

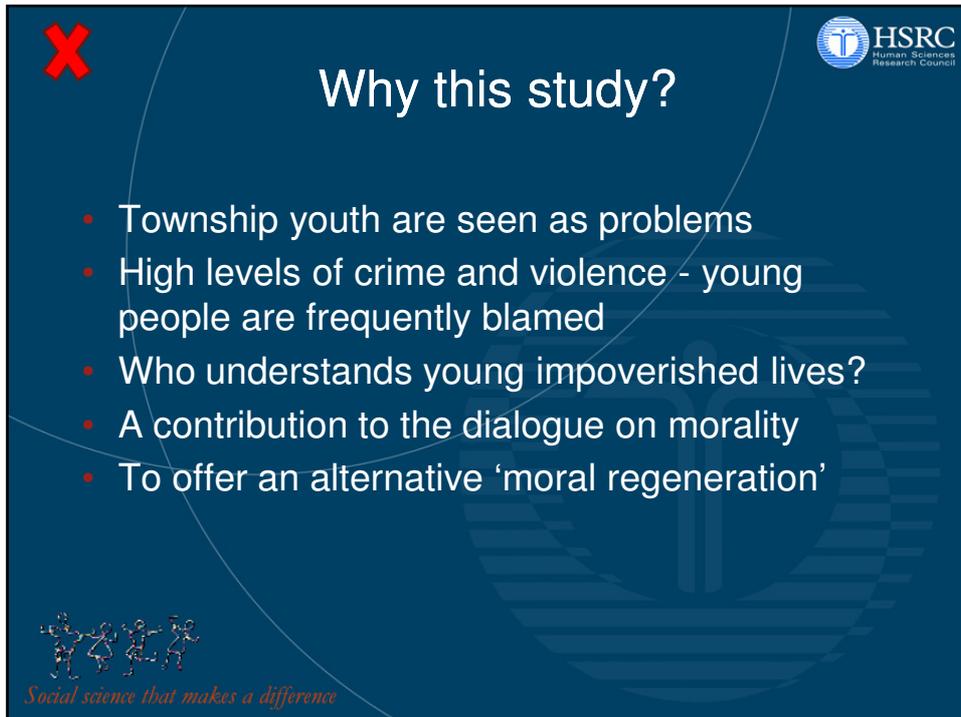
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iKASI
The Moral Ecology of South Africa's Township Youth

Sharlene Swartz

Cape Town
18 August 2010

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Why this study?

- Township youth are seen as problems
- High levels of crime and violence - young people are frequently blamed
- Who understands young impoverished lives?
- A contribution to the dialogue on morality
- To offer an alternative 'moral regeneration'

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The biggest issues

1. Partial-parenting
2. Partial-schooling
3. Historical blindness/racial subjugation
4. Normalisation of violence
5. Debilitating substance use
6. Huge aspirations


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✘ Ikasi Outline

Part One The SA Moral Context

- 1 Studying youth morality amidst poverty
- 2 SA's fractured morality: A youth view
- 3 'What world is this?' Complex realities

Part Two Youth morality after Apartheid

- 4 Moral codes of right and wrong
- 5 Positioning others and yourself
- 6 Moral decision-making and dissonance
- 7 Making meaning of moral influences

Part Three Applying contextual moral knowledge

- 8 Theorising a notion of 'moral capital'
- 9 Application for groups and communities


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IKASI
The Morality of Post-Apartheid Youth
Shafiqe Swartz



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Appendix

Methodological notes



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The study

- An ethnographic study
- Two years and ongoing
- With 37 'Black' youth – 18 men, 19 women
- Aged between 14 and 20 years old
- Most in Grade 9
- Cape Town townships



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Data Collection

- Three individual interviews
- Participant observation fieldnotes
- Digital photovoice
- Right and wrong questionnaire
- Decision making mind maps
- Free lists of right and wrong
- Rank ordering of moral influences
- Hanging out!



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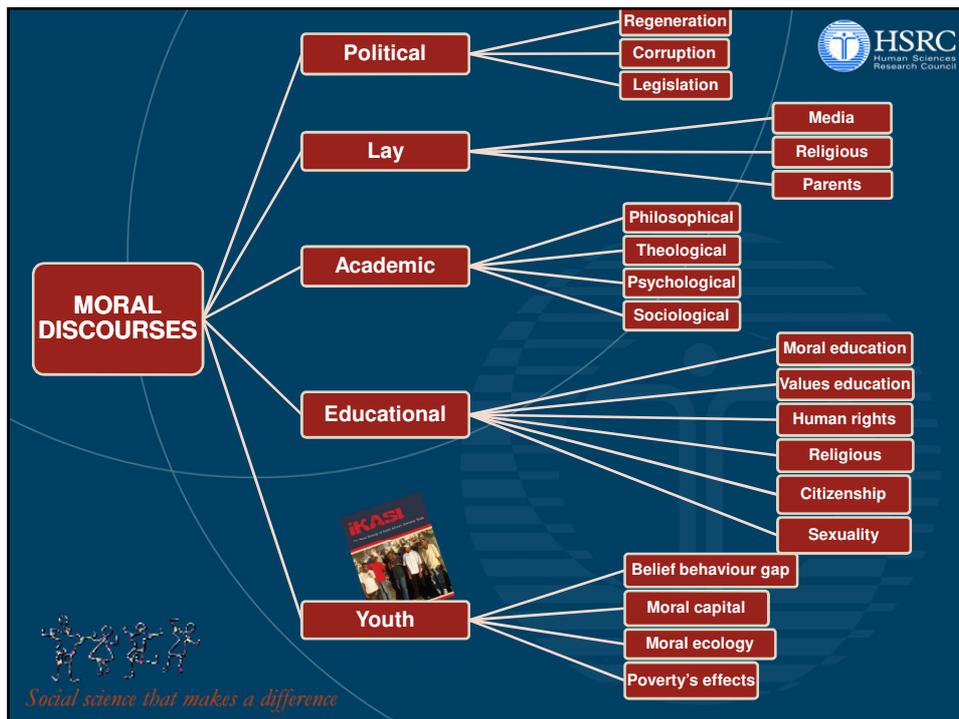


Chapter One

Studying youth morality amidst poverty



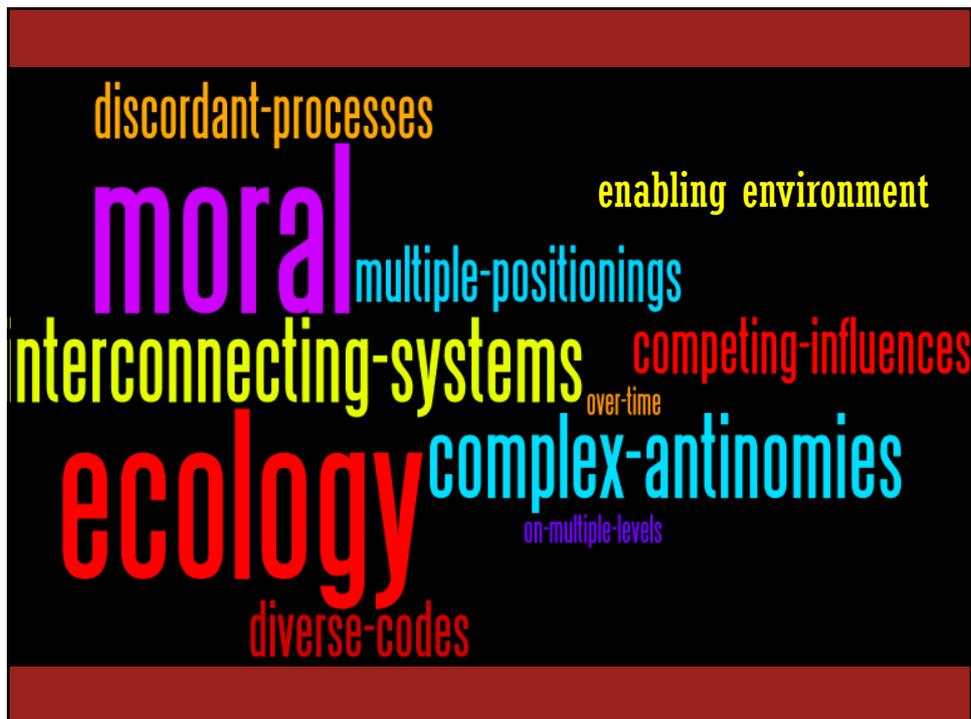
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How does poverty affect morality

1. Alcohol and drugs sabotage intentions
2. FASD leads to ADHD and aggression
3. Poor education sabotages reflection skills
4. Lack of supervision and mentoring
5. Stress hormones, fatigue – too tired to act
6. Uncover morality's 'ecology'

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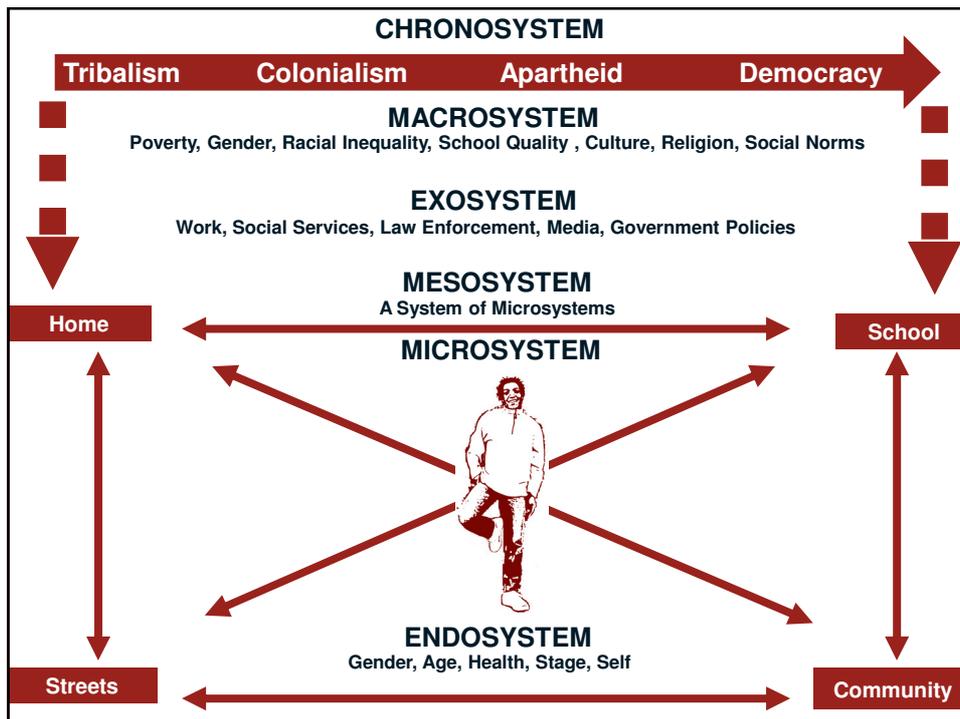
What is a moral ecology



1. About young people's contexts not just individual behaviour.
2. Like plants – not living in isolation.
3. Influenced by sun, rain, type of soil, wind, weather patterns, available nutrients, predators - an ecology.
4. Youth morality influenced by:
 - A series of overlapping, interconnecting systems
 - Internally, age, stage, sex
 - Schools, streets, home, community life.
 - Also history, polices, inequality, cultural traditions
5. Moral ecology – life world that moral action occurs in



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Chapter Two

South Africa's fractured morality: A youth view


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Nelson Mandela

Poverty and the breakdown of family life have secondary effects. Children wander about the streets of the townships because they have no schools to go to, or no money to enable them to go to school, or no parents at home to see that they go to school... This leads to a breakdown in moral standards, to an alarming rise in illegitimacy, and to growing violence which erupts not only politically, but everywhere.



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(*Long walk to freedom*, 1994, p. 437)



Fractured morality

1. 300 years
2. Colonisation, Wars, Apartheid, Land-grabbing, Necklacing
3. Gangsterism, Organised Crime, Corruption
4. Truth commission that never transferred ownership of resources
5. Enormous inequality



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What is morality?

Concerned with both private and public life; with what it means to be a good person and to lead a good life. It covers intimate, communal and national relationships between human beings, as well as between people and their environment. It should be concerned with violence and crime, conflict and peace, slavery and human trafficking, social spending and consumption, judgement and incarceration, inequality and greed. It must be interested in the moral significance of social class, poverty and unemployment, as well as the moral implications of lack of housing, welfare, access to education, gender equality, freedom of opportunity, fairness, racism, homophobia, human rights and justice in all its forms.



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The effects of Apartheid

Vuma: If Apartheid didn't affect... [my parents] then maybe we wouldn't be staying in that shack house... like me I won't get corrupt – like I will be still at school... Where I stay in the township, you see everything there you know. So maybe if my parents are staying in the suburbs I wouldn't know about those things and I didn't see so many people smoking ganja you know.



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The effects of poverty

Khaya: They are stress[ed], just because they're unemployed you see. Others they don't have parents to support them. And others they are saying it's [better] rather [for] them to die than to live with nothing. To be poor. [So they drink].



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Chapter Three

'What world is this?'
Complex social realities



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Youth 2010

1. School attendance low
2. Home disappeared fathers
3. Community youth unemployment (15-24)
4. Streets alcohol, dagga, Mandrax, crime and violence



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Youth 2010

1. School attendance 43: 10-20-12
2. Home 63% Disappeared fathers
3. Community 51% Youth unemployment (15-24)
4. Streets
 - Excessive alcohol 43%M 23%F
 - Dagga 56%M 26%F
 - Mandrax 28%M 21%F
 - Sex 62% M&F
 - 38% victim of crime



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Chapter Four

Moral codes of right and wrong



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Three kinds of moral code

1. Conventional – substance use, crime and violence
2. Contested – sex and money
3. Postmodern – where you are, self as moral authority



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Three kinds of moral code



- Conventional – substance use, crime and violence
- Contested – sex (forced wrong, outside of marriage not) and money (buying stolen goods, lying to get a job okay).
- Postmodern – space: where you are as a source of morality; self as moral authority (not law or religion)



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Right and wrong



Andiswa: A top is about 250 something rand, and we didn't have that kind of money. So the only way we could like get it is through stealing it. And we wanted it because... you feel like an outsider when you like don't have nice clothes in the neighbourhood. Because everybody... will be dressing nicely... but then you have to dress like normally when everybody else is like dressed fantastically.



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Sharlene: So... shoplifting?

Andiswa: It's wrong. It's plain wrong.

Sharlene: What's the difference between [shoplifting] and not paying train fare?

Andiswa: No, they're different. Because when you're riding on a train, there's a, there's a situation that's forcing you to do that. But for shoplifting, there's nothing forcing me to shoplift. It's just, it's just the fact that I'm greedy.



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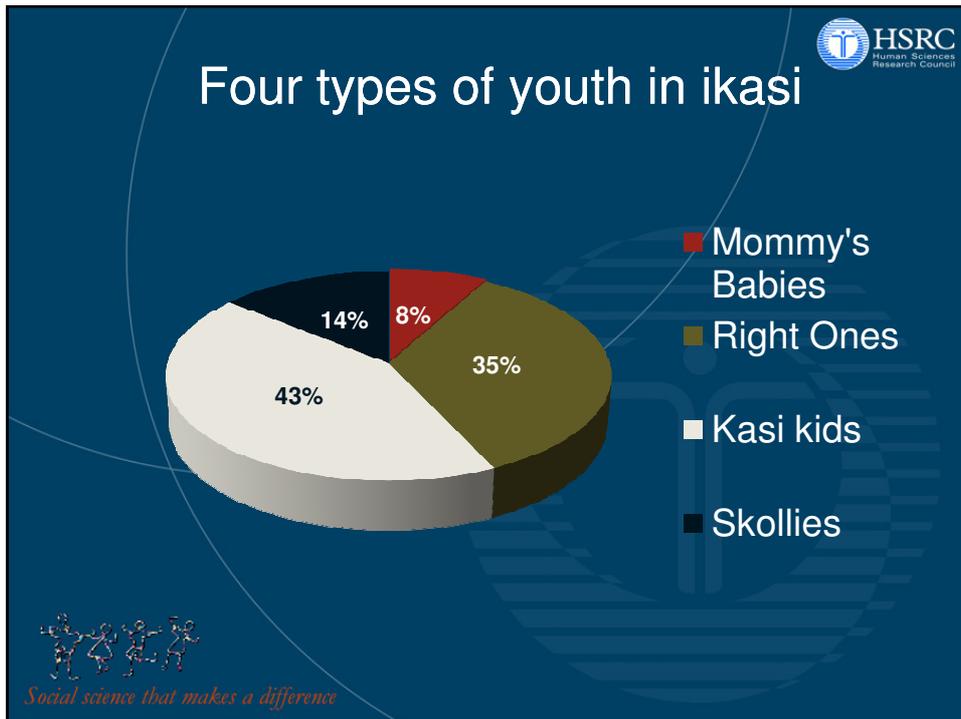


Chapter Five

Positioning others and locating yourself



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Positioning self and others

	Mommy's babies	'Right ones'	Kasi girl/boy	Skollies
Description	Isolated Protected Sheltered	Exposed Restrained, Judicious participation 'not overdosing'	Uncalibrated Competitions, 'Overdosing' Ikasi style	Criminals Hijackers Gangsters Prostitutes
Home	At home	Near home	Seldom home	Seldom home
School	In school	In school	In/out school	Out of school
Streets	Off the streets	Off the streets by curfew	On the streets after curfew	On the streets Rule the streets
Self portrayals	Unequivocally good	Unequivocally good	Qualified good 'in the middle'	Good!!!
Social representations	Hegemonic – what you do	Emancipated – who you are	Emancipated – who you are, where you are	Hegemonic – what you do
Moral stance	Isolating	Deflecting	Absorbing, reforming	Ignoring, reforming

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Are you a good person?

Vuma: Sometimes [pause] it's what I do to make me a good person because like – but it's inside. Some people see me as a wrong person... cos I don't do good... I can say that like, I'm a good person but [long pause] I am a good person *but without dagga and alcohol.*


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What do we mean by 'moral'?

1. Moral action - Doing the right thing
2. Moral knowledge – Knowing the difference between right and wrong
3. Moral identity - Seeing yourself as a good person
4. Moral desire – Wanting to be a good person


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Chapter Six

Moral decision-making and dissonance



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Mind Maps

- Many unable to complete them
- Most depicted combination of consequences, benefits and influences
- Very few could depict the process and sequence of decision-making steps they took



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No self control, delayed gratification



Luxolo: Every time I have money, I like, I think of a beer... I tell myself, "Okay with R10 I'm going to cut my hair and with the other money I'm going to buy some toiletries..." but then when I have the money in my hand, it all flushes - and then I go and drink... I don't know why. It's like I can't control myself. I try [pause] - to be a better person, but then it's hard.

Sharlene: Do you think about your decisions, Luxolo, like when you're about to drink or smoke dagga or break into a house?



Luxolo: [Pauses—then shakes her head slowly indicating no]. Just do it.

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Not thinking



Khaya: When I was robbing the Pick 'n Pay. Go to the shop to buy something, then do something else that I was not planning for it. I was just ask[ing]me that question. I was not thinking, just do... You just follow—you don't think.



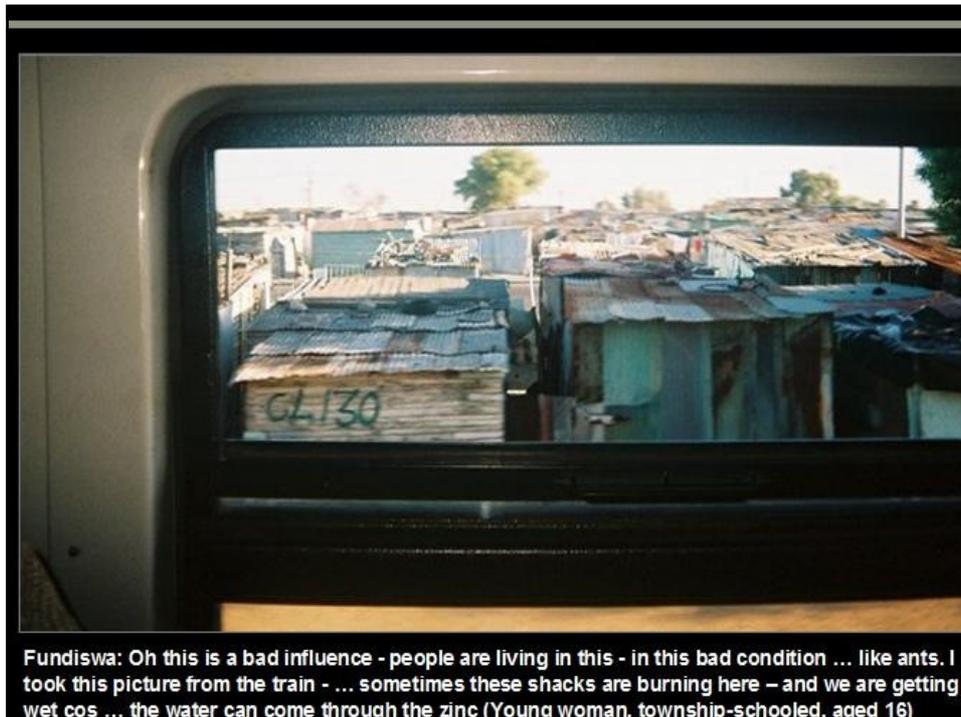
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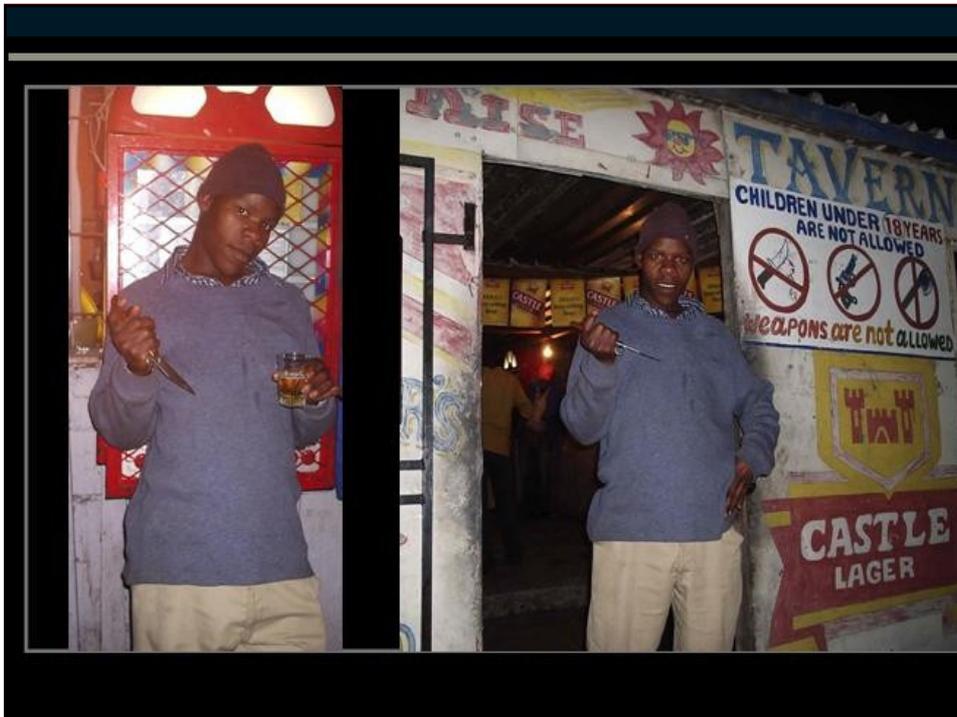
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Chapter Seven

Making meaning of moral influences

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Work and morality



Poseletso: I think education should be free. Some... [young people] want to be good people but they don't have money to go to university so that they can study and then become good people when they have got their own jobs. So they don't have money, so they end up staying in the street—doing all those [wrong] things.



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Mothers

Andile: She does everything for me. She looks after me [and] her four children. She's one - she's the mother and at the same time, she's the father... And my mother is struggling... She just works sometimes and sometimes she doesn't. She's a [long pause] I would say it's a domestic worker.



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The Supernatural

Andile: The muti that [gangsters] are using... it's supposed to be that if you wear that you cannot be stabbed or shot by the gun. If you try to shoot him, the gun will lock. So *it makes you more violent because you think you're strong*. No one can touch you.



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Ulwaluko - Initiation

Khaya: They teach you the way you have to respect the old men. ... And how to talk to old parents, yes something like that. And how to, to behave—with women and in the home.

Xolile: I depends to you... If you listen when they talk to you. Or whether the words go straight through your ears. It depends to you.



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Chapter Eight

Theorising a notion of 'moral capital'



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Moral capital

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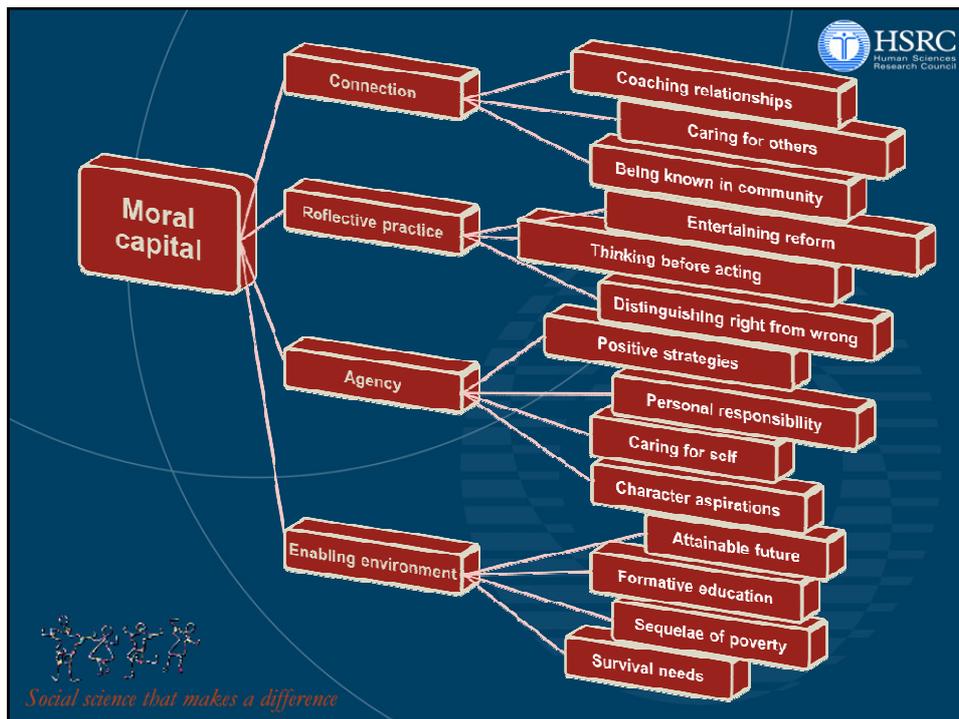
1. Moral capital is the strategies and resources that young people need to be good – e.g. Connection, reflection, agency, enabling environment.
2. Moral capital is what young people acquire if they are good – e.g. a good reputation with people, prospective employees, community members – which helps them to get ahead.

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Reputation Capacities
Career-opportunities
Financial-success

How-being-good-is-a-form-of-capital

Strategies
Intelligences
The-capital-you-need-to-be-good
Educational-achievement
Good-person Qualities
Dispositions



X **Implications of moral capital**

1. Focuses on what is present rather than absent
2. From deficit to asset
3. From 'regeneration' to building 'capital'
4. Nuances blame 'the system' v. 'the individual'
5. Explains poverty-morality relationship
6. Challenges the celebration of oppositional youth culture

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Chapter Nine

Application for groups and communities



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So what next?

1. A new moral discourse – ecology & capital
2. Develop youth critical consciousness
3. Increase adult involvement
4. Improve education quality
5. Work as a moral imperative
6. Understand needs of various kinds of youth
 - What makes a kid a 'right one'?



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