

# Examining the Process of Violentization of 78 Youth from Gugulethu and Khyalitsha in the Western Cape

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# Abstract

- Why do only some youth become seriously violent offenders whilst their peers do not? Athens' (1992) conceptual model of violent socialization explicates the reason why some individuals choose to employ violence as a preferred method of dealing with everyday social encounters.
- The purpose of this study is to examine the social process of violentization of South African youth from two Western Cape communities; Gugulethu and Khyalitsha making use of Athens' Process of Violentization Theory (Athens, 1992, 1997, 2003).

# Process of Violentization Theory

- Athens developed the Process of Violentization Theory describing four stages in the development of violent perpetrators, namely; brutalization, defiance, violent performances and virulency.

## **Brutalization**

This Stage has three elements:

1. Violent subjugation (may be coercive – stops when subordinate complies; or retaliate).
  2. Personal horrification (witnesses violence inflicted on someone close, often a mother or sibling).
  3. Violent coaching (learns when a situation demands violence – gets “toughened up for life”).
- Techniques used to prompt violent response to perceived provocation including ridicule, coercion and harassment).

## **Defiance**

Individual tries to resolve the crisis of their brutalization.

Realizes that the only way to put a stop to it is to become violent, never to let themselves be subjugated again.

## **Violent Dominant engagement**

The subordinate puts new-found resolve to the test. To progress to the next stage, must successfully inflict ‘grievous injuries’ to others on several occasions.

## **Virulency**

The stage has three elements:

1. Violent notoriety (gains a reputation for violence).
2. Social trepidation (people begin to treat him differently – he feels invincible).
3. Malice (desire to harm others or to see others suffer - makes a firm resolution to attack or kill if provoked).

# Research Sample

- 78 Youth Offenders attending Diversion Program at REALISTIC during December 2011 – February 2012
- 31 Gugulethu and 47 Khyalitsha
- 70 Male respondents, and
- 8 Female respondents
- Ages ranged between 13 – 26 years old
- In testing the Process of Violentization Theory for the South African context, use was made of a 59 Item Violentization Socialization Scale (VSS, Athens, 1992, 1997, 2003).

# Violent Socialization Scale (VSS)

- VSS consists of 59 items (Likert Type Scale) drawn from Athens Theory of Violentization
  - Participants asked to respond to various Likert Type Statements on a scale from 1 (never / not at all) – 6 (Frequently / almost always)
  - Also asked to indicate relationship with perpetrator (i.e. Father, Mother, Stepfather, etc.)
- Violent Subjugation (19), Personal Horrification (11), Violent Coaching (9), Virulency (9), Defiance (6) & Violent Performance (5)

# Reliability of individual components

Component	Cronbach Alpha
VS	.914
PH	.935
VC	.815
Be	.809
VP	<i>.577</i>
Vi	.834

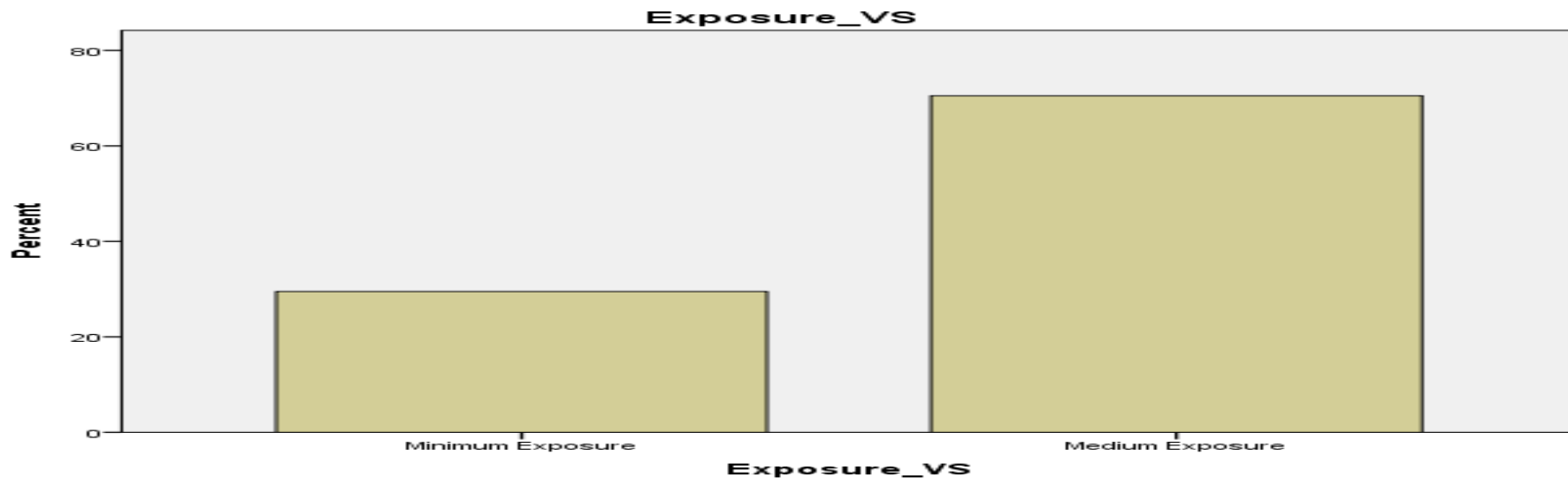
Each component (as categorized by documentation provided) was examined for internal reliability using the Cronbach Alpha. Values higher than 0.7 indicate good reliability.

# Data Analyses

- Frequency tables, bar charts and summary stats for individual items:
  - Tables and charts generated in SPSS output file. Methodology purely descriptive (frequency tables and bar charts self-explanatory), with specific summary statistics: N, mean and standard deviation, median and inter quartile range, and mode (most frequently observed response).
- Heat maps/tables (organized by component):
  - The heat maps provided color-coded tables, which indicates the percentage for each response for each item, as well as the mean response value and standard deviation.

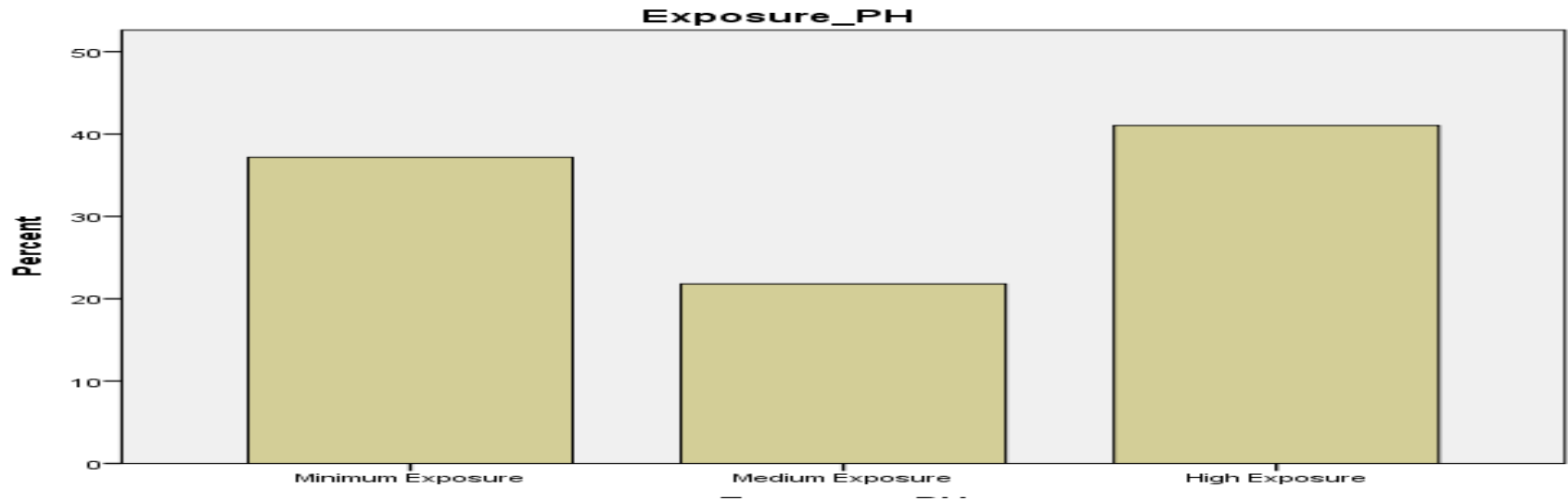


# Exposure to Violent Socialization items 1 – 19



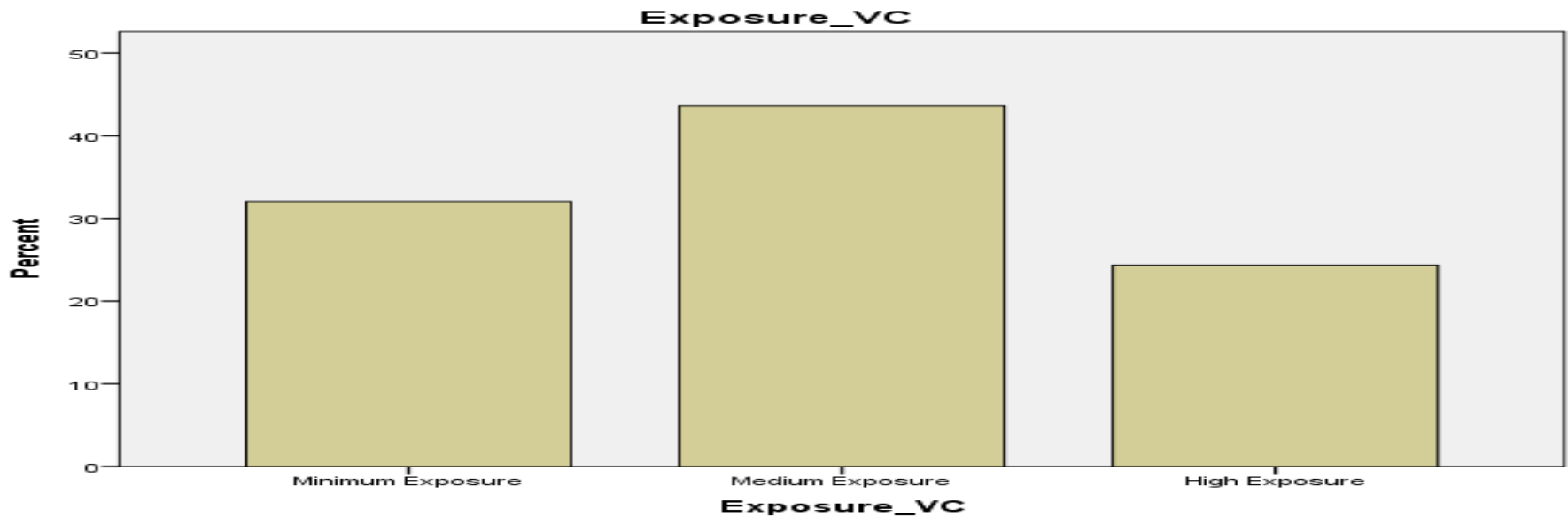
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Minimum Exposure	23	29.5	29.5
	Medium Exposure	55	70.5	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0

# Exposure to Personal Horrification items 20 – 30



		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Minimum Exposure	29	37.2	37.2	37.2
	Medium Exposure	17	21.8	21.8	59.0
	High Exposure	32	41.0	41.0	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

# Exposure to Violent Coaching items 31 – 39



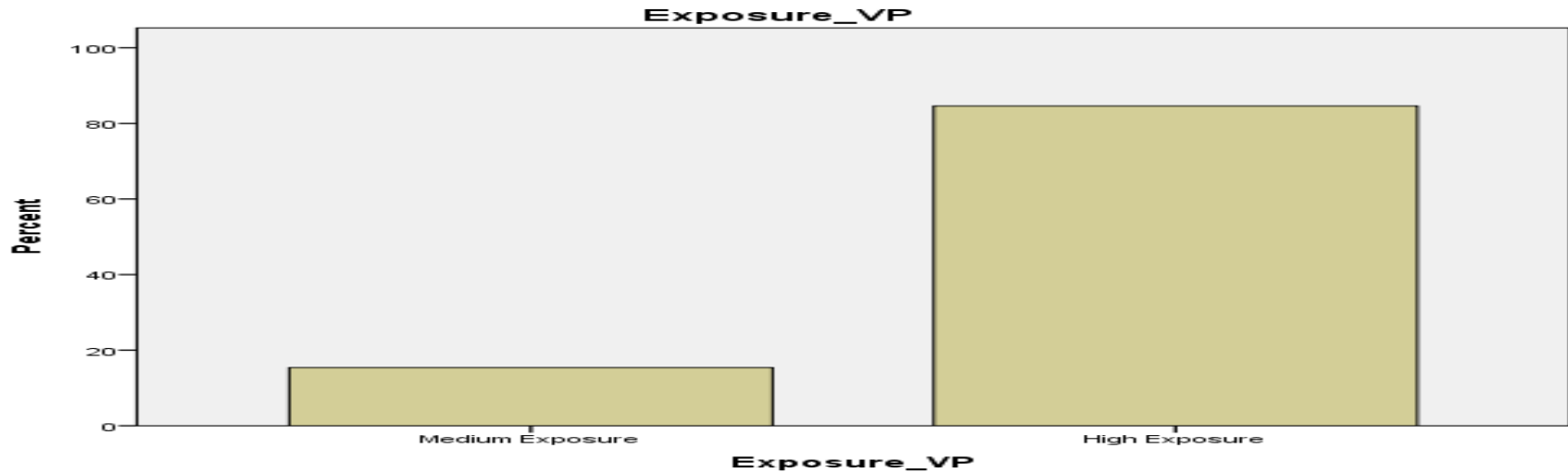
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Minimum Exposure	25	32.1	32.1	32.1
Valid Medium Exposure	34	43.6	43.6	75.6
Valid High Exposure	19	24.4	24.4	100.0
Total	78	100.0	100.0	

# Exposure to Defiance items 40 – 45



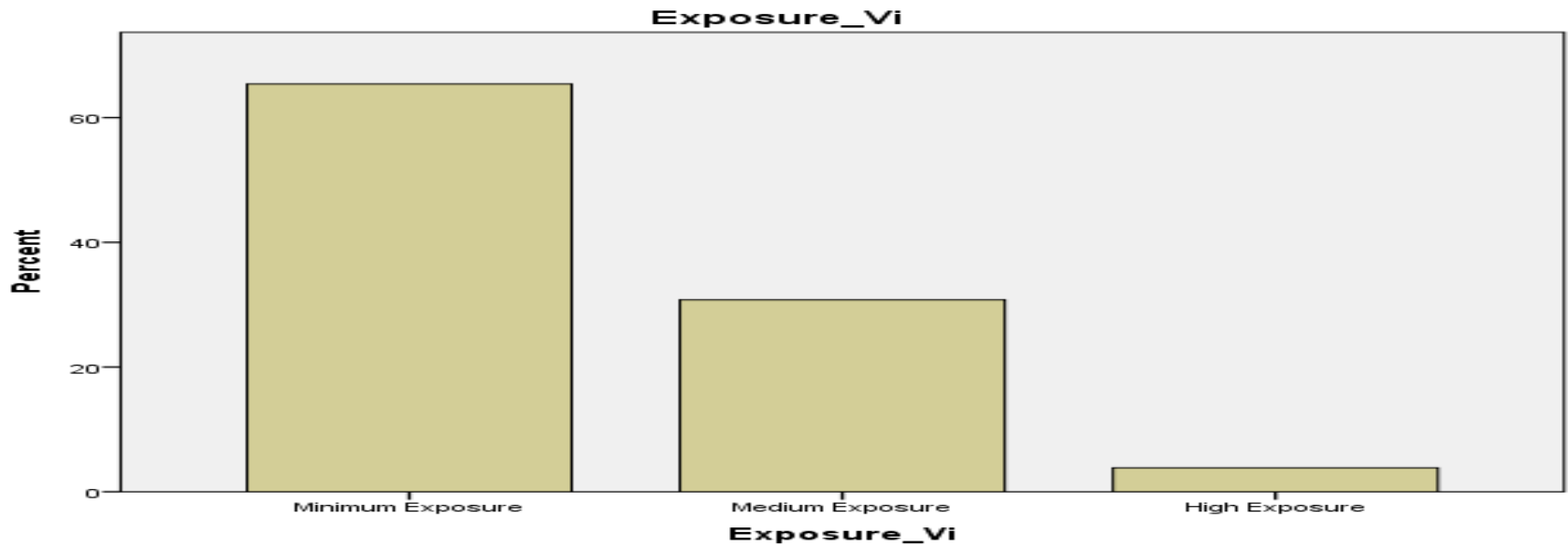
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Minimum Exposure	25	32.1	32.1	32.1
Valid Medium Exposure	32	41.0	41.0	73.1
Valid High Exposure	21	26.9	26.9	100.0
Total	78	100.0	100.0	

# Exposure to Violent Performances items 46 – 50



		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Medium Exposure	12	15.4	15.4	15.4
	High Exposure	66	84.6	84.6	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

# Exposure to Virulency items 51 - 59



		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Minimum Exposure	51	65.4	65.4	65.4
	Medium Exposure	24	30.8	30.8	96.2
	High Exposure	3	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	100.0	

# Overall Exposure

(using the average of the various components)



	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Minimum Exposure	4	5.1	5.1	5.1
Valid Medium Exposure	64	82.1	82.1	87.2
Valid High Exposure	10	12.8	12.8	100.0
Total	78	100.0	100.0	