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**"You have to hit some people, it's all they understand!":**

**Are Violent Sentiments More Criminogenic than Attributing Hostile**

**Intent in the escalation of grievances?**

by
Sally Fiona Kelty,
B.A. (Hons.); B.Com.

*This thesis is presented for the degree of*
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*I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains*

*as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a*

*degree at any tertiary education institution.*

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Sally Fiona Kelty

**TITLE:** "You have to hit some people, it's all they understand!":
Are Violent Sentiments More Criminogenic than Attributing Hostile Intent
in the escalation of grievances?

Sally Kelty (nee Stevenson).
Supervisors, Mr. Guy Hall; Dr. Angela O'Brien-Malone and Dr. Anne Pedersen
*School of Law & School of Psychology, Murdoch University. Perth. Western Australia.*

## Abstract

Is it **what** adult violent offenders think or **how** they think that discriminates them most from non-offenders? This study investigates whether violent and criminal sentiments, attributional biases and violence based grievance resolution strategies represent dynamic criminogenic risk factors. The results indicate that it is **what** offenders think that discriminates them more than how they think.

The participants were 546 adults comprising 105 violent offenders, 238 university students and 203 men and women from a stratified random community sample. Using interview data from high-risk violent offenders, two scales were specifically developed to measure the variables of interest. The differences between offenders and non-offenders in violent attitudes was measured by expanding the scope of the Criminal Sentiments Scale. The differences in attributional biases and problem solving was assessed by a second scale developed for this study.

The results showed that offenders were clearly different from non-offenders with the offenders endorsing significantly higher criminal and violent sentiments with an effect size of $\eta^2 = .46$. The offenders also reported a significantly higher level of violence-based resolution strategies to end grievances than non-offenders. However, the surprising finding was that the adult male high-risk offenders did not demonstrate more pronounced hostile attributional biases than either adult men and women students or men and women from the community. The results imply that believing violence is acceptable and being prepared to use violence is more criminogenic than how you interpret the social behaviour of others. These findings have important implications for our understanding of why grievances escalate and the development of more effective intervention programs.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# PART ONE

## Introduction and Review of the Literature

# Hungry thugs beat up chef

## Cattle prod used in attack after cafe ran out of chilli mussels

THREE thugs became so angry when their local takeaway Italian restaurant ran out of chilli mussels that they drove to the shop and severely beat the owner and his staff, the District ... was to ...

guilty to one count each of assault occasioning bodily harm over the incident.

Shaun Adam Damasco, 36, of Dianella, who is alleged to have used a cattle prod capable of producing several thousand volts of electricity on one of the victims, admitted two counts of the same charge.

some food and if the food wasn't any good he was going to kick the delivery driver in the mouth", Mr Urquhart said.

He said Mr Damasco continued to swear before the owner said: "If you want to be like that, the same to you, prick." He then hung up.

Full story, see Appendix N

# Chapter 1.

# Introduction, literature review and hypotheses

**1.1. Violent Crime in Australia: An Overview of the Economic and Social Costs**

For the past 15 years, compared to other Western industrialised nations, Australia has consistently had the one of the highest per capita rates for non-sexual aggravated assault (Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) 2004; Mukherjee & Graycar, 1997). From 1989 to 1995 the fear of violent crime was ranked as the number one social concern for Australian men and women, even overshadowing their concerns about unemployment and health (Chappell, 1989, 1995). Weatherburn and Indermaur (2004) noted that although official statistics show that violent crime remained relatively stable over the period 1993 to 2003, the majority of the public believed that violent crime was increasing. This trend has also been found in other Western nations. For example, the fear of violent crime has been of major concern for people in the U.K, with a report finding that a large number of people are concerned for their personal safety when going out after dark (Giddens, 2001). Whether or not the public's fear of becoming a victim of violent crime is overstated, the economic and social costs of this type of crime for the community cannot be understated, and the prevention of, and rehabilitation of violent offenders plays a crucial part in law reform and political agendas (Chappell, 1995).

Violent crime has far reaching social and economic effects on both a macro level, for society as a whole, and on a micro level for the persons directly affected by this form of crime. Chappell (1995) stressed that although the true social cost cannot be quantified it has been estimated that the cost to run the criminal justice system alone exceeds $1 billion per annum. The cost to adjudicate (policing, trial and imprisonment) each murder case exceeds $1 million. Of the approximate 150,000 non-sexual assault victims per annum, around 30% (57,000 victims) require medical attention, in many cases surgery or prolonged physical rehabilitation (Mukherjee & Graycar, 1997). In 2003, the cost to imprison each offender per day ranged from $146 to $238 (AIC, 2004). Overall, in 2002 approximately $58,181 was spent per prisoner, whereas the average

cost per year was substantially less for each offender sentenced to serve a community order (e.g., probation) at $3,541 (AIC, 2004).

There are also numerous economic and social costs for the persons directly affected. For the victim there is the potential for long periods of physical rehabilitation and medical treatment, the temporary or permanent loss of employment through injury, and the potential for sustained emotional trauma. These effects may carry over to the victims' immediate and extended family, friends and work colleagues (Chappell & Egger, 1995). For the offender there is the loss of liberty, sometimes for a substantial period of their lives. There is the potential for disruption of, and dislocation from, the immediate and extended family unit. Disruption of the family unit and the separation of and reuniting with children upon release is especially problematic for female offenders and their families (Goulding, 2004). There is also a potential for the loss of employment skills that may become redundant while imprisoned. This in turn can then provide for long-term unemployment upon release. The effect of having the label "violent offender" on criminal history can have profound implications such as the restriction to travel to certain countries and loss of employment opportunities because employers prefer not to employ ex-offenders (Graffam, Shinfield, Lavelle & Hardcastle, 2005). For example,  in Western Australia it is common practice to request that new employees produce a criminal history. The sheet, obtained from Police stations, details both State offences (e.g. violent offences) and Federal (e.g.: social security fraud). Records of index violent offences (assault, robbery) remain on criminal history for 10 years, murder convictions remain for life.


### 1.1.1. The Level of Violence in Australian Society

The rates of reported violent crime have fluctuated over the past 200 years. Chappell (1995) noted that during colonisation (1780s to 1820s) crime rates were high with

Australia being a relatively violent and turbulent society. From the 1830s onward, violent crime rates decreased steadily, with rates remaining low and stable from Federation in 1901 to the end of World War II. From the 1940s to late 1970s, reported incidences of violent crime increased rapidly with a doubling of the rate of homicide and armed robbery (Chappell, 1995; Indermaur, 1996a). Since the 1990s reported incidences of violent offences have been relatively stable (AIC, 2004).

The overall trend in Australia has seen fluctuations over time, although these fluctuations are accounted for by specific increases in certain types of crime. The trends for the most common violent offences (homicide, assault and robbery) over the past decade including the characteristics of offenders and victims are presented below. These trends represent official reports. One problem in determining the true level of violent crime in Australian society is that many incidents are not reported to police. Due to the nature of homicide most cases are detected and the rates below are relatively accurate; however this is not the case for robbery and assault. For example, in 1994, 30% of non-sexual assaults and 50% of robberies were not reported (Carcach, 1997). Similar rates were found in the 2000 Australian component of the International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS) with 50% of robberies and 31% of non-sexual assaults not reported (Carcach & Makki 2003). In both the 1994 and 2000 ICVS there were four main reasons why victims did not report incidents to police. These reasons were based on the victim's beliefs that: the police could not, or would, not do anything about the matter; the incident was not serious enough; it was a private matter; or for fear of retaliation by the offender. An analysis of reporting trends by Carcach (1997) found that people less likely to report violent incidents tended to have experienced multiple victimisations, were younger and were male.

**1.1.1.1 Homicide.** The definition of homicide used by the AIC (2004) is the unlawful killing of another person. Homicide statistics include both wilful murder and manslaughter. Not included in homicide rates are the offences of attempted murder and driving causing death. Over the past few decades the homicide rate has remained stable with approximately two victims per 100,000 people per year. From the 1950s onwards Australia has had a consistently low rate compared with international standards, recording five times less homicides than Northern Ireland and ten times less than in the U.S. (AIC, 2001). In 2003, there were 341 victims of homicides in Australia, 89% being murder and the remaining 11% victims of manslaughter. Approximately 60% of all homicides occurred as a result of using various weapons. The trend in homicides over the past decade can be seen in Figure 1. The chart shows that the homicide rate peaked in 1999 with a rate of 2.04 per 100,000 of the population and then returned to a more stable position.
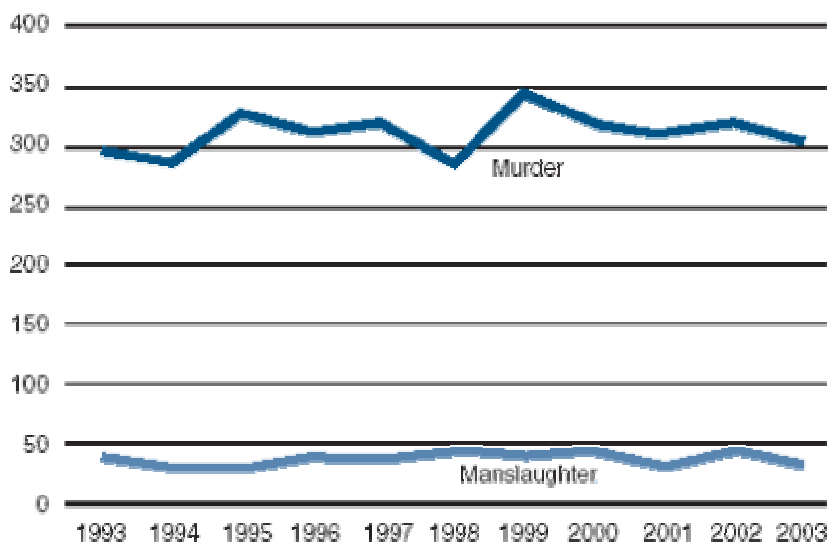


**Figure 1.** Number of homicides from 1993 to 2003 (Source: AIC 2004).

The relationship between victim and offender differed according to the gender of the victim. In 2003, males were more likely to be killed by a friend or acquaintance,

whereas females were more likely to be killed by a family member, especially a partner. Approximately 70% of male victims and 90% of female victims were in a close relationship with their killers. Twenty two percent of male victims were killed by a stranger, whereas only 3% of females were. Of all homicides in 2003, 67% of victims were males aged between 25 to 44 years. The risk of becoming a homicide victim is significantly higher for young men than older men and women. Homicide offenders are also more likely to be young males. In 2003, 85% of offenders were young males aged 20 to 24 years. Only 13% of homicides were carried out by women aged 20 to 24 years and only 2% of offenders were juveniles. As Graycar (1997) stressed, these statistics go against the popular belief that murder is a random act committed by a cold and calculating stranger.

   **1.1.1.2 Assault( non-sexual).** The AIC (2004) define assault as the direct infliction of force, injury or violence upon a person, including attempts or threats. Over the past 40 years the number of assaults reported has risen sharply. In 1973, 20,000 reported being assaulted, in 2003 there were 158,629 victims (AIC, 2004; Mukherjee & Graycar, 1997). In 1999, 7 people per 1000 population were assaulted and this increased to 8 per 1000 in 2003. Australia has one of the highest per capita rates in OECD nations for aggravated non-sexual assault, with an assault occurring approximately every 15 minutes (Mukherjee & Graycar, 1997). However, as the international rankings are calculated in January, the high ranking may be more reflective of the month rather than the level of actual violence in society. Non-sexual assault is a seasonal phenomenon in Australia with the number of assaults peaking during the hot spring and summer months from October to February (AIC, 2001, 2004). The trend in aggravated non-sexual assault can be seen in Figure 2 below.
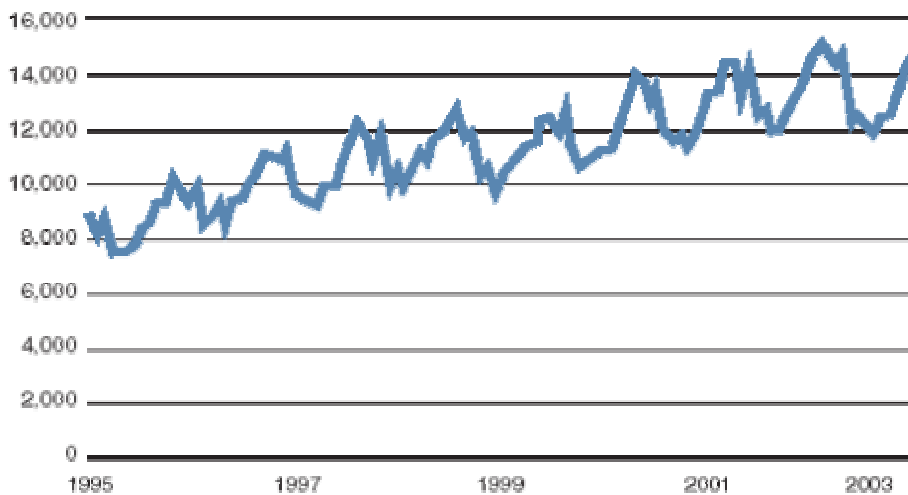
**Figure 2.** Number of recorded assaults from 1995 to 2003 (Source: AIC, 2004).

As can be seen in Figure 2, there is an apparent upward trend in the number of assaults. However, there is debate about whether this trend is a real increase. As Indermaur (1996a) noted, crime rates are calculated by two methods. One is official reports to police and the other is by anonymous victim surveys. When the two sets of data are compared what becomes apparent is that although more assaults are reported, the average number of people per capita who say they were assaulted has not increased over the past twenty years. As Indermaur suggested, it is possible that the increase in reported incidents reflects a change in societal attitudes toward violence with people becoming less tolerant of it. For example, some types of altercations once seen as a private matter are now considered wrongful and criminal acts, domestic violence being a case in point. Due to this shift in tolerance it is possible that victims are more likely to now report victimisation.

Similar to homicide, the relationship between offender and victim differ by gender of the victim. Approximately 77% of female victims know their assaulter (39% being family members and 37% being a friend/acquaintance). For males, only 44% know their assaulter. In 2003, women were twice as likely to have known their assaulter as men.

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Finally, 46% of male victims were assaulted by a stranger, compared with 18% of women (AIC, 2004).

Of all assaults reported in 2003, 58% involved male victims in the 15 to 24 age range with 70% of assault offenders being young males aged 15 to 24 years. Eighteen percent of assaults were perpetrated by adult females. Approximately 12% of offenders were juveniles. The trend over the past ten years shows that regardless of age, males are more likely to be assaulted than females. However, for females, the greatest risk of becoming an assault victim is during late adolescence and early adulthood. Of interest, there has been a marked upward trend in the number of females charged with assault. For example, between 1995 and 2002 the rate of females charged with assault rose by 27% for juveniles aged 15 to 19, and 31% for young adult females in the 20 to 24 age range (AIC, 2004).

The location of assault differed by gender of the victim. Approximately 60% of females were assaulted in residential locations (primarily private dwellings), whereas 70% of males were assaulted in non-residential locations (e.g., streets and recreational venues). The location of assaults combined for males and females is shown in Figure 3.



Residential 43%
Community 35%
Other 21%
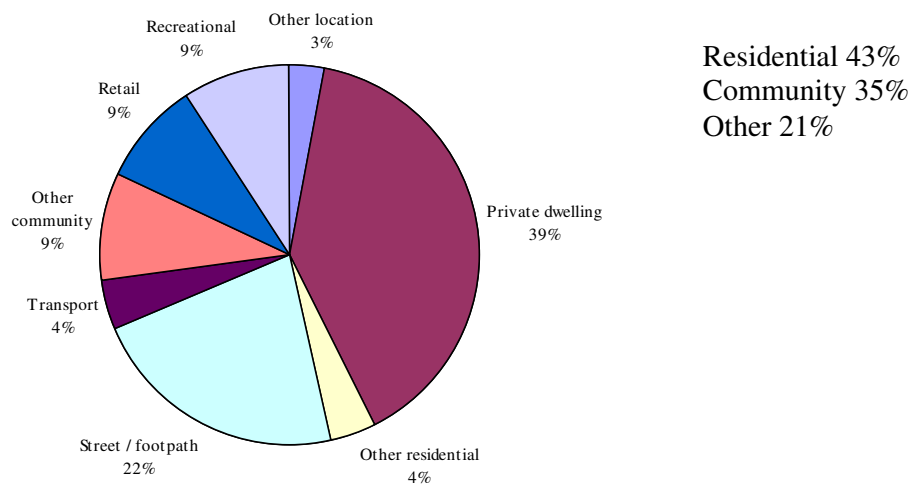
**Figure 3.** Location of assaults in Australia in 2003 (Source, AIC, 2004).

Approximately 60% of male victims sustained physical injury compared with 45% of women victims. Twenty-nine percent of injured males required medical attention, compared with 18% of females. It is possible that the level of injury sustained by males is due to weapons, primarily knives, syringes and sticks. Only 2% of assaults involved firearms.

**1.1.1.3 Robbery.** The offence of robbery is defined by the AIC (2004) as the unlawful taking of property without consent and accompanied by force or threat of force with robbery victims being either persons or organizations. The offence is divided into categories: armed and unarmed. Armed robbery is conducted with a weapon (any object, real, imitation, or implied that can cause fear or injury). Unarmed robbery is conducted without a weapon but where the threat or use of force is present. In 2003, 19,719 robberies were reported, comprising of 64% being unarmed and 36% being armed. The trend in both forms can be seen in Figure 4.
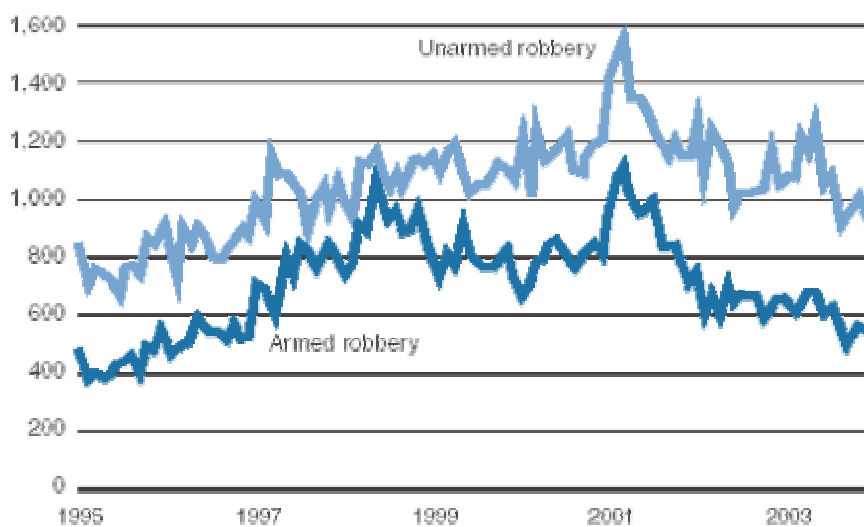


**Figure 4.** Trend in armed and unarmed robberies from 1995 to 2003 (Source: AIC, 2004)

In 2003, 41% of armed robberies occurred in retail premises. A further 41% occurred in community locations, with approximately 29% of these robberies occurring on streets and footpaths. For unarmed robbery, 69% occurred in community locations, including 49% on streets and 12% in transport locations. Only 14% of unarmed robberies occurred in retail locations compared with 41% of armed robberies. The most common weapon used was a knife (19%). Firearms were used in only 6% of incidents in 2003. Between 1993 to 2003 there has been a 44% reduction in the use of firearms in these offences.

During 2003, 62% of all robbery offenders were males aged between 20 to 24 years. A further 26% of robberies were carried out by juveniles, mostly aged 15 to 19. The remaining 12% of robberies were carried out by females, mostly in the 15 to 19 age range. From 1995 there has been a sharp increase in the number of young males committing robbery, from 114 offenders per 100,000 in 1995 to 199 per 100,000 offenders in 2003.

**1.1.1.4 Summary.** The official statistics show that most violent incidents are not random acts occurring in a social vacuum. Rather, they occur between people who know each other and are more likely in certain locations and at certain times. Violent crime is also primarily a young male phenomenon. The victims of violent crime are mostly young males aged 15 to 24 years and young males are three times more at risk of being assaulted and robbed than men aged 45 years and over. Violent offenders are also mostly young men in the 18 to 30 age range. It is young males who commit roughly 85 to 90% of all reported violent offences, including the most serious (AIC, 2004; Mukherjee & Graycar, 1997).

It is vital to stress that not all violent incidents recorded necessarily occur between first time offenders and first time victims. Young males are not only more likely to become assault and robbery victims they are also more likely to experience multiple victimisations (Carcach, 1997; Ross & Polk, 2005). The prevalence rates in most western nations show that the more chronic the offending behaviour the more likely the offender is to commit the most serious violent offences. This does not mean that chronic offenders only commit serious violent offences, they commit the most serious simply because they commit more offences overall (Farrington, 1997). For example, Farrington found that in the UK longitudinal Cambridge study, 6% of the chronic young adult male offenders committed roughly 50% of all the convictions recorded; this included multiple index violent offences. In Australia, between 63% to 74% of Australian adult male offenders incarcerated for index violence offences had prior, and often multiple, imprisonments for both violent and non-violent offences (AIC, 2004). In conclusion, although violent behaviour is primarily the social domain of young males, what the figures presented above suggest is that some young males, not all young males, appear to be more at risk of being an offender and/or a victim.

## 1.2. Rehabilitation Programs for Violent Offenders

With the social and economic implications of violent crime for society in mind, public policy has turned its focus to the implementation of violence prevention initiatives (such as domestic violence help lines) and intervention programs for violent offenders aiming to reduce recidivism (Howells & Day, 1999). This interest in the rehabilitation of violent offenders is not unique to Australia but is an issue that has emerged worldwide. Howells, Watt, Hall and Baldwin (1997) noted that the rehabilitation of violent offenders is an important issue because violent offenders represent over 50% of the prison population in many countries and cause considerable social concern due to the

perceived or real "risk" of their re-offending when released. In 2003 the percentage of males Australia wide serving prison sentences for violent offences was 47% (AIC, 2004).

Rehabilitation of offenders can take different forms. Currently within Western Australia there are three categories: vocational training (such as carpentry apprenticeships); educational (basic literacy/numeracy to university degrees); and offending behaviour programs (drug use, violent and sex offending). It is often the case that completion of an offender behaviour program is a requirement passed down during judgement as a necessary condition for parole consideration or has been requested by the Parole Board.

The question of whether violent offending treatment programs or offender behaviour programs in general have been effective in reducing recidivism rates has been a contentious issue for the past 35 years. This issue is not just a philosophical debate (should offenders be rehabilitated?) or empirical (does rehabilitation reduce recidivism?), it is also underpinned by the economic factor of whether the benefit (reduction in recidivism) equals or exceeds the cost (all economic units in terms of resources required for the intervention) (South, 1998). With respect to the empirical question, one of the most controversial papers written on the topic was by Martinson (1974) who concluded that from the evidence it appeared that very little worked to reduce recidivism. As for the economic question, South's (1998) conclusion was equally as negative as Martinson's when he concluded that overall the cost of rehabilitation was probably too high, and for programs that were effective the cost-benefit ratio of carrying out an intervention was usually too low.

In contrast to the more negative position, there has been a growing number of extensive meta-analyses and empirical reviews using pooled samples in excess of 10,000 offenders from Canada, the U.S., England and Australasia which found that

rehabilitation programs can significantly reduce recidivism rates by 5 to 20% (refer especially Andrews & Bonta, 1998; Gendreau, Little & Goggin, 1996; Howells & Day, 1999; McGuire, 2002; Polaschek & Collie, 2004a). Bourgon and Armstrong (2005) reported that a 10% reduction in recidivism following program completion can equate to an average cost benefit to the community of between U.S. $4,653 to $80,000 per offender. Of the rehabilitation programs that were found to be successful, it appeared that the majority of these programs were underpinned by Andrews and Bonta's (1998) risk-needs-responsivity principles. These principles are outlined below.

## 1.2.1. The Risk Principle

The risk principle refers to the matching of an offender's recidivism risk to the level of intervention required. Assessing risk requires the identification of criminogenic variables, which are comprised of two distinct types. The first are static criminogenic variables, for example: criminal history; environmental factors during childhood; intellectual disability; and age at first offending. Although static variables correlate with offending behaviour they primarily represent historical factors that cannot be changed through intervention. The second criminogenic factors are the dynamic variables, which include: illicit drug use; criminal attitudes; criminal affiliations; problem solving skills; education; and employment skills. Dynamic variables correlate with criminal behaviour and as such are able to be addressed during rehabilitation programs. Both the static and dynamic variables predict recidivism risk (Ogloff & Davis, 2004).

This principle is underpinned by the rationale that level of risk is matched to level of intervention. It follows that only offenders at high risk of recidivism are provided with high intensity interventions (Ogloff & Davis, 2004). Bourgon and Armstrong (2005) recently assessed how the criminogenic needs of 482 male adult offenders were matched to interventions with regard to the length of the rehabilitation program in time

and whether this impacted on recidivism rates. To assess recidivism risk Bourgon and Armstrong used "The Level of Service Inventory- Ontario Revised" (LSI-OR, Girard & Wormith, 2004). They found that each week of treatment predicted 1.7% reduction in risk. For offenders at low-risk who had few needs, programs could reduce recidivism rates significantly after only after 100 hours (5 weeks) of intervention. For high risk offenders with multiple needs, recidivism rates could reduce by 20% but only after 300 hours of intervention was completed (15 weeks).

### 1.2.2. The Needs Principle

The needs principle holds that although all human beings have needs (such as accommodation) but not all needs are criminogenic in nature. Therefore, it is only criminogenic needs that should be targeted during rehabilitation. For example, most people like to have and need friends. Having friends per se should not be the focus of rehabilitation unless the friends are pro-criminal and act as a source of reinforcement for an individual's offending behaviour. Ogloff and Davis (2004) argue that the needs identified for intervention may not be the same needs that an offender identifies. As such, there should be a distinction made between the identification of general needs and "treatment needs". The needs principle when applied correctly provides that although offenders may have a wide range of needs, to reduce recidivism risk one must concentrate on the variables directly related to why they offend.

### 1.2.3. The Responsivity Principle

The final principle is responsivity which relates to the identification of potential sources, be they internal or external, which impact upon the effectiveness of the program. Internal sources refer to individual difference factors, such as offenders' motivation to fully participate in a program, or the intelligence level of the offender. For

example, if an offender has literacy problems and treatment staff are not fully aware of this, unfinished homework may be construed as poor motivation rather than what it actually represents. External sources refer to factors not directly related to an offender that can have a negative or positive impact on program effectiveness. For example, does the institution support and consider the program worthwhile; are treatment staff competent, trained, and supervised; and can the treatment staff employed develop a therapeutic relationship with the offenders in the program (Ogloff & Davis, 2004). Finally, of importance is the method of delivery. Empirical evaluations of programs have found that cognitive-behavioural approaches work better than other therapeutic methods (Andrews & Bonta, 1998; McGuire, 2002).

### 1.2.4. Dynamic Criminogenic Needs of Violent Offenders

As discussed above, of vital importance to effective offending behaviour rehabilitation is the identification of dynamic criminogenic variables (treatment needs). The findings from extensive reviews and meta-analyses suggested that some of the important variables are antisocial attitudes, anti-social peers, poor problem solving skills, high impulsivity and low self-management, cognitive processing deficits (especially the appraisal and interpretation of social situations), lack of empathy and high hostility and anger (Andrews, 1995; Howells & Day, 1999; McGuire, 2002).

In a recent review of rehabilitation programs for violent offenders, Polaschek and Collie (2004a) argued there appears to be very little empirical understanding of which dynamic needs actually underpin violent behaviour. For example, empathy, or rather a lack of, is suggested to underpin violent acts, but Andrews (1995) argues the link between violence and empathy has yet to be demonstrated. The psychometric measurement of empathy in violent offenders has been shown to be highly problematic and is currently being extensively reviewed (Beven, O'Brien-Malone & Hall, 2004).

The Polaschek and Collie (2004a) review found that anger management programs did not always have a significant effect in reducing violent recidivism and they argue that at present there is little empirical support to suggest that anger should be considered a special criminogenic need underpinning violent offending. They concur with Novaco, Ramm and Black's (2001) hypothesis that anger is neither necessary nor sufficient for violence to occur. Polaschek and Collie also found that cognitive processing deficits and problem solving skills could not yet be confirmed as important criminogenic variables because the empirical literature is too limited. This was also the case for beliefs that endorse the use of violence.

Based on the literature reviewed above, it appears that although the method for effective rehabilitation has been examined in detail it is reasonable to suggest that there is an urgent requirement to empirically establish what dynamic criminogenic needs underpin violent offending. For Australia especially an understanding of what variables underpin assault is of specific interest because Australia has consistently had one of the highest rates of this form of crime in Western industrialised nations (Ross & Polk, 2005). When considering the criminal justice statistics for Australia it is apparent that approximately 60% of violent incidents occur between people in a known relationship. Although approximately 40% of violent incidents occur between strangers, especially for young males, many of these assaults occur in specific urban locations and under certain environmental conditions. For example, assaults are more common between young men at the weekends and in public places such as recreational venues or non-residential areas, primarily city centres. Ross and Polk (2005) considered that too much emphasis is placed on "violence between strangers" and that violent acts are not usually random or senseless, at least from the perspective of the offender. For instance, although the parties to a violent incident may state they did not know each other prior to the incident, the social interaction occurring between them, such as honour contests and

reputation maintenance, is in essence not that different to the social interaction between the parties in a known relationship which escalate into serious or lethal acts of violence (Graham, Wells & Jelley, 2002; Ross & Polk, 2005). Given the issues discussed above it appears that grievance escalation theories, originally developed in criminology, would be helpful in the identification of important criminogenic needs underpinning violent behaviour. The stages of grievance escalation as proposed by Luckenbill and Doyle (1989) is presented below.

## 1.3. The Escalation of Grievances: Luckenbill and Doyle's Model

To explain how disagreements escalate into grievances which end in violence, Lukenbill and Doyle (1989) devised a grievance escalation model comprised of three interrelated successive stages. The first stage is "naming". Naming occurs when a negative outcome is transformed into a grievance. Grievances develop when one party (the victim) perceives/recognises that another party (victimiser) has caused harm. Furthermore, it is necessary that the victim holds the victimiser accountable for their "bad behaviour". The second stage of the model is "claiming". Claiming refers to the transformation of the grievance into a demand for reparation. Luckenbill and Doyle noted there were several outcomes that could occur during the claiming stage. The victimiser can apologise and make reparation thus bringing the grievance to an end. However, if the victimiser rejects the claim in whole or part, the grievance can escalate into the third stage, "aggression".

Luckenbill and Doyle's (1989) model does not imply that all problematic social encounters end in violence. What this model provides is an understanding of the stages of a conflict and how a grievance can escalate into violence. For escalation to occur, the model hypothesises that several factors are present. First, the injured party will not only have taken the position of a "victim" but is willing to demand that the harm be rectified.

This willingness is referred to as disputationess. Disputationess is suggested to discriminate between people. For example, not all people who experience injustice or are harmed by another will make a claim or persevere with a grievance. Therefore, their level of "disputationess" is considered low when they would rather let some incidents slide rather than persevere with all the grievances they encounter in their personal lives. The second factor is whether a person is willing to engage in coercive action or violence to end a grievance. This factor is called "aggressiveness". However, this factor is as much about a "victim" using violence to settle the grievance as it is about the social interaction between the parties. For example, after the "victim" makes a claim the manner in which the "victimiser" responds to the claim can have a significant impact on the likelihood of the grievance ending in coercion or violence. Escalation thus occurs through the interaction between the parties to the grievance in terms of their combined personal levels of disputationess and aggressiveness.

In this model disputationess and aggressiveness are suggested to relate to beliefs and values that state when and what type of harm ***cannot*** be ignored and when and where violence is not just warranted but required. These values and beliefs are considered to be subcultural and relate to certain groups in society. The suggestion that disputationess and aggressiveness are a manifestation of subcultural values was based upon the official criminal justice statistics which show an unequal distribution of violent behaviour occurring in most Western societies where it is specific demographic groups that engage in a disproportionate number of conflicts and amount of violence. For example, in the U.S. (where Lukenbill and Doyle's (1989) model was devised) a higher proportion of violence occurs: in the Southern States compared with the Northern States; between persons of low socio-economic status (SES) relative to higher SES peers; between African Americans than any other ethnic group; and violence occurs more often in urban than rural locations. Furthermore, young males have more

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interpersonal conflicts and engage in a far higher proportion of violence than older men or women of any age (Luckenbill & Doyle, 1989).

The values and beliefs that endorse high levels of disputationess and aggressiveness are not suggested to be strict codes of behaviour specifically related to places but rather to a group of people who share and understand these values. For example, some young males believe that derogatory remarks made about themselves, their mothers or girlfriends cannot be ignored because to do so is considered a display of weakness which would undermine their beliefs about honour and masculinity. The subculture (or group of associates) a person identifies can also be influence if they expect one of their peers / members to respond to an insult rather than let it slide. For the other party to the interaction (the insulter) the corresponding beliefs would be that to apologise is also a sign of weakness and "a real man doesn't back down". In this scenario, escalation would also be more likely given certain environmental conditions, such as in a recreational venue with significant peers present.

### 1.3.1. Testing Luckenbill and Doyle's Model

Support for the three stages of Luckenbill and Doyle's (1989) model was found by Kennedy and Forde (1996) and Bell and Forde (1999). Both studies tested the model using scenarios detailing interactions between a harm-doer and a victim. In the scenarios the level of harm was presented in a range from a minor conflict (name calling) to a severe high-intensity grievance (actual physical attack). Each participant was asked to take the role of the victim. Kennedy and Forde used a community sample of 2052 Canadian men and women with a mean age of 39 years. They found that the more intense and more severe the harm, the higher the levels of upset respondents reported. Regardless of a participant's SES level, or the amount of harm caused, approximately 65% of the sample stated they would make a claim and demand the

harm-doer give an explanation or repair the damage. Kennedy and Forde also found that roughly 15% of this general community sample said they would resort to aggression to solve the grievance. Finally, the men in this sample were not only more likely to report they would make a claim, the men were also more likely to report they would resort to aggression to deal with the matter than women.

In a later study by Bell and Forde (1999) an extension of the model was tested in a sample of 229 U.S. university students with a mean age of 21 years. They not only asked participants to discuss their feelings and what they would do but also whether they would call the police. They found that the more hostile and physically antagonistic the victimiser in the scenario the higher the reports of being upset. This was especially pronounced for both men and women students when the victimiser was portrayed as a man in a high conflict situation. Approximately 45% of the sample stated that in high-intensity conflicts they would use aggression, while only 30% said they would call the police. The best predictor of using aggression was when the victim and victimiser were both young males of a similar age, where the situation was hostile and when the victim was upset by the behaviour of the victimiser. The main reasons for not reporting conflicts to the police were because the matter would be private, or would be too inconsequential to involve the police. As Bell and Forde noted, when these results are combined with Kennedy and Forde (1996) they mirror the official U.S. criminal statistics where violence most likely occurs in young male-male high intensity conflicts and where many violent incidents go unreported.

The findings presented above appear not just to be in line with the U.S. criminal statistics, but with the statistics found in the U.K. and Australia. This implies that Luckenbill and Doyle's (1989) model may be a reasonable basis to describe the process and stages of how grievances escalate in Western nations. However, the model only provides one reason for the escalation of grievances, namely that some people believe

using force to settle some grievances is reasonable and legitimate and the discussion of violent beliefs is not comprehensive. Although attitudes and beliefs have been found to be a reasonable predictor of a range of behaviours (Ajzen & Madden, 1986) they alone do not account for 100% of the variance in thinking and behaviour (Aronson, 2004; Ajzen & Madden, 1986). Therefore an extension of Luckenbill and Doyle's work could potentially provide a more comprehensive and useful working model of the factors that produce higher levels of disputationess and aggressiveness.

There are three potential areas that could enhance the model. First, to explain the type of harm that can upset people enough to make them proceed into the second escalation stage and make a "claim". Second, to examine the psychological processes that people use to consider their harmdoer responsible and guilty for their injury. In other words, the transformation of harmdoer to victimiser. Finally, the model would benefit from a more in-depth discussion of how attitudes and beliefs influence the decision to engage in criminal and violent behaviour. Each of these areas will be discussed in more detail below. Included in the discussion will be the identification of several variables that could enhance the theoretical underpinning of this model.

## 1.4. Perceiving Harm: The Types of Harm That Upset People and Why

Tedeschi and Felson (1994) proposed there are four main types of harm that can underpin grievances: physical harm (injury, pain, or the threat of injury or pain); material damage (loss of goods or services); psychological harm (lack of respect, fairness or equality); political harm (violation of rights and freedoms by the state or organisations). The recent work of interactional justice theorists in Europe found that psychological harm (such as broken promises, selfish behaviour or lack of respect and loyalty) upsets people more than physical, material or political harm (Lupfer, Weeks, Doan & Houston, 2000; Mikula, Perti & Tanzer, 1990). These researchers found that

although physical, political and material harm are judged as wrongful acts, it is the effects of psychological harm(especially when the harm is carried out by significant others) that has more impact on the development of negative emotions and the desire for revenge. They found that people are more likely to experience a wider range of emotions (anger, despair, sadness, anxiety) when lied to, insulted by, unfairly accused or let down by a family member or friend rather than by their boss or an organisation (Mikula, Scherer & Athenstaedt, 1998). Bies and Tripp (1996) had found similar results in that people overwhelmingly experienced only anger and resentment when they believed their employer had acted unjustly towards them or their work colleagues. Miller (2001) suggested this occurs because people expect organisations to be less than honourable, so therefore when an organisation or representative thereof acts unjustly, although it is perceived as unpleasant and anger provoking, it is not totally unexpected. In contrast, a different and stricter set of standards is usually set for significant others and people we encounter in daily life (e.g., friends, co-workers, neighbours, even strangers) and when these people behave "badly" we are more affected because we expect to receive "better" behaviour from them. In other words we do not expect or consider it right that ordinary people lie, accuse, dishonour, cheat or insult us.

The standards of behaviour and expectations Miller (2001) referred to are the standards of interpersonal sensitivity continued in the psychological contract we have with others. These abstract contracts represent our idiosyncratic norms of behaviour that we not only expect but believe we are entitled to receive from others. Although most people report wanting similar behaviour from others (such as respect, fairness, equality; Mikula et al., 1990) the actual amount of that behaviour (e.g., how much respect or equality) required to satisfy idiosyncratic norms varies between persons. For example, one person can believe they deserve complete respect and fairness from all people all the time, while another person may not set such a strict standard and only expect respect

and fairness from certain people. Hojjat (1997) refers to Miller's standards of behaviours as "ought" philosophies. "Oughts" are moral based values and beliefs which state what we believe ought to be. For example, marriage partners ought to be honourable, faithful, respectful and obey their partners (Hojjat, 1997).

Miller (2001) explained that one problem with holding "ought" beliefs is that when fundamental "oughts" are breached it can be upsetting, anger provoking and can also lead to resentment. One reason why people become upset and angry, according to Ferguson and Rule (1983), is that a wide discrepancy is created between the "is" and the "ought". "Is" beliefs are subjective evaluations of what we think happened. "Is" beliefs are then balanced against the "oughts"; beliefs about what ought or should have happened. The wider the discrepancy the more likely we are to feel negative emotions (whether it be disappointment, anger, sadness, humiliation) which in turn fuels the desire to get even (Miller, 2001).

Hogan and Emler (1981) stressed that when we think that another person has broken one of our "oughts", the other person has done more than just violate our expectations. The breach can be seen as a sign that the harmdoer does not care to play the social game with us and ignores the "rules" of reciprocity in respectful dealings between people. They also argued that the natural response to "ought" breaches is moralistic and righteous rage. The emotional and cognitive state of righteous rage can then flow naturally into the desire for revenge, justice and retribution. Miller (2001) argues that because righteous rage occurs out of a belief that another has immorally violated our "oughts", it is more likely that people will feel justified and right about seeking revenge. Getting even or an act of revenge can be seen as the means to restore justice. Bies and Tripp (1996) when examining grievances in workplaces found that the more a wronged employee considered their boss's behaviour to be "morally bad", the more likely they were to be morally outraged at their treatment. Many of these

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employees sought to get even through less personal work motivation or even acts of theft or industrial sabotage. Importantly, the employees reported that due to the "bad behaviour" to which they been subjected they felt that the psychological contract between them and the firm had been so fundamentally breached that decent behaviour toward the firm was no longer required. The findings of Bies and Tripp underpin the essence of Bandura's (1990) theory that once we believe another person has acted "immorally" toward us we feel justified in disengaging from the moral codes of behaviour we usually set for ourselves. Of note, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to present a summary of the vast interactional justice literature in detail and the interested reader is referred to Heider (1958), Lerner and Lerner (1981) and Ross & Miller (2002).

**1.4.1 Summary of the Justice Literature and Research Directions**

In summary, the interactional justice research to date has found that it is primarily psychological harm that upsets people the most. This is due to perceived breaches of the standards of behaviour people expect from others with regard to being treated fairly, equitably and respectfully (Mikula et al., 1990). It appears that for most people being treated fairly, respectfully and equitably represents fundamental "oughts" (Miller, 2001). One way that people perceive a harm is by benchmarking what they think the other person did and their responsibility for what they did ("is") against what they think they other person should have done ("ought") (Ferguson & Rule, 1983). The wider the discrepancy between the "is" and the "ought" the more likely people are to experience anger, disappointment, resentment, frustration, anxiety and/or sadness (Mikula et al., 1998). When it is a fundamental "ought" that has been (or perceived to have been) breached this can not only lead to the development of negative emotions but also the desire to get even. The act of revenge, due to the very nature of the perceived breach, can be viewed by the victim (who becomes the retaliator) as a righteous act necessary to

get justice (Aronson, 2004). In essence a wide "is/ought" discrepancy occurs due to a moral judgement about other's "bad behaviour".

Both Howells (1988) and Tedeschi and Felson (1994) suggested that the "is/ought" discrepancy represents a cognitive component in the initial development of grievances. The work of Felson (1982, 2000) has consistently shown that offenders appear to be highly sensitive to one form of psychological harm, namely insults and accusations, and that this type of harm creates a high desire to retaliate as a means of restoring personal honour and to maintain a favourable impression. As non-offenders also engage in this cognitive evaluation of the behaviour of others it cannot be implied that this discrepancy represents a dynamic criminogenic variable per se, although there are two ways that the process could potentially be problematic. The first is where people consistently encounter wide discrepancies due to the strict application of "ought" philosophies. Ellis (2002) noted that some people encounter difficulties in the relationships with others because "ought" philosophies become extreme and are manifested as "must haves" and "should haves". The problem that arises from strict and rigid "ought" application is that other people cannot usually live up to such rigid and high standards even if they wanted to. At the extreme such high "oughts" do not even leave room for non-intentional errors such as forgetting. This can lead a person who applies "oughts" too strictly to believe that their "oughts" are always being breached and can lead to the development of what Ellis (2002) calls irrational beliefs, such as "people always let me down, people cannot be trusted, loved ones hurt and humiliate me all the time".

The essence of what Ellis observed with non-offender clinical cases appears to underpin what Toch (1969) and Bush (1995) have found with offenders. Toch noted from his research that offenders appeared to find it acceptable to breach other people's "oughts" but found it intolerable when others broke their own "oughts" and caused them

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harm, be it psychological or physical. Bush (1995) in his clinical work with violent offenders also noted similar aspects, in that offenders disliked having their autonomy threatened. This Bush suggested was based on the philosophy that they believe they have the right to set the rules for how they live their life. However, when others break their "oughts" and make them feel unpleasant, humiliated or guilty, they see the actions of others as an affront which turns from "how could they" to "how dare they make me feel bad".

Although the rigid stance that offenders take toward how other people should behave has been suggested by several theorists (Bush, 1995; Yochelson & Samenow, 1976, 1977) it appears that the "is/ought" discrepancy has not been examined as a potential criminogenic variable. After an extensive search of the literature and numerous databases no published work could be located examining the circumstances creating the "is/ought" discrepancy and the differences between an offender and non-offender sample. To see if this variable distinguishes offenders from non-offenders became one aim of this study.

Applying strict and rigid "oughts" to others is not the only manner in which a wide "is/ought" discrepancy could be problematic. Howells (1988) suggested that another way was when the discrepancy itself occurred due to biased cognitive attributions of intention, specifically the attribution of hostile intent. When the discrepancy occurs in this manner it is possible that another person who breaches an "ought" is viewed as deliberately and maliciously causing harm, when in reality although harm occurred it occurred through an unintentional thoughtless error. The theory and research on the attribution of hostile intent is discussed below.

## 1.5. Perceiving Harm: Hostile Attributional Biases

How people interpret the intent underpinning the behaviour of others has long been the focus of attributional theorists (Huesman, 1998; Weiner, 1995), clinicians (Ellis, 2002), and forensic psychologists (Blackburn, 1993; Howells, 1988). In their seminal work on violence and coercive action, Tedeschi and Felson (1994) argued that a vital factor which determines whether a social interaction concludes as a violent encounter is how the acts and/or omissions of the perceived harmdoer are interpreted. Both Tedeschi and Felson and Ferguson and Rule (1983) suggested that where the acts/omissions of another are deemed disrespectful and unwarranted and where this "bad" behaviour was carried out with hostile and malicious intent, grievances are more likely to develop and escalate. According to Aronson (2004), where a person has been harmed but the harm occurred by a thoughtless error or by accident the harmdoer is seen as less responsible for the act therefore the desire to punish them is reduced. As Ferguson and Rule argued, the perceived intention of the harmdoer is vital because it influences whether the victim believes punishment is required and the severity of the punishment. For example, if the harmdoer is believed to have intentionally broken the rules for his or her own personal gain, the victim's desire to seek justice through retaliation is enhanced, and where punishment is enacted it is likely to be harsher (Ferguson & Rule, 1983). In essence people are more likely to become upset and seek reparation where the harmdoer's acts are judged to be intentional rather than accidental. One explanation for why some people find themselves more often in situations that conclude with violence is because they have a bias toward seeing the intent of their harmdoers as hostile where in fact no hostility was meant. Hostile attributional biases (HABs) refer to the misattribution of hostility to interpersonal cues in the social environment that warrant other explanations (Nasby, Hayden & DePaulo, 1980). In other words, some people appear to be predisposed to interpret the harmful acts of others as deliberate and hostile under

circumstances where other people have difficulty in determining the intent of the other person. As Matthews and Norris (2002) commented, this bias results in people seeing hostility where none exists.

**1.5.1. Hostile Attributional Biases: A Theoretical Overview and Critique.**

The most prominent theory explaining the psychology of HABs has been the social information processing model, initially proposed by Dodge in 1980, and substantially reformulated by Crick and Dodge in 1994. It is based on the analogy of human cognition as akin to an information processing system (a computer system). The model proposes six steps explaining how people perceive, interpret, and then decide on what course of action to pursue when faced with a social situation. The first step is encoding, where people use their sensory and perceptual systems to pick up stimuli from the environment. Step two is where stimuli from the environment are interpreted. It is in step two that causal and intent attributions are made to try and make sense of the situation and the behaviours of others. In steps three and four people will then consider, based on the attributions made in step two, how to respond and whether this response will provide the outcome goals they wish to achieve. For example, if someone has behaved in what you see as an antinormative manner you may decide it's not worth bothering about and choose to ignore it. Alternatively you may choose to retaliate by, for instance, ending the relationship or reducing the amount of contact you have with the harmdoer. Step five refers to the cognitive evaluation people make of their chosen response. For example, they will consider the likely ramifications if they carried out that response, such as "what will happen if I retaliate?" In addition, people will consider their level of confidence in successfully enacting the response, for example; "Am I actually capable of and do I really want to retaliate?" The final stage is where the chosen behaviour is carried out (Crick & Dodge, 1994). The cognitive processes

underpinning the model are serial, although it is possible to go back to certain stages and restart the steps. For example, if you feel you cannot successful enact a chosen response (step 5) you can go back to step 4 and think about another response and then consider the second response again in step 5.

Crick and Dodge (1994) theorise that aggressive people tend to select and use less environmental information to interpret the behaviour of others. Aggressive people will also be more likely to concentrate on hostile environmental cues while unconsciously ignoring and filtering out benign cues. It is the honing in on potential hostile cues while ignoring benign cues that provides for the cognitive distortion of HABs. As Gibbs, Potter, and Goldstein (1995) argue, the misattribution of hostility can lead to violence because aggressive people engage in what they believe is justified retaliation due to assuming the other party intentionally aimed to harm and/or insult them. As such their violent behaviour is considered a legitimate response to the hostility demonstrated by the other party rather than an antagonistic or pre-emptive strike.

Although Crick and Dodge's (1994) model appears not to be have been critiqued directly, there is within the cognitive and social psychological literature a general critique of social information processing models of cognition. It is argued that that analogy of human cognition as akin to a computer information processing system is too abstract and reductionist (Best, 1999). Further, that when this model is used to interpret research there is potential for the findings themselves to be biased and discussed in value laden terms. For example, social information processing models are primarily underpinned by the hypothesis that humans process information in prescribed logical stages and where the processing occurs serially, similar to how a computer processes data. This can imply that when people do not process social information logically or serially they can be described as presenting with "cognitive distortions" or "thinking errors" (Best, 1999).

A second concern is that social information processing models pay too little attention to the social aspects that influence human cognition. It is argued that how significant others interpret the social encounters we have can be just as important as how we personally interpret them. For example, Bies and Tripp (1996) found that the attributions made by other people (e.g., work colleagues, friends) about a social situation, regardless of whether they witnessed it or not, could have an important influence on how a victim interprets their own victimisation. Bies and Tripp argued that when people discuss events with other people, the original interpretation of the event can be changed from neutral to hostile, or vice versa. Moreover, the motivation to retaliate can be enhanced based on what other people think and say to us. For example, "Are you really going to let them get away with that?" As Vaughan and Hogg (2002) noted social information processing models which aim to explain social interactions between people appear to have taken the "social" out of their explanatory framework by concentrating too much on internal individual cognition.

One theory that explains HABs by combining external social influences with internal cognition is Huesman's (1998) cognitive schemata model of aggression. Huesman's model contains two distinct aspects. The first aspect is the development of a hostile world view. This world view develops when people who grow up in hostile, unpredictable and aggressive environments learn to expect hostility and aggression from others. As exposure to hostility and aggression increases over time the person is more likely to develop a wide repertoire of hostile social scripts which in turn enhances hostile expectations over a wider range of social encounters. Therefore when faced with a social situation where harm occurred, and where the situation contained elements of ambiguity, the person who holds a wide repertoire of hostile scripts and expectations will assume that the other person's behaviour was antagonistic rather than thoughtless. The model also suggests that due to exposure to hostility and aggression over time, the

person will have observed, or at least heard about, problem solving strategies which are based on violence. When all these elements are combined this model proposes that the more you are exposed to hostility and aggression the more likely you are to store more hostile and violent experiences in memory. Over time you will come to see the world and other people as primarily hostile and aggressive. In memory you will have stored more hostile memories than non-hostile and will have developed more hostile social scripts and aggressive problem solving scripts. Based on the mismatch between hostile and non-hostile schemata, and as you expect hostility from others, when faced with an ambiguous situation you are more likely to recall hostile scripts from memory to help you make sense of the current situation. Huesman's model contains two aspects. The first, discussed above, describes hostile world schemata. The second aspect is normative beliefs about the acceptability of violence. This aspect will be discussed in Section 1.6.1 below when the literature examining violent and criminal sentiments is presented.

Although Huesman's (1998) and Crick and Dodge's (1994) models have some differences, both models emphasise that when people are faced with a social situation they will evaluate what is happening, make attributions about another person's behaviour and then search memory for an acceptable response. The main distinction between the models is that Crick and Dodge propose that HABs occur through the distorted cognitive processing of environmental stimuli, where a person hones in on hostile cues while filtering out benign cues. In contrast Huesman's model emphasises that HABs occur through the recall of hostile scripts and hostile social expectations held in memory as the guide for interpreting ambiguous social situations. In short, Crick and Dodge's model concentrates more heavily on internal cognitive processes whereas Huesman's concentrates on how external factors (e.g., family, peers, school) influence internal cognitive processes.

## 1.5.2. Hostile Attributional Biases: A Review of The Child and Adolescent Literature

The empirical research examining the social information processing models of Crick and Dodge (1994) and Huesman (1994) initially focused on the differences between young boys who did or did not engage in bullying and aggressive behaviour at school (de Castro, Veerman, Koops, Bosch & Monshouwer, 2002). The essence of this research was to ask whether a social interaction could be interpreted in different ways by different people. One of the first studies to examine HABs was by Nasby, Hayden & DePaulo (1980) using a sample of emotionally disturbed institutionalised boys. Using photographs of social interactions which participants rated on two dimensions (negative/positive and dominant/submissive), the researchers found that participations high on trait aggression reported significantly higher HABs. They found that regardless of the social situation the more aggressive boys tended to choose negative and dominant explanatory themes to interpret the situation relative to the less aggressive boys who used more positive and submissive explanations.

The work of Nasby et al., (1980) was expanded by Dodge (1980) who examined the differences in HABs between school boys judged by teachers and their peers as aggressive compared with boys judged to be non-aggressive. His study exposed both aggressive and non-aggressive boys to a puzzle task (constructing a model) with the possibility of winning a prize. During the task the boys were interrupted and taken into another room to view one of their peers' models. While in the room they heard via a bogus intercom that the peer was viewing their model and had destroyed it. The experiment had three conditions: the peer was heard to say "I didn't want him to win" (hostile); or "oh no, I didn't mean to drop it" (benign); or a third condition where the intent for the damage was unclear (ambiguous). Each participant was left alone in the peer's room and they were unaware that they were being observed to see whether they would react or not. Under the hostile condition most of the boys, regardless of whether

they were aggressive or not destroyed the peer's model.  In the benign condition most of the boys left the model alone. However, under the ambiguous condition significantly more aggressive boys broke their supposed antagonist's model than the non-aggressive boys. In a second study Dodge examined whether the hostile attributional bias observed in the previous study would occur when boys were presented with vignettes depicting negative frustrating outcomes (e.g., being hit on the back by a peer with a ball). Similar results were found with the aggressive boys attributing higher HABs to the peer's behaviour but only in the stories written to be ambiguous. The aggressive boys also reported that they expected these peers to be aggressive in the future and said they had higher distrust of them. Dodge proposed that aggressive children engaged in cue distortion under ambiguous circumstances.

The findings of Nasby et al., (1980) and Dodge (1980) that aggressive boys are more likely to have higher levels of HABs in ambiguous situations have been replicated in numerous studies using a variety of methods to measure HABs. Dodge and Frame (1982) replicated these results using a sample of 81 school boys who responded to written vignettes specifically asking the participants to imagine they were the victim and to infer the intent underpinning the actions of the harmdoer in each vignette. Courtney and Cohen (1996) found similar results with a sample of 84 third to sixth grade boys using videotaped scenarios. The reader is also referred to Coleman and Kardash (1999), Price and Dodge (1989) and Gomez and Gomez (2000) for similar findings.

In 1988, Slaby and Guerra expanded the research scope by using a sample of 144 violent adolescent offenders and high school students aged 14 to 18 years. The Slaby and Guerra study remains one of the few that has examined sex differences. Their study examined a number of aspects including cognitive content (just world and violent beliefs) and process (HABs and problem solving). HABs and problem solving were assessed by reading two hypothetical vignettes describing ambiguous potentially

problematic social encounters with a same-sex peer to each of the participants. Slaby and Guerra found that juvenile offenders who had been convicted of violent index offences (murder, rape, theft) were clearly distinguishable from high school students on the cognitive process variables. The offenders (both male and female) were more likely to interpret ambiguous social situations as hostile, to use fewer facts as the basis for their interpretation, to consider fewer options to solve the problem, and to choose more aggressive behavioural responses than both male and female students. Several sex differences were found. Relative to males, females (regardless of being an offender or student) were less likely to attribute hostile intent to the ambiguous acts of another. Females, regardless of group, also demonstrated significantly higher problem solving skills by using more facts to base their intent attributions on and to evaluate the consequences of their considered behavioural response. With respect to endorsement of beliefs, the offenders, especially males, were more supportive of the use of violence. The findings for endorsement of violent beliefs is presented below (refer Section 1.6.6 where the literature on violent sentiments is presented).

In a later study by Dodge, Price, Bachorowski and Newman (1990) they examined whether demonstrations of HABs could distinguish violent male juvenile offenders from non-violent offenders. The groups were: offenders who primarily engaged in reactive violence; non-violent offenders; and violent offenders who primarily engaged in instrumental violence. The sample were 128 offenders aged 14 to 19 incarcerated in a maximum-security juvenile institution. HABs were assessed using videotaped vignettes presenting ambiguous social interactions. The vignettes were deemed ambiguous because the intent underpinning the harmdoers' behaviour could be interpreted in a number of ways, not necessarily hostile. Dodge et al., found HABs were positively correlated with the following variables: participants classified as undersocialised aggressive conduct disordered; males who primarily engaged in reactive (irritable,

angry, hot-tempered) aggression; and finally with the number of interpersonally violent offence convictions (such as assault). In contrast, HABs were not significantly correlated with non-violent offending, or with juvenile offenders classified as socialised aggressive conduct disordered and who primarily committing acts of instrumental violence. These results held after IQ, SES, and ethnicity were controlled. Based on these findings Dodge et al., (1990) argued that HABs were significantly relevant to people who primarily engage in reactive aggression.

A later study by Van Oostrum and Horvath (1997) examined the effects of HABs in a sample of 58 male high school students aged 16-18 years. Specifically, the study aimed to assess the relationship between perceived HABs and aggressive behaviour ratings. The participants read three hypothetical vignettes detailing a problematic social situation between two males. The intent underpinning the harmdoer's behaviour in all scenarios was ambiguous. Aggressive behaviour ratings were based on scores from the Youth Self Report (YSL; Achenbach, 1995). The results found a significant positive relationship between higher HABs and a higher aggression rating under ambiguous social situations.

In Shah (1998) rejected the Dodge et al., (1990) hypothesis that people engage in two distinct forms of violence, namely: reactively, when they misattribute hostile intent to others and behave aggressively to protect/defend themselves; or instrumentally, violence as a means to an end to achieve material or status goals. Shah, like Farrington (1997), argued that where juveniles engage in violence, even though they may have more convictions for one type of violence, they will often engage in both types at some point. Shah therefore examined whether the link between HABs and reactive aggression was overstated. Shah classified the incarcerated violent juvenile offender sample into two groups based on primary type of offending history. Offenders who had primarily committed assault were defined as reactive aggressive, and those who had primarily

committed robbery with violence were classified as proactive aggressive. In part one of the study, Shah asked the juveniles convicted of either assault or robbery to describe their thoughts and feelings before their current offence had occurred. Shah proposed that the participants would describe distinctly different cognitions associated with the two different types of crimes (assault or robbery). The qualitative results supported this hypothesis with the juveniles who had committed assault reporting cognitions consistent with the HABs hypothesis. In contrast, adolescents last convicted for robbery with violence reported cognitions associated with proactive aggression (i.e. material and status goals). In part two of the study, all participants, regardless of group (assault or robbery) listened to stories in which a harmdoer committed a crime. The stories were presented in two ways. One set of stories made the cognitions of the offender harmdoer explicitly reactive or proactive. The second set was specifically written so that the intent of the offender could be explained in a number of ways (the ambiguous condition). It was predicted that if HABs related to the distorted cognitive processing of offenders who engage primarily in reactive aggression, then the offenders in the assault group would use more hostile interpretations of the stories than offenders in the robbery group. The results did not support this hypothesis. The participants' interpretations of the harmdoer's actions in the ambiguous stories were not related to the type of offence they had last committed. However, although the two offender groups could not be distinguished, Shah did note that most of the participants tended to use hostile explanations and attributions for ambiguous events rather than benign.

In a recent meta-analysis using 41 peer-reviewed studies with a pooled sample of 6,017 children and adolescents the link between HABs and bullying and violent behaviour found an overall effect size of $r = .17$ (de Castro et al., 2002). Although the overall mean effect size was small, de Castro et al., found that effect sizes for individual studies ranged from a negative ($r = -.29$) to a large positive effect size ($r = .65$). One of

the discrepancies between studies related to the type of stimulus method used to assess HABs. The analysis found that four main types of stimulus had been used. The first type, which yielded the lowest effect size (r <.09) was where participants were presented with pictures or photographs depicting social interactions and were asked to rate the intent of the harmdoers. Low to medium effect sizes were found when participants had been presented with videotaped scenarios of social interactions and asked to rate intent (r = .09). Larger effect sizes were found when participants were presented with hypothetical vignettes or scenarios. No significant differences were found between the studies who orally read the vignettes to participants, or where participants read the vignettes themselves (r = .24). Finally, the largest effect size found was for experimental research that had created and staged an actual social interaction between research participants and confederates (r = .55). The overall conclusion of de Castro et al., was that the research provided strong support for the hypothesis that HABs are significantly related to the aggressive and bullying behaviour of young male children and adolescents. As there were too few studies using female children and adolescent participants de Castro et al., could not perform a full analysis and they considered that due to the lack of research it was premature to suggest that HABs are associated with female violence.

In summary, the empirical studies using child and adolescent samples have overall supported the hypothesis that higher levels of HABs are found in people who engage in violent behaviour. It appears from the child and adolescent literature that HABs are of the most concern for young aggressive people when they interpret socially ambiguous situations. HABs do not appear to be of concern in explicitly hostile or benign situations. Crick and Dodge (1994) suggested that HABs appear more problematic for people who engage in reactive aggression. However the findings are less clear on this hypothesis, with Shah's (1998) study suggesting that HABs are problematic for

adolescent offenders regardless of whether they primarily engage in reactive or instrumental violence. Finally, although de Castro et al., (2002) could not analyse sex differences due to the lack of research using female participants, the findings of Slaby and Guerra (1998) suggest that although HABs appear to be somewhat problematic for violent female adolescents, it is male offenders who demonstrated significantly higher HABs than female offenders.

### 1.5.3. Hostile Attributional Biases: A Review of the Adult Empirical Literature

The link between HABs and violent behaviour in adults features heavily in the forensic theoretical literature (refer especially Blackburn, 1993; Serin & Kuriychuk, 1994). Despite this emphasis in the literature, the empirical research using adult samples (aged 18 years and over) appears to be less abundant than studies which uses children and adolescents. After an extensive search, using numerous electronic databases and literature reviews, only a few studies linking HABs and violent behaviour in adults could be located.

In 1995 Epps and Kendall examined the HABs and violent behaviour link in an adult sample of 120 male and female psychology undergraduates divided into four groups: men and women who were high or low on trait anger and aggression. Each participant interpreted 22 social scenarios, such as "being jostled in the hallway". The scenarios were written to reflect three types of intent underpinning the harmdoer's behaviour in each scenario, either explicitly hostile or benign or where the intent was ambiguous. Epps and Kendall found that participants high on self-reported trait anger and aggression demonstrated significantly higher HABs than their less trait angry and aggressive peers in both the hostile and ambiguous scenarios, and also to a lesser extent in the benign scenarios. Further, participants high on trait anger/aggression were found to be much more accurate at seeing the hostile cues in the hostile situations than their

peers. In the benign scenarios, the students high on anger/aggression were significantly more likely to hone in on the minority of hostile cues while passing over the majority benign cues. Sex differences were also found with males in the high anger/aggression group demonstrating higher HABs than any other group, especially for benign statements. Epps and Kendall hypothesised that aggressive people learn to expect aggression and therefore believe they see hostility and malice in the behaviour of others when no hostility was intended. They also suggested that as aggressive people store in memory new hostile social scripts they simultaneously reinforce old hostile scripts. This means that over time aggressive people expect aggression and hostility from others and therefore respond disproportionately to a minimum number of hostile cues while unconsciously ignoring non-hostile cues.

One of the first studies to examine HABs in adult offenders was by Copello and Tata (1990). The sample were 27 male participants being; 9 offenders incarcerated at Broadmore Forensic Hospital in the U.K., 9 offenders on parole for the offences of car theft or fraud, and 9 non-offenders who were semi-skilled Broadmore Forensic Hospital staff. Copello and Tata's study examined group differences in interpretation and recall of sentences. Participants were presented with a set of 12 sentences that could be interpreted as either a violent threat or a neutral statement, such as, "the painter drew a knife". Participants were then asked to confirm visually what they read. For example, they could recall the sentence as either hostile ("the painter pulled a knife") or neutral ("the painter sketched a knife"). The researchers hypothesised that if violent offenders manifest a paranoid "assume the worst and expect hostility" style of interpreting social ambiguity then they would be more likely to interpret the sentences as hostile than either the non-violent offenders or the non-offenders. The findings only partially supported the hypothesis. Although the 9 violent offenders used more hostile interpretations than the 9 non-offenders, the violent offenders were not significantly

different from non-violent offenders. Due to the characteristics of the violent offender sample (incarcerated in a forensic institution, classified as seriously violent, and having been diagnosed as psychopathic or personality disordered) it is difficult to generalise these results to violent offenders held in general prison populations.

In 2002, Simourd and Mamuza reported the mean differences in HABs between two samples: 146 high-risk violent Canadian male prisoners and 104 male and 33 female low-risk U.S. offenders serving community probation sentences. HABs were measured using the "Hostile Interpretations Questionnaire" (HIQ: Simourd & Mamuza, 2002). The HIQ presents participants with a series of seven statements and asks them to interpret the motive of each harmdoer. Each situation in the HIQ was based on clinical experience of common social situations that Canadian offenders have found problematic, such as interactions with family members, police and parole officers. Although the HIQ manual did not provide any results on the statistical differences between the prisoner sample and community sample, the means presented in the manual showed that the community probationers had higher total HIQ mean scores (M = 69.9) than prisoners (M = 58.6), suggesting that the lower recidivism risk offenders demonstrated higher HABs than the higher risk violent prison sample. As Simourd and Mamuza said, the higher HABs demonstrated by the lower-risk non-violent offender sample was surprising.

In a recent study Seager (2005) examined hostile cognitive schemas as manifested through HABs, impulsivity and psychopathy. His sample were 50 male violent Canadian prisoners. Seager hypothesised that persistently violent men have greater expectations of a hostile social world (hostile schemata) which would be manifested through high impulsivity scores, high scores on the Psychopathy Check List -Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 1991) and high HABs to socially ambiguous written vignettes. The results supported this chain of reasoning. Higher psychopathy scores on the PCL-R

were significantly and positively related with: higher impulsivity scores; higher number of assaults; prison violence rating; and high levels of HABs. Based on these results Seager suggested that written vignettes were a satisfactory measure to tap into the underlying construct of hostile social world schemas. He also hypothesised that violent men who expect the social world to be hostile impulsively confirm their HABs and react accordingly. However, as Seager pointed out, these results were speculative only and need replication primarily due to the small and "extreme" sample of prisoners used (violent offenders classified as high on psychopathy).

In contrast to Seager's findings, a recent study by Vitale, Newman, Serin and Bolt (2005), using 150 violent Caucasian and African-American offenders incarcerated in two U.S. prisons, found no relationship between violent behaviour and HABs. Vitale et al's study aimed to test whether there were two causal pathways to higher HABs, one was depressogenic attributional style (the tendency to see the self, the world, and the future in a negative ways) and the other was psychopathy (as measured by the PCL-R). HABs were measured using 10 short vignettes devised by the authors. The results found that higher psychopathy scores were significantly related to higher HABs for Caucasian offenders and with depressogenic attributional style significantly related to higher HABs in African-Americans. High psychopathy scores were also significantly related to violent criminal behaviour. However, and contrary to prediction, HABs were not causally related to violent criminal behaviour for either Caucasian or African-American offenders. Vitale et al., suggested this counterintuitive result was probably due to measurement error, specifically that the vignettes were too short to capture HABs and that the measure of violent behaviour (a tally of the number of violent convictions) was inadequate.

Within the adult literature, a few studies have looked at the link between HABs and specific types of violent behaviour, such as driver related aggression (road rage) and

domestic violence. Matthews and Norris (2002) examined HABs in 263 men and women adult drivers from the community who were aged 18 to 86 years and were either high or low on trait aggression and hostility. participants were presented with scenarios describing everyday road events and asked to judge the harmdoer's motives for his or her driving behaviour. The harmdoer's actions in the scenarios could be interpreted as underpinned by hostility, or where intent was ambiguous, or where the behaviour was accidental. The results found that men and women, regardless of their level of trait aggression and hostility, were equally accurate in perceiving antagonism and provocation from the other driver when the scenario depicted a hostile situation. These results also applied to interpretations of accidental situations. Differences were found in the ambiguous scenarios with men and women high on trait hostility demonstrating higher HABs in their interpretations of ambiguous road situations compared with their less hostile peers. There was also a relationship between HABs and age with HABs reducing as age increased. Additional analyses of self-reported actual driving behaviour showed that younger drivers high on trait aggression were more likely to report engaging in risky driving behaviour and that they had personally experienced several instances of aggression from others on the road compared with their older and/or less aggressive peers. Finally, after the miles driven by participants were controlled, no sex differences in HABs were found.

The second specific area of research is the link between HABs and domestic violence. Holtzworth-Munroe and Hutchinson (1993) examined the differences in how men perceive the ambiguous behaviour of their spouses. The participants were; 22 domestically violent men, 17 non-violent but unhappily married men, and 17 non-violent happily married men. The results found that domestically violent men were more likely to demonstrate higher HABs to the ambiguous behaviour of their wives than the other two groups. For example, in a social setting, such as the pub, if a husband saw

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his wife talking to a handsome man they did not know, the violent men were significantly more likely to believe their wife would be flirting with the stranger, rather than just talking to him, or that their wife actually knew the man. The results also found that domestically violent men, relative to their non-violent peers, were more likely to report higher levels of jealousy, and said they were more sensitive to "perceived" challenges or being teased by their wives. While higher HABs were associated with the domestically violent men, there were no differences in HABs in the two non-violent groups. In other words, non-violent men regardless of whether they are happily married or not demonstrated lower HABs than the men who were violent towards their wives.

### 1.5.4. Summary of the Adult HAB Literature and Research Directions

In summary, our knowledge of how potentially problematic HABs are for adults who engage in violent behaviour is limited and in some instances the findings are conflictory. At present it appears that there is no published and peer-reviewed literature on the differences between mainstream (e.g., not high on psychopathy) adult violent offenders and non-offenders, especially a random sample of non-offenders from the general population. This gap in the literature is of concern because we cannot say with confidence whether HABs are an important criminogenic risk factor that discriminates offenders from non-offenders. This means we cannot assume that HABs should be targeted in violent offender rehabilitation. Also of concern are the two discrepancies between study findings and some counterintuitive findings which deviate from what the hypothesis relating high HABs to violent behaviour would predict.

The first discrepancy is the conditions under which HABs operate most strongly. Unlike the child and adolescent empirical literature which found that HABs are primarily problematic under ambiguous social situations, the adult literature provides

conflicting results. For example, Epps and Kendall (1995) found that aggressive university students demonstrated higher HABs in a wide range of both hostile and ambiguous, and to a lesser degree in benign social situations relative to their less aggressive student peers. However, Copello and Tata (1990), Matthews and Norris (2002), and Holtzworth-Munroe and Hutchinson (1993) found that HABs appeared problematic only in ambiguous situations.

The second discrepancy is whether HABs are associated with a range of violent behaviour by adults, especially interpersonally violent acts like assault, or only problematic for specific acts of violence like road rage and spousal abuse. If HABs are problematic for violent adults in a range of social situations then it is reasonable to suggest that people known to engage in high levels of interpersonal violence should demonstrate higher HABs than their less aggressive peers. The findings by Copello and Tata (1990), Simourd and Mamuza (2002), and now Vitale et al., (2005) appear counterintuitive to what would be expected.

Although the adult research reviewed above provides tentative support for the hypothesis that HABs represent a risk factor for adults who engage in violent behaviour, there is one question that the current literature cannot answer: *do adult violent offenders engage in a higher level of HABs than non-offending adults from the general community?* This question is of vital importance because due to the lack of empirical findings using adult samples, it is unclear whether HABs represent a dynamic criminogenic variable for adults or is primarily an adolescent limited cognitive process. Answering this question became one of the aims of the current project where HABs will be compared in three distinct samples: violent offenders; non-offender university students; and non-offender men from the community.

In order to carry out this aim it was necessary to consider how to compare HABs in violent offenders and non-offenders. As discussed above in the child and adolescent

review, de Castro et al., (2002) found that the stimulus method used to measure HABs had a significant impact on the effect size obtained for assessing between group differences, the highest effect size being for actual staged social interactions between participants and research confederates. Despite this method being the most optimal from a research perspective, it would be highly unethical to stage a mock social interaction with adults who have a known history of engaging in serious acts of violence. Assessing HABs via written vignettes or scenarios was found to produce a medium effect size (de Castro et al., 2002). Six of the seven adult studies reviewed above had used this method and had reported good reliability and validity for the scenarios.

In Epps and Kendall's (1995) study vignettes were specially written to describe typical situations that students attending a university could relate to and would commonly find themselves in. Although Epps and Kendall reported good reliability, their scenarios were so specific to being a student (e.g., interactions between students and lecturers) they may not necessarily be relevant to offenders or adults who had not attended university or college. Simourd and Mamuza (2002), Seager (2005) and Vitale et al., (2005) presented their offender participants with scenarios detailing different kinds of situations that clinicians had noted offenders found problematic, such as interactions with prison inmates, police and parole officers. Again, although overall good validity and reliability were reported for each of these scales, the situations assessed were relevant for offenders and may not necessarily be relevant to non-offenders (for instance, interactions with parole officers). Finally, several other scales exist to measure HABs although their scope is limited to the link between HABs and specific types of aggressive behaviour, such as road rage (Matthews and Norris, 2002) or domestic violence (Holtzworth-Munroe and Hutchinson, 1993). After assessing the content of the scenarios from the reviewed studies and after an extensive search of peer-reviewed published sources, a suitable scale to measure the differences between

offenders and non-offenders could not be located. Therefore, an additional aim was to develop and validate a psychometric scale that would be useful in multiple settings. To achieve this aim the scenarios contained in the scale would need to be applicable and relevant to prisoners, offenders on community orders, university undergraduates, and non-offenders in the community. As Aronson (2004) noted, if researchers want valid information about what or how people think, it is essential that people are asked to discuss issues they can understand and relate to. The aim here was that the scale once developed would be useful for both research purposes and for clinical applications (i.e. as a pre and post intervention measure).

## 1.6. Violent and Criminal Sentiments

Criminal sentiments represent a set of attitudes, values and beliefs that represent personal proximal and interpersonal support for engaging in criminal acts (Andrews & Wormith, 1990). At present, criminal sentiments are discussed in terms of three constructs and are expressed as a negative opinion of the validity of law and the criminal justice system, a higher tolerance for law violation, and a higher identification with criminal peers.

Criminal sentiments have a prominent place in several influential theories from sociology, criminology and psychology, such as differential association (Sutherland, 1947), neutralisation theory (Sykes & Matza, 1957), social learning theory (Bandura, 1973, 1977) and the psychology of criminal thinking (Walters, 1990). Within Andrews and Bonta's (1998) general personality and social psychological theory of offending behaviour, antisocial attitudes and peer affiliations, along with criminal history and selected personality factors (such as impulsivity, problem solving skills, and antisocial personality) comprise the "big four" risk factors for engaging in offending behaviour. A series of recent large meta-analytical studies (using pooled samples of up to 11,962

offenders), have found that high endorsement of pro-offending sentiments represents the highest risk factor for recidivism for both men and women (Dowden & Andrews, 1999; Gendreau et al, 1996). Moreover, endorsement of criminal sentiments has been found to be highly predictive of a criminal past and future for adult men, explaining 40% of the variance in three-year recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 1998), and especially predictive of violent recidivism for men (Walters, Trgovac, Rychlec, Di Fazio & Olson, 2002). Despite criminal sentiments' prominence in the literature, and their status as the highest risk factor for recidivism (especially for violent men) Walters et al., (2002) argue that rehabilitation programs do not devote enough serious attention to the reduction of these sentiments. This appears to occur because some clinicians favour empirical assessment tools which do not measure criminal sentiments directly (such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) (MMPI; Hathaway & McKinley, 1982) rather than theoretically driven tools (e.g., actuarial risk assessments or specific criminal sentiments scales) (Hilton, Harris, Rawson & Beach, 2005; Simourd & Olver, 2002). As such, the results from psychological testing using empirical tools cannot measure the degree to which criminal sentiments have become ingrained with an offender's value and belief system. This means there is the potential for intervention to not fully address this risk factor.

### 1.6.1. The psychology of Criminal and Violent Sentiments: From Differential Association to Normative Beliefs of Aggression

The three most influential theories underpinning the criminal sentiments construct are differential-association, social learning theory and the techniques of neutralisation (Andrews & Bonta, 1998). Criminal sentiments have been examined extensively by criminology and sociology and the three main theories reviewed here originated in these

two disciplines. However, where forensic and psychological theories are akin to

criminological and sociological theories they will be presented and discussed.

One of the first theorists to discuss criminal attitudes and values was Sutherland

(1947). From the 1930s up to the late 1940s, Sutherland devised and reformulated his

social-interactionist theory of differential-association (DA). He suggested that offending

and deviant behaviour was learnt through interaction with others. The theory of DA

proposed nine key points, which are as follows

1. Criminal behaviour is learned.
2. Criminal behaviour is learnt in interaction with others in a process of
   communication.
3. The principle part of the learning of criminal behaviour occurs within intimate
   personal groups.
4. When criminal behaviour is learned, the learning includes (a) the techniques of
   committing the crime, which are sometimes very complicated, sometimes very
   simple, and (b) the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations and
   attitudes.
5. The specific direction of motives and attitudes is learned from definitions of the
   legal codes as favourable or unfavourable.
6. A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favourable to
   violation of law over definitions unfavourable to violation of law.
7. Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity.
8. The process of learning criminal behaviour by association with criminal and anti-
   criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other
   leaning.
9. Although criminal behaviour is an expression of general needs and values, it is not
   explained by those general needs and values, because non-criminal behaviour is an
   expression of the same needs and values.

In essence, DA proposed offending behaviour was learnt in the same manner as other

social behaviour was learnt, with the learning taking place within intimate groups

whose members defined offending, or any act of deviance, favourably. The important

aspect of differential association was key point six which emphasised that people

engage in criminal acts because they have learnt definitions (attitudes and

rationalisations) that favour the specific criminal act in question in excess over

definitions that see the act as unacceptable. An important aspect of Sutherland's

theory was that offenders were not necessarily viewed as psychologically different

from people who are not offenders. As Giddens (2001) explained, according to DA

"thieves are just like people in orthodox jobs in trying to make money, but they choose illegal means to do so" (p.209). Although Sutherland's work was influential, his theory of DA was critiqued. The main critique was that DA was merely a set of untestable propositions as the psychological mechanisms of learning DA referred to were not explained (Blackburn, 1993).

In 1973, Akers addressed this critique by reformulating DA through the addition of Bandura's (1973) behavioural reinforcement and role-modeling. Akers (1985, 1997) stressed the importance of considering how the key points of DA interacted with a person's social history based on the consequences of their observing others, or themselves engaging in offending behaviour that had been rewarding in the past or perceived as rewarding in the present and future. Therefore, if a previous criminal act had been seen to be reinforcing, whether personally, (excitement, revenge, justice, money), or interpersonally (supported by others, or at least not condemned by significant others), then given similar circumstances the probability of the same or similar act was high. Akers' social learning theory was not simply about antisocial peers initiating a person onto a criminal trajectory through observing criminal behaviour; rather the emphasis, like Sutherland, was that the ratio of exposure to favourable definitions exceeded unfavourable definitions. Furthermore, both favourable and unfavourable definitions could be learnt from direct or indirect reference groups. Direct reference groups comprise of criminal and non-criminal peers and associates or any important social group, such as families, schools and churches. Indirect exposure occurred through imaginary comparative reference groups, such as media images which acted as a subjective norm, where a person believed that the comparative reference would endorse similar behaviour to what the person has, or intends to, engage in.

The essence of social learning theory is that a causal sequence occurs from exposure to definitions and criminal behaviour (Akers, 1997). When a person is exposed

more often and over a longer period of time to favourable definitions and reinforcing observations, then when a person finds themself in a specific situation, given their earlier exposure, they are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour. A criminal act is also more likely if the person believes that significant others will support their actions, whether it be actual peers, or a perception created by identification with an indirect comparative reference group (e.g., a media stereotype). The converse is suggested to happen for a person who has been exposed to more unfavourable definitions than favourable. For the person exposed to a higher level of unfavourable definitions then given a situation where a specific criminal act can occur, if a person has internalised into their belief system definitions stating that this criminal act is wrong, then the probability of that person carrying out that criminal act is low.

The sequence that Akers proposed is akin to several influential psychological theories. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) and Ajzen and Madden (1986) suggested that behaviour was a consequence of an intention to act. Intentions were considered a function of; positive attitudes toward the behaviour, the perception that others would support you engaging in that behaviour; and knowledge or a 'personal belief' that the behaviour, or something similar, had been engaged in successfully in the past, or was perceived as accomplishable given the present circumstances. Ajzen and Madden's work has been successfully used to predict behaviour from attitudes under various conditions, such as political voting, slimming program completion, and quitting smoking (Aronson, 2004).

The essence of Akers' (1973, 1997) theory, which originated in criminology, can also be seen in two other psychological theories. The first is Andrews and Bonta's (1998) influential general personality and social psychological approach to criminal behaviour. This approach argues that given certain situations where temptations are present, or stress levels high, offending behaviour will be likely if a person's has a

positive attitude towards criminal behaviour, they know how to rationalise and justify their acts, and believe others will support them. The second is Huesman's (1998) cognitive schemata model of aggression. Huesman's model has two aspects. The first relates to hostile schemata and the attribution of hostile intent, which was discussed in the previous section (refer Section 1.5). The second aspect of Huesman's theory is the role of normative beliefs supporting the use of aggression. This second aspect draws heavily from the work of Bandura (1973, 1977), as does Akers' theory, the only differences between the theories is the terminology used. Whereas Huesman refers to criminal and violent sentiments as normative beliefs of aggression, Akers refers to criminal sentiments as favourable and unfavourable definitions for engaging in crime. Furthermore, like Akers, Huesman's model suggested that repeated exposure to violence (whether direct through the environment or indirect such as through the media) creates the circumstances under which people observe violence as a problem solving strategy. If this strategy is seen as successful and considered appropriate and achievable people are more likely to develop a belief system that sees retaliation and/or pre-emptive acts of force as normative. Huesman's normative beliefs essentially represent personally held idiosyncratic norms and self-efficacy evaluations for behavioural responses. For example, given a certain social situation where harm occurred, would you see the use of force as an acceptable means to solve the issue? Furthermore, would you be confident that you could successfully engage in aggression to achieve the outcome you want?

## 1.6.2. Favourable Definitions: Neutralisation of Criminal and Violent Behaviour

In Akers' (1997) theory the favourable definitions referred to were based upon Sykes and Matza's (1957) five techniques of neutralisation. Neutralisations are the sentiments offenders used, or could use, to justify and rationalise offending behaviour. Sykes and

Matza (1957) originally proposed that neutralisations, once learnt and internalised, would operate before a criminal act. However, clinical reports from justice personnel suggest that neutralisations could be used prior, during, or after a criminal act (Andrews & Bonta, 1998). Sykes and Matza proposed five different forms of neutralisations, these are as follows:

1. Denial of responsibility, where a person's actions were viewed as beyond their personal control (e.g., I was drunk; I just blew up; I blacked out).
2. Denial of injury, where the act was viewed as harmless (it was just a prank).
3. Denial of the victim, where there were no victims, or where the victim deserved it (I only steal from businesses, they have insurance; rats deserve what they get; they are also criminal so they shouldn't complain).
4. Condemn the condemners, where the behaviours of others who condemn the act was questioned (people are hypocrites; the police are on the take; everyone breaks the law at one time or another how come I am condemned?).
5. Appeals to higher loyalties (my family needed the money what else could I do; my friends were relying on me how could I let them down?).


Matza and Sykes (1961) and Akers (1997) argued that most offenders were neither committed to law-abiding or offending behaviour. Therefore, conventional social values would not be rejected completely, but knowing how to rationalise and justify criminal and deviant acts provided choice in whether to engage in a crime, and then to deal with any guilt during or after. In sum, the techniques of neutralisation, once learnt and internalised, provided the reasoning that, in general, the deliberate harming of others is not acceptable; however, given certain circumstances a criminal or deviant act would be considered to be understandable, even necessary (albeit from the offender's perspective). Matza and Sykes also proposed that neutralisations were the means by which offenders pushed the boundaries of legal codes (specific criminal laws) by the extension of social norms. For example, acts of violence are condoned in some social circumstances, such as in war, sporting events like boxing and certain martial arts. Matza and Sykes proposed that offenders simply extended the social settings, such as pub brawls considered to be a private matter and not much different to a boxing match,

or assaults on "rats" (a person considered a lowlife or simply "scum") as similar to the rationale often used when nations go to war, remedying injustice.

The psychological underpinning of neutralisation theory appears to be akin to Aronson's (2004) social psychological theory of dissonance and self-justification. Sykes and Matza considered that the psychological effect of neutralising criminal behaviour was to reduce guilt, and/or to maintain a positive self-concept. Aronson's theory hypothesised that in general most people need and prefer to see themselves as decent and reasonable people who do not intentionally go around hurting people. This preference for seeing the self as a decent person would become dissonant to personal knowledge that you intended to, or were at that moment hurting, or had hurt someone. Aronson suggested two mechanisms existed for reducing dissonance, each mechanism being directly related to the type of harm caused. First, if the harm is or was not explicit, dissonance could be reduced through attitude changes that minimised the consequences, such as, "it's not that bad", or "no harm done, insurance will cover it" (akin to neutralisation type 2, denial of injury). For example, it may be possible that robbery with violence could be neutralised by this first method if no victims were actually physically injured. In contrast, where the harm is, or was, obvious, minimising the harm would not reduce dissonance. However, transferring the blame to the victim and then reducing the victim to subhuman level could reduce the dissonance, such as, "if that rat hadn't done X, then I wouldn't have had to do Y, they deserved what they got" (akin to neutralisation type 3, denial of the victim)[1]. In essence, by transferring the blame you make the other party culpable. When emphasising and honing in on the "badness" of a victim any cruel acts that you may have done can be cognitively changed into a justified, righteous, even a good act. As both Bandura (1990) and Aronson (2004)

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[1] Of interest, Indermaur (1995) found that one reason offenders gave for harming victims during a robbery was because they had perceived that the victim was trying to prevent them from escaping. The harm was justified because people should know to do as they told during a robbery. Therefore if people choose to "play the hero" they are more likely to get hurt.

noted, reducing dissonance by victim blaming can have terrible consequences, because through the process of dehumanising people we come to see them as little more then "despicable rats", and it becomes far easier to harm "rats" than another thinking feeling human being. For example, during the court-marshal of U.S. Army Lieutenant Calley (concerning his part in the massacre which took place in the Northern Vietnamese village of Mai Lai), evidence was presented to suggest that Calley had come to see the Vietnamese people as deserving of harm because he believed they supported the communist regime. Calley and the men under his authority also had subhumanised the Vietnamese referring to them as "VC gooks". Evidence was presented that Calley and his men considered killing "VC gooks" a mission (that it was expected of them as soldiers to reduce the communist threat) (Scharf, Marrero & Lininger, 1981). In the case of Calley and his men, their mission to remove the communist threat resulted in the brutal massacre of 200 elderly men, women and children.

### 1.6.3. Critique of Differential Association and Social Learning Theory

The first critique of Sutherland's DA and Akers' social learning theory concerned the influence of criminal peer and associates. Glueck and Glueck (1950) and Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) disputed the idea that people learn to be criminal through their affiliations with criminal associates. They argued that "birds of a feather flock together", where people already involved in deviant pathways will seek out other deviant peers to associate with, primarily because deviant people would find it difficult to associate with more conventional and non-deviant peers, and vice-versa. The essence of this critique was that there was no effect from criminal peers on the onset and acceleration of a criminal career. Contrary to this critique, the longitudinal work of Farrington (1992) in the U.K. found that criminal associations, whether peers, siblings, parents, or the self-modeling of peers in the neighbourhood, was strongly associated

with the frequency of offending, and highly predictive of adolescent offending continuing into adulthood. Farrington found that by age 19, the young men whose serious delinquency was adolescent limited stated the main reason for desisting was that they now had new friends and did not socialise with their former delinquent peers. Similar results were found in the longitudinal U.S. study of Conway and McCord (2002) where violent offenders who commenced their violent career with violent co-offenders (especially three or more violent co-offenders) were more likely to become enmeshed into a violent criminal career which continued into adulthood. Conway and McCord also found that violent juvenile offenders whose first violent offence occurred with violent co-offenders were more likely to engage in higher levels of violence causing more injury to their victims than violent offenders who commenced their criminal career as solo offenders. Finally, Agnew (1991) who re-analysed the data from 1,725 boys from the large longitudinal U.S. National Youth Survey, found more support for Social learning theory, especially for serious delinquency. The findings were that adolescent males who engaged in minor delinquency (shop-lifting, destroying property) carried out these acts regardless of peer influence or support. However, peers were highly influential in the escalation and continuance of serious delinquency (selling hard drugs, major theft, assault). The influence of peers on serious delinquency occurred regardless of how cohesive or long term the peer relationships were. As Andrews and Bonta (1998) have argued it is not so much the type or the stability of the relationship between anti-social peers that is important but rather the level of support for offending behaviour that peers provide.

The second critique related to the underlying psychological purpose of neutralisation.

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), Hindelang (1970) and Hollinger (1991) considered that neutralisations were not a psychological mechanism for reducing guilt, but were merely

the manifestation of an underlying antisocial value system. The essence of this argument was that as offenders were not attached to conventional social norms and values in the first place there was nothing to neutralise when norms, such as theft or assault, were violated. This position was primarily based on the work of Hindelang (1970), who had asked adolescents whether they respected the police, and whether they approved of criminal acts, such as assault, in a yes/no format. Hindelang found that adolescents reporting a high level of delinquency had less respect for police, and approved of their criminal acts. These results were the basis for the critique. Another interpretation of these findings is that they are not as divergent from neutralisation theory as Hindelang has thought. Neutralisation theory would predict that people would justify their deviant acts and in turn question, even condemn those who condemned them, especially the justice system and the police. As Hindelang did not ask why criminal acts were approved of, or why the police deserved less respect, it could be argued that neutralisation theory was not tested as it was intended. Further, the only norms addressed in Hindelang's work were related to offending, and as such the generalisation that offenders were not attached to social norms may be too broad. In a study by Stevenson (2001), violent men and women offenders and non-offenders were asked to state whether they thought 11 conventional social norms were important or not, such as telling the truth, obeying the law, avoiding theft and keeping promises. The results found that regardless of whether a person was male or female, or an offender or not, most people considered the conventional social values measured were important to uphold. These results were contrary to what Gottfredson and Hirschi, Hindelang and Hollinger hypothesised and suggest that in general offenders do consider conventional moral norms important to uphold.

## 1.6.4. Endorsement of Criminal Sentiments: A Review of the Empirical Literature

One of the first empirical investigations into criminal sentiments was carried out in 1963 by Mylonas and Reckless. In their exploratory study they examined endorsement of attitudes toward the validity of law and criminal justice personnel in 300 men who had been recently incarcerated at the Ohio Penitentiary in the U.S. The sample were divided into subgroups based on specific demographic variables such as marital status, race and criminal history. They found that African-Americans had less favourable attitudes towards the law and justice personnel than Caucasians. However, Mylonas and Reckless argued this difference could have occurred due to the explicit racism and discrimination experienced by African-Americans. Single men were also found to have more negative attitudes than married men. In addition, the longer the criminal history and the more exposure to the justice system and justice personnel, the more negative the attitudes towards the legal system. The 30-item "law scale" used by Mylonas and Reckless was reduced to 27 items, renamed "Attitudes towards the Law, Courts and Police (ALCP)" and inserted into the widely used Criminal Sentiments Scale (Andrews & Wormith, 1984).

One of the first studies to explore the interactive effects of the variables underpinning social learning theory was carried out by Akers and Cochran (1985). They found strong support for DA and social learning theory in relation to illegal drug use. The study specifically examined the relationship between exposure to favourable definitions to drug use, the level of support and type of relationships with peers who used illegal drugs, and actual drug taking behaviour in a sample of 2700 male and female senior high school and college students. Akers and Cochran found that having a positive attitude towards drugs, high exposure to definitions suggesting that drug use was "cool", and having a perception that others approved of drug use (especially having friends who used drugs) accounted for 68% of the variance in students who used drugs.

In addition, sex differences were not found, with these interactive variables having as much influence for males as females.

In a recent cross-sectional study from the U.S., Alarid, Burton and Cullen (2000) examined social learning variables using a sample of 1031 male and 122 female adult prisoners. Twenty percent of the sample had been convicted for serious violent offences (assault, homicide), with the remaining 80% being convicted of general offences (such as burglary, theft, drug offences). For violent offenders, criminal behaviour was significantly related to attitudes supporting law violation, higher exposure to favourable definitions (in the form of neutralisations) and higher perceived support for offending (primarily from peers). The results also found that for both men and women violent offenders, the higher their attachment to antisocial peers the higher their involvement in criminal behaviour.

Finally, a relationships was found between age and criminal behaviour with the frequency of offending decreased as age increased. Similar results to the Alarid et al., study have been found in both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies which found strong and positive relationships between social learning variables (exposure to favourable definitions and cognitive reinforcement for offending behaviour) and degree of criminal involvement (refer Lui & Kaplan, 1999; Title, Burke & Jackson, 1986; Vitaro, Brendgen & Tremblay, 2000).

One of the few studies to test the influence of exposure underpinning differential-association was carried out in a prison setting in 1973 by Andrews, Young, Wormith, Searle and Kouri. The prison setting was chosen because it represented one of the most optimal settings to test whether exposure to favourable and unfavourable definitions could influence a person's beliefs about law violation, the validity of law, and the criminal justice system. As Reckless (1940) had argued, by default imprisonment isolates offenders from non-offenders and therefore removes them from prosocial

associations and non-criminal definitions. Therefore the anti-authority culture (characteristic of "condemn the condemners" neutralisations) found in prisons could maintain, even enhance the learning of criminal techniques and neutralisations specific to law violation. As Reckless argued in 1940 prisons are the universities of crime. The Andrews et al., (1973) sample comprised of 20 volunteer offenders and 20 community volunteers randomly assigned to two conditions. Ten offenders and 10 volunteers were assigned to an exposure condition with the other 50% of the sample assigned to a no-exposure control condition. The 10 offenders and 10 volunteers in the exposure condition, together with a group facilitator, met each week for a few hours and discussed different aspects of criminal sentiments in an open and informal format. The meetings focused on issues such as the role of law in society, crime and victims and the role of criminal justice personnel. The offenders and non-offender volunteers in the no-exposure condition did not meet or interact with each other. The study itself was carried out over an eight week period. Before the program commenced, the endorsement of criminal sentiments for all participants was measured using an early version of the Criminal Sentiments Scale (CSS; Andrews & Wormith, 1984). Pre-program scores on the CSS showed that the 20 offenders had significantly higher procriminal sentiments compared to the 20 non-offenders regardless of condition. At post-test, the 10 offenders exposed to non-offenders reported significantly lower criminal sentiments. For the 10 non-offenders exposed to offenders, after the program finished, the scores on the CSS showed that their tolerance for law violation had increased, their identification with criminal peers had increased, but their attitudes towards the criminal justice system remained the same. Of importance, the results indicated that endorsement of criminal sentiments for the offenders and non-offenders no-exposure controls had not changed. The transference effect found in the exposure group appeared to support Sutherland's (1647) and Akers' (1973, 1997) claim that criminal sentiments are learnt and

internalised through exposure. As the sample size was small these results could not be considered conclusive. However, in later studies by Andrews, Wormith, Kennedy and Daigle-Zinn (1977) and Wormith (1984) these results were replicated using a similar format with larger samples.

In Australia, Wortley (1986) examined whether offenders can be discriminated from non-offenders in their level of endorsement of criminal sentiments. The first sample were 207 men offenders and 102 men university students. Based on current offence, offenders were classified into four groups: armed robbery, murder, rape and burglary. Wortley had considered that offenders would neutralise their own offences but may not necessarily neutralise offences of which they had not been convicted. For example, burglars would neutralise theft, but not murder. For non-offenders, Wortley hypothesised that relative to offenders, fewer neutralisations would be endorsed, especially for serious offences. The findings supported the hypothesis that offenders would endorse a high level of neutralisation related to their current offence. Wortley also found that offenders endorsed a significantly higher number of neutralisations than non-offenders. Although contrary to prediction the offenders also endorsed a wide range of neutralisations that did not relate to their current offence. The only exception was for rape, with both non-offenders and offenders not convicted of sex offences endorsing significantly lower rape neutralisations than sex offenders. The results support the findings of Farrington (1997) that most adult offenders do not specialise in one particular crime, especially those enmeshed in a criminal career who carry out a wide range of offences including both violent and non-violent. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that if most adult offenders are not specialists then it would be unlikely that they would be selective in the type of offences they neutralise, with the exception being rape and sex offences.

The literature reviewed has provided strong support for the hypothesis that endorsement of criminal sentiments is an important variable which discriminates offenders from non-offenders. The empirical studies which tested the principles of Differential-Association also found that by exposing offenders to non-offenders it is possible to change "what" offenders think (Andrews & Bonta, 1998; Simourd, 1996).

### 1.6.5. Endorsement of Violent Sentiments: An Overview of the Qualitative Literature

The empirical literature reviewed above primarily examined the three aspects which presently represent the criminal sentiments construct, namely: attitudes towards the criminal justice system; attitudes towards law violation in general; and affiliations with criminal peers. The following will present an overview of the qualitative research which has focused on what violence means and why it is viewed as acceptable behaviour by some people.

The importance of pro-violent sentiments was highlighted by Indermaur (1995, 1998) in his analysis of violent property crime and driver-related "road rage" violence. Indermaur found that the use of violence appeared to be a function of the beliefs that offenders held which allowed, permitted and tolerated violence. Indermaur also found that offenders believed that given the circumstances surrounding their offence, their use of violence (or force as they preferred to call it) was to them understandable, justifiable and in some instances even necessary. As such, Indermaur strenuously argued that how offenders excuse violence is of lesser concern than how they come to see violence as the right response. Indermaur's argument appears to support the view of Luckenbill and Doyle (1989) who suggested that higher levels of disputationess and aggressiveness were manifested through beliefs and values which legitimise violence.

In Indermaur's (1995) analysis of violent property crime he interviewed 88 West Australian adult offenders. He found that although the majority of offenders accepted

their charges of robbery, they did not necessarily see the violence carried out in the offence as "violence". For most of the sample, they believed that violence was a term that described random acts of aggression that were senseless and meaningless. When asked about their own "violence", they primarily referred to it as the use of force that was called for due to the circumstances, and given these circumstances, it was the most appropriate response. The reasons for why the offenders thought the use of force was acceptable was to preserve personal honour, to help protect or support a friend or to seek justice. Thomsen (1997) and Genders and Morrison (1996) also found similar results to Indermaur in that the participants in their studies believed that violence per se was rarely acceptable behaviour, however given certain circumstances "acts of force" were acceptable.

Thomsen (1997) carried out a 300 hour observational study over a one year period of the circumstances under which violence occurred in five different drinking venues in inner  city Sydney, Australia. His study involved interviews with parties to violent acts, bouncers, hoteliers and nightclub owners, as well as his own extensive field notes. In total 27 incidents were analysed ranging from mild violence (verbal abuse) to serious violence (assaults involving multiple parties). He found that most participants he talked to in his sample did not specifically go to the venue to seek a "brawl", but rather they engaged in acts of violence (often fights in the car park) following hostile altercations with other patrons. The most common reasons for pub fights were explicit allegations of cheating at pool, approaches made to girlfriends, and bumps and spills. In relation to the bumps and spills, the hostility occurred following the commencement of verbal insults, not being bumped per se. Thomson's analysis noted that most of the violence he witnessed occurred between young adult males. Further, that the violence appeared to be related to a male identity of "tough" and as impression management. As several participants informed Thomson, it was better to be seen to respond to insults or

allegations, even if that meant getting physically hurt and losing, than to ignore it. They believed that if they did nothing they would become known as "girls". A further finding was that many altercations occurred during "happy hour" (drinks sold at half price) when the young males were engaging in a drinking contest. These contests were related to male identity where to have only one or two drinks meant you were acting like a "girl". It appeared it was not the drinking per se, but rather the combination of alcohol consumption with more congestion at the bar which created more chance for bumps and spills to occur. As Thomson noted, even though his study took place in drinking venues, not all people who he witnessed engaging in violence had drunk alcohol. One finding of importance was that although the participants in Thomson's study did not deliberately attend these venues to have a fight, they considered that if they did fight, or witness a fight, it wasn't such a big deal, and even added to the excitement of the evening. As one barman told Thomson, in one place he worked he had witnessed bar brawls that looked like something out of a Wild West movie, and even though he did not take part he considered it so exciting that he continued to work there. This finding is akin to what Katz (1988) argued; that is, acts of violence contain elements of excitement because they are essentially rule-breaking behaviours which undermine, just briefly, the strict and orderly rule of a civil society.

Rather than observe acts of violence, Genders and Morrison (1996) undertook in-depth interviews with 79 violent offenders from the U.K. and asked them to discuss their attitudes and beliefs toward violence and the circumstances leading up to their offence. Several themes were identified in the qualitative analysis of the interviews. The first theme was that violence was purposeful and achieved certain goals, primarily impression management (being seen to stand your ground) and to help promote, maintain, or even enhance an image of "toughness". Being seen as tough was vital because the repercussions of being seen as weak would be a signal to others that they

can take you for a ride. The second theme was that violence was often used as a matter of principle, to punish "bad behaviour". Genders and Morrison also found that many offenders had been surprised by the degree of injury they had caused. Several of the offenders stated that although they intended to harm their victim, to give them "a good hiding", they had not intended for their victim to sustain such serious physical injuries that death resulted. In these incidents, the offenders stated the situation just seemed to get out of control. In contrast to Thomson's work, the participants in Genders and Morrison's study did not discuss whether violence held some excitement for them, although the content of the data suggested that for these offenders violence was a normative response and an acceptable problem solving strategy.

### 1.6.6. Endorsement of Violent Sentiments: A Review of the Quantitative Literature

Most of our current knowledge of how offenders rationalise and justify violence comes from the qualitative literature. Regarding the quantitative literature, Polaschek and Collie (2004a) strenuously argued that despite violent sentiments' prominence in the criminology and forensic psychology literature, the empirical literature on this risk factor is seriously lacking. Although there has been extensive work on the variables of anger and hostility that influence aggressive behaviour (e.g., Buss and Durkee, 1957; Buss and Perry, 1992; and Novaco, Ramm and Black, 2001) this literature has not specifically focused on endorsement of violent sentiments. The review below will commence with the child and adolescent literature, then the adult literature and will conclude by considering potential research directions.

One of the most cited studies examining violent beliefs was that carried out by Perry, Perry and Rasmussen (1986). They specifically explored several aspects of social learning theory in a sample of 160 children and adolescents aged 10 to 13. The sample was divided into two groups, 80 males and females who their peers had judged to be

aggressive, and 80 males and females judged to be non-aggressive. They asked the sample various questions concerning their self-efficacy beliefs about whether they could successful carry out an aggressive act, whether they could inhibit aggression, whether they could use verbal persuasion to get what they want rather than aggression and whether aggression provides positive or negative outcomes. They found that the aggressive participants, both male and female, thought that being aggressive was an easy response to a social problem. They also thought it would be harder to inhibit aggression compared with their less aggressive peers. They also reported significantly lower self-efficacy beliefs for the use of verbal persuasion over aggression relative to their peers. Finally, aggressive participants said that aggression often provides positive benefits such as the removal of aversive factors. Similar results were found by Gottheil (2000) in his analysis of social learning theory underpinning bullying behaviour at school. Gottheil found that both male and female bullies viewed aggressive behaviour as an easy response, they felt that bullying was a normative part of school, and believed that bullying behaviour provided reinforcing outcomes, such as increased self-esteem and impression management (e.g., being seen as able to stand up for yourself).

In a later study by Slaby and Guerra (1988), the degree to which juvenile offenders were distinguishable from their less aggressive peers with regard to endorsement of violent beliefs and hostile attributional biases (HABs) was examined. The sample comprised of 144 seriously violent juvenile offenders and school students aged 14 to 18 years. Slaby and Guerra's study assessed both just world and violent beliefs in a series of statements which participants could endorse or reject. For example, "if someone gets beat up, it's usually his or her own fault" and "it's ok to hit someone if you just go crazy with anger". Results indicated that the offenders endorsed more beliefs supporting the use of violence than non-offenders, although fewer offenders relative to non-offenders endorsed the just world belief that victims probably deserved

their victimisation. The female participants (whether offenders or students) were less likely to endorse violent beliefs than both male offenders and students. In addition, regardless of group, males were more likely to believe that aggression enhances self-esteem and that victims don't suffer, whereas females were more likely to endorse the just world belief that victims get what they deserve. The results also showed that the juvenile offenders, especially males, demonstrated higher HABs and provided fewer non-aggressive problem solving strategies than their non-offender peers. This was one of the first studies to demonstrate that juvenile offenders convicted of rape, assault and murder are significantly different from non-offenders in beliefs that endorse violence. Their findings with respect to HABs were discussed above, refer Section 1.5.2. Slaby and Guerra's results were replicated by Huesman and Guerra (1997) using a sample of 846 male and female school children and adolescents and by Zelli, Dodge, Lochman and Laird (1999) using a sample of 387 male and female children and adolescents.

One of the first studies to measure attitudes to violence in a large adult sample was carried out by Velicer, Huckel, and Hansen (1989) using 740 adult men and women university undergraduates in the U.S. Velicer assessed attitudes toward violence in five specific sociocultural contexts using a modification of the Bardis violence scale (1973). The five contexts assessed were: the legitimacy of violence in war, corporal punishment of children, penal code violence (should the state be allowed to use violent means to punish offenders?), extreme social violence (should the police be able to use violence to contain and control social protests?) and violence within intimate relationships. The results showed that attitudes towards violence comprised of a single construct. The discriminant validity analysis found that only the "assault" subscales from the revised Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory (Velicer, Govia, Cherico & Corriveau, 1985) significantly and positively correlated with legitimising violence used in war, corporal punishment of children and penal code violence. Furthermore, only the "hostility"

subscale from the Buss-Durkee correlated with the corporal punishment of children. The value of these findings was the demonstration that attitudes legitimising violence represent a different construct to the variables of hostility and aggressive behaviour as measured in the original Buss-Durkee (1957) or the revised Hostility Inventory (Velicer et al, 1985). Finally, although their study showed the structure of violent attitudes across five sociocultural contexts, the researchers did not report on the level of endorsement of interpersonal violence. As Polaschek, Collie and Walkey (2004b) noted, the few items which measure interpersonal violence in the Velicer et al., scale is not sufficient to adequately assess violent sentiments in offenders.

In the two years (2002 to 2004) two scales have been devised to measure violent beliefs in adult offender samples[2]. Each of these studies will be discussed in turn. Mills, Kroner and Forth (2002) devised the Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA). The MCAA is comprised of four subscales. One subscale measures attitudes towards violence. The other subscales measure sentiments of entitlement, antisocial intent, and attitudes towards criminal associates. The items in all the subscales are proposed to measure the degree to which offenders rationalise and justify the four aspects of behaviour measured (Mills et al, 2002). The MCAA was tested in a sample of 341 Canadian federal male offenders with a mean age of 37 years. The results showed the scale to have good reliability and validity.

The second scale was the 20-item Criminal Attitudes to Violence (CAVS) developed and validated by Polaschek et al., (2004b). The CAVS was specifically devised for adult male prisoners and was tested using a sample of 302 prisoners incarcerated in two prisons in New Zealand. The scale was shown to have good reliability and validity and was found to be unrelated to a measure of desirable responding. The CAVS was highly predictive of recidivism for violent offences and was

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[2] It is possible that other scales have been developed, but the scales discussed were the only ones to have been published in peer-reviewed journals and with a citation in various electronic databases.

able to discriminate between violent and non-violent offenders, with violent offenders scoring higher CAVS scores than offenders with no or few violent convictions. The CAVS was found to correlate highly with CSS-M scores (Simourd, 1997; a modified version of the widely used Criminal Sentiments Scale, Andrews & Wormith, 1984). This finding suggests that violent sentiments potentially represent a valid extension of the criminal sentiments construct.

Finally, in the U.K. over the past 15 years there has been a body of research developed that has explored the differences in how men and women justify and view aggression. This work commenced with the theory of Campbell and Muncer (1987) who suggested that men justify violence and aggression in instrumental terms (e.g., power and control of negative situations and/or others) whereas women discuss the use of violence in more expressive ways (e.g., a loss of control). To test this theory the 20-item EXPAGG was developed to measure the difference between instrumental and expressive beliefs underpinning aggression and violence. The EXPAGG was revised in 1997 by Archer and Haigh who tested gender differences in a sample of 47 adult women prisoners and 62 adult men prisoners. Half of the men and women had been convicted of violent offences, the other half of non-violent offences. The results showed that for the sample combined beliefs concerning personal instrumental beliefs about aggression highly correlated with a measure of aggressive behaviour. Aggressive behaviour was assessed using the Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992). As expected, females endorsed a higher level of personal explanations that viewed their use of aggression in expressive terms whereas men were more likely to see their aggression as instrumentally based. The finding that women are more likely to endorse expressive explanations for their use of aggression and violence than men who see their use of violence and aggression as primarily instrumentally based was replicated in a study by Forrest, Shevlin, Eatough, Gregson and Davis (2002) using a sample of 337 men and

women adult university students. What these studies demonstrate is that men and women differ in how they explain their use of aggression. However, as Archer and Haigh (1997) pointed out the EXPAGG does not assess normative beliefs about aggression. In essence what the EXPAGG measures is how a person explains their use of aggression and violence, and although it is important to assess the different ways that men and women view violence, it does not in effect measure violent sentiments (the circumstances under which violence is considered acceptable).

### 1.6.7. Summary of the Violent Sentiments Literature and Research Directions

In summary, the findings from the qualitative studies discussed in Section 1.6.5 suggest that people who engage in violence do not necessarily approve of violence per se, but given certain circumstances they consider it an appropriate response as a means of dealing with a wide range of social problems, especially other people's "bad" behaviour. In this respect, violent acts appear to be goal directed behaviours underpinned by whether a person supports the use of violence or not. With respect to Thomson's (1997) findings, although they may not be readily generalisable outside of drinking venues, the findings are of importance for three reasons. First, as mentioned in Section 1.1.1, approximately 40% of recorded assault incidents in Australia occur between young men in urban recreational venues or on the street. Second, these findings mirror that of Alder and Polk (1996) and Mouzos (2000) in that many homicides are attempted assaults that resulted in fatal violence due to the escalation of a disagreement or grievance over trivial matters. Third, Thomson's findings highlight the usual trivial matters (such as bumping and accusations of cheating) that can lead to the use of violence. These matters are akin to what has been found in the assault and impression management literature of Felson (1982, 2000). Furthermore, the matters listed which lead to violence in Thomson's study mirror that of the interactional justice literature

(presented in Section 1.4 above) in that it is psychological harm that can upset people enough to make them demand reparation, namely being insulted and unfairly accused. Finally, with respect to the work of Indermaur (1995), Thomson (1997) and Genders and Morrison (1996) the sequences and circumstances they describe mirror that of Luckenbill and Doyle's (1989) grievance escalation model which further implies this model is applicable to understanding assault and some homicide in Western society. The qualitative review presented above was not fully inclusive but aimed to provide the reader with representative examples from the literature. Please refer to Alder and Polk (1996) and Toch (1969) for further examples.

With respect to the quantitative literature, it appears that our current empirical knowledge is limited. Although the qualitative literature describes how and why offenders justify violence, the question that the quantitative literature does not answer is: *do adult violent offenders endorse a higher level of violent sentiments than adult non-offenders.* This lack of discriminant knowledge is of concern because we cannot confirm that violent sentiments represent an important criminogenic variable that warrants intervention in offender treatment programs. Although the adolescent empirical literature has provided some initial support in that violent juvenile offenders can be discriminated from adolescent non-offenders it would be imprudent to apply this knowledge to adult offenders even though it appears to be an intuitive extension. The hypothesis that what was found in the adolescent literature also applies to adults appears intuitive in the case of violent sentiments especially as Polaschek et al (2004b) found that their measure of violent sentiments was significantly correlated with the CSS-M. The CSS-M (Simourd, 1997) is a modification of the widely used Criminal Sentiments Scale (Andrews & Wormith, 1984) which measures the three established constructs of criminal sentiments that have been shown to be highly discriminant between adult

offenders and non-offenders (namely attitudes towards the legal system, law violation, and identification with criminal peers).

Another area of concern raised by Polaschek and Reynolds (2001) was that due to the lack of empirical research there has been little work carried out on the development and validation of suitable measurement tools for violent sentiments. As Polaschek and Reynolds argued, if attitudes supportive of violence represent a risk factor for violent recidivism it is desirable that these attitudes be addressed in rehabilitation programs, and to confirm whether the program was successful in reducing this risk factor the program should be complimented by valid and reliable pre and post program measurement. Since this critique was raised two scales were specifically devised for use with offender samples: the MCAA (Mills et al., 2002); and the CAVS (Polaschek et al., 2004b). With respect to the development of these scales, the item content of both scales was written by the authors based on the clinical experience in working with offenders. Although both scales were shown to have good reliability and validity with male offenders neither scale was validated or tested with a non-offender sample or a female sample. As the researchers of both scales noted in their papers their aim was to devise and test a violent attitude scale that would have utility in forensic settings. As Polaschek et al., (2004b) specifically noted, their main concern in writing the CAVS was for the scale to be relevant for New Zealand prisoners (many of whom have Maori or Polynesian ethic identity) and whether the scale could distinguish violent from non-violent offenders. They specifically stated they were not concerned whether the scales would be useful with non-offenders.

At present the empirical literature has not demonstrated whether adult offenders differ from adult non-offenders in their endorsement of violent sentiments. Answering this vital question became the final aim of this project. With respect to selecting an appropriate violent belief scale, it appeared that the scales currently available were not

appropriate for use in the current project. Four peer-reviewed and validated violent belief scales were identified in the literature. As mentioned above, the "Attitudes to Violence Scale" used by Velicer et al.,  (1989) would not provide enough scope to adequately assess the violent sentiments construct, and the "EXPAGG-Revised" (Archer & Haigh, 1997) does not measure sentiments justifying the use of violence per se. Finally the content of the MCAA (Mills et al., 2002) and the CAVS (Polaschek et al., 2004b) appear appropriate for adult male offenders but due to the masculine nature of the items may not necessarily be appropriate for adult non-offenders, especially females.

The items for both the MCAA and CAVS were devised by the researchers based on their clinical experience and judgement. The method of devising scales from clinical experience has been critiqued. Several influential researchers have strenuously argued that if you really want to know what someone thinks about an issue you must ask them personally (Allport, 1961; Aronson, 2004). Moreover Devillis (1991) and Hermans (1988) advised that if quantitative research scales are to combine the desirable elements of good internal, external and face validity it is vital that the content of the items be sourced from the people to which the research results are to be generalised. Hermans further argued that the most optimal method for quantitative scale development is to source the scale items from qualitative data generated from in-depth interviews with people who are knowledgeable about the subject matter that lies at the heart of the research. Based on these critiques it could be questioned as to whose beliefs the MCAA and the CAVS are measuring. As the scales were devised by clinicians it could be that the scales measure the violent sentiments that clinicians believe offenders hold rather than the sentiments that offenders actually do hold. This critique was not raised with the intention of undermining the work, experience or integrity of the researchers who devised the MCAA or the CAVS but rather to highlight that both psychometricians and

influential social psychologists suggest that clinical judgement alone may not be the most optimal method for scale development. Based on this critique, and as the project wanted to assess the violent sentiments held by men and women, rather than substantially alter the content of the MCAA or the CAVS, it was considered beneficial for a new scale to be devised. This new scale would be specially written for both research and forensic clinical use, and would be applicable to both adult men and women. To achieve high internal, external and face validity the scale items themselves would be sourced from qualitative data generated from in-depth interviews with people knowledgeable in when and how violence is justified. In other words to carry out in-depth interviews with offenders who have a known history of engaging in violent behaviour.

## 1.7. Rationale and Aims of the Current Project

The rationale for this project was to expand our current knowledge of a number of variables that could represent dynamic criminogenic needs influencing violent behaviour in adults, namely violent sentiments, the "is/ought" discrepancy and HABs. Although these variables feature prominently in influential criminological or psychological texts on offending behaviour (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Blackburn, 1993; McGuire, 2002; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994) it appears that due to the lack of adult research we cannot confirm whether these variables are adolescent limited risk factors or apply to adult offenders. Given the prominence which these variables have been given in these reference texts and given that these reference texts influence the content of rehabilitation programs it is vital that the discriminant validity of these variables be assessed.

Andrews (1995) strenuously argued that for criminogenic needs to be effectively targeted in intervention there must be a supporting theory explaining how these

variables influence offending behaviour and how best to reduce their future influence. On the basis of this argument and as the main reason for carrying out this research was to generate knowledge that would be useful, the primary aim therefore became not only to assess whether violent sentiments, "is/ought" discrepancies and HABs differentiate offenders from non-offenders but to assess whether these variables are influential in the maintenance of higher levels of disputationess and aggressiveness, the two major aspects of Luckenbill and Doyle's grievance escalation model.

In Luckenbill and Doyle's (1989) grievance escalation model the main reason suggested for why grievances escalate is a person's level of disputationess (the desire to persist with the grievance) and aggressiveness (the desire to use force to end the grievance). As for the variables that influence levels of disputationess and aggressiveness Luckenbill and Doyle only provided one explanation, that of subcultural beliefs endorsing violence and masculine reputation management. During the review of the model carried out in Section 1.3 above, it became apparent that one area of importance the model did not discuss was how harm was perceived, the vital element in the first escalation stage of "naming". It was argued by the current author that the variables of interest in this project might enhance our understanding of this first stage as well as our understanding of what influences disputationess and aggressiveness.

Finally, the overall goal of this project was to provide practitioners and theorists with the data they would find useful when devising and delivering adult male rehabilitation programs that are as effective as possible. From the outset this project has taken an interdisciplinary approach with many of the theories discussed coming from sociology, criminology, forensic psychology and social psychology. This will ensure that the supporting theory developed from the results of the current study will not be restricted to the influence of one discipline.

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## 1.8. An Overview of the Thesis and the Research Hypotheses

The rationale for this thesis was to assess whether a number of variables represented dynamic criminogenic needs. Criminogenic needs, according to Andrews and Bonta (1998) are factors directly related to criminal behaviour and represent variables that clearly discriminate offenders from non-offenders. The ultimate goal of this thesis was to determine whether a sample of high-risk violent offenders were clearly significantly different from non-offenders on the "is/ought" discrepancy, criminal and violent sentiments, and HABs. As noted throughout the literature review, after an extensive search of the published literature appropriate psychometric scales to measure these variables in samples of offenders and non-offenders could not be located. As no appropriate scales were available there was a need for psychometric scale development before the main studies could commence. Given the strong argument previously stressing that the most optimal way to develop valid scales is to use interview data collected from people knowledgeable in the subject area, this thesis became a mixed method project [3].

The thesis began with a series of interviews with 18 adult male violent offenders. These men discussed in detail their experiences of grievance escalation, in particular what they had thought about their harmdoer, why they thought the harmdoer had behaved as they did, and how the grievance ended. They also discussed their beliefs about violence. Of interest, because the interviews were not structured the offenders were able to raise issues not originally intended to be assessed. The interview analysis showed that in addition to the variables of interest, the fundamental attribution error and two forms of HABs (hostile intent and malevolent intent) were raised. As these variables were prominent themes in the data the scope of the project was expanded to

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[3] One of the original aims had been to assess the differences between men and women offenders and men and women non-offenders. Although it would have been beneficial to have included women offenders, this was not possible. This issue is discussed in more detail in chapter 4, Section 4.2.2.

include them. In addition, due to the strong beliefs expressed that violence was an acceptable way to end a grievance and "get even", the scope of the project was also extended to assess not only violent sentiments but violence based grievance resolution strategies as well. Following the interview analysis the themes identified and some of the narrative text were used to develop two psychometric scales. One scale was to measure violent sentiments, the other to measure social judgements and attributions, feelings and grievance resolution strategies (problem solving) people use in problematic situations. The interviews and the thematic content analysis will be outlined in Chapter 2.

Following the scale development the internal reliability and component structures of both scales were assessed. The initial assessment was carried out with 238 non-offenders who were first year university undergraduates from Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia. Undergraduates from all the main schools throughout the university were recruited so that the student sample would be more representative rather than restricted to social sciences or psychology students only. The results from the first psychometric evaluation of the scales will be outlined in Chapter 3.

As the scales will be used to compare offenders with two non-offender samples, it was vital to make sure that the scales were valid and reliable in all three samples. The evaluation using a sample of 87 high-risk violent offenders will be presented in Chapter 4. The evaluation using a stratified random sample of 208 non-offender men and women residing in the general population in Perth, Western Australia will be outlined in Chapter 4.

The next series of studies compared the sample of high-risk violent offenders with the two non-offender samples in order to determine whether any of the variables being measured represented dynamic criminogenic needs. In total, eight hypotheses were

developed and tested in two studies. The hypotheses and the rationale underpinning each of them are as follows.

### 1.8.1. Endorsement of Violent and Criminal sentiments.

Whether violent and criminal sentiments represent significant dynamic criminogenic needs is the subject of Study 5 (refer Chapter 5). In essence, Study 5 asks: are offenders significantly different from non-offenders in their endorsement of these sentiments? Two hypotheses are explored in Study 5.

**Hypothesis 1.** Three distinct issues underpinned Hypothesis 1. First, if criminal, and especially violent sentiments, are criminogenic risk factors for violent behaviour, then people convicted of serious violent offences should be clearly distinguishable from non-offenders. Second, if pro-violent sentiments are related to violent behaviour then people with a higher risk of engaging in violent behaviour should endorse higher levels of pro-violent sentiments. As women are known to engage in a significantly lower level of violence than men, women should endorse a lower of violence then men. Third, if violent sentiments are related to risk of violent behaviour, and as outlined in Section 1.1.1, violence is primarily a young male phenomenon with young males in Australia being three times more likely to be involved in violent incidents than men over 45 years, then the younger male student sample should endorse higher levels of violent sentiments than the older male community sample. Combining these three aspects, Hypothesis 1 predicted that: *male offenders will endorse a higher level of violent and criminal sentiments than all four non-offender samples. The younger male non-offender students will endorse a higher level of violent sentiments than the older male community sample. The male community sample in turn will endorse a higher level of violent sentiments than female students and women from the community.*

**Hypothesis 2.** If violent sentiments are an integral aspect of the construct of criminal sentiments it is expected that: *A strong and significant relationship will be found between the original subscales of the CSS and the new JFV subscale. The relationship expected is where higher pro-violent sentiments will correlate with a higher disrespect for the criminal justice system, a greater willingness to neutralise offending behaviour, and a higher identification with criminal others. This relationship is expected to be stronger for male offenders than the adult male and female non-offenders.*

## 1.8.2 Grievance Escalation Variables: Group Differences in Social Judgments, Attributional Biases, Feelings and Grievance Resolution Strategies.

Study 6 explores whether violent offenders experience wider "is/ought" discrepancies, demonstrate higher HABs, are more likely to experience negative emotions and are more likely to use violence based grievance resolution strategies than non-offenders. In essence, Study 6 (reported in Chapter 6) asks, do violent offenders interpret, feel and respond differently to the harmful behaviour of others? Six hypotheses are tested in the current study. These are as follows.

**Hypothesis 1.** If the "is/ought" discrepancy represents a criminogenic variable it is predicted that: *male offenders will demonstrate wider "is/ought" discrepancies over a number of different social interactions than non-offenders.*

**Hypothesis 2.** Although demonstrations of high levels of hostile attributional biases (HABs) have been observed in violent adolescent samples the adult literature has not fully demonstrated whether adult violent offenders are different on this variable than adult non-offenders. Therefore, if HABs represent a criminogenic variable for adults Hypothesis 2 predicts that: *male offenders will demonstrate higher HABs, especially in ambiguous situations compared with non-offenders.*

**Hypothesis 3**. If the fundamental attribution error can in some instances represent a criminogenic variable it is predicted that: *male offenders will be more likely demonstrate a higher level and more frequent use of the FAE than non-offenders.*

**Hypothesis 4**. If adult violent offenders have more pronounced HABs, especially in ambiguous situations, then is likely that: d*ue to the over-attribution of hostile intent male offenders will be more likely to report more negative emotional states, especially anger, over the five MAPS scenarios than non-offenders.*

**Hypothesis 5**. This hypothesis will assess the link between attitudes and behavioural intentions. The aim here is to explore whether people holding more positive beliefs about violence are also more likely to report they would actually use violence than those who hold less positive beliefs and attitudes. Based on the proposition that positive attitudes towards an act can influence behaviour, the fifth hypothesis predicts that: *male offenders will report more violence based grievance resolution strategies than non-offenders.*

**Hypothesis 6**. The rationale for this hypothesis is to assess whether offenders are less likely than non-offenders to generate more alternative grievance resolution strategies when faced with problematic situations. This question was based on the work of Slaby and Guerra (1988) who found that delinquent and violent male and female adolescents were more likely to generate single violence-based solutions whereas their non-violent peers were more likely to generate a number of alternative non-violence based solutions. If the findings of Slaby and Guerra (1988) using an adolescent sample generalise to adults it is predicted that: *male offenders will report a lower number of grievance resolution strategies than non-offenders.*

# PART TWO

## The Studies

**JAIL TERM BOOSTED OVER KETTLE ATTACK**

By David Darragh

A prisoner had his jail term extended by 14 months for throwing a kettle full of hot water on to a sleeping inmate, causing him to be taken to hospital.

'X', 30 pleaded guilty in Perth Magistrate's court yesterday to a charge of assault occasioning bodily harm.

The offence was committed on June 6 at Acacia Prison. The court was told that 'X' threw the boiled kettle at 'A', 24, because he thought he had a score to settle with his fellow inmate.

'A' was taken to Royal Perth Hospital burns unit with scalding to 15% of his body. He did not suffer permanent scarring.

'X' claimed he intended to wake 'A' and then settle their differences with a fight and did not realise the kettle had recently been boiled by another prisoner.

In sentencing, Mr Cullen labeled 'X''s offence cowardly because 'A' was not in a position to defend himself. Other prisoners must have been fearful at hearing 'A''s scream because they alerted prison guards about the serious assault, he said.

He sentenced 'X' to 14 months jail to be served on top of his current term, which is due to expire in April.

Since 1990, 'X' had eight convictions for violent offences, including assaulting a police officer and assault occasioning bodily harm.

Mr Cullen refused parole eligibility because of the nature of the assault and 'X''s criminal record.

Full story, see Appendix O

# Chapter 2.

# Study 1:
# Experiencing disrespect & injustice: The perception of harm, grievance escalation and justifications for violence in an offender sample.

## Study 1: Experiencing disrespect and injustice: The perception of harm, grievance escalation and justifications for violence in an offender sample

## 2.1 Introduction and Study Overview

The current study had three primary aims. The first aim was to explore through in-depth interviews the experience of grievance escalation from the perspective of 18 violent offenders. The second aim was to assess whether the descriptions given in the interviews were consistent with Luckenbill and Doyle's (1989) hypothesised three stage model. The third aim was to use the themes and narrative text from the interviews to devise two psychometric scales. One scale was to measure the cognitive processes underpinning grievance escalation and the other was to measure violent sentiments. Basing scale development on interview content and by using examples of narrative text it was hoped that both scales would have high face validity because the items themselves were based on real life experience and actual verbalisations of attitudes, values and beliefs of offenders.

Study 1 is presented in a number sections. Section 2.2 overviews the literature which formed the focus areas for the interviews. Section 2.3 describes the method and an overview of the interview process. Section 2.4 presents the findings and discussion of the results obtained from a thematic content analysis. Section 2.5 describes the rationale for the study and how the findings from the interviews were used to devise two psychometric scales.

## 2.2 Literature Review

In 1989 Luckenbill and Doyle hypothesised that grievances develop and escalate in three stages. "Naming" is the first stage where a harmful outcome is experienced by one party (the victim) who in turn blames and holds another party (the harmdoer)

responsible for the harm. Stage two is "claiming", where the victim demands reparation from the harmdoer. The final stage is "aggression", where an act of physical force is used to end the grievance. Luckenbill and Doyle proposed that two psychological factors explain why grievances escalate into violence: disputationess and aggressiveness. Disputationess refers to the willingness to demand reparation and to persevere with the grievance. Support for Luckenbill and Doyle's model was found in a community sample of Canadian men and women (Kennedy & Forde, 1996) and in a sample of university undergraduates from the U.S. (Bell & Forde, 1999). However, as the samples used to test the model were both non-offender samples and as a study looking at this model in violent offenders could not be located it could be argued that this model, although promising, needs further investigation. In particular, in a sample of people with a known history of engaging in disputes that escalate into serious non-sexual index violent offences. This is the focus of Study 1.

During the review of Luckenbill and Doyle's (1989) model (presented in Chapter 1) it was suggested that stage one of the model was not explained comprehensively. What appeared to be missing was an understanding of what types of harm upset people enough to make them want to "claim" and the types of attributions used to blame and hold the other party accountable for the harm (primarily attributions of intent).

With respect to the types of harm, research over the past two decades has found it is primarily psychological harm in the form of a lack of respect, fairness or equality that appears to upset people the most (Lupfer et al, 2000; Mikula et al 1990). These researchers found that although physical, political and material harm are judged as harmful acts it is the effects of psychological harm (being lied to, insulted by, unfairly accused or let down) that has more impact on the development of a wider range of negative emotions and the desire for revenge. This was especially so when the psychological harm was carried out by significant others (Mikula et al, 1998). Felson

(1982) and Thomson (1997) reported that one of the primary reasons underpinning assaults was two specific forms of psychological harm, namely accusations considered unfounded and insults.

Miller (2001) suggested that psychological harm is an upsetting experience because we hold psychological contracts with others, especially significant others, which stipulates the type of behaviour we expect from them and which we feel we are entitled to and deserve to receive. These behavioural stipulations have been referred to as "ought" philosophies or beliefs. "Oughts" state how other people **should** behaviour and how social interactions **should** occur. For example, "ought" beliefs in relationships often equate to partners should be honest, respectful and faithful (Hojjat, 1997). As all people hold "ought" beliefs, it is not these beliefs per se that cause people distress. Distress and upset is suggested to occur when people experience harm and their "oughts" are balanced against the "is". In essence, when we believe that a person has behaved in a way that has harmed us we benchmark the "is" (what we think happened and their responsibility for it) against what we believe they "ought" or should have done. Ferguson and Rule (1983) argued that the wider the discrepancy between the "is" and the "ought" the more upset we become. Furthermore, negative emotions, according to Bies and Tripp (1996) can escalate into moralistic anger which in turn can motivate the desire to seek revenge or to demand justice.

Because "is-ought" discrepancies are suggested to be a common cognitive process (Miller, 2001) the discrepancy itself is not assumed here to be a criminogenic variable. However, where people hold rigid and strict "oughts" it is suggested that they will experience wider discrepancies than people who apply their "oughts" in a more flexible manner (Ellis, 2002). For example, a rigid stance would provide for a set of beliefs that "people **should, will** and **must** do this". Holding rigid "oughts" has been noted as one of the primary reasons for why some clinical clients have continual problems in their

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social relationships. Ellis (2002) suggested this is because the "oughts" set for others are so strict they do not even allow other people to make a thoughtless slip-up. This means that in most cases other people cannot possibly live up to these strict "oughts" which then reinforces beliefs that other people are continually "behaving badly" and letting them down. Practitioners and theorists have observed that violent men often appear to take a rigid stance toward the "bad behaviour" of others. Both Bush (1995) and Toch (1969) noted that offenders appear to find it intolerable and unacceptable when others break their "oughts". Bush (1995) also noted that when offenders' "oughts" were breached anger often manifested itself as righteous rage where "how could they do that" became "how dare they". As no studies could be located which explored this issue it appears that at present we do not know whether wide "is/ought" discrepancies potentially represent a criminogenic variable.

In addition to a rigid application of "ought" beliefs, another cognitive process that has been suggested to impact on whether a grievance escalates is the attribution of intentionality. Ferguson and Rule (1983) proposed that if a victim believes the harmdoer did not intend to harm them (e.g., a thoughtless error) the victim will experience a lower amount of negative emotions and will either ignore the matter, or seek a lesser punishment for the harmdoer. Over the past few decades a large body of literature has emerged finding that violent children and adolescents, especially males, have a pronounced bias toward seeing hostility as the motive for other's harmful behaviour (Krahe, 2001). Hostile attributional biases (HABs) provide that the ambiguous and accidental, albeit harmful, acts of others are seen by the victim as a clear demonstration of malice and hostility where in fact none exists (Dodge et al, 1990; Huesman, 1988). Although this bias has strong support as a risk factor for violent children and adolescents (de Castro et al., 2002) it has not been fully demonstrated whether this bias is a risk factor for adult violent men.

The present study had two general objectives. The first objective was to gain an in-depth understanding of how a sample of violent offenders experienced grievances and how and why it escalated from their perspective. As this first objective was exploratory in nature no firm hypotheses were set. However, based on the review presented above a number of areas for exploration were identified. First, although Luckenbill and Doyle's three stage model has empirical support in non-offender samples it appears not to have been tested in an offender sample. A second aim was to assess whether the model could be enhanced by exploring what types of harm upset offenders enough for them to transform a dispute into a grievance. In addition, to assess whether the "is/ought" discrepancies and HABs represent prominent explanatory themes for why and how offenders judged the behaviour of the other party as harmful. Third, Luckenbill and Doyle had considered that the vital factor influencing higher levels of disputationess and aggressiveness was tolerance for violence underpinned by beliefs justifying the time and reason when violence was an acceptable means to settle disputes. Study 1 will explore the sentiments offenders used to justify violence as the means to end grievances or other problematic social interactions.

The second objective of Study 1 was to use the themes identified from the interview data to devise two psychometric scales. The rationale for using the interview data and how the themes identified were embedded into these scales is presented in Section 2.6.

## 2.3 Method

### 2.3.1 Participants

The participants were adult male non-Indigenous Australian offenders from a maximum security prison in metropolitan Perth, Western Australia. None of the participants had participated in prior intensive intervention for criminal attitudes or social attributional

biases, thus avoiding the possible confound of treatment effects on the data collected. Twenty-two offenders were originally invited to participate and 18 consented (response rate 81.8%). The reasons for non-participation in the study were as follows: 3 offenders said they did not want to participate giving no specific reason; and one offender refused to leave his unit to come to the interview room. The final sample was 18 participants aged between 22 to 38 years, with a mean of 27 years (SD = 4.70). All of the sample were serving sentences for serious non-sexual violent index offences (homicide, assault, unlawful wounding, armed robbery, weapons offences). Their effective sentence length (sentence date to first parole application) ranged from 2.5 to 20 years, with a mean of 5.5 years (SD = 4.18).  Although it would have been beneficial to have interviewed women offenders this was not possible as the Western Australian Department of Justice had declined access to female prisoners at the time the study was carried out. Due to cultural differences access to Australian Indigenous and Torres Straight Islander peoples was not permitted by the Department of Justice. The issue of research with Indigenous prisoners is discussed in detail in Chapter 7, refer Section 7.5.3.

The participants were randomly selected from an intensive violent offending treatment program waitlist compiled by a senior clinician at the Western Australian Department of Justice. The criteria used for inclusion on the waitlist was: conviction for a serious violent index offence; be psychologically stable; serving a custodial sentence of two years or more; and been assessed as being at high-risk of violent recidivism.

The 18 participants reported a wide range of education. Ten participants said they left school before the required leaving age (in Australia this is year 10, approximately 16 years of age). However, of these 10 participants five had commenced or completed either a tertiary education or a trade apprenticeship in  their adulthood. The remaining eight participants completed school with leaving qualifications. Regarding occupation before coming to prison, nine participants said they were employed in a trade or blue

collar occupation (bricklayer, labourer, gardener). Five participants identified themselves as having a criminal occupation. For example, when asked "Were you working before you came to prison?", a typical response was "I was full-time involved in criminal activities"; "I am a career crim"; or simply just "a crim". Four participants said they were unemployed. Finally, one participant said he was running his own business and was self-employed.

## 2.3.2   Interview Procedure

Eighteen individual interviews were carried out by the author. The length of each interview ranged from one and half to two and a half hours. They were all conducted in an official interview room located within the prison. These rooms are used primarily for police and parole officer interviews. With regard to the rooms themselves, they were bare except for a table and four chairs and with one wall comprising of a sheet of sound proof glass (providing that interviews are carried out within eyesight but out of hearing of the two or more prison officers present in the interview room annex). At the time of the interviews, these were the only rooms available in the prison and did not necessarily represent the most optimal location due to their normal use (police and justice staff official interviews). Despite this, the interviews were conducted in as informal a manner as the setting allowed.

To establish rapport between the author (the interviewer) and each participant the interviews commenced with a general discussion lasted approximately 15 minutes. Building rapport was not structured in any way and varied according to what general issues were raised. However, all interviews commenced with the interviewer introducing herself, and then asking the participants which prison unit they lived in, whether they worked in the prison and if so did they like the job. Once rapport was

established as much as possible under these circumstances consent was obtained and consent forms signed.

The semi-structured interviews, although guided by a series of probe areas, were not carried out in a structured or rigid manner. This provided for flexibility of approach and gave each participant the opportunity to raise and discuss issues that were important to them. This flexible approach also allowed for unique issues to be raised which had not been considered by the author beforehand. Each interview did however commence with a set of initial questions. These questions asked the participants to "Tell me about a time when someone behaved badly, treated you badly". The participants were asked to discuss the background to the disagreement, who was involved, how and why (from their perspective) the disagreement escalated and how the grievance ended. Rather than simply asking participants to recall the circumstances surrounding their current offence, the interviewer stressed that they could talk about any disagreement they had had. The participants effectively choose which grievances and how many grievances they discussed.

In terms of content, although the interviews were not rigidly structured a set of probes were used to explore the areas highlighted in the literature review. The four broad areas were: whether the "is/ought" discrepancy was an explanatory theme in how grievances were discussed; whether and what types of attributions were discussed; whether the grievances escalated in a sequential manner as suggested in Luckenbill and Doyle's model; and how and why violence was justified. To avoid leading questioning techniques, the probes were only used when the participants did not raise the issue. For example, where intentionality was not discussed a probe questions was asked, such as "Did you wonder why they did that?" In addition, as intentionality had been raised it was then important to clarify whether it had been a prominent cognitive variable during the grievance. For example, "Did it matter to you why they did that?"

After the interviews all participants were thanked for their input and any questions raised by the participants were answered. The main issue raised was who would have access to and read the interview notes. Reassurances were given that only the author and her supervisors would see the notes. The main concern was that staff at the Department of Justice would be given copies. In addition, the author asked each of the participants whether they consented to their stories being used to develop a scale. The scale was explained as a study to see how people experience and react to social problems. Each participant was informed that their name, any other person's name they mentioned, or any other specific identifying information would be amended so that their identity would be protected.

Directly after completing the interviews the author left the interview and went to an office and transcribed the shorthand interview notes into long hand and made any necessary notes. This ensured that all the interviews were transcribed while still in active working memory. To determine whether the transcribed interview notes were accurate and made sense all participants were seen again on the same day to confirm that the longhand notes were correct. Where errors were made these were corrected. All participants were then asked again whether they minded their stories being used. Three participants reconsidered and said they did not want their stories to be used in the scale development, while the remaining 15 participants again consented. The stories from the three participants who refused consent were kept in the content analysis presented below but were not used for the scale development.

The interviews were not tape recorded. Although tape recording and then full transcription is recommended to avoid the potential for lost data and/or to prevent the interview flow being disrupted by note-taking (Smith, 1995) in this instance it was considered unsuitable. First, as noted the official interview rooms are used primarily for police or other official Department of Justice interviews. As such, it was considered

appropriate to try and make the context of these interviews as far removed from an "official" interview as possible (in essence, untaped). Second, from the authors prior experience, many prisoners are wary of what information they give to whom and especially information that can be directly linked to them. Therefore, if the interviews were taped an assurance of complete confidentiality could not be given because tape recordings do potentially represent identifiable data.

### 2.3.3  Analytical Method

The interview data was analysed in two ways. The first method was to locate and extract the descriptive data from the interviews. The descriptive data reported comprised of the parties to the grievance, the relationships between the parties and how the grievance escalated and ended. The second method was a thematic content analysis which identified the major themes in what the participants were thinking and feeling as the grievance escalated. The content analysis followed Smith's (1995) recommendations for the idiographic approach. This approach commences with each interview being analysed in full before moving on to the next interview. During the analysis of the first interview the themes that emerged were noted and each theme given a code. A draft code list was then developed which was used as the basis for coding the themes in each successive interview (numbers 2 to 18). During the analysis, as new themes were found in the data they were inserted into the theme list.

As qualitative analysis can be subjective and open to a range of biases, especially where the content analysis was performed by the interviewer (as in the current study) it is essential that an independent researcher verify the themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The theme list together with instances of text representing each theme was given to a second coder. The second coder verified whether the theme made sense and that the text

was a good representation of each theme. The second coder was a senior lecturer from Murdoch University who specialises in research and analytical methodology.

## 2.4 Findings and Discussion

The total number of grievances analysed was 23. Four participants discussed two incidents each while the remaining 14 discussed one incident. Both the descriptive data and the common themes running through the interview data is presented below. To enhance the findings examples of interview data are provided. To ensure that the participants' identities were protected all names contained within the interview notes were substituted with a random and non-identifying code, such as S21. In addition, where examples are given, words or phrases that appear in brackets indicate an attempt to explain or amplify something a participant said.

The findings are presented in a number of sections each discussing a different aspect of the grievance dynamics identified. For example, those involved, the influence of significant others, the nature of the grievance, how and why it escalated and how it ended.

### 2.4.1  The Parties to the Grievance and the Influence of Significant Others

Of the 23 incidents discussed 21 grievances occurred between the participants and another party (the harmdoer) they knew well or had a close relationship with. Three incidents were between neighbours, three were with girlfriends, three with other family members and five occurred between work colleagues. Three grievances were between close friends, whereas five incidents were between people referred to as associates. Associates were described by A12 as *"Someone you sort of knew well but not really your "mate"* [4]. Only two grievances discussed were between strangers. Eighteen of the

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[4] A12, example of the type of code number used as a substitute for a participant's name.

grievances were male on male, whereas five involved a man and a women. Even though this is a small study and has limited generalisability, the types of relationships between the parties to the grievance discussed are not divergent from the official criminal justice statistics (reported in Chapter 1) which report that most incidents of violence, especially homicide and assault, occur between parties in a known relationship and where the primary parties involved are young males (AIC, 2004).

The data revealed that between two and seven people were involved in each grievance. Of interest, in most cases (18 out of the 23 incidents) the participants considered that the grievance was between them and one other person. However, what became apparent as their stories unfolded was that multiple persons were involved although their involvement was not necessarily direct. Other parties were usually partners or friends whom the participants discussed the matter. In some cases the data suggested that significant others had directly facilitated the grievance escalation. The influence of significant others on criminal behaviour is contentious and the debate centres around whether peers can or cannot directly influence another person's involvement in criminal behaviour. What is known however is that one of the biggest risk factors for criminal behaviour is associating with criminal peers and/or getting support for criminal activity from others (Gendreau et al, 1996). During the analysis three themes emerged with respect to the involvement of significant others.

**2.4.1.1  Direct support for grievance escalation and/or violence.** This theme addressed the active and direct involvement of a significant other (e.g., mother, brother or girlfriend). In this theme significant others had played either a supportive or active role in how and why the grievance escalated. Of the 23 grievances analysed, five cases of this theme were noted. Examples of direct support were:

> In the case of E4, although he considered that the grievance was between himself
> and his neighbour he mentioned that his mother was upset by the neighbour's

behaviour and wanted the behaviour stopped. Furthermore, on the day he went to "*confront the goose"* (the neighbour) he took his younger brother with him. As E4 stated, "*The dickhead* (the neighbour*) was upsetting my Mum, she wanted it stopped. So I went over there, took my younger brother with me, bit of moral support,* (to*) show him I meant business"*.

D78 said that "*I told the people in the house* (where he was living) *about the cleaner guy, they said give him a fucking hiding, let him know, stamp your authority. I told 'em I didn't wanna hide* (hit) *the guy, might go overboard. They said only way he'll learn"*.

Y3 also considered the grievance was between him and an associate although he mentioned how angry his girlfriend was and that "*she egged me on"*. On the day he went to discuss the matter with the associate (armed with a machete) it was his girlfriend who drove the car to the associate's house, waited in the carpark while the assault took place, and then drove Y3 back home.

**2.4.1.2 Appeals to higher loyalties.** Sykes and Matza (1957) hypothesised that one way in which criminal behaviour is justified and neutralised is by appealing to higher loyalties (e.g., "my family needed the money", "I had to do it to support my mate"). Indermaur (1995) had also found that appeals to higher loyalties were present in his analysis of violence used during property crime, such as "I had to support my friend, I couldn't leave him there" (that is, at the robbery scene). Appeals to higher loyalties were present in 10 of 23 grievances discussed. The following examples were representative of this theme.

SX1: "*Every time my missus talked about it she was in tears. I was up North* (working away) *so I was powerless. I got more pissed the more upset my missus got. He threatened my Mum too, he wagged his finger at her. After he threatened my Mum I wanted to kill him"* .

D9: "*My Mum was really worried. She didn't like to talk about it, got her upset. Didn't like to see my Mum being so worried, I got more pissed off when he rang the house. I had to get it sorted"*.

D18. "*He says to my mate "I'll be having you". My mate's not a big bloke and I stood up for him. Dog wants trouble, he thinks he's gonna bash my mate, well that ain't gonna happen"*.

**2.4.1.3 The presence of significant others.** In this theme the mere presence of significant others played a role. Although the narrative did not imply that the significant

others were actively involved in any way, their mere presence was enough for the dispute to escalate. The implicit role of peers was prominent during grievances concerning allegations made by the harmdoer to the victim that occurred in front of others. In some cases it appeared that it was not the confrontation itself per se that upset the victim but rather the humiliation felt because the confrontation occurred in front of others with whom the victim wanted to maintain a certain impression. As Z5 explained *"Can't let your mates see you're a goose"*. The implicit role of significant others was prominent in six grievances discussed. Examples of this theme were:

> B35: *"These were false accusations he made. What I heard from the people at work was that he said I stole two eggs. He was a cheeky prick, what I heard about him. Heard he had a month on him. They* (the other people in the kitchen) *heard us having the altercation. They knew it was false. He tried to come and take me, so I stabbed him"*.

> B2: "*I leant this guy money. Don't know what went through his head. See he paid back most of what he owed. Then he started trouble between me and the dealer. I was on good terms with the dealer up till them, got good deals. Then the dealer started wanted cash up front. He (*the dealer*) told me my credits no good 'cause my mate told him I ripped him off. I found him* (the friend). *He won't be spreading lies 'bout me in a hurry"*.

> A12: *"There's ways of saying you owe money, you don't humiliate people in front of their mates. Should have talked to me about this not in front of my mates. He could have said* (in private)*"listen man 'bout that $250, we gotta talk about it"*.

## 2.4.2  What the Grievances Were About: Stage One: "Naming" the Harm

Tedeschi and Felson (1994) proposed there were four main types of harm underpinning grievances: physical harm (injury, pain, or threat of); material damage (loss of goods or services); psychological harm (lack of respect, fairness or equality); political harm (violation of rights by the state or organisations). In this sample, of the 23 grievances discussed, 19 were underpinned by psychological harm (e.g., broken promises, insulted, lack of courtesy). Two were underpinned by physical harm and two by political harm. No grievances were discussed which were underpinned by the experience of material harm. When the harm was analysed several different forms of harm were identified.

**2.4.2.1  Types of psychological harm.** The first 19 grievances that follow

represent types of psychological harm. Three grievances developed after the participants

were verbally insulted in public which caused them to feel humiliated.

> As D78 stated, *"This idiot cleaner asks me why I don't clean my area, I show him my area, then he gets lippy and says in public that some guys are pigs. I felt insulted and humiliated in front of my work mates"*.

Five grievances developed after the other party had betrayed them which they

considered was a violation of trust . Two of these incidents concerned being given up to

the police by co-offenders. For example, while B2 was evading the law his two friends

and three cousins (all co-offenders) became witnesses against him for the prosecution.

> As B2 explained, *"After the armed robs I went on the run over East* (Eastern States of Australia)*. While I was on the run my mates and cousins provided the coppers with stuff. The case was set up when I got back. They fast tracked* (pleaded guilty) *and got a few years off* (their sentence)*, they went crown* (witness) *on me too and got more off"*.

Three other incidents concerned the perception of betrayed by a partner. As exemplified
by A12:

> "I *found out, she told me, that she was lonely and seeing someone else. I had wanted to marry her. I felt like she'd given my love to someone else"*.

Two grievances developed after the participants considered the other party had taken

advantage of them. As in the case of D78 who was annoyed that:

> *"See I'd look after the babies, not mine, hers, she'd say she'd be back at ten* (pm*) then she'd rock up the next morning, she did that lots. See you're nice to 'em* (women) *buy 'em flowers an' all that and they use you, take advantage"*.

Four grievances developed due to a lack of courtesy.

> As C21 had experienced: *"The missus and I had just had a baby, we'd only been home a few days and the neighbour woke me up with a concrete mixer. I didn't want the baby woken so I went over there. The miserable cunt then tells me to fuck off and that he'll do his drive* (mix concrete) *when he wants. I was thinking first the pricks inconsiderate waking us up, then he's rude when I ask him nicely to keep the noise down and not wake the baby"*.

Three developed directly after promises made to the participants were broken.

> As exemplified by D9. In his case he had sorted out the payment of a debt on behalf of a friend with an associate. The friend promised to pay the associate. The friend did not pay and so the associate then transferred the debt to D9 and held D9 liable for the debt. As D9 said *"I saved him a flogging and the least he could do was pay what he owed, what he promised he'd do"*

The last two grievances underpinned by psychological harm were in the form of accusations made by others which the participants felt were unfounded.

> As exemplified by A12 who was accused by an associate of owing him $250 which A12 said he did not owe and had never owed.

> In the case of B35, he stated that while he was working as a kitchen hand he was accused of stealing two eggs by a work colleague. As B35 noted *"it was rubbish 'cause I don't eat eggs".*

### 2.4.2.2  Types of political harm. Two grievances occurred due to a form of

political harm (perceived abuse of power by a person given statutory authority).

> As discussed by C52, *"My flat mate told me there was this job going, I rang the boss and started work. I got given shit jobs, women's jobs, tea, sweeping, cleaning. I asked why I wasn't doing what I was employed to do, supervisor told me enough guys doing the work but the way the supervisor dished out the work was unfair. He could have given me a chance".*

### 2.4.2.3  Types of physical harm. The final two grievances discussed were

underpinned by physical harm in the form of threats of harm to self or a significant

other.

> As in the case of SX1 who stated that his wife had made friends with the couple next door. The women then said her partner was beating her and SX1's wife told her she should leave him. The next day the man from next door threatened his wife telling her *"to butt out and that she'd get cut if she didn't let up"*. SX1 indicated the threat was for a cut throat and said the man had symbolized what he meant to do by moving his finger underneath his chin.

### 2.4.3  How the Grievances Escalated: From "Naming" to "Claiming"

Luckenbill and Doyle (1989) proposed that grievances escalate in a series of interrelated

stages, from the original perception of harm (naming) to a demand for reparation

(claiming) and where the reparation is unsatisfactory onto a third stage, aggression. Within the model there is recognition that some grievances are resolved amicably at the claiming stage (where reparation is satisfactory for both parties). Grievances can also end at the claiming stage even though the claim was unsuccessful because the victim decided that the matter was not worth pursuing. Luckenbill and Doyle stressed that one vital factor which influences why some grievances escalate into aggression is due to the social interaction between the parties, and especially how the harmdoer responds to the claim.

2.4.3.1 **Unacceptable responses from harmdoers**. In the present study 16 of the 23 incidents discussed, the participants said they experienced unacceptable response from their harmdoer. Although the original harm was upsetting and annoying for the participants, what appeared to be a primary factor in the further development of negative emotions and "righteous rage" was how the harmdoer had responded to the demand for reparation (the "claim"). The type of response was influential because it appeared to enhance the negative thoughts that developed about the harmdoer as well as the types of emotions felt. For example, if the harmdoer's response was, from the participants' perspective, "unexpected and/or unacceptable" this accentuated the negative impact that the harm had originally had. Furthermore, the unacceptable response often led to the experience of further harm for the victim (the participants), such as threats of physical harm or verbal insults. Of importance, as the participants discussed the claim, it was apparent that the process of dehumanising the harmdoer occurred at the claiming stage when reparation was unsatisfactory. These aspects are best exemplified in the following cases:

> N10: "*I'm facing unlawful wounding charges. It was you know, the icing on the cake. It all started when this idiot touches me up, grabs my arse. When I said what ya doing, he insults me by saying I flirted with him. Thought I was into it. This guy touches me up thinks I'm gay. I couldn't believe it. I expected him to say like oh*

*sorry mate. I was really pissed at him, fuming. The next day he walks up and bumps me real hard and makes me spill my brew (*cup of coffee*). It was hard, this was no accident. I threw the brew in his face. He was cut in the neck and needed stitches. I saw him later and asked whether there was a problem between him and me, he said no. I thought it was finished. But ya know what, he laid charges on me. He says to the cops that I threw the brew on him for nothing. He never mentioned his invasion of my privacy or that he bumped me. He's a dog and a faggot. I was shocked, this definitely is off".*

C21: "*See it was 5am when I asked him to turn the mixer off, "'scuse me mate my baby's asleep, can you do that later?". He said "well this is the only time I got* (referring to 5am)*, I work hard and when I come home I like to rest". He told me to fuck off. So I said "yeah whatever" and walked off. Stuck up prick. Was the way he said it, his flared tone of voice. I was dirty on him, agro on him. He just carried on mixing. I got angry and frustrated. I was thinking don't talk to me like that you piece of shit. Why speak to me like an animal in that tone. First the prick's inconsiderate waking people up then he's rude to me when I ask him to stop. I thought he would understand new baby and all that. He's fairly well off, thought he have a bit more brains, a bit of common courtesy. I figured be neighbourly, like neighbours help each other out, common thing all over the world. This miserable rude prick, it's just common decency, being civilised. You know his attitude was sort of like it's my house I'll do what I like".*

Of the 16 grievances that went through an unsuccessful claiming process, three grievances were brought to an end by the participants. Luckenbill and Doyle stressed that not all grievances escalate and that some are finalised by a victim because even though the harmdoer will not correct the wrong (at least from the victim's perspective) the victim is unwilling to persevere. This unwillingness to persevere is according to Luckenbill and Doyle evidence of a person with a low level of disputationess and a low tolerance for using aggression to settle grievances. This proposition was evident in the considerations that the three participants gave. This was exemplified by the following case:

S40: "*When I got out last time I met up with this women I'd been writing to. She was a female crim. She was trying to get her kids back, so I helped her get a place and get furniture. She had nothing so I guess the male ego took over. I turned back to crime. Did an armed robbery and got caught. She was in on it, hid the money. I 'fessed up to other crimes just so they would let her go. When I came in thought she would visit at least phone me, be grateful for what I did for her. I probably got another 3-4 years for 'fessing up to four armed robs. One compared to four is a big deal on your sentence. The only time I ever heard from her was when she wanted something, money. I heard she was seeing this other crim. She was seeing him and still asked me for money. I asked her about this bloke, she said she was*

*seeing no-one. She lied. I was disappointed in her. I found out who he was. He came in here. I didn't go after him, no point. I wrote to her told her I was going in the foreign legion. I put the word out that he leave me alone. I wanted to belt him, hurt him, but it would only get me more time, another 10 years. I don't want to play these games. I don't want to hold a grudge. She still writes asking for things but I just ignore em. She's down and out again and playing games. If people don't want me then I don't want them. I was heartbroken though".*

**2.4.3.2  Acceptable responses from harmdoers.** Two of the grievances ended amicably because, according to the participants, their harmdoers had responded well to the claim. From the participant's perspective it was not just that the harmdoer acknowledged the harm, what was important was that the harmdoer actually took some action and remedied the harm. These two cases were as follows:

> In the case of C21, he had experienced difficulties with two neighbours. Both of the neighbours had woken him and his family up during the night. One was due to a concrete mixer (as discussed above). The other was due to the noise made by a car revving. Unlike the concrete mixer, the neighbour's car dispute ended amicably, as C21 explained: *"Like my neighbour 'cross the road, he's a good bloke. He had a really nice car, new V8 with a sports exhaust, really loud, every morning, like 3am, he'd take off and let everyone know. I said to him one day, "she sounds nice, loud, I hear ya every morning". He automatically thought about us and the baby. He looked liked he hadn't realised how loud the car was. He said "look mate, I have the music up, I never knew, really sorry about that". A week later I saw him and asked if he'd been off work, hadn't heard him heading off. He said "no, I've been rolling the car out of the drive save waking yous up". He and I became mates, had a few BBQs after that. He took me for a spin".*

The second example is the case of C52. He had been employed as a concrete pourer. He had been told he would be taught how to use all the machinery. However when he started the supervisor assigned him what he considered was "women's jobs", menial tasks like sweeping the floor and making tea. He had tried to talk to the supervisor who told him there were enough experienced guys working the machines. This is how C52 claimed and how this grievance ended:

> *"I was just sitting round all day waiting for someone to want something menial. I heard from my flat mate that a job was coming up on night shift. Night shift is good money, another $150 a week. So I went to see the boss and said I wanna change to night shift. I told the supervisor and the boss I wanted to work and not make tea. I told the boss I was a good worker and give me a chance to show I can hack it. They must've thought I was keen cause I got the job. I got to do what I wanted, and I got the money. I stayed working there for 16 months".*

**2.4.3.1  When the harmdoer cannot be found.** The analysis found that in five of

the 23 grievances the process of claiming could not be accomplished because the victim

could not locate the harmdoer. Where harmdoers could not be found, even though some

time had passed, in 4 out of the 5 cases the victims considered that the grievance was

not over. Only one participant considered that too much time had passed and that

pursuing a claim was not worth it. The analysis found that being unable to locate your

harmdoer had similar effects as when the harmdoer had responded unacceptably to the

harm; that is, the increase in negative emotions and the development of "moralistic

anger", the dehumanising of the harmdoer and the desire to get revenge. As exemplified

in the following three examples:

> E4: *"They moved house and haven't seen 'em since. Since wannabe biker hard
> man turned two-faced and started putting his nose into me and brothers business.
> I tried to find him, gutter scum I hated the dog. I drove round looking for the dog.
> I drove round everyday. I thought of all the things I wanted to say to the dog and
> do to the dog. I didn't find him, but if I do he'll get a flogging for running off.".*

> D9: *"I kept trying to call him on his mobile, to get it sorted. He never answered. I
> kept hitting redial. I went round there to but his missus said he was out. I'm not
> sure he realised the hassle he caused me and now my Mum's upset. I was pissed
> off, shocked at what he did, furious, I was pissed right off at him. I don't know
> what he was thinking off doing this to his mate. I kept thinking this is not right. I
> wanted to slap him, punch his head in. I'm gonna keep looking for him 'cause he
> caused me hassle".*

**2.4.4  How the Grievances Ended: From "Claiming" to "Aggression"**

As discussed above, not all grievances escalated to the third stage: aggression. Five of

the grievances did not pass through the claiming stage because the harmdoer could not

be found. Two grievances ended amicably. Three came to end after an unsuccessful

claim was considered not worth pursuing. This left 13 unresolved grievances. The next

stage of the analysis explored how the grievance ended. Of interest although the 13

unresolved grievances ended with the third stage of Luckenbill and Doyle's model,

namely aggression. Only 12 of the 13 grievances concluded with the use of physical

aggression, one grievance was "resolved" (according to the participant) through passive

aggression, namely theft.

<u>**2.4.4.1  Escalation to physical aggression and how violence was justified.**</u>

Twelve out of the 23 grievances clearly escalated into violence. The following examples

are representative of how and why violence was used.

> A12: *"He's a dickhead, even when I told him I don't owe ya nothing he wouldn't take it, kept saying I was bad for a debt. I couldn't let him get away with that, making me look like I got no ticker. I figured I'm not having this looper humiliate me. So I went and got pumped up and healthy so I could belt him. I called him up and told him I had something for him. He came and I knocked him out, cut both his eyes, put him in hospital. I'm not paying what I don't owe and I'm not having this dickhead stand over me no more.*

> D18: *"When he said "I'll have you" at my mate and then said he'd have me, he was showing us up. I knew my mate couldn't stand up to him. Once he said he'd take us both on I belted him, he was on the ground. I pulled an iron post off the fence and whacked him on the back, didn't want him getting up. I didn't go looking for trouble, we had a nice night, nice food. He showed up looking for trouble. Anyway it's over, he never came back, left my mate's missus alone. He's got the scars to remind him, he knows now, leave 'em alone. This was a no win situation. I wasn't looking for trouble but he couldn't be reasoned with".*

> A15: *"When they jumped the  queue I was pissed off. I got pissed off when one of 'em says "well you weren't fast enough were you". My missus says to 'em "really we were first". In a nice way, not arsey. This other goose then flicks his hand at my missus. Rude cunt. So I look at him he looks at me like "yeah mate". I think "yeah mate" I waited for 'em outside and then I king hit the first one and bashed the second one. Be rude to my missus and then check me out, cheeky cunts.*

Where grievances had ended with violence the participants were asked why "the use of

force" was considered necessary and/or acceptable. The following narratives are

representative of several sub themes identified.

**Informing is not acceptable**
> B2: *"These people were against me. They gave the coppers stuff and set the case up.  People should pull together, crims should stay together. There's too many people against crims, like the cops and the courts. Coeys* (co-offenders) *who go crown are lowlife dogs, they need a hiding for providing coppers with stuff".*

**Recreational pastime and influence of peers**

> Z5: *"Sometimes you're compelled to fight. Can't let your mates see you're a goose. What we do* (referring to his friends) *is, like we wind up a couple of blokes and watch them fight. Lets off a bit of steam.*

**Violence as a lesson**

> B35: *"The dog tried to cause dramas for me. It backfired and he got a belting. Some people you have to belt cause it's all they understand. I don't like doing it but you have to. See I don't get angry, I just do what has to be done".*

**Knight in violent armour (protecting the honour of others)**

> SX1: *"I've been threatened before but you don't threaten my missus. What gives that cunt the right to say he'll cut my missus. I put that cunt in his place. Was the last fucking insult he'll ever give. You threaten my family you deserve to get hurt".*

**Reputation maintenance**

> D18: *"You can't let people stand over ya and do nothing. Not right to be confronted. If you can't stand your ground people will think they can walk all over you. Once you're an easy target, got no reputation left.*

> A12: *"I don't want people to know I'm weak like I can't stand my ground. Look, people know you don't want the word out that you got no ticker, that you're easy prey. It's better to get beat up and keep respect. People say you win the fight by being 100 miles up the road, but that proves you got no ticker".*

**2.4.4.2  Ending the grievance through passive aggression.** One grievance was "resolved" not by the use of violence but by removing the object that was central to the grievance. This is the case of C21 who had been woken up for a few mornings at 5am by his neighbour who had been using a concrete mixer. C21 had asked his neighbour to keep the noise down but the neighbour had been rude and continued to mix concrete.

> As C21 explained: *"5am is ridiculous. I was worried the noise would wake the baby. I figured I'll get rid of it* (the mixer*). I don't want this happening. I saw him go to work, took my ute* (pick-up utility van), *backed up his drive, loaded the mixer on the back and took it to "Cashies"*  (licensed pawn broker)*, that'll fix him. Got the mixer down there by lunchtime.* **I engraved my drivers license on the mixer, fools em every time, they think it's yours. Find the loop in the system** [5]. *He comes home that night, seen me in the front and stares, but hasn't seen my mate. He notices the mixer's gone, it was on his front drive and comes over for a confrontation, you could  see he was fuming. Then he sees my mate, 6ft6 guy, tats, huge, big bikie looking fella. His jaw dropped, he stared, turned and walked off. He stares me down  every time he sees me but he's*

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[5] As a means of trying to prevent stolen goods being sold at pawn brokers a law was passed in Australia providing that people must prove ownership of the goods and provide identification (e.g., driver license, passport) before goods/cash change hands. The pawn brokers must retain a record of your ID along with a description of the goods. However, as C21 explained there are ways of circumventing this law.

*never said anything. He called the cops, so about six I was in the back garden and this copper looked over the back fence I said "can I help you", he looked around and then said "no mate". I set the sprinkler in the front for five next morning so I had an excuse to see what he was up to. I thought he might have hired another mixer. He was up mixing the concrete in a wheelbarrow.*

### 2.4.5 Types of Attributions Made and Types of Feelings Experienced

In addition to exploring whether the grievances described could be understood in terms of Luckenbill and Doyle's three stage model, the present study aimed to explore the most common types of attributions the participants made. Specially whether the "is/ought" discrepancy and HABs formed a common part of the narrative. This section presents the themes that were identified in the data. These themes outline what the participants thought of their harmdoer and the feelings they experienced as the grievance escalated.

### 2.4.5.1 Why the harm was wrong: "Is/ought" and moral judgements. Miller

(2001) suggested that one way we acknowledge that harm has occurred is by making a morally based assessment of what someone should have done ("oughts") against what we think they did do ("is"). The interviews revealed that the participants had quite firm views about what the other person "ought" to have done. These "oughts" were sometimes expressed by the participants in terms of the moral guidelines that they set for their own behaviour (e.g., *I would not do what they did*). Of interest, the emphasis that the participants gave in highlighting "is/ought" discrepancies and moral judgements appeared to be a vital aspect in how the participants described their grievances. What the harmdoers did and why this was considered wrong was such a prominent theme that it was rarely an area that required probing. Another aspect prominent in the interview data was that the participants had expected an apology or some kind of recognition for

the harm they had suffered. The lack of an apology was also a prominent theme in "is/ought" discrepancies in that people **should** apologise for their bad behaviour.

"Is/ought" discrepancy judgements were prominent in 18 of the 23 grievances discussed. This finding adds support to the proposition of Howells (1988) that moral based judgements are an important variable in the development and escalation of anger that can lead to the use of aggression. The following examples were representative of this theme.

> Z5: *"This guy was getting lippy over my wife, but his comments were getting personal about my Mum. We all know where to draw the line. There's this line that you don't cross. Sometimes people don't know where to draw the line, but then you apologise. I don't say things about my mother. People's mothers, they brought you into the world, you wouldn't have got here without them. There's certain things you don't say".*

> D9: *"This is off, it ain't right. I was trying to help him out. It ain't right to help someone out like I did and then have all this stuff happen. I shouldn't have gotten involved in other people's business. My mate said he would pay and that's what he should have done. If he* (the friend) *had said sorry for getting you involved that would have been good enough for me and we could have got it sorted".*

> B2: *"You gotta live by a code, if you're a crim or a straight head* (referring to non-offenders) *you gotta have morals. They chose to sell me out. They knew I would never sell them out. People should be loyal, loyalty that's what it's all about".*

> E4: *"You don't run to the cops if you got a problem, you sort it out. Two-faced people, say hi and all that then run to the cops behind your back. You expect people to be up front and honest. You gotta mind your own business and keep your nose out of other peoples business. He stuck his nose in, should have kept out of it. I hate nosy people. He should have copped it on the chin".*

### 2.4.5.2 Why the harmdoer behaved badly: The fundamental attribution error.

During the analysis it became apparent that the most prominent form of social attribution present in the narrative was the fundamental attribution error (FAE). This was an unanticipated finding and this project had not aimed to explore whether this attributional bias was influential in grievance escalation. However, given that the FAE is suggested to be one of the most common attributional biases (Jones, 1986), this finding was not surprising.

The FAE error is the tendency to overestimate the importance of personality factors relative to other situational or environmental explanations (Aronson, 2004). For example, if a shop assistant is rude it is often assumed that the rudeness occurred because **he or she is a** rude person rather than due to them having a bad day. The problem with this bias is that people infer that that other's behaviour is more consistent that it truly is. For example, in one of the most widely cited studies research participants who were to all intents and purposes equal in intelligence were assigned to one of two roles, that of a quizmaster and that of a game show contestant. A second set of research participants observed the "mock quiz show" and were asked whether they believed the quizmaster or the contestant was more intelligent and knowledgeable. Significantly more participants said that undoubtedly the quizmaster was more intelligent. This occurred because the quizmaster "appeared" to be more intelligent and knowledgeable simply because they read out the questions while the contestants "appeared" less intelligent because they could not always answer the questions (Ross, Amabile & Steinmetz, 1977).

In the current study the FAE was evident in 12 of the 23 grievances discussed. Of interest, the FAE appeared to be related to the process of dehumanisation. Not only were friends, neighbours and work colleagues transformed into "despicable rats" but the participants also considered they had always been "rats". Furthermore the participants also considered they themselves had made a personal error in judgement in assuming these people were "ok" in the first place. In essence, the "bad behaviour" that caused the grievance was put down to the harmdoers being consistently "bad" people rather than just "behaving badly once". The following examples are representative of dehumanisation combined with the FAE.

> D9: *"They are both arseholes. Should have known better than to think these people were my mates".*

C21: *"Stuck up prick. Lives alone, can't mix with people. People like that don't have a life, don't know how to mix with other people. Don't know how to be nice how to show a bit of courtesy. You don't need people like that for your neighbour".*

RX1: *"Top people at work they're like on a power trip. They don't care what they do, how they treat ya, they think legally they can do what they want. Site supervisors in the building game they're all the same, all fuckwits".*

E4: *"They started off as good neighbours "how ya doing" and all that. Then they showed their true colours, two faced people who run to the cops. They got an attitude problem, chip on their shoulders".*

S40: *"She probably didn't know any better, been dragged up all her life. You expect people to be moral, do the right thing. Not her. She was a drug addict, can't expect much from them, drugs come first. She got no conscience, I didn't know that when I met her. I should've chosen my girl more carefully".*

**2.4.5.3  Why the harmdoer behaved badly: Hostile attributional biases.** Of specific interest in this project was to assess whether hostile attributional biases (HABs) were problematic for adult violent offenders and whether this variable represented an important factor in the escalation of grievances which end in violence. HABs occur when a victim believes that the harmful act carried out by a harmdoer was deliberate and underpinned by hostility and malice when in reality it was either an accident or a thoughtless mistake.   Evidence of HABs were found in 10 of the 23 grievances discussed. Of interest, HABs appeared to be more prominent in the narrative after a participant had made a claim which was unsuccessful or where the victim had been unable to contact the harmdoer. It appeared that the lack of an acceptable response from the harmdoer was taken as evidence that the harm was deliberately carried out underpinned by some form of hostility. During the interviews when a participant considered that the harmdoer had deliberately intended to harm, to assess whether this was potentially a HABs or fact the participants were asked whether they had found out the harm deliberate (in essence to ascertain whether they had proof of actual hostile behaviour or just inferred). The following examples are representative of the cases

where the behaviour of the harmdoer was assumed to be hostile without supporting

evidence.

> D9: *"I give everyone my mobile number, I don't give out my home number, it's my Mum's place. The lad* (referring to his friend) *must have given him my Mum's number. He knew I was looking for him, I told his girlfriend to get him to call me. Look he knew he did wrong that's why he hid. I reckon he hid to get the other guy off his back".* In this case D9 had been unable to contact his friend and had no firm evidence to support his theory that his friend had given out his home number.

> F11: *"He sold me out to get a deal done. He got his charges dropped and put me right in it. He wasn't professional see. I tried to phone him but he wouldn't answer the phone. I wanted to let him know he was a dog, wanted to hear from him that he'd opened his month. I wanted an apology, hear him say sorry. Still would have been dirty, but he blew the gig, wouldn't speak to me. It's still floating* (the grievance) *not sure when I'll see him he don't travel in my circles".* F11 assumed his co-offender had "sold him out" although F11 had no evidence to support to confirm that that the co-offender had even been to the police station, had been charged or become an informer.

During the analysis it appeared that hostile intent was expressed in two distinct

ways. The first way was where the participants perceived that their harmdoer had

deliberately aimed to harmed them. In essence the harm was perceived as deliberate,

antagonistic and hostile and was personally directed towards them. This first way was

referred to as hostile intent. The following narrative was representative of this sub

theme:

> D9: *"He thought I was a push over he could take advantage of"*.

> C52: *"He was out to frustrate me so he can get rid of me."*.

The second way was more Machiavellian in nature where the means justified the

ends, and was referred to as malicious intent. Malicious intent was slightly different to

hostile intent in that the behaviour of the harmdoer was perceived as both deliberate and

harmful although the harm was not considered a personal affront. Rather the

participants considered that the "bad behaviour" was carried out purely for the self-

serving benefit of the harmdoer and who ever was around at the time could or would

have been the victim. The following examples were representative of malicious intent.

> RX1: *"It's a game to them, they're out to piss people off, don't care whose toes they step on. They just sit round all day nothing to do except think about who they can pick on".*

> D78: *"He wanted to look important in front of everyone at work, wanted to look like a hard man by accusing people of being pigs".*

**2.4.5.4 How the participants' felt: The range of emotions discussed.** The final

theme found in the interview data related to the types of feelings that the participants

had freely expressed. According to Mikula et al., (1998) when people experience harm

they experience a wide range of negative emotions. Like the college student sample in

the Mikula et al., study, the participants in this study reported a variety of mixed

emotions, although all were negative. The following examples are representative of the

emotions felt by the participants as the grievances escalated. To keep the emotions felt

within their context the examples are presented along with a brief indication of the

circumstances and the type of harm experienced.

> F11 had experienced being betrayed by his co-offender. According to F11 the co-offender had informed the police of all the activities that F11 had been involved in over the past few months .*"I was so disappointed in him, I was shattered and angry".*

> B2 had also been betrayed by his friend and his two cousins who he claims provided the police with false information that led to a lengthy jail sentence. B2 said, *"I was angry and sad at the same time, and frustrated and down, all these were mixed up into one".*

> Y3 considered that an associate who he had dealings with in the past did not trust him with certain information which he felt was unfair. *"I done the right thing in the past and now this, I was angry, sad, felt depressed".*

> G4 had experienced being accused of owing money which he said he did not owe. The debt allegation according to G4 was not the primary harm, what upset G4 was that it was raised in public. *"I was a stunned mullet, I was disappointed, hurt, betrayed, but what was worse was the dog insulted me in public, humiliated me in front of my mates".*

C52 considered that his supervisor was asking him to do menial tasks and this was an abuse of the supervisor's power which made him feel "*insulted and angry*".

## 2.4.6 Summary of Findings

In summary, 23 grievances were discussed in the present study. From the participants' perspective 19 of the grievances began after they had experienced a psychological harm (e.g., broken promises, insulted, lack of courtesy). Two were underpinned by physical harm and two by political harm. No grievances were discussed which were underpinned by the experience of material harm. Of interest, in this study most of the grievances were male on male disputes which began due to trivial matters yet escalated into sometimes quite serious acts of violence, such as, being accused of stealing two eggs which led to the accuser being stabbed. The initial reasons for the development of the grievances discussed closely mirrored the findings of Mikula et al., (1990) who found that is was the experience of psychological harm that upset their European college student sample the most.

An interesting finding in the present study was that although the participants considered the grievance was primarily between themselves and their harmdoer, it was evident that significant others played an important role in how and why the grievance escalated. Significant others appeared to play one of three roles. The first role was direct support for the escalation where the significant others supported the escalation (e.g., "egging them on"). The second role was where the participant reacted to the concerns of others (appeals to higher loyalties) where they took on the role of protector or enforcer on behalf of another. The last role was more implicit and their role here was merely that they were there. This last role was psychological in nature for the victim and was related to their own impression management because a confrontation had started in public which made them feel humiliated in front of their peers. Association with criminal peers is known to be one of the highest risk factors for criminal behaviour. What the data

from this study suggest is that is that the support from others, especially family members, can be direct or implicit. The role of significant others in grievance escalation is discussed further in Chapter 7 (Section 7.5.3) when future research directions are considered.

Although not all of the grievances discussed escalated through the three stages, in the main the data was supportive of Luckenbill and Doyle's (1989) model. All grievances commenced with the perception of harm (the naming stage). The majority of participants were quite clear about what type of harm they had experienced and were extremely forthcoming about why the harmdoer had acted immorally and "badly". It was proposed in Chapter 1 that Luckenbill and Doyle's model could be enhanced by a better understanding of why people perceive harm. The findings from this qualitative study suggests that the "is/ought" discrepancy might be a reasonable way of explaining how people perceive harm and how this experience leads to the development of negative emotions and moralistic anger and righteous rage.

The second stage of the model was "claiming". All participants stated that they had in some way tried to make a claim. The analysis found three ways in which "claiming" proceeded (acceptable response; unacceptable response; and harmdoer unavailable). Two participants said their claim was successful. What appeared to be vital was not just that the harmdoer acknowledged the harm but that they altered their behaviour. In essence it appeared that "actions spoke louder than words". Five of the grievances did not actually achieve an outcome because the harmdoer could not be located. In four of these cases the participants stated that the matter was not "resolved" even though some time had passed. These four participants still intended to find their harmdoer and "have it out with them". In 16 cases the participants considered the harmdoers' response was both "unexpected and unacceptable". In three of these 16 cases the participants themselves choose to end the grievance, even though unresolved,

because they considered the matter not worth pursuing. Finally aggression was used "to resolve" 13 grievances.

The analysis suggested that it was during and after unsuccessful claims (whether due to an unacceptable response, or harmdoer not available) that already negative thoughts and feelings became elevated into righteous rage and moralistic anger. This appeared to be due to the fact that the unsuccessful claim was itself perceived as yet another harm. This in turn led to demonstrations of hostile attributional biases and the dehumanising of the harmdoer. Also demonstrated was the fundamental attribution error, where participants judged the second "bad act" as yet more evidence that this person always acts "badly".

As mentioned 13 incidents escalated into the third stage "aggression", although only 12 incidents (approximately 50% of the total number of grievances discussed) ended with the use of violence. In the thirteenth case although physical violence was not used or threatened, the participant engaged in passive aggression. He simply removed the offending object (an act of theft and then sold the stolen goods). Of the 12 grievances that did escalate into violence, the analysis showed that the escalation occurred quite rapidly and was underpinning five different forms of justifications for violence. These being: violence as punishment for informers; as a recreational pastime; to maintain reputation; to protect others; and to teach people a lesson.

## 2.5 Using the Findings to Develop Scale Items

The primary rationale for carrying out this project was to assess whether violent offenders differ from non-offenders in terms of higher HABs, wider "is/ought" discrepancies and higher justifications for violence. As no suitable psychometric tests could be located to measure these variables it was necessary to devise new scales. As previously discussed, both Hermans (1988) and Whitley (1996) argued that for

psychometric scales to have both acceptable internal reliability and validity and high

external and face validity the scale items ideally should be sourced from qualitative data

generated from in-depth interviews. Furthermore Hermans argued that the interviews

should be with people with whom the scale is ultimately to be used and who are

knowledgeable about the subject matter. The second objective of the present study was

therefore to use the stories, narrative and themes identified in the interview data to

devise two scales. The rationale for using the interview data was that the two scales

would be based upon the narratives given by the participants allowing the scale content

to use everyday language and be based on real life experience and real events.

Based on the content analysis, previously presented, two scales would be devised.

The first was intended to measure violent sentiments, the second to measure social

attributions, feelings and grievance resolution strategies (problem solving).

## 2.5.1  Violent Sentiments: Devising the "Justifications for Violence" Scale

The items were sourced directly from the interview data and comprised the sentiments

that the participants used to state why and under what circumstances they believed that

violence was justified and warranted. Where necessary, the text was slightly amended to

make the items more understandable. For example, the word "dog" in Australian

criminal code refers to a person considered "lowlife scum". It is also used to refer to a

"tamp" (a child sex-offender/pedophile). As this word has little meaning to Australian

people who do not use criminal code it was replaced with the term "lowlife".

In total, thirty sentiments were drawn from the interview data and these items

were named the "Justifications for Violence" (JFV). The items were then inserted at

random into the Criminal Sentiments Scale (CSS: Andrews & Wormith, 1984). The

rationale for inserting the JFV items into the CSS was to explore in more detail the

preliminary results of Polaschek et al., (2004b) who had found that endorsement of

violent beliefs in a sample of adult male offenders was highly correlated with endorsement of attitudes towards the criminal justice system, law violation in general and identification with criminal peers. This finding suggested that violent sentiments could be related to endorsement of other criminal sentiments. To assess whether violent sentiments function independently or are related to other criminal sentiments and to ensure that measurement error did not confound the results, it was considered optimal to assess all four types of sentiments at the same time and using the same format, scaling and scoring method. Permission to insert the JFV items into the CSS was obtained from Dr Wormith, one of the copyright holders of the CSS (S.W. Wormith, personal communication, June, 27, 2002). The 30 JFV items can be seen in Appendix A.

## 2.5.2  Devising a Measure of Attributions, Feelings and Social Problem Solving

The second set of items collated from the Study 1 data analysis formed the basis for the development of a scale that would measure social attributions, "is/ought" discrepancies and problem solving in socially problematic situations that could escalate into grievances. This scale was less straightforward to devise than the JFV and the development occurred in a number of stages.

As discussed in Chapter 1 the optimal method for measuring HABs (and by implication "is/ought" discrepancy judgements) is to stage a mock social interactions and to observe what unfolds and/or to ask the participants what they are thinking (de Castro et al., 2002). As this method would be ethically unsound in this research the second best method was utilised. This method entailed presenting written scenarios and asking participants a series of questions probing their thoughts and opinions.

The first stage of development was to use the grievance escalation stories collected during the interviews. As the scale would be used to compare offenders with non-offenders, stories that involved grievances between criminal peers over criminal

matters were considered too specific to criminal peer interactions and were excluded. Out of the 15 participants who consented for their stories to be used, seven stories were selected. Each story chosen involved a problematic encounter with a friend, neighbour, work colleague or ex-partner. All of the stories were based on the experience of psychological harm, such as insults, accusations, inconsiderate behaviour and broken promises.

To transform the stories into scenarios, the descriptions of the events given by the participants were condensed into one paragraph. Although the stories were condensed, the essence of each situation was retained by ensuring that certain social factors remained unaltered. For example, the type of harm (e.g., insults), the place where the situation had occurred (e.g., workplace), and the relationship between the parties (e.g., neighbours) was not altered. The final alteration was to create levels of hostility and ambiguity in the stories. As the literature had suggested that hostile attributional biases are more pronounced in social situations where the intent of the harmdoer is not clear, in essence where the harm occurred under ambiguous circumstances, it was vital that this issue be explored in this thesis. The level of ambiguity written into each scenario comprised of a range from clearly hostile through levels of ambiguity to accidental. Of importance in this thesis, scenarios were deemed ambiguous when there was at least two distinct and unrelated explanations that could be given for why the harmdoers behaved as they did and where at least one of the explanations was not hostile. The seven stories and their ambiguity level can be seen in Appendix B.

The second stage of development was to create a series of questions to measure the prominent themes found during the content analysis. The aim was for the scale to measure the "is/ought" discrepancy as well as the prominent social attributions made, such as the fundamental attribution error and attributions of hostile and malicious intent. As the participants in the study had discussed in some length how they felt while the

grievances were escalating it was considered optimal to include this aspect and a scale item was devised to measure the range of emotions the participants had mentioned. The items for social attributions and feelings was sourced directly from the interview narrative.

The final question was devised to assess how offenders compared to non-offenders would solve each of the seven social problems. This question was left open-ended so that the grievance resolution strategies (social problem solving) of these groups could be assessed without the limits of forced choice options. The newly devised scale was called the "Measure of Attributions and Problem Solving" (MAPS). The draft seven-scenario MAPS can be seen in Appendix E.

## 2.6 General Discussion

The study reported in this chapter explored how and why grievances escalate as manifested through the narratives of 18 offenders with a history of engaging in grievances that escalated into violence. The study explored several different aspects of grievance escalation. First, the data was analysed to assess whether the grievances discussed by the participants escalated in the three stages that Luckenbill and Doyle (1989) had proposed. This first analysis found strong support for their three stage model.

The second aspect of grievance escalation assessed was how and what the participants were thinking and feeling and what they did to end the grievances. The data found that the prominent cognitive processes expressed were the "is/ought" discrepancy, the fundamental attribution error, and attributions of hostile and malicious intent. The data also found that as the grievances escalated the harmdoers were often dehumanised (where the friend became the "idiot"). As the grievances escalated the participants stated that their feelings became more negative and their desire to seek

revenge, or to gain justice, increased. Finally, of the 23 grievances discussed approximately 50% were brought to an end through the use of violence and in some instances serious acts of violence which resulted in high levels of physical injury for the original harmdoer.

Although the current study has several limitations such as limited generalisability of findings, what this study did provide was narrative from violent offenders about how and why grievance escalate, what types of attributions offenders use, and why violence is seen as a legitimate way to end socially problematic situations. This information was vital for the content of the two new psychometric scales developed. Each of these scales was devised to assess either what offenders think (violent sentiments) or how they think (common cognitive processes underpinning grievance escalation and resolution).

The first scale devised was Justifications for Violence. The 30 JFV items were inserted into the established and widely used CSS (Andrews & Wormith, 1984). This scale will be used in later studies to examine two vital questions: *do adult violent offenders endorse higher justifications for violence than adult non-offenders, and do violent sentiments operate independently or are they related to endorsement of other criminal sentiments.* These questions are the student of Study 5, reported in Chapter 5.

The second scale devised was the Measure of Attributions and Problem Solving (MAPS). The MAPS was devised to measure what people would think, how they would feel and what they would do if they found themselves in seven distinctly different socially problematic situations. The MAPS contains seven scenarios based on the grievances that the participants in the current study had experienced. The MAPS will be used in several studies in this thesis to examine the following questions: *do adult violent offenders experience wider "is/ought" discrepancies, demonstrate higher HABS, report more negative emotions, and are more likely to state they would use violence to end*

*grievances than adult non-offenders.* These questions are the subject of Study 6,
reported in Chapter 6.

Before comparing non-offenders with offenders, it was essential that the newly
devised scales were shown to be internally reliable and valid. The next stage of
development was to test the draft forms of the JFV and the MAPS using a student
sample and then to assess whether the scales work well in an offender and non-offender
community sample. The psychometric assessment of the two scales for the three
samples is reported in the next two chapters.

## 12 YEARS FOR 'STARE' MURDERER

By David Darragh

A 21 YEAR-OLD murderer has been sentenced to life imprisonment with a sentenced minimum of 12 years for bashing a stranger to death with a baseball bat because the victim stared at him.

A Supreme Court jury found 'X' not guilty of the wilful murder of Ronal Mark Hilsley, 34, but guilty of the lesser charge of murder. The jury ruled that 'X', who was 19 at the time, intended to cause grievous bodily harm to, but not to kill, Mr Hilsley when he repetitively bludgeoned him in the back of the head with a metal baseball bat at the Kenlorn Caravan Park in Queens Park, on November 2, 2001. 'X''s first trial in October ended with a hung jury.

Justice John McKechnie sentenced 'X' to a mandatory life jail term with a minimum of 12 years, backdated to November 2001, before he is eligible for parole. The maximum sentence is 14 years. Justice McKechnie said 'X' could not control his anger and was a danger to the community. He was an amphetamine user with convictions for three burglaries on caravans at Kenlorn Caravan Park.

Outside court, Mr Hilsley's sister Kayeleen, said she was disappointed at 'X''s acquittal on wilful murder but satisfied with his long jail term. She labeled 'X' a vicious animal who destined to murder. Her brother, a machine operator at a medical waste disposal business in Welshpool, may have stared at the killer outside his house because he believed 'X' had previously stolen his bicycle. She described her brother, the eldest of nine children, as a loving family man. The family was devastated by his brutal murder. At the time of his death, he had been looking forward to a holiday in the Northern Territory with one of his brothers and taking his young nephews whale watching, she said.

Det-Sgt Pete Davies said it was disturbing that X had hunted down Mr Hilsley in the caravan park 16 hours after such a trivial incident. "It was a horrible, senseless crime," he said.

During a two-day retrial, the court was told that 'X' got angry because he thought Mr Hilsley, a stranger, had stared at him when Mr Hilsley rode his bicycle past his unit on the way to work. 'X' kept mentioning the incident and seemed angry while drinking with others that night. About 12.30am, armed with a knife hidden in his pants and a bat, he and two others went hunting through the caravan park for Mr Hilsley.

After a scuffle he hit Mr Hilsley on the thigh with the bat then four or five forceful blows to the back of the head while he was on the ground. Mr Hilsley died from severe head injuries. 'X' later admitted to police in a video interview that he had killed him.

**Full story, see Appendix P**

# Chapter 3.

# Study 2:
# Testing the Violent and Criminal Sentiments Scale and the Measure of Attributions and Problem Solving Using a Student Sample.

## 3.1 Introduction and Study Overview

The aim of the current study was to assess whether the Violent and Criminal Sentiments

Scale (VCSS) and the Measure of Attributions and Problem Solving (MAPS) developed

from the interviews, reported in Chapter 2, were reliable and valid scales. Specifically

the aim was to assess whether the scales had unifactorial component structure and

produced high internal reliabilities. As the intention was to use these scales in later

studies to compare offenders with non-offenders it was vital that they have satisfactory

psychometric qualities. The sample chosen to initially validate the new scales was

university undergraduates. The current study is presented in a number of sections.

Section 3.2 details the method. Section 3.3 presents the psychometric proprieties

observed for the new scales and Section 3.4 discusses the results.

## 3.2 Method

### 3.2.1 Draft Measurement Scales

**3.2.1.1 Measure of pro-violent and pro-criminal sentiments.** The Violent and

Criminal Sentiments Scale (VCSS) was an expanded version of the Criminal Sentiments

Scale (CSS) (Andrews & Wormith, 1984). The original CSS is a 41-item paper and

pencil measure divided into three subscales. The first subscale measures attitudes

towards the Law, Courts and Police (ALCP); for example, "The law does not benefit the

common person." The second subscale, Tolerance for Law Violation (TLV) measures

the degree to which a person tolerates offending behaviour; for example, "A hungry

person has the right to steal." The third subscale measures Identification with Criminal

Others (ICO); for example, "I would rather associate with people that obey the law than

those that don't". Items are scored using a 5-point Likert scale: (1) "strongly agree" to

(5) "strongly disagree." Some items in each subscale are scored in a positive direction and some in a negative direction. After reversal, lower ALCP scores reflect higher negativity towards the justice system and higher TLV and ICO scores reflect a greater willingness to endorse neutralisations and positive identification with criminal others. Evaluation of the CSS using 200 Australian offenders and non-offenders, mean age 26.9 years, reported the reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for the ALCP, TLV and ICO respectively as .91, .81, .65 (Stevenson et al., 2003). The measure was also found to discriminate Canadian offenders from Canadian non-offenders (Roy & Wormith, 1985), and Australian offenders from non-offenders (Stevenson et al., 2003).

The piloted measure for violent and criminal sentiments was a paper and pencil measure containing the original 41 CSS items and 35 additional items, 76 items in total. The CSS was expanded and amended for two reasons. First, the CSS is a widely used and valid measure of criminal sentiments, however the scale did not contain any items to ascertain the level of a person's endorsement of the use of violence as a means to settle interpersonal problems. A primary aim of this research was to develop a reliable and valid subscale measuring justifications for violence (JFV) that could be inserted into the CSS. Second, an additional aim was to improve the psychometric properties of the existing third subscale within the CSS which measures identification with criminal peers. The original ICO contained only 6 items and although highly predictive of a person's affiliation with criminal peers, the internal reliability of the subscale was not high, with Cronbach's alpha around .60 for both offender and non-offender samples (Roy & Wormith, 1985; Stevenson et al., 2004). After analysis of the subscale items and consultation with one of the copyright holders of the CSS (Dr. Wormith) it was suggested that it was not the items per se that caused the poor reliability but rather that there may be too few items. On this basis five additional items were devised. The original six ICO items together with five new items was renamed "Identification with

Criminal Others Plus" (ICO+). The CSS with the addition of the JFV and ICO+ subscales was renamed "The Violent and Criminal Sentiments Scale".

Two item pools were devised for the 35 new VCSS items. The first pool contained 30 items measuring endorsement of violence (JFV); for example, "If people threaten my family and friends they deserve to get hurt." The second pool contained 5 additional identification with criminal peers items; for example, "Most of the people I know have had hassles with the justice system." Both the JFV and additional ICO items were inserted within the CSS at random. The JFV items were sourced from the in-depth interviews with 18 Australian high-risk offenders convicted of serious violent index offences as outlined in Chapter 2. The additional ICO items were sourced from the extensive research carried out by Agnew (1991), Akerstrom (1996) and Thornberry et al., (1994) who investigated the sentiments offenders used to describe their affiliations with criminal peers. All 35 new items had the same response options as the CSS items, that is, a 5-point Likert scale, (1) "strongly agree" to (5) "strongly disagree" was used and with the items being scaled in either a positive or negative direction. After reversal, the higher the JFV and ICO+ scores the higher the endorsement of violent sentiments and the higher the identification with criminal peers. Please refer Appendix A for the JFV items and Appendix C for the additional ICO+ items.

**3.2.1.2 Measure of attributions and problem solving.** The Measure of Attributions and Problem Solving (MAPS) was a paper and pencil scale containing seven hypothetical scenarios. As noted in Chapter 2, each scenario detailed potentially problematic social situations. The content of each scenario was written to reflect differing hostility ranges underpinning the intent of the harmdoer (from clearly hostile through to accidental). As each scenario has a differing hostility level, the interest in the MAPS is to assess participants' responses scenario-by-scenario, rather than overall on

the scenarios combined. In scenarios 1 and 7, the behaviour of the harmdoer was clearly hostile and antagonistic. In scenario 4, the harmdoers' behaviour was thoughtless with no hostility intended. The remaining scenarios (2, 3, 5, and 6) were written in an ambiguous manner where it is not explicitly clear whether the harmdoers deliberately carried out the act with hostility or not. The MAPS is divided into three parts: attributions; feelings; problem solving. Participants are asked to read each scenario and to consider what they would think about the behaviour of the harmdoer's (social attributions), how they would feel (feelings) and what they would most likely do or say to the harmdoer's (grievance resolution strategies/ problem solving).

Part 1 (question number 1 to 4 on each scenario) asks participants whether they find the behaviour of the harmdoers acceptable or not ("is/ought" discrepancy); then to consider the likelihood that the actions of the harmdoers' were accidental or not (attribution of intent) and finally whether they agree or disagree with six specific attributions for why the harmdoers may have behaved as they did. Part 1 items are scored using a 5-point Likert scale, (1) "strongly agree" to (5) "strongly disagree", and scaled in positive and negative directions. After reversal, the higher the "is/ought" discrepancy, intent, and specific attribution scores the more likely the harmdoer's behaviour is judged anti-normative, purposeful, and carried out with malevolence and/or hostility. The specific attributions are scored in two ways: the items can be summed to give an overall attribution score for each scenario, or coded into the four different types of attributions measured: malevolent intent; hostile intent; negation of hostile intent; and the fundamental attribution error.

Part 2 (question number 5 on each scenario) presents seven different types of feelings. Participants are asked how they would feel if this scenario happened to them. Participants can circle as many options as they judge applicable. The feelings are

measured on an ordinal scale ranging from "no feelings" to "anger" and scored as either yes/no.

Part 3 (question 6 on each scenario) asks participants to describe in their own words what they think they would do, or say, if they found themselves in each situation. Scoring of Part 3 involves matching each open-ended response to the coding classifications outlined in the scoring guide. The development of the coding guide is presented in section 3.3.5. The finalised scoring guide can be seen in Appendix D.

**3.2.1.3 Development of the questionnaire pack.** A pack was developed for use in the current study which comprised of three sections. Section 1 asked participants a number of demographic questions such as age, employment, school leaving year, and sex. Sections 2 and 3 contained the 76-item development VCSS, and the 7-Scenario development MAPS. In addition, the pack contained an instruction sheet and feedback sheet. To infer that the student participants were non-offenders, the instruction sheet asked participants not to complete the pack if they had been to prison or had/were on a community sentence (e.g. Community Supervision Order or Suspended Sentence). (Refer to Appendix E for the pack as presented to student participants).

The placement of the measurement scales (VCSS and MAPS) within the questionnaire packs was counterbalanced to determine whether responses to the VCSS appeared to influence responses to the MAPS and vice versa. Order of presentation for 50% of the participants was: instruction sheet, demographic page, VCSS, MAPS, then the feedback sheet. For the other 50% of participants the MAPS appeared before the VCSS.

### 3.2.2 Participants

The participants were 257 first year undergraduates recruited from Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia. Nineteen participants were excluded from the analyses as they were aged 17, making them comparable to juvenile offenders rather than adults. Four hundred and eighty questionnaire packs were distributed and 257 were returned (54% response rate). The final sample comprised 238 participants with a mean age of 26.6 years (SD = 9.26, range = 18-61). One hundred and forty participants were women (mean age = 27.5, SD = 10.04), and 98 were men (mean age = 25.2, SD = 7.87). In order to obtain a sample of participants that was wider than simply psychology students, the sample was recruited from all of the University's main schools. Ninety-one participants were enrolled in the School of Psychology, 50 were enrolled in Social Sciences and Humanities, 22 were in Business, 31 from Law and Legal Studies, 43 students were enrolled in Science and Engineering, and one student omitted to write their school. Ninety-eight percent of the sample were Australian citizens or permanent residents.  Sixty-five percent of the sample had finished year 12 (school leaving age of 17), with a further 16% completing TAFE or technical college. Seventy-two percent of the sample listed their occupation as full-time undergraduate student. The remaining 28% were part-time students with a part-time or a full-time job. The primary employment of working students was in office and administration positions. One participant was Australian Indigenous the remaining 237 were non-Indigenous Australian citizens or permanent residents.

### 3.2.3 Procedure

**3.2.3.1 Pilot study.** During March 2003 the VCSS and the MAPS, both in draft form, were piloted with a convenience sample of nine people (6 women and 3 men). Three respondents were academics, and five were postgraduate students enrolled within

the School of Psychology at Murdoch University. The last member of the pilot sample was Dr Wormith, one of the copyright holders of the CSS. Dr Wormith provided formal permission for the JFV items and ICO additional items to be inserted within the CSS and for the amended scale to be renamed as the VCSS (S.W. Wormith, personal communication, June, 27, 2002). Comments were sought regarding the content, ease of completion and the time taken to complete the pack. After discussion, several items were amended to improve their clarity, while maintaining their colloquial terms of phrase. Upon completion of the pilot the questionnaire pack was finalised and the main study commenced.

### 3.2.3.2 Main study: Undergraduate sample.

**3.2.3.2 Main study: Undergraduate sample.** Two procedures were used to recruit the student participants. For students enrolled in the School of Psychology, it is a course requirement at Murdoch University that all psychology undergraduates participate in a research project. All projects are advertised on the School of Psychology web page and students select the project of their choice. In the current study, students signed up on-line and came to the author's office in the School of Psychology to collect a questionnaire pack. The packs were completed in their own time and returned anonymously to a sealed box outside the author's office.

In order to recruit students in schools other than the School of Psychology, between April and June 2003 the author entered various first year lectures and briefly described the study with the students attending the lecture. Packs were given to students who volunteered to participate. Each of the lectures from each of the main schools within the university were selected at random. The author returned to the lectures on two occasions (at one and two weeks after the original presentation). A box was placed at the front of the lecture theatre and completed packs placed inside anonymously.

During October 2003, a number of debriefing sessions were held. These sessions were about 45 minutes duration. In these debriefing sessions, the aims, theory and hypotheses of the study were explained. The debriefing sessions were open to all participants and were advertised at the time the questionnaire packs were returned. No rewards or inducements were offered to any participants.

## 3.3  Results

The aim of the analyses presented below was to assess the psychometric properties of the new VCSS subscales (ICO+ and JFV) and the MAPS. Devillis (1991) suggested that such an analysis be undertaken in the following order. First, an item analysis to identify poorly performing items. Second, a Principal Components Analysis to explore whether the scale is a single unifactorial construct.

The results are presented in a number of sections. Section 3.3.1 describes the preliminary investigations of the data set. Section 3.3.2 presents the analyses exploring the psychometric properties of the VCSS. Sections 3.3.3 to Section 3.3.5 presents the properties of Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the MAPS. Finally, Section 3.3.6 presents subsidiary findings, including the counterbalancing of scale order and responses from the feedback sheets.

### 3.3.1  Preliminary Analyses

Prior to the analyses, the data set was checked for missing values. Several participants completed either the VCSS but not the MAPS, or vice versa. Several participants completed the majority of the seven scenarios contained within the MAPS, but not all. Therefore, the number of cases included in the analyses was reduced.

Three participants did not complete the VCSS, therefore the analyses of the VCSS were based on 235 cases. Within the VCSS data set, 12 missing responses were found.

These missing values were replaced with an unsure response, as detailed in the CSS scoring sheet (Andrews & Wormith, 1984: refer Appendix F). The VCSS data set was also checked for univariate outliers, with three outliers identified with z-scores above 3.29 (the recommended cut-off for outliers). Using Mahalanobis distance with 4df, $p <$ .001, no multivariate outliers were identified[6]. As the three univariate outliers were not extreme cases, and as both univariate and multivariate outliers are to be expected in large data sets (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996) these cases were retained for analysis.

Six participants did not complete any of the MAPS, with a further three participants only completing 6 of the 7 scenarios. Therefore, in some analyses the number of cases is reduced. Only one missing value was found in Part 1 of the MAPS. This was replaced by an unsure response as detailed in the scoring guide (refer Appendix D). Ten  univariate outliers were identified with z scores above the recommended 3.29. Using Mahalanobis distance with 15df, $p <$ .001 only one multivariate outlier was identified [7]. As neither the univariate or the multivariate outliers were extreme, all cases were retained in the dataset.

### 3.3.2  Psychometric Properties of the VCSS

#### 3.3.2.1 Scale reliability and Principal Components Analysis of the ICO+

**Subscale.** The first stage in the analysis was to confirm that the 5 new items enhanced the internal reliability of the original 6-item scale. After recoding reverse-scored items, the additional items increased Cronbach's alpha from .65 (original ICO Subscale) to .81. This increase enhanced the subscale from Devillis' (1991) rating of "undesirable" (alphas .65 to .70) to the "very good" (alphas .80 to .90). Table 1 shows that all items had satisfactory corrected item-total correlations.

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[6] The four degrees of freedom comprises the subscale score for ALCP, TFV, JFV, and ICO+.
[7] The 15 degrees of freedom comprise the "is/ought" discrepancy, attribution of intent, and specific attribution score on each of the five scenarios.

**Table 1.**  Reliability per Item for the Identification with Criminal Others + Subscale

| Item | | Scale [a] | N | Mean | SD | CITC [b] | αID [c] |
|------|---|-----------|---|------|-----|---------|---------|
| 28 | | ICO+ | 235 | 1.74 | 1.01 | .56 | .78 |
| 29 | | ICO+ | 235 | 1.51 | 0.80 | .45 | .79 |
| 33 | | ICO | 235 | 2.13 | 0.94 | .39 | .80 |
| 37 | | ICO | 235 | 1.92 | 0.88 | .56 | .80 |
| 39 | | ICO | 235 | 1.37 | 0.74 | .31 | .80 |
| 40 | | ICO+ | 235 | 1.25 | 0.60 | .42 | .80 |
| 43 | | ICO+ | 235 | 1.74 | 0.94 | .55 | .78 |
| 47 | | ICO | 235 | 1.67 | 0.82 | .68 | .77 |
| 49 | | ICO | 235 | 2.00 | 0.97 | .38 | .80 |
| 53 | | ICO | 235 | 2.83 | 1.16 | .34 | .81 |
| 58 | | ICO+ | 235 | 2.08 | 1.11 | .59 | .78 |

*Notes:* [a] Scale: ICO = original CSS item; ICO+ = new item.  [b] Corrected item-total correlation. [c] Effect on subscale Cronbach alpha if item deleted.

In the second stage, a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was used to explore whether the expanded subscale measured one component; namely the identification with criminal others. Tzeng (1992) argued that when using a PCA, the eigenvalue of less than 1 rule for component extraction is overly sensitive and overestimates the number of true components to be extracted. Tzeng recommended that the optimal method is to locate the "elbow" of the curve in the scree plot. Following Cattell's (1966) guidelines the "elbow" occurred after the first component, suggesting that the scale is unifactorial. Component 1 had an eigenvalue of 3.94 explaining 35.9% of the variance. As the results found the ICO+ Subscale to be unifactorial, rotation was not required. Table 2 presents the component matrix and shows that all items in the expanded ICO+ Subscale had a significant factor loading of > .4.  The scree plot for the ICO+ Subscale can be seen in Figure 5.

**Table 2**.  Component Matrix for the Identification with Criminal Others + Subscale

| | | Component 1 |
|---|---|---|
| Item | | Loading |
| 47 | | |
| 58 | | |
| 28 | | |
| 43 | | |
| 37 | | |
| 29 | | |
| 40 | | |
| 33 | | |
| 49 | | |
| 53 | | |
| 39 | | |
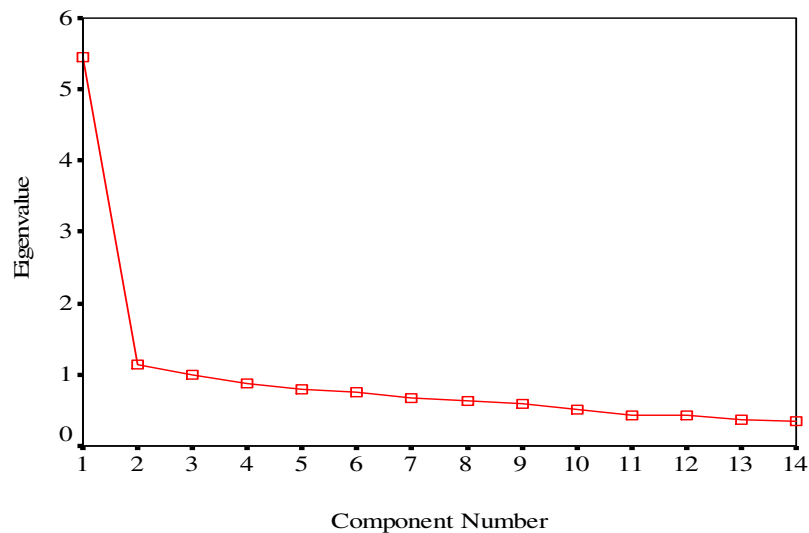


**Figure 5.**  Scree plot for the Principal Components Analysis of the ICO+ Subscale.

### 3.3.2.2 Scale reliability and Principal Components Analysis of the JFV Subscale.

After recoding reverse-scored items, the internal reliability of each of the 30 JFV pool items was examined. Devillis (1991) recommended that items with low corrected item-total correlations (CITCs of less than .30) should be removed because they represent poorly performing items. Devillis further recommended that individual items that deflate a subscales' overall alpha be removed even if their CITC is above .30. Using these guidelines, eight items were removed from the pool. The component structure was then briefly examined to determine whether any of the remaining 22 items appeared to

be overly complex (loading over multiple components) or loading onto their own component with little common variance with any other item. This initial examination revealed that three items required removal because they loaded onto three or more components, which meant their interpretation was overly complex. A further five items were removed as they loaded onto separate components and where the content of the item made the component unrelated to the construct of justifications for violence. The internal reliability of the 14 remaining items was then re-examined. Only one further item was removed to enhance the overall internal consistency.

The initial analyses removed 17 items from the JFV pool, leaving 13 items in a unifactorial subscale. However, one item was re-inserted. This item was devised to measure the necessity to carry weapons. It had been removed because the PCA had shown it to be a complex item. Although the item had a complex factor loading in a student sample, the rationale for its retention was that, despite its complexity, it might be a major discriminant between violent offenders and non-offenders. Specifically, the injuries sustained by victims often increase in severity when weapons are present (Wells & Horney, 2002). Moreover, violent offenders readily report they consider it imprudent to be without access to a weapon (E. Arthurs, personal communication, August, 19, 2003). The final subscale contained 14 items, with a Cronbach's alpha of .87. This is within Devillis' (1991) scale range of "very good reliability". Table 3 shows the reliability statistics for each of the 14 items.

**Table 3**.  Reliability per Item for the Justifications for Violence Subscale

| Item | | N | Mean | SD | CITC [a] | αID [b] |
|------|---|-----|------|------|------|------|
| 26 | | 235 | 1.98 | .090 | .50 | .87 |
| 31 | | 235 | 1.89 | 1.00 | .56 | .86 |
| 32 | | 235 | 1.89 | 1.03 | .50 | .87 |
| 34 | | 235 | 1.56 | 0.75 | .63 | .86 |
| 36 | | 235 | 2.42 | 1.23 | .57 | .86 |
| 42 | | 235 | 2.07 | 1.18 | .71 | .85 |
| 44 | | 235 | 1.71 | 0.89 | .42 | .87 |
| 45 | | 235 | 2.94 | 1.22 | .65 | .86 |
| 46 | | 235 | 2.35 | 1.19 | .42 | .87 |
| 51 | | 235 | 2.65 | 1.16 | .51 | .86 |
| 55 | | 235 | 1.68 | 0.79 | .57 | .86 |
| 57 | | 235 | 1.72 | 0.82 | .58 | .86 |
| 59 | | 235 | 1.72 | 0.76 | .45 | .87 |
| 60 | | 235 | 2.78 | 1.19 | .49 | .87 |

*Notes:*  [a] Corrected Item-total correlation. [b] Effect on subscale Cronbach alpha if item deleted.

A Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was then performed to assess the construct validity of the JFV Subscale, essentially to confirm that the 14 items were measuring one construct, namely justifications for violence. Based on Tzeng's (1992) method for determining the numbers of components to be extracted, the scree plot was inspected to locate the turning point of the curve. The scree plot can be seen overleaf in Figure 6. The plot indicated a one component solution with an eigenvalue of 5.46, explaining 39.0% of the variance. As the results found the JFV Subscale to be unifactorial rotation was not required. The component matrix for the subscale can be seen in Table 4. As shown in Table 4, all JFV Subscale items had a significant factor loading of > .4.

**Table 4.** Component Matrix for the Justifications for Violence Subscale

| Item | | Component 1 Loading |
|---|---|---|
| 42 | | |
| 34 | | |
| 45 | | |
| 57 | | |
| 55 | | |
| 31 | | |
| 36 | | |
| 51 | | |
| 26 | | |
| 32 | | |
| 60 | | |
| 59 | | |
| 44 | | |
| 46 | | |
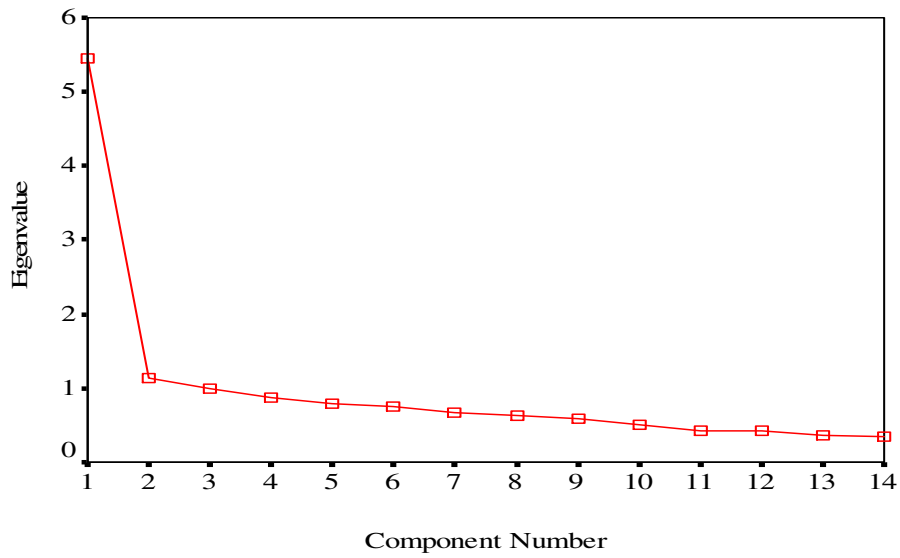


**Figure 6.** Scree plot for the Principal Components Analysis of the JFV Subscale for the student sample.

### 3.3.2.3 Principal Components Analysis of the original ALCP and TFV Subscales.

The next analysis performed was an inspection of the component structures for the two original CSS subscales unaltered in this project (the ALCP and TFV Subscales). The results found the ALCP subscale was essentially unifactorial with an eigenvalue for Component 1 of 6.84, explaining 27% of the variance. The minimum item loading on Component 1 of the ALCP was .13 and the maximum loading was .69. Although the ALCP subscale was unifactorial, three of the items only had weak loadings on Component 1, being below the recommended loading of .30 (Coates & Steed, 2003). These items were 4, 9, and 24. The TFV subscale was also unifactorial with an eigenvalue of 3.33 which explained 33% of the variance. All 10 TLV items loaded onto Component 1, with a minimum loading of .42 and a maximum loading of .73.

### 3.3.2.4 Reliability and descriptive statistics of the VCSS. The internal

consistency of the four VCSS subscales were then assessed using Cronbach's alpha. All measures showed satisfactory internal consistency being above the recommend level of .70. The coefficients are presented in Table 5 and the descriptive statistics can be seen in Table 6.

**Table 5.**  Cronbach's Alpha Calculated for each of the VCSS Subscales for the Student Sample

| Variable | N [a] | Items [b] | α [c] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attitudes towards law, courts & police | 235 | 25 | .88 |
| Tolerance for law violation | 235 | 10 | .76 |
| Justification for violence | 235 | 14 | .87 |
| Identification with criminal others plus | 235 | 11 | .80 |

*Notes:* [a] Number of participants.  [b] Items per scale. [c] Cronbach's alpha.

**Table 6.**   Mean and SD for the Student Sample (n=235) on the VCSS. SD in Parentheses

| ALCP [a] | TLV [b] | JFV [c] | ICO+ [d] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 85.87 (11.81) | 24.95 (5.55) | 29.37 (8.77) | 20.25 (5.90) |

*Notes:* [a] Attitudes towards the law, courts and police. [b] Tolerance for law violation.  [c] Justifications for violence. [d] Identification with criminal others plus (11 items).

**3.3.2.5 The relationships between the constructs of violent and criminal sentiments.**

One of the aims of this project was to assess whether violent sentiments are related to endorsement of other criminal sentiments, or whether violent sentiments operate independently. A Pearson product moment correlation matrix was used to assess whether the new JFV and ICO+ subscales were strongly related to endorsement of the unaltered ALCP and TLV subscales. The assumptions underlying correctional analyses were examined. Homoscedasticity and Linearity were examined; the scatterplots indicated these assumptions were met. Normality was assessed, finding that all distributions were significant, although skew and kurtosis were not extreme, indicating deviation was minor. The correlations can be seen in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Intercorrelations between the Subscales of the Violent and Criminal Sentiments Scale for the Student Sample (n = 235)

|                | Variable | ALCP    | TLV     | JFV     |
|----------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Student sample | TLV      | -.534** | -       | -       |
|                | JFV      | -.328** | .601**  | -       |
|                | ICO+     | -.458** | .671**  | .552**  |

*Notes: * $p < .05$ (2 tail).  ** $p < .01$ (2 tail).*

The results found highly significant relationships between the four VCSS subscales. The new JFV and amended ICO+ Subscales were highly correlated with the original ALCP and TLV subscales. The pattern in the correlations showed a series of relationships, whereby a negative attitude towards the justice system (ALCP) related to higher tolerance for law violation (TLV), a higher endorsement justifying violence (JFV), and a higher identification with criminal others (ICO+). These results are in line with prior findings showing the subscales on the original CSS to have highly significant relationships (Roy & Wormith, 1985; Stevenson et al., 2003, 2004).

### 3.3.3 Psychometric Properties of Part 1 of the MAPS: Social Attributions

#### 3.3.3.1 Scale reliabilities and Principal Components Analysis of Part 1.

After recoding reverse-scored items, the internal consistency for each of the seven scenarios were assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Scenarios 3 to 7 had satisfactory internal consistencies being within the recommended range of .70 and above (Devillis, 1991). In contrast, Scenarios 1 and 2 were found to have alphas below .70 (within Devillis' rating of "undesirable"). These two poorly performing scenarios were removed, leaving a five-scenario finalised scale. The coefficients for the retained scenarios can be seen in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Cronbach's Alpha Calculated for the Five MAPS Scenarios for the Student Sample

| Scenarios [d] | N [a] | Items [b] | α [c] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 – Comments made by new cleaner | 232 | 8 | .82 |
| 4 – The neighbours car | 231 | 8 | .70 |
| 5 – The unpaid debt owed by friend | 230 | 8 | .77 |
| 6 – Conditions and tasks assigned at work | 232 | 8 | .78 |
| 7 – The ex-boyfriend at the BBQ | 232 | 8 | .72 |

*Notes:* [a] Number of participants. [b] Items per scale. [c] Cronbach's alpha. [d] Original Scenario numbers from the piloted 7 scenario scale.

A series of PCAs were then performed to explore whether Part 1 of each scenario was unifactorial and measured the single construct of social attributions. Prior to analyses the set of specific attributions (question 4a to f on each scenario) were coded into the four attributional aspects as outlined in the scoring guide and as shown in Table 9. The Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated that all 5 scenarios were appropriate for PCA. The results showed that each of the five scenarios were unifactorial and that all individual items loaded onto component 1 in each of the scenarios above the recommended .30 loading (Coates & Steed, 2003). The eigenvalues, variance explained, and the component matrix for each scenario can be seen in Table 9. The scree plots for each scenario are presented in Figure 7.

**Table 9.** Component Matrix for the MAPS Scenarios for the Student Sample

| Scenario and items | Eigenvalue | Variance explained | Component 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scenario 1.  The cleaner | 3.07 | 51.2% | |
| Hostile intent | | | .83 |
| Negation of hostile intent | | | .81 |
| Attribution of intent | | | .78 |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .66 |
| Malevolent intent | | | .66 |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .51 |
| | | | |
| Scenario 2.  The neighbours | 2.38 | 39.6% | |
| Hostile intent | | | .80 |
| Negation of hostile intent | | | .67 |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .64 |
| Attribution of intent | | | .63 |
| Malevolent intent | | | .61 |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .31 |
| | | | |
| Scenario 3.  The friends | 2.88 | 48.0% | |
| Malevolent intent | | | .81 |
| Hostile intent | | | .76 |
| Negation of hostile intent | | | .75 |
| Attribution of intent | | | .64 |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .61 |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .56 |
| | | | |
| Scenario 4.  The supervisor | 3.04 | 50.7% | |
| Negation of hostile intent | | | .82 |
| Hostile intent | | | .80 |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .75 |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .71 |
| Malevolent intent | | | .70 |
| Attribution of intent | | | .42 |
| | | | |
| Scenario 5.  The ex-boyfriend | 2.54 | 42.4% | |
| Hostile intent | | | .81 |
| Negation of hostile intent | | | .79 |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .72 |
| Attribution of intent | | | .69 |
| Malevolent intent | | | .43 |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .30 |
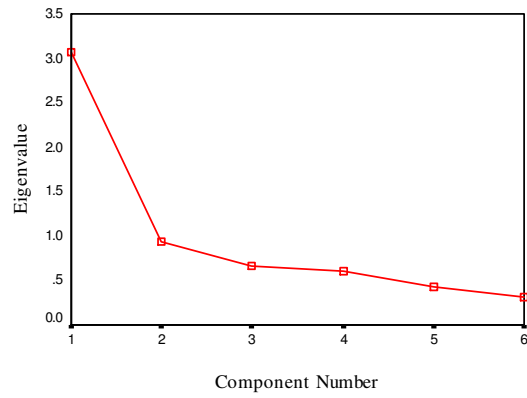
Scree plot for Scenario 1.
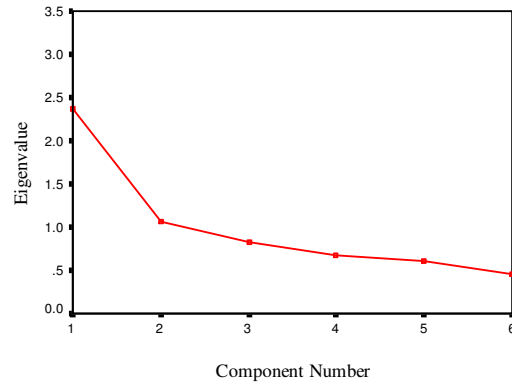
Scree plot for Scenario 2.
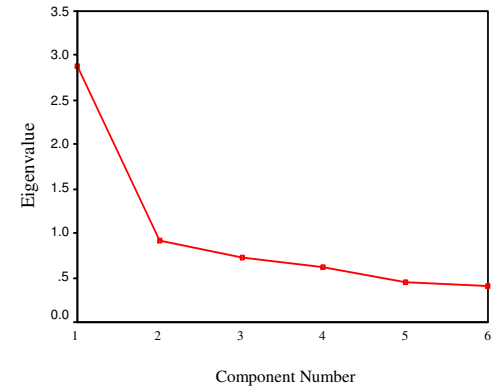
Scree plot for Scenario 3.
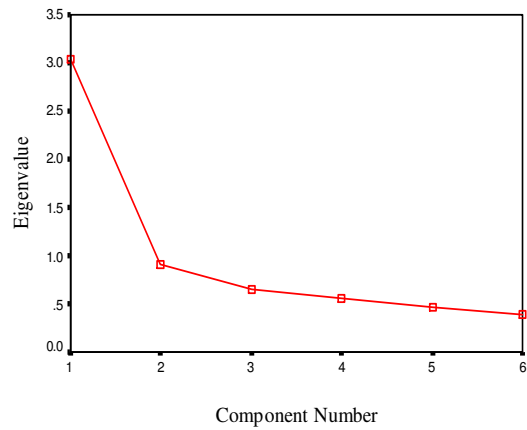
Scree plot for Scenario 4.
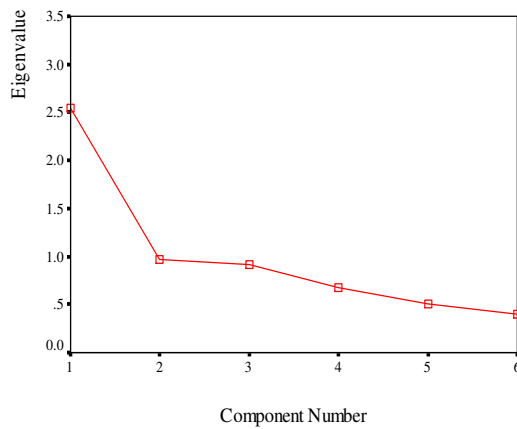
Scree plot for Scenario 5.

**Figure 7.**  Scree plots for the Principal Component Analyses of the five scenarios on Part 1 of the MAPS using the student sample.

**3.3.3.2 Ranking hostility level by scenario for Part 1.** The final analysis explored whether the situations specifically written to be hostile, accidental or ambiguous would be judged as such by a large sample. Prior to analysis the specific attributional aspects were recoded to form an overall specific score. The means and standard deviations are presented below in Table 10. The scenarios in the table are shown ranked by the level of specific attributions assigned by the full sample, being highest (most hostile/malevolent) to lowest (least hostile/malevolent). As can be seen in Table 10, the behaviour of the ex-boyfriend described in Scenario 5 was considered the most anti-normative, the most deliberate act and underpinned by hostility. In contrast, the situation concerning the neighbours' car in Scenario 2 was considered thoughtless rather than malevolent or underpinned by hostile intent. For the remaining scenarios (1, 3 and 4) the means, being at the midpoint / undecided range, showed the students were unclear about whether the harmdoers' actions were thoughtless or malicious/hostile.

**Table 10.** Means and SD for the student sample on Part 1 of the MAPS. (SD in Parentheses)

| Scenario number | N [a] | "Is/ought"[b] | Intent [c] | Specific [d] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Ex-boyfriend | 232 | 9.53 (1.19) | 4.59 (0.70) | 25.02 (3.27) |
| 3. the friend | 230 | 8.73 (1.74) | 3.85 (0.82) | 19.03 (3.97) |
| 4. Supervisor | 232 | 6.27 (1.98) | 3.69 (0.93) | 16.97 (3.83) |
| 1. Cleaner | 232 | 7.72 (1.92) | 2.88 (1.19) | 15.48 (4.14) |
| 2. Neighbours | 231 | 2.38 (0.74) | 2.43 (1.04) | 11.76 (2.92) |

*Notes:* [a] Number of participants. [b] "Is/ought" discrepancy. [c] Attribution of intent. [d] Specific attribution score.

A series of three One-way mixed design Analysis of Variance (SPANOVA) were carried out to examine whether the five scenarios would be judged significantly different from one another on each of the attribution aspects measured: "is/ought" discrepancy; attribution of intent; and the specific attribution score. Assumptions underlying ANOVA were examined. All distributions violated normality, although ANOVA is robust to this violation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Homogeneity of variance was confirmed for intent and specific attributions, although the "is/ought"

discrepancy violated this assumption with an F-max ratio of 7.11:1. Despite this violation, the analysis can still be performed as long as a more stringent alpha is set (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996), therefore the alpha level set for this analysis was .01. All analyses violated Mauchly's test of sphericity ($p < .05$); however, the results showed that the f-ratio for all three tests could be evaluated using the Greenhouse Geiser epsilons, which were not significant ($p< .05$).

The results, together with partial eta-squares as an estimate of effect size, are as follows. The "is/ought" discrepancy was significant (F (3.262, 740.456) = 767.88, $p <.001$; $\eta^2 =.77$), as was the attribution of intent (F (3.423, 776.910) = 184.30, $p <.001$; $\eta^2 =.45$). The analysis for the specific attributions was also significant (F (3.781, 858.319) = 495.55, $p <.001$; $\eta^2 = .69$).

A series of pairwise comparisons were then performed to locate which of the scenarios differed from the others. The comparison for the "is/ought" discrepancy and the specific attributions found all comparisons were significant at $p <.001$. For the attribution of intent, the comparisons found that most of the scenarios were significantly different from each other; the only exception was for degree of intent attributed to the actions of the harmdoers in Scenarios 3 (the friend) and 4 (the supervisor). However as both Scenarios 3 and 4 were written to be ambiguous situations it was not unanticipated that participants would assign similar values for intent on these two ambiguous situations. The pairwise comparisons on the three attributional aspects can be seen below in Tables 11 to 13.

These results indicate that it is appropriate to suggest that each scenario can be ranked by degree of intent from hostile to thoughtless, and with a large sample finding that overall each of the scenarios was significantly different in nature from the others. These results were as expected and indicated that a large sample would rank the scenarios in the order of hostility level as the author had intended them to be ranked.

**Table 11.**  Pairwise Comparisons for the "Is/Ought" Discrepancies for the Student Sample

| "Is/ought" (I) | "Is/ought" (J) | | Mean Difference (I-J) | Sig. [a] | 99% Confidence interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower bound | Upper bound |
| Scenario 1 | Scenario | 2 | 5.33* | .00 | 4.89 | 5.78 |
| | | 3 | -1.03* | .00 | -1.55 | -.50 |
| | | 4 | 1.44* | .00 | .851 | 2.03 |
| | | 5 | -1.85* | .00 | -2.33 | -1.37 |
| Scenario 2 | Scenario | 3 | -6.36* | .00 | -6.79 | -5.93 |
| | | 4 | -3.90* | .00 | -4.37 | -3.42 |
| | | 5 | -7.18* | .00 | -7.50 | -6.86 |
| Scenario 3 | Scenario | 4 | 2.47* | .00 | 1.87 | 3.06 |
| | | 5 | -.82* | .00 | -1.22 | -.4.34 |
| Scenario 4 | Scenario | 5 | -3.29* | .00 | -3.78 | -2.79 |

*Notes:*  Based on estimated marginal means. * The mean difference is significant at the .001 level.
   [a] Bonferroni adjustments made for multiple comparisons.

**Table 12.**  Pairwise Comparisons for The Attribution of Intent for the Student Sample

| Intent (I) | Intent (J) | | Mean Difference (I-J) | Sig. [a] | 99% Confidence interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower bound | Upper bound |
| Scenario 1 | Scenario | 2 | .46* | .00 | .11 | .80 |
| | | 3 | -.97* | .00 | -1.28 | -.65 |
| | | 4 | -.82* | .00 | -1.15 | -.49 |
| | | 5 | -1.71* | .00 | -2.03 | -1.40 |
| Scenario 2 | Scenario | 3 | -1.42* | .00 | -1.73 | -1.12 |
| | | 4 | -1.27* | .00 | -1.60 | -.94 |
| | | 5 | -2.17* | .00 | -2.55 | -1.88 |
| Scenario 3 | Scenario | 4 | .15 | .53 | -.11 | .41 |
| | | 5 | -.75* | .00 | -.97 | -.52 |
| Scenario 4 | Scenario | 5 | -.90* | .00 | -1.11 | -.68 |

*Notes:*  Based on estimated marginal means. * The mean difference is significant at the .001 level.
   [a] Bonferroni adjustments made for multiple comparisons.

**Table 13.**  Pairwise Comparisons for The Specific Attribution Score for the Student Sample

| Specific Attributions (I) | Specific Attributions (J) | | Mean Difference (I-J) | Sig. | 99% Confidence interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower bound | Upper bound |
| Scenario 1 | Scenario | 2 | 3.72* | .00 | 2.77 | 4.66 |
| | | 3 | -3.54* | .00 | -4.67 | -2.40 |
| | | 4 | -1.49* | .00 | -2.65 | -.34 |
| | | 5 | -9.55* | .00 | -10.66 | -8.44 |
| Scenario 2 | Scenario | 3 | -7.25* | .00 | -8.28 | -6.22 |
| | | 4 | -5.21* | .00 | -6.16 | -4.26 |
| | | 5 | -13.19* | .00 | -14.17 | -12.22 |
| Scenario 3 | Scenario | 4 | 2.04* | .00 | .99 | 3.10 |
| | | 5 | -6.02* | .00 | -7.05 | -4.99 |
| Scenario 4 | Scenario | 5 | -8.06* | .00 | -9.04 | -7.08 |

*Notes:*  Based on estimated marginal means. * The mean difference is significant at the .001 level.
   [a] Bonferroni adjustments made for multiple comparisons.

### 3.3.4 Frequency Scores for Part 2 of the MAPS: Range of Feelings

The first stage of this analysis was to explore which types of feelings would be most reported in each of the scenarios. This was carried out using a multiple dichotomy analysis. The percentage responses given to each feeling for the full sample for each scenario is displayed in Table 14. The order of scenarios presented in Table 14 corresponds to the level assigned by the students for the specific attributions assigned (being most hostile to least hostile) as detailed in Table 10.

As can be seen in Table 14, the more anti-normative and hostile the students had judged the scenario the higher the frequency of reported negative feelings and the more likely the students were to report multiple negative feelings. The situation that made the students the angriest was the behaviour of the friend described in Scenario 3. Despite the students having judged the intent of the friend as ambiguous (they could not decide whether the act was deliberate, or underpinned by malevolence) this situation still made them angry about the events. In Scenario 5 (the ex-boyfriend), ranked the most hostile, the students reported they were more likely to feel angry and/or scared. For Scenario 1, about 40% of the sample said that they would not really feel anything if this occurred. For Scenario 4 (the supervisor), the majority of students (62%) said they would feel fed-up. Finally, for Scenario 2, the most widely reported feeling was happy.

Part 2 of the MAPS is analysed in more detail in Chapter 6 where the feelings reported for each scenario by the students are compared with the feelings reported from an offender sample and a community non-offender sample.

**Table 14.** Frequencies of Feelings Reported for each Scenario using the Student Sample

| Scenario and feeling | Count | % responses [a] | % cases [b] | N [c] | Responses [d] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. The ex-boyfriend | | | | 229 | 417 |
| Angry | 156 | 37.4% | 68.1% | | |
| Scared | 126 | 30.2% | 55.0% | | |
| Sad | 62 | 14.9% | 27.1% | | |
| Fed-up | 39 | 9.4% | 17.0% | | |
| Insulted | 28 | 6.7% | 12.2% | | |
| No feelings | 5 | 1.2% | 2.2% | | |
| Happy | 1 | 0.2% | 0.4% | | |
| 3. The friend | | | | 229 | 449 |
| Angry | 163 | 36.3% | 71.2% | | |
| Sad | 102 | 22.7% | 44.5% | | |
| Fed-up | 101 | 22.5% | 44.1% | | |
| Insulted | 61 | 13.6% | 26.6% | | |
| Scared | 20 | 4.5% | 8.7% | | |
| No feelings | 2 | 0.4% | 0.9% | | |
| Happy | 0 | | | | |
| 4. The supervisor | | | | 230 | 379 |
| Fed-up | 142 | 37.5% | 61.7% | | |
| Insulted | 94 | 24.8% | 40.9% | | |
| Sad | 61 | 16.1% | 26.5% | | |
| Angry | 51 | 13.5% | 22.2% | | |
| No feelings | 26 | 6.9% | 11.3% | | |
| Happy | 5 | 1.3% | 2.2% | | |
| Scared | 0 | | | | |
| 1. The cleaner | | | | 226 | 282 |
| No feelings | 91 | 32.3% | 40.3% | | |
| Insulted | 51 | 18.1% | 22.6% | | |
| Fed-up | 47 | 16.7% | 20.8% | | |
| Angry | 43 | 15.2% | 19.0% | | |
| Sad | 27 | 9.6% | 11.9% | | |
| Happy | 23 | 8.2% | 10.2% | | |
| Scared | 0 | | | | |
| 2. The neighbours | | | | 233 | 294 |
| Happy | 168 | 68.0% | 72.1% | | |
| No feelings | 37 | 15.0% | 15.9% | | |
| Fed-up | 25 | 10.1% | 10.7% | | |
| Sad | 8 | 3.2% | 3.4% | | |
| Angry | 7 | 2.8% | 3.0% | | |
| Insulted | 2 | 0.8% | 0.9% | | |
| Scared | 0 | | | | |

*Notes :* [a] percentage of responses. [b] percentage of cases. [c] number of participants. [d] total number of responses provided by participants.

### 3.3.5 Frequencies for Responses on Part 3 of the MAPS: Grievance Resolution Strategies (Problem Solving)

**3.3.5.1 Thematic content analysis and development of the scoring codes.** A content analysis was performed in order to analyse the open-ended qualitative responses given to each of the five scenarios in Part 3 of the MAPS. The method of content analysis was in essence the same as carried out in Study 1 and reported in Chapter 2. However, there was a slight difference. In Chapter 2, the aim of the analysis was to explore how the 18 offender participants had interpreted a problematic social situation they had found themselves in and why they considered the use of violence was justified. The themes identified in Study 1 were then used to develop a justifications for violence scale as well as the scenarios and items contained in the MAPS. In Study 2, the level of analysis used was to identify and classify commonly reported themes, namely the different types of problem solving strategies that participants reported they would consider using to solve each of the five scenarios. The primary aim here was to identify a set of themes which could be classified by a series of codes which could then be used in subsequent studies to compare the problem solving strategies of different groups. For example, comparing offenders with non-offenders.

During the initial stages of the analysis, 40 questionnaires were drawn at random based on computer generated numbers from the student sample data (20 men and 20 women). The responses on each scenario were read individually and emerging themes contained in the text noted. In the initial extraction, 15 main themes were coded for each scenario. The 15 themes, together with the data, were given to a second rater in order to verify that the themes for each scenario were all-inclusive, mutually exclusive, made sense and were adequate descriptors of the responses given. After discussion, the themes were amended with some minor themes condensed into one major theme. The results from the classification analysis identified seven major grievance resolution themes which applied to all five scenarios, such as the use of physical or verbal

aggression, or avoidance behaviour. The analysis also identified unique themes highly specific to each scenario. For example, in Scenario 2, a unique theme was where people would not only thank the neighbours, but would actively engage in developing a friendship, such as "they seem like good people, I would ask them round for a drink". An "other" code was also developed for each of the scenarios. This allowed for unique but very uncommon grievance resolution strategies to be included. For example, on Scenario 4, out of 214 participants two participants stated the only way they could think of resolving the problem with the supervisor would be to get physically stronger by going to the gym. Following completion of the content analysis a draft scoring guide was produced.

**3.3.5.2 Inter-rater agreement on assignment of codes.** The next stage was to confirm whether the draft scoring guide was understandable and user-friendly. Moreover, to reduce the inherent risk of subjective bias in coding which undermines the validity of qualitative data, Miles and Huberman (1994) stressed the importance of obtaining at least 90% inter-rater agreement on assignment of codes. Due to the volume of open-ended data in the student data set (across all five scenarios there were in total 838 scenarios to code), no attempt was made to assess inter-rater agreement over the whole data set. Therefore in order to gain an estimate of inter-rater agreement, a second coder was provided with the draft scoring guide and asked to score the open-ended responses to all five scenarios on 30 randomly selected questionnaire packs (15 males and 15 females). To avoid the risk of gender bias, the second theme rater and second coder were a different gender to the author. The theme rater was a male psychology and law academic, and the second coder a male psychology post-graduate student. Both the rater and coder were blind to the sex of the participants when confirming the themes and during the coding. A total of 150 scenarios were coded by both the author and the second coder.

The initial inter-rater coding agreement across the 30 questionnaires was only 78.6%. This is below the acceptable percentage level required for qualitative coding of 90% as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994). However, inter-rater discrepancies are to be expected during the initial stages of code development and are often associated with ambiguous code description provided in draft scoring guides rather than difficulties identifying themes in responses (Carey, Morgan & Oxtoby, 1996). During discussions between the author (first coder) and second coder, it became apparent that the coding discrepancies were caused by ambiguities in the draft manual, primarily due to the small number of response examples used to illustrate each code. After the ambiguities were addressed and the scoring guide amended the inter-rater agreement for the coding was 92%. The finalised scoring guide can be seen in Appendix D. The guide details each of the coded themes scenario by scenario and provides specific examples of actual responses provided by participants to illustrate each theme.

**3.3.5.2 Grievance resolution strategies reported by the student sample.** After completion of the content analysis and code development, the student data set was fully coded and entered into SPSS. A multiple dichotomy analysis was then performed to determine the range and frequency of the coded problem solving strategies reported. The responses by theme for each scenario are presented overleaf in Table 15.

**Table 15.** Frequency by type of Grievance Resolution Strategy for Scenarios 1 to 4

| Scenario and Themes | | Count | % responses [a] | % cases [b] | N [c] | Responses [d] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1: The cleaner | | | | | 220 | 232 |
| Major Themes | Nothing | 86 | 37.1% | 39.1% | | |
| | Avoidance | 7 | 3.0% | 3.2% | | |
| | Aggression | 0 | - | - | | |
| | Reactive | 7 | 3.0% | 3.2% | | |
| | Verbal aggression | 24 | 10.3% | 10.9% | | |
| | Ambiguous assertion | 39 | 16.8% | 17.7% | | |
| | Assertive | 52 | 22.4% | 23.6% | | |
| Unique Themes | Supportive | 6 | 2.6% | 2.7% | | |
| | Talk to HR | 6 | 2.6% | 2.7% | | |
| | Other | 10 | 2.2% | 2.3% | | |
| 2: The neighbours | | | | | 199 | 221 |
| Major Themes | Nothing | 47 | 21.3% | 23.6% | | |
| | Avoidance | 4 | 1.8% | 2.0% | | |
| | Aggression | 0 | - | - | | |
| | Reactive | 0 | - | - | | |
| | Verbal aggression | 3 | 1.4% | 1.5% | | |
| | Ambiguous assertion | 7 | 3.2% | 3.5% | | |
| | Assertive | 16 | 7.2% | 8.0% | | |
| Unique Themes | say thanks | 110 | 49.8% | 55.3% | | |
| | Socialise | 31 | 14.0% | 15.6% | | |
| | Other | 3 | 1.4% | 1.5% | | |
| 3: The friend | | | | | 205 | 252 |
| Major Themes | Nothing | 1 | 0.4% | 0.5% | | |
| | Avoidance | 4 | 1.6% | 2.0% | | |
| | Aggression | 3 | 1.2% | 1.5% | | |
| | Reactive | 6 | 2.4% | 2.9% | | |
| | Verbal aggression | 21 | 8.3% | 10.2% | | |
| | Ambiguous assertion | 37 | 14.7% | 18.0% | | |
| | Assertive | 121 | 48.0% | 59.0% | | |
| Unique Themes | Temporary fix | 31 | 12.3% | 15.1% | | |
| | Pay money | 15 | 6.0% | 7.3% | | |
| | Other | 13 | 5.2% | 6.3% | | |
| 4: The supervisor | | | | | 214 | 303 |
| Major Themes | Nothing | 32 | 10.6% | 15.0% | | |
| | Avoidance | 3 | 1.0% | 1.4% | | |
| | Aggression | 0 | - | - | | |
| | Reactive | 1 | 0.3% | 0.5% | | |
| | Verbal aggression | 6 | 2.0% | 2.8% | | |
| | Ambiguous assertion | 6 | 2.0% | 2.8% | | |
| | Assertive | 99 | 32.7% | 46.3% | | |
| Unique Themes | Talk to boss/HR | 21 | 6.9% | 9.8% | | |
| | Quit | 25 | 8.3% | 11.7% | | |
| | Bide time | 70 | 23.1% | 32.7% | | |
| | Prove self | 32 | 10.6% | 15.0% | | |
| | Other | 8 | 2.6% | 3.7% | | |

*Notes :* [a] percentage of responses. [b] percentage of cases. [c] number of participants. [d] total number of responses provided by participants.

**Table 15 (Continued).**  Frequency by type of Grievance Resolution Strategy for Scenario 5

| Scenario and Themes | | Count | % responses [a] | % cases [b] | N [c] | Responses [d] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S5: The ex-boyfriend | | | | | 220 | 366 |
| Major Themes | Nothing | 9 | 2.5% | 4.1% | | |
| | Avoidance | 60 | 16.4% | 27.3% | | |
| | Aggression | 45 | 12.3% | 20.5% | | |
| | Reactive | 10 | 2.7% | 4.5% | | |
| | Verbal aggression | 7 | 1.9% | 3.2% | | |
| | Ambiguous assertion | 12 | 3.3% | 5.5% | | |
| | Assertive | 60 | 16.4% | 27.3% | | |
| Unique Themes | Police/legal | 137 | 37.4% | 62.3% | | |
| | Defend self | 20 | 5.5% | 9.1% | | |
| | Other | 6 | 1.6% | 2.7% | | |

*Notes :* [a] percentage of responses. [b] percentage of cases. [c] number of participants. [d] total number of responses provided by participants.

As can be seen in Table 15, the students used a variety of different resolution strategies across the five different types of social situations described in the MAPS. For Scenario 1 (the cleaner), the majority of students said they would not do anything about it, so in essence this issue was not considered worth bothering about. For example, one participant whose written response reflects the "do nothing" theme stated *"Wouldn't say or do anything. He obviously didn't mean me, and even if he did – who cares? Such an insignificant event wouldn't even occur to me to second think it"*. For Scenario 2, nearly half the students said they would thank the neighbours. For Scenario 3, 48% of students said they would engage in some form of assertive dialogue between the friend and/or John to try to resolve the problem. One example was: *"I would ask John not to call my house again and tell him that calling my mother was unacceptable, and to just talk to me so we can work something out"*. A second example was: *"I would try and track John and my friend to find out what is going on, best to get their story before jumping to conclusions"*. Regarding Scenario 4 (the supervisor), the two most common themes that emerged were assertion and biding time. These two themes were often combined in one response: for example, *"Would give myself time to earn the stripes, if nothing changed then I would ask the supervisor when my job will change, then if nothing I'd look for other work"*. Finally, for Scenario 5, the most frequent theme that emerged from the

student data was to get legal assistance to deal with the ex-boyfriend's antagonistic behaviour, such as call the police.

More detailed analyses of Part 3 responses are shown in Chapter 6 when the grievance resolution strategies of male violent offenders are compared with the students and a random sample of men and women from the general population.

### 3.3.6 Additional Findings

**3.3.6.1 Counterbalancing the scales.** To assess whether the order the scales were completed in may have influenced the results, the questionnaire pack was counterbalanced. For the purpose of this analysis the four VCSS subscales (ALCP, TLV, JFV, and ICO+) and Part 1 of the MAPS across all five scenarios were summed to form one global VCSS and one global MAPS score. The descriptive statistics for each scale by counterbalance order are shown in Table 16 below.

**Table 16.** Means and SD for the VCSS and MAPS by Counterbalance Order (SD in Parentheses)

| Counterbalance order [a] | (n) [b] | VCSS global score [c] | MAPS global score [d] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 102 | 162.26  (16.69) | 139.86  (15.13) |
| 2 | 122 | 159.34  (14.32) | 140.79  (13.89) |

*Notes:* [a] order 1= demographic sheet, VCSS then MAPS; 2 = demographic sheet, MAPS then VCSS. [b] Number of participants. [c] Global score = sum of ALCP, TLV, JFV, ICO+. [d] Global score = sum of "is/ought" discrepancy, attribution of intent, and specific attributions across all five scenarios.

The results found no significant differences between the students who completed the VCSS then the MAPS (order one) compared with students who completed the MAPS then the VCSS (order two). Regardless of counterbalance order, the students endorsed similar violent and criminal sentiments ($t$ (222) = 1.41, $p$ = .16) and similar social attributions across the five MAPS scenarios ($t$ (234) = -.48, $p$ = .64). These results suggest that order of administration did not make a difference. These results also suggest that fatigue effects were not apparent in the data obtained.

**3.3.6.2 Participant feedback on the questionnaire pack.** The last page of the pack provided the student sample with an opportunity to give some feedback on what they thought of the questionnaires. The feedback sheet asked a number of questions regarding presentation, ease of completion and whether any of the VCSS or MAPS questions were confusing. The results overall were follows. Out of 238 participants: 185 (78%) said their overall impression of the pack was very good; 156 (66%) found the task interesting; 165 (69%) said the pack was not at all confusing and was easy to understand. Regarding the VCSS, 23 (10%) participants stated the measure was confusing for several reasons. Some participants thought the questions were too general, while others considered the questions were too rigid and "black and white". Other participants did not like the double negatives. Two female participants thought the questions appeared too masculine and therefore not relevant for women.

For the MAPS, 155 (65%) said the scenarios were not confusing while 69 students (29%) said that some scenarios were confusing. Of the students who said they were confused, their confusion was primarily concerning Scenarios 1, 3 and 4 because they could not clearly work out the intent of some harmdoers. Several participants wrote that it would be better if the intention of the harmdoer was more clearly stated. Of interest, only three participants found Scenario 2 (the neighbours) confusing, and no-one found Scenario 5 (the ex-boyfriend) confusing. The confusion appeared to be related to the ambiguous situations regarding the interactions with the cleaner, the friend, and the supervisor. Although having participants confused is not often the aim of psychometric measures, in the current study Scenarios 1, 3 and 4 were specifically written in an ambiguous manner leaving the participant to consider whether the act was more likely to have been carried out with malice or not.

The next question asked the students whether after they had read each of the scenarios, from the description, could they imagine what each of the situations would be like for them. One hundred and ninety-seven (83%) of participants said they were able

to, with a further 26 (11%) participants saying they could sort of imagine what it might be like for them. The next question asked the students whether they were able to think about why that person/s behaved like that towards them. One hundred and seventy-eight students (75%) said they could, with a further 43 students (18%) saying they could sort of think why they might have behaved like that. Finally, the participants were asked whether after reading each scenario could they imagine what they would feel if each of the situations happened to them. Two hundred and eight students (87%) said they were able to identify how they would feel. As with the VCSS, one of the main criticism raised by 14 women was that the scenarios appeared to be very male oriented.

### 3.4 General Discussion

The results presented above indicated that the two new measures have satisfactory psychometric properties.

For the new JFV and expanded ICO+ subscales, the internal reliability of both subscales was well above the recommended level. Both subscales were also unifactorial suggesting they measure the single constructs of justifications for violence and the identification with criminal peers. Moreover, the patterns in the correlations observed suggest that the construct validity of the original ICO subscale was not affected by the addition of the new items to form the ICO+. The new JFV subscale was also found to share a highly significant relationship between the established ALCP and TLV subscales, as well as the amended ICO+ subscale. This suggests that the JFV subscale is an appropriate addition to the scale and expands the coverage of the CSS to not only measure criminal but also now to measure violent sentiments as well.

The results obtained using the MAPS were equally encouraging. On Part 1 of the MAPS, all five scenarios were found to be unifactorial, measuring a range of social attributions. The social situations described in the MAPS were specifically written to reflect a different level of hostility and maliciousness underpinning each of the

harmdoers' actions. The results found that a large sample of students judged the scenarios as distinctly different from one another in terms of the level of hostility and this sample had also ranked the scenarios in the order that the author had originally intended them to be ranked. For Part 2, the sample reported a range of different feelings: on average the more hostile the situation, the more negative the reported feelings. Anecdotally, based on the feedback supplied, the majority of participants stated that after they had read each of the scenarios they were able to imagine how they would feel if they found themselves in these situations. These findings combined suggest that the scenarios presented in the MAPS can be understood and that people are able to think about how they would feel. Finally, for Part 3, the thematic content analysis and multiple dichotomy analysis revealed that the students considered a wide range of strategies they thought they might use to solve each of the five scenarios. The Maps scoring guide, which provides an overview of the problem solving themes identified during the content analysis, is presented in Appendix D.

One of the primary aims of this project was to develop two reliable and valid scales to measure pro-violent sentiments and to assess how people interpret the behaviour of others and what they would do when faced with problematic social situations. This chapter assessed the psychometric properties of these scales using a student sample. The next two studies (reported in Chapter 4) will assess the psychometric qualities of these scales but this time using two different samples (male violent offenders and men and women from the general population).

## BIKIE DOBS IN MATE FOR ASSAULT

By Megan Sadler

Senior Gypsy Joker 'X' has broken the bikie code of silence, dobbing in a fellow club member for allegedly assaulting the manager of a Kalgoorlie nightclub last year.

'X', charged with the September 18 assault at the Club Inn, was acquitted on Tuesday after a trial in Kalgoorlie Magistrate's Court. Giving evidence, he told the court he did not assault the manager with a bar stool but he knew who did.

When he refused to name the man, Magistrate Stephen Sharratt threatened to remand him in custody overnight and charge him with contempt of court if he failed to reveal the person's identity. When asked by police prosecutor Sgt Mark Bolitho who committed the assault, 'X' said he was not raised to "dob in a mate" and would "cop whatever is coming" as a result.

But faced with the prospect of a night behind bars, 'X' reluctantly agreed to seek permission from his associate before naming 'Y' in court.

'X' vehemently denied assaulting the manager, claiming two fights erupted around him as he stood at the bar drinking with his son. "I didn't lay a hand on the bloke," he said.

A Club Inn barmaid told the court the manager had called the group "deroes" and told them to leave. She saw the assault take place but said the attacker was not 'X'.

Full story, see Appendix Q

# Chapter 4.

# Studies 3 & 4:
Evaluating the Violent and Criminal Sentiments Scale and the Measure of Attributions and Problem Solving using Offender and Community Samples.

## 4.1 Introduction and Chapter Overview

In Chapter 3, the results showing the preliminary psychometric analyses for the VCSS and the MAPS were presented. Both scales demonstrated good reliability and validity. However, these results were obtained using data from University students. Two questions of importance for this project were first, would the scales perform equally well when used with a sample of violent offenders? Second, would the scales work well in a sample of men and women non-offenders from the general population?

Establishing the validity and reliability of the scales separately for each of the three samples (students, offenders and community) was vital for this project because the scales are used in subsequent studies (refer Chapters 5 and 6) to examine whether violent offenders are more likely to endorse a higher level of violent and criminal sentiments and are more likely to interpret social situations in different ways compared with two non-offender samples (students and the community).

This chapter is presented in two sections. Section 4.2 presents the findings from Study 3 which examined the psychometric properties of the scales using a sample of prisoners convicted of serious index violent offences. Section 4.3 presents the results from Study 4 which assessed the psychometric properties of the scales using a community sample. Both of these studies are essentially parallel analyses to those performed in Chapter 3 with the primary aim being to reexamine the reliabilities and factor structure of the scales but this time using different samples. As the data collected from the offender and community samples on the MAPS Part 2 (feelings) and Part 3 (problem solving) will be analysed in greater detail in later studies, to prevent repetition of results only the psychometric properties on Part 1 of the MAPS are reported here.

## 4.2 Study 3:Evaluating the VCSS and the MAPS using an Offender Sample.

### 4.2.1 Study 3 Overview

The primary aim of Study 3 was to assess whether the VCSS and Part 1 of the MAPS are valid and reliable scales when using a sample of violent offenders. There were also two secondary aims. The first was to assess whether the method of administration could impact upon the scores obtained. Due to the known poor literacy levels in offender populations (Caddick & Webster, 1998; Davis, 1988) the participants in the present study were offered two administration methods, oral or self-completion of the VCSS and the MAPS. As researchers have argued that the method of administration can have negative impacts upon the validity of data due to the introduction of interview and response bias (Loftus, Miller & Burns, 1978) it was vital to determine whether the data obtained from the participants who choose the oral method (completion with the author's assistance) was comparable to the data obtained from participants who completed the scales themselves.

The second aim was to assess whether a history effect could be present in the data collected. Between July 2002 and December 2003 a Royal Commission was called to investigate the allegation of police corruption in Western Australia[8]. The Commission's final report was presented to the Attorney-General in January 2004 (Corruption and Crime Commission of Western Australia (CCC), 2004). During the hearings numerous witness testified that police officers had in the past bribed prosecution witnesses and also had tampered with and removed critical evidence. Although the Commission made several recommendations to increase police accountability, no cases of corruption were proved (CCC, 2004). The finding that there were no cases to answer was controversial, especially after an ex-police office admitted to a journalist that he had fabricated

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[8] A Royal Commission is a major inquiry into a controversial issue, such as deaths in custody. The Commission is created by government and has considerable powers to investigate, e.g., the ability to summon experts/witnesses, seize documents. The findings are lengthy reports presented to government.

evidence that led to lengthy prison sentences for two brothers in 1982 ("Ex cop admits framing", 2002). The data collection for the present study occurred just three months after the Commission published the report and the matter was still the focus of media attention at that time. On this basis, it is possible that several aspects measured in the VCSS (primarily attitudes towards the police) may have been salient at that time. To assess whether the Commission's findings may have affected the data, the present sample of offenders were compared with a previous (1999) sample of Western Australian violent offenders on the original Criminal Sentiments Scale (CSS). In the previous study, the data was collected before the Royal Commission was called.

## 4.2.2    Method

### 4.2.2.1 Participants

The participants were 87 non-Indigenous Australian male offenders serving sentences in two Perth metropolitan prisons for non-sexual violent index offences. Their effective sentence length ranged from 2 to 30 years, with a mean of 8.1 years (SD = 7.64). None of the participants had participated in prior intensive intervention for criminal attitudes or social attributional biases, thus avoiding the possible confound of treatment effects. One hundred and one offenders were invited to participate and 87 consented (response rate 86.13%). The reasons for non-participation were as follows: 11 offenders stated they did not want to participate; and three offenders refused to leave their units to come to the interview room. The final sample comprised 87 participants, mean age of 31.7 (SD = 8.45, range = 18 - 54). Of note, the 18 offenders who had participated in Study 1 of this project were not included in this sample. Due to culture differences access to Indigenous offenders is only given to researchers who are Indigenous Australians.

The current offences of the sample were as follows: 16 men were serving life sentences for willful murder; 7 for aggravated burglaries with assault or deprivation of

liberty; 23 for serious assault; 8 for attempted murder; 8 for firearms offences; 18 for robbery whilst armed and in company; with a further 7 convicted for the lesser offence of armed robbery. Seventy-four of the men had been imprisoned previously, with the remaining 13 men serving their first sentence as an adult. However, as the author did not have access to juvenile records it cannot be concluded that these 13 men did not have prior criminal histories. Sixty-four percent of the sample appeared to be general offenders, having adult criminal histories covering a range of violent and non-violent offences against persons and property (e.g. serious assault, armed robbery, drink driving, receiving stolen goods), while the remaining 36% had been convicted of violent offences only, primarily violence against persons [9].

The participants had a range of education level and employment status. Thirty men had finished year 9 (age at completion 13 to 14 years). Twenty-eight men had finished year 10 (age 15 to 16 years), 19 had finished years 11 and 12 (age at completion 16 to 18), and nine had completed technical college qualifications (TAFE). Fifty-one men had completed a trade apprenticeship, primarily in construction (carpenter, plasterer, stonemason) or industry (welder, sheet metal). Before coming to prison, 46 men had been employed, primarily in the trade they were qualified in, with the remaining 41 men being unemployed at the time.

#### 4.2.2.2 Measures

The measures used in the current study were presented to the participants in the form of a questionnaire pack containing three sections. Section 1 asked the offender participants the same demographic questions as the students had been asked, such as age, pre-incarceration employment, trade qualification, and school leaving year. Section 2 of the

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[9] Although there is a debate in the literature about classifying violent offenders as either reactive aggressive or proactive/instrumental aggressive (refer Tedeschi & Felson, 1994; Shah, 1998) no such distinction was made in this thesis. As discussed above most of the offenders who participated in this study did not engage in just one type of violence and most participants had present and prior convictions for serious index reactive and proactive offences.

Pack contained the 60-item Violent and Criminal Sentiments Scale (VCSS). Section 3 contained the five scenario Measure of Attributions and Problem Solving (MAPS). For detailed descriptions of the VCSS and the MAPS see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1. For a copy of the pack as presented to offender participants please refer Appendix G.

### 4.2.2.3 Procedure

**Pilot study.** In March 2004, after the student data had been collected and analysed but before the main offender sample data collection commenced, a group of eight violent offender participants took part in a small pilot study. The aim of the pilot was to gather feedback on the questionnaire pack from offender participants' perspectives. Each offender consented to participate in the pilot study which involved completing the questionnaire pack as described in section 4.2.1. and afterward to give their opinion about the readability and presentation of the pack. All eight participants informed the author that the content of the pack was understandable, that the layout was acceptable, and that the instructions for self-completion of the scales was adequate. All of the participants stated that they enjoyed the task. The main reasons given for enjoying the task were that the task was a novel change from their usual highly structured day, or that it provided an opportunity to state their opinion about the issues contained in the scales. Moreover, five of the eight participants stated they felt pleased to be able to give their opinion about the scales. As one participant commented afterwards "*It's rare in here* (sic prison) *to have anyone ask you what you reckon 'bout anything*". As the pilot sample found the scales understandable and user-friendly, no amendments to the scales were required.

**Main study: Offender Sample.** Eligibility for inclusion in the sample was based on the following criteria: conviction of a serious violent non-sexual index offence; psychological stability and not taking psychotropic medication; a custodial sentence of

two years or more; being waitlisted for an intensive prison-based violence rehabilitation program; and having been assessed as being at high-risk of violent recidivism. The participant list of 101 offenders was compiled by a senior member of staff from the Offender Programs Department within the West Australian Department of Justice. The list was derived from information stored in the Total Offender Management Database.

All participants were seen individually in interview rooms within the prison between March and June 2004. Upon arrival participants were asked to volunteer for the study which included completing the demographic sheet and the two scales (the VCSS and the MAPS). Consent to participate was fully discussed and freely obtained before completing the questionnaire pack. Consent to participate was in accordance with the Australian Psychological Society's and the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) ethical guidelines. To provide participants with an assurance of confidentiality, consent was by completion of the pack, therefore the participants were not asked to sign their name on a consent form. To address the potential for poor literacy, each participant was offered two administration options, either self-completion or oral where the author read out the questions and wrote down the responses. Twenty-three participants chose the oral method and 64 participants chose to complete the pack themselves. The interviews ranged 60 to 90 minutes. Upon completion of the questionnaire packs, all participants were fully debriefed which included giving an overview of the study and the aims. During the debriefing the participants were asked their opinion of the questionnaire pack. The majority (85%) of participants said they had considered the pack was easy to understand and had not experienced any difficulty in understanding the scenarios. Several participants informed the author they enjoyed doing the pack as it gave them an opportunity to think about the law and social behaviour in a manner not normally discussed in prison. After completion of the data collection, to protect the identity of all participants any documentation containing personal information was destroyed.

## 4.2.3 Results

### 4.2.3.1 Preliminary analyses

Prior to commencing the analyses, negatively scored items were reversed, missing values located, univariate and multivariate outliers identified, and the distributions on each variable assessed. For the VCSS, 25 missing values were found and replaced with the mid-point score of "undecided" as recommended in the VCSS scoring guide (refer Appendix F). All 87 participants completed the VCSS. Within the data set, 6 univariate outliers were found with z-scores above 3.29, the recommended cut-off for univariate outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Using Mahalanobis distance with 4df, $p < .001.$, one multivariate outlier was identified[10]. However, as neither the univariate outliers nor the multivariate outlier were extreme, all cases were retained for analysis. For Part 1 of the MAPS, 18 missing values were found and replaced using the mid-point "undecided" as outlined in the scoring guide (refer Appendix D). Eighty-six participants completed all five scenarios, with one participant completing four of the five. Only one univariate outlier was detected with a z-score of 3.52. As the z value was not extreme, the case was retained for analysis. No multivariate outliers were identified using Mahalanobis distance with 15df, $p < .001$[11].

Finally, normality of distributions for the variables: age; ALCP; TLV; JFV; ICO; ICO+; and Part 1 of the MAPS on all five scenarios was assessed. The results showed that age on the four VCSS subscales were normally distributed, with all Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics of $p > .05$. For the MAPS, all distributions violated normality, although skew and kurtosis were not extreme indicating deviation from normality was minor providing negligible effects on the statistical tests performed (Grimm, 1993).

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[10] The four degrees of freedom comprises the subscale score for ALCP, TLV, JFV, and ICO+)

[11] The 15 degrees of freedom comprises the "is/ought" discrepancy, attribution of intent, and specific attribution score on each of the five scenarios.

**4.2.3.2 Psychometric properties of the VCSS**

    **Principal Components Analysis of the VCSS.** The results from the Principal Components Analyses using the student data (presented in Chapter 3) had shown that both the JFV and ICO+ subscales were each unifactorial. The aim of the analyses presented below was to ascertain whether the 14-item JFV and 11-item ICO+ were unifactorial when using an offender sample. Two Principal Components Analyses (PCA) were used to examine this aim. As the eigenvalue of more than 1 rule for component extraction is overly sensitive when using PCA (Tzeng, 1992), the number of components extracted here was based on the Cattell (1966) guidelines for locating the "elbow" or "turning point" of the curve within the scree plot.

    For the JFV subscale the "turning point" occurred after the first component, suggesting the subscale is unifactorial. Component 1 had an eigenvalue of 6.82 which explained 48.7% of the variance in justifications for violence. The scree plot can be seen below in Figure 8. The component matrix is presented in Table 17.
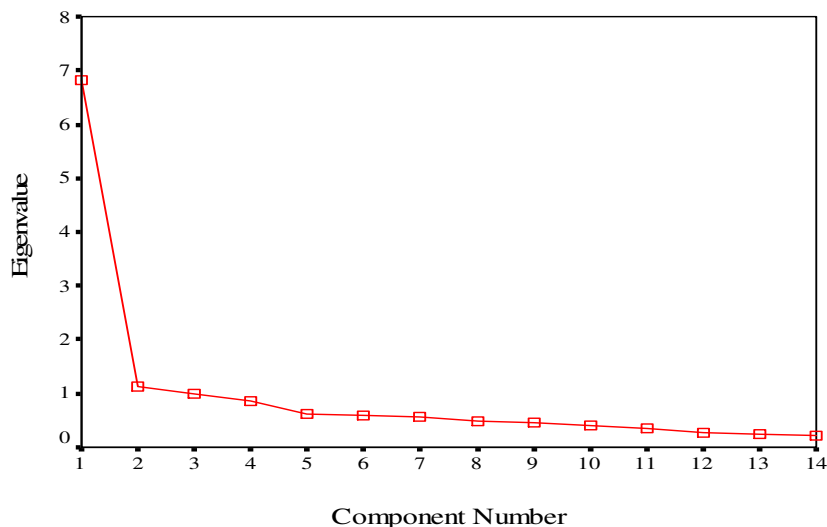


**Figure 8.**   Scree plot for the Principal Components Analysis of the JFV Subscale for the offender sample.

**Table 17.** Component Matrix for the Justifications for Violence Subscale for the Offender Sample.

| Item Number | Item | Component 1 Loading |
|---|---|---|
| 55 | | .81 |
| 42 | | .78 |
| 36 | | .78 |
| 44 | | .77 |
| 45 | | .77 |
| 57 | | .72 |
| 34 | | .72 |
| 46 | | .72 |
| 59 | | .69 |
| 51 | | .65 |
| 31 | | .64 |
| 32 | | .58 |
| 26 | | .56 |
| 60 | | .52 |

For the ICO+ subscale the "turning point" occurred after Component 1 suggesting that this subscale is also unifactorial. Component 1 had an eigenvalue of 5.41 explaining 49.2% of the variance in identification with criminal others. The scree plot can be seen in Figure 9 and the component matrix in Table 18 overleaf.
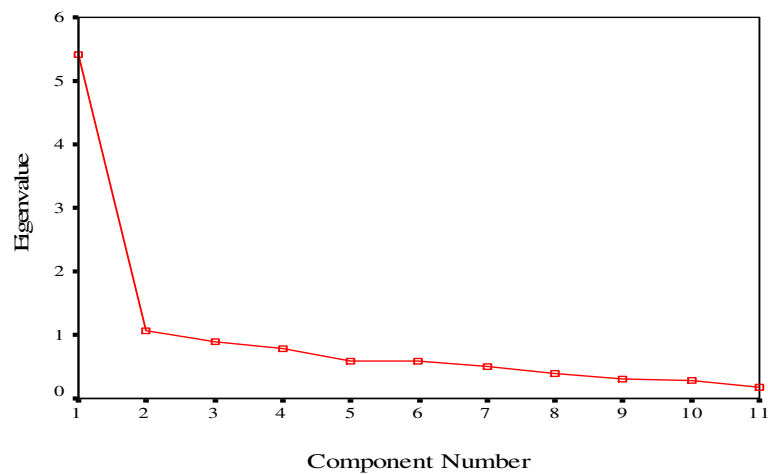


**Figure 9.** Scree plot for the Principal Components Analysis of the ICO+ Subscale for the offender sample.

**Table 18.** Component Matrix for the Identification with Criminal Others + Subscale for the Offender Sample.

| Item Number | Item | Component 1 Loading |
|---|---|---|
| 28 | | .82 |
| 43 | | .79 |
| 47 | | .79 |
| 29 | | .76 |
| 33 | | .72 |
| 49 | | .70 |
| 39 | | .69 |
| 58 | | .69 |
| 37 | | .67 |
| 40 | | .60 |
| 53 | | .38 |

The component structures of the original CSS's TLV and ALCP subscales were also assessed. The ALCP subscale was unifactorial with an eigenvalue of was 7.81, which explained 31.2% of the variance. The minimum item loading on Component 1 of the ALCP subscale was .31, with a maximum loading of .76. Although, the solution for the ALCP subscale was unifactorial, only 24 of the 25 items loaded onto Component 1 with a factor loading above the recommended .30 (Coates & Steed, 2003). Item 18 of the ALCP subscale had a component loading of only .12. The TLV subscale was unifactorial with an eigenvalue for Component 1 of 4.21, which explained 42.1% of the variance in tolerance for law violation. All ten items loaded onto Component 1 with a minimum item loading of .56, and a maximum item loading of .81.

In comparing the results obtained from the student data with the offender data, it appears that all four of the VCSS subscales are unifactorial in both samples, and that the variance explained by each component is at least as large in the offender sample as in the student sample. For example, in the student data, Component 1 of the JFV explained only 39.0% of the variance, whereas for offenders 48.7% of the variance of the justifications for violence subscale is captured by the first component. For the ICO+,

again the first component captures at least as much variance when used with an offender sample (49.2%) as with a student sample (35.9%).

**Subscale reliabilities for the VCSS.** The next analyses explored whether the internal reliability was satisfactory for the four VCSS subscales when using an offender sample. The reliabilities were assessed using Cronbach's alpha and all alphas obtained were within the Devillis (1991) range of "very good" indicating high internal reliability for each subscale. Notably, within both the JFV and ICO+ subscales all corrected item-total correlations were above the recommended level of .30 (Devillis, 1991). The item-total correlations for the JFV and ICO+ subscale can be seen in Tables 19 and 20 and the coefficients for all four subscales can be seen in Table 21.

**Table 19**. Reliability per Item for the Justifications for Violence Subscale for the Offender Sample

| Item | | N | Mean | SD | CITC [a] | αID [b] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | | 87 | 3.39 | 1.21 | .51 | .91 |
| 31 | | 87 | 2.78 | 1.31 | .58 | .91 |
| 32 | | 87 | 2.82 | 1.40 | .52 | .91 |
| 34 | | 87 | 2.16 | 1.10 | .67 | .91 |
| 36 | | 87 | 3.38 | 1.35 | .72 | .91 |
| 42 | | 87 | 3.11 | 1.35 | .72 | .91 |
| 44 | | 87 | 3.97 | 1.21 | .71 | .91 |
| 45 | | 87 | 4.29 | 1.03 | .71 | .91 |
| 46 | | 87 | 3.26 | 1.36 | .66 | .91 |
| 51 | | 87 | 3.16 | 1.26 | .59 | .91 |
| 55 | | 87 | 3.26 | 1.47 | .76 | .90 |
| 57 | | 87 | 2.93 | 1.30 | .66 | .91 |
| 59 | | 87 | 3.06 | 1.38 | .62 | .91 |
| 60 | | 87 | 4.37 | 0.85 | .46 | .92 |

*Notes:* [a] Corrected Item-total correlation. [b] Effect on subscale Cronbach alpha if item deleted.

**Table 20.** Reliability per Item for the Identification with Criminal Others+ Subscale

| Item | | Scale [a] | N | Mean | SD | CITC [b] | αID [c] |
|------|---|-----------|---|------|-----|----------|---------|
| 28 | | ICO+ | 87 | 3.38 | 1.45 | .76 | .87 |
| 29 | | ICO+ | 87 | 2.62 | 1.37 | .68 | .88 |
| 33 | | ICO | 87 | 2.78 | 1.26 | ..63 | .88 |
| 37 | | ICO | 87 | 2.78 | 1.20 | .59 | .88 |
| 39 | | ICO | 87 | 2.90 | 1.46 | .61 | .88 |
| 40 | | ICO+ | 87 | 2.33 | 1.35 | .52 | .89 |
| 43 | | ICO+ | 87 | 3.36 | 1.36 | .72 | .88 |
| 47 | | ICO | 87 | 2.89 | 1.22 | .72 | .87 |
| 49 | | ICO | 87 | 2.43 | 1.07 | .63 | .88 |
| 53 | | ICO | 87 | 3.62 | 1.08 | .32 | .90 |
| 58 | | ICO+ | 87 | 3.63 | 1.18 | .62 | .88 |

*Notes:* [a] Scale: ICO = original CSS item; ICO+ = new item. [b] Corrected item-total correlation. [c] Effect on subscale Cronbach alpha if item deleted.

**Table 21.** Cronbach's Alpha Calculated Separately for Each of the Four VCSS Subscales.

| Subscales | N [a] | Items [b] | α [c] |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Attitudes towards Law, Courts & Police | 87 | 25 | .90 |
| Tolerance for Law Violation | 87 | 10 | .84 |
| Justification for Violence | 87 | 14 | .92 |
| Identification with Criminal Others + | 87 | 11 | .89 |

*Notes:* [a] Number of participants. [b] Items per scale. [c] Cronbach's alpha.

## 4.2.3.3 The relationships between the four VCSS Subscales

Pearson product moment correlations were used to examine the relationships between the four subscales and to assess whether age was related to the level of endorsement found on each subscale. The correlations are shown below in Table 22.

**Table 22.** Intercorrelations Between the Four Subscales of the VCSS for the Offender Sample (n = 87).

| Variable | ALCP | TLV | JFV | ICO+ |
|----------|------|-----|-----|------|
| TLV | -.564** | - | - | - |
| JFV | -.569** | .770** | - | - |
| ICO+ | -.493** | .704** | .748** | - |
| Age | .181 | -.095 | -.212* | -.283** |

Notes: * p < .05 (2 tail).** p < .01 (2 tail).

The results showed a series of highly significant relationships whereby a negative attitude towards the legal system related to a higher tolerance for law violence, a higher level of support for the use of violence and a stronger identification with criminal peers. In addition, the results showed that age was not related to endorsement of the ALCP and

TLV subscales, suggesting that these attitudes once formed do not share a significant

relationship with age. In contrast, age was related to a lower level of endorsement of

JFV and ICO+, suggesting that as offenders age they are less likely to endorse the use of

violence and less likely to identify with criminal peers.

**4.2.3.4 Comparison with a previous Australian offender sample on the VCSS**

The next analysis compared the present offender sample with data from a previous

study using violent offenders undertaken by the author in 1999 (Stevenson et al., 2003).

The aim of this analysis was to explore whether a history effect could have occurred in

the present data, primarily due to the publication of the findings from the Royal

Commission into police corruption in Western Australia. The means and standard

deviations for both the present and previous samples are shown below in Table 23.

**Table 23.** Means and SD for the Present and Previous Australian Sample on the Original CSS.

| Variable | (n) | ALCP | TLV | JFV | ICO [a] | ICO+ [b] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Present sample | | | | | | |
| Male offenders | 87 | 69.07 (15.14) | 31.95 (7.40) | 45.95 (12.26) | 17.39 (5.06) | 17.39 (3.48) |
| Previous Australian sample [c] | | | | | | |
| Male offenders | 58 | 76.52 (13.40) | 30.59 (6.54) | - | 17.84 (3.46) | - |

*Notes:* Standard Deviations in parentheses. [a] Identification with Criminal Others (original 6 items).
[e] Identification with Criminal Others+ (11items). [c] Previous sample Stevenson et al.., 2003.

A series of one-sample t-tests compared the 2004 (present) sample with the 1999

(previous) sample. To control Type I error risk, alpha was set at .01. The 2004 sample

endorsed a significantly higher negativity toward the justice system (ALCP, ($t$ (86) =

4.59, $p < .001$). In contrast the 2004 sample endorsed similar tolerance for law violation

(TLV, ($t$ (86) = 1.72, $p = .09$) and identification with criminal others (ICO, ($t$ (86) =

0.83, $p = .41$) as the 1999 sample.

To explore where the significant difference on the ALCP subscale lay, the

subscale was divided into the three aspects of the legal system it measures: attitudes

towards the validity of the law ("Law"); courts and court personnel ("Courts"); and the police ("Police"). Using a series of one sample t-tests, the 2004 sample endorsed a similar attitude as the 1999 sample toward law in general ($t$ (86) = 0.86, $p$ = .39). In contrast, the 2004 sample had a more negative attitude toward the courts ($t$ (86) = 5.09, $p$ < .001), and a more negative attitude toward the police ($t$ (86) = 6.40, $p$ < .001). These results suggest that the significant finding observed in the ALCP Subscale is not reflected in how the two samples viewed the validity of law in general, but rather the process and people who enforce the law, namely the courts and the police, with the present sample endorsed a more negative opinion.

### 4.2.3.5 Psychometric properties of Part 1 of the MAPS

The aim of the analyses presented below was to assess the component structure and reliabilities of Part 1 of the MAPS using an offender sample. For more detailed analyses of the offender data, including descriptive statistics on Part 1 and the results for Parts 2 and 3, please refer Chapter 6.

**Principal Components Analysis of Part 1 of the MAPS.** The results presented in Chapter 3 showed that all five scenarios contained in Part 1 were unifactorial when using a student sample. The next analyses examined whether the component structures of each scenario were unifactorial when using the offender data. The results showed that Scenarios 1, 3, 4(ambiguous situations) and 5 (hostile) were unifactorial. However, Scenario 2 (benign) was not unifactorial with the variance being explained over two components. The component matrix for Part 1 of the MAPS can be seen overleaf in Table 24.

As can be seen in Table 24, the items from Scenario 2 loaded onto two components. Regardless of whether the Scenario 2 solution was rotated used an orthogonal or oblique method, the "is/ought" discrepancy and the negation of hostile

intent loaded onto Component 2 with no overlap of variance within Component 1. The

scree plots for each of the five scenarios can be seen in Figure 10.

**Table 24.**  Component Matrices for Part 1 of the MAPS for the Offender Sample.

| Scenario and variables | Component 1 | | | Component 2[a] | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Eigen-value | Variance explained | loading | Eigen-value | Variance explained | Loading |
| Scenario 1.  The cleaner | 3.12 | 52.11% | | One Component extracted | | |
| Negation of intent | | | .85 | | | |
| Hostile intent | | | .77 | | | |
| Attribution of intent | | | .74 | | | |
| Malevolent intent | | | .70 | | | |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .69 | | | |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .56 | | | |
| Scenario 2.  The neighbours | 2.14 | 35.67% | | 1.33 | 22.21% | |
| Hostile intent | | | .74 | | | .39 |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .73 | | | - |
| Attribution of intent | | | .64 | | | - |
| Malevolent intent | | | .65 | | | - |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | - | | | .75 |
| Negation of intent | | | - | | | .75 |
| Scenario 3.  The friends | 2.84 | 47.29% | | One Component extracted | | |
| Malevolent intent | | | .84 | | | |
| Hostile intent | | | .76 | | | |
| Negation of intent | | | .76 | | | |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .75 | | | |
| Attribution of intent | | | .52 | | | |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .40 | | | |
| Scenario 4.  The supervisor | 3.32 | 55.27% | | One Component extracted | | |
| Negation of intent | | | .83 | | | |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .80 | | | |
| Hostile intent | | | .79 | | | |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .76 | | | |
| Malevolent intent | | | .76 | | | |
| Intention | | | .46 | | | |
| Scenario 5  The ex-boyfriend | 2.75 | 45.80% | | One Component extracted | | |
| Hostile intent | | | .79 | | | |
| Negation of intent | | | .78 | | | |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .72 | | | |
| Attribution of intent | | | .60 | | | |
| Malevolent intent | | | .58 | | | |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .55 | | | |

*Notes:*  [a] results show orthogonal rotation method, Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.
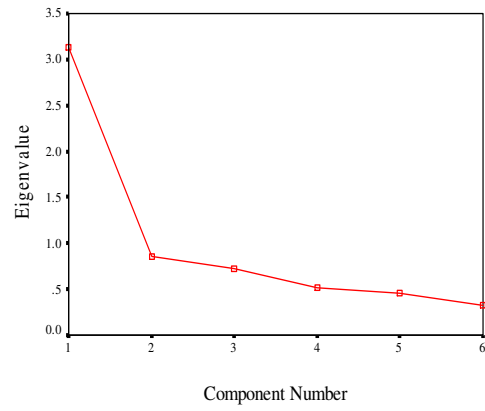
Scree plot for Scenario 1.
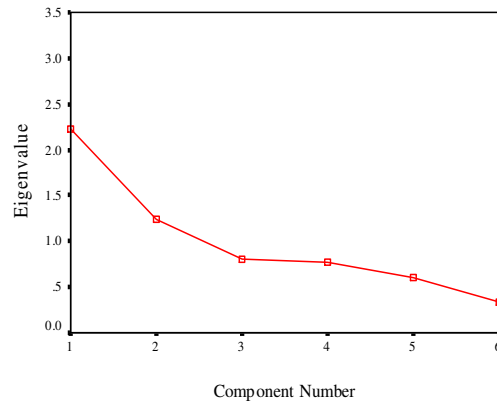
Scree plot for Scenario 2.
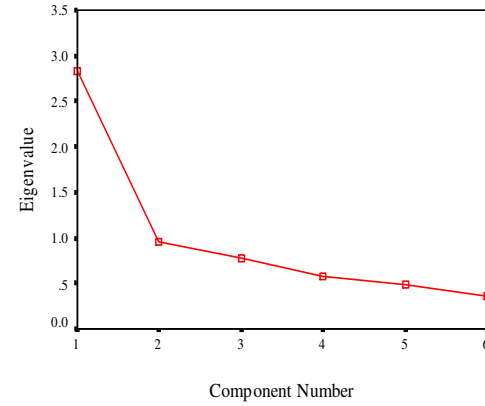
Scree plot for Scenario 3.
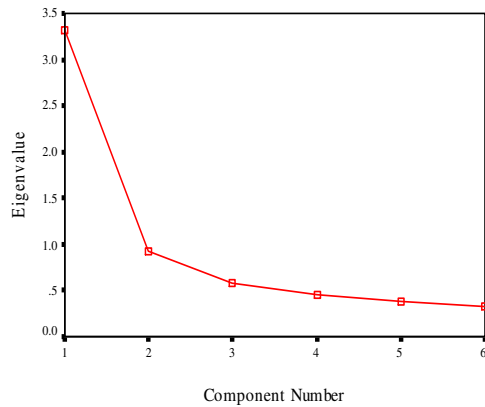
Scree plot for Scenario 4.
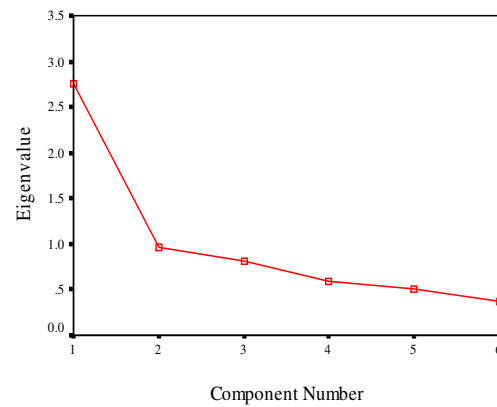
Scree plot for Scenario 5.

**Figure 10.** Scree plots for the Principal Component Analyses of the five Scenarios on Part 1 of the MAPS using the offender sample

**Scale reliabilities for Part 1 of the MAPS.**  The internal consistencies for the five scenarios contained within part 1 of the MAPS were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. Scenarios 1, 3, 4 and 5 had satisfactory internal reliabilities being above the recommended range of .70 (Devillis, 1991). The alpha for Scenario 2 was within Devillis' (1991) rating of undesirable (scale alphas .60 to .70). However, Thomson (2001) stressed that it can be difficult to get a high alpha value when using a small number of items. He argued that when a scale has only a few items an alpha of .60 can indicate that the scale has good internal consistency. The coefficients for the MAPS scenario by scenario can be seen in Table 25.

**Table 25.** Cronbach's Alpha Calculated for each of the Five MAPS Scenarios for the Offender Sample (n = 87).

| Scenarios | Items [a] | $\alpha$ [b] |
|---|---|---|
| 1 – Comments made by new cleaner | 8 | .78 |
| 2 – The neighbours car | 8 | .64 |
| 3 – The unpaid debt owed by friend | 8 | .75 |
| 4 – Tasks assigned at work by the supervisor | 8 | .82 |
| 5 – The ex-boyfriend at the BBQ | 8 | .76 |

*Notes:*  [a] Items per scale.  [b] Cronbach's alpha.


## 4.2.3.6 Additional analyses

**Administration Method of the VCSS and the MAPS.**  In the present study, the participants choose between to complete the scales using two different administration methods. After gaining consent each participant made a choice as to which method they preferred. The two methods were either self-completion, with the participant being given a pen and the pack, or oral administration, where the author read the questions and wrote down the response. The administration choices was presented as follows: "There are two ways to fill in the pack, you can either fill it in yourself, or I can read the questions out and note down what you say, whichever one you prefer, the choice is yours". Twenty-three (26.4%) participants chose the oral method while the remaining 64 participants completed the pack themselves.

The effects of administration method have long been debated. Both Loftus et al., (1978) and Milgram (1974) argued that an interviewer's method can create contamination of the data due to participants wishing to comply with their beliefs about how the interviewer wishes them to behave, or by participants being influenced by leading questions. In contrast, Allport (1961) argued that the most objective and useful method of collecting information was to ask the person directly for a response. In a previous study by Di Fazio (1998) using a measure of criminal attitudes and values (The Criminal Sentiments Scale-Modified; Simourd, 1997) it was showed that the method of administration (either presented orally or by self-completion) had a negligible influence on the scores obtained.

To determine whether administration method affected the scores obtained from the offender sample, the 60 items from the VCSS were summed to form a global score, as were the Part 1 items from the MAPS (Scenarios 1 to 5). The global means and standard deviations can be seen in Table 26 below.

**Table 26.** Means and SD by Method for the VCSS and MAPS. (SD in Parentheses).

| Administration method | (n) [a] | VCSS global score [b] | MAPS global score [c] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Oral | 23 | 181.70 (15.07) | 144.61 (18.10) |
| Self-completion | 64 | 178.97 (23.61) | 139.03 (15.22) |

*Notes:* [a] Number of participants by administration method. [b] VCSS global score = sum of ALCP, TLV, JFV, and ICO+. [c] MAPS global score = sum of the "is/ought" discrepancy, attribution of intent, and specific attributions across all five scenarios.

Independent samples t-tests were used to examine mean differences for each administration method on the two scales. As one participant did not complete all of the five MAPS scenarios the number of cases is reduced. The results showed that, regardless of the method, the means obtained were not significantly different for the VCSS ($t$ (85) = 0.52, $p$ = .61) or the MAPS ($t$ (84) = 1.43, $p$ = .16).

## 4.2.4  Discussion: Offender Sample

The primary aim of the present study was to assess whether the VCSS and Part 1 of the MAPS had satisfactory psychometric properties when using an offender sample. For the VCSS, the new JFV and expanded ICO+ subscales demonstrated good internal consistency and were each unifactorial. In addition, the new subscales shared a significant relationship with the existing subscales of the CSS. Moreover, the VCSS was shown to have higher internal reliability on all four subscales, with the JFV and ICO+ explaining at least as much variance in violent and criminal attitudes in an offender sample as in a student sample. These results therefore indicate that the new subscales have at least as a high a construct validity in an offender sample than in a student sample. This is an important result, as two aims of this project were first to devise a valid and reliable scale for comparing offenders with non-offenders on endorsement of pro-criminal sentiments, and second to devise a scale that practitioners working within criminal justice agencies would find useful.

Despite the overall result showing the VCSS to be a valid and reliable measure when used in an offender sample, a discrepancy was found between the current sample and the earlier 1999 sample of violent offenders on the ALCP subscale of the original CSS (Andrews & Wormith, 1984). There are three possible reasons for these results. First, the differences may be a reflection of the samples themselves. The participants in the 1999 sample had been assessed as being at either medium or high risk for violent recidivism, while the present sample were all at high risk. The majority of participants in the present sample had long criminal histories. The difference in attitudes towards the courts and police may therefore be as a result of more involvement with the system, such as more arrests, more trials and more sentences being passed.

A second potential reason is a history effect caused by the findings from the Western Australian Royal Commission into police corruption (CCC, 2004). During the

hearings a number of prisoners convicted of armed robbery were called to give evidence regarding an alleged discrepancy between the amount of money or goods they said they had stolen and the prosecution evidence presented in court. Of interest, several of the witnesses called to give evidence were still serving sentences in both of the male prisons sampled in the current study (none of the prisoners called to give evidence at the hearings participated in any of the studies carried out in this thesis). Although none of the offenders who participated in the current study mentioned they knew the offender witnesses personally, it could be speculated that the prison environment might have provided opportunities for the circumstances surrounding the hearings to become known among inmates. For example, male prisoners in Western Australia convicted of more serious offences usually begin their sentences in either of the prisons sampled in and the number of prisoners in each prison is not overly large (both prisons have a population of under 400 prisoners). Regardless of whether direct or indirect knowledge of the hearings had an impact, during the interviews the impact of the media became apparent when a number of the offender participants made comments to the author about a number of items concerning getting justice in court, and especially about the content of item 10 ("the police are honest"). As one offender commented: "*yeah right, police honest, that's why we've got a Royal Commission telling us they are dishonest, and look at the outcome the judge let the dogs get away with it, they're all in bed together*". It is reasonable to argue that based on the results and anecdotal evidence, such as that detailed above, that the Royal Commission findings have had a negative impact on how offender's currently view the police. As the Commission was presided over by a retired Supreme Court Justice, by implication this may also have impacted upon offenders' views of the courts and especially court personnel.

A third possible reason for the discrepancy observed maybe be reflective of both suggestions where the recidivism risk level of the 2004 offender sample (at high risk)

combined with the Royal Commission's findings was responsible for why these offenders view the courts and police more negatively. As the author personally collected the data from all participants in both samples it is unlikely that the difference in the results reflect different characteristics of the data collector or data collection method.

The results for Part 1 of the MAPS were less straightforward with only four of the five scenarios having high internal consistency and unifactorial factor structures. For the offender sample, for Scenario two the internal consistency was below the recommended .30 level (Devillis, 1991) although as Thomson (2001) has argued it is difficult to obtain high reliability coefficients when calculating Cronbach's alpha using a small number of items. However, for the other scenarios (1, 3, 4 and 5), despite the few items the reliability coefficients were above the recommended .70 level. When using a student sample, Scenario 2 had been unifactorial, with all items loading highly on Component 1. In contrast, when using an offender sample the solution for Scenario 2 spread over two components. The results suggested that for the offender sample the "is/ought" discrepancy, negation of hostile intent, as well as a proportion of the attribution of hostile intent were a separate construct to the other attributional aspects measured in Part 1 of the MAPS. However, for the other scenarios when using the offender sample the other four scenarios formed one unifactorial construct.

Therefore, when looking at the overall findings it could be that it is the essence of Scenario 2 which created the two component solution. Scenario 2 describes the situation where the act of the neighbours (revving the car late at night) albeit causing a harmful and annoying outcome (lack of sleep on numerous occasions) was a thoughtless rather than malicious act, and when told about their bad behaviour, they apologised and stopped the behavior. Therefore, in Scenario 2 the bad behaviour was corrected and the essence of the questions in Part 1 of the MAPS explore whether the behaviour was malicious or a thoughtless act combined with whether the apology was genuine or not.

In contrast, the other four scenarios either describe the intent of the harmdoer as explicitly hostile, or are written in an ambiguous manner so that the intent underpinning the harmdoer's act is unclear. These four scenarios are also left open and the harmdoer has neither acknowledged the harm or corrected their behaviour. Given the two component solution for Scenario 2 it is possible that benign/thoughtless acts of others are judged differently by offenders than by non-offenders. The differences between offenders and non-offenders in judging the benign act of the neighbours (Scenario 2) can be seen in Chapter 6.

An additional aim of the current study was to assess whether administration method had a negative impact upon the data collected. The results for the VCSS were in line with the Di Fazio (1998) findings which suggests that the construct of violent and criminal sentiments can be measured reliably in two ways; either orally or by self-administration. The results obtained for the MAPS also indicates that this new measure is unaffected by the method used to administer the scale. These results have implications for clinicians working within the justice system. For example, in Western Australia the Criminal Sentiments Scale (Andrews & Wormith, 1984) is used as part of a pre and post assessment battery for the Violent Offending Treatment Program (Hall et al., 1999). The scores from this battery are written into the post program report as an indication of the increase or reduction of pro-offending attitudes and values. The parole board are provided with a copy of the report which in part is used to evaluate whether an offender is released into the community on parole. Furthermore, the literacy and educational level of prisoners in Western Australia is low, with the majority of prisoners only completing year 7 (school leaving age of approximately 13 years) (H. Zielinski, Adult Educational Co-ordinator for the Department of Justice, Western Australia, personal communication, October 9, 2002). As such many prisoners require assistance when asked to complete psychometric scales. The implication here is that clinicians can

feel confident that, regardless of whether a prisoner can or cannot complete the VCSS or the MAPS themselves, the scores obtained will not be affected by the method used.

In summary, overall both the VCSS and MAPS performed well in an offender sample. It is possible that the results obtained reflect the method used, whereby the main content of the JFV, the five new ICO+ items, and the scenarios contained in the MAPS, were primarily based upon the interviews carried out with offender participants (refer Chapter 2), and where the items were couched in the same everyday language used by the participants in Study 1. The results from the current study support the argument of Hermans (1988) who considered the optimal method for developing scales with both high internal and external validity was to base the scale content on interview data generated from people knowledgeable about the subject matter in hand.

## 4.3 Study 4: Testing the VCSS and the MAP using a Community Sample.

### 4.3.1 Study 4 Overview

The aim of Study 4 was to collect data from the general population in Perth on the VCSS and the MAPS and to assess the scales psychometric properties in a community sample of non-offenders. The rationale for the current study was twofold. First, as the community respondents comprised a sample that were distinct from students or offenders it was vital that both scales be shown to be valid and reliable measures, especially as the community data was to be used in later studies to compare with offenders and students. Second, although data for non-offenders on the original CSS subscales (ALCP; TLV; ICO) had previously been collected from university students, probation officers, and participants who had consented to take part in experimental research trials (Andrews & Wormith, 1990), this is the first study to collect data on the CSS from a stratified random sample of men and women from the general population. As with the offender data presented above, the data from the community sample on Parts 2 and 3 of the MAPS will be analysed in detail in subsequent studies. Therefore to prevent repetition, the results presented in this section are limited to preliminary findings only. The main emphasis in the current study was on assessing the component structures and reliabilities for both the VCSS and Part 1 of the MAPS. For more detailed analyses using the community data please refer to Chapter 5 (for the VCSS) and Chapter 6 ( for the MAPS).

### 4.3.2   Method

#### 4.3.2.1 Sampling method and procedure

The first aim was to collect a random sample of non-offenders residing in metropolitan Perth, Western Australia. In 2001, 1,339,993 people resided in metropolitan Perth. Of these 988,966 were adults aged 65 years and over. Approximately 15% of the adult

population were 65 years of age and over; Perth like many other Australian capital cities has an aging population. Forty-eight percent of adults were male, and 52% were female. Approximately 84% of adults (845,199) were Australian citizens, with the remaining residents being either New Zealand citizens or under permanent residency visas. Perth is a multicultural city with roughly 33% of adults born overseas, primarily the U.K. Italy, Africa, India, South East Asia, and Eastern block Europe. The 2001 Population Census recorded 34 different languages other than English as the main language spoken in Perth homes. Australian Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people represented only 1.5% of the metropolitan Perth population (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2002a).

In order to collect a random sample of adults residing in Perth a stratified multi-stage cluster sampling method was used. The first stage in constructing the sampling frame was to locate four main clusters based on socio-economic status (SES) using the 2001 Census of Population and Housing (ABS, 2002b). The Census lists suburbs from highest to lowest on a number of socio-economic and demographic variables, primarily median individual weekly income, average monthly rent and mortgage repayments per household. The four clusters were: High SES (individual median weekly income A$473-$588, monthly median housing loan repayments A$974-$2000); Medium to High SES (individual income A$357-$472, loan repayments A$550-$815).; Medium to Low SES (individual income A$242-$356, loan repayments A$457-643); and Low SES (individual income A$126-$241, loan repayments A$374-470). Notably, the suburbs in metropolitan Perth are in the main clearly defined by the socio-economic status of the residents; this is due primarily to the price of land.

The second stage in the cluster sampling was the random selection (using Microsoft Excel to generate random numbers) of two suburbs from each of the four main SES clusters. Finally the streets to sample within each suburb were selected by computer generated random street directory map references for each of the eight

suburbs. The final sampling list was a total of 80 streets randomly drawn from eight suburbs within metropolitan Perth.

Eight hundred survey packs were printed, and 100 packs distributed to each of the eight metropolitan suburbs. The survey packs were addressed "to the resident" and delivered to every second letter box in the selected streets. Half of the packs were intended for men and the other half for women. On page 2 of the pack was a request that where possible the pack should be completed by either an adult female or adult male. The request was worded as: "To ensure a cross-section of community views is represented in the survey, houses and streets have been chosen at random. This is how you were selected. As we hope for an equal number of male and female respondents, half of the surveys are intended for males, the other half are intended for females. In your case, we would be grateful if an adult female in the house could complete the survey. However, if this is not possible, we would be pleased if an adult male could complete it". A reply paid envelope was provided for respondents to return the pack once complete (The pack as distributed to households in the community can be seen in Appendix G). Finally, two weeks after the packs had been delivered, reminder letters were hand delivered to the letterboxes of the residents who had received the packs (refer Appendix H for an example of the reminder letter).

### 4.3.2.2 Participants

The respondents were adult men and women residing in metropolitan Perth, Western Australia. Of 800 residences invited to participate, 218 completed the survey pack and returned it by post (response rate of 27%)[12]. Of these, 11 packs were unusable for two reasons: one pack was returned blank; and a further 10 were substantially incomplete. The final sample was 208 respondents with a mean age of 46.9 years (SD=13.89, range

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[12] Although a 27% response rate is below the usual expected rate of 42% for US surveys (Dillman, 2000), 27% is in line with the response rate for Western Australian surveys found in the published literature (for example, 27% was obtained in by Pedersen, Beven, Walker and Griffiths, 2004).

= 18 - 84). One hundred and eight respondents were men, with a mean age of 48.2 (SD= 13.99) and 100 respondents were women with a mean age of 45.7 (SD = 13.72). Only 1 respondent was an Indigenous Australian with the remaining respondents being non-Indigenous Australian citizens or permanent residents.

On page 2 of the pack was a request informing respondents that as data had been collected from Western Australian prisoners, thus if they had been to prison or had/were on a community sentence, (e.g. Community Supervision Order), they were asked not to complete and return the pack. However, such requests leave it to the respondents to act according to the request, therefore it cannot be categorically confirmed that all 208 respondents in the final sample were non-offenders.

One of the primary problems associated with community samples is that they are comprised of residents with certain demographic characteristics which make unrepresentative of the population. This can be problematic when researchers wish to infer their results to the general population. For example, most community samples are over-representative of women who are middle aged and with a significantly higher level of education than the population (Whitley, 1996).

Table 27 overleaf presents some demographic variables collected from the sample which can be compared with the known demographics of the population. Although a full analysis was not carried, the sample is reasonable representative of sex. In contrast the sample is not representative of education level with the sample having a higher level of education than the population. The ratios of occupation types are not representative with the sample having fewer members who are employed in trades or as labourers or clerical/sales positions compared with the population. Although this sample is not "extreme" it cannot be considered fully representative of the general population of adults residing in Perth. In addition, Australian Indigenous citizens underrepresented in this sample. The differences between the sample and the population are in line with

what other researchers have found, in that community sample tend to be more highly

educated and employed in more senior position within the community (Whitely, 1996).

Therefore the data collected from this sample may not necessarily fully represent what

the population thinks about the issues being explored in this project.

**Table 27.**  Selected Demographic Variables for the General Adult Population of Perth
and the Current Community Sample

|  |  | Population | Sample |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sex – | Males | 48% | 52% |
|  | Females | 52% | 48% |
| Age (mean age of adults aged 18 and over) | Males |  | 48.2 |
|  | Females |  | 45.7 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Education – | Doctor/Masters degree | 1.4% | * |
|  | Bachelors degree/graduate diploma | 9.3% | 37.5% |
|  | Technical collage/trade certificate | 23% | 22.6% |
|  | Finished secondary school (leaving age 16/17) | 35.7% | 25% |
|  | Completed year 10 (leaving age 15 years) | 20% | 13% |
|  | Completed year 9 or below | 10% | 3.8% |
|  | No formal schooling | 0.6% | 0 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Adult workforce participation - | In the workforce | 60.4% | 71.1% |
|  | Unemployed but looking for work | 5% | 1.9% |
|  | Homemakers, carers or retired | 31% | 27% |
|  | Status not confirmed | 3.6% | 0 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Managers and Administrators | 7.2% | 5.8% |
|  | Professionals | 18.8% | 19.2% |
|  | Associate Professionals | 12.7% | 8.2% |
|  | Tradespersons and Related Workers | 12.7% | 7.2% |
|  | Advanced Clerical and Service Workers | 4.1% | 9.1% |
|  | Clerical, Sales and Service Workers | 27.6% | 12.5% |
|  | Production and Transport Workers | 7.5% | 2% |
|  | Labourers and Related Workers | 7.6% | 2.4% |
|  | Inadequately described | 1.8% | 3.4% |

*Notes:* [a] Respondents were only asked whether they had finished University; it is unknown what percentage have a bachelors and what percentage have a higher degree. [b] The usual occupations stated by the respondents were classified in the same manner as the General Population using The Australian Standards Classification System (ABS, 1997). [c] Extracted from The 2001 Census of Population and Housing (ABS, 2002a).

## 4.3.2.3 Measures

The measures used in Study 4 were presented to the respondents in a survey pack

comprised of three sections. Section 1 collected the same demographic information that

was collected from the students and the offenders. Section 2 of the pack contained the

60-item Violent and Criminal Sentiments Scale (VCSS), and Section 3 contained the 5-scenario Measure of Attributions and Problem Solving (MAPS). In addition, on page 2 of the pack respondents were provided with instructions for returning the packs, consent options and details of how they were selected. Contact numbers for the author, the author's supervisors, and the ethics committee of Murdoch University were also provided for any respondent who encountered difficulties or concerns. The pack as distributed to households in the community can be seen in Appendix G. For a more detailed description of the VCSS and the MAPS please refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1.

### 4.3.3  Results

Prior to all the analyses the assumptions underlying the statistical tests used were assessed. Where the assumptions were violated the recommendations provided by Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) for correcting the violations were applied. Due to the number of multiple tests performed, the conservative alpha level of .01 was set to reduce the risk of Type I errors as recommended by Coates and Steed (2003).

#### 4.3.3.1 Principal Components Analysis of the VCSS

The component structures of the new JFV and amended ICO+ subscales of the VCSS were examined using Principal Components Analyses. The Cattell (1966) guidelines were used to locate the "turning point" of the curves as the basis for the number of components extracted. The results showed both subscales were unifactorial for the community sample data. The eigenvalue for the JFV subscale was 4.68, explaining 33.4% of the variance. The eigenvalue for the ICO+ subscale was 3.88, explaining 35.3% of variance. The scree plots for the JFV and ICO+ subscales are shown in Figures 11 and 12 and the component matrixes are shown in Tables 28 and 29.
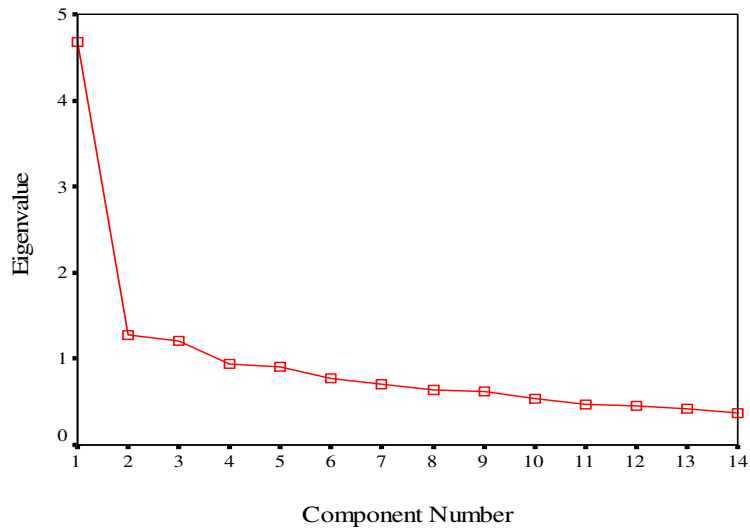
**Figure 11.** Scree plot for the Principal Components Analysis of the JFV subscale for the community sample.

**Table 28.** Component Matrix for the Justifications for Violence Subscale for the Community Sample.

| Item Number | Item | Component 1 Loading |
|---|---|---|
| 42 | | .72 |
| 34 | | .70 |
| 57 | | .67 |
| 45 | | .66 |
| 55 | | .63 |
| 59 | | .60 |
| 51 | | .58 |
| 46 | | .55 |
| 31 | | .53 |
| 32 | | .52 |
| 60 | | .49 |
| 36 | | .49 |
| 26 | | .46 |
| 44 | | .40 |
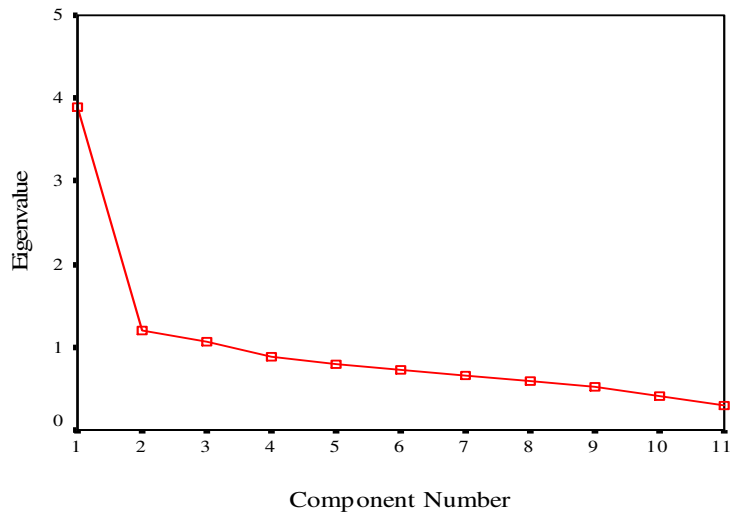
**Figure 12.** Scree plot for the Principal Components Analysis of the ICO+ subscale for the community sample.

**Table 29.** Component Matrix for the Identification with Criminal Others+ Subscale for the Community Sample.

| | | Component 1 |
|---|---|---|
| Item Number | Item | Loading |
| 40 | | .79 |
| 43 | | .72 |
| 47 | | .71 |
| 58 | | .68 |
| 28 | | .67 |
| 39 | | .64 |
| 37 | | .51 |
| 29 | | .46 |
| 49 | | .42 |
| 33 | | .37 |
| 53 | | .35 |

The component structures of the original ALCP and TFV subscales were also assessed. The results showed that both the ALCP and TFV were unifactorial. Component 1 of the ALCP subscale had an eigenvalue of 3.31, explaining 33.1% of the variance. All items loaded onto Component 1 of the TLV subscale, with the minimum loading for an item of .38, and the maximum loading of .71. The Principal Components Analysis for the ALCP subscale yielded two components. The eigenvalue of Component 1 was 7.07 which explained 28.3% of the variance. The eigenvalue for Component 2 was 2.73, which explained a further 10.9% of variance. The two components explained a total of 39.19% of the variance. After Varimax rotation, 14 items loaded onto Component 1, with a minimum item loading of .31 and a maximum of .73. Twelve items loaded onto Component 2: the minimum loading was .31, the maximum was .69.

### 4.3.3.2 Principal Components Analysis of the MAPS

The component structures for each of the five MAPS scenarios were then assessed using Principal Components Analyses. The Cattell (1966) guidelines were again used to determine the number of components to be extracted based on the location of the "turning point" of the curve located in the scree plot. The results showed that each of the five scenarios was unifactorial. The scree plots for the five MAPS scenarios can be seen in Figure 13 and the component matrix can be seen in Table 30. As can be seen in Table 30, all items loaded onto Component 1 for each of the five scenarios and with the individual item loadings being above the recommended .30 (Coakes & Steed, 2003).
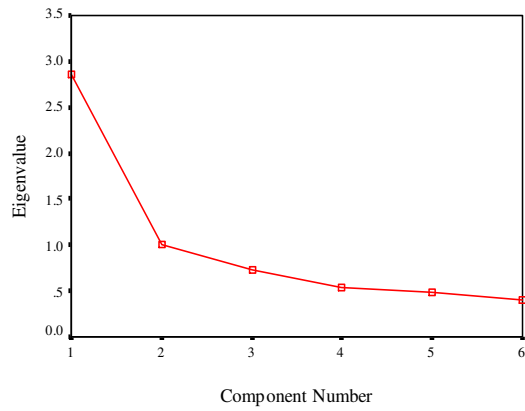
Scree plot for Scenario 1.
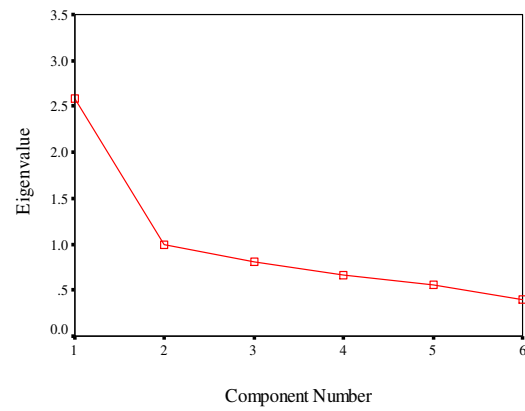
Scree plot for Scenario 2.
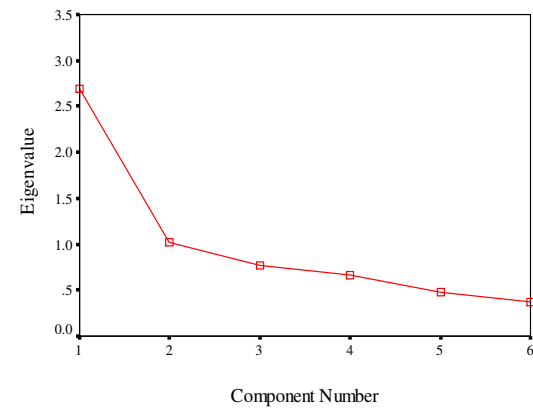
Scree plot for Scenario 3.
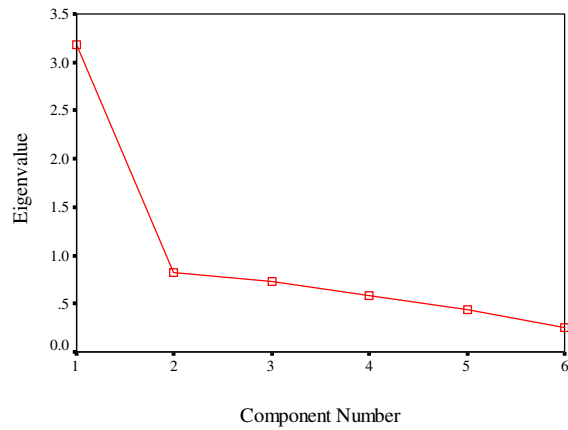
Scree plot for Scenario 4
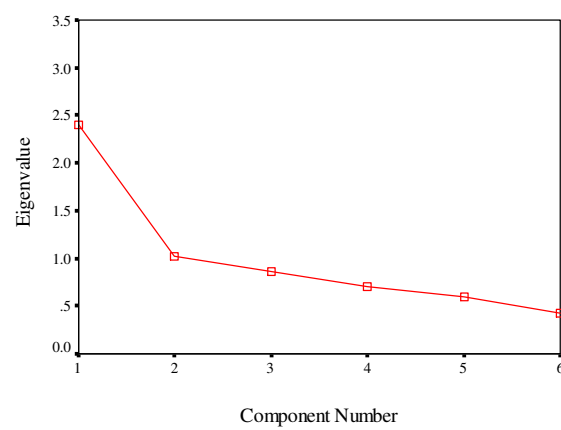
Scree plot for Scenario 5.

**Figure 13.** Scree plots for the Principal Component Analyses of the five Scenarios on Part 1 of the MAPS using the community sample.

**Table 30.** Component Matrices for Part 1 of the MAPS for the Community Sample

| Scenario and items | Eigenvalue | Variance explained | Component 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scenario 1.  The cleaner | 2.86 | 47.7% | |
| Hostile intent | | | .82 |
| Negation of intent | | | .73 |
| Attribution of intent | | | .69 |
| Malevolent intent | | | .61 |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .32 |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .57 |
| | | | |
| Scenario 2.  The neighbours | 2.59 | 43.1% | |
| Hostile intent | | | .82 |
| Malevolent intent | | | .69 |
| Negation of hostile intent | | | .67 |
| Attribution of intent | | | .64 |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .63 |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .44 |
| | | | |
| Scenario 3.  The friends | 2.69 | 44.9% | |
| Malevolent intent | | | .82 |
| Hostile intent | | | .76 |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .75 |
| Negation of hostile intent | | | .68 |
| Attribution of intent | | | .54 |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .36 |
| | | | |
| Scenario 4.  The supervisor | 3.18 | 53.0% | |
| Negation of hostile intent | | | .85 |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .82 |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .76 |
| Hostile intent | | | .74 |
| Malevolent intent | | | .65 |
| Attribution of intent | | | .50 |
| | | | |
| Scenario 5  The ex-boyfriend | 2.40 | 39.9% | |
| Negation of hostile intent | | | .80 |
| Hostile intent | | | .76 |
| Attribution of intent | | | .68 |
| Fundamental attribution error | | | .61 |
| Malevolent intent | | | .51 |
| "Is/ought" discrepancy | | | .33 |

### 4.3.3.3 Scale reliabilities and descriptive statistics for the VCSS and the MAPS

The reliability coefficients for the VCSS and Part 1 of the MAPS are presented in Table

31. The results showed that all four VCSS subscales and all five scenarios contained in

Part 1 of the MAPS had good internal reliability being above the Devillis (1991)

recommended alpha of .70. The item-total correlations for the JFV and ICO+ subscale

can be seen in Tables 32 and 33.

**Table 31.** Cronbach's Alpha Calculated Separately for the Four VCSS Subscales and Each of the Five Scenarios for Part 1 of the MAPS for the Community Sample

| Variable | N [a] | Items [b] | $\alpha$ [c] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Violent and Criminal Sentiments Scale | | | |
|     Attitudes towards law, courts & police | 208 | 25 | .88 |
|     Tolerance for law violation | 208 | 10 | .75 |
|     Justification for violence | 208 | 14 | .83 |
|     Identification with criminal others plus | 208 | 11 | .76 |
| | | | |
| Measure of Attributions and Problem solving (Part 1) | | | |
|     Scenario one   – The cleaner | 198 | 8 | .78 |
|     Scenario two   – The neighbours | 199 | 8 | .75 |
|     Scenario three – The friend | 193 | 8 | .74 |
|     Scenario four   – The supervisor | 194 | 8 | .81 |
|     Scenario five   – The ex-boyfriend | 198 | 8 | .73 |

*Notes:* [a] number of respondents. [b] items per scale. [c] Cronbach's alpha.

**Table 32**. Reliability per Item for the Justifications for Violence Subscale for the Community Sample

| Item | | N | Mean | SD | CITC [a] | $\alpha$ID [b] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | | 208 | 1.69 | 0.72 | .36 | .83 |
| 31 | | 208 | 1.48 | 0.65 | .42 | .83 |
| 32 | | 208 | 1.73 | 0.82 | .44 | .82 |
| 34 | | 208 | 1.45 | 0.65 | .60 | .81 |
| 36 | | 208 | 2.01 | 1.05 | .39 | .83 |
| 42 | | 208 | 1.73 | 0.92 | .63 | .81 |
| 44 | | 208 | 1.60 | 0.62 | .29 | .83 |
| 45 | | 208 | 2.73 | 1.19 | .59 | .81 |
| 46 | | 208 | 2.29 | 1.17 | .48 | .82 |
| 51 | | 208 | 2.31 | 1.11 | .49 | .82 |
| 55 | | 208 | 1.74 | 0.77 | .53 | .82 |
| 57 | | 208 | 1.57 | 0.75 | .56 | .81 |
| 59 | | 208 | 1.55 | 0.62 | .48 | .82 |
| 60 | | 208 | 2.41 | 1.05 | .41 | .83 |

*Notes:* [a] Corrected Item-total correlation. [b] Effect on subscale Cronbach alpha if item deleted.

**Table 33.** Reliability per Item for the Identification with Criminal Others+ Subscale

| Item | | Scale [a] | N | Mean | SD | CITC [b] | $\alpha$ID [c] |
|------|--|-----------|---|------|-----|------|------|
| 28 | | ICO+ | 208 | 1.27 | 0.58 | .53 | .74 |
| 29 | | ICO+ | 208 | 1.51 | 0.81 | .30 | .76 |
| 33 | | ICO | 208 | 2.13 | 0.92 | .30 | .76 |
| 37 | | ICO | 208 | 1.67 | 0.87 | .42 | .75 |
| 39 | | ICO | 208 | 1.23 | 0.58 | .45 | .75 |
| 40 | | ICO+ | 208 | 1.14 | 0.40 | .63 | .74 |
| 43 | | ICO+ | 208 | 1.47 | 0.76 | .61 | .72 |
| 47 | | ICO | 208 | 1.54 | 0.80 | .60 | .72 |
| 49 | | ICO | 208 | 1.85 | 1.00 | .30 | .76 |
| 53 | | ICO | 208 | 2.45 | 1.12 | .28 | .77 |
| 58 | | ICO+ | 208 | 1.66 | 0.85 | .53 | .73 |

*Notes:* [a] Scale: ICO = original CSS item; ICO+ = new item. [b] Corrected item-total correlation. [c] Effect on subscale Cronbach alpha if item deleted.

The means and standard deviations with community men and women combined, on the VCSS and Part 1 of the MAPS can be seen in Tables 34 and 35 below. Of note the means and standard deviations for the community men and women are presented separately in Chapter 5 for the VCSS and chapter 6 for the MAPS.

**Table 34.** Means and SD for the Community Sample (n=208) on the VCSS. (SD in parentheses)

| ALCP [a] | TLV [b] | JFV [c] | ICO+ [d] |
|----------|---------|---------|----------|
| 94.52 (11.23) | 21.19 (5.14) | 26.27 (6.97) | 17.93 (4.88) |

*Notes:* [a] Attitudes towards law, courts and police. [b] Tolerance for law violation. [c] justifications fc

**Table 35**. Means and SD for the Community Sample on the MAPS Part 1. (SD in Parentheses)

| Scenarios | (n) [a] | "Is/ought"[b] | Intent [c] | Specific [d] |
|-----------|---------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| 1. Cleaner | 198 | 8.56 (2.02) | 2.94 (1.28) | 15.99 (3.90) |
| 2. Neighbours | 199 | 2.46 (0.89) | 2.20 (0.93) | 13.09 (3.24) |
| 3. Friend | 193 | 9.00 (1.49) | 3.89 (0.74) | 18.05 (3.89) |
| 4. Supervisor | 194 | 6.90 (2.16) | 3.44 (1.02) | 16.97 (3.82) |
| 5. Ex-boyfriend | 198 | 9.61 (1.02) | 4.40 (0.79) | 23.60 (3.46) |

*Notes:* [a] Number of respondents. [b] "Is/ought" discrepancy. [c] Attribution of intent. [d] Specific attribution score.

## 4.3.4  Discussion: Community Sample

In summary, the results for the VCSS and the MAPS were encouraging and showed that both measures have good psychometric properties when used with a community sample. For the amended ICO+ and the new JFV subscales, the internal reliability for both was above the recommended level of .70 suggested by Devillis (1991) indicating the subscales have high internal consistency. The results also showed that the ICO+ and JFV subscales were unifactorial suggesting they measure the single constructs of self-identification with criminal others and justifications for the use of violence. Of note, this was the first study to collect data on violent and criminal sentiments from a random sample of non-offenders living in the general population. As the next stage of this project is to compare offenders with non-offenders in their endorsement of these sentiments it was vital that the VCSS was shown to be highly reliable and valid within this sample.

Regarding the MAPS, the results for the internal reliability analyses showed that each of the five scenarios on Part 1 had high internal consistency. Each scenario was also shown to have a unifactorial component structure indicating that in each scenario the questions when combined measure the construct of social attributions. As the aim of the current study was to assess whether Part 1 of the MAPS was psychometrically valid when using a community sample, the data collected on Parts 2 and 3 were not analysed or presented here, please refer to Chapters 6 and 7.

## 4.4 General Discussion

The primary aims of the two studies presented in this chapter was to further investigate the component structures and internal reliabilities of the VCSS and the MAPS. The results from Studies 3 and 4 suggest that the scales worked well and had satisfactory psychometric properties. Overall, the results obtained from these studies are convergent with the results from Study 2 (student sample, refer Chapter 3). When the results from all three studies (2, 3 and 4) are combined it can be suggested that the VCSS and the MAPS work well in these three samples which were drawn from three distinctly different populations: university undergraduate students; prisoners incarcerated for violent offences; and men and women from the general population residing in metropolitan Perth, Western Australia.

These results have important implications for the validity of the subsequent studies carried out in this project. One aim of this project was to explore the sentiments that offenders use to justify violence and whether offenders are more likely to endorse higher levels of violent justifications than non-offenders. The JFV subscale was specifically devised for this project and it was crucial that before comparing offenders with non-offenders that the JFV be shown to be reliable and valid in each sample. A further aim was to explore whether offenders differ from non-offenders in how they interpret social situations and the kinds of attributions they make. Therefore, it was also crucial that Part 1 of the MAPS was a valid and reliable measure in three samples.

The next stage of this project aims to examine two questions of importance. First, are offenders more likely to endorse higher violent and criminal sentiments than non-offenders? Second, are offenders more likely to interpret potentially problematic social situations in a different way than non-offenders? These questions are explored in the next two chapters.

# Jail for Jilted Man over Shooting

**By David Darragh**

A man was jailed for 3.5 years yesterday after he admitted shooting another man in the neck outside a city nightclub.

'X', 26, formerly of Burswood, pleaded guilty in the Supreme Court to causing grievous bodily harm to Giovanni Paul Ruiz, now 24, outside the Ambar nightclub in Murray Street on November 25, 2001.

Justice Chris Pullin said 'X''s sentence needed to deter people from carrying guns and firing them on the streets. "It is extremely undesirable that guns should be produced and used on our streets," he said.

'X' has served almost a year in custody. His 3.5 year term with parole eligibility was not back-dated.

The court was told that 'X' was angry when his ex-girlfriend, 25-year-old Melissa Yvette D'Amico split up with him and started a relationship with Stevan Merenda.

'X' had supported Ms D'Amico while she served a five-year jail term for the motor vehicle manslaughter of 17-year-old Andrew King, who was run over outside a Roleystone party in November 1997.

'X' obtained the revolver covertly after he received threatening messages on his mobile phone following an argument with Ms D'Amico

He had the gun when he confronted Mr Merenda and two friends outside Ambar. After exchanging abuse, 'X' cocked the gun and fired five shots, causing the three men to flee.

One bullet hit Mr Ruiz in the neck, lodging so close to his spine that it was too dangerous to remove. After firing the shots, 'X' smashed the window of a car in which Ms D'Amico was sitting before friends dragged him away.

Justice Pullin said 'X' had not been frightened and considered himself in control of the situation.

Defence lawyer Tom Percy QC submitted previously that 'X' was in fear of being the victim of a gangland-style payback at the time of the shooting. He was due to face three counts of attempted murder and one of unlawful detention but the prosecution offered no evidence on these charges because key witnessed refused to testify.

'X' had previous convictions for burglary, dishonesty and drug offences but no record of violent offences.

"The worst aspect of the offence is that you took the effect to locate and acquire a dangerous weapon and then armed yourself with it," Justice Pullin

# Chapter 5.

# Study 5:
# Do Offenders Endorse Higher Pro-Violent and Pro-Criminal Sentiments than Students and the Community?

## 5.1  Introduction and Study Overview

The aim of Study 5 was to explore whether adult male offenders convicted of serious

violent index offences were more likely to endorse a higher level of pro-violent and pro-

criminal sentiments than men and women university undergraduates and men and

women from the general population.

The current study is presented in a number of sections commencing with a

literature review and the hypotheses set for the study. The method and results are then

presented followed by a discussion which considers where the results converge with and

diverge from prior findings and the hypotheses made.

## 5.2  Literature Review and Hypotheses

Criminal sentiments feature in many prominent theories of criminal behaviour. For

example, in control theory the presence of high endorsement of attitudes and beliefs

supportive of criminal behaviour and high negativity towards the legal system were

considered to be a reflection of weak bonds to conventional pursuits and a weak

commitment to follow social norms such as obeying the law (Hindelang, 1974). In

contrast, social leaning and neutralisation theory argue that criminal sentiments are not

merely a manifestation of an anti-social value system that disregards conventional social

norms, but rather they are the neutralisations and definitions that offenders use to justify

(to themselves and others) their deviant acts (Akers, 1997; Matza & Sykes, 1961).

According to Andrews and Bonta (1998) given certain situations where temptations are

present, or stress levels high, offending behaviour is more likely if a person's attitudes

are positive, they know how to rationalise their acts, and believe others will support

their behaviour. For example, a person is walking down the street with their friends

when two strangers walk past and make an insulting comment, such as "look at what they're wearing, what a jerk". The person who has been insulted is more likely to respond aggressively if they believe that thumping someone who insults you is acceptable and they believe their friends would approve of this response. Within Luckenbill and Doyle's (1989) model it was posited that pro-violent beliefs represent one of the main factors as to why some interpersonal disputes end in violence.

The empirical research to date exploring criminal sentiments has found a series of highly significant relationships where offenders report a higher negativity toward the criminal justice system, endorse a high level of attitudes supportive of law violation and have a high identification with criminal peers. Offenders at a higher risk of recidivism endorse a higher level of criminal sentiments than lower risk offenders and overall offenders report a significantly higher level than non-offenders (Alarid et al., 2000; Andrews and Bonta, 1998; Simourd, 1996; Stevenson et al., 2003). Higher endorsement of criminal sentiments has also been found to be highly predictive of a criminal past and future for adult men, explaining 40% of the variance in three-year recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 1998). Endorsement of these sentiments are also the highest overall risk factor for recidivism (Gendreau et al., 1996) and highly influential in the maintenance of a criminal lifestyle (Walters, 1990, 2002).

The importance of high endorsement of violent sentiments was highlighted by Indermaur (1995, 1998) in his analysis of violent property crime and driver related aggression (road rage). Indermaur argued that the use of violence appeared to be strongly influenced by beliefs that permitted and tolerated violence. Indermaur also found that offenders believed given the circumstances surrounding the offence their use of violence, was to them, understandable and in some instances considered necessary. In Thomson's (1997) situational analysis of drinking and violent encounters in pubs located in Sydney, Australia, he found that participants did not specifically seek a

"brawl", but rather they engaged in violent acts (often fights in the car park) following hostile altercations with other patrons. The most common reason for pub fights were explicit allegations of cheating at pool, approaches made to girlfriends, and bumps and drink spills followed by verbal insults. Thomson suggested that most recreational violence appeared to be related to impression management and "face-saving" rather than the pursuit of violence for the sake of it.

The qualitative results from Study 1 of this thesis were comparable to the findings of Indermaur (1995) and Thomson (1997) in that the use of violence was seen as legitimate to the 18 participants and was to them understandable given the "bad behaviour" of the other party to the grievance. As noted in that Chapter, of the 23 grievances discussed during the interviews, violence was used to end the disputes in 12 cases. Of these 12 cases violence was justified in five distinct ways. These were: violence as a means of punishment for informers; as a recreational pastime; to maintain reputation and save-face; to protect others form harm or future harm; and to teach people a lesson.

The findings from the studies discussed above which had examined how violence could be justified suggested that people who use violence do not necessarily approve of violence per se, but given certain circumstances violence is considered justifiable, even necessary. In this respect, violent acts appear to be goal directed behaviours underpinned by whether a person supports the use of violence to resolve the situations in which they find themselves. As Polaschek and Reynolds (2001) argued, if attitudes supportive of violence represent a risk factor for violent recidivism it is desirable that pro-violent attitudes be addressed in rehabilitation programs and that the program be complimented by a valid scale to measure the change in these attitudes post intervention. Polaschek and Reynolds also considered that the limited empirical

knowledge on endorsement of violent sentiments by offenders and non-offenders was primarily due to the lack of valid psychometric scales.

To address this issue, a Justifications for Violence (JFV) subscale was specifically devised for insertion within the Criminal Sentiments Scale (CSS: Andrew & Wormith, 1984). The JFV items are theoretically underpinned by social learning theory and reflect the reasoning that violence is not acceptable per se, but sometimes violence is deemed acceptable given certain circumstances. Each of the items details a different social circumstance under which violence may be seen as justifiable or not and were sourced from the interview data collected during Study 1 of this project. The CSS was chosen as the optimal scale to insert the JFV items into because it is a theoretically based scale which is underpinned by Differential-Association and social learning theory (as are the JFV items). The CSS is a widely used measure for both research and within criminal justice settings and has high discriminant validity between offenders and non-offenders, and overall has good reliability (Andrews & Wormith, 1990). After the JFV items were inserted, the CSS was renamed the Violent and Criminal Sentiments Scale (VCSS).

The rationale for the expansion of the CSS was that a JFV subscale would allow practitioners working within justice settings to gain a greater understanding of how individual offenders legitimise and neutralise the use of violence. Based on this rationale, if the JFV subscale is to have utility within criminal justice settings it was essential to confirm that the measure was sensitive enough to discriminate violent offenders from non-offenders. If the JFV subscale has good discriminant validity it could be inferred that violent sentiments represent a dynamic criminogenic variable which in turn has implications for the content of violent offender treatment programs.

Study five had three aims. The first aim was to assess whether violent offenders would endorse a higher level of criminal, and especially violent sentiments than non-

offenders. This was the first study to assess the differences between adult male high-risk offenders and a stratified random sample of non-offender adult men and women from the community. Although several researchers had compared offenders with non-offenders, the non-offenders had been either university students, criminal justice personnel or volunteer participants in experimental research studies (Andrews, 1980). Therefore the research to date had not explored to what degree offenders differ from men and women from the general population. The second aim was to further explore whether violent sentiments are significantly related to the other established aspects of criminal sentiments, or whether violent sentiments function independently. The third aim was to assess whether the discriminant validity of the ICO subscale was not undermined by the insertion of the five additional items by assessing whether offenders were significantly different from non-offenders in their identification. Although, high discriminant validity had been found between offenders and non-offenders for the original six item ICO Subscale, the internal reliability was shown to be consistently low (Cronbach's alphas of .65 and below) in several studies (Roy & Wormith, 1984; Stevenson et al., 2003, 2004). To address this issue, an additional five ICO items were inserted and the subscale renamed "Identification with Criminal Others Plus". As presented in Chapters 3 and 4, the additional five items were shown to have enhanced the internal consistency of the subscale but now it was important to confirm that the additional items did not undermine the discriminant validity found when just using the original subscale. The following two hypotheses were set for this study.

**Hypothesis 1: Endorsement of criminal and violent sentiments.** Three distinct aspects underpinned Hypothesis 1. First, if criminal, and especially violent sentiments, are criminogenic risk factors for violent behaviour, then people convicted of serious violent offences should be clearly distinguishable from non-offenders. Second, if pro-

violent sentiments are related to violent behaviour then people with a higher risk of engaging in violent behaviour should endorse higher levels of pro-violent sentiments. As women are known to engage in a significantly lower level of violence than men then women should endorse a lower of violence then men. Third, if violent sentiments are related to risk of violent behaviour and as outlined in Chapter 1 (Section 1.1.1) given that violence is primarily a young male phenomenon and with young males in Australia being three times more likely to be involved in violent incidents than men over 45 years, then the younger male student sample should endorse higher levels of violent sentiments than the older male community sample. Combining these three aspects, Hypothesis 1 predicted that: *male offenders will endorse a higher level of violent and criminal sentiments than all four non-offender samples. The younger male non-offender students will endorse a higher level of violent sentiments than the older male community sample. The male community sample in turn will endorse a higher level of violent sentiments than female students and women from the community.*

**Hypothesis 2.** If violent sentiments are an integral aspect of the construct of criminal sentiments it is expected that: *A strong and significant relationship will be found between the original subscales of the CSS and the new JFV subscale. The relationship expected is where higher sentiments justifying violence will correlate with a higher disrespect for the law and criminal justice system, a greater willingness to neutralise offending behaviour, and a higher identification with criminal others. This relationship is expected to be stronger for the offenders than the non-offenders.*

## 5.3  Method

### 5.3.1  Participants and Procedure

The participants were 530 adult men and women recruited from three populations: offenders; students; and the general population. The offenders were 87 men serving prison sentences for non-sexual serious violent index offences; their mean age was 31.7 years (SD = 8.45, range = 18 to 54). The students were 235 undergraduates enrolled in all the main schools from Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia. The 96 student men had a mean age of 25.3 years (SD = 7.93, range = 18 - 51). The 139 student women had a mean age of 27.59 years (SD = 10.07, range = 18 - 61). The community sample were 108 men with a mean age of 48.2 years (SD = 13.99, range = 19 - 81) and 100 women with a mean age of 45.7 years (SD = 13.72, range = 19 - 84). The participants and procedures used in this study have been presented in detail in earlier chapters. Please refer Chapter 3, Section 3.2 for the student sample, and Chapter 4 Section 4.2.2 for the offender sample and Section 4.3.2 for the community sample.

### 5.3.2  Measures

All participants completed a questionnaire pack which comprised of three sections. The questionnaire pack as distributed to students is detailed in chapter 3 (Section 3.2) and can be seen in Appendix E. Please refer to Appendix G for the pack as presented to the offender and community samples. Details of the Pack for the offender and community samples can be seen in Chapter 4, sections 4.2.2 and 4.3.2.

## 5.4 Results

Prior to the analyses the assumptions underlying all the statistical tests used were examined. Where the assumptions were violated, the impact of the violation upon the robustness of the test was considered and the recommendations provided by Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) and Coates and Steed (2003) for correcting the violations were applied. Due to the number of multiple tests performed a more conservative alpha level of .01 was set for evidence of significance as recommended by Coates and Steed (2003).

It had initially been intended to statistically control the potential effects that the socio-demographic variables of age and education level may have had on the results, however, this was not possible. Although, the community men and women were significantly older than the male offenders, who in turn were significantly older than the men and women students (f (2, 528) = 189.23, $p$ <.001) the correlations between age for each group on all four VCSS subscales were below the recommended level for a variable to be used as a covariate in multivariate analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Although, the community men and women had a significantly higher level of education than men and women students, who in turn had a significantly higher level of education then the male offenders (f (2, 526) = 92.46, $p$ <.001) the correlations between education for each group on all four VCSS subscales were also below the recommended level. The correlation matrix constructed to assess the relationships between age, educational level and the four VCSS subscales for each of the five groups can be seen in Appendix I. Furthermore, as shown in Appendix I, the correlations between age and education were significantly correlated in all five groups on all subscales making these demographic variables unsuitable for use as covariates in these analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).

### 5.4.1 Testing Hypothesis 1: Endorsement of Violent and Criminal Sentiments

**5.4.1.1 Group differences on the four VCSS subscales.** Hypothesis 1 predicted that: *male offenders would endorse a higher level of violent and criminal sentiments than the two male non-offender groups (students and community).* It was also predicted that: *men would endorse a higher level of justifications for violence than women.* The first analysis performed explored whether there were any significant differences between the groups in their endorsement of these sentiments. The means and standard deviations by group for the VCSS can be seen in Table 36. The means observed suggest that male offenders endorsed the highest level of violent and criminal sentiments with the community women endorsing the lowest level.

**Table 36.** Means and SD by Group on the Four VCSS Subscales. (SD given in parentheses)

| Variable | (n) [a] | ALCP [b] | TLV [c] | JFV [d] | ICO+ [e] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male offender sample | 87 | 69.07 (15.14) | 31.95 (7.40) | 45.95 (12.26) | 32.71 (9.79) |
| Male student sample | 96 | 84.23 (12.68) | 26.96 (5.94) | 34.54 (9.27) | 22.15 (6.19) |
| Female student sample | 139 | 87.00 (11.08) | 23.56 (4.82) | 25.81 (6.32) | 18.94 (5.33) |
| Male Community sample | 108 | 94.09 (11.99) | 22.00 (5.45) | 28.62 (6.94) | 18.31 (4.94) |
| Female community sample | 100 | 94.98 (10.38) | 20.32 (4.65) | 23.74 (6.08) | 17.51 (4.81) |

*Notes:* [a] number of participants. [b] Attitudes towards law, courts and police. [c] Tolerance for law violation. [d] Justifications for violence. [e] Identification with criminal peers plus.

A one-way between-subjects Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was performed to access differences in endorsement on the four dependent variables: ALCP; TLV; JFV; and ICO+. As expected, using Pillai's Trace, the MANOVA showed significant differences between the groups on the combined DVs ($F_{(16,2100)} = 25.70$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .17$). The univariate tests also showed highly significant differences for each of the four DVs with partial eta-squared estimating small to medium effect sizes for each. The results obtained were as follows: $F_{ALCP}(4, 525) = 67.93$, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .34$;

$F_{TLV}$ (4, 525) = 62.93, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .32$); $F_{JFV}$ (4, 525) = 112.19, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .46$); and $F_{ICO+}$ (4, 525) = 92.34, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .41$). As can be seen from these results, the largest estimated effect size was for justifications for violence, suggesting that this is the main discriminating variable between the five groups.

Post hoc comparisons were then performed to identify which of the subscales which groups differed from each other. To control for risk of Type I and II errors, the Scheffé test was selected. This test provides all possible comparisons but utilises a strict criterion for rejecting the null hypothesis (Coakes & Steed, 2003).

The results showed that on all four VCSS subscales the offenders were clearly distinguishable from the other four non-offender groups with all comparisons being $p <.001$. The offenders endorsed a more negative opinion of the law and the justice system, were more tolerant of law violation, were more likely to justify the use of violence in various social situations and had a higher identification with criminal others than any of the male or female non-offenders they were compared with.

For the JFV subscale, as can be seen in the observed means presented in Table 36, the male offenders endorsed almost twice the number of sentiments as the community women and this observation was reflected in the results. The male offenders were clearly distinguishable from all four non-offender groups and endorsed a significantly higher level of pro-violent sentiments.

The next highest level of endorsement was by the male students who as a group demonstrated a significantly higher endorsement of JFV than female students and men and women from the community (all tests $p < .001$). Finally the results showed that men and women from the community and female students endorsed the lowest level and all three groups were not significantly different from each other (all tests $p > .01$).

The comparisons between the non-offenders on the remaining subscales were as follows. For the ALCP subscale, the results showed that male students and female

students shared similar views about the law and the justice system ($p = .87$), although their views were significantly more negative than the community men and women ($p <$ .001. The men and women from the community were shown to share similar views amount the validity of law ($p = 1.00$). For the TLV and ICO+ subscales the student men were shown to have a significantly higher tolerance for law violation and a significantly higher identification with criminal peers than the female students and men and women from the community (all tests $p < .001$). The female students and the men and women from the community sample were not significantly different from each other suggesting that on the TLV and ICO+ subscales these three groups share similar attitudes and values (all comparisons were $p > .05$).

The results from the above analyses are presented graphically in Figure 14.
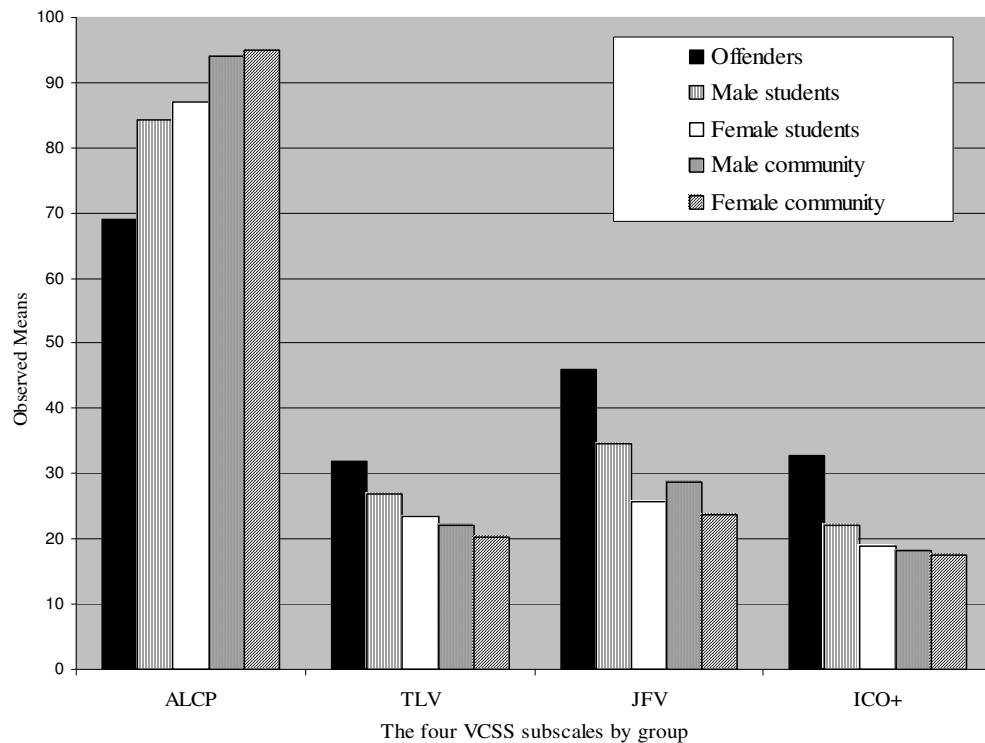


**Figure 14.** Profile plot for the four VCSS Subscales by group.

**5.4.1.2 Group differences in attitudes towards the law, courts and police.**
The next analysis performed was to examine further the group difference found for the
ALCP subscale. As the ALCP is comprised of three aspects (attitudes toward the
validity of law, attitudes toward the courts and court personnel, and attitudes toward the
police) the rationale for this analysis was to assess whether the group differences found
were specific to one or all three aspects. Three one-way ANOVAs by group were
performed on each of the aspects (law, courts and police).

For attitudes toward the law, the results showed a significant main effect, although
the effect size estimate was small ($F_{law}$ (4, 525) = 23.15, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .15$). Post hoc
Scheffé tests were then performed to see where the group differences lay. The male
offenders were shown to have a significantly more negative opinion than female
students and men and women from the community sample (all tests $p < .001$) although
the male students were shown to share the same opinion as the offenders ($p = .11$). The
means in order of least positive to most positive were: $M_{offenders} = 32.31$; $M_{male\ students} =$
34.63; $M_{female\ students} = 35.90$; $M_{male\ community} = 38.53$; and $M_{female\ community} = 38.97$.

For attitudes toward the courts, the main effect was significant with a small effect
size ($F_{courts}$ (4, 525) = 53.12, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .29$). Post hoc Scheffé tests showed that the
offenders had a significantly less positive opinion of the courts and court personnel than
men and women students and men and women from the community (all tests $p < .001$).
The male and female students were not significantly different ($p = .99$) suggesting they
share a similar opinion about the operation of the courts, although the students were less
positive than the men and women from the community (both $p < .001$). Finally, the
results showed it was the community men and women who were the most positive about
the courts and the men were not significantly different from the women ($p = .93$). The
means in order of least to most positive were: $M_{offenders} = 18.87$; $M_{male\ students} = 24.99$;
$M_{female\ students} = 25.17$; $M_{male\ community} = 27.43$; and $M_{female\ community} = 28.04$.

For attitudes toward the police, the main effect was also significant, with an estimated medium effect size ($F_{police}$ (4, 525) = 90.47, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .41$). The Scheffé tests showed similar results as for attitudes toward the courts. The offenders were significantly different from all four non-offender groups and endorsed more negative opinion of the police (all tests $p < .001$). The men and women students shared a similar opinion and were not different from each other ($p = .24$) although the students were significantly more negative than men and women from the community ( both $p < .001$). The community men and women endorsed the most positive opinions about the police and there were no observed gender differences in the community samples ($p = .99$). The means for the groups in order of most negative to most positive were: $M_{offenders} = 17.89$; $M_{male\ students} = 24.61$; $M_{female\ students} = 25.93$; $M_{female\ community} = 27.97$; $M_{male\ community} = 28.14$.

The results from these analyses are presented graphically in Figure 15 below.
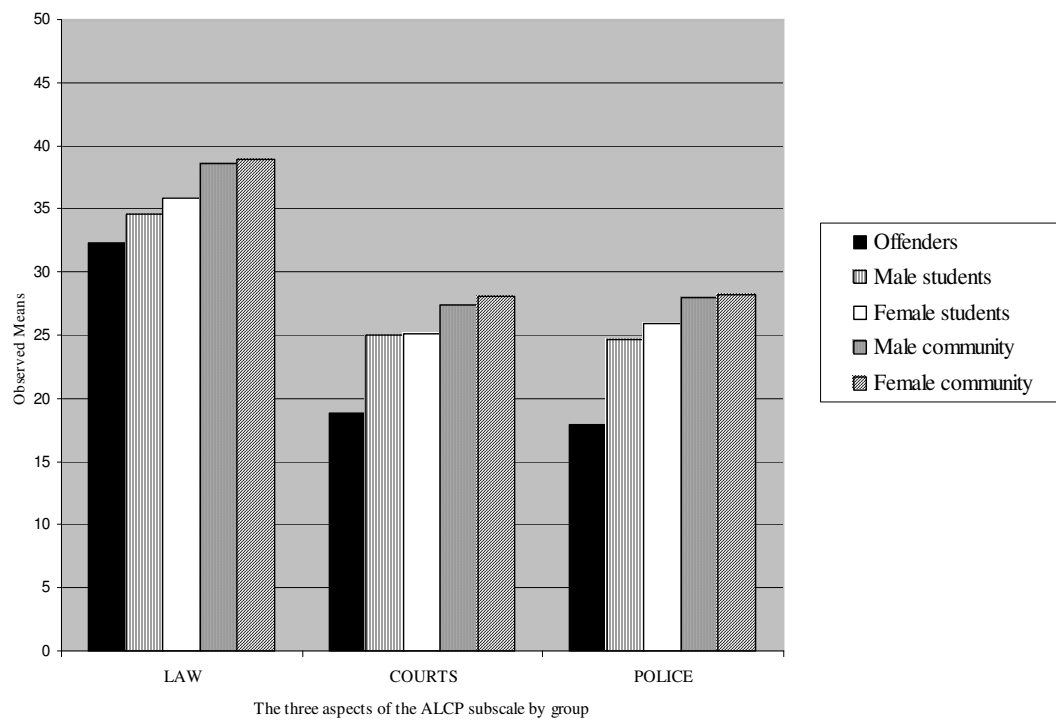


**Figure 15.** Profile plot for the three aspects of the ALCP Subscale by group.

### 5.4.2 Testing Hypothesis 2: The Relationships Between the Four VCSS Subscales

The second hypothesis predicted that: *strong and significant relationships will be found between the original CSS subscales and the new JFV subscale. The relationships expected are where higher sentiments justifying violence will correlate with a higher disrespect for the law and criminal justice system, a greater willingness to neutralise offending behaviour, and a higher identification with criminal others. This relationship is expected to be stronger for male offenders than the four non-offender groups.* To assess how the patterns of relationships between the VCSS subscales differed across the five groups a Pearson product moment correlation matrix was developed. Table 37 shows the matrix for each group.

**Table 37**. Intercorrelations between the Four Subscales of the VCSS for the Offender, Student and Community Samples

| Group and number of participants per group | Variable | ALCP [a] | TLV [b] | JFV [c] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male offender sample | TLV [b] | -.564** | - | - |
| (n = 87) | JFV [c] | -.569** | .770** | - |
| | ICO+ [d] | -.493** | .704** | .748** |
| Male student sample | TLV | -.584** | - | - |
| (n = 96) | JFV | -.385** | .568** | - |
| | ICO+ | -.531** | .620** | .528** |
| Female student sample | TLV | -.473** | - | - |
| (n = 139) | JFV | -.236** | .520** | - |
| | ICO+ | -.368** | .664** | .478** |
| Male community sample | TLV | -.651** | - | - |
| (n = 108) | JFV | -.528** | .584** | - |
| | ICO+ | -.457** | .551** | .466** |
| Female community sample | TLV | -.569** | - | - |
| (n = 100) | JFV | -.376** | .556** | - |
| | ICO+ | -.304** | .531** | .498** |

*Notes:* * $p<$ .05 (2 tail).** $p<$ .01 (2 tail). [a] Attitudes towards law, courts and police. [b] Tolerance for law violation. [c] Justifications for violence. [d] Identification with criminal peers plus.

As shown in Table 37, within each of the five groups the four VCSS subscales all shared highly significant relationships. As expected, the results showed that regardless of group, the more negative participants' opinion of the legal system were the more likely they were to endorse law violation, to support the use of violence and to have higher identification with criminal peers. Overall, as can be seen in Table 37, it was the offender sample with the largest observed correlations between the subscales, especially for justifications for violence. The results also showed that even though the magnitude of the correlations observed for the two female non-offender samples were in most cases lower, the patterns themselves showed the same relationship as for the men.

## 5.5 General Discussion

The first prediction made in Hypothesis 1 was that the offenders would endorse a higher level of criminal sentiments than non-offenders. The results supported this prediction showing that adult male offenders had a higher disrespect for the law and criminal justice system, were more willing to neutralise and tolerate general non-specified offending behaviour, and had a stronger identification with criminal peers compared with the students and the community. The result that offenders were significantly different from non-offenders in their higher endorsement of criminal sentiments is convergent with the prior findings of Alarid et al., (2000), Andrews and Wormith (1990), and Stevenson et al., (2003, 2004). These results add further support to the proposition that criminal sentiments represent one of the most important dynamic criminogenic risk factors (Andrews, 1995). The results also showed that as the expanded ICO subscale discriminated offenders from the four non-offender groups the additional five items did not undermined the subscale's discriminant validity.

The results also showed that as expected the offenders endorsed a significantly higher level of justifications for violence than all four groups of non-offenders. Notably,

it was the JFV subscale that showed the largest effect size for the group difference ($\eta^2 =$ .46) and the observed means showed that the male offenders endorsed almost twice the level of pro-violent sentiments than women from the community. These results support the suggestion that high endorsement of violent sentiments represents a criminogenic risk factor (Polaschek & Reynolds, 2001). This findings has implications for the content of treatment programs and this issue will be discussed further in Chapter 7 (Section 7.4).

Hypothesis 1 also predicted that gender differences would be observed in the level of violent sentiments endorsed. As predicted, the younger non-offender male students were significantly more supportive of violence than the older men from the community as well as both female non-offenders samples. These results are in line with the proposition that if violent sentiments are related to violent behaviour and as violent behaviour is primarily the social domain of young males (Ross & Polk, 2005) then younger males should be shown to be more supportive of violence than older men and women. Although, it cannot be inferred here that this sample of male students do or will engage in violence, with their mean age of 25.3 years the students are currently at the age of highest risk for being a party to a violent altercation, or perhaps at least being more likely to be exposed to violence vicariously by frequenting the social areas (such as recreational venues) where violent incidents occur. Although the male students were more pro-violent in their sentiments than the three other non-offender groups it is important to stress they were significantly less pro-violence than the male offenders.

It had been predicted that although younger men would be more supportive of violence than older men, given that women are known to engage in a significantly lower level of violence than men, women should endorse less pro-violent sentiments than men. This was observed for the young males; however, for the older male non-offender participants this prediction was not supported. The results showed that the men from the

community sample endorsed the same level of violent sentiments as both the female students and the community women. What this result implies is that as men age their approval for the use of violence diminishes and becomes more in line with the level of women. For non-offender women, regardless of whether they are younger students or older women from the community, as a group they have very low support for the use of violence. If the proposition is correct that for men their pro-violent sentiments reduce with age, then a significant and negative correlation should have been observed between age and the JFV subscale. As mentioned in the beginning of the results section, a correlation matrix had been constructed for each of the five groups (refer Appendix I) and the correlations observed for male students and men from the community on the JFV subscale were low and insignificant. However, when the male students and male community groups were combined a significant and negative correlation between age and endorsement of violent sentiments was observed [13]. This suggested that when the two male non-offender groups were analysed individually the age range was too restricted and had masked the true influence of age on the reduction of pro-violent sentiments. Notably, what this result implies is that the JFV subscale is sensitive enough to identify the level of this variable in the appropriate target risk group with violent offenders being clearly significantly differently from younger non-offender males and younger male non-offenders being different from older male non-offenders.

Finally, for Hypothesis 1, one interesting finding was that when the CSS's Attitudes towards the Law, Courts and Police subscale was divided into the three aspects it measures it appeared that only certain aspects distinguished offenders from non-offenders. For attitudes toward the validity of the law, although the offenders were more negative than female students and men and women from the community sample, the offenders and male students shared a similar opinion. In contrast, for attitudes

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[13] With the male student and male community groups combined the correlation observed between age and JFV was r (n=202) = -.266, $p < .001$.

toward the courts and the police, the findings mirrored that of the combined ALCP, where offenders were significantly more negative compared with students and the community. This finding suggests that it may not necessarily be attitudes toward the validity of law that highly discriminates offenders from non-offenders, but rather attitudes toward the process of criminal justice (such as the operation of the courts) and the personnel employed to administer law (such as lawyers and the police) that represent the main discriminant criminogenic variables. This finding has important implications for effective violent offender rehabilitation programs and will be considered further in the general discussion (please refer Chapter 7, Section 7.4).

Hypothesis 2 predicted that a relationship would exist between the original three subscales of the CSS and the JFV subscale. The results supported this hypothesis. The relationships showed that the more negative your opinion of the criminal justice system, the more willing you are to tolerate law violation, the more willing you are to justify violence, and the higher you identify with criminal peers or a criminal reference group. Moreover, as expected these relationships between the four subscales were on the whole stronger for offenders than both men and women non-offenders. This finding suggests that pro-violent sentiments do not appear to operate in isolation and that the inclusion of a violent justification subscale enhances the utility of the existing CSS for both research and clinical applications. This result is convergent with the longitudinal work of Farrington (1997) who found that most adults entrenched in a criminal career do not necessarily specialise in one form of criminal activity, but rather they engage in a variety of violent and non-violent offences against property and persons. These results also add empirical support to the theoretical and qualitative work of Indermaur (1995), Genders and Morrison (1996), and Luckenbill and Doyle (1989) who all argue that beliefs and justifications are an important factor in whether a person decides to settle

interpersonal disputes in an illegal and aggressive manner without involvement from the authorities.

Notably, the present study was the first study to compare male violent offenders with male and female university students and a stratified random sample of men and women from the general population using the original CSS with an expanded ICO subscale and a JFV subscale. As discussed, the offenders were significantly more violent and criminal in their attitudes and beliefs than all four non-offender samples. However, the results also showed that male students were more pro-violence in their attitudes than female students and men and women from the community. Based on this finding it could be suggested that male students did not equal the community in their endorsement of violent sentiments. As much of the work exploring the differences between male offenders and male non-offenders uses university students as the non-offender baseline, and if students do not have the same attitudes and beliefs as the community, this raises an important question: which sample of male non-offenders (either university undergraduates or the community) comprises the optimal comparison group to compare male offender samples with?

Andrews and Bonta (1998) proposed that the relationships shared between the three original constructs of criminal sentiments provided both the proximal cognitive and interpersonal support for engaging in criminal behaviour. A person is therefore more likely to offend if they questioned the validity of the justice system, they knew how to rationalise their criminal behaviour, and perceived themselves as being attached to, or like people who would promote, or at least not condemn criminal behaviour. This relationship was suggested to provide for the following patterns of thinking: police are just as crooked as the people they arrest, most successful people used illegal means to become successful, and people who have been in trouble with the law have the same sort of ideas about life that I have. The extension of the CSS to include violent

sentiments expands this translation to include sentiments such as: "If people want to sort out their differences by having a fight the police should keep out of it" and "threatening or hitting people is one of the best ways to get them to do the right thing".

In conclusion, it must be stressed that according to Matza and Sykes (1961) criminal sentiments are not merely manifestations of an antisocial value system but are extensions of accepted everyday justifications, but where the extension is considered unreasonable to most people, but not to an offender. An extreme example is provided by Brehm and Kassin (1993) who noted that when the American and British troops returned home after the first Iraq war in 1991 they were regarded as heroes, and where their hero status was a consequence of engaging in acts of violence, albeit socially sanctioned. As Matza and Sykes (1961) commented, society tolerates extreme violence during war, even basks in the glory when their nation wins, yet the same reasoning that some violent offenders use to justify their aggression, such as seeking revenge or corrected injustice, is not tolerated by society. As society tolerates violence in organised and recreational sport, such as kick-boxing or ice hockey it is possible that this apparent contradiction of what people in society will and will not accept that offenders develop and maintain their negative opinion about the criminal justice system. Afterall, if you believe that "using force" is the right response given certain circumstances, and with the belief that your associates will support you, then if other people condemn you for doing what you believe to acceptable, then it must be the condemners who have it wrong.

The study presented in this chapter assessed the differences between offenders and non-offenders in their sentiments about the law, crime, violent behaviour and criminal peer identification. The next study, assesses the differences between offenders and non-offenders in how they interpret the harmful behaviours of others, how they would feel and what they would do or say to resolve the matter.

# Chapter 6.

## Study 6:
## Do Offenders Interpret and Respond to Social Situations Differently from Students and the Community?

## 6.1    Introduction and Study Overview

The aim of Study 6 was to use the Measure of Attributions and Problem Solving

(MAPS) to explore whether male violent offenders interpret, feel and respond

differently to problematic social encounters than non-offenders. The question of interest

was whether any of the variables measured in the MAPS represented criminogenic risk

factors which would clearly discriminate violent offenders from non-offenders.

The current study is presented in several sections commencing with a review of

the literature followed by the method and the results. As multiple analyses were

performed the results from Parts 1 to 3 of the MAPS are presented and then discussed

sequentially. The chapter concludes with a general discussion.

## 6.2  Literature Review and Hypotheses

Luckenbill and Doyle (1989) suggested that interpersonal grievances escalate in three

distinct stages: naming; claiming; and aggression. Although the results from Study 1 of

this thesis gave an insight into grievance escalation from violent offender's

perspectives, what Study 1 could not answer was whether the "is/ought" discrepancy;

hostile and malevolent intent; the fundamental attribution error; the types of emotions

felt; and the type of grievance resolution (problem solving) strategies proposed

represented dynamic criminogenic needs. Each of these variables are overviewed below.

**6.2.1 The "Is/ought" Discrepancy.** This discrepancy occurs when we benchmark

our belief about what we think someone has done to us and their responsibility for their

behaviour (the "is") against how we believe they should have behaved (the "ought"). As

all people hold "ought" beliefs it is not "oughts" per se that is suggested by the author to

be a discriminating variable between offenders and non-offenders. It is the experience of developing an "is/ought" discrepancy over a wider range of social situations that could potentially be a discriminating variable. Assessing whether wider "is/ought" discrepancies discriminates offenders from non-offenders appears not to have been previously assessed. This became the first aim of the current study.

 

**6.2.2 Attributions of Hostile and Malevolent Intent.** Attributions of intent, especially hostile intent, are suggested to be influential in how and why grievances escalate. Krahe (2001) argued that the reason some people engage in violent behaviour is because they interpret the behaviour of others, especially in ambiguous situations, as motivated by malice and hostility. Empirical knowledge in this area originated in studies comparing conduct disordered children to high-risk violent male and female juvenile offenders with their less aggressive peers (Dodge et al, 1990; Slaby & Guerra, 1988). This body of literature has consistently found that violent children and adolescents, especially males, demonstrate a significantly higher level of HABs than their non-violent peers. Several studies examined HABs in college students, aggressive drivers and domestically violent couples, finding that more aggressive students, partners and drivers tend to demonstrate higher level of HABs, especially in socially ambiguous situations (Epps & Kendall, 1995; Matthews & Norris, 2002; Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993). Although sex differences have been observed in adolescent samples the adult literature has published conflictory findings for adults. Matthews and Norris (2002) found no sex differences in demonstrations of HABS while Epps and Kendall (1995) found that men demonstrated higher HABs than women. It is therefore unclear whether men and women demonstrate different levels of HABs.

Three studies have explored HABs in adult offender samples. The first tested the psychometric properties of a new HAB scale, and although high-risk and low-risk

offenders were compared the offender samples were not compared with non-offenders (Simourd & Mamuza, 2002). The second study examined HABs in an small "extreme" sample of male offenders high on psychopathy (Seager, 2005). The third study also compared an "extreme" sample of 9 male psychopathic and personality disordered offenders incarcerated in a forensic hospital with 9 non-offender staff from the forensic hospital and 9 non-violent offenders on parole for fraud or theft.  The researchers in this third study found a difference between the psychopathic offenders and the hospital staff although they did not find a difference between the violent offenders and low risk non-violent offenders (Copello & Tata, 1990). Although HABs have been shown to be a discriminant variable between violent and non-violent adolescents, due to the lack of adult empirical knowledge and what knowledge is there has presented conflictory findings, it is difficult to determine whether HABs represent an adolescent limited risk factor or one that extends to violent adult offenders. Whether adult offenders have pronounced HABs compared with non-offenders will be explored in the present study.

The results from Study 1 showed that HABs were described in two ways. The first was "hostile intent" where the behaviour of the harmdoer was considered to be not only deliberate but was carried out to harm them personally. In contrast, "malevolent intent" was where the intent of the harmdoer was more Machiavellian in nature. Although the harmdoer's actions were judged as deliberate, the harm was not personally directed toward the victim, rather, anyone who was in the wrong place at the wrong time could have become the victim. Based on these results, an additional aim was to assess in the present study whether either way discriminated offenders from non-offenders.


**6.2.3 The Fundamental Attribution Error.** The fundamental attribution error (FAE) occurs when people assume that the observed behaviour of another is a static personality trait rather then specific behaviour dictated by the situation or the

environment. As Aronson (2004) noted, what this bias ignores is that many people have a repertoire of differing personas. For example, many people appear different during work hours than with their friends at the weekend. Where this bias becomes problematic is where a one off incident is taken as evidence that the person is always badly behaved. It is not proposed that the FAE represents a criminogenic risk factor because the literature is clear that this is a common bias (Aronson, 2004). However, given that the FAE was a highly prominent theme in the Study 1 data it was beneficial to explore whether adult offenders and adult non-offenders differ in the level of this bias.

**6.2.4 Types of Emotions Felt.** During Study 1 the offender participants had reported experiencing a wide range of negative emotions as their grievances had escalated. This finding was in line with Miller (2001) and Bies and Tripp (1996) who both argued that the wider the "is/ought" discrepancy becomes the more likely people are to experience a wider range of negative emotions, especially moralistic anger and righteous rage. As noted, the primary aim of this thesis was not to explore the emotional states that occur during violent altercations. However, the rationale for briefly assessing emotional states here was that if offenders are found to engage in higher HABs, then it is possible that due to the type of intent assigned the offenders would also be more likely to experience more negative emotions, especially anger, than non-offenders.

**6.2.5 Violence Based Grievance Resolution Strategies.** In Luckenbill and Doyle's (1989) model it was proposed that a key factor influencing whether a dispute escalated into violence was "aggressiveness". "Aggressiveness" refers to a person's willingness to end a dispute with the use of or threat of physical force. This willingness is suggested to be underpinned by subcultural beliefs which view violence as an acceptable way to end a grievance in order to maintain reputation, to enhance self image and to teach the

harmdoer a lesson. Like Luckenbill and Doyle, Ajzen and Fishbein (1983) hypothesised that positive attitudes are strongly related to behaviour. In Ajzen and Fishbein's theory of reasoned action it was argued that the more positive your attitudes towards a certain behaviour combined with the belief that others would support that behaviour, the more likely the behaviour in question. To examine further the link between attitudes and behavioural intentions, the grievance resolution strategies proposed by people known to hold positive attitudes towards violence will be compared with people who hold less positive views. As the groups being used in the present study are the same as Study 5 it has already been shown that these five groups hold different beliefs about violence. The results from Study 5 showed that the five groups formed three distinct groups of samples. The first group with the highest level of pro-violent attitudes were the male offenders. The second group with a medium level of pro-violent beliefs were the younger male non-offender students. The third group with the lowest level were the older male community non-offenders and the two female samples.

Another question of interest is whether offenders are less likely than non-offenders to generate more alternative strategies when faced with problematic situations. This question was based on the work of Slaby and Guerra (1988) who found that delinquent and violent male and female adolescents were more likely to come up with single violence-based solutions while their non-violent peers were more likely to generate a number of alternative and non-violence based solutions to deal with problematic situations. Slaby and Guerra argued that adolescent offenders appeared to have cognitive deficits in generating alternative solutions and this difficulty related to their use of aggression during problematic interactions with others. The final aim in the present study was to assess whether the findings of Slaby and Guerra could be replicated in an adult sample; in essence to assess whether their findings represent an adolescent risk factor or one that extends to adults.

**6.2.6 The Hypotheses.** Six hypotheses were set for the current study. These are as follows.

**Hypothesis 1.** If the "is/ought" discrepancy represents a criminogenic variable then adult male violent offenders will experience wider discrepancies than non-offenders when faced with the "bad behaviour" of others. The first hypothesis predicts that: *male offenders will demonstrate wider "is/ought" discrepancies over a number of different social interactions than non-offenders.*

**Hypothesis 2.** Although pronounced hostile attributional biases (HABs) have been observed in violent adolescent samples, especially under ambiguous situations, the adult literature has not yet demonstrated whether adult violent offenders are different on this variable compared with adult non-offenders. If HABs are a criminogenic risk factor for violent adults, it is predicted : *male offenders will demonstrate significantly higher HABs, especially in ambiguous situations compared with non-offenders.* An additional aim was to investigate whether there were any difference between adult violent offenders and non-offenders on the two forms of HABs identified, namely "hostile intent" and "malevolent intent".

**Hypothesis 3.** If the fundamental attribution error is an important influence in the escalation of grievances and can in some instances represent a criminogenic variable it is predicted that: *male offenders will demonstrate a higher level and more frequent use of the FAE than non-offenders.*

**Hypothesis 4.** This hypothesis will test differences in emotional states reported across the five MAPS scenarios. It is proposed that if adult violent offenders have more pronounced HABs, especially in ambiguous situations, then: d*ue to the over-attribution of hostile intent male offenders will report more negative emotional states, especially anger, over the five MAPS scenarios than non-offenders.*

**Hypothesis 5.** This hypothesis will assess the link between attitudes and behavioural intentions. If positive attitudes towards an act can influence behavioural predictions the fifth hypothesis predicts that the following patterns in responses will be observed: *male offenders will report more violence based grievance resolution strategies than male students. Male students in turn will report more violence based strategies than female students and men and women from the community.*

**Hypothesis 6.** The rationale for this hypothesis is to assess whether the highly significant findings of Slaby and Guerra (1988), using an adolescent sample, generalise to adults. It is predicted that if a risk factor for violent behaviour is the generation of fewer alternative problem solving strategies then: *male offenders will report a lower number of grievance resolution strategies than non-offenders.*

## 6.3 Method

### 6.3.1 Participants and Procedure

The participants were 530 adults recruited from three populations: 87 male offenders, 235 men and women students and 208 men and women from the general population. For details about the participants and the procedures refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.2 for the student sample, and Chapter 4 Section 4.2.2 for the offender sample and Section 4.3.2 for the community sample.

### 6.3.3 Measures

The participants completed a questionnaire pack comprised of three sections. The pack and the measures contained in the pack are described in detail in earlier chapters and can be seen in Appendixes E and G. Please refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.2. for the student pack and Chapter 4 for a description of the pack as distributed to the offender participants (Section 4.2.2) and the community participants (Section 4.3.2).

## 6.4  Results and Discussion

The results presented below comprise of the all the analyses performed on Parts 1 to 3 of the MAPS. Part 1 measures the "is/ought" discrepancy; attributions of intent; and a range of specific attributional biases (hostile and malevolent intent; the fundamental attribution error). Part 1 is used to test Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3. Part 2 of the MAPS measures the range of feelings that participants said they would experience and is used to test Hypothesis 4. Part 3 of the MAPS is an open-ended question asking participants to write the grievance resolution strategies (problem solving) they would employ to solve each of the five scenarios and is used to test Hypotheses 5 and 6. As multiple analyses were performed the results for Parts 1, 2 and 3 are presented and discussed sequentially.

### 6.4.1 Preliminary Analyses

Prior to analyses, Parts 1 to 3 of the MAPS were scored in accordance with the scoring guide (refer Appendix D). All missing items on Part 1 were replaced with an "undecided" score as per the scoring guide. All qualitative responses provided for Part 3 were coded in accordance with the MAPS scoring guide.

All assumptions underlying the statistical tests to be performed were examined. Where assumptions were violated, the impact of the violation upon the robustness of the test was considered and the recommendations provided by Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) and Coates and Steed (2003) for correcting the violations were applied. Due to the number of multiple tests performed, an alpha level of .01 was set for evidence of significance on all analyses. Where t-tests were performed and the Levene's statistics were significant, equal variances were not assumed, and the reduced degrees of freedom reported. Lastly, as a number of participants from each group did not complete all parts of the MAPS, the number of cases used in some analyses is reduced and this is reported.

## 6.4.2 Group Differences on Part 1 of the MAPS

As the main objective of Study 6 was to determine whether the cognitive variables described previously represented criminogenic risk factors, rather than present the results comparing all five groups it was optimal to present the differences between the two most diverse groups for the following two reasons. First, the multifactorial analyses required to test differences between five groups across the five the scenarios on all the variables measures in Part 1 would produce a large amount of statistical output. Instead of inundating the chapter with pages of results, the main analyses presented will be the difference between the two most diverse groups: male violent offenders and non-offender women from the general population. Second, if hostile and other attributional biases represent criminogenic risk factors for violent adult men then it is reasonable to argue that a clear (i.e., highly significant) difference would be observed between violent offenders and non-offender women. The offender participants in the present study all have a known history of violent behaviour and were all classified as being at high risk for violent recidivism. In contrast, although it cannot be confirmed that the community women in the current study were non-offenders, it is reasonable to assume that most were not high risk violent offenders. This can be inferred because it is known that women are the least violent members of most western societies and are less likely to engage in violence than men. For example, 85% to 90% of violent offences occurring in Australia are perpetrated by men aged 18 to 35 (Mukherjee & Graycar, 1997). The results from Study 5 (refer Chapter 5) complimented the criminal justice statistics and showed that these community women were the least pro-violent in their sentiments whereas the male offenders were the most pro-violent.

The results comparing all five groups on the "is/ought" discrepancy, hostile and malevolent intent, negation of hostile intent and the fundamental attribution error can be seen in Appendixes  K, L and M.

**6.4.2.1 Testing Hypothesis 1: Does the "Is/Ought" discrepancy represent a**

**criminogenic variable?** The first hypothesis predicted that: *male offenders would*

*demonstrate wider "is/ought" discrepancies over a number of different problematic*

*social interactions than non-offenders.* To examine whether male offenders differed

from the community women on the "is/ought" discrepancy on any or all of the five

scenarios a series of five independent samples t-tests were performed. The means,

standard deviations and t-test results can be seen in Table 38.

**Table 38**. Means, Standard Deviations, and Group Differences on the "Is/ought" Discrepancy

| Scenario number and type of intent | Male Offenders (n =86) | Community Women (n =89) | T (d.f.) Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scenario 1 (Ambiguous intent) | 7.03  (2.56) | 8.97  (1.62) | $t$ (142.853) = 5.94,  $p < .01^*$ |
| Scenario 2 (Accidental/benign intent) | 2.86  (0.91) | 2.40  (0.81) | $t$ (169.08) = 3.50,  $p < .01^*$ |
| Scenario 3 (Ambiguous intent) | 8.64  (1.69) | 9.13  (1.37) | $t$ (163.50) = 2.13,  $p = .03$ |
| Scenario 4 (Ambiguous intent) | 6.28  (2.30) | 7.06  (2.02) | $t$ (173) = 2.38,  $p < .01^*$ |
| Scenario 5 (Hostile intent) | 8.78  (1.55) | 9.69  (0.89 | $t$ (134.57) = 4.74,  $p < .01^*$ |

*Notes:* Standard deviations in parentheses. * *$p < .01$*.

As can seen, four significant differences were observed, although the differences

were not always as predicted. For Scenarios 1 (the cleaner), 4 (the supervisor) and 5 (the

ex-boyfriend), although significant, it was the community women who considered the

behaviour of these harmdoers more anti-normative and unacceptable than the offenders

did. The only result providing some support for the hypothesis was on Scenario 2 (the

neighbours) where the offenders assigned a wider discrepancy score then community

women. However, as the observed offender mean was only 2.86 this shows that even

though significantly different from the women's mean score, the offenders only

assigned a very narrow discrepancy of what "is" and what "ought" to have been to the

neighbours' behaviour. Given that overall the community women assigned wider

"is/ought" discrepancies than the offenders it is unlikely this variable represents a

criminogenic risk factor for violent behaviour. The results are presented graphically in Figure 16.
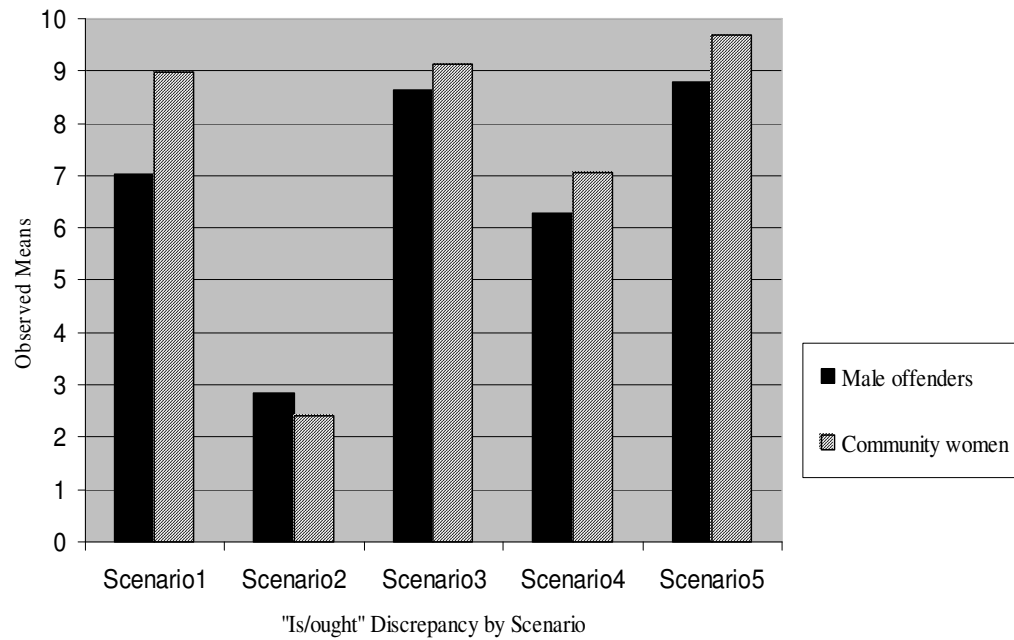


**Figure 16.** Profile plot for the "is/ought" discrepancy by group for each scenario.

### 6.4.2.2 Testing Hypothesis 2: Are attributions of intent a criminogenic risk

**factor?** The first prediction of Hypothesis 2 was that: *male offenders would be more likely to see the acts of others as deliberately intended rather than accidental compared with non-offenders.* To examine this prediction, the score from the attribution of intent (item 3) was used for each of the five scenarios. Item 3 asked the participants to judge whether the harmdoer carried out the harmful act on purpose (i.e., deliberately) or whether it was more likely to be an accidental or thoughtless act. Five independent samples t-tests were performed to see whether male offenders assigned a different level of intent than the community women. The results together with the observed means and standard deviations can be seen in Table 39.

**Table 39**. Means, Standard Deviations, and Group Differences for the Attribution of Intent

| Scenario number and type of intent | Male Offenders (n =86) | Community Women (n =89) | t (d.f.) Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scenario 1 (Ambiguous intent) | 3.01 (1.23) | 3.08 (1.32) | t (173) = 0.35, $p$ = .73 |
| Scenario 2 (Accidental/benign intent) | 2.38 (1.02) | 2.26 (1.00) | t (173) = 0.82, $p$ = .41 |
| Scenario 3 (Ambiguous intent) | 3.92 (0.80) | 3.96 (0.75) | t (173) = 0.31, $p$ = .76 |
| Scenario 4 (Ambiguous intent) | 3.13 (1.15) | 3.38 (0.97) | t (173) = 1.59, $p$ = .12 |
| Scenario 5 (Hostile intent) | 4.15 (0.91) | 4.42 (0.75) | t (173) = 2.10, $p$ = .04 |

*Notes:* Standard deviations in parentheses.

As can be seen in Table 39, no significant differences were observed showing that male offenders assigned a similar level of intentionality to each of the five situations as the community women. These results do not support the first prediction of Hypothesis 2 and suggest that violent offenders are no more likely to see the actions of others as deliberate as non-offender women.

**6.4.2.3 Testing Hypothesis 2: Do hostile attributional biases (HABs) represent a criminogenic risk factor?** The next analyses tested whether male offenders would demonstrate significantly higher HABs, especially in situations where the intent of the harmdoer is unclear (ambiguous). These analyses also explored whether the two forms of HABs ("hostile" and "malevolent" intent) discriminated offenders from non-offenders. A series of independent sample t-tests were used to assess whether male violent offenders were different from women non-offenders. The results, the means and standard deviations can be seen in Table 40.

**Table 40.** Means, Standard Deviations and Group Differences for the Attribution of Hostile and Malevolent Intent

| Scenario and intent | Attribution | Male Offenders (n =86) | Community Women (n =89) | t (d.f.) Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scenario 1 (Ambiguous) | Hostile intent | 4.85 (1.76) | 4.66 (1.77) | T (173) = 0.70, *p* = .49 |
| | Malevolent intent | 3.26 (1.19) | 3.26 (1.15) | T (173) = 0.02, *p* = .99 |
| Scenario 2 (Benign) | Hostile intent | 4.71 (1.38) | 4.13 (1.48) | T (173) = 2.66, ***p* < .01*** |
| | Malevolent intent | 3.27 (1.11) | 2.90 (1.01) | T (173) = 2.29, *p* = .03 |
| Scenario 3 (Ambiguous) | Hostile intent | 6.08 (1.54) | 5.62 (1.38) | T (173) = 2.10, *p* = .04 |
| | Malevolent intent | 3.45 (0.94) | 3.49 (0.92) | T (173) = 0.29, *p* = .77 |
| Scenario 4 (Ambiguous) | Hostile intent | 5.24 (1.73) | 5.36 (1.26) | T (155.43) = 0.50, *p* = .62 |
| | Malevolent intent | 3.17 (1.09) | 3.48 (0.96) | T (173) = 1.99, *p* = .05 |
| Scenario 5 (Hostile) | Hostile intent | 8.17 (1.29) | 8.03 (1.13) | T (173) = 0.77, *p* = .45 |
| | Malevolent intent | 3.52 (0.99) | 3.26 (1.05) | T (173) = 1.72, *p* = .09 |

*Notes:* Standard deviations in parentheses. * ***p* < .01**.

The results showed only one significant difference. This was for regarding the behaviour of the neighbours in Scenario 2 where the offender group demonstrated a higher level of hostile intent than the community women did. This suggests that in benign situations non-offender women are less likely to infer hostility than male offenders. However, although the groups were significantly different, it is noteworthy that this difference did not represent a pronounced level of HAB for the offender sample. The mean score observed for the male offenders was within the "perhaps no" to the midpoint ("undecided") range. It is reasonable to suggest that a clear demonstration of a pronounced HAB would be where the mean was above the midpoint and in the range where hostility was confirmed as "perhaps yes", or "definitely yes".

No significant differences were found on any of the other 9 tests performed. This result is contrary to prediction and showed that male offenders were no more likely than the female non-offenders to assign a higher level of hostile and/or malevolent intent to the harmful behaviour of others. Moreover, no significant differences were observed in the three scenarios which were specifically written to contain elements of ambiguity, namely, Scenarios 1 (the cleaner), 3 (the friend) and 4 (the supervisor). This suggests

that unlike juvenile offenders, adult male violent offenders are no more likely to demonstrate higher levels of HABs in ambiguous situations than a sample of older non-offender women from the general population.

The results overall do not support Hypothesis 2 and show that in the types of everyday situations assessed in the MAPS a sample of high risk violent male offenders demonstrated similar hostile and malevolent intent biases as a group of non-offender women from the general population.

The results for hostile intent are shown graphically below in Figures 17. As no significant differences were found for malevolent intent a figure is not presented.
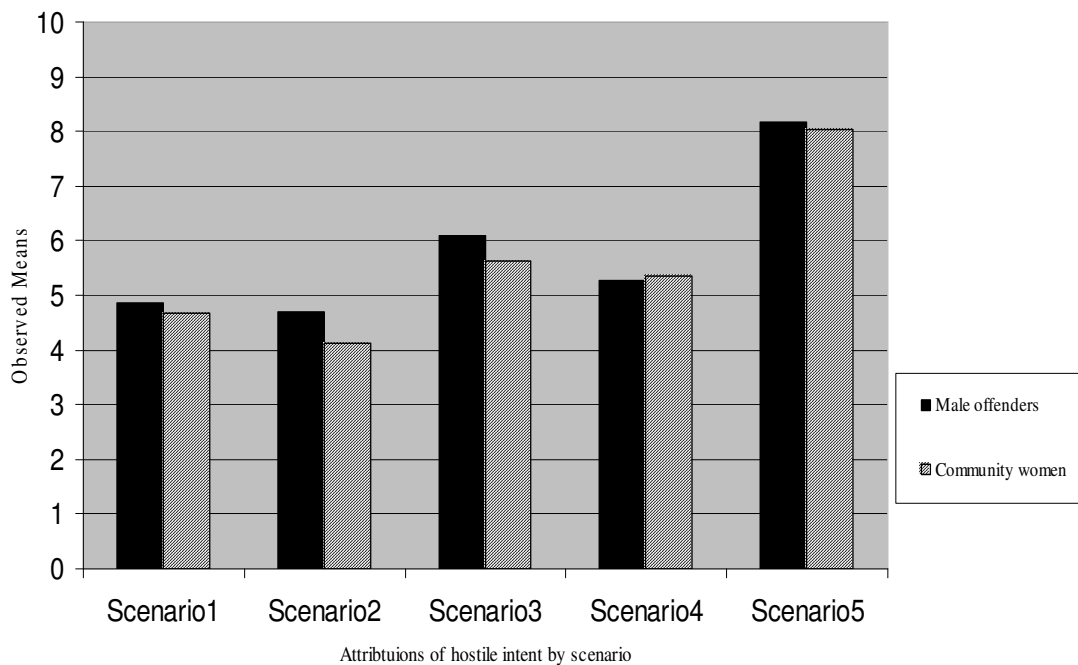


**Figure 17.** Profile plot for the attribution of hostile intent by group for each scenario.

**6.4.2.4 Testing Hypothesis 2: Do the groups differ in the negation of hostile intent?** The results from the analyses assessing the differences on the attribution of hostile and malevolent intent showed some unanticipated results. It had been predicted that male offenders, like violent juvenile male offenders, would demonstrate higher

HABs, especially in ambiguous situations, compared with non-offenders. The results

obtained did not support this prediction. However, before concluding that offenders and

non-offenders appear to interpret the intent of others in similar ways, differences in the

negation of hostile intent was explored. Negation items were specifically written into

each of the five scenarios to assess whether some people are more likely to find reasons

reducing a harmdoer's culpability. In essence, negation is where a harmdoer is given the

benefit of the doubt. Differences in negation was assessed using t-tests. The results,

means and standard deviations are shown in Table 41.

**Table 41.** Means, Standard Deviations and T-test Results for the Negation of Hostile Intent

| Scenario number and type of intent | Male Offenders (n =86) | Community Women (n =89) | t (d.f.) Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scenario 1 (Ambiguous intent) | 5.07 (1.72) | 5.31 (1.64) | $\underline{T}$ (173) = 0.96, $\underline{p}$ = .34 |
| Scenario 2 (Accidental/benign intent) | 4.26 (1.18) | 3.76 (1.25) | $\underline{T}$ (173) = 2.67, **$p$ < .01** |
| Scenario 3 (Ambiguous intent) | 6.24 (1.69) | 6.16 (1.61) | $\underline{T}$ (173) = 0.35, $\underline{p}$ = .73 |
| Scenario 4 (Ambiguous intent) | 5.00 (1.67) | 5.45 (1.67) | $\underline{T}$ (173) = 1.78, $\underline{p}$ = .08 |
| Scenario 5 (Hostile intent) | 7.64 (1.69) | 8.43 (1.42) | $\underline{T}$ (173) = 3.34, **$p$ < .01** |

*Notes:* Standard deviations in parentheses. * **$p$ < .01**.

Two significant differences were observed. In Scenario 2 it was the offenders who

were less likely to give the neighbours the benefit of the doubt, whereas in Scenario 5

the offenders were more likely to give the ex-boyfriend the benefit of the doubt

compared with women. Overall, given the contradiction in the results and also given

that three of five scenarios showed no differences between the group it would appear

that the negation of hostile intent is not a discriminant variable between male offenders

and non-offender women. These results are presented graphically in Figure 18.
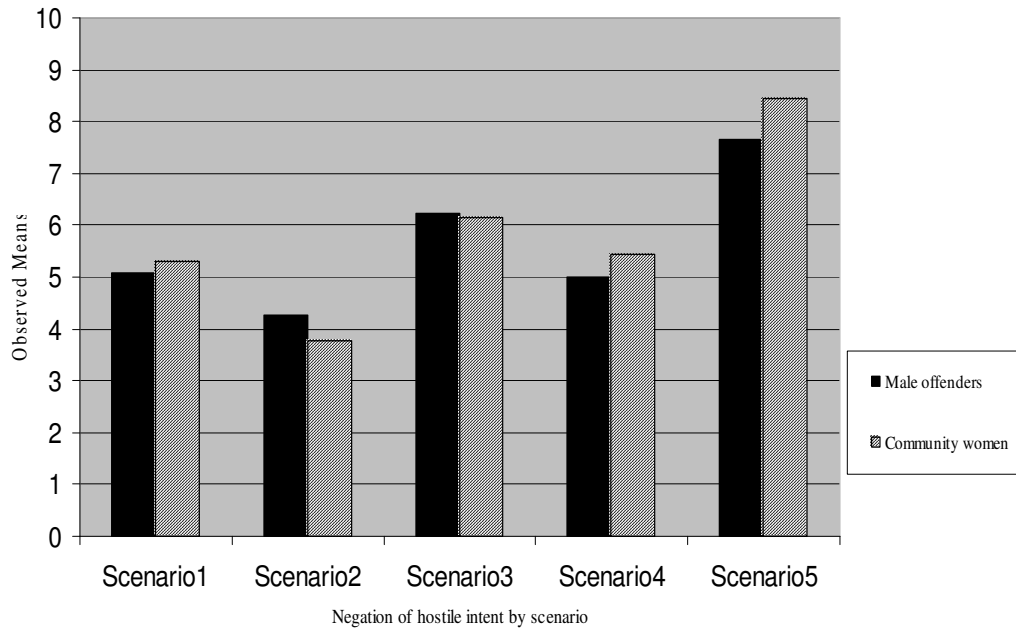
**Figure 18.**  Profile plot for the negation of hostile intent by group for each scenario.


**6.4.2.5 Hypothesis 3: Can the fundamental attribution error be a criminogenic**

**variable?**  The third hypothesis was exploratory and assessed whether the fundamental

attribution error (FAE) could represent a factor influencing how and why grievances

escalate. It was proposed that if this bias is more pronounced in male violent offenders it

could be influential in the escalation of grievances thus representing a criminogenic

variable.

Differences between men offenders and women non-offenders were assessed with

t-tests. The means, standard deviations and results are presented in Table 42. As can be

seen, the pattern in the means suggests that as the behaviour of the harmdoer in each

scenario becomes more hostile the level of the FAE increases. For example, the mean

for Scenario 2 (accidental/thoughtless) is much lower than the means for Scenario 5

(hostile situation).

**Table 42.** Means and Standard Deviations and Group Differences for the Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE)

| Scenario number and type of intent | Male Offenders (n =86) | Community Women (n =89) | t (d.f.) Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scenario 1 (Ambiguous intent) | 3.28 (1.11) | 3.37 (1.08) | $t$ (173) = 0.55, $p$ = .58 |
| Scenario 2 (Accidental/benign intent) | 2.88 (1.11) | 2.25 (1.00) | $t$ (173) = 3.98, **$p$ < .01** |
| Scenario 3 (Ambiguous intent) | 3.43 (1.02) | 3.19 (0.89) | $t$ (167.98) = 1.65, $p$ = .10 |
| Scenario 4 (Ambiguous intent) | 3.02 (1.03) | 2.79 (0.83) | $t$ (173) = 1.68, $p$ = .09 |
| Scenario 5 (Hostile intent) | 3.70 (0.98) | 3.94 (0.99) | $t$ (173) = 1.65, $p$ = .10 |

*Notes:* Standard deviations in parentheses. * **$p$ < .01**.

The results showed only one significant difference. On Scenario 2 the male offenders demonstrated a significantly higher level of the FAE towards the neighbours. However, when looking at the mean scores for both the men and the women, although the difference between men and women was significant, neither group demonstrated a high level of this bias. Both the mean for the men and the women was in the "perhaps no" to the midpoint (undecided) range suggesting that neither the men or the women assumed the behaviour of the neighbours was due to them being inconsiderate people. The results can be seen in Figure 19 below.
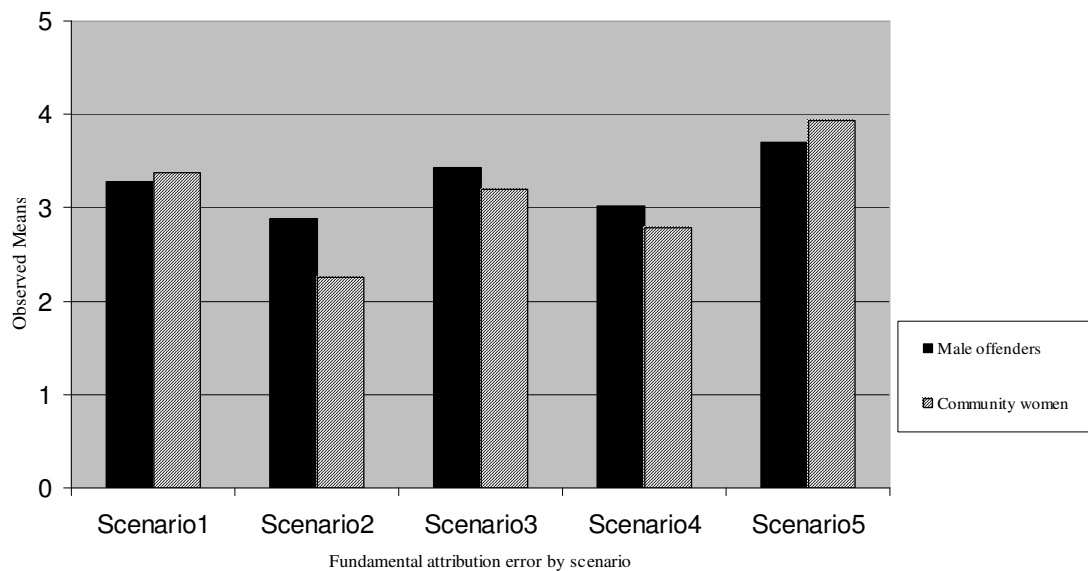


**Figure 19.** Profile plot for the fundamental attribution error by group for each scenario.

**6.4.2.6 Comparing male offenders with men and women non-offenders on the specific attribution score.** The set of analyses presented above compared the differences between the two most diverse groups in the current study (male offenders and non-offender community women). This next analysis was performed to give the reader an indication of whether offenders differed from any of the non-offenders (men and women students and men and women form the community) on the specific attribution score for each of the five scenarios. The "specific attribution" score is the sum of the attribution of hostile, malevolent intent and the FAE minus the negation of hostile intent.

It had been intended to control for the potential effects of age and education level. Although the community men and women were significantly older than the offenders who in turn were significantly older than the men and women students (f (2, 528) = 189.23, $p < .001$) and with the community groups having a significantly higher education level than the students, who in turn had a higher level than the male offenders (f (2, 526) = 92.46, $p < .001$), neither age nor educational level were controlled for. The correlations observed across the five scenarios on these variables for each of the groups were mostly non-significant suggesting that age and education level had little influence on the level of attributional biases endorsed by the participants in any of the five groups. The correlation matrix can be seen in Appendix J. The means and standard deviations for each group are shown in Table 43.

**Table 43.** Means and Standard Deviations for the Specific Attributions Score by Group on Each of the Five MAPS Scenarios

| Variable | n [a] | Scenario1 Ambiguous | Scenario2 Accidental | Scenario3 Ambiguous | Scenario4 Ambiguous | Scenario5 Hostile |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male offenders | 86 | 16.48 (4.49) | 15.12 (3.34) | 19.22 (4.13) | 16.44 (4.50) | 23.08 (3.67) |
| Male students | 94 | 15.85 (4.10) | 12.47 (2.94) | 18.70 (4.30) | 17.20 (4.04) | 25.10 (3.60) |
| Female students | 131 | 15.20 (4.21) | 11.31 (2.82) | 19.21 (3.74) | 16.81 (3.72) | 24.98 (3.06) |
| Male community | 101 | 15.45 (3.69) | 13.18 (3.05) | 17.67 (4.21) | 16.84 (3.93) | 23.76 (3.72) |
| Female community | 89 | 16.61 (4.07) | 13.04 (3.54) | 18.46 (3.55) | 17.08 (3.73) | 23.66 (3.03) |

*Notes:* Standard deviations in parentheses. [a] number of participants in each group

As shown in Table 43, the means for each group suggest that the situations specifically written to be hostile, accidental or ambiguous were judged as such by the five different samples used in this project. All five groups assigned the highest level of hostility and malice to the behaviour of the ex-boyfriend in Scenario 5 and the lowest level to the situation involving the neighbours (Scenario 2). The ambiguous scenarios were ranked in the middle by all five groups. The four non-offender groups all ranked the scenarios, being highest to lowest as follows: Scenario 5; 3; 4; 1; and 2 (namely, the ex-boyfriend, then the friend, the supervisor, the cleaner and lastly the neighbours). However, for the offenders the ranking was slightly different on two of the ambiguous scenarios. The order for the male offenders highest to lowest was: Scenario 5; 3; 1; 4; and 2 (namely, the ex-boyfriend, then the friend, the cleaner, the supervisor and lastly the neighbours).. This suggests that the offenders believed the cleaner acted with more hostility than the supervisor, and vice-versa for the non-offender groups.

To assess whether offenders would assign a higher overall level of attributional biases than the four non-offender groups a mixed design 5 (group) x 5 (scenario) SPANOVA was performed. Using the Greenhouse Geiser correction a significant main effect for scenario was shown with a medium effect size ($F_{(3.835, 1902.192)} = 717.16$, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .59$). This suggests that the groups assigned different levels of attributional biases across the scenarios. The specific attribution score by group interaction was significant although the estimated effect size for the difference was negligible ($F_{(15.340, 1902.192)} = 6.99$, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .05$). Lastly, the main effect for group was not significant ($F_{(4, 496)} = 1.59$, $p = .18$; $\eta^2 = .01$) suggesting that the groups did not differ in the level of combined attributions assigned across the scenarios.

As the main effect for scenario had been significant a series of pairwise comparisons were performed to explore which of the scenarios differed from the others. All scenarios were significantly different from each other suggesting that each of the

scenarios represents a social situation where a different level of level of attributional bias is assigned. This provides further validation that the scenarios in the MAPS represent a range from hostile to benign and is sensitive enough to scale to be able to measure the different levels of attributional biases people assign in different social situations. The comparisons can be seen in Table 44.

**Table 44.**  Pairwise Comparisons for the Main Effect of Scenario for the Specific Attributions Score

| Specific attributions (I) | Specific attributions (J) | Mean Difference (I-J) | Sig. [a] | 99% Confidence interval Lower bound | Upper bound |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scenario 1 | Scenario 2 | 2.89* | .00 | 2.23 | 3.55 |
| | 3 | -2.74* | .00 | -3.50 | -1.98 |
| | 4 | -.96* | .00 | -1.74 | -.18 |
| | 5 | -8.20* | .00 | -8.94 | -7.45 |
| Scenario 2 | Scenario 3 | -5.63* | .00 | -6.33 | -4.94 |
| | 4 | -3.85* | .00 | -4.51 | -3.19 |
| | 5 | -11.09* | .00 | -11.80 | -10.38 |
| Scenario 3 | Scenario 4 | 1.78* | .00 | 1.03 | 2.53 |
| | 5 | -5.46* | .00 | -6.14 | -4.79 |
| Scenario 4 | Scenario 5 | -7.24* | .00 | -7.98 | -6.50 |

*Notes:*  * Mean difference is significant at p<.001. [a] Bonferroni method used to adjust for comparisons

To explore further where the significant interaction lay a series of one-way ANOVAs were performed. Three ANOVAs were not significant. For scenarios 1 (cleaner), 3 (friend), and 4 (supervisor), male offenders, men and women students and men and women from the community were similar in their level of attributional biases in these types of situations. The results were: ($F_{scenario\ 1}$ (4, 496) = 2.31, $p$ =.06; $\eta^2$=.02); ($F_{scenario\ 3}$ (4, 496) = 2.66, $p$ =.04; $\eta^2$=.03); and ($F_{scenario\ 4}$ (4, 496) = .0.48, $p$ =.75; $\eta^2$ =.01). These non-significant results were surprising because Scenarios 1, 3 and 4 are the ambiguous scenarios. This is contrary to prediction and show that in situations which contain elements of ambiguity adult male high-risk violent offenders are no more likely to demonstrate pronounced levels of attributional biases than men and women non-offender students and adult men and women from the general population.

Two significant results were shown however, regarding the behaviour of the neighbours and the ex-boyfriend. Although the estimated effect sizes for these significant differences were both so small they were almost negligible: ($F_{scenario\ 2}$ (4, 496 = 20.01, $p$ < .001; $\eta^2$ =.14); and ($F_{scenario\ 5}$ (4, 496) = 6.60, $p$ < .001; $\eta^2$ =.05). Post hoc Scheffé tests were then performed to assess which group differed from the others.

For Scenario 2, the offenders assigned a higher level of attributional biases to the neighbours' behaviour and were significantly different from all four non-offender groups (all comparisons $p$ <.001). For the non-offender groups the Scheffé tests showed that female students assigned a significantly lower level of biases than the student men and the men and women from the community (all test $p$ <.001). The male students were not different from the community men or the community women (all tests $p$ >.05).

For Scenario 5, the results were not straightforward. Although it was the men and women students who demonstrated the highest level of attributional biases they were not significantly different from the offenders (both tests $p$ <.01). The men and women students were significantly different from the community men and women who demonstrated the lowest level (both tests $p$ <.01). However, despite the offenders being different from students and students being different from the community, the Scheffé tests also showed that the offenders were not different from the community men ($p$ = .76) or the community women ($p$ = .87). This set of mixed results probably occurred because a large sample size (n = 501) was used for the ANOVA and therefore the slightest difference in the means would be significant. Although the ANOVA was significant the effect size for the difference was virtually non-existent ($\eta^2$ =.01). As the effect size was .05 it is not surprising that the groups could not be clearly distinguished.
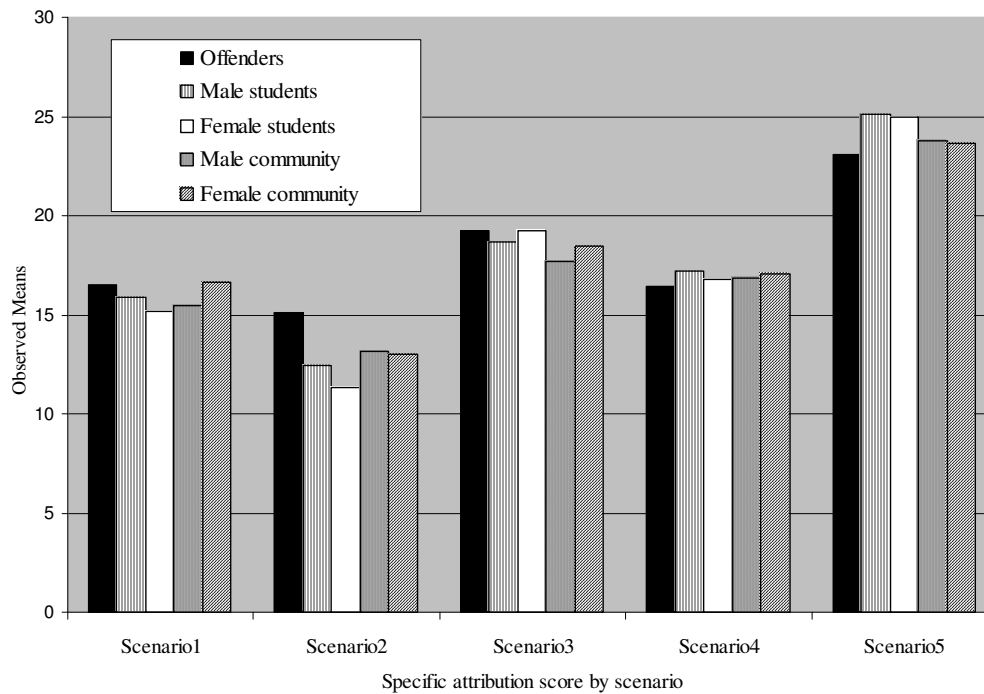
**Figure 20.** Profile plot for the specific attributions score by group for each scenario.

The results presented in figure 20 shows that the most marked difference between offenders and non-offenders was on Scenario 2. As discussed in Chapter 4 (refer Section 4.2.3.4), when the psychometric properties of Part 1 of the MAPS were explored in an offender sample in contrast to the other scenarios, Scenario 2 produced a two component solution. The two component solution, combined with the results from these analyses suggest that offenders judge the benign/thoughtless acts of others differently from non-offenders. In essence, it appears that offenders as a group are less likely to correctly identify thoughtless errors than non-offenders. Despite these results it is crucial to point out that the offender mean (M= 15.12) for Scenario 2 was at the midpoint and it could well be argued that a midpoint score is not a clear demonstration of a pronounced HAB. What the midpoint score implies is that the offenders were not sure whether the neighbours acted with malice or not. Moreover, with an effect size of $\eta^2 = .14$ observed, the differences between the groups is not large.

### 6.4.2.7 Discussion of results: MAPS Part 1: Attributions and social judgements

The three hypotheses tested above were devised to assess whether violent offenders would interpret and judge the behaviour of a harmdoer differently to non-offenders. Rather than inundate the reader with pages of statistical results, most of the analyses compared the two most diverse samples. This was based on the rationale that if "is/ought" discrepancies, hostile and malevolent intent, and the fundamental attribution error represent criminogenic risk factors for violent offenders then there should be clear differences between adult male high-risk violent offenders and non-offender women from the general population. The results obtained were unexpected showing that the group at the highest risk of violent behaviour (male offenders) were not that different from the group with the lowest probability of behaving violently (non-offender community women). Moreover, the comparisons between all five groups on the specific attribution score showed that overall the male offenders did not interpret the behaviour of the harmdoers in the MAPS scenarios very differently from the non-offender men and women. Each of the three hypothesis is discussed individually below.

**Hypothesis 1** was exploratory and tested whether offenders would experience wider "is/ought" discrepancies than non-offenders. Although some significant differences were observed they were contrary to prediction and showed that overall it was the community women who considered the behaviour of the harmdoers to be more unacceptable and antinormative than the male offenders. The results for all five groups (refer Appendix K) mirror the results presented in this chapter and suggest that violent offenders are no more likely to develop wider "is/ought" discrepancies than non-offenders. Given these results it appears that the "is/ought" discrepancy does not represent a criminogenic variable and that overall offenders were no more intolerant of the harmful behaviour described in the MAPS as men and women non-offenders.

Although the results did not support the prediction that wider "is/ought" could

represent a criminogenic risk factor, the results did however imply that this variable is

influential in how and why grievances develop for most people, regardless of whether

they are a violent offender or not. The results showed that each scenario was

significantly different in the width of the discrepancy reported. The difference between

each of scenarios also generated a large estimated effect size ($\eta^2 = .74$; as shown in

Appendix K). It was observed that the more hostile the situation had been judged by the

participants the wider the "is/ought" discrepancy. For example, in Scenario 2 the

behaviour of the neighbours was judged as the least deliberate and malicious and was

assigned the narrowest discrepancy. In contrast, the behaviour of the ex-boyfriend in

Scenario 5 was judged as the most deliberate and malicious and was assigned the widest

discrepancy. This finding is convergent with the interactional justice literature which

found that the more antinormative a person's behaviour is considered the more outraged

people become (Bies & Tripp, 1996; Mikula et al., 1998; Miller, 2001). This result will

be considered further in Chapter 7 (refer Section 7.3) and will be used to expand

Luckenbill and Doyle's three stage grievance escalation model.

**Hypothesis 2** assessed whether offenders would demonstrate higher HABs,

especially in ambiguous situation, compared with non-offenders. Various forms of

HABs were assessed such as hostile intent, malevolent intent and the negation of hostile

intent. The results overall showed that HABs were no more problematic for 87 adult

male offenders than they were for 430 men and women non-offenders.

It has been strongly argued in the literature that attributions of intentionality,

especially hostile intent (HABs), represents an important and enduring criminogenic

risk factor (Bartol & Bartol, 2005). Most of the research on this variable has assessed

the differences between aggressive and non-aggressive children and adolescents finding

that aggressive children and adolescents have pronounced HABs. The child and

adolescent literature has consistently found strong support for the hypothesis that HABs represent a risk factor for adolescent violent behaviour (de Castro et al., 2002). Although HABs have been suggested to be an enduring risk factor that carries through from adolescent into adulthood (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Huesman, 1998) because the adult literature itself is so limited it could not be confirmed whether HABs represent an adult risk factor or are adolescent limited.

After an extensive search of various databases only a few studies could be located which had investigated HABs using adult samples. Epps and Kendall (1995), Holtzworth-Munroe and Hutchinson (1993) and Matthews and Norris (2002) all found that adults high on trait aggression and anger demonstrated significantly higher HABs than their less trait aggressive and angry peers. Clearly, the present results are divergent from the three studies discussed above. This may have occurred for two reasons. First, as all three prior studies had explored HABs under specific situations, such as wife abuse or driver related road incidents, the scope of their assessment may have been too narrow. In contrast, the situations assessed in the MAPS were more general which meant that HABs could be assessed across a range of social situations. The MAPS scenarios were also carefully selected from real life events and where the content of each scenario was reflective of the kinds of harm known to upset people (e.g., broken promises, arbitrary use of power, inconsiderate behaviour). Second, the present study used a much larger total sample size (n = 530) than the previous three studies [14]. This ensured more statistical power to assess group differences but also meant that the samples themselves were more heterogeneous in their demographic characteristics. Finally, although Epps and Kendall found significant differences, as they did not report the effect size it is unknown how large the difference between the groups were. Matthews and Norris did report their estimated effect size as $\eta^2 = .06$. As this effect is

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[14] Epps and Kendall's sample were 120 U.S. undergraduates. Matthews and Norris's sample were 263 men and women from the community. Holtzworth-Munroe and Hutchinson's sample were 56 adult men.

very small, even though they found a significant difference in the means for HABs between aggressive and non-aggressive drivers the difference was relatively minor. The effect size found between the five groups on the various forms of HABs tested in the current study mirror that of Matthews and Norris. As can be seen in Appendix L, even though significant differences between the offenders and non-offenders were observed, the effect size estimates ranging from $\eta^2 = .03$ to $\eta^2 = .05$ meant that any significant differences in the means were so small they almost negligible.

Several other prior studies had explored HABs in offender samples. Copello and Tata (1990) found that 9 psychiatrically disturbed violent offenders had higher HABs than 9 non-offenders, but the 9 violent offenders were no different from 9 low-risk non-violent offenders on parole. Seager (2005) had found a strong and positive correlation between higher psychopathy scores on the PCL-R with higher impulsivity scores, higher number of assaults, higher prison violence ratings and higher demonstrations of HABs. The present study did not support these findings either. It is possible this occurred due to the differences in the samples used. Both of the prior studies had used "extreme" samples with participants being either psychiatrically disturbed or very high on psychopathy. Due to the "extreme" samples used it is possible that their results do not generalise to less extreme and more psychologically stable offenders. Although the offenders used in this sample had committed serious index violent offences and were at very high-risk of violent recidivism they were all mainstream prisoners who were deemed psychologically stable by a senior clinician at the Western Australian Department of Justice and none of the sample had a history of major psychiatric illness.

The only published research using offender samples with which the present findings are somewhat convergent, and where the research had used a sample of mainstream high-risk violent offenders making the sample comparable with the current study, were by Simourd and Mamuza (2002) and Vitale et al., (2005). Simourd and

Mamuza presented in their article the means for HABs for 146 violent Canadian male prisoners and 137 low-risk U.S. adult offenders on probation. Although they did not report the statistical differences between each offender risk group, the means were themselves counterintuitive to what would be expected if HABs represented a risk factor for adult violent behaviour. The results from Vitale et al., were also counterintuitive. They found that in their sample of 150 male violent offenders that HABs were not casually related to violent behaviour. The result from this present study adds support to these counterintuitive results because if HABs are a risk factor for violent behaviour in adults then adults at high-risk of violent recidivism should have demonstrated more pronounced HABs than non-offenders or offenders. This was not the case.

Although the present study has demonstrated that HABs do not appear to represent an adult criminogenic risk factor, in no way did the results imply that HABs were not present, nor did they imply that HABs are not problematic for adults. What was observed was that high levels of HABs were not just a phenomenon experienced by adult offenders, it was a phenomenon experienced by most of the 430 adult non-offenders. The results showed that the more unacceptable the behaviour of the harmdoer the more pronounced the level of HABs became. This was regardless of whether a participant was an offender or not, or a male or female. Interestingly, these results were not influenced by how the participants had judged the hostile motives of others. As mentioned, there was little difference in the hostility order assigned to each scenario. All participants in each group were less outraged by the neighbours' behaviour in Scenario 2 and the lowest level of HAB were observed here. In contrast all participants, regardless of group, were more outraged by the behaviour of the ex-boyfriend and the highest level of HAB was assigned in Scenario 5. The overall result that regardless of group and gender high level of HABs were observed is very divergent from the large

body of adolescent literature which over the past 25 years has shown clear differences between males and females and violent offenders and non-offenders (de Castro et al., 2002; Krahe, 2001). There are two potential reasons which may account for why the present findings are so divergent from the literature, and so divergent from what text books have presented (see, for example, Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Blackburn, 1993).

The first reason is due to cognitive reasoning maturation. The adolescent literature had found that not only do juvenile offenders demonstrate higher HABs, but they are also developmentally delayed compared with their non-offender peers in other areas such as in moral reasoning ability (Goldstein & Glick, 1998), perspective-taking (Selman, 1980) and cognitive problem solving and verbal skills (Slaby & Guerra, 1988; Werner, 1989). The developmental delays observed in aggressive children and adolescents are also supported by large effect sizes. For example, a meta-analysis, using a pooled sample of 673 juvenile offenders found that on average the offenders were two to three years behind their peers in their level of moral reasoning development. The effect size for the difference was .74 and this was independent of measurement instrument, age, gender, ethnicity, I.Q. or socioeconomic status (Nelson, Smith and Dodd, 1990). In the case of moral reasoning it had been strongly argued that moral reasoning delay represented a criminogenic risk factor which should be increased through structured intervention (Goldstein & Glick, 1998). It was also strongly argued that the developmental delay found in adolescent would apply to adults (Arbuthnot and Gordon, 1988; Jennings, Kilkenny & Kohlberg, 1983). As there is a dearth of information in the adult literature in this area, it had not been demonstrated whether adult offenders were developmentally delayed or not. Stevenson et al., (2003, 2004) recently explored the delay hypothesis in a sample of 99 high-risk men and women violent offenders and 101 men and women non-offender university students. The findings were that the majority of offenders, regardless of gender, demonstrated a higher

level or reasoning than previously assumed with 65% of offenders demonstrating a mature level. Although the offenders' reasoning (at stage 3) was significantly lower than university students (at stage 3.5), the offenders were on average reasoning at the same level as men and women from the general population (Basinger, Gibbs & Fuller, 1995; Stevenson et al., 2003). What the Stevenson et al study showed was that even if the offenders were delayed during adolescence, as adults they were at the same level as the non-offender members of the general population. Inferring these results to the present study, it is possible that if even these offenders had higher HABs as adolescents, as adults their level of HAB is in line with adult non-offender students and adults from the general population.

Second, Huesman (1998) has carried out extensive work with young people noting that violent children and adolescents overwhelmingly have a hostile worldview and are suspicious about the ambiguous actions of others. In other words they tend to assume the worst. Like Bandura (1977), Huesman did not dismiss that many of these violent children and adolescents do grow up in hostile and violent environments and that their own use of violence may just simply be a case of them modeling their social reality [15]. Therefore, the HABs they demonstrate (although problematic and sometimes wrong) may be adaptive because they act as a protection mechanism as well as an aid to help them negotiate their "dog eat dog" world. When HABs are assessed between violent children and adolescents and their less aggressive peers, the less aggressive group are often formed using certain criteria. For example, Van Oostrum and Horvath (1997) used scores from Achenbach's (1995) Youth Self Report, whereas most of Dodge's influential work selected child and adolescent samples based on both teacher and peer ratings for young people who were compliant, non-disruptive in class and liked by their peers. The scores from the YSL and teacher and peer ratings are both correlates of

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[15] Not all violent offenders grew up in violent environments, although two unrelated studies found that 70% of violent offenders experienced physical abuse during childhood and approximately 80% reported substantial neglect as children (Haemaelaeinen & Haapasalo, 1996; Weeks & Widom, 1998).

children, who developmental psychologists argue, are on average representative of well adjusted children who grow up in nurturing and secure environments (Werner, 1989). It is also known that many children and adolescents who grew up in nurturing environments have idealised beliefs about the world and assume that most people are "good or nice" (Peterson, 1996). As it is known that most adolescents are not violent (AIC, 2004) and as most adolescents see the world in less than realistic terms, the question of importance is whether the lower HABs observed in non-violent adolescents is merely a manifestation of their idealised beliefs that the world is a nicer place than it actually is. One question that needs to be asked is whether children with higher HABs who are more suspicious of the motives of others are more accurate in their assessment than assumed? This suggestion does not imply that HABs are not problematic; the essence of the question is whether the benchmark of very low HABs observed in adolescent non-offenders is itself as unrealistic as their views of the world. It then follows that if non-aggressive adolescents' low HABs are underpinned by idealised beliefs about the world then as they become adults and through their lived experience their low HABs may increase as their idealised beliefs diminish. For example, children and adolescents often believe they can pursue whatever career they desire (Peterson, 1996). However, in adulthood due to the racism or sexism of the wider community they may be prevented from pursuing their chosen career (Bottomley & Parker, 1997). In other words, their idealised beliefs may diminish as they observe that people are not always "nice" and people do sometimes act with malice. It is possible that the results from the present study support this reasoning in that adult non-offenders appear to be just as suspicious and wary of the motives of others as adult male violent offenders.

The present study appears to be the first published study to assess the differences between a large sample of "non-extreme" adult mainstream male violent offenders, non-offender men and women university students, and a stratified random sample of adult

non-offender men and women from the general population. Based on the discussion presented, it would appear that the low benchmark set for HABs in non-offender adults **is too low**. As there was very limited prior adult comparative research, it appeared that an assumption was made in the literature that what was observed in the adolescent literature would apply to adult offenders. The present results indicate this is not the case. However, demonstrations of pronounced HABs have been noted by clinicians working with offenders (e.g., Bush, 1995). It is possible that what clinicians have themselves experienced is the fundamental attribution error (FAE) in action. FAEs are one of the most common attributional biases which occur when behaviour influenced by the situation/environment is taken as evidence of a stable internal trait (Aronson, 2004). As most clinicians see offender clients in prison or a parole office it is possible that the animosity they observe in offenders is due to *where* the sessions take place combined with *who* the clinicians work for (usually the justice system). As most sessions occur in criminal justice locations, the sessions are themselves occurring in one of the most hostile societies within society. As McVicar (1982) noted prisons are an environment where "watching your back" becomes second nature. McVicar noted several rules and codes of behaviour for "surviving" imprisonment. First, present yourself to other inmates as tough-minded and self-reliant. Second, don't "dob" on anyone to the authorities and watch your back because people **will** use you, assault you and take advantage if you let them. Third, if an inmate takes advantage, you have to deal with it or put up with it. This was underpinned by a code which saw violence between inmates as a legitimate, proper, and manly action which is sanctioned (unofficially) by the prison subculture. McVicar argues the violent subculture in prison is not about working class consciousness but rather what other inmates expect. For example, by asserting your authority (through violence) you effectively engage in "self-preservation" by ensuring a type of "respect' which equates to a reduction in other inmates trying to take

advantage. Not only is it possible that offenders while in prison are constantly hyper-vigilant because that is what is required to "survive", it is also possible that offenders view clinicians as "out-group" members. In essence clinicians may be viewed as not much different to prison guards or other employees of the social institution who has already punished them (the justice system). As discussed in Chapter 5, most offenders in this present study were shown to have a highly negative opinion of the people employed within the criminal justice system. Therefore, the pronounced level of HABs observed by clinicians may by more to do with the prison environment and that the high levels of animosity and suspiciousness maybe limited to interactions between people involved in the justice system which may not extend outside of the justice system.

Not only may the FAE be operating here with respect to the clinical observations made in justice setting, it is also possible that based on the literature clinicians also believe that non-offenders will demonstrate much lower higher HABs than offenders. Given that non-offenders in the current study demonstrated the same level of HABs as offenders, it is reasonable to argue that non-offenders would also appear just as "suspicious and hostile" if they were placed in a hostile prison environment. This argument is underpinned by the Stamford Prison experiment findings which clearly showed the negative impact upon a group of psychologically stable students after entering the hostile environment of a mock prison (Zimbardo, 1995).

In summary, two suggestions were proposed for the unexpected finding that offenders did not demonstrate pronounced HABs compared with non-offenders. Each suggestion raises its own question. In adulthood do non-offenders increase their level of HABs to that of offenders, or as adults do offenders decrease their level of HABs to be more in line with non-offenders? Whichever answer is correct, what the present study has shown is that the non-offenders demonstrate the same level of HABs as offender adults.

**Hypothesis 3** assessed the differences between offenders and non-offenders in their use of the fundamental attribution error (FAE) during problematic social situations. This was an exploratory aim devised from the unanticipated findings from Study 1 where the FAE had been used as a method of dehumanising harmdoers during grievance escalation. Although this bias was not assumed to represent a criminogenic variable per se, it was proposed that it may be more problematic for some people if they engage in higher levels of the FAE over a range of situations.

The results did not support this exploratory hypothesis showing that offenders were no more likely than men and women non-offenders to demonstrate high levels of this bias. Given these results, it has not been demonstrated that the FAE represents a criminogenic risk factor.

However, similar to the "is/ought" discrepancy, what the results did show was that regardless of group higher levels of this bias were found across the different scenarios. Specifically, the less hostile the behaviour of the harmdoer the lower the FAE, and with the FAE increasing as hostility judgement increased. In essence, the more antinormative and unacceptable the behaviour was judged to be combined with the higher level of hostile intent assigned, the more likely the participants, regardless of group, judged the harmdoer's behaviour as due to bad manners or ignorance. It appears that although the FAE is not a criminogenic risk factor it can play a part in how and why grievances escalate. As Aronson (2004) argued, this bias can be problematic when a thoughtless error is taken as evidence that this person is "always bad". This can be especially problematic when the FAE is used as a method of dehumanising a person, where an associate is cognitively transformed into a "despicable rat". It is suggested that once a person is dehumanised it becomes psychologically easier to harm them, be rude to them and/or retaliate against them. As Aronson (2004) said, it is far easier to harm a "rat"

than a person who just made a mistake. This issue will be discussed further when the results are applied to Luckenbill and Doyle's model (refer Chapter 7, Section 7.3).

In conclusion, the analyses presented above for Part 1 of the MAPS showed some unexpected results which suggested that adult offenders and non-offenders are not that different from each in how they interpret the harmful actions of others. The next section of this chapter explored whether adult male offenders experience different types of emotions than non-offenders when faced with the same harmful behaviour.

### 6.4.3 Comparing Male Offenders with Men and Women Non-Offenders on the MAPS Part 2: Feelings Reported

#### 6.4.3.1 Hypothesis 4: Do Offenders report different feelings during problematic social interactions than non-offenders? The next analysis tested Hypothesis 4 which was based on the proposition that if violent offenders have pronounced HABs then is likely that: d*ue to the over-attribution of hostile intent male offenders would report more negative emotional states over the five MAPS scenarios compared with non-offenders.* As discussed above, the results from Part 1 of the MAPS showed that attributional biases were no more problematic for adult male violent offenders than non-offenders. Given these results the prediction of Hypothesis 4 could not be fully tested. However, given the prominence with which the offenders who participated in the Study 1 discussed how upset and angry they felt towards their harmdoers it was beneficial to assess whether offenders experience different emotions than non-offenders during the escalation of grievances.

To explore whether offenders differed from non-offenders in the type of feelings they reported on each scenario, a series of 2 (feeling experienced, yes/no) x  7 (feelings

measured) two-way contingency tables were constructed for each scenario. To minimise the risk of Type I errors, alpha was set at .01 for evidence of significance. Table 45 overleaf shows the percentage in each group reporting they would experience each of the feelings measured. Table 45 also displays the results from the Chi-square analyses with phi-coefficients as an estimate of the effect size. Due to the number of results presented, significant differences are highlighted in bold. As some participants did not indicate the types of feelings they believed they would experience the number of cases for each analysis was reduced and the total number of participants used is noted.

As can be seen, the results showed significant associations for 14 of the 35 feelings assessed. This suggests that for 21 different type of feelings assessed across the five scenarios, regardless of whether a participant was an offender, a student, or a member of the general population the same types of feelings would be felt.

For Scenario 1, regarding the ambiguous behaviour of the cleaner, significant associations were found for the experience of "sadness" and "no feeling". The negative residuals showed that fewer offenders and fewer male students than expected by chance reported they would feel "sad" by the cleaners behaviour compared with female students and men and women from the community. For "no feelings" more male students and more offenders than would be expected by change reported they would not feel anything, whereas fewer community women than expected said they would has no feelings. No other significant associations were observed.

**Table 45.** Feelings Reported by Each Group for Each Scenario (Scenarios 1 to 3)

| Scenario and intent type | Feelings reported | N [a] | Offenders[b] | n [c] | Male Students[b] | n c | Female Students[b] | n [c] | Male Community[b] | N [c] | Female Community[b] | N [c] | Pearson $\chi^{2}$ [d] | Sig. | $\phi$ [e] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. The cleaner** (Ambiguous) | Happy | 502 | 5% | 86 | 14% | 13 | 28% | 10 | 5% | 5 | 8% | 3 | 9.84 | .04 | .14 |
| | Insulted | 502 | 22% | 19 | 26% | 24 | 21% | 27 | 29% | 29 | 40% | 37 | 12.28 | .02 | .16 |
| | **Sad** | **502** | **-** | **0** | **7%** | **6** | **15%** | **20** | **12%** | **12** | **21%** | **19** | **23.07** | ***p<.01*** | **.21** |
| | Angry | 502 | 15% | 13 | 17% | 16 | 21% | 27 | 21% | 21 | 27% | 25 | 4.62 | .33 | .09 |
| | Scared | 502 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 2% | 2 | 8.95 | .06 | .13 |
| | Fed-up | 502 | 13% | 11 | 21% | 20 | - | 0 | 12% | 12 | 2% | 2 | 7.45 | .11 | .12 |
| | **No feelings** | **502** | **55%** | **47** | **43%** | **40** | **39%** | **51** | **38%** | **38** | **25%** | **23** | **16.85** | ***p<.01*** | **.18** |
| **2. The neighbours** (Benign) | **Happy** | **514** | **94%** | **81** | **76%** | **74** | **69%** | **93** | **94%** | **97** | **90%** | **85** | **42.63** | ***p<.01*** | **.29** |
| | Insulted | 514 | 1% | 1 | 1% | 1 | .1% | 1 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 2.08 | .72 | .06 |
| | **Sad** | **514** | **-** | **0** | **1%** | **1** | **5%** | **7** | **-** | **0** | **-** | **0** | **16.25** | ***p<.01*** | **.18** |
| | Angry | 514 | - | 0 | 3% | 3 | 3% | 4 | 1% | 1 | - | 0 | 6.43 | .17 | .11 |
| | Scared [f] | 514 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | - | - |
| | **Fed-up** | **514** | **1%** | **1** | **4%** | **4** | **15%** | **20** | **4%** | **4** | **3%** | **3** | **23.99** | ***p<.01*** | **.22** |
| | **No feelings** | **514** | **4%** | **3** | **18%** | **17** | **15%** | **20** | **4%** | **4** | **8%** | **8** | **18.45** | ***p<.01*** | **.19** |
| **3. The friend** (Ambiguous) | Happy [f] | 494 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | - | - |
| | Insulted | 494 | 42% | 34 | 33% | 32 | 22% | 29 | 26% | 25 | 31% | 28 | 10.61 | .03 | .15 |
| | **Sad** | **494** | **9%** | **7** | **46%** | **45** | **44%** | **57** | **41%** | **40** | **38%** | **34** | **34.69** | ***p<.01*** | **.27** |
| | **Angry** | **494** | **49%** | **40** | **73%** | **71** | **70%** | **91** | **53%** | **51** | **59%** | **53** | **17.03** | ***p<.01*** | **.19** |
| | Scared | 494 | 3% | 2 | 5% | 5 | 11% | 14 | 5% | 5 | 12% | 11 | 9.23 | .06 | .14 |
| | **Fed-up** | **494** | **21%** | **17** | **43%** | **42** | **44%** | **58** | **16%** | **15** | **22%** | **20** | **35.58** | ***p<.01*** | **.27** |
| | No feelings | 494 | 3% | 2 | - | 0 | 2% | 2 | 5% | 5 | 3% | 3 | 6.17 | .19 | .11 |

*Notes:* *$p < .01$ (adjusted alpha, 2-tail). [a] Total number of participants used for analysis. [b] Percentage of participants by group reporting they would experience the feeling. [c] Number of participants by group reporting they would experience the feeling. [d] Pearson Chi-square, using 4 d.f. [e] Phi coefficient. [f] Chi-square not calculated, no participants said they would experience this feeling.

Table 45 (Continued). Feelings Reported by Each Group for Each Scenario (Scenarios 4 and 5)

| Scenario and intent type | Feelings reported | N [a] | Offenders[b] | n [c] | Male Students[b] | n [c] | Female Students[b] | n [c] | Male Community[b] | n [c] | Female Community[b] | n [c] | Pearson $\chi^{2}$ [d] | Sig. | $\phi$ [e] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. The supervisor (Ambiguous) | Happy | 498 | 6% | 5 | 3% | 3 | 2% | 2 | 6% | 6 | 7% | 6 | 5.50 | .24 | .11 |
| | Insulted | 498 | 29% | 24 | 42% | 40 | 40% | 54 | 33% | 32 | 33% | 29 | 4.93 | .30 | .10 |
| | **Sad** | 498 | **1%** | **1** | **26%** | **25** | **27%** | **36** | **15%** | **15** | **18%** | **16** | **27.21** | **p<.01\*** | **.23** |
| | Angry | 498 | 13% | 11 | 27% | 26 | 19% | 25 | 25% | 24 | 25% | 22 | 7.54 | .11 | .12 |
| | Scared | 498 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 1% | 1 | - | 0 | 4.09 | .40 | .09 |
| | **Fed-up** | 498 | **19%** | **16** | **59%** | **57** | **62%** | **84** | **39%** | **38** | **13%** | **11** | **47.60** | **p<.01\*** | **.31** |
| | **No feelings** | 498 | **39%** | **33** | **15%** | **14** | **10%** | **14** | **19%** | **19** | **13%** | **11** | **33.13** | **p<.01\*** | **26** |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. The ex-boyfriend (Hostile) | Happy | 506 | 1% | 1 | - | 0 | 1% | 1 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 2.86 | .58 | .08 |
| | **Insulted** | **506** | **28%** | **24** | **16%** | **15** | **10%** | **13** | **21%** | **21** | **11%** | **10** | **15.82** | **p<.01\*** | **.18** |
| | **Sad** | **506** | **5%** | **4** | **18%** | **17** | **34%** | **45** | **17%** | **17** | **11%** | **10** | **35.50** | **p<.01\*** | **.27** |
| | Angry | 506 | 66% | 57 | 79% | 75 | 61% | 81 | 56% | 57 | 59% | 54 | 13.34 | .02 | .20 |
| | **Scared** | **506** | **5%** | **4** | **42%** | **40** | **60%** | **85** | **37%** | **38** | **69%** | **63** | **100.19** | **p<.01\*** | **.45** |
| | Fed-up | 506 | 11% | 9 | 17% | 16 | 17% | 22 | 15% | 15 | 17% | 13 | 1.98 | .74 | .06 |
| | No feelings | 506 | 8% | 7 | 3% | 3 | 2% | 2 | 4% | 4 | 1% | 1 | 9.00 | .06 | .13 |

*Notes:* \**p* < .01 (adjusted alpha, 2-tail). [a] Total number of participants used for analysis. [b] Percentage of participants by group reporting they would experience the feeling. [c] Number of participants by group reporting they would experience the feeling. [d] Pearson Chi-square, using 4 d.f. [e] Phi coefficient. [f] Chi-square not calculated, no participants said they would experience this feeling.

For Scenario 2, regarding the thoughtless/benign behaviour of the neighbours, four significant associations were shown for the feelings of "happy", "sad", "fed-up", and "no feelings". The negative residuals showed that fewer male and female students said they feel happy about the neighbours' behaviour than would be expected by chance. In contrast more offenders and men and women from the community reported they would feel happy about the situation than expected by chance. For the feelings of "sadness" and "fed-up" the only negative residuals obtained showed that the significance was accounted for by one group. More female students than expected said they would feel "sad" and would feel "fed-up" then expected. The residuals for the last significant association showed that more male and female students than expected said they would not feel anything by the neighbours' behaviour.

For Scenario 3, which describes the ambiguous behaviour of the friend regarding the unpaid debt, three significant associations were observed. The residuals showed that fewer offenders would feel "sad" about the friend's behaviour than the community men and women and the male and female students. However, for the remaining associations, more male and female students than expected reported feeling "angry" and "fed-up" with the friend than the offenders or the community men and women.

Three significant associations were observed for Scenario 4, regarding the ambiguous behaviour of the supervisor. The tests showed that more male and female students than expected by chance said they feel "sad" and "fed-up" with the situation than the offenders or the community men and women. In contrast, more of the community men and the offenders reported they would have "no feelings" about the situation compared with the male and female students and women from the community.

For Scenario 5, describing the antagonistic and hostile behaviour of the ex-boyfriend, three significant associations were observed. The residuals showed that more community men and male offenders than expected said they would feel "insulted" by

the ex-boyfriend. In contrast, more female students than expected said they would experience being "sad" in this situation. For the last association, the negative residuals showed more women than expected by chance said they would feel "scared" with fewer offenders than expected reporting they would feel "scared". Of interest, the largest effect size obtained in all the analyses performed was for the feeling of "scared". As can be seen in Table 45, the percentage of offenders who said they would feel scared is significantly lower than any other group.

The final overall observation from the results is that the types of feelings reported for each scenario. As can be seen in Table 45, the more anti-normative and hostile the groups had judged the scenario the higher the frequency of reported negative feelings. The scenario judged by all groups as the most anti-normative and hostile was Scenario 5 (the ex-boyfriend). In this scenario the negative emotions of being "scared" and "angry" were at highest for both men and women. These differences were not surprising, with a larger percentage of women reporting they would feel "scared" by the ex-boyfriends behaviour. In contrast, the scenario judged by all groups as the least hostile was Scenario 2 (the neighbours). It was in scenario 2 that most participants reported the positive emotion of "happiness".


### 6.4.3.2 Discussion of results: Feelings reported

In summary, for the majority of feelings reported, associations between the types of feelings reported and the five groups was not observed. This suggests that regardless of whether a person is a high risk violent offender, a university undergraduate, or a member of the general population these men and women would experience similar feelings about the situation and the harmdoer across all five scenarios. However, 14 significant associations were found, although in five of these associations the estimated effect sizes were all very small (phi-coefficients < .20).

The results showed that the more anti-normative and hostile the participants had judged the scenarios the higher the frequency of reported negative feelings and the more likely the participants were to report multiple negative feelings. This supports the interactional justice literature which has found that the more offensive, and deliberately hostile/malicious a victim judges the actions of a harmdoer the more likely they are to experience negative emotions, such as sadness, humiliation and moralistic anger (Bies & Tripp, 1996; Hogan and Emler, 1981; Mikula et al., 1998). This adds further support for the proposition that Luckenbill and Doyle's grievance escalation model could be enhanced by discussing how "is/ought" discrepancies occur and why these discrepancies are associated with the development of negative emotional states and the desire to "get even".

As the primary emphasis of this project was to assess differences in attributions and beliefs, the experience of different emotional states during grievance escalation was secondary. It is therefore important to stress that these results are merely descriptive and it cannot be inferred that offenders and non-offenders are similar in the intensity of the emotions felt during grievance escalation. There is a large body of literature which has examined emotional intensity finding that offenders are significantly different from non-offenders. For example, offenders are suggested to have such elevated levels of anger it has been referred to as "white rage" (Bartol & Bartol, 2005). As it is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully discuss this literature, the interested reader is referred to Bartol and Bartol (2005), Howells (1988), and Blackburn (1995) for a summary.

### 6.4.4 Grievance Resolution Strategies: Part 3 of the MAPS

#### 6.4.4.1 Hypothesis 5: Group differences in types of grievance resolution

strategies reported (problem solving). Hypothesis 5 was devised to test Ajzen &

Madden's (1986) proposition that there is a link between positive attitudes toward a

specific behaviour and behavioural intentions. This hypothesis was underpinned by the

results obtained in Study 5 which showed that the male offender group endorsed

significantly higher sentiments justifying the use of violence and were clearly

distinguishable from the four non-offender groups (men and women students and

community participants). The younger male students in turn endorsed significantly

higher sentiments than the female students and the older men and women from the

community group. Given the clear group differences in pro-violent sentiments, it was

predicted that: *male offenders would report more violence based grievance resolution*

*strategies than male students. Male students in turn would report more violence based*

*strategies than female students and men and women from the community.*

Prior to analysis, all responses given on Part 3 for each of the five scenarios were

coded according to the MAPS scoring guide (refer Appendix D) [16]. To explore the

associations between the types of strategies reported on each scenario, a series of 5

(group) x 2 (type of strategy, yes/no) two-way contingency tables were constructed. As

multiple tests were performed, the alpha level was set at .01 for each test.

The percentages of participants in each group who stated they would use each

strategy is presented in Table 46. As several participants did not provide a response to

some of the scenarios the number of cases in some analysis is reduced and is noted. The

results from Chi-square analysis and effect size estimates based on phi-coefficients are

also presented. Where results were significant they are highlighted in bold.

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[16] After Part 3 had been coded, a selection of responses for each scenario theme code were inserted into the MAPS scoring guide. This ensured that the finalised scoring guide in Appendix D was not restricted to university undergraduates but illustrated responses from adult male offenders and men and women non-offender from the community as well.

**Table 46.** Grievance Resolution Strategies (Problem solving) Reported by Each Group for each Scenario (Scenarios 1 to 3)

| Scenario and intent type | Resolution strategy for each scenario | N [a] | Offenders [b] | N [c] | Male Students [b] | n [c] | Female Students [b] | n [c] | Male Community [b] | N [c] | Female Community [b] | N [c] | Pearson $\chi^2$ [d] | Sig. | $\phi$ [e] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The cleaner (Ambiguous) | **Do nothing** | 487 | **21%** | **17** | **42%** | **36** | **38%** | **49** | **27%** | **26** | **20%** | **18** | **17.26** | **p<.01*** | **.21** |
| | Avoidance | 487 | 9% | 7 | 5% | 4 | 3% | 3 | 6% | 6 | 6% | 5 | 4.45 | .35 | .10 |
| | **Aggression** | 487 | **5%** | **4** | - | **0** | **0%** | **0** | - | **0** | **0%** | **0** | **20.22** | **p<.01*** | **.20** |
| | Reactive | 487 | - | 0 | 3% | 2 | 3% | 4 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 7.82 | .09 | .13 |
| | Verbal aggression | 487 | 12% | 10 | 16% | 14 | 8% | 10 | 9% | 9 | 4% | 4 | 8.29 | .08 | .13 |
| | Ambiguous assertion | 487 | 21% | 17 | 16% | 14 | 19% | 24 | 19% | 19 | 22% | 20 | 1.20 | .89 | .05 |
| | Assertive | 487 | 27% | 22 | 16% | 14 | 29% | 37 | 32% | 31 | 34% | 31 | 8.50 | .08 | .13 |
| | Supportive | 487 | 7% | 6 | 3% | 3 | 2% | 3 | 4% | 4 | 9% | 8 | 6.42 | .17 | .12 |
| | **Talk to HR** | 487 | **1%** | **1** | **2%** | **2** | **3%** | **4** | **10%** | **10** | **19%** | **17** | **30.86** | **p<.01*** | **.25** |
| | Other | 487 | 4% | 3 | 1% | 1 | 3% | 4 | 2% | 2 | 1% | 1 | 2.22 | .69 | .07 |
| 2. Neighbours (Benign) | **Nothing** | 469 | **52%** | **44** | **27%** | **21** | **22%** | **26** | **39%** | **37** | **53%** | **49** | **32.91** | **p<.01*** | **.27** |
| | Avoidance | 469 | 10% | 8 | 4% | 3 | 1% | 1 | 10% | 10 | 5% | 5 | 11.86 | .02 | .16 |
| | Aggression [f] | 469 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | - | - |
| | **Reactive** | 469 | **4%** | **3** | - | **0** | - | **0** | - | **0** | - | **0** | **13.84** | **p<.01*** | **.17** |
| | Verbal aggression | 469 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 3% | 3 | 1% | 1 | - | 0 | 6.14 | .19 | .11 |
| | Ambiguous assertion | 469 | 5% | 4 | 5% | 4 | 3% | 3 | 1% | 1 | - | 0 | 7.11 | .13 | .12 |
| | **Assertive** | 469 | **4%** | **3** | **6%** | **5** | **8%** | **10** | - | **0** | - | **0** | **15.75** | **p<.01*** | **.18** |
| | **Say thanks** | 469 | **25%** | **21** | **44%** | **35** | **63%** | **75** | **50%** | **48** | **45%** | **42** | **29.32** | **p<.01*** | **.26** |
| | **Socialise** | 469 | **4%** | **4** | **23%** | **18** | **10%** | **12** | **4%** | **4** | **3%** | **3** | **28.67** | **p<.01*** | **.25** |
| | Other | 469 | - | 0 | 1% | 1 | 2% | 2 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 4.31 | .37 | .09 |
| 3. The friend (Ambiguous) | Nothing | 444 | 1% | 1 | 1% | 1 | - | 0 | 5% | 4 | 4% | 3 | 6.79 | .15 | .12 |
| | Avoidance | 444 | 11% | 8 | 3% | 2 | 2% | 2 | 10% | 9 | 9% | 7 | 12.21 | .02 | .16 |
| | **Aggression** | 444 | **18%** | **13** | **3%** | **2** | - | **0** | - | **0** | - | **0** | **57.93** | **p<.01*** | **.36** |
| | **Reactive** | 444 | **14%** | **10** | **1%** | **1** | **4%** | **5** | - | **0** | - | **0** | **29.60** | **p<.01*** | **.26** |
| | **Verbal aggression** | 444 | **10%** | **7** | **14%** | **11** | **8%** | **10** | **1%** | **1** | - | **0** | **18.71** | **p<.01*** | **.21** |
| | Ambiguous assertion | 444 | 17% | 12 | 26% | 21 | 13% | 16 | 15% | 13 | 10% | 8 | 9.91 | .04 | .15 |
| | **Assertive** | 444 | **38%** | **27** | **43%** | **34** | **69%** | **85** | **53%** | **47** | **51%** | **41** | **23.05** | **p<.01*** | **.22** |
| | Temporary fix | 444 | 8% | 6 | 15% | 12 | 15% | 19 | 17% | 15 | 24% | 19 | 6.62 | .16 | .12 |
| | Pay money | 444 | 13% | 9 | 7% | 6 | 7% | 9 | 2% | 2 | 3% | 2 | 9.61 | .04 | .15 |
| | Other | 444 | 3% | 2 | 4% | 3 | 8% | 10 | 6% | 5 | 14% | 11 | 9.13 | .05 | .14 |

*Notes:* For notes see Table 46 continued overleaf.

**Table 46 (Continued).** Grievance Resolution Strategies (Problem Solving) Reported by Each Group for each Scenario (Scenarios 4 and 5)

| Scenario and intent type | Resolution strategy for each scenario | N [a] | Offenders[b] | n [c] | Male Students[b] | n [c] | Female Students[b] | n [c] | Male Community[b] | N [c] | Female Community[b] | N [c] | Pearson $\chi^{2}$ [d] | Sig. | $\phi$ [e] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. Supervisor (Ambiguous) | Nothing | 473 | 23% | 18 | 20% | 17 | 12% | 15 | 12% | 11 | 13% | 11 | 7.76 | .10 | .13 |
| | Avoidance | 473 | 8% | 6 | 1% | 1 | 2% | 2 | 2% | 2 | 1% | 1 | 10.04 | .04 | .15 |
| | Aggression | 473 | 1% | 1 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 4.99 | .29 | .10 |
| | Reactive | 473 | 1% | 1 | - | 0 | 1% | 1 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 2.85 | .58 | .08 |
| | **Verbal aggression** | **473** | **4%** | **3** | **7%** | **6** | **-** | **0** | **-** | **0** | **-** | **0** | **19.89** | ***p<.01*** | **.21** |
| | Ambiguous assertion | 473 | 9% | 7 | 2% | 2 | 3% | 4 | 6% | 6 | 6% | 5 | 5.03 | .28 | .10 |
| | **Assertive** | **473** | **13%** | **10** | **38%** | **33** | **52%** | **66** | **44%** | **41** | **47%** | **41** | **33.73** | ***p<.01*** | **.27** |
| | Talk to boss/HR | 473 | 8% | 6 | 5% | 4 | 13% | 17 | 18% | 17 | 17% | 15 | 10.89 | .03 | .15 |
| | Quit | 473 | 18% | 14 | 13% | 11 | 11% | 14 | 20% | 19 | 22% | 19 | 6.31 | .18 | .11 |
| | **Bide time** | **473** | **11%** | **9** | **33%** | **28** | **32%** | **41** | **20%** | **19** | **33%** | **29** | **17.01** | ***p<.01*** | **.19** |
| | **Prove self** | **473** | **22%** | **17** | **7%** | **6** | **20%** | **25** | **10%** | **9** | **3%** | **3** | **20.97** | ***p<.01*** | **.21** |
| | Other | 473 | 3% | 2 | 4% | 3 | 4% | 5 | 2% | 2 | 1% | 1 | 1.86 | .76 | .06 |
| 5. Ex-boyfriend (Hostile) | Nothing | 471 | 10% | 8 | 5% | 4 | 4% | 5 | 14% | 13 | 13% | 11 | 11.39 | .02 | .15 |
| | **Avoidance** | **471** | **7%** | **6** | **18%** | **16** | **34%** | **44** | **25%** | **23** | **45%** | **38** | **37.37** | ***p<.01*** | **.28** |
| | **Aggression** | **471** | **56%** | **44** | **44%** | **39** | **5%** | **6** | **8%** | **7** | **3%** | **2** | **139.41** | ***p<.01*** | **.54** |
| | Reactive | 471 | - | 0 | 6% | 5 | 4% | 5 | - | 0 | - | 0 | 12.96 | .02 | .16 |
| | Verbal aggression | 471 | 8% | 6 | 5% | 4 | 2% | 3 | 3% | 3 | - | 0 | 8.25 | .08 | .13 |
| | Ambiguous assertion | 471 | 5% | 4 | 10% | 9 | 2% | 3 | 9% | 8 | 2% | 2 | 10.04 | .04 | .14 |
| | Assertive | 471 | 17% | 13 | 27% | 24 | 28% | 36 | 28% | 26 | 21% | 18 | 4.81 | .31 | .10 |
| | **Police/legal** | **471** | **5%** | **4** | **42%** | **36** | **75%** | **98** | **39%** | **36** | **57%** | **48** | **102.20** | ***p<.01*** | **.47** |
| | Defend self | 471 | 8% | 6 | 13% | 11 | 7% | 9 | 9% | 8 | 1% | 1 | 8.63 | .07 | .14 |
| | Other | 471 | - | 0 | 1% | 1 | 4% | 5 | - | 0 | 5% | 4 | 8.69 | .07 | .14 |

*Notes:* *$p < .01$ (adjusted alpha, 2-tail). [a] Total number of participants used for analysis. [b] Percentage of participants by group endorsing type of strategy. [c] Number of participants by group endorsing type of strategy. [d] Pearson Chi-square, using 2 d.f. [e] Phi coefficient. [f] Chi-square not calculated, no participants said they would use this strategy.

As can be seen in Table 46, out of the 52 different grievance resolution strategies analysed 19 significant associations were observed.

For Scenario 1, regarding the ambiguous interaction with the cleaner, the results showed three significant associations between the groups and the types of strategies reported. The first association was for "do nothing". The residuals showed that fewer men from the community and fewer of the offenders would not just ignore the situation than would be expected by chance. The second association was for "aggression" where more offenders said they would use violence on the cleaner. However, although only 4 offenders said they would be violent, none of the non-offenders said they be would engage in acts of physically aggression. The third association was for reporting the cleaner by taking the matter to "the boss or the HR department". In this association the residuals showed that more men and women from the community than expected said they would discuss the matter with someone in authority. Overall, it appears that in this scenario low levels of actual violence were  considered, although a reasonable percentage of people in all groups said they would use either verbal aggression, or ambiguous assertive strategies. Finally, for the three significant associations small estimated effect sizes were observed, with phi-coefficients ranging from .21 to .25.

Five significant associations were shown for Scenario 2 regarding the benign/thoughtless behaviour of the neighbours. These were for the strategies of "do nothing", "reactive retaliation", "be assertive", "say thank-you", and "socialise". The negative residuals showed that fewer of male and female students said they would "do nothing" about the situation than would be expected by chance. More offenders than expected said they would engage in acts of reactive aggression, primarily revving their own cars during the day, or would consider stealing the neighbours car. No non-offenders said they would engage in reactive retaliation in this situation. The residuals for the next significant association showed that more female students than expected

would use assertion in this situation. In this case, the female students using this strategy said they would politely remind the neighbours to keep the noise down in the future. In the next association the residuals showed that more female students would thank the neighbours while fewer offenders than expected said they would thank them. The final association showed that more male and female students than expected said they would purposefully get to know the neighbours better and arrange a social event like a BBQ. These results combined suggest that more offenders would just leave the matter, while more male and female students would actively develop a relationship with the neighbours. In this scenario, none of the 469 participants said they would use or consider using physical aggression, although 4 offenders said they would engage in acts specifically to annoy or cause material harm to their neighbours. This result is not unexpected because the scenario was specifically written to reflect a thoughtless error and as the results for Part 1 of the MAPS (presented above) showed the five groups judged the neighbour's behaviour as benign rather than hostile/malicious. Finally, for the five significant associations small estimated effect sizes were observed, with phi-coefficients ranging from .17 to .27.

Four significant associations were observed for Scenario 3, regarding the ambiguous actions of friend. These associations were for the strategies of "aggression", "reactive retaliation", "verbal aggression" and "assertion". The residuals showed that more offenders than would be expected by chance said they would use, or threaten "physical aggression" to solve the problem between themselves and their friend. More female students and more of the offenders than expected said they use an indirect form of retaliation to solve this problem. This primarily equated to teaming up with "John" and helping him collect the debt from "the friend". Of interest, both the offenders and female students said they would effectively help "John" to remove enough of the friend's possessions to pay the debt off. In the next significant association more of the

male and female students and more offenders than expected said they would be verbally abusive toward the friend. The fourth association showed that more female students than expected by chance would actively engage in assertive communication with the friend to try and resolve the situation. In contrast, fewer offenders than expected by chance said they would use assertive communication. Overall, more of the offenders said they would use violence or would engage in passive-aggressive acts designed to materially harm their friend while appeasing "John". The offender men were also the group the least likely to be assertive in trying to sort the situation out. In this scenario, three of the significant associations had small estimated effect sizes, with phi-coefficients ranging from .21 to .26. For the strategy of "aggression" the phi-coefficient estimated a small to medium effect; that is .36.

In Scenario 4, describing the ambiguous behaviour of the supervisor as regards the allocation of work tasks, three associations were significant. The first was for "verbal aggression" with more offenders and more male students than expected by chance saying they would be verbally abusive to the supervisor. However, despite the association being significant, only 3 offenders and 6 male students said they would use this strategy. None of the female students or men and women from the community said they would be verbally aggressive. The second association observed was for "assertion" with fewer offenders than expected saying they would "assertively" argue their case and discuss the matter with the supervisor. The next association was similar in that again it was fewer offender than expected who said they would "bide their time" to see if the situation improved. In contrast, the fourth association showed that more offenders and more female students then expected said they actively "prove themselves" to the supervisor. Overall, the results showed that although fewer offenders would be assertive or were willing to bide their time, they were more likely to work hard to prove to the supervisor they were good employees. In this scenario low levels of physical

aggression, verbal aggression or passive-aggression were endorsed. Similar to the other scenarios discussed so far, small estimated effect sizes were observed for Scenario 4 , with phi-coefficients ranging from .19 to .27.

Lastly, for Scenario 5, regarding the hostile antagonistic behaviour of the ex-boyfriend, three associations were significant for the strategies of "avoidance", "aggression" and "police/legal". The residuals showed that in this hostile situation more community men and women and more female students than expected said they would actively avoid further interaction with the ex-boyfriend. This usually equated to going inside, locking the doors, or making a quick escape and going home. In keeping with Hypothesis 5, the residuals for "aggression" showed that more offenders and more male students said they engage in, or threaten, physical aggression to deal with the ex-boyfriend. In contrast, the negative residuals showed that fewer female students and fewer men and women from the community than expected said they use or threaten physical aggression. The negative residuals for the last significant association showed that than fewer offenders said they would call the police or seek another form of legal assistance. In contrast, the residuals showed that that more female students and women from the community than expected by chance said they would call the police or get another kind of legal assistance (e.g., a violence restraining order). In Scenario 5 the largest effect size were observed. For the strategy of "avoidance" a small effect was estimated, being .28. However for "aggression" and "police/legal" medium effects sizes were estimated with phi-coefficients ranging from .47 to .54.

### 6.4.4.2 Hypothesis 6: Group differences on the number of grievance resolution strategies reported (Problem solving).

The rationale for Hypothesis 6 was to assess whether the prior findings of Slaby and Guerra (1988) using an adolescent sample would generalise to adults. It was predicted that if the ability to generate fewer

alternative grievance resolution strategies represented an adult risk factor for violent offenders then: *male offenders would report a lower number of grievance resolution strategies than adult male non-offender students and the community.*

In order to test this hypothesis the number of alternative responses (e.g., different types) given by the participants in each group on each of the five scenarios were summed. A series of five one-way ANOVAS was then performed to assess whether the groups differed from each other. Only those participants who provided a response on each of the scenarios was included in the analysis. The number of participants per group is recorded in Table 47 below. The table also presents the mean number and standard deviations for the number of different alternatives given as well as the ANOVA results. Where results were significant they are highlighted in bold.

**Table 47**. Means, Standard Deviations (in parentheses) and Group Differences in the Number of Alternative Grievance Resolution Strategies Reported

| Scenario number | Male Offenders | Male Students | Female Students | Male Community | Female Community | f (d.f.) Sig, $\eta^{2\,a}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 1.07 | 1.03 | 1.06 | 1.09 | 1.14 | $\underline{f}$ (4, 482) = 1.94, $\underline{p}$= .10, $\eta^2$=.02 |
| | (0.26) | (0.18) | (0.27) | (0.29) | (0.35) | |
| 2. | 1.04 | 1.12 | 1.11 | 1.05 | 1.06 | $\underline{f}$ (4, 464) = 1.64, $\underline{p}$ = .16, $\eta^2$=.01 |
| | (0.18) | (0.32) | (0.31) | (0.22) | (0.25) | |
| **3.** | **1.32** | **1.27** | **1.16** | **1.12** | **1.08** | **$\underline{f}$ (4, 439) = 4.90, $\underline{p}$ < .01\*, $\eta^2$=.04** |
| | **(0.50)** | **(0.48)** | **(0.41)** | **(0.33)** | **(0.32)** | |
| **4.** | **1.19** | **1.32** | **1.48** | **1.34** | **1.42** | **$\underline{f}$ (4, 468) = 3.62, $\underline{p}$ < .01\*, $\eta^2$=.03** |
| | **(0.40)** | **(0.50)** | **(0.70)** | **(0.58)** | **(0.56)** | |
| **5.** | **1.17** | **1.72** | **1.68** | **1.35** | **1.50** | **$\underline{f}$ (4, 466) =14.71, $\underline{p}$< .01\*, $\eta^2$=.11** |
| | **(0.38)** | **(0.68)** | **(0.62)** | **(0.52)** | **(0.57)** | |

*Notes: \* **p < . 01**. [a] Results for one-way ANOVAs with eta-squared estimates for the effect size.*

The ANOVAs found three significant differences across the five scenarios. The first difference was for Scenario 3, and contrary to prediction, it was the offender group who generated the highest number of alternate strategies. The post hoc Scheffé tests showed that the offender group generated a significantly higher number of strategies than male and female students ($p < .05$) and men and women from the community

group ($p < .001$). The male and female students were not different from the community (all tests $p > .05$).

Although the ANOVA found a significant difference for Scenario 4 the post hoc tests could not locate where the groups difference lay. All Scheffé comparisons for each of the five groups were $p > .05$. According to the post hocs, all five means formed one homogeneous subset which could not clearly distinguish one group from another. This could have occurred due to a slight difference in the mean being significant, although when looking at the estimated effect size ($\eta^2 = .03$) the effect is so small that the groups were in effect not that different.

The third significant difference was for Scenario 5. Here it was the male and female students and women from the community who generated the same number of strategies (all tests $p > .01$) as well as generating a higher number than the community men and the male offenders (all tests $p < .01$). The post hoc tests also showed that the community men and the male offenders were not different from each other ($p = .38$).

### 6.4.4.3 Discussion of results: Grievance resolution strategies (Problem Solving).

The results for Hypothesis 5 showed that overall the participants in the five groups reported a variety of different ways to solve the five different situations described in the MAPS. Hypothesis 5 had predicted that if there is a link between positive attitudes and behavioural predictions then: *male offenders would report more violence based grievance resolution strategies than male students. Male students in turn would report more violence based strategies than female students and men and women from the community.* The results supported this prediction; namely, that aggression based strategies were observed more often in the offender group than the non-offender groups. Overall, more offenders said they would use physical aggression than male students, followed by female students and men and women from the community. This result is

concurrent with the Study 5 results where the offenders endorsed a higher level of justifications for violence (JFV) than male students, who in turn endorsed a significantly higher level of JFVs than the older males, and both groups of women. In Study 5 the results also showed that the five groups formed three very distinct subgroups. Combining the results, it was group 1 (the offenders) who were not only more pro-violence in their attitudes but were also more likely to report they would use violence to deal with certain situations. The second distinct subgroup were the younger male students who endorsed a medium level of pro-violent attitudes and who were also more likely to say they would use violence than the next group (group 3). Group 3 were the older community men and female students and community women. This last group endorsed the lowest level of pro-violent attitudes, and as shown in Table 46, very few participants from this group members said they would consider using violence to deal with any of situations described in the MAPS. These results add empirical support to Luckenbill and Doyle's (1989), Ajzen and Fishbein's (1983) and Akers' (1997) argument that the more positive your attitudes and beliefs toward a certain type of behaviour, the more likely that you will engage in that behaviour.

The results for Hypothesis 5 must, however, be qualified in that aggression based strategies were not reported across the board but were only reported under certain circumstances. Overall, reports of using "aggression" to solve a problem became more evident for all the groups as the hostility level in the scenarios increased. For example, in Scenario 2 no participant, regardless of group, said they would consider using violence toward the neighbours. As discussed above in Section 6.4.2, the behaviour of the neighbours was judged to be the least deliberate and the least malicious. Yet as shown in Table 46, three of the female students did say they would be verbally abusive towards the neighbours, and four of the male offenders said they would consider materially harming the neighbours (e.g., stealing their car). As discussed in Section

6.4.2, the level of malice and judgement of deliberateness was higher in Scenario 3 than Scenario 2. In Scenario 3 reports of using physical aggression had increased for the offenders and the male students, and reports of using verbal aggression had increased for the female students. However, none of the community men or women said they would use either type of aggression to solve Scenario 3. The highest level of aggressive based strategies was found in Scenario 5, and this was the scenario that had been judged as the most antinormative and malicious by all participants regardless of group. In Scenario 5 over 50% of the offenders and over 40% of the male students said they would use violence to deal with the ex-boyfriend. As shown in Table 46, very few female students and older men and women from the community said they would engage in violence. Finally, in Scenarios 1 and 4, very few participants in any of the groups said they would use aggressive strategies to solve these work based problems.

Given the observation discussed above, it appeared that aggressive strategies (namely, physical, verbal or passive-aggression) reported by the male offenders was dependent upon the type of situation and the harmdoer. For example, in Scenario 4 the strategy with the highest endorsement from the offender group was not to abuse or assault the supervisor but rather the pro-social option of working hard and proving themselves. In contrast, the offenders were the group who were the least likely to find a peaceful solution when it was their friend who had let them down (Scenario 3). The result for Scenario 3 is convergent with the interactional justice literature which has found that we are more likely to become morally outraged and upset by the "bad behaviour" of significant others because we generally expect better behaviour from people we know well (Miller, 2001). This result is also in line with the criminal justice statistics which shows that assaults are more likely to occur between people in a close relationship, such as friends and family members (AIC, 2004). However, although the friend's behaviour had upset most people in all five groups, it was the offender group

with far higher reports of using physical aggression and less assertive strategies compared with the non-offenders. These results imply that a high risk situation for violent offenders are when their friends let them down, and a high risk situation for both violent offenders and young men is when faced with the hostile and antagonistic behaviour from another. The result that both offenders and the younger male students appear at risk of violent behaviour when they are faced with antagonism is not surprising given the literature which argues that most assaults are rarely random senseless acts but rather the conclusion of a heated and hostile interaction between the parties (Luckenbill & Doyle, 1989; Ross & Polk, 2005; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994; Thomsen, 1997).

One final observation was the clear difference between offenders and non-offenders in calling the police or other legal assistance to deal with the ex-boyfriend in Scenario 5. Only 5% of offenders said they would use this strategy. This result is not surprising, and in effect provides further support for the hypothesis that positive attitudes can influence behaviour, or in this case, negative attitudes can influence a lack of behaviour. The results from Study 5 showed that the offenders had a significantly more negative opinion of the police than all four non-offender groups. Researchers have also found that many offenders view the police in "out-group" terms and have a code of behaviour which states you sort out your own personal problems, you do not involve authorities (Akerstrom, 1996; McVicar, 1982). Given that most of the offenders in the current study had lengthy criminal histories it is reasonable to argue that these men also consider the police their "out-group". Therefore calling the police to deal with a problem would represent a strategy they would simply not consider nor use.

The next hypothesis tested was in essence a replication of the study carried out by Slaby and Guerra (1988) who had found that violent male and female, especially male, adolescents were more likely to generate fewer alternative problem solving

strategies to deal with problematic situations than their less trait-aggressive peers. Slaby and Guerra suggested that violent and delinquent adolescents appear to have difficulties in generating a number of alternative and peaceful solutions to interpersonal grievances and this deficit directly influenced their high use of aggression during problematic interactions.

While the results from the present study did not fully support the Slaby and Guerra findings some support was found. As discussed above, the results from Hypothesis 5 showed that the male offenders were more likely to propose aggression based solutions than non-offenders. However, the high level of aggression based strategies was not across all five scenarios and was only apparent under certain circumstances, namely in response to being let down by a friend or when faced with an antagonistic person. In contrast, the results did not support the prediction that non-offenders would generate more alterative grievance resolution strategies than offenders. Although three significant differences were observed across the five scenarios, the post hoc tests revealed that is was only in two scenarios that clear group differences were present. The first difference was for Scenario 3 which showed the male offenders generating more alternative strategies than non-offenders, although in this scenario the offenders were the least likely to generate peaceful solutions. The other significant difference was for Scenario 5 which showed that although the male and female students and women from the community were more likely to generate a higher number of strategies, it was the male students who were the second most likely group, after the offenders, to say they would use aggression based resolutions. The results for Scenario 5 also showed that the offenders generated the same number of strategies as the older men from the community.

Overall the results provided little support for Hypothesis 6 which had predicted that non-offenders would generate more of as well as less aggression-based grievance

resolution strategies than offenders. The implication of the current results is that the Slaby and Guerra's findings potentially represent an adolescent limited risk factor which does not extend to adults. This discrepancy between the findings probably occurred due to the differences in reasoning abilities of adolescents as compared to adults. There is strong empirical support that delinquent and violent male and female adolescents are delayed in various cognitive skills such as moral reasoning, perceptive-taking, problem solving and verbal communication skills (Goldstein & Glick, 1998). Recent research has shown that adult violent offenders are not different from their non-offending peers in the general populations with a mature level of social moral development (Stevenson, et al., 2003). Given that a component of mature moral reasoning is the ability to take the perspective of another and to problem solve moral dilemmas (Selman, 1980) it could well be that if adult offenders are similar to adult non-offenders in moral problem solving. Thus, the results obtained in the current study imply that adult offenders may not so different from non-offenders in general problem solving either.

In summary it appears from the results of Hypotheses 5 and 6 that offenders are not necessarily deficient in generating grievance resolution strategies. Rather, what appears to be problematic is that offender are less likely to be assertive in some situations and more violent in other situations compared with their non-offender peers.

### 6.5 General Discussion

Study 6 explored whether 87 adult male high risk violent offenders would interpret, feel and respond differently to 430 men and women non-offenders when faced with the harmful behaviour of others. In contrast to Study 5 which assessed the differences in **what** offenders thought (criminal and violent sentiments) the current study assessed **how** offenders thought. The main question of interest was whether a number of

cognitive variables represented adult dynamic criminogenic variables. These variables were the "is/ought" discrepancy, attributions of hostile and malevolent intent (HABs), the fundamental attribution error (FAE) and grievance resolution strategies (problem solving).

In Part 1 of the MAPS, the differences between the highest violence risk group (male offenders) and the lowest risk group (older non-offender women from the general population) were compared on the "is/ought" discrepancy, HABs and the FAE. It was argued that if any of these variables represent criminogenic risk factors for violent men then there should be clear differences between these two distinct groups. This was not the case with the results showing that overall violent male offenders are similar to non-offender women in how they interpret the behaviour of others. The same result was obtained when the offenders were compared with the men and women students and the men and women from the community. Overall, the current study did not demonstrate that wider "is/ought" discrepancies, pronounced HABs or the fundamental attribution error represent criminogenic risk factors for adult male violent offenders. What was shown was that these variables, especially high HABs, are observed in male violent offenders AS WELL AS in most adults regardless of whether they are male or female, or a university student or a member of the general population.

In Part 2 of the MAPS differences in how people would feel when faced with the harmful behaviour of others was assessed. Some significant differences were observed although overall the types of emotions the offenders said they would feel was similar to what the non-offender men and women reported. One observation observed which was in line with what the interactional justice literature had found (Miller, 2001) was that was that the more deliberate and antinormative the behaviour of a harmdoer had been judged the higher the reports of negative emotions. This implies that emotional states are influenced by the experience "is/ought" discrepancy. This in turn implies that

grievance escalation models could be enhanced by an understanding of why people become upset by the "bad behaviour" of others.

Part 3 of the MAPS assessed the link between attitudes and behaviour. Specifically, whether people known to be supportive of violence would be more likely to report violence based solutions as a means of dealing with other people's "bad behaviour". An additional analysis investigated whether adult offenders compared with non-offenders were not only more likely to generate aggressive resolution strategies but also more likely to only generate single solutions. It was observed that the offenders overall generated a similar number of strategies as the non-offenders although these strategies were more likely to be aggression based compared with the strategies reported by the non-offenders. However, the results also showed that high levels of violence based strategies were not reported by the offenders in all five scenarios. It appeared that out of the five different scenarios the high risk situations for offenders were when they were led down by their friend and when faced with an antagonistic harmdoer.

Finally, the results showing that the 87 high risk violent offenders were not that different from the 430 non-offenders in HABs was unexpected. It had been argued by Gibbs et al., (1995) that aggressive people engage in what they see as "justified violent retaliation" because they misattribute hostility, especially in ambiguous circumstances, which leads them to believe the other party intentionally aimed to harm and/or insult them. They then consider their violent behaviour a legitimate response rather than antagonistic or a pre-emptive strike. If HABs are problematic for adult offenders then the offenders in this study should have demonstrated pronounced HABs across the five scenarios, especially in the ambiguous scenarios (Scenarios 1, 3 and 4). This was not observed. If pronounced HABs are not only problematic but linked to violent behaviour then it should have been observed that the offenders would report higher HABs and higher violence based strategies across the five scenarios compared with non-offenders.

This was not observed either. Given that the adult offenders did not demonstrate highly pronounced HABs across all five situations it was therefore not surprising that their use of violence was selective. In this study, where higher HABs were demonstrated and higher levels of aggression based solutions were proposed, the offenders cognitions were not only similar to men and women non-offenders, they were also in line with the known circumstances under which violence, especially assaults and homicide, primarily occurs. Namely, that violent incidents are more likely between parties in a close relationship (as in Scenario 3: being let down by a friend) and under high-intensity provocation altercations (as in Scenario 5: the antagonistic ex-boyfriend) (AIC, 2004; Ross and Polk, 2005). When the results from Parts 1 and 3 of the MAPS are combined it appears that higher levels of HABs are not associated with levels of ambiguity contained in the situation but rather the type of harm that occurred, where the harm occurred (the location) and who the harmdoer was.

Two explanations were given for why the results for HABs were so divergent from the adolescent literature and influential textbooks. Each explanation raised a similar question, namely, in adulthood do non-offenders increase their level of HABs to that of offenders, or as adults do offenders decrease their level of HABs to be more in line with non-offenders? Answering this question would require a longitudinal study and this thesis is therefore unable to comment on which explanation is more probable. However, what this study has shown is that the low benchmark set for HABs in non-offender adults is too low.

The results from this study suggest that it is not how offenders interpret the "bad behaviour" of other people, or the types of feeling they experience, but what they believe they should do and what they are prepared to do about the "bad behaviour" that matters. In other words, it appears that **what** offenders think is more criminogenic than **how** they think during the escalation of grievances.

# PART THREE

# General Discussion, Applied Implications and Future Research Directions

## DAUGHTER WHO STABBED MUM OVER CHOPS GOES FREE

By James Madden

It was cold lamb chops that finally pushed Julie Smith over the edge, prompting her to stab her invalid mother 48 times with a kitchen knife.

Unhappy with the way her daughter had cooked her favourite meal, Barbara Smith, 71, had returned to the kitchen to reheat the underdone chops.

But her dissatisfaction infuriated Julie, 47, who ordered her mother back to her bedroom.

Decades of stressful and sometimes violent cohabitation with her mother were about to reach a climax.

Julie took the tray with the plate of chops on and smashed it over her mother's head. She then stabbed Barbara 48 times with a kitchen knife, leaving her close to death.

"The lamb chops were a metaphorical last straw," Judge Bernard Teague said yesterday as he sentenced Julie to a maximum four-year prison term. But hours later, Julie walked free from the Victorian Supreme Court, released after Justice Teague ruled that the 132 days she had spent in custody qualified as the non-parole period.

He said Julie's crime was "seriously wrong" but that she was driven by years of stress caring for her mother and the family home.

Julie, who pleaded guilty to intentionally causing serious injury to her mother -- who survived the attack -- also suffered depression and was deeply remorseful, Justice Teague said.

The court heard that Julie had lived with and cared for her mother almost all her life at the family's home in Broadmeadows, in Melbourne's northwest. Their relationship was beset by "major communication problems", Justice Teague said.

"There were many ways in which you dealt with your mother that troubled her. She was ready to let you know it. There were many ways in which your mother dealt with you that troubled you. Until January 2004, you did not retort physically. Occasionally, you retorted orally. You generally opted to seethe."

Justice Teague said he took into account the victim impact statement of Barbara Smith, who asked that her daughter be spared a jail term in favour of counselling. At an earlier court hearing, she admitted that she often fought with her daughter, but maintained that they "got on very well".

After she was attacked by her daughter, Barbara Smith told police "I don't remember her ever kissing me or putting her arm around. She was a man-hater. We had problems where things would build up and I would explode and yell at Julie."

# Chapter 7.

## General Discussion

### Including
### Enhancing Luckenbill and Doyle's model.
### Applied implications for Rehabilitation.
### Where to from here?

## 7.1 Introduction and Chapter Overview

The rationale for this project was to determine whether a number of cognitive variables appeared to represent dynamic criminogenic needs for adult male violent offenders. By identifying whether certain variables discriminated offenders from non-offenders, theorists and practitioners could use this knowledge to develop and deliver violence rehabilitation programs that are as effective as possible. Rehabilitation programs which have been found to be more successful are those which target dynamic criminogenic risk factors and where the risk factors have a theoretical underpinning (Howells & Day, 2002). It was therefore necessary that this project not only identify criminogenic risk factors, but present a theoretical explanation for how these variables influence violent behaviour. To achieve a more comprehensive theoretical coverage of the cognitive aspects of grievance escalation, the literature presented throughout this thesis has not just been from the disciple of psychology but has used the knowledge found in a range of disciplines including, economics, law, criminology and sociology.

This chapter commences with a summary of the project and the results obtained. Based on these results, an expanded three stage grievance escalation model is presented. The applied implications are then considered and finally the limitations of this research and areas for future research highlighted.

## 7.2 Summary of the Studies and the Results Obtained

This was a mixed method thesis with the primary aim being to determine whether violent sentiments, HABs and violence-based grievance resolution strategies represented adult criminogenic risk factors. The project was carried out over six separate studies. Each of the studies and their findings are summarised below.

In Study 1, 18 in-depth interviews were carried out with violent offenders to explore their thoughts during grievances they had had. The common cognitive themes

identified from the data was the "is/ought" discrepancy, the fundamental attribution error (FAE) and hostile and malevolent attributions of intent (HABs). The last aim was to use the themes identified to develop two psychometric scales. The first scale measured violent beliefs (Justification for Violence; JFV). The JFV scale was inserted into the widely used Criminal Sentiments Scale (Andrews & Wormith, 1984) and the CSS was renamed the Violent and Criminal Sentiments Scale (VCSS). The second scale measured attributions, feelings and problem solving strategies (Measure of Attributions and Problem Solving; MAPS).

Studies 2 to 4 assessed the psychometric properties of the new scales in three samples. The samples were: 238 first year undergraduates from Murdoch University; Perth, W.A.; 87 male violent offenders serving custodial sentences in two maximum security prisons in Perth, W.A.; and a stratified sample of 203 men and women from the general population in Perth, W.A. The two scales were shown to have good internal reliability and validity and an evaluation of the scales by the student and offender samples showed the scales had good face and external validity as well.

Two hypotheses were tested in Study 5. The differences between offenders and non-offenders in endorsement of violent and criminal sentiments using the VCSS were assessed in Hypothesis 1. Of specific interest was the score obtained on the new JFV subscale. Based on JFV scores three distinct groups were observed. Group 1 were the male offenders with significantly higher JFV scores than any other group. Group 2 were the younger male students with a medium level of JFV endorsement. Group 3 were the older men from the community, female students and women from the community with the lowest level of JFVs. These results indicated that beliefs justifying violence are an important criminogenic risk factor. The difference between the groups generated a medium to large effect size ($\eta^2 = .46$).

Hypothesis 2 of Study 5 explored whether violent sentiments operate in isolation or whether they are a valid addition to the criminal sentiments construct. The results showed that in all samples the JFV subscale was significantly related to endorsement of other criminal sentiments. The relationship, regardless of group, was where a negative opinion of the criminal justice system related to a higher tolerance for breaking the law, a higher level of justifying violence and a higher identification with criminal peers. It appears that violent sentiments do not operate in isolation from other criminal sentiments. The JFV subscale enhances the CSS by allowing violent sentiments to measured at the same time as other criminal sentiments. The results also showed that the VCSS is not just restricted to forensic applications but is a useful measure for applied research with both men and women.

In Study 6, Part 1 of the MAPS was used to explore whether violent offenders interpreted the social behaviour of others differently compared with non-offenders. Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 tested whether violent offenders would experience wider "is/ought" discrepancies, would demonstrate pronounced HABs and would demonstrate higher FAEs. Overall, the implications from the results are that adult violent offenders do not interpret the harmful behaviour of others very differently from adult non-offenders. In contrast to the findings for adolescent offenders, these cognitive variables, especially  HABs, do not appear to represent important dynamic criminogenic risk factors for adults. Although these variables did not represent clear discriminatory criminogenic factors they did appear to be influential in how and why grievances develop and escalate. This aspect will be discussed in Section 7.3 when Luckenbill and Doyle's model is expanded.

Part 2 of the MAPS was used in Study 6 to test Hypothesis 4. In Hypothesis 4 the differences between offenders and non-offenders were assessed in relation to the types of emotions experienced in problematic situations. The results showed some significant

differences, although overall the offenders reported the same types of emotions as non-offender men and women. The results obtained were in line with the interactional justice literature (Miller, 2001) namely that the more deliberate and antinormative the behaviour of a harmdoer is judged to be the more negative the emotions felt. This implies that emotional states are influenced by the experiencing wider "is/ought" discrepancies and higher levels of attributions of intent.

Finally, Part 3 of the MAPS was also used in Study 6 to test Hypothesis 5 and 6. Hypothesis 5 assessed the attitudes and behaviour link and asked whether people known to support the use of violence would be more likely to report they would use violence to deal with other people's "bad behaviour". Hypothesis 6 assessed whether adult offenders were more likely to generate only single violence-based resolutions strategies. The results showed that overall the offenders generated a similar number of strategies as the non-offenders although the offenders' strategies were more likely to be violence based. However, the offenders' use of violent strategies was selective and was only marked in two scenarios. This result was in line with the known circumstances under which many violent incidents occur; namely, that violence is more likely between parties in a relationship (as in Scenario 3: Being let down by a friend) and in hostile altercations (as in Scenario 5: The antagonistic ex-boyfriend) (AIC, 2004; Ross and Polk, 2005).

The results from this project are summarised in Figure 21.

| The social exchange |
| :---: |
| One person perceives that another has insulted, unfairly accused them or acted in an antinormative way. Attributions of intent made, "Is/ought" discrepancy judgement made, fundamental attribution error made. |

| Offender and non-offender appraisal of situation |
| :---: |
| "That was just not right, they shouldn't have done that. What a rude person." |

| **Male Offender Sample** | **Younger Male Non-Offender Sample** | **Older Male and Female Non-Offenders** |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| "What a rude person, how dare they behave like that" | "What a rude person, how dare they behave like that" | "What a rude person, how dare they behave like that" |
| **Action = sometimes chooses to use violence** | **Action = occasionally chooses to use violence** | **Action = Almost never chooses to use violence** |
| Differences | Differences | Differences |
| **1.** Highest level of sentiments justifying violence. | **1.** Medium level of sentiments justifying violence. | **1.** Lowest level of sentiments justifying violence. |
| **2.** Violence often seen as a way to "fix" social problems. | **2.** Violence occasionally seen as a problem "fixer" | **2.** Violence rarely seen as a problem "fixer" |
| **3.** When faced with some social problems a majority of sample will use aggressive strategies to solve problem. | **3.** When faced with some social problems a significant minority will engage in aggressive strategies to solve problem. | **3.** When faced with most social problems only a small minority consider using violence to solve the problem. |
| **4**. Violence often used to deal with antagonistic people and friends who behave badly. | **4.** Violence is a reported dispute resolution strategy by 40% of sample to deal with antagonistic people. | **4**. Violence is NOT the primary dispute resolution strategy to deal with any situation. Violence used as last resort if all else fails. |

**Figure 21.** The empirical differences observed between offenders and non-offenders.

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The results from this project suggest that it is not how offenders interpret the "bad behaviour" of other people but what they believe they should do (in the form of violent sentiments) and what they are prepared to do about the "bad behaviour" (violence based resolution strategies) that matters. As summarised in Figure 21, there were no major differences between offenders and non-offenders in the types of social judgments or attributions used to assess why the MAPS' harmdoers had acted as they did. The difference was that most offenders held beliefs which promoted violence and believed that violence solves social problems. In contrast, the younger male students were more violent in their sentiments than older men and the women, yet they reported they would only use violence when confronted with high-intensity hostile situations. The older men and both female groups endorsed the lowest level of violent sentiments. This group had beliefs which inhibited violence and this was reflected in Part 3 of the MAPS where only a few people (n=15) said they would use violence and this was only in Scenario 5, describing the hostile and antagonistic behaviour of the ex-boyfriend.

## 7.3 Expanding Luckenbill and Doyle's Three Stage Model

### 7.3.1 The Original Model

Luckenbill and Doyle (1989) suggested that grievances escalate in a series of interrelated stages, from a perception of harm (naming) to a demand for reparation from the harmdoer (claiming) and where the reparation is unsatisfactory onto a third stage, aggression. There is recognition that some grievances do not escalate through all three stages and that some end in the claiming stage, primarily due to reparation which is satisfactory for both parties. Grievances can end in the claiming stage even though the claim was unsuccessful because the victim decides the matter is not worth pursuing. Support for this three stage model was found in a large community sample (Kennedy & Forde, 1996) and in a sample of university students (Bell & Forde, 1999). Support for

the model was also found in Study 1 where 18 violent offenders discussed their experience of grievance escalation. The Study 1 analysis showed that the grievances discussed did develop and escalate in the same sequence hypothesised by the model.

Despite support for the three-stage sequence, the model itself appeared to lack a comprehensive theory of why grievances escalate and only provided two propositions for why grievances escalate into violence. First were the two individual psychological factors. Factor one was "disputatioess"; the willingness to pursue a claim and to demand reparation. Factor two was "aggressiveness"; the willingness to end grievances through violence. Both "disputatioess" and "aggressiveness" were suggested to be underpinned by subcultural beliefs stating where, when and how insults or other wrongs should be responded to. The second proposition was that grievances were more likely to escalate given the nature of the interactions between the victim and the harmdoer during the "claiming" stage. Specifically, Luckenbill and Doyle stressed that grievances were more likely to escalate if the harmdoer responds inappropriately to the claim.

### 7.3.2 The Expanded Model

One aim of this project was to use the findings to expand this three-stage grievance escalation model. The findings and their theoretical basis are discussed below.

The first expansion was to include the types of harm that upset people enough to make them claim. Tedeschi and Felson (1994) proposed there were four types of harm which underpin grievances: physical harm (injury or the threat of); psychological harm (lack of respect, fairness or equality); material damage (loss of goods or services) or political harm (violation of rights and freedoms by the state or organisations). In Study 1, out of the 23 grievances discussed, 19 grievances began after the experience of psychological harm (e.g., broken promises, lack of courtesy). Two commenced after physical harm and two after political harm. None of the grievances discussed

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commenced after the experience of material harm. The result that most of the grievances

discussed commenced after being unfairly accused, insulted, let down or experiencing

inconsiderate behaviour was in line with the work of interactional justice researchers,

specifically, Bies & Tripp (1996), Mikula et al., (1998) and Miller (2001) noted that it is

the experience of psychological harm, especially from significant others, that upsets

people the most. This suggests that it is the experience of specific types of harms that

are more influential than others in why grievances escalate.

The second expansion of the "naming" stage is the inclusion of some common

forms of attributional biases and social judgements people use to hold their harmdoers

accountable for the harm. The common social judgement used to analyse the actions of

others is suggested to be the "is/ought" discrepancy (Miller, 2001). This discrepancy

occurs when we benchmark what we believe has occurred (the "is") against what we

believe should have occurred (the "ought"). The discrepancy is shown graphically in

Figure 22 below in the hypothetical case of an accusation the victim considers to be

unfair and unwarranted.

**"Is"** = Being unfairly accused of stealing.

**"Ought"** = This person should not accuse people without proof.

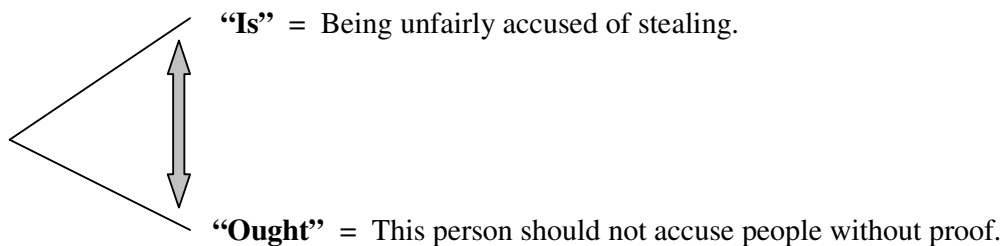**Figure 22.** The "is/ought" discrepancy in the case of unfair accusations.

As "ought" beliefs are essentially the moral benchmarks we set for the behaviour

of others and represent out personal beliefs about how we deserve to be treated, the

wider the discrepancy between the "is" and the "ought" the more morally outraged we

become and the more likely we are to demand reparation (Miller, 2001). The results

showed that the wider the discrepancy become the more likely people were to engage in two attributional biases. It was observed in Study 6 (using the MAPS) that the wider the "is/ought" discrepancy, the higher the reports of negative emotions, and the higher the levels of the fundamental attribution error and hostile and malevolent attributions of intent. The results also showed that high levels of these biases, especially HABs, were not just a phenomenon experienced by male offenders, it was a phenomenon experienced by most of the 430 non-offenders. Also observed was that the more unacceptable the behaviour of the harmdoer was considered (a wide "is/ought" discrepancy), the more negative the emotions felt and the higher the level of attributional biases, especially HABs, the less likely people were to let the matter slide.

The third expansion of the model is to elucidate the "claiming" process. The Study 1 analysis found that the "claiming" process proceeded in three ways. The first pathway was where the grievance ended due to an acceptable response. Where claims were successful, the vital element was not just that the harmdoer acknowledged the harm, but rather they actively engaged in some kind of restorative action. The second pathway was where the response from the harmdoer was unacceptable and where reparation was not forthcoming. The results indicated that although the original harm was upsetting and annoying for the Study 1 participants, "unexpected and/or unacceptable" responses from the harmdoer appeared to accentuate the impact the original harm had had. The "unacceptable" response was in essence a further harm, such as physical threats, or further insults. The impact of the secondary harm was also associated with high levels of the FAE, the increase in negative emotions and the dehumanisation of the harmdoer. The third pathway was where no claim was carried out because the harmdoer was unavailable. The Study 1 participants recalled this as a frustrating experience. Five of the participants could not "claim" due to this reason and even though some time had passed they still considered the matter "unresolved".

The expansion of this model shows that it is the experience of psychological harm which is more likely to be judged as offensive and antinormative. The more offensive and antinormative the behaviour, the higher the experience of negative emotions, and the more negative the emotions, the more likely people are to use attributional biases to hold their harmdoer an inconsiderate and badly behaved "rat". The results also showed that the more antinormative the behaviour of the harmdoer was judged, the less likely people were to just let the matter slide. Of note, although "is/ought" discrepancies, HABs and the FAE did not appear to represent criminogenic risk factors for violent adults, they did appear to be influential by representing the pathway through which "naming" occurs and why "naming" escalates to "claiming".

In the current project the most significant difference between the five groups was how "claiming" proceeded to "aggression". In Studies 5 and 6, it was observed that three distinct groups were formed. Group 1 were the offenders who had attitudes which supported aggression and when faced with certain situations (antagonistic people, as in Scenario 5, and "badly behaved" friends, as in Scenario 3) over 50% were prepared to use some form of "aggression" to solve the problem. For most offenders aggression (either verbal, physical or passive–aggression) were the primary strategies reported. Group 2 were the younger male students with a medium level of attitudes supporting violence with 44% of the sample prepared to use violence but only when faced with an antagonistic person. Group 3 were the older men and both female groups. They had a low level of support for violence and only very few were prepared to use violence in any of the situations assessed in this study. The implication of these results is that it is not just the interaction between the harmdoer and the victim, or whether a claim is successful or not, what appears to matter more is whether a person supports violence and is prepared to use it. It appears that women, regardless of age, neither support nor consider violence an option to solve social problems. Younger men, however, are more

likely to support and use violence than older men. In Study 5, a correlation was observed showing that attitudes supporting violence in non-offender men reduced with age, although the correlation only accounted for approximately 10% of the variance. Therefore violent sentiments are not the only factor that influences younger men to behave violently and turn unsuccessful claims into acts of aggression. It is possible that another explanation for a reduction in support for violence with increasing age is the decrease in physical ability and strength to fight which therefore reduces the desire and motivation to fight. As one 59 year old community male said in response to Scenario 5 of the MAPS "I'd run like buggery. Seriously, I'd try to talk to him but at my age (I'm 59 now) I would probably run. When I was younger it would have been different, I would have had it out with the blighter".

## 7.4 The Applied Implications of the Results

Several of the findings have applied implications for violent offender programs.

First, one of the most important findings of this project was that HABs were a phenomenon observed in the sample of 87 adult male mainstream violent offenders at high-risk of violent recidivism **and** in the sample of 430 men and women non-offenders. Although some significant differences were observed between offenders and non-offenders, the actual means observed showed the difference did not equate to a pronounced HAB. That is, any differences were accompanied by such small effect sizes making any difference in the means negligible. The rationale for HAB intervention is to reduce the hypothesised tendency for offenders to assume that the harmful behaviour of others was malicious. In Serin and Kuriychuk's (1994) Canadian violent offender program they aim to teach offenders to "pause, reflect and check the information". Serin and Kuriychuk's (1994) program was underpinned by the hypothesis that violent offenders are more likely than non-violent offenders and non-offenders to base their

social information processing on hostile scripts and hostile attributional biases. As mentioned, the current project appears to be the first study to assess whether a sample of mainstream adult violent offenders actually differ on this variable from a large sample of adult non-offenders. What the current project found was that it is not just the violent offenders who did not pause, reflect or check the information, neither did the men and women non-offenders. Therefore, if non-offenders are prone to attribute malice and hostility where none exists and yet do not engage in violence then HABs in adulthood do not appear to be a dynamic criminogenic need. As effective intervention programs are those which target variables that are related to offending behaviour and discriminate offenders from non-offenders (Ogloff & Davis, 2004) then given these results the issue to be considered is whether targeting HABs warrants valuable time in adult intervention programs.

In Chapter 6 two potential reasons were noted for why it was noted for why the HAB results were so divergent from forensic text books and from what clinicians have noted. The first two reasons were based on the suggestion that the assumed low level of HABs in non-offender adults was too low. There is also a third potential reason which is partly based on this assumption in that clinicians may have assumed that non-offenders do not engage in such high levels of HABs as they have observed in offenders. As shown, in the range of situations assessed in this project, the offenders and non-offenders engaged in the same level of HABs which became more pronounced for all groups as the scenario descriptions became progressively more hostile. The results also showed that the most marked differences between offenders, younger males, and older males and women was not at the commencement of the grievance, in the "naming" stage where HABs occur, but at the end of the escalation, the "aggression" stage. It appeared that although HABs are an influential pathway in explaining why grievances escalate, what leads to violence is whether people support violence and are prepared to

use it. It follows that if clinicians assume that HABs are more criminogenic than they are, when they discuss violent acts with offender, clinicians may be placing more emphasis on what the offender thought the harmdoer had done and why, rather than on the beliefs that offenders hold about why violence was considered necessary.

In the current project the two variables that appeared to represent criminogenic risk factors and which clearly discriminated offenders from non-offenders were violent and criminal sentiments and violence-based grievance resolution strategies. Intervention options for both of these variables are considered below.

It has been argued that the most important risk factor to target is criminal sentiments (Andrews, 1995). These sentiments have been found to represent the highest risk factor for recidivism for both men and women (Dowden & Andrews, 1999; Gendreau et al, 1996). At present criminal sentiments have been discussed in terms of three related constructs which share a highly significant relationship where a negative opinion of the criminal justice system is related to a higher tolerance for law violation and a higher identification with criminal peers. The results indicated that an enhancement of the criminal sentiment construct was the addition of violent sentiments (attitudes and beliefs which justify and support the use of violence given certain situations). In the current project, the endorsement of violent sentiments generated the largest effect size out of all the criminal sentiments measured ($\eta^2 = .46$). Although these sentiments are the highest risk factor, reducing their influence is a difficult task. As Bush (1995) and Simourd (1996) have noted, high-risk adult offenders appear to have a strong commitment to criminal sentiments which they strenuously defend whenever another point of view is presented. This suggests they are highly internalised variables which are therefore enduring. Simourd (1996) also noted that there is the risk of transference when clinicians aim to reduce these sentiments. The transference risk is where clinician's levels of criminal sentiments increase as offender's levels decrease. It

is therefore vital that clinical staff be supervised and debriefed during criminal sentiments interventions.

The phenomenon of transference was noted by Andrews et al., (1973) who exposed 10 offenders to 10 community volunteers during an eight week study where the offenders and non-offenders discussed a number of issues such as the role of law in society, crime and victims, and the role of criminal justice personnel. After their exposure, the offenders reported significantly lower criminal sentiments whereas the non-offender's tolerance for law violation had increased as had their identification with criminal peers, although the non-offenders' attitudes towards the criminal justice system remained the same. Although the risk of transference is high, and has to be acknowledged, given that criminal sentiments are the highest risk factor and resistant to change practitioners may find it useful to address this criminogenic need in two different ways. The first way is to address this risk factor during structured intervention programs commonly carried out in prisons with justice departmental clinical staff. The second way is for practitioners to run adjunct exposure groups. Several Canadian studies showed significant reductions in pro-criminal sentiments for the offender participants after just 8 to 12 weeks (Andrews, 1980; Andrews et al, 1973, 1977; Wormith, 1984). These programs used the essence of Differential-Association as the mechanism for attitude change by exposing a group of offenders to a group of non-offenders, who were community volunteers. These Canadian programs were usually run once a week for a few hours and were conducted in an informal manner where offenders and non-offenders discussed each other's opinions about law violation, violence, victims, and crime. If these adjunct programs are implemented it is vital they be carefully supervised, especially regarding attitude transference through exposure to high-risk offenders for the non-offender group.

The second finding that has applied implications was that when the CSS's Attitudes towards the Law, Courts and Police (ALCP) subscale was divided into the three aspects it measures, the offenders were only significantly different from non-offenders on two aspects. The results from Study 5 in this project showed that offenders and students held the same views about the validity of law, therefore this aspect does not appear criminogenic and practitioners may find they do not need to address this issue in as much detail. In contrast, where offenders were significantly different from all non-offenders was in the process of law. Specifically, the offenders had a very negative opinion of the operation of the courts and the personnel employed to administer law, such as judges, lawyers and the police. Based on these results, programs may be more effective if they spend more time on attitudes toward the courts and the police. This finding and its implication must however be qualified. With the exception of two non-offender participants, the scores on the VCSS were from Australian non-Indigenous samples. Given the history concerning the impact of the Westminster system of law (Anglo-European system of law) upon Australia's Indigenous people it would be imprudent to suggest that Indigenous people will share the same views as non-Indigenous Australians towards the validity of Westminster law. In keeping with Howells and Day (2002) argument that it is vital to assess the needs of individual offenders, it is recommended here that before reducing or removing sentiments concerning the validity of law from programs practitioners should assess whether the offenders in a program require this aspect of criminal sentiments to be increased or reduced. The issue of criminal sentiments in the Indigenous population is considered further in Section 7.5.3.

The final applied implication for violence rehabilitation programs concerns grievance resolution strategies. In the current project it was shown that the use of violence was most prominent in response to friends' "bad behaviour" and during hostile

altercations with antagonistic people. Given that violence in response to "bad behaviour" was selective, and given that the situations where offenders were more likely to engage in violence was in line with the circumstances surrounding most reported violent crimes (AIC, 2004), it appears that programs may find it useful to tailor their interventions. Based on the Study 6 results it could be argued that programs could be more effective by concentrating on non-violence based grievance resolution strategies to specific types of interactions. For example, most assaults and homicides occur between friends and family members, therefore helping offenders learn non-violent ways to deal with the "bad behaviour" of significant others appears valuable.

Of note, although programs often aim to show offenders non-violent grievance resolution strategies these programs are often underpinned by the theory that the offenders have attributed hostile intent and are acting violently upon their mis-attribution (Bush, 1995; Serin & Kuriychuk, 1994). What is indicated by the results in Study 6 of the current project is a slightly different approach. Instead of looking at resolution strategies which aim to ask offenders to pause and check the information, this approach says "well ok, this person has probably behaved badly, how can we sort this problem out without using force and without you getting a jail term". This approach does not assume that offenders will have interpreted the behaviour of their harmdoer any differently from non-offenders. What this approach does is to acknowledge openly to offenders that non-offenders will probably also have thought that the harmdoer was a "rude or inconsiderate person" but non-offenders will deal with this problem without resorting to a violent solution.

## 7.5 The Limitations of this Project and Future Research Directions

There are a number of issues that must be taken into account when considering the results from this study. The discussion that follows highlights the limitations of the

research. As many of these limitations could be addressed, where applicable future research directions and replications will be highlighted.

The first limitation is that causality cannot be inferred here. Similar to many studies in the forensic area, offenders were measured post-event. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that their level of attributional biases, grievance resolution strategies or their endorsement of violent and criminal sentiments at the time of this study were comparable to when the offence/s occurred.

Second, the literature on violent behaviour is vast with numerous theories aiming to explaining the phenomenon. This project was only able to explore a few of the myriad of cognitive variables proposed to influence violent behaviour. Violent behaviour is not only underpinned by cognitive variables, it is also suggested to be influenced by enduring personality traits (e.g., psychopathy; Hare, 1991), by certain environmental conditions (e.g., hot temperatures; Anderson, 1989), and/or by physiological variables, such as higher levels of testosterone or neurological abnormalities (Bartol & Bartol, 2005). It is also widely recognised that violent offenders are not homogeneous (Howells & Day, 2002). Due to the heterogeneity of offenders it is possible that violent behaviour is still likely even when an offender has low violent and criminal sentiments, a low level of attributional biases and knowledge of a range of pro-social problem solving strategies because, for example, they have poor anger control (Howells et al., 1997). What this project aimed to achieve was to isolate a number of variables and assess whether they represented criminogenic risk factors for most adult offenders. What the results showed was that higher endorsement of violent sentiments and the generation of violence based grievance resolution strategies in some social situations clearly discriminated offenders from non-offenders and appeared to be problematic for the majority of offenders in this study.

The following limitations are specific to the two different methods and procedures used during this project.

**7.5.1 The Limitations of Study 1: The Qualitative Research.**

In Study 1, a total of 23 grievances were discussed by 18 violent offenders. The method used in this study was in-depth semi-structured interviews with participants being asked to recall a grievance they had had. There are two limitations that could potentially impact on the results: these being generalisability of results and reconstructive memory biases.

First, as this was a small sample (n = 18) the findings may not be generalisable outside of forensic settings. For example, it would imprudent to assume that non-offenders, or even offenders who do not engage in physically violent acts (such as white collar offenders) would experience grievances in the same way as the high-risk violent offenders who participated in this study. However, this was a purposive sample specifically selected because the participants all had a history of engaging in grievances which had escalated into violence. Therefore, this sample had direct experience and knowledge to discuss all three stages of grievance escalation from the initial perception of harm to how, when and why violence was actually used. This was considered vital because the aim of this project was to understand how and why grievances escalate and then to use the data to construct two psychometric scales. This would ensure that the scales had high face validity by using actual narrative based on real life experience and real events.

The second limitation is that the data is based on reconstructive memory where participants discussed from their perspective how and why the events occurred. As Best (1999) argued, reconstructing past events can be biased because people will often remember events the way they want to remember them which may not necessarily be

how the events actually were or how other people involved would recall them. Despite this limitation, one of the values of this study was to assess the range of beliefs that offenders hold regarding why violence is an acceptable way to end grievances. As Indermaur (1996b) argued, asking offenders to explain why violence is acceptable is a valid area of research because it provides an indication of the underlying belief and value system.

### 7.5.2 The Limitations of Studies 5 and 6: The Empirical Research.

Studies 2 to 6 utilised the empirical method by presenting participants with psychometric scales and assessing group differences based on the scores obtained.

The first limitation relates to the use of hypothetical scenarios to assess attributional biases and grievance resolution strategies. Fincham and Bradbury (1992) argued that data obtained from hypothetical scenarios must be interpreted with caution. Their main concern was whether the responses given to hypothetical dilemmas merely reflect what people believe they would think and what they would do which may not necessarily equate to what they would actually think and do if they found themselves in such a situation. Despite basing the MAPS scenarios on real events and using everyday language, they are still hypothetical situations of which some people may have had no experience. This means that it cannot be inferred that the data collected is a true reflection of what people would actually think or do. As mentioned in Chapter 1 (refer Section 1.5.4) the optimal method for assessing HABs and grievance resolution strategies is to observe the behaviour of participants under experimentally staged social interactions (de Castro et al., 2002). As this method would have been ethically questionable here, the second best method was selected, that of presenting participants with hypothetical scenarios. Although Fincham and Bradbury raising the concern about the reliability of using hypothetical scenarios, in their study assessing marital distress

and negative attributions toward partners they did not find any significant differences in the level of negative attributions toward partners when participants were asked to recall a real life negative event or when the participants were asked to judge the behaviour of a couple in a hypothetical scenario. Finally, the present project is the first published research which assesses the differences in social attributions and grievance resolution strategies between adult offenders, students and non-offenders from the community. What was found was that male offenders did not interpret the behaviour of harmdoers very differently from men and women non-offenders. What was also found was that male offenders are more likely to resort to violence-based resolution strategies then men and women non-offenders.

The second limitation of the MAPS scenarios was highlighted during the scale's evaluation with the University student sample. Fourteen student women said they thought the scenarios were very male oriented. The scenarios were based on the grievance escalation experiences of male offenders, therefore the criticism of these women appears to be a valid one. The original aim had been to include women violent offenders throughout this project. However, at the time this project took place access to female offenders had been restricted due to the amount of research these women had recently participated in. Had female prisoners been available Study 1 would have assessed the grievance escalation experiences of both violent men and women offenders. This would have ensured that the MAPS scenarios were based on real life incidents from both sexes. Furthermore as violent women offenders did not participate in Studies 5 and 6 it cannot be inferred that the results obtained apply to women offenders. This means that we still do not know whether HABs, JFVs, or violence-based grievance resolution strategies are criminogenic risk factors for adult women. This limitation in the MAPS scenarios combined with our lack of knowledge of these variables could both be addressed by replicating the project in a sample of adult women

violent offenders. However, given that Western Australia has very few women at high-risk of violent recidivism (there were only 24 women in Perth at high-risk of violent recidivism who could have participated in this project) it would be beneficial that this replication recruit women from across two or more Australian states.

The third limitation, and not uncommon for forensic research, is the difficulty in confirming non-offender status. Confirming offender status is rarely problematic because it requires identifying the presence of behaviour, such as a conviction for a serious violent index offence. In contrast, confirming non-offender status is problematic because it requires confirmation of the absence of behaviour. Jennings et al., (1983) argued that most forensic research controls for possible confounding variables, with the exception of one vital one; that is, confirming that non-offenders are indeed non-offenders. Therefore, if the main difference between the groups is that one group got caught then comparisons become meaningless. Jennings et al., recommended that researchers confirm non-offender status by completion of a self-report criminal involvement checklist (e.g., The Antisocial Behaviour Scale; Simourd, 1999). However, as Beven et al., (2004) recently reported, community non-offender respondents can be reluctant to complete and return questionnaires asking to confirm or deny socially undesirable actions (such as lack of empathy for victims) and this reluctance can have a negative impact on response rates. Moreover, the biggest confound for self-report scales is that they are only valid if respondents neither reduce or overstate their criminal behaviour. Due to the problems associated with self-report scales the respondents in the current project were asked "if you have been to prison, or have served/are serving a community sentence, please do not return the questionnaire pack". As non-offender status could not be completely confirmed, it is possible that some participants classified as non-offenders have engaged in prior violent behaviour. However, if the non-offender sample was contaminated in this manner, the effect would be to weaken the observed

significant differences between offenders and non-offenders rather than to artificially inflate statistical findings. Furthermore, given that women in general are known to engage in a significantly lower level of violence than men, it is unlikely that many of the women who participated in this research were even low-risk violent offenders.

The final limitation concerns the non-standardisation of procedure. In this study two methods were used to collect the data. Although standardisation is preferable, this was not possible. As the Western Australian Department of Justice do not allow offender participants to complete research scales in their own time, all offender participants completed the scales in the presence of the author. Although no time limit was set for completion, the mere presence of the author may have contaminated the results. In contrast, due to time and financial constraints it was not possible to interview all of the undergraduate students and community respondents, therefore the two non-offender samples completed the questionnaire packs in their own time. This meant they had more time to complete the scales and with the possible confound of experimenter effects absent. Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997) have noted that personal interviews, or studies where the researcher is present can increase reactivity, such as evaluation apprehension, novelty effects, and demand characteristics. To reduce these threats to internal validity several strategies recommended by Whitley (1996) were employed in the current project. These strategies included that all data was collected by the author, the author introduced herself as a student (not a psychologist), all participants were told this was not a test and that it was their opinion that was important, and finally negative or positive remarks made by the author to responses (such as "um", or "good") were avoided. However, as any impact that experimenter effects may have on the data cannot be assessed it would be beneficial that this study be replicated, this time ensuring that all participants experience the same procedure.

### 7.5.3. Other Future Research Directions

As this project progressed, three specific areas for future investigation were identified.

The first area was the role of significant others in grievance escalation. In Study 1, an interesting finding was that although 16 of the 18 the participants considered that the grievance was between themselves and their harmdoer, it was apparent from their descriptions of events that significant others (usually partners, family, friends or associates) had taken on one or more of three roles which had influenced the escalation of the grievances. The first role was a direct supportive influence. In these cases, the participant had discussed the matter with the significant other/s who directly encouraged and supported the participant to escalate the grievance. The second role played by significant others was more indirect and corresponded to Sykes and Matza's (1957) fifth technique of neutralisation, that of appeals to higher loyalties. In these cases, the participant described escalating the grievance because the harmdoer had directly, or in some way vicariously, harmed or threatened their significant other. The third role played by significant others was simply their presence. Although the interview narrative did not imply these significant others were involved in any way, their mere presence was enough for the grievance to escalate. This indirect role was prominent during grievances concerning allegations or insults that occurred in public. In some cases it appeared that it was not the confrontation per se that upset the participant, but rather the humiliation they felt because it occurred in front of others with whom they wanted to present a certain impression to. The influence that significant others can have on criminal behaviour is contentious and the debate centres around whether peers can or cannot directly influence another person's involvement in criminal behaviour (Blackburn, 1993). Given that associations with peers who support criminal behaviour is one of the highest risk factors for recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 1998) and as the

results from Study 1 indicated that peers take a number of influential roles in why grievances escalate, it appears this issue requires further in-depth investigation.

The second area was to investigate whether Australian Indigenous offenders share the same beliefs about the law and the justice system as non-Indigenous offenders. As mentioned, only two Indigenous non-offenders participated in this project and no Indigenous offenders took part, therefore the data collected may not necessarily be generalisable to Indigenous Australians. It is suggested by Howe (1999) that current day Indigenous beliefs and behaviour must be always be viewed in the historical context upon which they are formed. Bottomley and Parker (1997) argue that the most negative impact for Indigenous people was during the "protectionist era" between 1880 to 1968. This era was marked by legislation which enabled each state in Australia to become the "legal protectors/guardians" of Indigenous people. The various State Acts provided that Indigenous people could not vote, could not marry without permission, and allowed the State to enter Indigenous homes and remove Indigenous children. The removal of children (referred to as the "stolen generation") led to one in ten Indigenous children being removed and with many of these children being physically, sexually or emotionally abused in their foster homes or missions (Howe, 1999). The impact of the "stolen generation" has far reaching consequences for Indigenous people today, with many families having at least one member who was affected by these policies. Given this history it is reasonable to argue that many Indigenous people may not view European "law" as valid and may have a negative opinion of the legal institutions which uphold European law.

The third area identified related to emotional intensity. What this study showed was that overall offenders and non-offenders experienced similar types of emotions, and that the more antinormative the behaviour the more likely people were to report negative emotions. However, what this study cannot confirm is how negative these

negative emotions were. As it has been widely documented that offenders experience higher levels of anger than non-offenders (Bartol & Bartol, 2005) a beneficial extension of the current project would be to assess intensity. For example, offender and non-offender participants could be given the MAPS but with the addition of an intensity scale in Part 2. This addition could ask participants "of the emotions you say you would feel how strong would they be (e.g., I would be slightly sad; I would be very sad; I would be seriously distressed). This replication would therefore be able to assess the role of intense versus weakly felt emotions during grievance escalation.

## 7.6 Conclusion: Is How You Think As Criminogenic As What You Think in the Escalation of Grievances?

This project asked is it **how** offenders think (in the form of attributional biases and social judgements) or **what** they think (in the form of violent sentiments and approval for violence-based grievance resolution strategies) that discriminates them most from non-offenders. What this study showed was that for mainstream adult offenders at high-risk of violent recidivism it is **what** they thought not how they thought that was more criminogenic. Of importance, although it appears that HABs are not a criminogenic risk factor for adult offenders, this in no way implies that HABs do not exist, or that pronounced levels of this bias were not present in the data: they were. What the data suggests is that HABs appear to be a more common attributional bias for adults than previously assumed and that most adults, regardless of being an offender or not, will probably engage in quite high levels of this bias at some point. Overall, these findings add empirical support to the prediction of Andrews that: "*what people think (antisocial attitudes) will prove more important than how they think*" (Andrews, 1995, p.51).

Criminal sentiments represent the highest risk factor for violent recidivism (Gendreau et al, 1996) yet are one of the hardest dynamic needs to change (Simourd,

1996). It appears that criminal (and now violent) sentiments are an ingrained aspect of a person's belief and value system. The question of why offender's strenuously hold onto these sentiments maybe answered by Aronson (2004) who stressed that it is through the endorsement of attitudes and beliefs (e.g., violent and criminal sentiments) that one psychological need may be met. A need that Aronson argues most people can relate to, that I am a reasonable person who does not hurt other people without just cause. It is the just cause that violent sentiments could provide for people who consistently engage in violent behaviour. After all, by justifying aggression as the right response given the circumstances, and with knowledge or a belief that friends and associates will support your behaviour, then if other people condemn you for doing what you believe to be right, it must be the condemners who are misguided, or soft.

In a final note, this thesis is the culmination of three and half years research. In the time taken to complete this work, based on 2003 AIC official reports, approximately 1194 Australian people will have been the victims of homicide. The economic cost of adjudicating just one of these trials will have been over $1 million (Chappell, 1995). Approximately 555,202 people will have been the victims of serious non-sexual assault with roughly 166,560 of these victims requiring medical attention, often extensive. It is also vital to stress that this is an underestimation because about 30% of assaults are not reported (AIC, 2003; Carcach, 1997). Violent crime is a major social issue which has both far reaching macro and micro economic and social costs for Australia and other OCED nations. The rationale for this thesis was to provide practitioners with the data they would find useful when developing rehabilitation programs that are as effective as possible in reducing the level and severity of violence in our societies.

# PART FOUR

# References and Appendixes

# Man Jailed for Tube Knife Murder

**BBC** NEWS

**A man who murdered a student at a Tube station after a row in a west London park has been jailed for life.**

Hassan Hassan, 20, stabbed Sayed Abbas through the heart after chasing him onto the platform at Hounslow West station in August 2004. The Old Bailey heard Mr Abbas, 18, and some friends were attacked for playing football on a gang's "territory".

Hassan, of Hounslow, was found guilty of murder last month. Three others were found guilty of violent disorder. Mohammed Omar Ali, 19, from Hammersmith, Sherif El Gazzaz, 18, and Mustafa Ibrahim, 18, both from Heston, were sentenced to three-and-a-half years in a youth detention centre. Hassan was told he must serve at least 14 years of his sentence.

During the trial the court heard Mr Abbas and his friends had earlier been confronted by the gang in Beaversfield Park and accused of being "on their territory". Jurors heard that after they left the gang called for reinforcements and armed themselves with a broken bottle, pool cue, bricks and the knife.

Responding to a telephone call for help, Hassan went to Hounslow West station with the gang where he stabbed Mr Abbas.

Judge Ann Goddard said: "Your actions were planned and they were violent and in my view, they were arrogant. One awful fact is that you are all intelligent young men. On this occasion you had no sense of responsibility at all and showed pathetic immaturity".

The judge told the court that Mr Abbas's family had been so upset by the murder they had left the country.

Full story, see Appendix U

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## VICIOUS THUG SHATTERED FAMILY

**BBC NEWS**

The family of a man who was stabbed to death in an argument over a cheap car stereo have branded his killer "a vicious thug".

David Donnell was sentenced to 10 years in prison for the culpable homicide of Roddy Mitchell in an Aberdeen car park. Donnell said he acted in self-defence but Mr Mitchell's family said he showed his real character by taking life over "an unbelievably trifling matter". They said the killing had shattered the family and left a child fatherless. Donnell, 23, whose father David was jailed for a bungled gangland killing two years ago, had originally been accused of murder. He alleged that he was protecting himself but Mr Mitchell's brother Daniel said he was extremely aggressive.

The accused, from Aberdeen, stabbed Mr Mitchell six times in a car park in Wellington Road, city on 3 December last year.

The High Court in Glasgow that the en had scuffled in the car park of Menzies Distri- Abbotswell R a row over the stereo. II then follow

Full story, see Appendix V

# APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

## <u>Justifications for Violence Items (JFV)</u>

The 30 JFV items were sourced from the in-depth interviews carried out with 18 violent offenders. The interview data can be seen in Chapter 2.

Please contact the author (via her supervisors) to view the scales

Mr Guy Hall, School of Law. Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

**or**

Ms Anne Pedersen, School of Psychology, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

**The Seven Scenarios for the Draft Measure of Attributions and Problem Solving (MAPS)**

The seven scenarios presented below were adaptations of the grievances discussed by 18 violent offenders, reported in chapter 2. The level of ambiguity underpinning the intent of the protagonists toward the victim is reported for each of the scenarios.

Please contact the author (via her supervisors) to view the scales

Mr Guy Hall, School of Law. Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

**or**

Ms Anne Pedersen, School of Psychology, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

## APPENDIX C

## <u>Identification with Criminal Others Subscale (ICO), Additional Items</u>

Five additional items were added to the original subscale. The items were added to assess whether the poor internal reliability was due to the original subscale only having six items. The assessment of internal reliability for the amended ICO+ subscale can be seen in chapter 3, Section 3.3.2.1. Permission to add items to the original ICO subscale was obtained (S. Wormith, personal communication, 27th June, 2002).

**Five new items.**

Please contact the author (via her supervisors) to view the scales

Mr Guy Hall, School of Law. Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

**or**

Ms Anne Pedersen, School of Psychology, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

**Scoring the Measure of Attributions and Problem Solving (MAPS)**

*The MAPS is divided into three parts. Part 1 measures three distinct forms of social attributions: the "is/ought" discrepancy; attribution of intent; specific attributions. Part 2 measures how participants believe they would feel. Part 3 asks participants to describe in their own words what they think they would do or say if they found themselves in each of the scenarios. Of importance, the MAPS contains five distinct hypothetical scenarios. Each of the scenarios are scored individually. There is no overall MAPS score. This booklet details how to score the MAPS.*

**Scoring guide thesis pages 313-326**

Please contact the author (via her supervisors) to view the scoring guide

Mr Guy Hall, School of Law. Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

**or**

Ms Anne Pedersen, School of Psychology, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

**Questionnaire Pack as Presented to University Undergraduate Students.**

**Questionnaire pack presented on thesis pages 327 to 340**

Please contact the author (via her supervisors) to view this questionnaire pack

Mr Guy Hall, School of Law. Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

**or**

Ms Anne Pedersen, School of Psychology, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

# APPENDIX F

**VCSS Scoring Guide (Based on the original guide for the CSS, Andrews & Wormith, 1984)**

**VCSS Scoring Guide presented on thesis pages 341 to 344**

Please contact the author (via her supervisors) to view this guide

Mr Guy Hall, School of Law. Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

**or**

Ms Anne Pedersen, School of Psychology, Murdoch University, Perth, Western

Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

# APPENDIX G

## Questionnaire Pack as Presented to Offender and Community Participants

## Questionnaire pack presented on thesis pages 345 to 356

Please contact the author (via her supervisors) to view this questionnaire pack

Mr Guy Hall, School of Law. Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

**or**

Ms Anne Pedersen, School of Psychology, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia,

061 8 9360 6000

School of Law

**MURDOCH**
U N I V E R S I T Y
PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LAW CRIME
AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR SURVEY

24th September 2004

Dear Resident

A survey was recently delivered to you regarding what the Western Australian community thinks about the law, the legal system and crime. **If you have completed the survey and returned it to me, thank you very much for your assistance, and I would be grateful if you disregard this follow-up letter.**

If not, could I please ask that you complete the survey and return it to me as soon as possible. I apologise for any intrusion, but stress the importance of obtaining your views. Surveys were distributed to only a small representative cross-section of the Perth community. It is therefore important that your views are included in the research if I am to accurately assess community feelings on the above issues. If you have not completed the survey due to time commitments, I would be grateful if you could complete at least some of the survey and return it to me.

If you have any questions about this survey, or need help completing the pack, please contact Sally Stevenson on 08 9360 6734, or myself on 08 9360 6033. If you want to talk to someone not directly connected with this survey please contact the human research Ethics committee at Murdoch University on 08 9360 6677. If you have misplaced the survey please contact Sally Stevenson on 08 9360 6734 and she will be happy to send you another copy.

**Your help with this research is greatly appreciated.**

Yours faithfully

Mr. Guy Hall
Senior Lecturer in Law, Murdoch University

# APPENDIX I

## Correlation Matrix for the Four VCSS Subscales by Group

| Group and number of participants per group | Variable | AGE | Education Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Male offender sample (n = 87) | ALCP [a] | .181 | -.057 |
| | TLV [b] | -.095 | -.089 |
| | JFV [c] | **-.212*** | -.210 |
| | ICO+ [d] | **-.283**** | **-.318**** |
| | Education Level [e] | .123 | - |
| Male student sample (n = 96) | ALCP [a] | -.102 | -.111 |
| | TLV [b] | -.149 | .200 |
| | JFV [c] | -.085 | .200 |
| | ICO+ [d] | -.110 | .148 |
| | Education Level [e] | **-.234*** | - |
| Female student sample (n = 139) | ALCP [a] | .010 | -.079 |
| | TLV [b] | -.144 | -.044 |
| | JFV [c] | -.130 | -.098 |
| | ICO+ [d] | -.160 | -.099 |
| | Education Level [e] | -.003 | - |
| Male community sample (n = 108) | ALCP [a] | .153 | .062 |
| | TLV [b] | **-.290**** | .093 |
| | JFV [c] | .005 | -.117 |
| | ICO+ [d] | **-.305**** | -.036 |
| | Education Level [e] | -.149 | - |
| Female community sample (n = 100) | ALCP [a] | .014 | -.152 |
| | TLV [b] | **-.207*** | .167 |
| | JFV [c] | .029 | -.070 |
| | ICO+ [d] | **-.210*** | -.029 |
| | Education Level [e] | -.095 | - |

*Notes:* * $p < .05$ (2 tail).** $p < .01$ (2 tail). [a] Attitudes towards law, courts and police. [b] Tolerance for law violation. [c] Justifications for violence. [d] Identification with criminal peers plus. [e] Represents years of formal education completed.

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**Correlation Matrix for the Specific Attributions Score by Group: Part 1 of the**

**MAPS.**

| Group and number of participants per group | Specific Score by Scenario number | AGE | Education Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Male offender sample (n = 87) | Specific 1[a] | -.060 | -.162 |
| | Specific 2 | -.111 | **-.284\*\*** |
| | Specific 3 | -.035 | .015 |
| | Specific 4 | -.154 | **-.230\*** |
| | Specific 5 | .007 | .200 |
| Male student sample (n = 96) | Specific 1[a] | -.106 | .030 |
| | Specific 2 | .074 | .051 |
| | Specific 3 | **-.233\*** | -.062 |
| | Specific 4 | -.104 | .111 |
| | Specific 5 | .052 | .017 |
| Female student sample (n = 134) | Specific 1[a] | -.005 | .071 |
| | Specific 2 | .140 | .045 |
| | Specific 3 | .012 | -.057 |
| | Specific 4 | -.031 | .026 |
| | Specific 5 | .073 | .032 |
| Male community sample (n = 101) | Specific 1[a] | -.079 | -.098 |
| | Specific 2 | -.070 | -.145 |
| | Specific 3 | -.073 | -.099 |
| | Specific 4 | -.184 | .157 |
| | Specific 5 | -.136 | .039 |
| Female community sample (n = 100) | Specific 1[a] | .028 | **-.312\*\*** |
| | Specific 2 | -.009 | **-.250\*** |
| | Specific 3 | -.073 | .083 |
| | Specific 4 | -.094 | .034 |
| | Specific 5 | -.053 | -.031 |

*Notes:* \* $p < .05$ (2 tail).\*\* $p < .01$ (2 tail). [a] Specific attributions score for each of the five scenarios (score = sum of the attribution of hostile, malevolent intent and fundamental attribution error minus the negation of hostile intent).

**Testing Hypothesis 1: Between Group Differences on the "Is/ought" Discrepancy.**

Means and Standard Deviations for the "is/ought" Discrepancy Score by Group on each of the Five Scenarios

| Sample | n [a] | Scenario1 Ambiguous | Scenario2 Accidental | Scenario3 Ambiguous | Scenario4 Ambiguous | Scenario5 Hostile |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male offender sample | 86 | 7.03 (2.56) | 2.86 (0.91) | 8.64 (1.69) | 6.28 (2.29) | 8.78 (1.54) |
| Male student sample | 94 | 7.32 (1.94) | 2.44 (0.84) | 8.55 (1.77) | 6.15 (1.86) | 9.48 (1.23) |
| Female student sample | 131 | 7.99 (1.87) | 2.35 (0.68) | 8.86 (1.71) | 6.37 (2.09) | 9.65 (1.05) |
| Male community sample | 101 | 8.18 (2.29) | 2.52 (0.98) | 8.85 (1.59) | 6.69 (2.27) | 9.53 (1.15) |
| Female community sample | 89 | 8.97 (1.62) | 2.40 (0.81) | 9.13 (1.38) | 7.06 (2.20) | 9.69 (0.89) |

*Notes:* Standard deviations in parentheses. [a] number of participants in each group

Group differences were assessed using a mixed design 5 (group) x 5 (scenario) SPANOVA. The Greenhouse Geiser showed a significant main effect for scenario with a large estimated effect size (F (3.308, 1640.977) = 1444.46, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .74$).

Pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni adjustment showed that all scenarios were significantly different from each other (all tests $p < .001$) suggesting that each of the scenarios represents a social situation where a different "is/ought" discrepancy level occurs.

Although the main effect for group was significant (F (4, 496) = 12.06, $p = .08$, $\eta^2 = .08$) as was the scenario by group interaction (F (13.234, 1640.977) = 4.45, p < .001; $\eta^2 = .04$) the estimated effect sizes for both these results were so small they were almost negligible.

As can be seen from the means above and the in the profile plot overleaf, although the differences were significant this is due to the numbers used in the analysis rather than a pronounced difference between the groups on this variable.
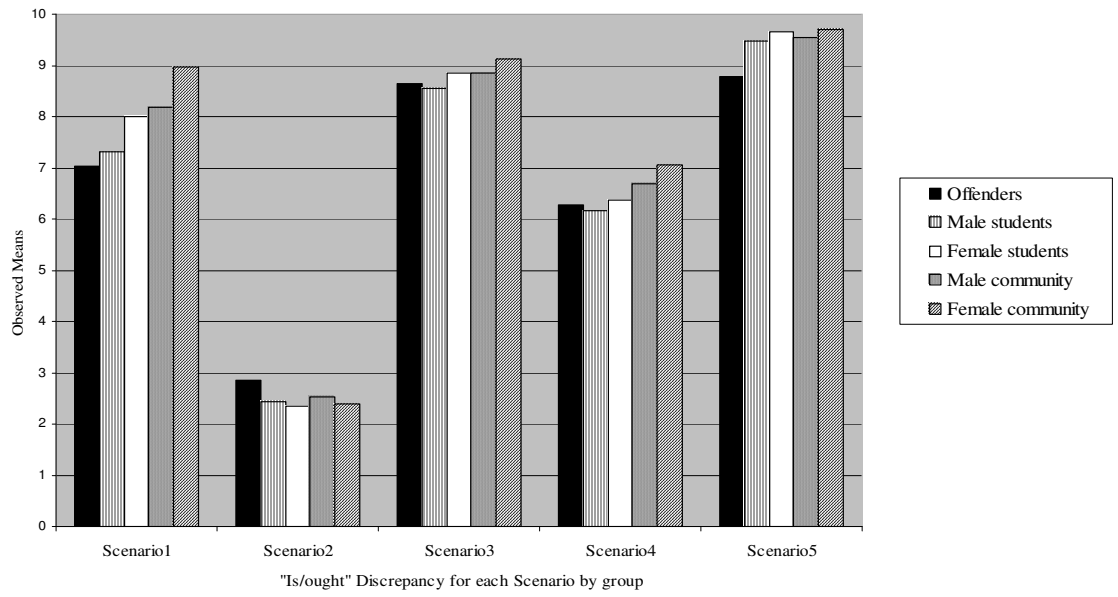
**Profile plot for the "Is/ought" discrepancy**

## APPENDIX L

**Testing Hypothesis 2: Group Differences on the Attribution of Hostile Intent, the**

**Attribution of Malevolent Intent and Negation of hostile Intent.**

Means and Standard Deviations for Hostile, Malevolent, and the Negation of Hostile
Intent by Group on each of the Five Scenarios

| Sample | n [a] | Variable | Scenario1 Ambiguous | Scenario2 Accidental | Scenario3 Ambiguous | Scenario4 Ambiguous | Scenario5 Hostile |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male offenders | 86 | Hostile [b] | 4.85 | 4.71 | 6.08 | 5.24 | 8.17 |
| | | Malevolent [c] | (1.76) | (1.38) | (1.53) | (1.73) | (1.29) |
| | | | 3.22 | 3.22 | 3.44 | 3.21 | 3.53 |
| | | Negation [d] | (1.14) | (1.14) | (0.94) | (1.06) | (0.98) |
| | | | 5.07 | 4.26 | 6.24 | 5.00 | 7.64 |
| | | | (1.72) | (1.18) | (1.69) | (1.67) | (1.69) |
| Male students | 94 | Hostile [b] | 4.53 | 3.52 | 5.49 | 5.32 | 8.48 |
| | | Malevolent [c] | (1.70) | (1.16) | (1.56) | (1.35) | (1.33) |
| | | | 3.23 | 3.43 | 3.41 | 3.17 | 3.81 |
| | | Negation [d] | (1.01) | (1.08) | (1.09) | (1.12) | (0.99) |
| | | | 5.34 | 3.49 | 6.70 | 5.74 | 8.67 |
| | | | (1.88) | (1.10) | (1.77) | (1.46) | (1.56) |
| Female students | 131 | Hostile [b] | 4.05 | 3.22 | 5.66 | 5.13 | 8.15 |
| | | Malevolent [c] | (1.51) | (1.08) | (1.48) | (1.34) | (1.17) |
| | | | 3.13 | 2.98 | 3.30 | 3.23 | 3.88 |
| | | Negation [d] | (1.14) | (1.18) | (0.95) | (1.03) | (0.92) |
| | | | 5.21 | 3.24 | 6.75 | 5.59 | 8.95 |
| | | | (1.72) | (0.98) | (1.54) | (1.62) | (1.22) |
| Male community | 101 | Hostile [b] | 4.42 | 4.03 | 5.26 | 5.29 | 8.29 |
| | | Malevolent [c] | (1.48) | (1.18) | (1.49) | (1.24) | (1.32) |
| | | | 3.11 | 2.94 | 3.32 | 3.23 | 3.27 |
| | | Negation [d] | (1.08) | (0.99) | (1.08) | (0.99) | (1.04) |
| | | | 4.94 | 3.97 | 6.24 | 5.43 | 8.29 |
| | | | (1.36) | (1.11) | (1.68) | (1.76) | (1.64) |
| Female community | 89 | Hostile [b] | 4.66 | 4.13 | 5.62 | 5.36 | 8.03 |
| | | Malevolent [c] | (1.76) | (1.48) | (1.38) | (1.26) | (1.13) |
| | | | 2.96 | 2.83 | 3.30 | 3.54 | 3.18 |
| | | Negation [d] | (1.06) | (1.01) | (0.99) | (1.06) | (1.06) |
| | | | 5.31 | 3.76 | 6.16 | 5.45 | 8.43 |
| | | | (1.64) | (1.25) | (1.61) | (1.67) | (1.42) |

*Notes:* Standard deviations in parentheses. [a] number of participants in each group. [b] Attribution of hostile intent. [c] Attribution of malevolent intent. [d] The negation of hostile intent.

Group differences on the variables were assessed using three mixed design 5 (group) x 5 (scenario) SPANOVAs.
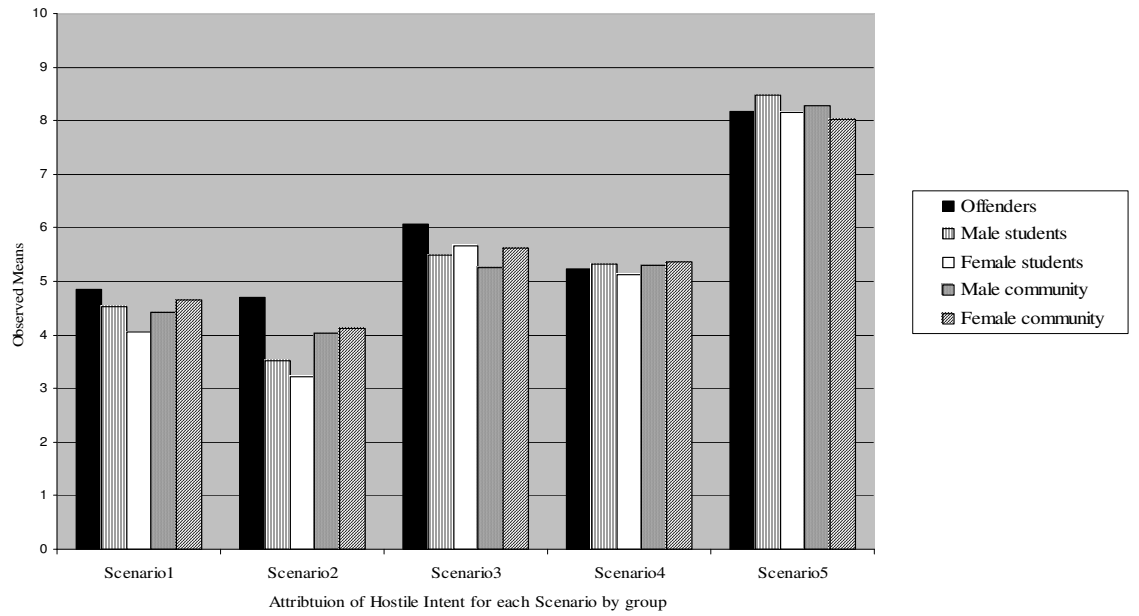
For the attribution of hostile intent the Greenhouse Geiser showed a significant main effect for scenario with a medium effect size (F (3.836, 1902.488) = 840.43, *p*

<.001; $\eta^2 = .62$). Pairwise comparisons showed that all scenarios were significantly

different from each other (all tests $p < .001$) suggesting that each of the scenarios

represents a situation where a different level of this attributional bias is demonstrated.

The main effect for group was also significant (F (4, 496) = 6.22, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$) as

was the scenario by group interaction (F (15.343, 1902.488) = 5.30, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .04$).

Although the main effect for group and the interaction were both significant the

estimated effect for the differences were so small they were negligible.

Similar results were shown for the attribution of malevolent intent. Using Pillai's

Trace a significant main effect for scenario was shown, although the effect size was

small (F (4, 492) = 17.41, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .12$). The main effect for group was significant

(F (4, 495) = 4.05, $p < .01$; $\eta^2 = .03$) as was the scenario by group interaction (F (16,

1980) = 3.53, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .02$) although the estimated effect sizes for both results were

weak.

Finally, for the negation of hostile intent the Greenhouse Geiser showed a

significant main effect for scenario with a medium effect size estimate (F (3.815,

1892.264) = 704.190, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .59$). Pairwise comparisons showed that most

scenarios were significantly different from each other (all tests $p < .001$). The exception

was for the two ambiguous scenarios (1 and 4) where the same level of negation was

applied to the cleaner as the supervisor. The scenario by group interaction was also

significant (F (15.260, 1892.264) = 6.02, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .05$) although the estimated

effect size was so small it was negligible. In contrast, the main effect for group was not

significant (F (4, 496) = 2.72, $p < .03$, $\eta^2 = .02$) suggesting the groups overall did not
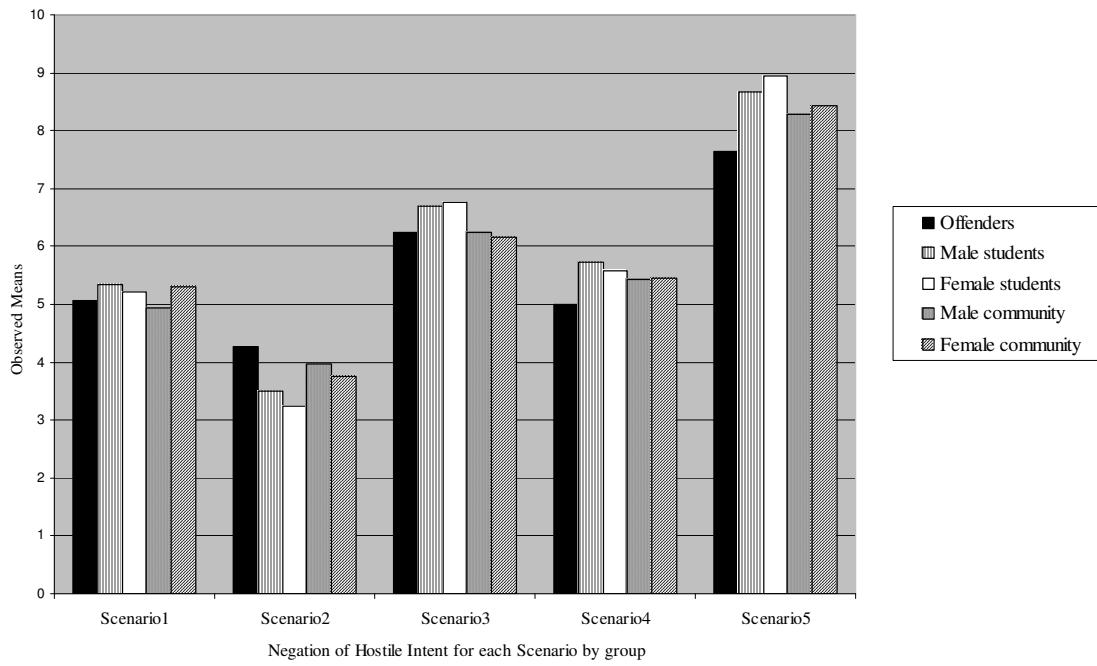
differ in their level of negation.

The results from the three sets of analyses are presented below.

**Profile plot for the attribution of hostile intent**

## APPENDIX L Continued
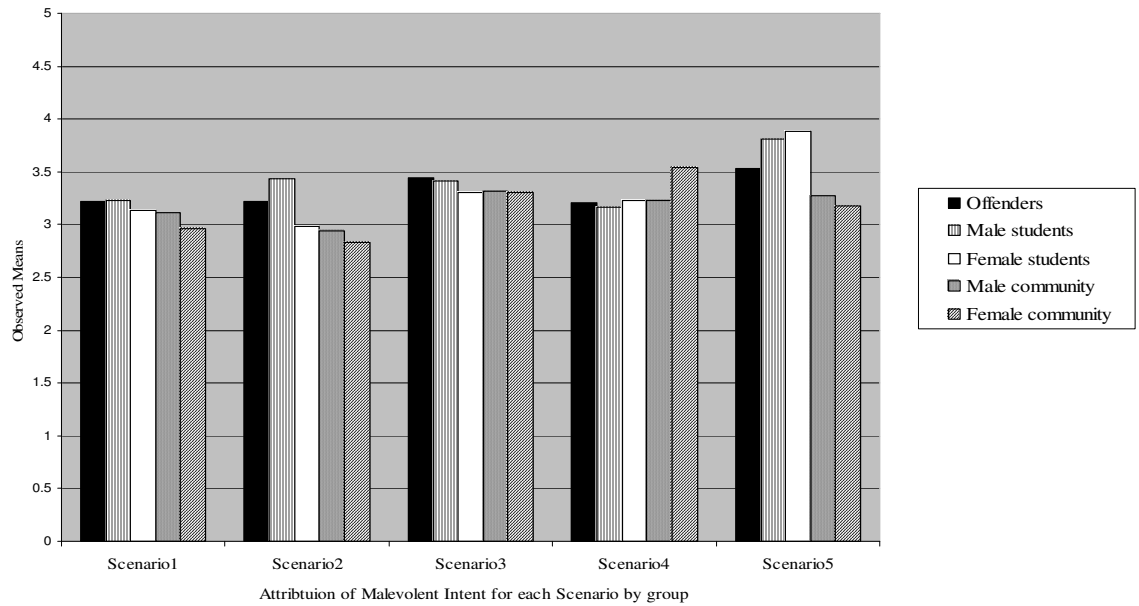


**Profile plot for the attribution of malevolent intent**

**Profile plot for the negation of hostile intent**

# APPENDIX M

## Testing Hypothesis 3: Group Differences on the Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE).

Means and Standard Deviations for FAE by Group on each of the Five Scenarios

| Sample | n [a] | Scenario1 Ambiguous | Scenario2 Accidental | Scenario3 Ambiguous | Scenario4 Ambiguous | Scenario5 Hostile |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male offenders | 86 | 3.26 (1.12) | 2.84 (1.10) | 3.38 (1.04) | 3.06 (1.01) | 3.70 (0.98) |
| Male students | 94 | 2.83 (0.91) | 2.04 (0.82) | 3.21 (0.96) | 3.09 (0.94) | 4.19 (0.87) |
| Female students | 131 | 2.78 (1.02) | 1.90 (0.79) | 3.16 (0.97) | 2.76 (0.91) | 3.98 (0.95) |
| Male community | 101 | 3.46 (1.05) | 2.31 (0.97) | 3.05 (0.97) | 2.82 (0.87) | 4.06 (0.98) |
| Female community | 89 | 3.13 (0.97) | 2.23 (0.97) | 3.19 (0.89) | 2.80 (0.91) | 3.90 (0.89) |

*Notes:* Standard deviations in parentheses. [a] number of participants in each group.

Group differences were assessed using a mixed design 5 (group) x 5 (scenario) SPANOVA. Pillai's Trace showed a significant main effect for scenario with a medium effect size ($F_{(4, 493)} = 232.26$, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .65$).

The pairwise comparisons showed that the FAE appeared to be related to hostility level. Scenario 2 (benign) was significantly different from all other scenarios (all tests $p < .001$). Scenarios 1, 3 and 4 (ambiguous) were not different from each other (all tests $p > .001$)). Scenario 5 (hostile) was different to all other scenarios (all tests $p < .001$).

The SPANOVA showed a significant effect for group although the effect size estimate was very small ($F_{(4, 496)} = 5.53$, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .04$). Pillai's Trace also showed a significant effect for the scenario by group interaction although again the estimated effect size was so small it was negligible ($F_{(16, 1984)} = 6.03$, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .05$).

The profile plot for these analyses can be seen overleaf.
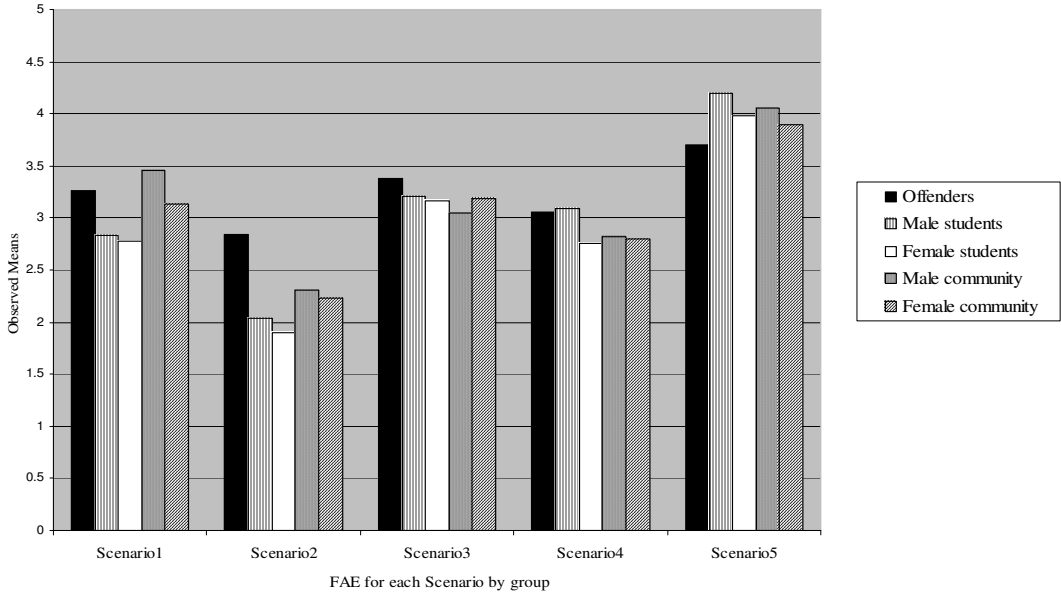
**Profile plot for the fundamental attribution error**

## Cattle prod used in attack after café ran out of chilli mussels

By Sean Cowan

THREE THUGS became so angry when their local Italian restaurant ran out of chilli mussels they drove to the shop and severely beat the owner and his staff, the District Court was told yesterday.

Dean George Damasco, 33 of Bayswater, and Michael John Rigaldi, 44, of Dianella, pleaded guilty to one count each of assault occasioning bodily harm over the incident.

Shaun Adam Damasco, 36, of Dianella, who is alleged to have used a cattle prod capable of producing several thousand volts of electricity on one of the victims, admitted two counts of the same charge.

Prosecutor Philip Urquhart told Chief Judge Kevin Hammond that Dean Damasco's partner had called Papa Gino's in Beechboro to order the mussels on April 1, 1999.

She became angry when the restaurant had run out of mussels. Mr Damasco later spoke to the owner. "He said that he wanted some food and if the food wasn't any good he was going to kick the delivery driver in the mouth," Mr Urquhart said.

He said Mr Damasco continued to swear before the owner said "If you want to be like that, the same to you, prick". He then hung up.

Thirty minutes later, Mr Damasco, his brother Shaun and friend Michael Rigaldi arrived at the restaurant in a white van.

They went to the restaurant's back door where Shaun Damasco attacked the chef using the stun gun (cattle prod) while the other men went inside. The attack left the chef with a split lip and bruising.

Dean Damasco and Rigaldi beat up the owner and delivery boy before smashing crockery.

Neighbours went to the rescue after the owner's wife ran for help. But they were warned off by Shaun Damasco, who stood at the door brandishing the cattle prod.

The owner's wife also collapsed unconscious during a frantic call to the police. A tape recording of the call was played to the court.

Mr Urquhart said the men deserved jail terms. "These were the actions of men who regard themselves as a law unto themselves," he said.

"The crown says these victims were soft targets because of their build and age. The three offenders were all considerably larger then the complainants and the stun gun was designed to intimidate".

Defence lawyers David Moen, Vesna Amidzic and Greg Smith said their clients could be dealt with by suspended prison terms or intensive supervision orders. They had actually gone to the shop to pick up their order, Mr Moen said.

Mr Smith said Rigaldi had been hit with a big pizza shovel during the incident and had a serious injury that prevented him from working.

The men were remanded in custody on November 13.

(Source, The West Australian, November 2002).

## APPENDIX O

### Jail Term Boosted Over Kettle Attack.

By David Darragh.


A PRISONER had his jail term extended by 14 months for throwing a kettle full of hot water on to a sleeping inmate, causing him to be taken to hospital.

Peter Adrian Yarran, 30 pleaded guilty in Perth Magistrate's court yesterday to a charge of assault occasioning bodily harm.

The offence was committed on June 6 at Acacia Prison.

The court was told that Yarran threw the boiled kettle at Luke Andrew Turner, 24, because he thought he had a score to settle with his fellow inmate.

Turner was taken to Royal Perth Hospital burns unit with scalding to 15% of his body.

He did not suffer permanent scarring.

Yarran claimed he intended to wake Turner and then settle their differences with a fight and did not realise the kettle had recently been boiled by another prisoner.

In sentencing, Mr Cullen labeled Yarran's offence cowardly because Turner was not in a position to defend himself.

Other prisoners must have been fearful at hearing Turner's scream because they alerted prison guards about the serious assault, he said.

He sentenced Yarran to 14 months jail to be served on top of his current term, which is due to expire in April.

Since 1990, Yarran had eight convictions for violent offences, including assaulting a police officer and assault occasioning bodily harm.

Mr Cullen refused parole eligibility because of the nature of the assault and Yarran's criminal record.


(Source, The West Australian, September 2002).

# APPENDIX P

## 12 Years for 'Stare' Murderer.

By David Darragh.

A 21-YEAR OLD murderer has been sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum of 12 years for bashing a stranger to death with a baseball bat because the victim stared at him.

A Supreme Court jury found Dean Grant Anderson not guilty of the wilful murder of Ronal Mark Hilsley, 34, but guilty of the lesser charge of murder.

The jury ruled that Anderson, who was 19 at the time, intended to cause grievous bodily harm to, but not to kill, Mr Hilsley when he repetitively bludgeoned him in the back of the head with a metal baseball bat at the Kenlorn Caravan Park in Queens Park, on November 2, 2001.

Anderson's first trial in October ended with a hung jury.

Justice John McKechnie sentenced Anderson to a mandatory life jail term with a minimum of 12 years, backdated to November 2001, before he is eligible for parole. The maximum sentence is 14 years.

Justice McKechnie said Anderson could not control his anger and was a danger to the community.

He was an amphetamine user with convictions for three burglaries on caravans at Kenlorn Caravan Park.

Outside court, Mr Hilsley's sister Kayeleen, said she was disappointed at Anderson's acquittal on wilful murder but satisfied with his long jail term.

She labeled Anderson a vicious animal who was destined to murder.

Her brother, a machine operator at a medical waste disposal business in Welshpool, may have stared at the killer outside his house because he believed Anderson had previously stolen his bicycle.

She described her brother, the eldest of nine children, as a loving family man. The family was devastated by his brutal murder. At the time of his death, he had been looking forward to a holiday in the Northern Territory with one of his brothers and taking his young nephews whale watching, she said.

Det-Sgt Pete Davies said it was disturbing that Anderson had hunted down Mr Hilsley in the caravan park 16 hours after such a trivial incident. "It was a horrible, senseless crime," he said.

During a two-day retrial, the court was told that Anderson got angry because he thought Mr Hilsley, a stranger, had stared at him when Mr Hilsley rode his bicycle past his unit on the way to work. Anderson kept mentioning the incident and seemed angry while drinking with others that night. About 12.30am, armed with a knife hidden in his pants and a bat, he and two others went hunting through the caravan park for Mr Hilsley.

After a scuffle he hit Mr Hilsley on the thigh with the bat then four or five forceful blows to the back of the head while he was on the ground. Mr Hilsley died from severe head injuries.

Anderson later admitted to police in a video interview that he had killed him.

(Source, The West Australian, August 2003).

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# APPENDIX Q

## Bikie Dobs in Mate for Assault.

By Megan Sadler.


Senior Gypsy Joker Graham Slater has broken the bikie code of silence, dobbing in a fellow club member for allegedly assaulting the manager of a Kalgoorlie nightclub last year.

Mrs Slater, charged with the September 18 assault at the Club Inn, was acquitted on Tuesday after a trial in Kalgoorlie Magistrate's Court.

Giving evidence, he told the court he did not assault the manager with a bar stool but he knew who did.

When he refused to name the man, Magistrate Stephen Sharratt threatened to remand him in custody overnight and charge him with contempt of court if he failed to reveal the person's identity.

When asked by police prosecutor Sgt Mark Bolitho who committed the assault, Mr Slater said he was not raised to "dob in a mate" and would "cop whatever is coming" as a result.

"The person wanted to surrender himself and I said, 'No, they can't prove it is me in court'," he said.

But faced with the prospect of a night behind bars, Mr Slater reluctantly agreed to seek permission from his associate before naming Chris Nisblett in court.

Mr Slater vehemently denied assaulting the manager, claiming two fights erupted around him as he stood at the bar drinking with his son.

"I didn't lay a hand on the bloke," he said.

A Club Inn barmaid told the court the manager had called the group "deroes" and told them to leave.

She saw the assault take place but said the attacker was not Mr Slater.


(Source, The West Australian, June 2005).

# APPENDIX R

## Jail for Jilted Man Over Shooting.

By David Darragh.

A MAN was jailed for 3.5 years yesterday after he admitted shooting another man in the neck outside a city nightclub.

Gwilyn Thomas Fawcett, 26, formerly of Burswood, pleaded guilty in the Supreme Court to causing grievous bodily harm to Giovanni Paul Ruiz, now 24, outside the Ambar nightclub in Murray Street on November 25, 2001.

Justice Chris Pullin said Fawcett's sentence needed to deter people from carrying guns and firing them on the streets.

"It is extremely undesirable that guns should be produced and used on our streets," he said.

Fawcett has served almost a year in custody. His 3.5 year term with parole eligibility was not back-dated.

The court was told that Fawcett was angry when his ex-girlfriend, 25-year-old Melissa Yvette D'Amico spilt up with him and started a relationship with Stevan Merenda.

Fawcett had supported Ms D'Amico while she served a five-year jail term for the motor vehicle manslaughter of 17-year-old Andrew King, who was run over outside a Roleystone party in November 1997.

Fawcett obtained the revolver covertly after he received threatening messages on his mobile phone following an argument with Ms D'Amico.

He had the gun when he confronted Mr Merenda and two friends outside Ambar. After exchanging abuse, Fawcett cocked the gun and fired five shots, causing the three men to flee.

One bullet hit Mr Ruiz in the neck, lodging so close to his spine that it was too dangerous to remove.

After firing the shots, Fawcett smashed the window of a car in which Ms D'Amico was sitting before friends dragged him away.

Justice Pullin said Fawcett had not been frightened and considered himself in control of the situation.

Defence lawyer Tom Percy QC submitted previously that Fawcett was in fear of being the victim of a gangland-style payback at the time of the shooting.

He was due to face three counts of attempted murder and one of unlawful detention but the prosecution offered no evidence on these charges because key witnessed refused to testify.

Fawcett had previous convictions for burglary, dishonesty and drug offences but no record of violent offences.

"The worst aspect of the offence is that you took the effort to locate and acquire a dangerous weapon and then armed yourself with it," Justice Pullen said.

(Source, The West Australian, August, 2003).

## Thugs Went Too Far With Business Rival

London: Press Association

One of Britain's wealthiest men is facing a life term for killing a business associate who dared challenge him.

Nicholas van Hoogstraten hired two thugs to exact revenge on father-of-six Mohammed Raja after they fell out.

But although he wanted Mr Raja harmed, he had not wanted him murdered, an Old Bailey jury decided yesterday, on the eight day of deliberations.

They cleared him of murder but convicted him of manslaughter.

After sentencing the hit men to life, trial judge Mr Justice Newman warned van Hoogstraten he was considering a life term for him too.

But the judge delayed sentencing to allow van Hoogstraten to consult his lawyers about whether he wanted the case to be adjourned for psychiatric reports.

Mr Raja was stabbed and shot at point-blank range at his home in Sutton, South London, on July 2, 1999.

The 62-year-old landlord was taking court proceedings against van Hoogstraten, alleging fraud, the jury was told.

Had he succeeded, van Hoogstraten would have faced criminal proceedings and possible jail. He decided to teach the man he described as "a maggot" a lesson. He asked Robert Knapp – an old friend and enforcer he met in prison decades before – to take care of it. But it went too far. Knapp took another ex-convict, David Croke, with him. Both were convicted of murder on Friday.

van Hoogstraten, a landlord and property developer, is worth an estimated $550 million and was at one time building a $120 million mansion at Framfield, East Sussex, said to be the most expensive new home in Britain.

He became notorious for his classes with walkers after blocking footpaths at Framfield.

(Source, The Australian, February 2004).

# APPENDIX T

## Daughter Who Stabbed Mum Over Chops Goes Free.

By James Madden

It was cold lamb chops that finally pushed Julie Smith over the edge, prompting her to stab her invalid mother 48 times with a kitchen knife.

Unhappy with the way her daughter had cooked her favourite meal, Barbara Smith, 71, had returned to the kitchen to reheat the underdone chops.

But her dissatisfaction infuriated Julie Smith, 47, who ordered her mother back to her bedroom.

Decades of stressful and sometimes violent cohabitation with her mother were about to reach a climax.

Julie Smith took the tray with the plate of chops on and smashed it over her mother's head. She then stabbed Barbara 48 times with a kitchen knife, leaving her close to death.

"The lamb chops were a metaphorical last straw," Judge Bernard Teague said yesterday as he sentenced Smith to a maximum four-year prison term.

But hours later, Smith walked free from the Victorian Supreme Court, released after Justice Teague ruled that the 132 days she had spent in custody qualified as the non-parole period.

He said Smith's crime was "seriously wrong" but that she was driven by years of stress over caring for her mother and the family home.

Smith, who pleaded guilty to intentionally causing serious injury to her mother -- who survived the attack -- also suffered depression and was deeply remorseful, Justice Teague said.

The court heard that Smith had lived with and cared for her mother almost all her life at the family's home in Broadmeadows, in Melbourne's northwest. Their relationship was beset by "major communication problems", Justice Teague said.

"There were many ways in which you dealt with your mother that troubled her. She was ready to let you know it. There were many ways in which your mother dealt with you that troubled you. Until January 2004, you did not retort physically. Occasionally, you retorted orally. You generally opted to seethe."

Justice Teague said he took into account the victim impact statement of Barbara Smith, who asked that her daughter be spared a jail term in favour of counselling. At an earlier court hearing, she admitted that she often fought with her daughter, but maintained that they "got on very well".

After she was attacked by her daughter, Barbara Smith told police: "I don't remember her ever kissing me or putting her arm around me. She was a man-hater. We had problems where things would build up and I would explode and yell at Julie".

(Source, The Weekend Australian, September 2005).

## Man Jailed for Tube Knife Murder.

**B B C** NEWS

**A man who murdered a student at a Tube station after a row in a west London park has been jailed for life.**

Hassam Hassan, 20, stabbed Sayed Abbas through the heart after chasing him onto the platform at Hounslow West station in August 2004.

The Old Bailey heard Mr Abbas, 18, and some friends were attacked for playing football on a gang's "territory".

Hassan, of Hounslow, was found guilty of murder last month. Three others were found guilty of violent disorder.

Mohammed Omar Ali, 19, from Hammersmith, Sherif El Gazzaz, 18, and Mustafa Ibrahim, 18, both from Heston, were sentenced to three-and-a-half years in a youth detention centre. Hassan was told he must serve at least 14 years of his sentence.

During the trial the court heard Mr Abbas and his friends had earlier been confronted by the gang in Beaversfield Park and accused of being "on their territory".

Jurors heard that after they left the gang called for reinforcements and armed themselves with a broken bottle, pool cue, bricks and the knife.

Responding to a telephone call for help, Hassan went to Hounslow West station with the gang where he stabbed Mr Abbas.

Judge Ann Goddard said: "Your actions were planned and they were violent and in my view, they were arrogant. One awful fact is that you are all intelligent young men. On this occasion you had no sense of responsibility at all and showed pathetic immaturity".

The judge told the court that Mr Abbas's family had been so upset by the murder they had left the country.

(Source, BBC NEWS, September 2005).

<u>**Vicious Thug Shattered Family.**</u>

# BBC NEWS

**The family of a man who was stabbed to death in an argument over a cheap car stereo have branded his killer "a vicious thug".**

David Donnell was sentenced to 10 years in prison for the culpable homicide of Roddy Mitchell in an Aberdeen car park.

Donnell said he acted in self-defence but Mr Mitchell's family said he showed his real character by taking life over "an unbelievably trifling matter". They said the killing had shattered the family and left a child fatherless.

Donnell, 23, whose father David was jailed for a bungled gangland killing two years ago, had originally been accused of murder.

He alleged that he was protecting himself but Mr Mitchell's brother Daniel said he was extremely aggressive.

The accused, from Aberdeen, stabbed Mr Mitchell six times in a car park in Wellington Road in the city on 3 December last year.

The High Court in Glasgow heard that the two men had scuffled in the car park of Menzies Distribution in Abbotswell Road, where they worked, after a row over the stereo.

Donnell then followed Mr Mitchell, 24, from Balmedie, and his 22-year-old brother in their car to Lidl's car park in Wellington Road where the stabbing occurred.

Donnell was convicted of culpable homicide and dangerous driving and a separate charge of assaulting a bus driver in Roslin Street, Aberdeen, on 3 September.

Mr Mitchell's family welcomed the sentence handed down to Donnell at the High Court in Edinburgh on Wednesday.

In a statement, they said: "We are pleased and grateful that the man responsible for the death of our brother and son has been brought to justice for his death. While it can never bring back our Tiger, as our family call him, the sentence imposed today means that we can now put the terrible events of last December behind us and start to grieve properly for him.

The actions of David Donnell that morning were those of a vicious thug who clearly had no respect for life and his attempts to shift blame on to Roderick by claiming he acted in self-defence speak volumes about his real character."

The family said they would take what consolation they could from the "hurt" inflicted by Donnell on Mr Mitchell's loved ones and friends.

They said: "In taking Tiger's life over an unbelievably trifling matter, he has shattered an entire family and made a lovely little girl fatherless. 'Tiger' was a wonderful dad to Zoe and partner to Hannah and he can never be replaced in their lives."

The distraught family expressed their gratitude to all those who helped to secure a conviction, including the witnesses who came forward to speak to the police.

David Donnell senior was jailed with three other men in October 2003 for killing an innocent man during a drugs feud.

They had plotted to kill a rival drugs dealer in a turf war, but they bungled the hit and shot Billy Fargher, 38, the owner of a takeaway food and coffee shop in October 2002.

(Source, BBC NEWS, September 2005).