members is shown in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2: Thematic discussion framework for understanding the perspectives of community members on Gurans

Major Themes	Categories	Subcategories
<b>Effects of the Gurans violence on communities</b>	• Community members' sense of victimhood	○ Robbery and house burglary ○ Loss of loved ones
	• Induced effects of witnessing Gurans violence	○ Recall of traumatic events ○ Hostile environment to raise a child
<b>Community members' perceptions on factors contributing to Gurans</b>	• Human factors	○ Interaction of parents and traditional healers ○ Indifference and bias of parents
	• Infrastructural factors	○ Lack of recreational and activities

### 5.3.1 Effects of the Gurans violence on Communities

Although Gurans violence usually entail physical and violent confrontations amongst people of the youth age group, evidence produced in this section shows that the general community members of Khayelitsha have also not been spared from the effects of the violent behaviour of these youths. Analysis of the community members narratives show that community members have also been affected by the violence in many ways. Community members recounted being victims and also affected by the mere fact of witnessing Gurans. Such people remember witnessing Gurans violence unfolding and having to live with related shocks and trauma thereafter. Gurans have also resulted in disruptions of existing community social structures. This has happened through community members accusing one another of not putting much effort in attempts to weed out Gurans violence. They accuse each other for deliberately failing to rein in wayward children.

This section discusses the effects of Gurans violence on community members under three categories that emerged from the individual interviews: *community members' sense of victimhood*, and *induced effects of witnessing Gurans violence*.

#### 5.3.1.1 Community Members' Sense of Victimhood

Similar to the youths (whose narratives were presented and discussed in the previous chapter), older community members of Khayelitsha have also been terrorised by the youths participating in

Gurans. Their narration of their experiences was grouped into two subcategories: *Robbery and house burglary* and *loss of loved ones*. These are discussed subsequently.

### ***Robbery and house burglary***

Two of the community members that were interviewed recounted their physical encounters with youths in Gurans thus:

*Living in Khayelitsha, it is a problem, especially for us who are going to work in the morning; you are even scared of your neighbour because they might turn around and rob you. These boys start by asking for matches then after that they rob you, for me Khayelitsha is a No; we are not free at all. We are just forcing because we have to eat. I have been robbed 3 times this month by the same boys who are busy with this violence that is giving us unrest; they took my jacket, phone and R30 and slap me on the face. So, there's nothing great about Khayelitsha at all. {CMK3: 40-year-old Male}*

*You know my child, I have so many things to say about this violence that is happening here, but at the same time ndiyoyika (I am scared) because you don't if they are listening. Mna (myself) I was told to run for my life after these boys robbed me with a knife pointing at my face. These boys are dangerous, as old as we are, we are scared of them. {CMK4: 55-year-old Male}*

These assertions that community members physically encounter Gurans violence in their daily lives was also supported by other community members who testified that such happenings were a daily occurrence.

*Gurans is a huge problem, even though we don't know what's going on. I really don't know, I'm not sure it's the drugs, or just crime. A kid might ask parents for expensive shoes and if they can't afford them, they go outside and rob people all because they want to look like the others. We end up being victims of such acts, uhleli nje unexhala uzorojwa (you are always scared of being robbed) It's very terrifying, we are scared for our lives as these*

*incidences can occur at any time. Be it in the morning, afternoon or even at night. {CMK5: 60-year-old Female}*

*What I don't like about Khayelitsha is the level of crime, it's very high. Houses are being broken into, and people get robbed on a daily basis so that's the only thing that makes it hard to stay in Khayelitsha, our kids are always up to no good. Gunshots are everything here, people get shot all the time when they comeback from the tavern at night. {CMK1: 43-year-old Female}*

The above narratives reveal the unpleasantness of staying in Khayelitsha township and the vulnerability of its residents. There are certain times in the day when it is more difficult for residents to move around. For instance, going to work in the morning is difficult because they do not know what to expect on their way. They might be robbed, or in worse cases, be murdered. Two community members narrated that they have been victims of Gurons violence in Khayelitsha. Although, they were not physically hurt, their interaction with the young boys emotionally affected them. The 40-year-old male mentioned that he was robbed three times within one month, and this made him feel unsafe living in this community. Overall, the whole community has been subjected to social ills by the activities of delinquent youths; incidents like being mugged or potentially harmed while walking the streets or on the way to work, and house burglary have become the daily experiences of these residents. Although the government has invested in crime prevention measures, the issue of violent crime in Khayelitsha is still a social problem (Breetzke and Edelstein, 2020; O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014; Edelstein, 2016). According to Marzbali et al. (2011), reducing the impact violent crime in these communities requires a collective approach, which involves the participation of the community working with other relevant key role players.

### *Loss of loved ones*

Some community members in Khayelitsha have suffered the more severe effects of Gurans by losing family members to related violence. One community recounted her loss thus:

*I thought my kid was in safe hands when he was at school which I turned out to be wrong as he was stabbed at school, in the presence of educators, and no one came to apologise or explain anything, that's why I took the decision to move my other remaining son to the EC because I was scared that he was going to suffer the same fatal fate. I really don't know because these kids come from school and when they get out there are others waiting for them. I have 4 kids now and the fifth one is the one that was stabbed to death at school.*  
{CMK2: 65-year-old female}

However, it seems also that the fate of losing children to Gurans was an issue that was a widespread phenomenon in Khayelitsha. One community member related the seriousness of the problem thus:

*Besides the gunshots. In this Gurans, they do not use guns, they use sharp knives and spades. A lot of children have died, in 2015 most of them died. Most parents lost their children in this madness, esingayazi noba usuka ph losathana wento (we don't even know where this stanism [Gurans]came froms) Last year it was not that much.* {CMK1: 43-year-old Female}

This narrative demonstrates the seriousness of Gurans violence, which has escalated into a widespread loss of life. The narrator attested that many young people died between 2015 and 2016, due to Gurans. Male adolescents and young adults living in low-income urban areas of South Africa are exposed to extreme levels of violence and crime, and “there are no safe places of refuge” (Sommer et al., 2017: 30). Youths between the ages of 10-25 years in South Africa are most likely to be victims of homicide and murder (Leoschut and Burton, 2006; Matzopoulos et al., 2015; Ward et al., 2012). This explains the experience of violence as a part of the lives of young people growing up in disadvantaged communities (Kaminer, Heath, Hardy, Mosdell and Bawa, 2013; Swartz et al., 2012; Ward et al., 2012). Their exposure to violence somehow creates room for, or develops, delinquent behaviours, willingly or unwillingly. Some of the young men in the current

study were not fundamentally criminals, however their environment perpetuated their participation in ‘Gurans’ and the violent activities thereof (Mguzulwa, 2014; Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019). Unfortunately, some neighbourhoods’ play a vital role in the lives of young people who are in gang (related) groups (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996).

### **5.3.1.2 Induced Effects of Witnessing Gurans Violence**

Whereas the previous subsection concerned itself with the issue of how people become victims of Gurans, this subsection discusses how the members of the community of Khayelitsha are being traumatised and shocked after witnessing this violence. This has resulted in these community members living in perpetual fear of the problem.

#### ***Recall of traumatic events***

The narratives below reveal how some community members were affected after witnessing Gurans violence:

*We cannot even look. We are truly scared and saddened about it. I was on my way home from church; the kids were stabbing each other. We even ran because we were scared of our lives. {CMK: 60-year-old Female}*

*They are so brutal, how can you kill a person by chopping their head off? They slaughter people like they are goats, that thing is not right, they are killing each other, and some end up with no future. Because you can’t stab a person and live a normal life, the community is always frightened, and you can never be sure of what your children are up to. It scares us because children are losing their lives and if they do not find the person, they are looking for they go for anyone in the family. So that is very scary. {CMK4: 55-year-old Male}*

*They use knives, pangas and rocks, when they see each other they throw stones at each other and they use knives mostly. When we see them, you have to walk on the other side. The use of words such as ‘qomoloza’ for an example on my way to work this one morning, I saw a group of boys going to school and two girls, in a split second the girl is stabbed by*

*the boys when we ask the friend why, apparently the boyfriend of the girl that was stabbed is in another gang so that's why they stabbed her so it's very visible {CMK3: 40-year-old Male}.*

The above narratives demonstrate that the fights of youths in Gurans is horrific. These fights resulted in homicides and injuries using sharp dangerous weapons such as knives, pangas, and throwing of stones. This has traumatised the residents, as these fights extend to their immediate families or loved ones. According to the community members, the inhumanity of these youths is beyond imagination. Viewing the high rate of youth engagement in violence and its cruelty instils doubts in the community regarding the potential for youths to reach adulthood. Ward (2007), as cited in Burton 2007: 5) posit that youths “model the behaviours and attitudes around them and reflect the behaviour they see among adults and leaders in their communities and society”. This is supported by Ethans (1998/2015/2016), who state that youth do not just become violent by chance, but their environment influences their behaviour. Children growing up in violent communities, either become subordinates or dominators, which means that they either become followers or leaders in the violent crimes they commit (Athens, 2017). In many cases, a young person will fight for domination and position, i.e., to prove to themselves that they have power over others. Violent performance, according to Athens and Rhodes (2017), may turn to mass murder, which they regard as a ‘dominative encounter’. In places like Khayelitsha, stopping this behaviour is difficult because the community is already dysfunctional and malignant. As the young boys in these communities grow up, violence becomes normal to them as long as they still reside in the same geographical area (Canada, 1995; Holtzhausen, 2015; Athens, 2007). Athens (1998/2003) further states that residents of these communities must endure the unpleasant realities of expecting themselves or their loved ones to be victims of murder. This leads to constant anxiety and fear in such communities (O’Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014).

### ***Hostile environment to raise a child***

The effects of witnessing Gurans violence even extends to situations in which community members end up fearing for the lives of their children. How such fear manifests in individuals is explained in the narrative below:

*It is not safe at all to raise a child here because you raise a kid in this community then you hear that your child is engaging in criminal activities. When they come back from school, they get bored and go stand by the shops with others and that's where the problem starts. When they are standing by the shops, they start thinking of robbing people or engaging in violence. {CMK1: 43-year-old female}*

*We are constantly worrying about our kids, to us we sometimes wish that they don't go to school because we don't know if they will come back alive or not. It has not been nice staying in Khayelitsha especially with the kids. When I hear that it (Gurans) has started outside, I close the door and make sure my kids are inside I don't even want to look. {CMK2: 65-year-old female}*

The narratives from the community members indicate that Gurans pose a real terror to the community of Khayelitsha. Whereas the elders are targets for robberies and muggings, the youths are dually targeted for murder and recruitment into Gurans violence. For the youths, this is unfortunate, because growing up in such a community will become difficult (O'Regan-Pikoli Commission of Inquiry, 2014; Seekings, 2013). According to Ward et al., (2012) youths are both the perpetrators and victims of violence and are the same generation that will pass this behaviour to the next generation (DuRant et al., 1995). It is unfortunate that the most common victims and perpetrators of violence are young men living in disadvantaged communities (Pinnock, 2016; Holtzhausen, 2015; Hallman, Kenworthy, Diers, Swan and Devnarain, 2015; Mguzulwa, 2014; Sefali, 2014). The South African Police (2019) indicated that violent crime was high and included common assaults and murder amongst youth. Thus, violence is a threat to this age bracket and compromises their safety (Hallman et al., 2015).

### **5.3.2 Community members' perceptions on factors contributing to Gurans**

The narratives of community members related to the theme of factors contributing to the continuance of Gurans in their community were grouped into two subcategories: *human factors* and *infrastructural factors*. These are discussed subsequently.

### 5.3.2.1 Human Factors

Another extreme way in which the people of Khayelitsha have been affected by Gurans violence is the manner in which the whole community loses orientation as far as good neighbourliness and living together are concerned. This is so because Gurans has a way of making community members turn against each other. They do this through counter accusations and suspicions of complicity in perpetuating the Gurans scourge. Their narratives show that the key human influencers of the perpetuity of Gurans are *interaction of parents and traditional healers*:

#### *Interaction of parents and traditional healers*

The community members explained their perception of the negative role of traditional healers in Gurans affairs thus:

*I would say traditional healers' influence works, because these traditional healers want money and these kids when they go to them, they lie saying that they just want to protect themselves that is why they give them some mutis (charm) because they want money, so they do have an impact. {CMK3: 40-year-old Male}*

*The parents sometimes take them to traditional healers, so they give them extra protection. Parents pay these traditional healers, and I remember there was a traditional healer that was evicted from the community where they worked, he was the one giving these kids extra powers that's why most of them (children/youth) in 2015 died as that old man was giving them extra powers. He just wanted money, but he ended up being responsible for the killings of so many kids. {CMK1: 43-year-old Female}*

*Parents do play a role in Gurans because they are afraid their kids might die so they take them to traditional healers and some kids come at home and ask for their parents to take them to get those protection belts from traditional healers. They see their peers not being able to get stabbed or shot at so parents have a huge role especially mothers I don't know about the fathers. {CMK5: 60-year-old Female}*

These narratives underpin the dysfunctional nature of many families in Black townships as a major contributor to the delinquent behaviours and violent disposition of the youths in these communities. Some parents knowingly fund their children's visit to traditional healers who seem to be offering the youths some service that contributes to their malevolent activities. Parents who feel that there is nothing more they can do by way of parental advice to prevent their children's participation in Gurans resort to traditional (occultic) means to ensure the security of the lives of their children. While these parents regard using traditional means as an appropriate approach to safeguard their children, Ashforth (2005) sees it as witchcraft involving a world of supernatural power, with the means of harming others. These supernatural powers and witchcraft beliefs are created to suit the people who seek them (Moore and Sanders, 2001). According to Gumede (2015) when people consult such powers, they think, as advised by the *Sangoma* (traditional healer) which they consult, that they are untouchable and cannot be harmed (Gumede, 2015). This assurance of invincibility makes them pursue fights, which results in more deaths, as some of these powers may not work as anticipated (du Preez, 2015).

### ***Indifference and bias of parents***

The community members of Khayelitsha also reckoned that parents contributed to the continuity of Gurans by being indifferent towards other people's children and biased towards their own children:

*As a community we are not united. Some people watch while some of the boys are being slaughtered in front of them. As long their children are not there. If it happens that they are there, that's when they start to react. {CMK3: 40-year-old Male}*

*I really do not know where it started, we just here that this is happening and we take our kids to the EC, my kid was studying in the EC because I was taking him away from the Gurans. No one wants to come with the truth, each parent is protecting their own child, by saying that their kids don't engage in these activities while everyone knows that they do. {CMK2: 65-year-old Female}*

*The people are not united, kids don't want to be shouted at or reprimanded, the first thing they go to tell their parents and the parents don't even ask they come and shout at you so to keep peace you just need to mind your own business. {CMK5: 60-year-old Female}*

The narratives of these Khayelitsha residents explains how Gurans have disrupted the social fabric as a community. Community members are living in suspicion of each other. As three community members clearly narrated, there are some parents who don't want to get involved in mitigating Gurans if their children are not affected or part of Gurans. They only protect their children, and some do not want them to be disciplined for any wrongdoing. While it is not clear whether such allegations are correct or not, it is clear that the issue of Gurans has brought divisions in the community.

Lack of community unity and reluctance by community members to restrain feuding Gurans are some of the factors that continue to fuel the violence. The indifferent behaviour of communities towards Gurans violence, especially the failure to take a stand against feuding Gurans parties, is something that has the potential to make those fighting feel like doing Gurans is the right thing. Moreover, as they pointed out, this also has the potential to make youths develop perceptions that spectating community members actually do not care about the well-being of the youths in the community. The contention that the stances taken by community members play an important role in shaping youth behaviour has also been documented in literature elsewhere, especially the work of Santiago, Lee, Lucero and Wiersma (2017). Writing on the issues of youth violent behaviours and marijuana drug use, Santiago et al. (2017) noted that youth attitudes, values, behaviours, and expectations towards these may be shaped by neighbourhood adult role models and norms enforced by the community or local culture. However, for Khayelitsha, all these attributes are somehow absent in positive forms as suggested by these narratives. This has contributed to the breaking down of the community's social values, and further resulted in the violent characteristic that it has now acquired. Brennan et al. (2009: 332) also noted that, "the community as a field of social interaction exists in the collective actions of its members." Accordingly, collective actions and networks of communities will greatly contribute to violent-free communities.

### 5.3.2.2      **Infrastructural Factors**

Alongside the contribution of the human factors to the perpetuation of Gurans, the narratives of the community members of Khayelitsha also highlighted that infrastructural factors also played a role, especially the *lack of recreational facilities and activities*.

#### ***Lack of facilities and recreational activities***

The community members of Khayelitsha suggested that there is a need for more recreational facilities like parks, and activities like sports to stop the youth from engaging in delinquent activities:

*The lack of sports activities. For example, the parks are not enough for everyone to play compared to neighbourhoods like Wynberg or Claremont. To me generally, I prefer the model c education, because in public schools' educators are controlled by the learners for an example Iqhayiya secondary school, educators can't teach freely because of gangsterism while in model c schools' educators are free. The government doesn't care about us, they only care about other communities far from us. I would say it's because of the way our communities are set up, mostly on the other side there are white people with money and our side there are poor people, so the government is serving them. {CMK3: 40-year-old male}*

*It's a lack of activities because as kids are growing you watch your kids play and think to yourself if they would follow whatever that he is interested in he would go far but because we lack such resources, we have stadiums but there are no people that are hands on so that kids can commit themselves in these sport facilities be it soccer, cricket or netball just like how we grew up but now you can never find such facilities. When they come back from school, they get bored and go stand by the shops with others and that's where it starts. {CMK1: 43-year-old Female}*

These narratives indicate that, as victims of Gurans violence, community members are concerned about what needs to be done to eradicate the problem. The two community members opine that the lack of recreational facilities, as well as failure to institute appropriate programmes that will be undertaken by youths resulted in most youths being idle after school hours. Thus, they loiter

about and become preoccupied with violent conflicts as a way of life to keep themselves busy. One community member compared Khayelitsha with other residential areas in the Western Cape, e.g., the former White-only suburbs of Wynberg, Claremont, and Constantia, based on the setup of the location. He argued that the government, in some cases, does not respond equally to the well-resourced and marginalised communities. Thus, there are major differences in the social setup of these communities, e.g., the differences between the Model C schools and township schools. He explained that educators in townships are always worried about their safety, whereas the situation is different in Model C schools. The participants further expressed that there are limited resources accessible to youths, and there are not enough people who guide youths in utilising those facilities and resources that are available. In some cases, there are not enough extramural activities to keep the children and youths busy when they return from school, during their spare time, or during weekends. Ignorance or denial of the need to provide these services to youths might drive them to offensive behaviour, as they start to stand in street corners with other youths in the community with nothing to do.

Triegaardt (2009) states that the inadequacy of resources in marginalised communities prevents the residents from the right to access social assistance, and the state should demonstrate that it is taking reasonable steps to realise this right progressively. Dreams are only realised when citizens have access to opportunities and resources. Recent work in the field of youth identity and belonging has shown that the youths of today (the so-called 'born frees') "carry the burden of an identity forged in the wake of apartheid and live their lives in a country whose geography is a persistent reminder of apartheid's continuing legacy" (Norgaard, 2015:2). The setup of townships in South Africa is a physical representation of inherited woundedness and a legacy of inequality. Some of the questions that should be asked is "how youth retain their humanity in the midst of filthy environments, struggle for survival, the physiological effects of poverty, the absence of recreation and widespread availability of alcohol and drugs" (Swartz and Scott, 2014: 30). Addressing this question, could limit early crime initiators (Souverein et al., 2016) and help in addressing the issues that were raised by the community members of Khayelitsha in this study.

## 5.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed how Gurans violence has affected the educational institutions and community members in Khayelitsha. The manner which Gurans violence has permeated almost every sphere of life in Khayelitsha was explained by individuals ranging from professionals such as educators to community members who all testified to different ways in which they have experienced Gurans violence. In terms of understanding the various dimensions of Gurans violence in Khayelitsha, the narratives used in this chapter clearly explained the depth of the problem in Khayelitsha. As victims of the Gurans scourge, community members rounded up the discussions by raising concerns of factors that might contribute to the continued perpetuation of the problem in their communities. Although township educators are determined to stop youth violence in the townships so that youths there can have a healthy transition to adulthood, what is needed first is to reverse the malignancy status of the community, first to turbulency levels and ultimately to a status of civility. This can be achieved first by mitigating against the very factors that contributes to the violentization of the youth, coupled with provision of resources that will support the well-being of the youth. It was also found out that the endeavour to attain a status of civility in Khayelitsha can also be aided by addressing the shortage of critical professionals, such as social workers and psychologists in the community. As discussed in the chapter, these critical professionals also contribute by providing therapeutic measures to the youth to choose to be less violent as well as to desist from violent activities. For the educators, the broad problems the Khayelitsha community is facing can be solved if the government can treat this as a matter of urgency and address the problems that have been raised above. According to them, their efforts in trying to ensure peaceful school environments can also be aided by the parents and guardians of the youth. The collective efforts of the parents will also, in a way, assure the youth that they are part of the community.

# Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings

## 6.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters discussed the problem of the Gurans violence from the perspective of both its perpetrators and victims. Central to the discussions in those chapters was the question of what was causing the youth of Khayelitsha to become violent. The same chapters also interrogated the broad meanings of the youths' violent behaviour toward the community of Khayelitsha. Using both Lonnie Athens' theory of violentization as well as Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory, a set of reasons were identified that were driving the youth's decisions to become violent and how the resultant violence had changed the socio complexion of the whole community. Against this background, the main purpose of this chapter is to consider succinctly the findings of this study in relationship to the main frameworks underpinning it. By critically analysing the findings, the aim is to fully interrogate the problem of youth violence in Khayelitsha with a view to finding the best way the problem can be weeded out of the Khayelitsha community.

In examining the findings in relationship to the theoretical framing of the study, the approach here slightly differs from other works that have also studied the problem of youth violence in Khayelitsha. This is because the majority of the studies on youth violence in Khayelitsha tend to view violent youth just as violent criminals presenting a societal problem. This study, which is underpinned by both violentization and social identity theories, advocates for an examination of these youth according to the different stages of the violentization process they are in when they commit violent offences, as well as what informs their behaviour when they associate with violent groups. As the chapter will demonstrate, through applying this approach, what emerges is the understanding that violence cannot be viewed as a 'one size fits' all problem. By applying the violentization theory to the problem makes it possible to formulate mitigatory measures that will be applicable to their specific circumstances. The same will also be done with those who would have reached the higher levels of the violentization process. More so, as the chapter will further demonstrate, the use of violentization theory also allows an examination of the community in which these cases of youth violence are being committed. Thus, rather than just considering other community members as passive victims of youth violence, the approach also calls for an

examination of that community's role in the violent behaviour of these youths. To discuss the findings, the chapter continues to use the themes, categories and subcategories that emerged from the discussions of the two previous chapters

## **6.2 Youths' participation in Gurans**

This section discusses the individual decisions of the youth to participate in violent activities. As hinted in the introductory remarks of this section, there are different reasons that force the youth to decide to associate with violent elements. These reasons vary from one individual to another. As such, we can only be able to deduce these reasons through discussing and interacting with the youth who participate in such activities and those who are affected by the ensuing violence of fellow youths. Against this background, the dominant reasons that came out from a data triangulation of both CMs and AYs narratives were 1) the need to negotiate safety, and 2) vengeance.

### **6.2.1 Negotiating safety**

As the narratives of some of the CMs and AYs living in Khayelitsha indicated, one of the key reasons why the youth ended up joining Gurans violence was the need to guarantee their safety in the community. Indeed, a desire for protection and survival in the hostile township environment emerged as a dominant rationale behind the conversion of a good number of them into violent Gurans behaviour. As this study found out, resorting to use of violence as a strategy for navigating and surviving the rough terrains of Khayelitsha township is consistent with what happens when individuals progress in the violentization process. The behaviour of youth who resolve to be violent would have entered the stage of defiance, as identified by Lonnie Athens. For such youth, as the study found out, there was no better alternative than to be violent and violence was the only means to guarantee their survival in the hostile environment.

As the finer details of the CMs' narratives indicated, being part of a crew assured them of safety from other violent youths from different parts of Khayelitsha township. As such, crew membership here is seen as an insurance cover for CMs in the event of any violent attacks. These perspectives

from these groups of respondents suggest that it is important to think of the Gurans culture, not just as a delinquent culture, but also to consider the socioeconomic and cultural conditions that gave rise to it. Hence, instead of regarding those who practice the culture as outcasts, emphasis must be on the conditions that are involved in shaping and giving meaning to the violent culture. In terms of framing this kind of thinking, the submissions of Jupp et al. (2011) is important. They purport that young people have been mostly misunderstood by society, especially those who belong to violent groups. These authors aver that there is a need to think about the socioeconomic conditions that force young people to associate with violent groupings before they can be blamed. Accordingly, it is also important to clearly delineate the rationale behind the conflicts and the violent disposition of CMs, based on the findings of this study and information from existing literature. It is after society properly understand this that appropriate measures, evolving from such an understanding, will be taken to help these seemingly delinquent youths channel their emotional energies toward nobler activities.

The information submitted during the course of this study indicate that some of the CMs were not fundamentally violent criminals to start with. Instead, they progressed further in the violentization process due to the circumstances they continued to face in an environment such as the Khayelitsha township. This particular finding, on the role of environment in creating violent youths, is also in tandem with the findings of Mguzulwa and Gxubane (2019), who found that an environment such as Khayelitsha plays a significant role in creating violent criminals. Since the environment they were residing in was by nature violent, a preparedness or resoluteness to also use violence or to harm perceived violent opponents was in this case inevitable. From a much broader analyses, what this finding means is that, if youths or children are exposed to high levels of violence in their communities, they will be impacted negatively (Osofsky, 1995) and are also likely to use violence to fight violence (Edelstein, 2016). As observed by Ngqela and Lewis (2012:87) “it is important for policy makers and educators to understand what these victims of violence actually experience to understand this specific phenomenon better”. Hypothetically, the researcher can add that young people growing up in such violent communities require protection and guidance from adults, as they are exposed to many negative social behaviours. The researcher and other scholars have observed that the major challenge about the youths, specifically in Black disadvantaged

communities, is violent youth, crime, and substance abuse (Mguzulwa and Gxubane, 2019; Ward et al., 2012; Swartz et al., 2012; Pinnock, 2016).

The current trends in Khayelitsha have comparisons elsewhere. According to Cooley et al. (2001), 80% of children living in the urban areas of the United States have witnessed community violence, with 70% of them having been victims. The only difference between the results of Cooley et al.'s study and the present one on Khayelitsha, judging by the narratives, is that the whole community has witnessed, and is living with a fear of violence.

Also, according to De Wet, Somefun and Rambau (2018:2) "youth, who are exposed to crime and violence in their families and communities, become victims and instigators". These youth negotiate safety and security, because they are in fear of what might happen to them.

This is supported by Leeper, Lahri, Patel, Reddy, Martin and van Hoving (2019), who state that 80% of assault-injured patients in Khayelitsha hospitals were identified as males between the ages of 14 and 24 years old, Black and isiXhosa speaking. Also, Khayelitsha has one of the world's highest mortality rates in young men because of violence (Groenewald et al., 2008). South African police reports also indicate that, in 2018, murder cases in Khayelitsha were high compared to other areas (Institute for Security Studies Crime, 2018). Acknowledging youth agency in South Africa, it is nonetheless important that society needs to understand the socialisation, culture and practices within that community. What could be the driving forces that lead young people to intentionally harm their peers is the fact that they have been poorly socialized. (Honwana, 2005).

## **6.2.2 Cycle of Vengeance**

Another key finding of this study was how the issue of vengeance shapes the youths' resoluteness to associate with violent groups, such as Gurans, or to engage in violent behaviour. As this study found out, deployment of vengeance always came as a result of the affected youth having suffered defeat in previous violent encounters with adversaries. Indeed, most of the youth who went on to become members of the Gurans had either participated in violent encounters or had experiences of friends or family members who had suffered defeat in violent engagement which they had wanted

to avenge. However, when this happens, this behaviour is consistent with a progression to the third stage of the violentization process. More so, the same behaviour is also consistent with Tajfel and Turner's analysis of what it means for individuals to belong to certain groups. For Tajfel and Turner, individuals who belong to the same groups always form close emotional ties with each other or fight in each other's corner whenever the need to do so arises.

Analytically, although township forms of justice that materialise in the form vengeance might atone for inflicted wrongs on loved ones, there is a possibility of the resultant engagements resulting in grave harm, or in extreme cases, death. In Khayelitsha, as some of the narratives testified, some of the violent skirmishes that arose through the need to exact vengeance resulted in loss of life. In cases where feuding members of opposing violent groups survived, what materialised again was a cycle of violence because defeated groups continued to seek revenge for their defeats. However, broadly, a worrying trend about the cycles of violent skirmishes was the complete disregard for the country's laws. This is further exacerbated by the fact that an analysis of the narratives of both CMs and AYs used in this study shows that all the youth who had contemplated revenge for previous defeats never thought of any other way to get over such a defeat except to use extreme violence.

As all the narratives of the AYs and CMs confirm, a Gurans violence is a never a one-off battle. A group that is defeated in one battle will undoubtedly return to account for the loss through a revenge. Oliver (1994) suggests that Black males between the ages of 15 and 34 are affected by homicide, which often leads to death. According to the SAPS' records, between 2016/2017, there were 19 016 murders in South Africa (SAPS, 2017). The Western Cape province accounts for a greater number of these violent crimes, with the townships being the epicenters of such violent crimes (SAPS, 2017). Young men in these townships have been at the receiving end of such mortality rates due to the social problems that have been mentioned above (Groenewald et al., 2008). This assertion is supported by Leeper et al. (2019) who mentioned that the greater numbers of youths found in Khayelitsha 24-hour emergency centers are due to assault injuries caused by substance abuse, and criminality. More so, several studies have reported that crime and the cycle of violence is visible mostly in underdeveloped segregated urban areas (Hinsberger et al., 2016). Further, Hipp and Wickes (2017:784) argue that "the spatial concentration of crime is strongly

associated with disadvantage and the ecological structure of urban neighbourhoods”. This explains the experience of violence as a part of the lives of young people growing up in disadvantaged communities (Kaminer et al., 2013; Swartz et al.2012; Ward et al., 2012).

A former City Press editor, Percy Qoboza (1986) cited in (Pelser, 2007:2) reflecting on the courage of young township fighters, described “the dark terrible beauty”. He acknowledged that it was “a great shame ... that this is our heritage to our children: the knowledge of how to die, and how to kill”. In this era of democracy in South Africa, young people in Black marginalised communities still live under the shadow of the old regime, learning to fight for themselves even if they die in the process. Pelser (2008:1) opines that, “the children of yesterday’s ‘lost generation’ have not yet been found and given relief, rather they are now learning to be lost”.

## **6.3 Practices behind Gurans Violence**

### **6.3.1 Territoriality**

From an analysis of the narratives of both CMs and AYs the issue territoriality was found to be one of the major reasons why CMs were violent. As shown in this study, youths in Khayelitsha have a strong sense of entitlement over the specific areas or locations where they reside. For instance, and as revealed in the narratives, trespassing in a territory deemed as belonging to an adversary violent group is regarded as an offence that is more likely to trigger a violent engagement, which might result in the harm of the trespassing youth. As revealed, the violent youth in Gurans will even kill to protect a territory that they regard as rightfully theirs. As the narratives further revealed, the struggle over territories in Khayelitsha has resulted in the naming of certain areas as either *Vuras* or *Vatos* territory. While there was no mention of the possible meanings of these names, there is no doubt in their use as territorial markers. As the participants further clarified, the names were identity markers, which violent Gurans groups use to differentiate themselves from each other. Some studies have shown that some young men become attached to a certain lifestyle, a practice that involves some rituals (Swartz et al., 2012). The rituals include name brands, alcohol drinking, art, music, and dance, and in some cases, having multiple partners (Swartz et al., 2012; Mathebula 2012). Participation in these rituals could become competitive,

creating some hatred or animosity amongst the different groups, especially if the pressure is too much. It is then important to understand how these young people grow up within their community. The majority of these young men are exposed to violent lifestyles and enmity at a very young age. After adaptation to a violent lifestyle, the concerned youths will then join hands with similarly violent youth and start dispensing violence as unitary groups either against other violent groups or community members.

However, while it can be argued that crew rivalries and violence are irrational, this study found out that they may be significantly driven by historical influences, which caused strong notions of territoriality. In South Africa, the former apartheid state made people to believe that they were different (Dissel, 1997; Steinberg, 2004; Stevens, & Lockhat, 1997). Such beliefs were further affirmed by that the manner in which apartheid influenced how Black townships were designed and operated (Albeker, 2007; Kynoch, 1999; Pinnock, 2016).

During the apartheid era, as the famed anti-apartheid activist Robert Sobukwe remembered, people were settled in townships according to their ethnic or tribal groupings to affirm such differences (Pogrund, 1990). Consequently, inimical behaviours were bred, and their effects have morphed into the violentization of the youth in the respective communities and creation of social identities amongst different groups of people within the same communities. Panday et al. (2012) further aver that South Africa's history still affects the country, and it is a major influencer of youth violence in South Africa.

As such, Ward et al. (2012) recommend that it is imperative to understand the roots of the problem of youth violence so as to find a long-term solution to the problem. To adopt Gevers and Flisher's (2012) view, it is also important to understand that for derived solutions or interventions against youth-related violence to be effective, they must emanate from an understanding of the root of the problem.

### **6.3.2 Possessions of dangerous weapons**

The possession and use of weapons in the fights of CMs was another dominant feature of people who participated in violent groups such as Gurans. The prevalence of this behaviour was confirmed in the narratives of the CMs, AYs, and the educators. According to the testimonies, the violent CMs used harmful objects, including knives, golf sticks, axes, and pangas during their violent engagements. These weapons do not only injure but might result in homicide. As this study found out, this behaviour of carrying or possessing dangerous weapons has one major implication on the community. First, carrying weapons usually act as a coaching platform for violence, especially other youth not engaged in violence at that particular time. This because if such youth are threatened by those possessing weapons, the former are most likely to seek their own weapons to protect themselves in the event of future violent engagements. In fact, what is more troubling is that the crew fights with dangerous weapons are evidently very horrific with severe casualties. In these fights, the youths, who would have attained the virulency stage of the violentization process, usually get some satisfaction by violently hurting others and watching the blood of their victim flow.

However, although carrying weapons is a problem that is prevalent in Cape Town schools, as observed by Flisher and his colleagues long back in the 1990s, Bell and Jenkins (1993) have noticed, however, that the problem is more common in low-income communities. Bell and Jenkins' assertion is supported by a few scholars who also observed that youths make use of dangerous weapons when they are in conflict with others (Pinnock, 2016; Mguzulwa, 2014, Sefali, 2014; Ward et al. 2012; Canada, 1995; DuRant et al. 1995; Webster et al., 1993). However, while the carrying of dangerous weapons is common, this study found that there are two categories of youths who indulge in such behaviour. The first group identified are those individuals who are so obsessed with violence that for them, gaining satisfaction from hurting others violently is something that they want to experience frequently. On the other hand, the second group pertains to the youth who just carry weapons for the sake of protecting themselves against violent opponents. This category is reminiscent of people who are in the third stage of the violentization process, meaning individuals who are ready to engage in skirmishes using dangerous weapons. Of these two groups, the most dangerous one, as Thaler (2011) also found, is the former group since

their behaviour can influence youngsters who still do not associate with violent groups. Therefore, what this means is that carrying weapons is dangerous behaviour that should be weeded out of Khayelitsha.

## **6.4 Factors contributing to Gurans violence**

The findings from this study indicate that Gurans, for several reasons stated by all the groups of participants, might be difficult to mitigate, as there are some contributing factors to its perpetuation. These reasons all emanated from the malignant status that Khayelitsha community had now attained due to the problem of Gurans violence. A malignant status, as Athens (2017) found, is a status that communities attain when there is a complete breakdown of all civil manners in a society. In malignant communities, violence is normally used to fight violence, instead of civil ways (Athens, 2017). Thus, by identifying Khayelitsha as a malignant community, the current study goes beyond other works that have examined the problem of youth violence in that community. Whereas authors such as Gillespie (2014), Maringira and Gibson (2019), Super (2015) saw community interventions that used violence, in attempts to weed out violence in Khayelitsha, as just poor and problematic approaches in the quest to fight violence, this study sees such actions as a reflection of a broken society. In this case, the advantage of identifying communities as broken down is that the focus is not only limited to issues of suitability of approaches. Rather, it asks what meanings we can derive from the communities' adoption of such approaches in their attempts to fight violence. Furthermore, another positive also derived from the use of an approach that examines a community's adherence to civil norms is that it does not place emphasis on underdevelopment as the main reason for youth violence in the community. Rather, the approach places its emphasis on what is it that is being done by community members, including the state apparatus, to create a non-violent and civil environment around them. However, to discuss why Gurans violence might not end, individual influences, familial influences, community influences, and state influences were identified as the key reasons why such a situation was inevitable.

### **6.4.1 Family influence**

An analysis of CMs' profiles revealed that a majority of them lived non-traditional families. Burton et al. (2009) corroborates this by indicating that, in South Africa, youths are mostly likely to live in households that do not have both parents. Such dysfunctionality of families in Black townships such as Khayelitsha was mentioned as a major contributor to youth delinquency and violence. The reason for this is that a child who grows up in a non-traditional family will lack the necessary mentorship, care, and upbringing that will make them desist from delinquent behaviour.

In single parent-headed homes, it can be difficult, sometimes, for mothers to discipline their children. It was found that in most single parent-headed households, the concerned parent is most likely to spend most of their time devising creative ways on how to fend for their families and in the process sparing very little time on matters of children's discipline. As such, the children will spend most of their time alone and might be tempted to indulge in unruly behaviour during the time when the single parent is away. In some of the cases, the concerned single parent might fail to provide adequately for the family, thereby prompting the children to devise their own ways of survival. Some of their survival strategies might include associating with unruly elements in the society and resorting to crime (Mguzulwa, 2014).

The same problem of youths living with single parent-headed families also applies to those living with extended family or just with siblings. In extended families, children belonging to absent parents are often neglected and are not given proper care and mentoring. In such families, the father or mother figure will most likely focus most of their attention on their own children and not the foster ones. In families of only siblings, the older siblings sometimes rarely pay attention to what the younger ones do, and who they associate with.

Even families composed of both parents are not spared from problems associated with parenting. There are records of children coming from such families indulging in delinquent behaviour. This could be attributed to two things that were found from this study. Firstly, this can be due to the fact that the concerned parents have ignored their children's daily activities or have failed to pay attention to their children's associates. As a result, such children will associate with people like

CMs without their parents noticing. Secondly, and as indicated in some of the narratives used in this study, some of the disciplinary measures that can be taken by parents or guardians on children also plays a significant role in making young children violent. This is because when violent disciplinary measures are used, the chances are high that the affected children will also become violent.

Single-headed families, unstable marriages, lack of parental control or oversight, ineffectual parental behaviour, very poor parent-child relationships contribute to youth delinquency (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, Smith and Tobin, 2003; Gove and Crutchfield, 1982 cited in Cernkovich and Giordano, 1987: 296). Thus, it is important to pay attention to the role played by the family in preventing or discouraging youth's participation in violence. Mathibela and Skhosana (2021:92) further state that we should also take into consideration that "adolescence is a period of mostly biological and psychosocial changes which might have a significant impact on the parent-adolescent relationship." It can be suggested that in order for the parents to be involved in their children's development stages, it is important that they adapt the authoritative parenting style (Srivastav and Mathur, 2020). This parenting style, while allowing children to be independent and have a sense of freedom, allows parents to exercise control, warmth and autonomy, and to monitor their children's behaviour (Srivastav and Mathur, 2020). In the case of CMs, families might not have encouraged them positively, but their response to their participation in Gurans will be very important in the quest to manage the problem of youth delinquency.

As the narratives of both CMs and AYs further showed, becoming violent does not happen abruptly. Rather, this is a problem that starts at the family level and during the upbringing of the youth. It is at that level that youth will start to experience or witness behaviour that will later on contribute to their choice to become violent. Indeed, while growing up, most youth in Khayelitsha who participated in this study reported experiencing hardships and behaviour that somehow went on to shape their later day lifestyles. The hardships include experiencing violence at the family level or even witnessing close family members being subjected to violence. On the other hand, these youth also had to contend with wayward behaviours of family members who were already violent offenders. As such, according to scholars of youth violent behaviour, such as Athens (2017) and Holtzhausen (2016), when the youth encounter such behaviour or experience such

hardships, they would have already entered a process known as violentization. As such, the findings of this study show that instead of considering the youth participating in violent activities as just a violent individual, there is also a need to consider that individual's personal upbringing and the people with whom they grew up.

Consequently, it can be summarised that the social problems experienced by youths in marginalised communities are interlinked with the issue of family absence and relationships to provide the concerned youths with the proper and necessary guidance. However, troublingly, these issues have never been given adequate consideration as important factors in monitoring and understanding youths' delinquent behaviours (Cernkovich and Giordano, 1987). Cernkovich and Giordano's views are also supported by Glaster and Santiago (2006) and Burton and Jarrett, (2000), who suggest that there is not much that has been done regarding the complexities of parent and child relationship in terms of what the concerned child will become in his youth.

#### **6.4.2 Community influence**

In the previous section it was mentioned that parents and guardians are very ignorant of their children's activities, and this practice results in the concerned children adopting wayward behaviours. This study found that parents who attempt to discourage their children from participating in Gurans but fail, end up resorting to traditional healers. They do this to either seek occultic powers that will make their children stop participating in Gurans or to make sure that the concerned child is protected whilst participating in Gurans. However, the research participants across all samples unanimously agreed that such consultation of traditional healers only exacerbated Gurans-related violence in the community. Nonetheless, despite the unanimous agreement that traditional healers are now a factor as far as the evolution of Gurans in Black townships is concerned, the overall meaning is that this is further confirmation of how broken down the Khayelitsha community has become due to violence.

Indeed, as this study found, despite some of the youth consulting traditional healers on their own and without their parents knowing, there are some parents who actually aid their children to seek occultic powers from traditional healers. This is ample evidence that in this community the use of violence to fight violence is now the accepted norm. The same also applies to the traditional healers

whose main task, as suggested by the title of their trade, is to heal society, but because of the violent environment around them are also forced to aid the same violence. They do so in the sense that the purpose of the occultic artefacts like *umuthi* (traditional medicine/herbs), which they administer to the violent youth, is not given with the intention to stop violence in the community. Rather, such *umuthi* is meant to give the concerned youth an aura of invincibility, meaning that it actually aids them to become more violent. In making this finding, this current study answers, in a way, Hartnack's (2014:6) query as to why violence had persisted elsewhere in Khayelitsha after ceasing at Manyano School where similar occultic charms had been used by the students to foment violence. This is because the problem was not a site-based problem, but a whole community problem.

However, in relationship to the above, the use of *umuthi* and occultic powers in aiding violence is not something new in Black communities. In fact, in South African history, dabbling in occultic powers has been a longstanding tradition (Leistner, 2014; Vincent, 2008; Ashforth, 2005; Kohnert, 2003). The case of the Marikana incident that took place on the 16th of August 2012 is another incident where allegations of the use of occultic powers and traditional medicine is said to have taken place, albeit in a dismal way. According to available newspaper and social media reports, a *Sangoma* (traditional healer) allegedly supplied *umuthi* to the striking mine workers, which was meant to protect them from physical harm in the event of violent confrontations with law enforcement agents. However, the Marikana strike got out of hand because the workers thought they could not be harmed by the bullets, as advised by the *Sangoma* (Gumede, 2015). This view was also supported by Pillay (2013), who commented that if a spiritual agent had not encouraged the mine workers, the resultant deaths would have been avoided. Thus, the *Sangoma's* assurance of invincibility (escaping the bullets) while at war (du Preez, 2015) turned out to be invalid, and caused many deaths.

The reason for invoking the Marikana incident in this study is that there is need to understand how traditionalists have sometimes contributed to violence in their respective communities. What happened in the Marikana case has been similar to the findings of this study regarding the youths in Gurans. Traditionalists advise these youths that they will be protected, and that the *umuthi* will make them untouchable. However, many youths in Gurans have been grossly injured and died

while using *muthi* after consulting traditional healers. Thus, it is apt to question the benefits of this culture, which is proving difficult to part with on the African continent.

The overwhelming confessions and testimonies by both CMs, AYs and educators of many deaths and injuries that the participants of Gurans suffer after consulting the services of traditional healers is something that does not necessarily call for an investigation on the efficacy of the ‘protection services’ offered by the traditional charms. Rather, and as already been stated, this reveals the central role traditional healers play in indirectly influencing fatal violence. In this study, only a school principal and one AY were not convinced that traditional healers played a role in indirectly promoting violence in Khayelitsha. Evidently, there is a spiritual dimension to the problem of violence in Khayelitsha that needs to be carefully studied in order to find solutions that delineate how traditional healers can contribute positively to the community instead of being associated with negativity. If this is not done, witchcraft and occultic beliefs will continue to contribute to the sociocultural standing of the Khayelitsha community in manners that will result in continued loss of lives. As Moore and Sanders (2001:11) argue, “witchcraft and occult beliefs and practices are often mustered to resist changes and are creatively refashioned to suit new situations”. The new situations could be Black youth actively engaging in violent crimes (such as Gurans) in expectation of being protected by their occult beliefs.

Although it is argued that youths should take full responsibility for their lives, doing so could be difficult, especially when the environment that is supposed to shape these youths into respected human beings is not conducive. In the malignant communities where these youths live, the predominant models and way of life that are visible are delinquent behaviours — even among the elderly — and violence. As such, it is easier for these youths to associate with the models they see most of the time and emulate such ways of life. The end result is that the number of youths with delinquent behaviours will increase significantly. As SAPS (2017) records confirm, there is quite a number of young people in South Africa who are involved in deviant crime activities. Frank (2006) also substantiated these findings after observing that most youths living in townships such as Khayelitsha have been taught how to commit crime. Indeed, to some of the CMs, committing a crime is not something alarming; it becomes easier as they get used to it. Some of them have been arrested several times and their cases are still pending.

Strategic interventions aimed at dealing with youth violence in Khayelitsha and South Africa at large are needed to address the vulnerability and development of young people. The inclination of young people to participate in violence needs to be addressed through the spectacles of community development. Although South Africa has developed legislation, policies and programmes that promise to support young people, protect their rights and deal with those in conflict with the law, there is still a huge gap that needs to be closed (Social Development Department and World Bank, 2012). Robeyns (2005:94) asserts that, “policies should focus on what people are able to do and be, on the quality of their lives, and on removing obstacles in their lives so that they have more reason to live the kind of life that, on reflection, they have reason to value.” Policies aimed at young people should consistently arrange programmes that focus on education, skills training, livelihood, and civic engagement (NYP, 2009-2014). These should improve young people’s appreciation of their existence and address the current situation of youth violence in South Africa.

### **6.4.3 State influence**

An issue that also featured dominantly in the narratives of AYs and CMKs was the influence of the state on youth violence in Khayelitsha. Poor socioeconomic conditions and insufficient law enforcement were emphasised as prevalent in Khayelitsha. Coupled with failures to address the legacies of inequality from the era of apartheid, all of these point to a lack of government intervention, thus to its complicity in the unfolding violence in black townships. Such trends contradict the importance accorded to youths by the country’s leadership. For instance, the late former president, Nelson Mandela, at one point, emphatically declared that, youths are valued possession of the Nation, their needs are great and require an urgent attention. These contradictions between rhetoric and what happens on the ground raises questions as to whether the youths, who seemingly are regarded as important, are really being valued, when they are left to grow up in hostile environments that are rarely monitored by the same government.

AYs and CMKs also strongly agree on the contribution of the lack of recreational facilities to the development of wayward behaviours in youths. They indicated that recreational and sport resources are insufficient in Khayelitsha, especially when compared to other places, such as the former White-only residential areas. This deprives the youths of meaningful refreshing activities

after their school lessons. Thus, they end up participating in Gurans activities, the prevalence for which make these the primary activity to look forward to.

The residents of Khayelitsha are neither pleased with this situation nor how things are progressing in the township. What is prevailing on the ground contradicts plans that have been made for the youth. Also, resources and opportunities are not being channelled towards youth programmes in Black townships and there is a dearth of information pertaining to what type of programmes are available for the youths. According to the National Youth Policy (2009-2014), young people should be included in programmes that are focused on education, skills training, and civic engagement. However, in Khayelitsha such plans have not been implemented to adequate levels that will eradicate the bigger socioeconomic problems affecting the community.

Furthermore, CMKs, AYs, CMs and Educators complained of not having enough law enforcement and security, and this has contributed to the perpetuation of Gurans. Police services in Khayelitsha have been perceived as ineffective and unreliable. The police in this community do not attend to the needs of the community effectively, and there is no continuous surveillance to make sure that the residents are safe and protected in incidents such as crew fights. According to the narratives in the study, police exhibit bias in their arrests and their response to the cases which they deem to be urgent and important. Sometimes, cases/reports are not even attended to, resulting in the withdrawal of charges.

Overall, the findings of this study show that the South African Police Service has been regarded as ineffective in Black communities. The apartheid government discrimination policies could have influenced this. During the time of apartheid, deploying police in Black communities was not considered important for maintaining societal order and peace developments in these communities, rather the members of the community were victims of arrest. The poor services and incompetence of the police officers in these communities explain why the residents have lost confidence in police services (Lamb, 2021; Goldsmith, 2005; Sharp and Atherton, 2007; Bruce, 2007). According to Bruce (2007: 17) “rather than service delivery being primarily good or bad, the principal problem appears to be one of unevenness”. This is supported by Mtantato (2013) who alludes that White-dominated areas have sufficient policing compared to other areas lacking such services.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

In line with the central question of this study, being what the main influencers of the rise of the Gurans culture in Khayelitsha are, this chapter discussed the key findings of this study. The chapter found that issues, such as vengeance, possession of dangerous weapons, territoriality, single-headed families, traditional healing practices, negative role modelling, deteriorating socioeconomic conditions, the absence of the state in township affairs as well as its reluctance to address apartheid era legacies of underdevelopment all contributed to the rise of the Gurans violent youth. Consistent with most broken-down communities, it was also found that there were many different players who were aiding the violence now prevalent in Khayelitsha. Traditional healers were also identified as some of the key players that have resorted to aiding violence in Khayelitsha instead of employing civil ways to eradicate the violence. The same also applies to key government departments that have also been conspicuous by their reluctance or lack of will to stop the prevalence of the violence.

# **Chapter 7: Conclusion, Implications and Future research**

## **7.1 Conclusion**

This study investigated the issue of young males who are engaging in activities of violence through their membership of a violent youth grouping known as Gurans, in the black township of Khayelitsha. The Gurans violent youth are a post-apartheid social problem that started affecting South African townships after the year 2000. Ever since inception, Gurans has been like a hereditary problem as most of the contemporary practicing Gurans who are still youths seems to be following in their brothers' footsteps. This confirms the regeneration trend that the problem has taken since its emergence. Additionally, the study found that some of the youths were being converted to the behaviour because of the environment surrounding them. Therefore, establishing that the Gurans problem is connected to issues of the post-apartheid underdevelopment is one area where this research succeeds in transcending previous studies on the phenomenon. While most studies saw the problem as a general youth problem, this investigation showed that the problem goes beyond mere problems of underdevelopment, most cited by different scholars as the biggest challenge faced by previously marginalised communities. Instead, the study found that what was exacerbating the problem was the malignancy status that the Khayelitsha community has attained subsequent to the emergence of Gurans violence. Indeed, when Gurans appeared in Khayelitsha, the community lost its moral compass and the forms of civility that should characterise normal communities. Thus, when the community attained such a status, the youth began to associate more frequently with violent groups, with community members also deploying violent methods in attempting to control the problem, while other members of society began to engage in behaviour that helped to perpetuate the problem.

Consequently, several narratives from the participants in this study clearly showed that the current problem of youth violence in South Africa's townships has its roots in youths' attempts to survive the hostile and harsh environment such as that of Khayelitsha. Indeed, this is akin to the people who were first marginalised by the apartheid-era policies and had to resort to violence as a way of responding to government reluctances, as well as to negotiate their own survival in an environment

that was becoming more violent and hostile. Undeniably, when apartheid ended in 1994, the new democratic government did not fully address key apartheid-era legacies that contributed to the impoverishment and hostility in communities such Khayelitsha and many others. There were also no formulations of clear policies to adequately deal with the problem of the township youth. This failure to formulate pro-youth policies resulted in the youths resorting to the violence observed in the apartheid era. However, the only difference, as explained in this thesis, is that while the youths in the apartheid era used violence to make a point about their liberation, the contemporary ones deploy the same violent methods against their friends and relatives, and also seek to achieve criminal gains. As the study of Ward et al. (2012) demonstrates, youths have a strong tendency to resort to violence if they do not have access to opportunities and national resources.

Furthermore, the study found that the continued marginalisation of black people and black townships under the post-independence government has contributed to the rise and sustenance of the Gurans culture. Due to such marginalisation, youths have been predisposed to fight each other based on their common links of poverty and deprivation. Youths in Khayelitsha and other marginalised black townships have therefore been identifying with Gurans. In addition to the marginalisation, also noted is the state's failure to provide security and protection for its people in Khayelitsha. This has legitimised Gurans in the community, as the culture is seen as providing some form of security for youth. This is further exacerbated by the community's loss of confidence in the security services protecting them. As such, they are left with no other option except to regard CMs as saviours as opposed to societal plagues.

As the thesis highlighted, the state is not alone in facilitating the continuation of the Gurans violence. In fact, families themselves, which are at the receiving end of the violence by CMs, also contribute to its sustenance. Dysfunctionality of families provide ample ground for the violence to continue unabated, since the absence of a parental figure implies that there is no one at the family level to advise and guide the youth against delinquent groups. Moreover, there is the issue of traditional healers whose rising role in facilitating Gurans is one of this thesis' major ground-breaking discoveries. Some families facilitate the consultations of traditional healers' services by youths in Gurans. The consulted traditional healers in turn provide occultic powers, which facilitate the continuation of the culture as opposed to its eradication.

By and large, it was discovered that socioeconomic problems are a major driver of all this interplay between traditional healers and the youths who consult for their services. The traditional healers in Khayelitsha provide occultic powers to the youths in exchange for monetary benefits. Thus, living in a community that is characterised by a high unemployment rate, unconducive socioeconomic factors, may lead to people resorting to unorthodox means of survival. As a result, this becomes a norm and a daily part of life, and the consequences of such behaviour on the well-being of the broader community are not duly considered.

Some community members who are unaware of their relatives' or children's membership in Gurans, sometimes try to prevent them from associating with the delinquent youths who practice Gurans. They reject and regard Gurans' members as outcasts and failures in life. However, such stigmatisation, rather than serving to destabilise and destroy Gurans, strengthens their structures. This is because the rejected youths who fail to find acceptance in the community are forced to remain in and regard their crews as their only social group of belonging.

Indeed, although Gurans seems to have supposedly catered for some of the social needs of several young males in Khayelitsha, its effects on both male and female youths are nevertheless devastating. Collectively, the physical and psychosocial trauma is enormous. Many male youths have suffered major injuries, fatalities, mental disturbances, and have criminal records, as emphasised in the preceding chapters. On the other hand, their female counterparts have been subjected to rape and physical assault, as well as restrictions on their choices of dating partners. Young women are prohibited from dating preferred suitors simply because they are from another territory under the control of a rival crew. Such phenomena limit women's choices, making them live in fear, and forcing them to fight the battles of their dating partners and siblings.

The study also found out that schools were the most affected places of Gurans' violence. Some learners could not attend school because they were scared that they will be attacked while commuting to and from school, and even inside school premises. Youth violence at schools is not something new in South Africa. It needs urgent attention, and the approach should not be universal but rather based on the peculiarities of individual communities. In the Western Cape, this approach requires the Western Cape Department of Education, community patrols and relevant governing

boards, as well as civil societies involved with youth projects at school, and learners, to act collectively. As stated by several respondents in this study so far, the attempts of educators and community members to reduce youth violence have been largely ineffective.

Nonetheless, the ineffectiveness of the educators' interventions did not mean that the Khayelitsha community gave up entirely on the Gurans problem. Instead, the community of Khayelitsha introduced sporting activities and youth counselling with the objective to reduce violence and dissuade young people from joining delinquent social groups. Due to these efforts, some youths who have been active members of Gurans, have since resolved to quit their groups and focus on their studies. However, youths who are not part of the rehabilitation programmes make it difficult for the repentant youths to remain neutral. These rehabilitated youths are usually targeted by the delinquent ones who assault them for merely staying in a different section of Khayelitsha. If these inimical actions of unrepentant youths are not checked, they could significantly detract from the gains obtained from rehabilitation programs.

The community efforts as illustrated above have also been aided by the coming aboard of both the police and taxi drivers in the quest to reduce youth violence in Khayelitsha. While there was consent that the taxi associations were more effective in curbing Gurans violence than the police services, reservations were however raised on their role in fighting Gurans violence and crime. This was because the taxi associations also used extreme violence in the communities. While acknowledging the efforts of the taxi associations against crime, the community members prefer the state to deploy the army or instructs the police to use excessive policing strategies, with a view to end youth and gang violence. However, it must be noted that the repressive policing strategies requested by the community are likely to be counterproductive in the long run, as repression usually forces youths to seek more dangerous weapons. It also led to fiercer battles between rival groups, which would always seek to control a larger territory.

However, as study that was premised on the need to examine the factors that are causing the youth of Khayelitsha township to become violent and also their broader effects on the community of Khayelitsha and how this can be mitigated, it can be stated that the study was overly successful. It

used insights from those youths who practice this culture. Furthermore, testimonies were collected from other youths who do not participate in the culture but are affected by the problem.

Educators whose sole responsibility is to educate the youths as well as other community members in Khayelitsha township, also provided input towards anchoring this study.

The narratives of all these groups of people were used in the writing of this thesis using Violentization and Social Identity theories as guiding frameworks to inform the study. As a result, the study succeeded in exposing the sometimes-hidden meanings and workings of youth violence in malignant communities. For instance, the connections between the youths who practice the culture and their communities of origin, were established. Moreover, it was shown that the influence of the communities on the youths, which incite them to violence, should also be considered, rather than focusing on these youths merely as perpetrators of violence. As it was further demonstrated in this thesis, an understanding of such connections can be useful in finding solutions to eradicate the recurrent societal problem of violence.

## **7.2 Implications**

The current study suggests that it is essential that policy making and initiatives to curb youth delinquency have a bottom-up approach, grounded in local meanings and understandings, rather than addressing the global situation. This will, in some way, help society to understand the complexities of youth violence. Based on the data that was gathered in the fieldwork, the study argues that:

It is imperative that society understands some of the major reasons that influence young people to join violent groups, using the lenses of geographical boundaries. Although Black youths have often been associated with violent behaviour (as perpetrators), violence manifests in different forms in their individual lives; to some, as part of a ‘survival strategy’. Since this study was premised on Violentization and Social Identity, it is significant to understand the level at which young people living in these communities find themselves. Some do not just become violent overnight, but through personal experiences (as victims) of violence, and through coaching (self-defence) from their social groups, until they become experts in the field, which is when they reach the virulence

stage, where there is no turning back. This is because, their current environment allows them to practice violence as way of protecting themselves from their rivals, and that is when violence becomes normal to the residents of those communities. To some extent, it has been debated that the danger of a ‘single story’ is that it omits certain realities of young people that are important in order to understand their engagement in violence.

Not all young men that are involved in violent activities (such as those in Gurans) should be labelled as formal gang members like those that are mostly found in Coloured townships (numbers, street and prison gangs). The activities of Gurans differ from what is commonly perceived as gangsterism in Cape Town. Young people in this study are secondary schooling boys, who do not have formal structured social groups. They become located in/or attached with these groups because of their geographical location. The individualistic nature of residents of Khayelitsha has provided an opportunity for the development of youth violence. Therefore, there is a need for mending the social fabric of the community in order to accommodate and rehabilitate vulnerable youths. Some of the youths who join Gurans lack good role models in the community. Those who climb the socioeconomic ladder either leave Khayelitsha or distance and divorce themselves from their community. The mending of the social fabric would be crucial in providing psychosocial support for young people, thereby preventing vulnerable youths from joining and participating in Gurans.

A comprehensive collective understanding of the role of key players (government institutions, community, and the youth themselves) is needed in developing better strategies and angles of unravelling the social problem of youth violence in black Townships and mitigating it.

Based on the findings of this study, the following proposals are suggested to first reduce and prevent Gurans culture and its malignant effects from escalating further in black townships, and then to build a peaceful society. Despite the fact that these proposals might require significant human and financial resources and could take time to be implemented, their application will be beneficial to the social well-being of Khayelitsha. As Burton (2007:1) noted, “the cost to government and to society of not adequately addressing youth offending is significant and, the issue should be given the requisite attention”.

## **7.2.1 Implications to the State**

### **7.2.1.1 Improvement of Security and Law Enforcement**

When considering the findings of this study as discussed in the previous chapter and also in few other reports have demonstrated that people in Khayelitsha have been worried about their safety and security. They need to cautiously determine the right time to be outside, and the places to avoid as they navigate their community. Taxi drivers have tried to control and manage the escalation of Gurans in the community. However, not all the residents are pleased with the methods used by these taxi drivers. Their use of brutal force perpetuates Gurans instead of resolving the matter. As such, behaviours like this have implications on the state. What this means is that the state must improve security and law enforcement in Khayelitsha and other townships, to ensure that people in the community are protected and feel safe, as it is within their rights to live in a healthy and safe environment. Security and safety measures should also be implemented in township schools so that they are violence-free, and rather foster teaching as well as learning.

Police services and neighbourhood watch services need to be visible and continuously active to minimise the occurrence and impacts of violence and other crimes. Also, community members could be incentivised to take responsibility for the prevention of the exacerbation of violence. The hiring of community members could be part of job creation, as unemployment is a major problem in several black townships. Basic training and workshops could be provided to employed persons, to teach them how to respond to violence without being violent.

### **7.2.1.2 Vocational Skills Training**

Empowering youths with vocational skills and funding for setting up profitable projects would go a long way in mitigating some of the implications that the problem of youth violence has on the South African society. Firstly, this will ensure that the youth are able to participate in the economy, without resorting to substance abuse and illegal activities to earn a living. The national youth policy focuses on enhancing the capacity of youths by promoting positive outcomes as well as the provision of opportunities, choices, relationships, and personal support for holistic development (National Youth Policy, 2015-2020). This policy worked towards building necessary strategies and interventions that could provide better lives for youths by improving upon the previous NYP

(2009-2014), while acknowledging that there is more to be done to address the challenges identified in the previous NYP. The NYP for 2009 - 2014 did not adequately address issues pertinent to violence. Instead, it focused on education, health and well-being, economic participation, and social cohesion. At the end of its five-year term, there were still significant gaps in addressing issues that affect youths at risk, especially those who are in conflict with the law. Even the current policy still did not address violence prevention measures that are visible and available to the youth-at-risk who reside in marginalised communities. Barolsky (2014: 11) states that, “it is important that violence prevention efforts engage with the complexity of the social environment in many areas experiencing violence.”

Young people must be provided with second-chance opportunities that appropriately support and encourage them, they could become an asset to themselves, their families and society at large. The life skills programmes should start early and should include protective factors, such as positive attitudes and behaviours. Vocational training centres should be made affordable and accessible to youths. Furthermore, an awareness of the different services offered by these centres need to reach the least of the community, since the majority of the youths in marginalised communities might not be informed of what is provided by these centres. Also, the government could provide funding for youths with entrepreneurial skills to start up and develop small businesses, instead of searching for jobs for which they might not be qualified.

### **7.2.1.3 Extra-mural Activities**

There is also a need for holistic extra-mural activities for youths living in communities like Khayelitsha. As highlighted in the study, there are football fields in most communities, but these are not accessible to some youths due to distance, or location or being in dangerous zones. While it is important to improve access to sports and facilities, it is also important to break gender stereotypes in sports’ participation. For instance, girls could also be exposed to football as players, cheerleaders or supporters for their siblings or boyfriends. Although, there has been some general progress in breaking gender stereotypes in sports participation in South Africa, there is still not much transformation in marginalised communities including Khayelitsha.

Besides sports, extra-mural activities should include other important forms of social engagement, including social debates that involve youths engaging with elders of the community without feeling judged, dismissed, or unheard. Arts and culture will also have a positive impact on some youths, as not all youths are keen on playing soccer and other sports activities. Some youths are interested in public speaking, painting, fashion designing, dancing, singing, etc. However, awareness and information on such opportunities are limited or not accessible. Youth policies should consider practical approaches for improving youth access to personnel and facilities that support development-oriented extra-mural activities and their participation therein.

## **7.2.2 Implications to the community, families and youth**

### **7.2.2.1 The individual youth**

Since youth violence starts from the perspective of the individual youth concerned, there are also implications that will arise if they don't start to take measures to help solve the problem. As such for individual youth, they must learn to refrain from associating with violent elements in society. More so, they must also abstain from engaging in behaviour that is likely to trigger violence. Such behaviour includes engaging in arguments that are likely to stoke tensions. Since it was found that intoxicating substances such as drugs and alcohol play a significant role in making youths violent, individual youth must also make efforts to avoid substances that will motivate their intentions to engage in violent behaviour. The same also applies to the issue of carrying dangerous weapons; youth must exercise restraint in moving around with dangerous weapons, as these increases the chances for them to engage in violence. However, this can only be feasible if the youth themselves create a space for conflict resolution among themselves.

### **7.2.2.2 The families**

As this study has ably demonstrated, most of the problems that have to do with youths becoming violent starts at the family level. This means that youth violence as a problem also has implications to families. In this regard, to mitigate against the implications, parents and other guardians must reserve a significant amount of time to monitor their children. They must also teach them about the dangers of associating with violent elements in society. Since a significant number of youths become violent after being coached at home, families must also desist from using violent ways of

disciplining their children. As both Athens and Holtzhausen found in their studies, using violent disciplinary ways sometimes amounts to violent coaching. As such, families can play a role in teaching their children non-violent ways of living if they desist from using such methods. Another issue that was also revealed as playing a significant role in the violentisation of the youth was that of association with violent family members such as brothers. In this case, families must try to minimise their children's association with unrehabilitated relatives. In this way, if the youths stop regarding their violent brothers or family members as role models, there will be a strong possibility that they will not follow in their siblings' violent ways. Lastly, families must check on their children's associates, whether they are indulging in drug or substance abuse and also whether they are moving around with dangerous weapons. If these things are averted at the family level, then a great stride would have been made in creating non-violent societies.

### **7.2.2.3 The Khayelitsha Community**

As a problem that is affecting Khayelitsha as a community, the perpetuation of Gurans violence also has implications on that community violence. If the community fails to play a role in the quest to resolve the problem of youth violence, what it means is that it will remain in the malignant status that it is already in. In this case, the Khayelitsha community can help avert further decency into malignancy by avoiding use of violence to help resolve the violence in their community. Instead, they must use civil ways to resolve the violence. They can also mitigate against this violence through educating community members on the dangers of violence. Community members must also resort to law enforcement agents whenever they have challenges with violence in their communities and they must also report all violent malcontents in their societies instead of protecting them.

Similarly, communities must also empower their street committees comprised of elected community members and security service agencies to deal with all security challenges in the community. These committees serve as crime detectors and provide a channel for reporting crime or suspicion thereof. Crime consultative committees ensure the restoration of social capital and trust between the community and the police.

### **7.3 Areas for further research**

This study investigated the origin and development of violent Gurans groups in the predominantly black community of Khayelitsha. It contributes to the scholarly platform through providing detailed data and discloses of what constitutes these groups and how they affect the communities where they are located. Although the study was successfully to an extent in uncovering Gurans violence and its hidden meanings, the study was nonetheless located in one township, Khayelitsha. What this means is that more studies are still required to understand both the operations and effects of similar groups in other Cape Town townships.

Further research that will be carried out in other predominantly black townships will help to unravel the extent of this problem and also help to establish whether there is a connection between poverty and the Gurans problem. Comparisons between gangs in coloured areas and the violent Gurans groups found in black communities is also another area still requiring further investigation. This is because violent youth groups in Black townships have always been referred to as gangs without carrying out comparative analysis between the different groups. Lastly, as this study revealed, there has also been an involvement of other societal social groups such as traditional healers. Although this expose of the connection between traditional healers and Gurans as revealed in this study is ground-breaking, more studies are still required to investigate the extent of the impact of their involvement in this problem. Carrying out these areas that were not covered in this study will culminate in a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the dynamics of the Gurans violence problem.

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# Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Review Form

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
Department of Social Development: ETHICS REVIEW FORM

**ETHICS REVIEW FORM: JOINT STATEMENT BY STUDENT & SUPERVISOR**  
This form is filled in jointly by the student and the supervisor

**PROCESS:**

- Student and Supervisor need to read the UCT/FACULTY ETHICS GUIDELINES on the WEBSITE.
- The ethics pertaining to the profession of Social Work also needs to be taken cognisance of in relation to social work students/candidates carrying out research with human participants.
- Once this ethics review form has been completed it is submitted to the Departments' Ethics Review Committee which according to the Guidelines laid down should consist of no less than three academics who will do the reviewing. In our instance the HOD / or designated senior academic who chairs the meeting with two other academics (who form the ethics committee) will assess the proposal/ethics.
- Once the Department approves the proposal/ethics then only is it sent through to faculty.
- **This form should be completed by the research student and then co-signed by student and supervisor: Tick the YES or NO box and write in details where appropriate. Please read the UCT Ethics Guidelines involving Human Subjects before completing the form. Ask your supervisor for clarification and help if needed.**

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**Student researcher name:**

Sisanda Mguzulwa

**Student number:**

MGZSIS001

**Title of research project:**

*An exploration of the "crew members" phenomenon: youth violence in Khayelitsha and its influence on broader community.*

**Course Code:**

**Degree:**

PhD (Social Development)

**Supervisor:** Dr. Khosi Kubeka and Leon Holtzhausen

# Appendix 2: WCED Research Approval Letter



Directorate: Research

[Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za)  
tel: +27 021 467 9272  
Fax: 0865902282  
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000  
[wced.wcape.gov.za](http://wced.wcape.gov.za)

**REFERENCE:** 20161103 –5835  
**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Ms Sisanda Mguzulwa  
L445 Site B  
Twecu Street  
Khayelitsha  
7784

Dear Ms Sisanda Mguzulwa

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: AN EXPLORATION OF THE "CREW MEMBERS" PHENOMENON: YOUTH VIOLENCE IN KHAYELITSHA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON BROADER COMMUNITY**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **23 January 2017 till 30 June 2017**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.  
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard  
**Directorate: Research**  
**DATE: 02 November 2016**

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Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001  
tel: +27 21 467 9272 fax: 0865902282  
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000  
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22  
[www.westerncape.gov.za](http://www.westerncape.gov.za)

# Appendix 3: Consent Form for Principal/Headmaster

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



## Consent Form for Principal/Headmaster

Dear Principal/Headmaster

My name is Sisanda Mguzulwa a PhD student from the University of Cape Town (UCT), Department of Social Development. We are currently conducting a study on Youth Risk & Protective Factors in schools in the Western Cape. The main objective of the study is to understand the risk and protective factors for pro/anti-social behaviours, as well as for social integration among young adults in the community. As the department of Social Development, we would like to have your consent for participation of your school in our study. It will be helpful for our study to have participation of your learners. We are writing to enquire if there is a possibility to give us permission to recruit participants from among the learners currently enrolled at your school. We would appreciate the help to identify and approach a group of learners that meet the criteria and if they are willing to take part in the study. We will distribute questionnaires to learners between the ages of 18-20 years old.

We would also need permission to complete the questionnaires during school hours/ or immediately after school hours and have access to an appropriate space in which we can use. The meetings should not take more than an hour.

It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit the school and community. This is a voluntary participation and the participants may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question that they feel uncomfortable with.

Ethical considerations that have been approved by the University of Cape Town (UCT) Ethics Committee will be applied in the study as a form of assurance to your learners. Complete confidentiality and anonymity will be upheld at all times during the meetings and afterwards.

Your signature will certify that you have been informed about the purpose of this study and given permission to do the study in your school. If you have any comments or questions about this research study, you are welcome to contact Associate Professor. Leon Holtzhausen

Phone: 021-650-3494

Email: [leon.holtzhausen@uct.ac.za](mailto:leon.holtzhausen@uct.ac.za)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the school

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Appendix 4: Consent Form for Community Members

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



## Consent Form for Participant

Dear valued participant

My name is Sisanda Mguzulwa a PhD student at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in the Department of Social Development. I'm currently doing a research study on youth violence in marginalised communities. The overall aim of the research is to explore “crew members” phenomenon: youth violence in marginalised communities and its influence on broader community. What makes young participate in youth violence and what influence does this violence has on the broader community. It is hoped that from these semi-structured interviews, that themes can be outlined that are competent in explaining why young people join and the influence of this phenomenon in the community. The findings of the study will be published in the final version of the thesis, which be available online and on hard copy.

As the department of Social Development, we would like to have your consent for participation in our study. As a parent/ or community member you are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by the Department.

Interviewing you will provide us with information that will assist this study to get a better understanding of this phenomenon in your community. This is a voluntary participation and you may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question that you feel uncomfortable with.

Ethical considerations will be applied in the study as a form of assurance to you. Complete confidentiality and anonymity will be upheld at all times during the interview and afterwards.

Your signature will certify that you have been informed about the purpose of this study and agree to voluntary participate. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate and feel free to ask questions, if there is anything that you do not understand.

---

Parent/community member Name

---

Parent/Guardian Signature

---

Date

---

Interviewer Signature

---

Date

# Appendix 5: Consent Form for Crew Members and Affected Youth



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

## CONSENT

This research has been approved by the Humanities Faculty Ethics in Research Committee. You will not be requested to supply any identifiable information, ensuring anonymity of your responses. Should you have any questions regarding the research, please contact:

Sisanda Mguzulwa  
Department of Social Development  
University of Cape Town  
mgzsis001@uct.ac.za

**Full title of Project:** An exploration of the “crew members” phenomenon: youth violence in marginalized communities and its influence on broader community.

**Purpose of the study:** The aim of the study is to explore the factors that contribute to young people’s participation in violence and the impact on the broader community.

- |  | <b>Please Tick<br/>Box</b> |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. I confirm that I have understood the purpose of the above study as explained by the researcher                                  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 2. I understand that my participation is <b>voluntary</b> and that I am free to <b>withdraw</b> at any time, without giving reason | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 3. I agree to take part in the above study   | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 4. I agree to the interview / focus group/ consultation being <b>audio</b> recorded  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 5. I agree to the interview / focus group /consultation being <b>image/video</b> recorded  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 6. I agree to the use of the anonymised quotes in publications   | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| 7. I agree to the use of my anonymised feedback as part of the results of the study  | <input type="checkbox"/>   |

---

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
---------------------	------	-----------



# **Appendix 6: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Crew Members**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**  
**Department of Social Development**

*Title: An exploration of the “Gurans” phenomenon: youth violence in Khayelitsha and its influence on broader community.*

## **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CREW MEMBERS**

Thank you for taking your valuable time to participate in the study, it is highly appreciated. The focus of the current study is youth violence. It aims to explore “Gurans” phenomenon: youth violence in Khayelitsha and its influence on broader community. Your experiences and perceptions about this phenomenon are vital for the study. This interview will be tape-recorded (this will be in discretion of both parties) and then transcribed. The findings of the study might be relevant to assist policies and interventions regarding youth violence reduction. Your name will be confidential and anonymous. The interview will last for 60 minutes.

### **Interview guidelines:**

- There are no right and wrong answers.
- Phones need to be off or silent, no recording besides the researcher.
- If you do not feel comfortable with the questions, you are not obliged to answer.
- You are free to leave at any point.

### **PERSONAL DETAILS:**

- Age

- Language
- Schooling
- Grade/grade passed
- Location

## **OBJECTIVES**

<b>YOUTH VIOLENCE/GURANS</b>
------------------------------

- a) What is youth violence/Gurans and how did it start?
- b) What are some of the main reasons that you decided to participate in Gurans?
- c) Were your parents/family aware that you were participating?
  - If yes, how did they know?
  - If no, how did you hide it?
- d) How long have you been involved?
- e) How do you feel being part of it?
- f) How do you consider your fellow crew members?
  - Were there any consequences regarding your involvement in Gurans?
  - (Probe, 'Yes/and No answers)
- g) Do you think you will ever leave Gurans?
  - (Probe, 'Yes/and No answers)

<b>YOUTH VIOLENCE/ GURANS AND SCHOOLING</b>
---

- a) What influence does youth violence/Gurans has on your schooling?

- b) Have you witnessed or been involved in youth violence inside school grounds?
- (Probe, 'Yes/and No answers)
- c) Tell me, do/did you feel safe at your school?
- (Probe, 'Yes/and No answers)
- d) What actions have the school taken to address this issue?
- e) Is there anything that you can think of that can be done to prevent youth violence in/around your school?

<b>YOUTH VIOLENCE/ GURANS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY</b>
--

- a) Do you think youth violence is a problem in your community?
- (Probe, 'Yes/and No answers)
- b) What do you think are the causes of youth violence in your community?
- c) How do you feel when you think about your participation in youth violence/Gurans?
- (Probe, 'Yes/and No answers)
- d) What do you think should be done in your community and other communities where youth violence/Gurans is rife?

Is there anything else you would think that might be helpful that I may have missed in understanding the issues of youth violence in your community? I will accurately represent your perceptions on these issues. Would it be acceptable if I contacted you again if I have any more questions? Are there any questions for me?

Thank you for your participation.  
Your opinions and contribution are appreciated.

# **Appendix 7: Semi-Structured Focus Group Interview Schedule for Affected Youth**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**  
**Department of Social Development**

*Title: An exploration of the “Gurans” phenomenon: youth violence in Khayelitsha and its influence on broader community.*

## **SEMI-STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR AFFECTED YOUTH**

Thank you for taking your valuable time to participate in the study, it is highly appreciated. The focus of the current study is youth violence. It aims to explore the “Gurans” phenomenon: youth violence in Khayelitsha and its influence on broader community. Your experiences and perceptions about this phenomenon are vital for the study. These focus groups will be tape-recorded (this will be in discretion of both parties) and then transcribed. The findings of the study might be relevant to assist policies and interventions regarding youth violence reduction. Your names will be confidential and anonymous. Your information will be recognised as group contribution and interviews will last for 60 minutes.

### **Interview guidelines:**

- There are no right and wrong answers.
- Respect one another’s point of views.
- Speak one person at a time.
- Phones need to be off or silent, no recording besides the researcher.
- Confidentiality is important.

- If you do not feel comfortable with the questions, you are not obliged to answer.
- You are free to leave at any point, but do so quietly.

**PERSONAL DETAILS:**

Gender:

Number of Females	Number of Males	Total Number

Age bracket:

12-16 years old	16-18 years old	18-22 years old	Total Number

Grades:

Grades 8-9	Grades 10-11	Grades 12	Total Number

**OBJECTIVES**

<b>YOUTH VIOLENCE AND SCHOOLING</b>
-------------------------------------

- What do you understand by the terms ‘youth violence’?
- What factors do you believe might be the reason for young people to participate in youth violence?
- In your experience, what influence does youth violence has on your schooling?

- d) Do you think youth violence is a problem at your school? (Why do you think so?)
- e) Have you ever been victims of this violence or affected in any way?
- If yes, how?
  - If no, how did you escape?
- f) What measures/ programs are used by the school to address this issue of youth violence?
- g) Is there anything that you can think of that can be done to prevent violence in/around your school?

### **YOUTH VIOLENCE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

- a) Do you feel safe in your community?
- If yes, why?
  - If no, why not?
- b) Has your family/ or member of your family been affected by youth violence?
- (Probe, 'Yes/and No answers)
- c) Do you think youth violence is increasing or decreasing?
- If increasing, why is that?
  - If decreasing, why is that?
- d) What do you think contributes to youth violence in your community?
- e) What measures are put in place in your community to reduce youth violence?
- f) What do you think should be done to reduce youth violence in your community?

Is there anything else you would think that might be helpful that I may have missed in understanding the issues of youth violence in your community? I will accurately represent your perceptions on these issues. Would it be acceptable if I contacted you again if I have any more questions? Are there any questions for me?

Thank you for your participation.

Your opinions and contribution are appreciated.

# Appendix 8: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Educators

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
Department of Social Development

*Title: An exploration of the “Gurans” phenomenon: youth violence in Khayelitsha and its influence on broader community.*

## SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATORS

NAME OF THE SCHOOL-----

Thank you for taking your valuable time to participate in the study, it is highly appreciated. The focus of the current study is youth violence. It aims to explore “Gurans” phenomenon: youth violence in Khayelitsha and its influence on broader community. Your experiences and perceptions about this phenomenon are vital for the study, your voices need to be heard. These individual interviews will be tape-recorded (this will be in discretion of both parties) and then transcribed. Your names will be confidential and anonymous. Your information will be recognized as anonymous and interviews will last for 60 minutes. Your contribution to the study is important to the completion of the research. Hopefully this research will be used to open up a discussion among community members surrounding the issue of youth violence, and shape future public policy concerning these social issues.

### Interview guidelines:

- There are no right and wrong answers.
- Phones need to be off or silent, no recording besides the researcher.
- Confidentiality is important.

- If you do not feel comfortable with the questions, you are not obliged to answer.
- You are free to leave at any point.

### ***OBJECTIVES***

#### **KHAYELITSHA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

- a) How long have you been working in this community?
- b) What has been your experience and expectations?

#### **TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS ON LEARNERS EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

- a) How many learners do you teach per class, how do you feel about the number you teach?
- b) In your views, what are major problems and challenges which lead/led to poor academic performance and school dropout of learners in this community?
- c) In your views, has the poor performance and school dropout influenced the development of young people in this community?

#### **YOUTH VIOLENCE**

- f) Are you aware of youth violence in this community, and what is your view about it?
- g) What kind of violence is that?
- h) Does this youth violence take place inside your school premises?
- i) Tell me, do you feel safe at your school and in this community?
  - If yes, why?
  - If no, why not?

- j) How does youth violence affect learners? Can you please provide an example?
- k) What are the major factors that you think are the cause of youth violence in this community?
- l) Would you say that quality education opportunities help young people abstain from youth violence activities?
- If yes, why?
  - If no, why not?
- m) Do you think Khayelitsha is a safe/conducive place to teach/raise a child?
- If yes, why?
  - If no, why not?

<b>THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL TO PREVENT YOUTH VIOLENCE</b>
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- a) What has the school done in the past to reduce youth violence?
- b) What specific intervention programs have been implemented to help learners who are victims?
- c) Have you worked with other schools in the community to prevent youth violence?
- If yes, how?
  - If no, why not?
- d) In your views, what is the role of parents and families in young people developing a violent habit and joining youth violence?

- e) What is the major change do you think needs to be instilled in making sure youth violence is terminated/reduced in marginalized communities?

Is there anything else you would think that might be helpful that I may have missed in understanding the issues of youth violence in your community? I will accurately represent your perceptions on these issues. Would it be acceptable if I contacted you again if I have any more questions? Are there any questions for me?

Thank you for your participation.

Your opinions and contribution are appreciated.

# **Appendix 9: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Community Members of Khayelitsha**

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
Department of Social Development

*Title: An exploration of the “Gurans” phenomenon: youth violence in Khayelitsha and its influence on broader community.*

## **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF KHAYELITSHA**

Thank you for taking your valuable time to participate in the study, it is highly appreciated. The focus of the current study is youth violence. It aims to explore “Gurans” phenomenon: youth violence in Khayelitsha and its influence on broader community. Your experiences and perceptions about this phenomenon are vital for the study. These interviews will be tape-recorded (this will be in discretion of both parties) and then transcribed. Your names will be confidential and anonymous. Your information will be recognised as anonymous and interviews will last for 60 minutes. Your contribution to the study is important to the completion of the research. Hopefully this research will be used to open up a discussion among community members surrounding the issue of youth violence, and shape future public policy concerning these social issues.

### **Interview guidelines:**

- There are no right and wrong answers.
- Phones need to be off or silent, no recording besides the researcher.
- Confidentiality is important.
- If you do not feel comfortable with the questions, you are not obliged to answer.

- You are free to leave at any point.

**PERSONAL DETAILS:**

Location	Gender [female/male]	Level of Education	Occupation	Marital status

***OBJECTIVES***

**YOUTH VIOLENCE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

- a) Are you experiencing/or have you experienced youth violence in your community?
  - If yes, what kind of youth violence are you experiencing/ or have you experienced, if any?
- b) Do you believe this youth violence is a problem in your community?
  - (Probe, ‘Yes/and No answers)
- c) What do you think are the causes/factors of youth violence activity in your community?
- d) How has youth violence affected the community?
- e) Do you think Khayelitsha is a safe/conducive place to live?
  - (Probe, ‘Yes/and No answers)

**YOUTH VIOLENCE INFLUENCE IN THE COMMUNITY**

- a) How has your community responded to youth violence?
- b) Are you satisfied with the way it has been challenged?

- (Probe, 'Yes/and No answers)
- c) What are you willing to do as the community members to help deal with youth violence in your community?
  - d) Is the government doing enough to address the reasons for youth violence in your community?
  - e) What do you think are the possible and practical solutions to the problem of youth violence?

Is there anything else you would think that might be helpful that I may have missed in understanding the issues of youth violence in your community? I will accurately represent your perceptions on these issues. Would it be acceptable if I contacted you again if I have any more questions? Are there any questions for me?

Thank you for your participation.  
Your opinions and contribution are appreciated.

**Appendix 10: Weapons Used in Gurans**





## Appendix 11: Pictures of Crew Members' Injuries Attained from Gurans Violence

