

Violent Cognitions: Do Violent Offenders Express Evaluations, Norms, and Mitigations of
Responsibility for Violence?

by

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Abstract

Past research has suggested that the term attitudes has often been used as an umbrella term for a variety of cognitive constructs, including evaluations, norms, and mitigations. In order to better understand the nature of these cognitions, I identified statements from interviews with 44 violent offenders that seemed to reflect definitions for each cognition, and quantitized these statements according to their support or aversion to the use of violence. Inter-rater reliability analyses suggested that a second coder and I reliably identified each of these cognitions in ten randomly selected interviews, and that we reliably coded the valence of statements reflecting evaluations and norms. Correlations between these cognitive statements and two indices of violence were examined, and evaluations were associated with prior convictions for violence. These results suggest that theoretical conceptualizations of evaluations, norms, and mitigations correspond to how offenders talk about violence, and that evaluative statements were associated with violence.

Keywords: attitude, evaluation, subjective norm, mitigation of responsibility, cognitions supportive of violence, violent offending, violent behaviour

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Violent Cognitions: Do Violent Offenders Express Evaluations, Norms, and Mitigations of Responsibility for Violence?

According to a national survey, almost 1.6 million Canadians were victims of violence in 2009, and 69% of these violent crimes were not reported to the police (Perreault & Brennan, 2010). To better prevent future violence, researchers have focused on the identification of potential risk factors of violence, such as violent cognitions. Violent cognitions refer to any form of thoughts, feelings, or beliefs that support the use of violence (Walker, 2005), and are theorized to play an important role in violent behaviour (e.g., Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Maruna & Copes, 2005).

For example, Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, suggests that people's intention to perform a behaviour (and consequently whether or not they do perform the behaviour) is influenced by three cognitive constructs; their attitude towards (or evaluation of) the behaviour, their subjective norms regarding the behaviour, and their perceived ability to effectively complete the behaviour. Andrews and Bonta (2010a) have also emphasized the importance of peers influencing how a person thinks about crime, and how they thereby influence the likelihood of the individual committing violent crime. For the purpose of my thesis research, evaluations are defined as the extent to which the actor regards violent behaviour as favourable or unfavourable (e.g., Ajzen, 1991), and subjective norms are defined as perceptions of whether people close to the actor (e.g., peers) think the actor should commit violence, or perceptions of how violent or how non-violent these people act (e.g., Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Alternatively, some authors have focused on the importance of whether an individual accepts or mitigates personal responsibility for an aggressive act (i.e., perception of responsibility). Specifically, Sykes and Matza (1957) were one of the first to outline categories of excuses articulated by juvenile delinquents when discussing their violent behaviour. Scott and

Lyman (1968) argued that these excuses could be further categorized according to whether the juvenile is attempting to mitigate personal responsibility for the violence, or if the juvenile is attempting to explain why the behaviour was acceptable under the given circumstances. For the purposes of my thesis project, mitigations of responsibility are defined as explicit attempts to deny or minimize personal responsibility for a negative behaviour, and claim that the behaviour was due to processes outside of the actor's control (e.g., Scott & Lyman, 1968; Snyder & Higgins, 1988; Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Overall, various theories have suggested that violent cognitions such as evaluations, subjective norms, and mitigations of responsibility are associated with—if not predictive of—violent behaviours. Several empirical studies provide support to these theories, as cognitions such as evaluations (e.g., Nunes, Hermann, Maimone, & Woods, 2015), subjective norms (e.g., Finigan-Carr, Cheng, Gielen, Haynie, & Simons-Morton, 2015), and mitigations of responsibility (e.g., Agnew, 1994) were found to be associated with violent behaviour.

However, there appears to be a lack of clarity in the conceptualization and measurement of cognitive constructs that are important in theory, research and treatment of violent offenders (e.g., Nunes et al., 2015; Polaschek, Collie & Walkey, 2004). For example, Nunes and colleagues (2015) have suggested that the term *attitudes* lacks a clear and distinct definition in the forensic/correctional psychology literature. Rather, the term attitudes appears to be commonly used as a synonym or superordinate label for a variety of different cognitions (e.g., excuses, justifications, rationalizations, neutralizations, moral disengagement, normative beliefs, etc.), thus calling into question the nature of these cognitive constructs.

One means of examining the nature of these cognitive constructs is to qualitatively examine the phenomena as they appear in nature. Mixed methods researchers have often

commented on the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods. Namely qualitative research is conducted in order to explore and describe the complex nature of the phenomena. Conversely, quantitative research is conducted in order to statistically test specific hypotheses and make predictions about the phenomena in question (e.g., Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003; Sechrest & Sidani, 1995). Furthermore, Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003) have suggested that using a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single study draws on the strengths of both methodologies, thus allowing for a better understanding of the phenomena. Therefore, the purpose of my thesis is two-fold: First to explore whether evaluations, subjective norms, and mitigations of responsibility (as defined by the literature) naturally appear in statements made by violent offenders and; Second to confirm whether the cognitions coded from these statements are significantly associated with indices of violent behaviour as suggested by past theory and research. In this way my thesis research will add to the literature by examining whether theoretical definitions for evaluations, subjective norms, and mitigations of responsibility correspond to how violent offenders talk about violence, by providing examples of statements made by offenders that are considered exemplary manifestations of these cognitive constructs, and by reporting the results of preliminary tests examining whether these cognitions are related with violent behaviour as suggested by past theory and research.

Attitudes and Evaluations of Violence

Nunes and colleagues (2015) have argued that there has been a lack of clarity and precision in the conceptualization and measurement of attitudes towards violence in the criminological literature. In contrast to the social psychological literature in which attitudes are defined as evaluations, in the criminological literature the term attitude has often been used as a

synonym or superordinate label for a variety of different cognitions, including excuses, justifications, rationalizations, neutralizations, and moral disengagement.

According to Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, evaluations are considered an important determinant of behaviour, and meta-analyses have generally revealed attitudes to show moderate (e.g., $r = .38$; Kraus, 1995) to large correlations (e.g., $r = .52$; Glasman & Albarracín, 2006) with various behaviours (e.g., recycling, donating blood, using of birth control, etc.); however, evaluation of violence appears to have been overlooked in the criminological literature (for a review see Nunes et al., 2015).

Nunes and colleagues (2015) suggested that some of the items included in scales designed to assess attitudes supportive of violence may not necessarily include or require a favourable evaluation of violent behaviour (e.g., Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates-Violence Scale [MCAA-V; Mills, Kroner, & Forth, 2002], the Criminal Attitudes to Violence Scale [CAVS; Polaschek, et al., 2004], the Maudsley Violence Questionnaire [MVQ; Walker, 2005], and the Attitudes Towards Violence Scale [ATVS; Funk, Elliot, Urman, Flores, & Mock, 1999]). Rather, some of the items from such measures may reflect cognitive constructs other than evaluations of violent behaviour. For example, consider the following items: "Sometimes you have to fight to keep your self-respect"; "I believe that you have to use violence to get through to some people"; "I try to stay away from places where violence is likely (reverse scored)"; "I tend to just react physically without thinking". Nunes and colleagues (2015) suggested that items such as these may reflect cognitions supportive of violence that are distinct from evaluations of violence.

To test this hypothesis, the authors conducted an exploratory factor analysis in a sample of undergraduate students ($N = 568$). Evaluations towards violence were assessed using a seven-

item semantic differential scale (i.e., Evaluation of Violence Scale) with bipolar evaluative anchors (i.e., negative—positive; not fun—fun; unpleasant—pleasant; wrong—right; bad—good; not enjoyable—enjoyable; immoral—moral), and cognitions supportive of violence were assessed using the Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates—Violence Scale and the Criminal Attitudes to Violence Scale. Analyses revealed that the items loaded onto distinct, though correlated factors, which was interpreted as suggesting that the Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates—Violence Scale and the Criminal Attitudes to Violence Scale assess cognitive constructs that are distinct from, though correlated with, evaluations of violence.

Nunes and colleagues (2015) found significant moderate correlations between self-reported violent behavior and the Evaluations of Violence Scale ($r = .37$), the Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates—Violence Scale ($r = .37$) and the Criminal Attitudes to Violence Scale ($r = .43$). The authors then examined whether evaluations of violence, and the Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates—Violence Scale/ Criminal Attitudes to Violence Scale were independently associated with self-reported violent behaviour. Two separate hierarchical regressions were conducted, one with the Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates—Violence Scale and the Evaluation of Violence Scale, and a second with the Criminal Attitudes to Violence Scale and Evaluation of Violence Scale. Results revealed that the Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates—Violence Scale was significantly correlated self-reported violent behaviour ($R^2 = .14$) and that the strength of the relationship significantly increased with the addition of the Evaluation of Violence Scale ($\Delta R^2 = .04$). Similarly, the Criminal Attitudes to Violence Scale was also significantly correlated with self-reported violent behaviour ($R^2 = .18$), and again, the relationship with violent behaviour significantly increased when the Evaluation of Violence Scale was included in the regression ($\Delta R^2 = .02$).

A similar pattern of results was found by Nunes, Hermann, White, Pettersen, and Bumby (2016), when examining the relationship between sexual aggression, evaluations of rape (Evaluation of Rape Scale) and a commonly used self-report measure of cognitive distortions supportive of rape (RAPE scale; Bumby, 1996). Specifically, an EFA was conducted with the two scales, and results revealed two distinct factors that corresponded to the individual scales. Two hierarchical regressions were then conducted in order to determine whether the two scales were independently associated with past sexually aggressive behaviour and with self-reported likelihood to rape. Results revealed that the RAPE Scale was significantly correlated with past sexually aggressive behaviour ($R^2 = .07$), and the strength of the relationship significantly increased with the addition of the Evaluation of Rape Scale to the regression ($\Delta R^2 = .03$). Similarly, the RAPE Scale was significantly correlated with self-reported likelihood to rape ($R^2 = .12$), and the strength of the relationship significantly increased with the addition of the Evaluation of Rape Scale ($\Delta R^2 = .05$). Although the RAPE Scale is described as a measure of cognitive distortions (as opposed to attitudes; Bumby, 1996), Nunes and colleagues (2016) have pointed out that items from the measure are commonly interpreted as reflecting attitudes towards rape (e.g., Helmus, Hanson, Babchishin, & Mann, 2013). Therefore the results of these studies provide preliminary evidence to suggest that some self-report measures that are commonly used to examine attitudes may assess cognitions that are distinct from evaluations of violent behaviour. Furthermore, the cognitive constructs assessed by these self-report measures as well as evaluations of violence are uniquely associated with violent behaviour. However it raises the question, if not evaluations, what else might be included in the conceptualization and measurement of attitudes towards violence?

In summary, past theory and research has suggested that attitudes are important determinants of various behaviours. In social psychology, attitudes are specifically defined as evaluations of the behaviour in question, but in criminological literature, the term attitude is more commonly used as an umbrella term for a variety of different cognitive constructs. Research by Nunes and colleagues (2015; 2016) support the notion that some commonly used self-report measures of cognitions supportive of violence are uniquely associated with violent behaviour. Furthermore, they have suggested that scales intended to assess attitudes towards violence may assess cognitive constructs other than evaluations, possibly subjective norms or mitigations of responsibility. Past research and theory have purported subjective norms and mitigations of responsibility as important in the initiation and maintenance of delinquent and criminal behaviour (e.g., Ajzen, 1991; Andrews & Bonta, 2010a; Maruna & Copes, 2005). Therefore, the following sections will review past theory and research that has assessed these cognitions and their relationship with violent behaviour.

Subjective Norms

According to Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, subjective norms are theorized as important determinants of behaviour. Subjective norms are theorized as developing from "the likelihood that important referent individuals or groups [e.g., close friends] approve or disapprove of performing a given behaviour" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 195). Furthermore, Ajzen and Fishbein (2005) suggested that an ideal measure of subjective norms would assess both injunctive norms, defined as "perceptions of what others think one should do" (p. 199), as well as descriptive norms, defined as "perceptions of what others are doing" (p. 199). However, relatively few studies have explicitly examined the relationship between subjective norms and violent or aggressive behaviour.

Similarly, the Personal, Interpersonal, and Community-Reinforcement (PIC-R) Theory proposed by Andrews and Bonta (2010a) has discussed how criminal behaviour is influenced by many factors, and more specifically has outlined how peers influence a person's behaviour. The PIC-R theory draws from learning perspectives, such as modelling (learning through observation and imitation), as well as classical and operant conditioning. The authors explain how individuals may learn to commit criminal behaviour by imitating the behaviour of criminal peers, and how this criminal behaviour can be further reinforced or discouraged depending on the apparent rewards and punishments for the behaviour (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a). Thus seeing a friend successfully rob a store without any repercussions may cause the individual to believe that there are more potential benefits relative to potential costs in robbing a store, thus increasing the likelihood that the individual will attempt to rob a store in the future. Although Andrews and Bonta (2010a) would most likely argue that this is an oversimplification of the process (as there are many factors influencing criminal behaviour, the influence of individual factors may vary over time and situations, as well as depend on the individual in question), the previous example depicts how an individual's beliefs about violence can be influenced by one's peers. In fact, the PIC-R theory suggests that perceptions of how approving or disapproving significant others consider a behaviour to be (i.e., subjective norms), could possibly be used as a proxy measure for whether the individual associates with antisocial individuals.

The PIC-R has also explained that an individual's likelihood of committing crime is in part based on their own experiences of rewards and costs for crime. An individual's peers may act as a source of rewards or costs for criminal behaviour, depending on how one's peers think about crime (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a). In this way, Andrews and Bonta (2010a) outline the influence of subjective norms on an individual's evaluation of violence, and on the individual's

likelihood of future violence. Similar to Ajzen and colleagues (i.e., Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005), theoretical work by Andrews and Bonta (2010a) suggest that subjective norms are an important determinant of future behaviour. Empirical research has lent some support to this notion.

In a recent cross-sectional study by Dardis, Murphy, Bill, and Gidycz (2016), the authors examined the relationships between male undergraduate students' self-reported rape myth acceptance (i.e., personal evaluations of rape), their perception of their close friend's rape myth acceptance (i.e., perceived subjective norms about rape), the friends' self-reports of their rape myth acceptance (i.e., peer's actual evaluations of rape), whether the students self-reported having previously committed any sexual assault or not (perpetration status), and whether the students perceived their friends as having previously committed sexual assault or not (i.e., perceived perpetration status).

Dardis and colleagues (2016) examined the relationships between these constructs using an actor-partner interdependence model within interchangeable dyads, which revealed the following findings: (1) students' rape myth acceptance was highly correlated with their perceived subjective norms about rape ($\beta = .81$), but these perceived subjective norms were not significantly related with their friend's self-reported rape myth acceptance ($\beta = .04$); (2) students who had previously committed sexual assault perceived subjective norms that were significantly more accepting of rape ($\beta = .26$), but the friends of students who had previously committed sexual assault did not self-report greater acceptance of rape ($\beta = .01$); and (3) students who had previously committed sexual assault perceived that their friend had also previously committed sexual assault ($\beta = .37$), but this perception was not significantly related to the friend's actual perpetration status ($\beta = .10$).

Overall, these findings from Dardis and colleagues (2016) suggest that students' personal beliefs and behaviours are associated with what they perceive to be their friends' beliefs and behaviours, though these perceptions are not necessarily related to what their friends actually believe or how they behave. In other words, perceptions about how significant others think and behave sometimes differ from how these people actually think and behave. With this in mind, these findings fail to support the notion that subjective norms could be used as a proxy variable for whether people associate with antisocial individuals. Rather, these findings emphasize the importance of one's perception of how significant others think and act, and support the notion that subjective norms are associated with sexually violent behaviour.

Similarly, a single-wave longitudinal study by Finigan-Carr and colleagues (2015), examined whether subjective norms could significantly predict urban adolescents' future aggressive behaviour. Subjective norms were assessed at baseline, by asking adolescents how many of their five closest friends commonly participated in problem behaviours (e.g., smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, get in physical fights with other kids, etc.). This index was later trichotomized to categorize distributions of adolescents with low, moderate, and high levels of antisocial subjective norms. Aggression was assessed at follow-up (approximately five months later), by asking the adolescents to report how often they had engaged in various aggressive behaviours within the past 30 days (e.g., push or shove another person; hurt someone on purpose, etc.). This index was subdivided into quintiles (i.e., zero aggression; low; medium-low; medium-high; and high levels of aggression). A polynomial logistic regression was conducted, and revealed that antisocial subjective norms significantly predicted aggressive behaviours within the following five months ($\chi^2(8) = 109.7, p < .01$). Odds Ratio (OR) scores were examined in order to determine the nature of the relationship, and revealed that adolescents in the moderate

antisocial subjective norms and high antisocial subjective norms categories were found to be roughly three and five times more likely to commit aggressive behaviours relative to their peers in the low antisocial subjective norms category (OR = 2.61, 95% CI [1.68, 4.07]; OR = 5.05, 95% CI [3.03, 8.39] respectively). Overall, these results support the notion that antisocial subjective norms are predictive of future aggressive behaviour.

Focusing specifically on subjective norms regarding non-sexual violence, cross-sectional studies have found significant correlations between subjective norms (i.e., respondents' perception of how their friends evaluate a behaviour) and self-reported likelihood of committing intimate partner violence (IPV) within a sample of adolescents (e.g., Flisher, Myer, Mèrais, Lombard, & Reddy, 2007), college students (e.g., Betts, Hinsz, & Heimerdinger, 2011), and adult males (e.g., Ames, Cunradi, Duke, Todd, & Chen, 2013; Tolman, Edleson, & Fendrich, 1996). In the study by Ames and colleagues (2013), the authors interviewed 502 married or cohabitating dual-earner couples to better understand the relationship between IPV and normative beliefs about IPV. The authors defined normative beliefs as perceptions of the extent that significant others approve or disapprove of IPV, and perceptions of how often significant others engage in IPV. In this way, the authors' definition for normative beliefs mirrors Ajzen and colleague's (e.g., Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005) definition of subjective norms. Ames and colleagues measured these norms via self-reports about how approving or disapproving coworkers, friends, and family would be of the respondent hitting or slapping his/ her spouse, and of how approving or disapproving these groups would be of the respondent being hit or slapped by his/ her spouse. Approval was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating perceptions of significant other being more approving of IPV. Respondents also self-reported frequency of IPV in the past year, which was measured according to the physical assault

subscale of the revised Conflicts Tactics Scale. The authors conducted a path model analysis, which revealed a significant direct relationship between male normative beliefs about IPV and male to female violence (unstandardized $B = .51$). In other words, the analysis suggested that males who perceive significant others to be more approving of IPV tended to engage in IPV more often. Therefore, these studies suggest that subjective norms are significantly associated with self-reported likelihood of committing IPV.

In summary, Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour as well as Andrews' and Bonta's (2010a) PIC-R Theory both suggest that subjective norms are important determinants of future behaviour. Specifically, subjective norms are defined as people's perceptions of how their peers evaluate a behaviour, or perceptions of how often their peers engage in a certain behaviour. Although few studies have empirically examined the relationship between subjective norms and violence, some researchers have found evidence that is consistent with this notion. Therefore, people who report more violent subjective norms are expected to engage in violence more frequently than those who do not report violent subjective norms.

Mitigations of Responsibility

After committing a delinquent or criminal act, individuals who retain a degree of commitment to conventional social norms are expected to experience negative affect following the behaviour. Researchers have suggested this negativity to manifest as a variety of possible affective and cognitive constructs, including guilt, lowered self-esteem, and a decreased sense of control (e.g., Maruna & Copes, 2005; Snyder & Higgins, 1988). However, these cognitions can be avoided or minimized by mitigating personal responsibility for the behaviour. Similarly, it is possible that individuals may endorse mitigations of responsibility for a third party who committed a violent act, regardless of whether they have ever personally committed the

behaviour in question. Here mitigation of responsibility is defined as an attempt to deny or minimize the actor's responsibility for a negative behaviour, and claim that the behaviour was due to processes outside of the actor's control (e.g., rage, intoxication, peer pressure, etc.; Scott & Lyman, 1968; Snyder & Higgins, 1988; Sykes & Matza, 1957). Furthermore, these mitigations of responsibility are reflected in cognitive constructs that are commonly discussed within the criminological literature.

Past research and theory have suggested that cognitive constructs such as neutralizations, rationalizations, and excuses are important contributing factors in the initiation and maintenance of delinquent and criminal behaviours. Specifically, neutralizations have been defined as “verbalizations designed to relieve the speaker of culpability or censure” (Maruna & Copes, 2005, p. 230), rationalizations have been defined as a means through which “[t]he individual can avoid moral culpability for his criminal action—and thus avoid the negative sanctions of society” (Sykes & Matza, 1957, p. 666), and excuses have been defined as “accounts in which one admits that the act in question is bad, wrong, or inappropriate but denies full responsibility” (Scott & Lyman, 1968, p. 47). It is clear from these definitions that the underlying mechanism of these cognitions is the mitigation of personal responsibility for the behaviour. Various authors have reported these cognitions as synonymous (e.g., Andrews & Bonta, 2010b) and “sharing many of the same properties” (Maruna & Copes, 2005, p. 230). However, there remains much ambiguity around the conceptualization of mitigations of responsibility.

For example, Sykes and Matza (1957) were one of the first to discuss the techniques people use when attempting to mitigate personal responsibility for unlawful behaviour. Specifically, the authors outlined five types of neutralization techniques commonly used by juvenile delinquents (i.e., denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim,

condemnation of the condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties). However, Scott and Lyman (1968) argued that the only technique that should be considered a mitigation of responsibility was denial of responsibility. Rather, they suggested that the remaining four categories should be considered examples of how people may attempt to justify their behaviour, by stating that the behaviour was appropriate when considering the specific circumstances (i.e., justifications—defined as “accounts in which one accepts responsibility for the act in question, but denies the pejorative quality associated with it”; Scott & Lyman, 1968, p. 47). In this way, justifications appear to be a type of qualified evaluation of the behaviour, and this notion has been supported by past research. Specifically, a study by Maimone, Hermann, and Nunes (2015) conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the Sexual Aggression: Attitudes, Justifications, and Excuses (SAAJE) measure, and the EFA revealed a four-factor model, in which positive evaluations of rape fell under the same factor as justifications for rape. However, further research is needed to examine whether evaluations and justifications for violence would similarly appear to tap the same construct.

Past research has suggested that mitigations of responsibility are associated with delinquent and criminal behaviours. For example, mitigations of responsibility have been found to be significantly associated with aggressive forms of delinquency ($r = .35$; Mitchell & Dodder, 1980) and with self-reported violent behaviour ($r = .40$; Agnew, 1994). Endorsing mitigations of responsibility have also been found to differentiate between high school students and incarcerated youth, as well as between predatory and non-predatory young offenders. Specifically, incarcerated youth revealed greater acceptance of mitigations of responsibility, as had the predatory young offenders, relative to their respective comparison groups (Shields &

Whitehall, 1994). Furthermore, longitudinal studies have found evidence to suggest that mitigations of responsibility may increase the likelihood of future offending.

For example, a longitudinal study by Minor (1981) examined the relationship between mitigations of responsibility and frequency of fighting behaviours committed within a three-month follow-up period in a sample of undergraduate students. Results revealed that students who accepted more techniques of mitigating responsibility were significantly more likely to have engaged in fights within the following three-months ($\tau = .10$; $N = 468$). Similarly, Agnew (1994) examined the relationship between agreement with mitigations of responsibility and future violent behaviour using data from the 1978 and 1979 waves of a National Youth Survey. Specifically, mitigations of responsibility were assessed according to respondents' mean level of agreement with the following three items: "It's alright to beat up people if they started the fight; If people do something to make you really mad, they deserve to be beaten up; [and] It is sometimes necessary to get into a fight to uphold your honor or 'put someone in his/ her place.'" (Agnew, 1994, p. 565). Results revealed that agreement with these items significantly predicted self-reported violent behaviour within the one-year follow-up period ($\beta = .08$; $N = 1\,433$). However, it is possible that some of these items may reflect mitigations of responsibility as well as evaluations of the behaviour in question. If this is the case, then these findings would suggest that agreement with items reflecting a combination of mitigations of responsibility and favorable evaluations of violence significantly predict aggressive behaviours within the following year. Therefore, these findings only lend partial support to the notion that mitigations of responsibility predict future aggression.

In summary, various cognitive constructs appear to assess mitigations of personal responsibility for inappropriate or criminal behaviours. Researchers have theorized that

mitigations of responsibility are important in the initiation and maintenance of criminal and juvenile behaviours, and that these techniques are used to explain past criminal behaviour. Empirical research has supported this notion, as cross-sectional and longitudinal research has found mitigations of responsibility to be significantly associated with, and predictive of, aggressive and violent behaviours. Therefore, people who commonly endorse mitigations of responsibility for violence are expected to engage in violence more frequently than those who accept responsibility for violence, or state that the actor who committed the violent behaviour is responsible for the violence.

Conclusion

The purpose of my thesis research is to better understand the nature of evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility¹. Specifically, I will extract statements from interviews with violent offenders, and code these statements as reflecting definitions for each of these three cognitive constructs. I will also examine the relationship between these cognitions and indices of violent behaviour, in order to confirm whether these cognitions are associated with violence as suggested by past research and theory. Specifically, a review of the literature seems to suggest that despite the lack of clarity in the conceptualization and measurement of these cognitive constructs, evaluations of violence, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility appear to be associated with—if not predictive of—violent behaviour.

Not only will my research provide support to the notion that these cognitions naturally appear in statements by offenders, but it will also examine whether these cognitions are related to violent behaviour as suggested by research and theory. Specifically, the purpose of my research is two-fold: (1) Do evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility naturally

¹ In order to include statements in which offenders mitigate responsibility as well as accept responsibility, this variable will be referred to as perceptions of responsibility throughout the remainder of the paper.

appear in statements made by violent offenders? And (2) Are these cognitions significantly associated with indices of violence, as suggested by past theory and research? To address the first question, I will create a coding manual based on past literature, which will outline definitions for each construct. I will then use this coding manual in order to extract statements from interviews with violent offenders, and numerically code these cognitions based on whether the individual statements reflect the definition for these three cognitions. Statements that are considered exemplary manifestations of each cognitive construct will also be reported in order to better retain the qualitative nature of the data. To address the second question, I will examine the correlation coefficients between each cognitive construct, number of previous convictions for violent offences while an adult, and offenders' estimated risk of reoffending according to the SIR-R1. In this way, the current study adds to the literature by examining whether theoretical definitions for these cognitions correspond to how violent offenders talk about violence, by providing examples of statements made by offenders that are considered exemplary manifestations of these cognitions, and by reporting the results of preliminary tests examining whether these cognitions are related to violent behaviour as suggested by past research and theory.

Method

Participants

Participants included 46 adult male violent offenders who were incarcerated in medium and maximum security prisons located within the Kingston area. One offender was excluded due to his interview audio file having too much electrical interference, and a second offender was excluded due to difficulty communicating in English. All 44 of the remaining offenders had been convicted for at least one non-sexual violent offence, and 39 offenders were serving time

for a non-sexual violent offence at the time of their interview. All offenders had begun serving their sentence within the past 10 years of the interview. The average age of offenders at the time of the interview was 32.99 years, and ages ranged from 21.13 years to 52.93 years. In terms of ethnicity, 43.2% of the final sample identified as Caucasian, 29.5% identified as Black, 15.9% identified as Aboriginal, 4.5% identified as Arab or West Asian, and the remaining 6.9% identified as Korean, Filipino, or Caribbean. Six offenders had an education of grade 10 or higher, 19 offenders had an education of grade nine or lower, and the remaining 19 offenders were missing information on this variable. All offenders were able to speak and understand spoken English, and each provided informed consent before beginning the interview (see Appendix A for the consent forms and Appendix B for the debriefing forms).

Measures

Demographic information. A file review was conducted in order to determine basic demographic information about all participants (e.g., age, ethnicity, etc.).

History of violent crime. Offenders' criminal history was examined via file review. Information from the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) was extracted on August 11 2016, and were coded by Dr. Kevin Nunes and myself at the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) national headquarters on August 25 2016. Number of non-sexual violent index offences and number of previous convictions for non-sexual violent offences as an adult were noted. Because there was a span of four years between the time when the interviews were conducted and when CPICs were examined, we defined index offences as the most recent sentence before offenders were interviewed.

Violent offences included convictions for murder, manslaughter, assault, robbery, forcible confinement, kidnapping, threatening, and using/ pointing a firearm in the commission

of an offence. For the full list of offences coded as non-sexual violence, see Appendix F for the CPIC coding manual. Both coders practice coded five CPICs, after which fourteen CPICs were randomly selected and coded by Dr. Nunes and myself. Inter-rater reliability was examined using Cohen's (1960) kappa statistic for categorical data, to assess the degree to which the coders consistently rated the number of non-sexual violent index offences and number of previous convictions for non-sexual violent offences as an adult across offenders. Both kappa's were in the excellent range (Number of violent index offences kappa = 1.00; Number of previous violent convictions ICC = .91), as outlined by Krippendorff (1980). This indicates that there was a high level of agreement between coders when coding the CPIC information, suggesting that there was very little measurement error introduced by the two coders.

Statistical Information on Recidivism Scale – Revised 1 (SIR-R1; Bonta, Harman, Hann, & Cormier, 1996). A file review of CSC criminal profiles was conducted in order to determine offenders' documented risk of recidivism according to the SIR-R1 (Appendix C), which was collected via the file review. The SIR-R1 is a well-validated risk assessment measure that is used by Correctional Service of Canada to categorize non-Aboriginal male offenders according to their likelihood of reoffending (CSC, 2015). Results from past research has shown the SIR-R1 as able to reliably predict both general (AUC = .71; Barnum & Gobeil, 2012) and violent recidivism (AUC = .68; Barnum & Gobeil, 2012). Similar results have been reported by other studies. The SIR has previously been found to reliably predict general recidivism (AUC = .74), broadly defined violent recidivism (AUC = .64), and narrowly defined violent recidivism (AUC = .65) within a three-year follow-up period (Bonta, Harmann, Hann, & Cormier, 1996).

The SIR-R1 is scored by summing together 15 items that reflect offenders' demographic information and criminal history variables (Nafekh & Motiuk, 2002), and cut-off scores are then

used to determine offenders' likelihood of reoffending with lower scores predicting higher likelihood of reoffending (e.g., Barnum & Gobeil, 2012). See Table 1 for cut-off scores suggested by Barnum and Gobeil (2012), and the percent of offenders in their study who did not reoffend.

Table 1
SIR-R1 Cut-Off Values Predicting Likelihood of General Recidivism

SIR-R1 Risk Group	Cut-Off Values	Total % (n)	Percent Successful
Poor	-14 to -6	24 (1 533)	64
Fair/ Poor	-5 to -2	20 (1 265)	76
Fair	-1 to 3	20 (1 256)	83
Good	4 to 9	19 (1 191)	91
Very Good	10 to 20	18 (1 177)	97
Total		6 422	81

Note. This table was adapted from information reported by Barnum & Gobeil (2012).

Semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews were conducted by Prof. Kevin Nunes and two female research assistants. Both of the research assistants received training to ensure that they followed the outline of the interviews, kept the focus of the interviews on non-sexual violence/ conflicts with peer aged and older same sex people, and encouraged participants to go into greater detail when deemed appropriate. The original purpose of these interviews was to collect information to aid in developing a measure of violent behaviour. Specifically, the interviews were used to create a series of vignettes and responses that assess how respondents react to conflict in violent and non-violent ways. Interviews ranged from approximately 17 minutes to approximately 126 minutes, and on average lasted 61 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded on a digital voice recorder (WS-802), and were conducted in a

private room located in the offenders' respective prison (either Collins Bay Institution or Millhaven Institution).

In order to ensure participants' anonymity, offenders were each assigned a participant number that was used to connect interviews with criminal records. Before beginning the interviews, offenders were told that they are allowed to withdraw consent at any time during the interview, and were assured that their participation would not affect how they were to be treated by CSC. Furthermore, they were assured that any information they disclosed would only be used for research and teaching purposes, and would not be reflected in their institutional files. In order to further protect the offenders' privacy and the privacy of others, the interviewers asked offenders to refrain from using people's surnames during the interview. Furthermore, interviewers asked offenders to refrain from discussing incidents of people threatening to hurt themselves, threatening to hurt others, or incidents of child abuse, as such information would need to be reported to the police.

Upon beginning the interviews, the interviewer spoke the offenders' participant number into the voice recorder, verbally explained the purpose of the study, and proceeded to ask about times when the offender had responded to conflict with and without the use of violence (see Appendix D for interview questions). At the end of the interviews, offenders were thanked for their participation, and provided the debriefing form. The interviewers also took note of any potential concerns that may affect the veracity of the information collected during the interviews (e.g., participant seemed to be intoxicated, participant seemed to be lying, etc.). All information that was collected was kept secure at Carleton University and the Research Branch of CSC in a locked filing cabinet and a password-protected computer.

Coding interviews. In order to code interviews, I listened to each interview and transcribed portions of the recordings that seemed to reflect cognitive constructs relevant to my thesis. In order to reduce the likelihood that any relevant statements were missed when extracting statements from transcribed interviews, a graduate student and I independently extracted statements from one interview while referring to the current working coding manual. Afterwards we met with Dr. Nunes and reviewed the statements we extracted, and discussed inconsistencies. I made changes to the coding manual based on these meetings.

I then read over the transcribed interviews and extracted statements that seemed to reflect one or more of the cognitions of interest, which were based on their semantic similarity with the provided definitions.² Similar to previous studies using mixed methods to analyze interview data (e.g., Marziano, Ward, Beech, & Pattison, 2006; Polaschek, Calvert, & Gannon, 2009), these extracted statements ranged in length from a single phrase to roughly three sentences in length. While extracting statements I only included enough of the text to encompass a coherent cognitive construct, and I used brackets to indicate necessary background information when neither the interviewer nor participant explicitly articulated that the cognition was in reference to a real or hypothetical violent behaviour.

A second coder and I then coded these portions of text or “meaning units” (e.g., Marziano, et al., 2006; Polaschek, et al., 2009), as reflecting none, one, or more than one of the cognitive constructs. In order to facilitate this process, a coding manual was used by the second coder and I while coding the individual meaning units (see Appendix E). During this process, the

² Evaluations were defined as the extent to which the actor regards violent behaviour as favourable or unfavourable (e.g., Ajzen, 1991); subjective norms were defined as perceptions of whether people close to the actor (e.g., peers) think the actor should commit violence, or perceptions of how violent these people act (e.g., Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005), and mitigations of responsibility were defined as explicit attempts to deny or minimize personal responsibility for a negative behaviour, and claim that the behaviour was due to processes outside of the actor’s control (e.g., Scott & Lyman, 1968; Snyder & Higgins, 1988; Sykes & Matza, 1957).

second coder and I ‘quantitized’ the qualitative interview data as outlined by Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003). The authors define quantitizing data as converting qualitative data (e.g., interview transcripts), by extracting themes within the qualitative data, and numerically coding themes which can be represented and examined statistically (e.g., Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). By quantitizing the qualitative data, I am able to statistically examine the relationship between violent cognitions articulated by violent offenders and indices of violent behaviour. Specifically, examining the relationship between qualitative data and quantitative data allows for a more complete interpretation of the themes (i.e., cognitions) within the qualitative data (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003), and allows for the qualitative nature of the interviews to be “integrated more firmly into the analysis” (Morse, 2003, p. 193). However, past researchers have argued that quantitizing data may lead to oversimplifying the complex nature of qualitative data (e.g., Onwuegbuzie, 2003; Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003; Sechrest & Sidani, 1995). Therefore, I included various statements extracted from different interviews that seemed to exemplify theoretical definitions for the cognitive constructs.

Onwuegbuzie (2003) stated that the frequency of individual themes can be calculated by first “binarizing” the data. According to Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003), binarizing data requires each theme to be coded as “present” or “not present”. Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003) also referred to a study by Teddlie, Kirby, and Stringfield (1989) in which the authors binarized the individual field notes according to a three-point Likert scale based on whether themes of interest were “evident”, “contradictory or weak”, or “not evident”. Field notes that did not appear to reflect any themes of interest were coded as “not observable” (Teddlie et al., 1989). These converted data were then averaged across participants, and used to calculate group differences in the themes of interest.

For the purposes of my thesis, the second coder and I attempted to mirror the method used by Teddlie and colleagues (1989) by first coding the cognitive constructs as present or not, and then considering the valence of each cognitive construct. Specifically, cognitions that did not appear to be present were coded as “not present”, and those that did appear to be present were coded along a three-point Likert scale to reflect how relatively supportive or against the use of violence the cognition appeared to be (e.g., positive, neutral, negative). In order to code for the different valences of mitigations of responsibility, this cognition was referred to as ‘perceptions of responsibility’, in order to allow for offenders’ statements that seemed to accept responsibility for violence to also be included in the analyses. In other words, perceptions of responsibility were coded as a mitigation of personal responsibility, an acceptance of personal responsibility, or a mix of mitigating some responsibility and accepting some responsibility for a violent behaviour. Last, the median score for each cognitive construct was calculated for all participants.³ In this way, each offender should have three final scores reflecting their median evaluation of violence, median subjective norm about violence, and median perception of responsibility for violent behaviours. These final scores were later used for further analyses.

Inter-rater reliability. In order to ensure that statements were coded reliably and consistently across interviews, the second coder and I practice coded four interviews, and independently coded ten randomly chosen interviews. After the second coder and I reviewed the coding manual, we coded one interview together, and practice coded two interviews independently. We reviewed all statements from the two practice interviews that were coded inconsistently, made a final decision for how to code these statements, and refined the coding

³ Because the cognitions were scored on a three-point Likert scale, these data are considered ordinal, making median scores the most appropriate measure of central tendency (as opposed to the mean of scores, which is less informative for ordinal data).

manual as necessary. We then practice coded a third interview independently, reviewed statements coded inconsistently, made a final decision for how to code these statements, and made necessary changes to the coding manual. See Appendix E for the final coding manual.

I then randomly selected ten interviews that were not included in the practice coding sessions. The second coder and I independently coded the sample of ten interviews, and inter-rater reliability was first assessed using Cohen's (1960) kappa statistic for categorical data. Specifically, I examined the degree that coders consistently rated evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility as present or not present in statements made by offenders. According to Krippendorff (1980), inter-rater reliability is considered acceptable at the .67 level. Each of the resulting kappa statistics were above this cut-off level (Evaluations kappa = .77; Subjective Norms kappa = .75; Perceptions of Responsibility kappa = .68), suggesting that each of the three cognitions were reliably identified in offenders' statements.

Second, I examined the degree that coders consistently rated the valence of each cognition according to a three-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly anti-violent*) to 3 (*strongly pro-violent*). Because the median scores for each cognition were used for subsequent analyses testing my second research question (i.e., correlations with indices of violence), I examined the inter-rater reliability between the median scores calculated from my own coding, and median scores calculated from the second coder's coding of the three cognitions across the ten randomly selected interviews. Inter-rater reliability was assessed using two-way mixed, single-measures, consistency intra-class correlations (ICC; Hallgren, 2012) to assess the degree that coders consistently rated the three ordinal cognitive constructs across offenders. The resulting ICC's ranged from poor to excellent (Median of Evaluations ICC = .85; Median of Subjective Norms ICC = .97; and Median of Perceptions of Responsibility ICC = 0), as outlined by cut-offs

provided by Cicchetti (1994). For median scores of evaluations and subjective norms, these high ICCs indicate that there was a high level of agreement between coders when rating these cognitions. This suggests that there was little measurement error introduced by the independent coders, and statistical power for subsequent analyses is not greatly reduced (e.g., Hallgren, 2012).

However, the median score of perceptions of responsibility resulted in an ICC= 0 ($p = .50$), indicating random agreement between coders, and suggesting that there was a high degree of measurement error introduced by the independent coders when rating this cognition. In order to better understand why inter-rater reliability for perceptions of responsibility was so low, I examined inter-rater reliability in rating the individual statements that were used to calculate the median scores for perceptions of responsibility. Once again, inter-rater reliability was assessed using a two-way mixed, single-measures, consistency intra-class correlations. The resulting ICC was somewhat low (ICC = .64), indicating that coders rated the valence of perceptions of responsibility within individual statements fairly-well, though there was still a moderate degree of measurement error introduced by the independent coders.

In order to determine why an ICC of .64 for individual statements resulted in an ICC of 0 after these statements were aggregated into a single score, I re-examined the proportion of statements that were coded as a perception of responsibility by either myself or the second coder. In total, there were 163 statements examined in the ten randomly chosen interviews. From this 163, the second coder and I agreed that 104 statements did not reflect a perception of responsibility. Thus the remaining 59 statements were coded as reflecting a perception of responsibility (cognition was coded as present) by either myself, and/ or the second coder. However from these 59 statements, there were only 35 statements where both coders coded a

perception of responsibility as present, and from these 35 statements, we agreed on the valence for 33 statements. In other words, the second coder and I commonly disagreed on whether or not to code these 59 statements as reflecting a perception of responsibility (though we did reliably agree on coding this cognition as present or not, as indicated by the adequate kappa statistic of .68). Because we only rated the valence of cognitions reflected in statements that we personally coded as reflecting the cognition in question, there were various statements articulated throughout interviews that were only rated by either myself or the second coder. Therefore, when the second coder and I coded different statements as reflecting perceptions of responsibility for an individual offender, this aggregated median score of perceptions of responsibility would differ depending on whether the score was based on statements coded by myself or the second coder.

For example, one offender in particular was shown to have articulated seven statements that were coded by either myself or the second coder as reflecting a perception of responsibility. We agreed on coding a perception of responsibility as present in four of the seven statements, and we consistently agreed on how to rate the valence of this cognition for all four of these statements. However, there were three statements in which a perception of responsibility was coded as present by one coder (and not present by the other), and the valence of this cognition was subsequently rated by only one coder. Specifically, I coded one statement as reflecting a perception of responsibility (which the second coder coded as not present), and the second coder coded two statements as reflecting a perception of responsibility (which I coded as not present). For the one statement that was not rated by the second coder, I rated the statement as reflecting a mitigation of responsibility. For both of the two statements that I did not code, the second coder rated as reflecting an acceptance of responsibility. Therefore, the median score for statements that I coded as reflecting perceptions of responsibility suggest that this offender more often

articulated statements reflecting a mitigation of responsibility for violence. However, the median score for statements that the second coder coded as reflecting perceptions of responsibility suggest that this offender more often articulated statements reflecting an acceptance of responsibility for violence. In this way, median scores for this offender's perceptions of responsibility differed, depending on whether the aggregated ratings were from myself or the second coder.

Therefore, it seems as though the main source of disagreement was from whether or not the second coder and I coded a perception of responsibility as present in the statement (as opposed to whether we agreed on the valence of the perception). In order to verify this possibility, I re-ran the inter-rater reliability analysis, this time excluding cases in which one of the two coders coded perceptions of responsibility as not present in the statement. Doing so resulted in inter-rater reliability jumping to near perfect agreement (ICC for perceptions of responsibility = .95).

When considered together, these findings suggest that the second coder and I reliably coded perceptions of responsibility as present or not ($\kappa = .68$), though this statistic was barely over the .67 cut-off point suggested by Krippendorff (1980). Furthermore, the relatively low (though acceptable) level of reliability seemed to disproportionately pull down inter-rater reliability in coding the valence of perceptions of responsibility. In this way, the relatively low level of inter-rater reliability for the valence of perceptions of responsibility within individual statements (ICC = .64) seems to have been largely due to disagreement in coding the cognition as present or not. Furthermore, because the second coder and I were looking at different statements when rating the valence of perceptions of responsibility (because we disagreed on what statements reflected the cognition), it makes sense that the median scores for these different

statements would not be the same (hence the random agreement [ICC = 0] in median scores for perceptions of responsibility). Overall, these statistics suggest that coders rated perceptions of responsibility with a relatively low level of agreement, and that there was random agreement between the median scores for ratings provided by the two coders. Therefore, these low ICC's for perceptions of responsibility suggest that the statistical power of subsequent analyses using this variable will be substantially reduced (e.g., Hallgren, 2012).

Identifying exemplary statements. In order to better retain the qualitative nature of the data being quantized and statistically examined, I attempted to identify statements that most clearly represented the definitions used when coding for the cognitive constructs (see the Coding Manual in Appendix E). In attempt to further protect participants' privacy and confidentiality, proper nouns that provided unnecessary information about the names of locations and people involved were deleted from statements, and replaced with the first letter of the proper noun. For example, if an offender said "My friend Bob and I were in downtown Ottawa at the time", the statement would be altered as such: "My friend [B] and I were in downtown [O] at the time".

After transcribing interviews, extracting statements, and coding these statements as evaluations, subjective norms and perceptions of responsibility, I re-examined the coded statements in order to identify exemplary statements for each level of the three cognitive constructs (e.g., anti-violent evaluations, neutral subjective norms, mitigating responsibility). In order to facilitate this process, I only included statements that were under three sentences in length, and organized these statements in three intrarespondent tables (one for each cognitive construct).

According to Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003), the intrarespondent matrix outlines what statements were coded as individual themes, using a binary code to indicate which cognitions

were coded as present or not present. For the purpose of my thesis, the intrarespondent matrices were organized according to the valence of each cognition (e.g., individual sections for positive evaluations of violence, neutral/ ambivalent evaluations of violence, and negative evaluations of violence). These matrices were used to facilitate the process of identifying statements made by offenders that seemed to most clearly represent the provided definitions for evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility. I also modified each of the tables by deleting the binary codes, so that the tables simply list the chosen statements according to valence (e.g., positive, neutral, negative evaluation). Last, while reflecting on the definitions of each cognitive construct, I chose approximately ten statements (for each valence) that most clearly reflected definitions for evaluations (see Appendix G), subjective norms (see Appendix H), and perceptions of responsibility (see Appendix I).

Procedure

The main purpose of my thesis research was to confirm whether cognitive constructs identified in past theory and research are naturally articulated by offenders, and whether these cognitions are related to violent behaviour as previous literature would suggest. My thesis study thus uses a confirmatory sequential mixed methods design, as outlined by Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003). Specifically, qualitative data was collected (interviews were conducted between July 30, 2012 and September 7, 2012) and analysed first, followed by the collection and analysis of quantitative data (all CPICs were retrieved August 11 2016). In order to allow for the relationship between the two data types to be examined statistically, the qualitative data were quantitized according to the degree that statements reflected definitions of the cognitions of interest, and scored according to the apparent valence of the cognition reflected within the statement. In order to retain the qualitative nature of offenders' statements, I also identified

statements that seemed to most aptly reflect definitions for evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility, and organized these statements according to coded valence of the cognition. Last, the relationship between these quantitized scores and quantitative indices of violent behaviour was then examined using parametric and non-parametric correlational statistics. As such, the assumptions for correlational coefficients were outlined and discussed in the following section.

A Priori Power Analysis

I conducted an a priori statistical power analysis using G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2007) in order to determine the required sample size for my analyses to find significant correlations between the three cognitive constructs and indices of violent behaviour. I examined power according to standard effect size estimates: small ($\rho = .10$), medium ($\rho = .30$), and large ($\rho = .50$). Power ($1 - \beta$ error probability) was set at .80, and the p -value was set at .05 two-tailed. Based on these criteria, I would need a sample size of 779 to detect a small effect, a sample size of 82 to detect a medium effect, and a sample size of 26 to detect a large effect. Previous research has generally revealed small to medium effects for the association between violent or aggressive behaviours and evaluations (e.g., Nunes et al., 2015; 2016), subjective norms (e.g., Ames et al., 2013; Dardis et al., 2016) and mitigations of responsibility (e.g., Agnew, 1994; Minor, 1981). Thus the current study appears to be sufficiently powered to detect large effects, somewhat underpowered to detect medium effects, and highly underpowered to detect small effects.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

All 44 offenders articulated at least one statement coded as including an evaluation of violence, 23 offenders articulated at least one statement coded as including a subjective norm about violence, and 43 offenders articulated at least one statement that was coded as including a perception of responsibility about a violent behaviour. Because of the low number of offenders who articulated a subjective norm, I opted for deleting missing cases pairwise in order to retain a higher number of cases to be included in analyses that did not include subjective norms. Additionally, seven offenders were missing information on the SIR scale. I verified that each of these offenders identified as Aboriginal, and therefore would not be expected to have a SIR score as this risk assessment measure is not currently applied to Aboriginal offenders (Barnum & Gobeil, 2012; CSC, 2015). These seven offenders were included in all analyses that did not include the SIR scale. See Table 2 in for the sample averages on all variables examined.

Table 2
Sample Means and Standard Deviations for Cognitive Constructs and Indices of Violent Behaviour

	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Evaluations	44	1.86 (0.69)
Subjective Norms	23	2.46 (0.78)
Perceptions of Responsibility	43	2.80 (0.36)
Prior Violent Convictions	44	3.00 (3.99)
SIR Score	37	2.32 (8.66)

Note. SIR = Statistical Information on Recidivism.

When I examined the relationship between the cognitive constructs and indices of violent behaviour, I used (1) the original variables, (2) the variables with univariate and multivariate outliers reduced, as well as (3) transformed variables with outliers reduced. Final correlation coefficients of the transformed variables did not greatly differ from the original variables and the

variables with outliers reduced. Thus I examined the original variables, or non-transformed variables, for ease of interpretation. However, for some of the variables, retaining the outliers (in the original variables) seemed to artificially inflate the strength of the correlation. Therefore, I reported results using the non-transformed variables with outliers reduced. The assumption of linearity was violated for some of the final analyses and Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was reported for these cases. The assumption of homoscedasticity was violated for most the analyses. According to Cohen (1988), the magnitude of the correlation coefficients can be interpreted as effect sizes: $r = .10$ indicates a small effect, $r = .30$ indicates a medium effect, and $r = .50$ indicates a large effect.

Primary Analyses

Do evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility naturally appear in statements made by violent offenders? A total of 1005 statements were extracted from interviews with violent offenders, and 66 of the statements were coded as multiple cognitions (e.g., statements that included an evaluation and a subjective norm about violence). From the 939 statements coded as a single cognition, 70% of the statements were coded as evaluations about violence, approximately 3% of the statements were coded as subjective norms, and 27% were coded as perceptions of responsibility. In order to better understand the qualitative nature of statements extracted from interviews when coding for cognitive constructs, I identified statements made by offenders that seemed to best represent the definitions for evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility.

Evaluations of violence. The intrarespondent matrix for evaluations can be found in Appendix G, which includes statements from various interviews with violent offenders. I included 10 statements reflecting a positive evaluation of violence (e.g., "After [the fight]

happens and you're doing good, it's kind of invigorating. You feel empowered"). Several questions that were asked across interviews commonly resulted in offenders indicating a positive evaluation of violence. The following are some example responses to the question "What are some positives about violence?": (1) "It's an immediate solution"; (2) "Depending on how your violence is used, I would say it gives you a lot of power"; (3) "In jail, [violence] can get you a certain level of demanded respect, and you can protect yourself. Guys won't mess with you if you've proven yourself."

The intrarespondent matrix about evaluations included 10 statements reflecting a neutral (or ambivalent) evaluation of violence (e.g., "I can justify using violence many times. But that doesn't necessarily make it right. Just because I can justify doesn't necessarily make it right"). When asked how they felt about the violence they committed, some offenders articulated neutral or ambivalent evaluations about the events, such as the following examples: (1) "It was just one of those things where it was just another day in that life"; (2) "In a way I feel bad, in a way I don't. In a way I honestly don't care. In a way I think she deserved what she got"; (3) "I feel I want to hit him, I know it's wrong in a way, but at the same time I don't really care about the consequences."

Last, the intrarespondent matrix about evaluations included 10 statements reflecting a negative evaluation of violence (e.g., "I remember starting the fire. And I feel bad about that. I could have hurt somebody"). When asked "What are some negatives about being violent in general or in that situation in particular?" various offenders articulated negative evaluations of violence, such as the following examples: (1) "You can end up inflicting serious harm. You can end killing somebody by accident, or purposely. You could get yourself in a lot of trouble"; (2) "Well there was another fight, I broke my hand. Somebody ducked just as I threw a punch, and

this knuckle bent the finger up that way”; (3) “Jail. Missed out on my baby being born, still missing out on seeing her right now.”

Subjective norms of violence. The intrarespondent matrix for subjective norms about violence can be found in Appendix H, which includes statements from various interviews with violent offenders. I included 10 statements reflecting pro-violent subjective norms (e.g., “[My friends] just beat someone up too you know. It’s like a regular occurrence. Like, oh I got someone too you know! So we all got one”). There were few questions asked across interviews that prompted responses reflecting subjective norms, though when asked “What did your friends do (or say) during the violent incident?” some offenders reported pro-violent subjective norms. For example: (1) “He just kept telling me hit him, hit him. You know, quit telling him off, just hit him”; (2) “[My friends] were nothing but cheering me on up on the balcony”; (3) “My co-accused points him out and says this guy has lots of money, let’s rob him”.

The intrarespondent matrix about subjective norms included four statements reflecting neutral subjective norms about violence (e.g., “My boys, they didn’t fuck him up, they just like gave him one-two punches right? Just to show like you punch my boy upstairs, you’re going to get some licks”). There were only four instances of neutral subjective norms, though one response to the question “Do you think that [your friends] expected you to be violent?” seemed to reflect the definition of subjective norms almost perfectly: “Not really, just if someone fights with us type of thing. We just never took it kindly you know?”

Last, the intrarespondent matrix for subjective norms included 10 statements reflecting anti-violent subjective norms (e.g., “My mom says it’s just words, just let it roll off your back. [Fighting’s] not going to accomplish anything”). Many statements coded as anti-violent subjective norms were descriptions of instances in which the offender was preparing to, or began

to act violently, and someone close to him had tried to stop him. For example: (1) “I just clocked him right in the face, and that was it. That was just the one thing, [then] my boy jumped in and stopped it”; (2) “I got him in the hallway. That’s when I put the choke on him, because then my girlfriend was trying to get me off this guy and begging me just let him go”; (3) “I pulled out my shank and my friend grabbed my hand and was like no, no, no. Let’s keep walking.”

Perceptions of responsibility. The intrarespondent matrix for perceptions of responsibility for violent behaviours can be found in Appendix I, which includes statements from various interviews with violent offenders. I included 10 statements reflecting mitigations of responsibility for violence (e.g., “I’ve learned a lot in jail, and jail’s different from the street right? In jail you have to fight. Like in jail if someone calls you a goof you have to fight. No questions about it”). There were various questions that prompted offenders to respond with a perception of responsibility, such as “Were you responsible for the violence that happened?”; “Did you feel in control at the time of the violent incident?” and “When is violence not your fault?” Some examples of responses to the third question included the following: (1) “If you’re in danger, if your life is in danger. I mean you have to protect yourself”; (2) “If somebody hits you first. That’s probably about it, self-defence”; (3) “It’s never my fault... A deep seated bitterness was buried in me a long time ago when I was a child. So now I believe it’s not my fault”.

The intrarespondent matrix for perceptions of responsibility included 10 statements reflecting a mix of mitigation and acceptance of responsibility for violence (e.g., “So I don’t take full responsibility, but I take part responsibility. I take responsibility, my [co-accused] takes responsibility, and the guy that’s dead should take his piece of responsibility because he fucked up”). Some offenders articulated statements reflecting a mix of mitigating some and accepting

some responsibility for violence when asked “Did you feel in control at the time of the violent incident?” For example: (1) “A little bit but not really, because I didn’t know what was going on”; (2) “I felt very in control at first, but then I felt like I was losing control, even though I was losing control I was loving it”; (3) “I wasn’t really in control. I was in control because I was fighting him and I was winning, but I wasn’t in control because my mind was telling me to do something that I shouldn’t have done”.

Last, the intrarespondent matrix for perceptions of responsibility included 10 statements reflecting an acceptance of responsibility for violence (e.g., “If I wasn’t selling drugs, then none of this would have happened. So I blame myself a lot for the [violent] situation”). Some offenders articulated statements that reflected an acceptance of personal responsibility for violence when asked “Were you responsible for the violence that happened?” For example: (1) “Sure I was responsible. It was my house. I did it, I hit him. I never denied it at all throughout the case”; (2) “Yeah I was. I don’t blame anyone else, like any of my friends. Like they say well your friends drove you there, but it wasn’t their fault”; and (3) “Yeah. I am responsible for what happened. I’m responsible for my actions right? Like I said, I could have just not engaged. Could have just walked away”.

Statements coded as multiple cognitive constructs. From the 66 statements coded as multiple cognitions, 30% of statements were coded as an evaluation and a subjective norm. For example, one offender stated the following:

In a way I stopped it cause my friends wanted to finish him. They were like let’s go get him, but I was like no, leave it alone, he learned his lesson now. But then he went to get a weapon from someone else, and then they came and told me that this kid asked me for a

shank, he wants to stab you still. So that gave my friends more reason to be like, let's go get him.

Sixty-four percent of the 66 statements coded as reflecting multiple cognitions were coded as an evaluation and a perception of responsibility, such as the following statement articulated by an offender:

I didn't want to shoot him, cause when you shoot someone you try and kill them. But I never really had intentions to want to shoot him. I felt like they forced my hand really, because I was trying to avoid it and they were just egging the situation on.

Six percent of the 66 statements coded as multiple cognitions were coded as a subjective norm and a perception of responsibility, such as the following example articulated by an offender:

Sometimes you get drawn into things that you don't really want to get drawn into, but it's mostly because you have to prove to the people you associate with that you're down to [fight], you're not a pussy, and you can handle certain situations.

There were no statements coded as all three cognitive constructs.

Are the cognitions that were extracted from offender statements associated with indices of violence? Inter-correlations between the median scores for the three cognitive constructs were not significantly related (see Table 3). Using the guidelines indicated by Cohen (1988), there was, however, a small positive correlation between evaluations of violence and subjective norms ($r = .21, ns$), and a small negative correlation between subjective norms and perceptions of responsibility ($r = -.14, ns$). Conversely, the two indices of violent behaviour were significantly correlated with one another. There was a significant medium-sized negative

correlation between number of prior violent convictions as an adult and SIR scores ($r = -.48, p < .01$).

Table 3

Inter-correlations between Cognitive Constructs and Indices of Violent Behaviour

	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Evaluations (<i>n</i>)	—			
2. Subjective Norms (<i>n</i>)	.21 (23)	—		
3. Perceptions of Responsibility (<i>n</i>)	-.04 ^a (43)	-.14 ^a (22)	—	
4. Prior Convictions (<i>n</i>)	.31* (44)	-.20 ^a (23)	-.14 (43)	—
5. SIR score (<i>n</i>)	-.18 (37)	-.14 (18)	.19 (36)	-.48** (37)

Note. SIR = Statistical Information on Recidivism. In order to retain as many offenders in the final analyses as possible, missing cases were deleted pairwise. Number of offenders included in each analysis are indicated in parentheses.

^a Spearman's rho correlation coefficient.

* $p < .05$, two tailed. ** $p < .01$, two tailed.

In order to determine whether the cognitive constructs were related with past violent behaviour, I examined the correlation coefficients between number of prior violent convictions with median scores for evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility (see Table 3). Analyses revealed a significant medium-sized positive correlation coefficient between evaluations and prior violent convictions ($r = .31, p < .05$), suggesting that offenders who articulated more pro-violent evaluations through the interview tended to have a greater number of prior convictions for a violent offence as an adult. None of the other correlation coefficients with prior violent convictions were statistically significant. Interestingly and despite the lack of significance, both subjective norms and perceptions of responsibility had a small negative correlation with prior violent convictions, suggesting that offenders who articulated more pro-violent subjective norms and more mitigations of responsibility tended to have slightly fewer prior convictions for violence as an adult.

In order to determine whether the cognitive constructs were related with offenders' likelihood of future violent behaviour, I examined the correlation coefficients between offenders' SIR scores with median scores for evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility (see Table 3). Analyses revealed non-significant small correlation coefficients in each case. Interestingly and despite their lack of statistical significance, evaluations as well as subjective norms revealed a negative correlation with SIR scores, indicating that offenders who had articulated more pro-violent evaluations and subjective norms throughout their interview tended to be estimated as slightly more likely to violently reoffend following their release into the community. Conversely, the positive correlation between perceptions of responsibility and SIR scores suggest that offenders who articulated more acceptance of responsibility throughout the interview tended to be estimated as slightly more likely to violently reoffend following their release into the community.

Discussion

Due to the lack of clarity in the conceptualization and measurement of cognitive constructs that are important in theory, research, and treatment with violent offenders (e.g., Nunes et al., 2015; Polaschek et al., 2004) the current study attempted to clarify the nature of some of these cognitive constructs. Specifically, I attempted to examine whether evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility naturally appear in statements made by violent offenders by quantizing statements made by offenders and coding them based on their semantic similarity to definitions for each cognition. I also examined relationships between these cognitions and indices of violent behaviour, in order to determine whether these cognitions were associated with violence as suggested by past theory and research. In this way, the current study adds to the literature by examining whether theoretical definitions for the three constructs

actually correspond to how offenders think and talk about violence, by providing examples of offender statements that were considered exemplary manifestations of each cognition, and by reporting the results of preliminary tests examining the potential relevance of each cognition for violent behaviour.

Research Question 1

My first research question asked whether evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility naturally appear in statements made by violent offenders. Specifically, my first research question examined whether theoretical definitions for these cognitive constructs correspond to the way incarcerated violent offenders talk about violence. If statements could be identified and reliably coded according to the theoretical definitions for these constructs, then that would be consistent with the notion that these cognitive constructs, as defined by past literature, correspond to how offenders naturally think and talk about violence. In order to answer my first research question, I examined inter-rater reliability for ten randomly chosen offenders, as well as the overall proportion of statements coded as each of the three cognitive constructs. The current findings suggest that the second coder and I reliably coded each of the three cognitions as present or not in statements made by the ten offenders, and that we reliably coded the valence of statements reflecting evaluations and subjective norms. However, the current findings indicate that we rated individual statements as perceptions of responsibility with a relatively low level of agreement, and that aggregating these ratings as a single score (i.e., into offenders' median score for these statements) resulted in random agreement between coders. According to Hallgren (2012), if inter-rater reliability is high for raw scores of a variable (e.g., ratings for individual statements) but low for the final form of the variable (e.g., median scores for these ratings), then coders seem to have reliably rated the variable in question, despite a

relatively high amount of measurement error being introduced to analyses using the final form of the variable. In the current study, inter-rater reliability was relatively low for the individual statements coded as perceptions of responsibility ($ICC = .64$), thereby suggesting that coders rated perceptions of responsibility with low reliability.

The current findings suggest that coders reliably coded perceptions of responsibility as present or not, though the statistic was just over the acceptable cut-off value. This relatively low level of inter-rater reliability thus indicates that a fair amount of measurement error was introduced by coders disagreeing on whether a perception of responsibility was present or not. Because coders somewhat often disagreed on which statements reflected a perception of responsibility, there were many statements in which one coder coded the statement as reflecting a perception of responsibility (and provided a rating for the valence of the cognition), and the other coder did not. This would explain as to why inter-rater reliability was at the chance level when considering median scores for ratings provided by the independent coders. Since the second coder and I were looking at different statements when rating the valence of perceptions of responsibility (because we disagreed on whether the cognition should have been coded as present or not), our median scores for offenders would have been based off two different samples of their statements. Specifically, one set of median scores would have been based off statements I coded as reflecting a perception of responsibility, and the second set of median scores would have been based off statements that the second coder coded as reflecting perceptions of responsibility. However, it remains unclear as to why inter-rater reliability was relatively low when coding perceptions of responsibility as present or not.

One possible explanation to this relatively low level of inter-rater reliability is that the operational definition used for perceptions of responsibility was less than ideal. Specifically,

statements coded as perceptions of responsibility were intended to reflect a spectrum of perceptions, including acceptance as well as mitigation of responsibility for violence. However, because the literature largely focused on mitigating responsibility for violence, I had chosen an operational definition for perceptions of responsibility that focused on mitigating responsibility (i.e., explicit attempts to deny or minimize personal responsibility for a negative behaviour, and claim that the behaviour was due to processes outside of the actor's control [e.g., Scott & Lyman, 1968; Snyder & Higgins, 1988; Sykes & Matza, 1957]). Therefore, it seems that the operational definition did not adequately encompass the entire possible spectrum of perceptions of responsibility, and this lack of clarity in the operational definition for perceptions of responsibility may have resulted in raters relying more heavily on their subjective understanding of the cognition when faced with statements that did not clearly reflect the definition provided.

Although inter-rater reliability does not definitively indicate whether these cognitive constructs appear naturally in statements by offenders, stronger inter-rater reliability suggests that there was little measurement error introduced to the data when coding statements. Therefore, these findings suggest that the second coder and I successfully coded each of the three cognitions as present in individual statements, though we were only able to successfully code the valence of evaluations and subjective norms about violence.

Additionally, examining the proportion of statements coded as each of the three cognitions indicates which of these cognitions were commonly reflected in statements made by offenders. When examining statements coded as a single cognition, 70% of statements were coded as an evaluation of violence, 27% of these statements were coded as a perception of responsibility, and about 3% were coded as a subjective norm about violence. Although the frequency of statements being coded as each cognition does not definitively indicate whether the

cognition naturally appears in statements made by offenders, cognitions that were coded in a higher proportion of statements would be expected to reflect real differences in how often offenders discuss and think about their evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility about violence.

When considered together, these findings suggest that evaluations defined as the extent to which the actor regards violent behaviour as favourable or unfavourable (e.g., Ajzen, 1991), and subjective norms defined as perceptions of whether people close to the actor (e.g., peers) think the actor should commit violence, or perceptions of how violent or how non-violent these people act (e.g., Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005), seem to appear naturally in statements made by offenders. Furthermore, because 70% of the statements were coded as evaluations, but only 3% were coded as subjective norms, this finding suggests that offenders articulated statements reflecting the former much more often than the latter, though this may have been due to the interviews including more questions about evaluations than questions about subjective norms.

Furthermore, the current findings suggest that inter-rater reliability was acceptable when coding whether perceptions of responsibility were present in individual statements, but inter-rater reliability was fairly low when coding the valence of this cognitive construct in individual statements made by offenders. After finding the median score for these ratings, inter-rater reliability further dropped to chance agreement between coders. Therefore, the current findings lend some support to the notion that mitigations of responsibility defined as explicit attempts to deny or minimize personal responsibility for a negative behaviour, and claim that the behaviour was due to processes outside of the actor's control (e.g., Scott & Lyman, 1968; Snyder & Higgins, 1988; Sykes & Matza, 1957) naturally appear in statements made by offenders.

Furthermore, because 27% of statements were coded as perceptions of responsibility, this cognition seems to be somewhat common in statements made by violent offenders.

Previous studies have commonly used strictly qualitative methods (e.g., grounded theory; interpretative phenomenological analysis) to assess cognitive constructs reflected in statements articulated by offenders (e.g., cognitions related to diminishing responsibility for sexual offences [Hartley, 1998]; normalization of violence [Polaschek et al., 2009]; violence is acceptable [Weldon, 2016]). Although these constructs may be conceptually similar to those examined in the current study, to the best of my knowledge, this study was the first to quantitize interview data to assess explicit evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility according to definitions from the literature. Therefore, the current findings add to the literature by suggesting that not only do offenders naturally articulate cognitions identified in previous studies, but they also naturally articulate statements reflecting evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility as defined in the literature. Furthermore, the current study adds to the literature by identifying exemplary statements for each of the three cognitive constructs, thereby illustrating and informing how these theoretical constructs manifest in statements made by violent offenders.

Although various questions asked throughout the interviews prompted offenders to think about violence in ways that they may not have considered otherwise, I only coded statements articulated by offenders being interviewed, as opposed to quotes encompassing questions asked by the interviewers that prompted only one worded answers from the offender. Instances in which the offender agreed or disagreed with statements made by the interviewer were only included in quotes extracted from interviews if the offender articulated his own thoughts

immediately before or after agreeing or disagreeing with the interviewer, and if the statement provided additional information about the content of the offenders' statement.

Most if not all offenders were asked questions regarding evaluations of violence (e.g., *What are some positive/ negative things about being violent?*) and questions regarding perceptions of responsibility (e.g., *How much were you in control?*; *When is being violent not your fault?*). However there did not appear to be any pre-planned interview questions specifically asking about subjective norms about violence. This may partially explain why the strong majority of offenders articulated statements reflecting evaluations and perceptions of responsibility, and why so few articulated statements reflecting subjective norms. However, many offenders naturally articulated each of the three cognitive constructs without being prompted by questions posed by the interviewer. These statements can be found in each of the three intrarespondent matrices, and are identified as statements that only include quotes from the violent offender being interviewed.

Overall, these findings suggest that offenders may naturally think about evaluations of violence, perceptions of responsibility for violence, and to a lesser extent subjective norms about violence, with and without prompting. However, future research should consider refining the operational definition for perceptions of responsibility. This would allow researchers to be better able to determine the valence of statements coded as perceptions of responsibility, and allow for more confidence that statements reflect this cognitive construct. Alternatively, it is possible that the low level of inter-rater reliability for perceptions of responsibility reflects real ambiguity in offenders' speech and thoughts about perceptions of responsibility for violence. If this is the case, then refining the operational definition for perceptions of responsibility would be unlikely to increase inter-rater reliability when coding for and rating this cognition in statements made by

offenders. Additionally, future research should consider including interview questions about subjective norms about violence. This would allow researchers to identify more exemplary statements of subjective norms, thus further increasing understanding of these cognitive constructs.

Research Question 2

My second research question examined whether these cognitive constructs, as defined by past literature, are associated with violent behaviour as past research and theory have suggested. Specifically, I coded statements reflecting evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility as relatively in support of or against the use of violence, and determined the median score for the valence of each cognition. I then tested my second research question by examining the correlations between the median scores for each cognitive construct and two indices of violent behaviour. The current findings suggest that of the three cognitive constructs examined, only evaluations were significantly associated with violence.

Evaluations of violence. The correlation between evaluations of violence and prior violent convictions was moderate, positive, and statistically significant, suggesting that offenders who articulated more pro-violent evaluations throughout their interview had been convicted for a greater number of violent offences in their adulthood. Conversely, the correlation between evaluations and SIR scores was small, negative, and non-significant, suggesting that offenders who articulated more pro-violent evaluations tended to be at slightly higher risk to violently reoffend following their release into the community. These findings are generally consistent with the theory of planned behaviour which suggests evaluations of a behaviour influence intentions to enact the behaviour in question (e.g., Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). These findings are also generally consistent with prior research which has suggested positive evaluations of

violence to be significantly associated with a higher frequency, or likelihood, of violent behaviour (e.g., Nunes et al., 2015; 2016).

Similarly, the Personal, Interpersonal, and Community-Reinforcement (PIC-R) Theory proposed by Andrews and Bonta (2010a; 2010b), states that when offenders learn to expect positive outcomes for violent behaviour (i.e., begin developing a favorable evaluation of violence) they are expected to continue engaging in violence in order to continue reaping these rewards. Thus individuals who often engage in violence and experience mostly positive outcomes for their behaviour (e.g., peer support, admiration, maintained social status, etc.) would be expected to evaluate violence more positively and subsequently engage in violence more often when compared to individuals who engage in violence and experience mostly negative outcomes for their behaviour (e.g., peer rejection, legal sanctions, feelings of guilt and embarrassment).

Although previous empirical studies used self-report measures to examine respondents' evaluations of violence, these previous studies as well as the current study defined evaluations as the extent to which the actor regards violent behaviour as favourable or unfavourable (e.g., Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, the current study supports the notion that evaluations are associated with violent behavior, is consistent with the notion that evaluations are important determinants of behaviour (e.g., Ajzen, 1991), and suggests that evaluations of violence naturally appear in statements made by violent offenders.

Subjective norms regarding violence. The correlation between subjective norms and prior convictions was small, negative, and non-significant, suggesting that offenders who articulated more pro-violent subjective norms tended to have been convicted for slightly fewer violent offences in their adulthood. Conversely, the correlation between subjective norms and

SIR scores was small, negative, and non-significant, suggesting that offenders who articulated more pro-violent subjective norms throughout the interview tended to be at slightly higher risk to violently reoffend following their release into the community.

Together these findings seem contradictory, suggesting that more pro-violent subjective norms are associated with slightly less violent behaviour in the case of offence history, but slightly more violent behaviour in the case of risk for recidivism. Therefore, these findings provide weak support to prior research and theory suggesting subjective norms to be associated with a higher frequency of behaviour in general (e.g., Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005), and with violent behaviour in particular (e.g., Ames et al., 2013; Andrews and Bonta, 2010a; 2010b; Betts et al., 2011; Finigan-Carr et al., 2015; Flisher et al., 2007; Tolman et al., 1996).

Perceptions of responsibility for violence. As previously discussed, inter-rater reliability for the median valence of perceptions of responsibility was very low, indicating there to be a high degree of measurement error introduced to analyses involving this cognitive construct. Thus the results of analyses involving perceptions of responsibility should be interpreted with caution, as the level of perceived responsibility was not reliably coded for.

The correlation between perceptions of responsibility and prior convictions was small, negative and nonsignificant, suggesting that offenders who articulated more acceptance of responsibility tended to have slightly more prior convictions for violence. The correlation between perceptions of responsibility and SIR scores was small, positive, and non-significant, suggesting that that offenders who articulated more acceptance of responsibility tended to be estimated as slightly more likely to violently reoffend in the future. When considered together, and despite their lack of significance, these findings suggest that mitigations of responsibility are associated with a lower frequency of violent behaviour. Therefore, the current findings seem

inconsistent with previous literature suggesting mitigations of responsibility to be associated with continued persistence in violent and aggressive behaviours (e.g., Agnew, 1994; Minor, 1981; Mitchell & Dodder, 1980; Shields & Whitehall, 1994; Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Although the correlations between perceptions of responsibility and indices of violence seem to diverge from past literature, this may be due to unknown third variables confounding the relationship. For example, past theorists have suggested that the effect of mitigations of responsibility on violent behaviour may be moderated by the offenders' adherence to conventional norms (e.g., Maruna & Copes, 2005; Sykes & Matza, 1957), or offenders' moral evaluations of the violent behaviour (e.g., Agnew, 1994; Minor, 1981). Specifically, these authors suggested that individuals who mitigate responsibility for violence may be more likely to engage in future violence and aggression if they generally adhere to conventional social norms suggesting that violence is an unacceptable behaviour. For these individuals, mitigating responsibility reduces feelings of guilt, thus removing inhibitions that would otherwise prevent the individual from engaging in further violence, and increasing the probability of future violence. Therefore, future research is needed to examine how perceptions of responsibility interact with adherence to conventional or nonconventional norms and evaluations of violence across various situations.

General Research and Theoretical Implications

These findings suggest that theoretical definitions for evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility correspond to how violent offenders think and talk about violence. Research examining the relationship between these cognitions and violent behaviour should therefore examine the construct validity of the provided definitions in order to test whether they could be used to develop measures intended to assess each of the three cognitions. Additionally,

because coders consistently rated the valence of evaluations and subjective norms according to a three-point Likert scale (positive; neutral/ ambivalent; negative), researchers may be able to assess evaluations and subjective norms according to the extent that offenders agree or disagree with statements reflecting each of the three valences.

In general, the current findings provide some support for Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour, mixed support for Andrews and Bonta's (2010a; 2010b) PIC-R theory of offending, and fail to provide support for neutralization theory (e.g., Maruna & Copes, 2005; Sykes & Matza, 1957). According to the theory of planned behaviour, evaluations, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence a person's intention to perform a behaviour and subsequently influences whether the individual does or does not complete the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The current study thus lends support for the notion that evaluations are associated with behaviour, and provides mixed support for the notion that subjective norms are associated with behaviour. Evaluations were significantly associated with one of the measures of violence, and both correlations suggested that offenders who evaluated violence more favorably enacted violent behaviours more often, thus lending support for this aspect of the theory of planned behaviour. Although subjective norms were not significantly associated with either measure of violence, the current findings suggest that offenders who perceive their friends as viewing violence more favorably have engaged in violence slightly more often in the past, yet these offenders were slightly less likely to engage in violence in the future. Therefore, these findings provide mixed support for the theory of planned behaviour.

Additionally, the current findings provide mixed support for Andrews and Bonta's (2010a; 2010b) PIC-R theory. The PIC-R theory purports that people may learn to commit criminal behaviour by observing and imitating their peer's criminal behaviour, and learning to

expect the same rewards and punishments that follow. Because the relationship between subjective norms and indices of violence were non-significant, and only one correlation was in the expected direction, the current findings provide mixed support for the PIC-R theory.

Last, the current findings seem to be inconsistent with past theories suggesting that mitigations of responsibility are important contributing factors to the maintenance of criminal behaviour (e.g., Maruna & Copes, 2005; Sykes & Matza, 1957). However, I make this interpretation with great caution, as the valence of perceptions of responsibility were not reliably coded for and these findings may simply reflect real ambiguity in offenders' speech and thoughts about perceptions of responsibility for violence. If this is the case, then theories about mitigations of responsibility for crime may not generalize to mitigations of responsibility for violence. In other words, offenders may clearly think and talk about their perceptions of responsibility for non-violent crime, but they may naturally think and talk about their perceptions of responsibility for violent crime in ways that are more ambiguous, subjective, and open to various interpretations. Alternatively, it is possible that the current study's operational definition for mitigations of responsibility significantly differed from the constructs referred to by neutralization theorists. Although I attempted to retain the underlying meaning behind rationalizations (e.g., Sykes & Matza, 1957), excuses (e.g., Scott & Lyman, 1968), and neutralizations (e.g., Maruna & Copes, 2005) when creating the operational definition for mitigations of responsibility, it is possible that the resulting construct failed to consider vital characteristics of the cognitions in question, which would otherwise explain the connection between these cognitions and criminal behaviour. If this is the case, then the current findings should not be interpreted in relation to theories about neutralization techniques and behaviour, as the current study would not have examined neutralization techniques articulated by offenders.

General Limitations

One of the main limitations to the current study was the small sample size. Because only a small number of offenders were included in the analyses, it is possible that the current sample is relatively unique from other violent offenders, and that they might think about violence differently than most incarcerated violent offenders. If this is the case, then these findings cannot be generalized to other samples of incarcerated violent offenders. Additionally, results of the a priori power analysis indicated that the current study had a sufficient sample size to detect large effects (required $N = 26$), though the sample was too small to detect medium (required $N = 82$) or small effects (required $N = 779$). Yet despite the current study being underpowered to detect medium effects, analyses revealed one significant moderate correlation between the cognitive constructs and indices of violence.

A second limitation to the current study was its cross-sectional correlational design, which calls into question the temporal sequence of offenders learning pro-violent evaluations and engaging in violent behaviour. Although the current findings are consistent with the notion that pro-violent evaluations influenced offenders' likelihood of engaging in violence, it is equally possible that offenders had first engaged in violence, and that this had caused these offenders to evaluate violence more favorably (e.g., by learning to expect rewards for violence). Alternatively, it is possible that the significant relationship between evaluations and prior convictions could be explained by an unknown third variable. For example, if offenders witnessed domestic partner violence as a child, then this could have simultaneously caused offenders to imitate these violent behaviours as well as teach offenders that using violence allows a person to easily achieve their goals by bullying others.

A third limitation to the current study is that transforming qualitative data into numerical form limits how much information that was provided in the interviews is considered in the quantitative analyses. As indicated by Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003), some qualitative researchers have argued that quantizing data oversimplifies the themes emerging from the qualitative data and fails to capture the complex meaning behind the data. In an attempt to retain the qualitative nature of the data, I identified statements that seemed to best represent the cognitive constructs (see Appendices G, H, and I), and I included at least one statement from each offender in the current study. Furthermore, because of the need for consistency and clear decision rules when quantizing data, the provided coding manual was rigorously followed when coding statements made by violent offenders.

A fourth limitation is that I examined risk of violent recidivism using the SIR scale. Specifically, previous research has suggested that the SIR scale can reliably predict violent recidivism (e.g., Barnum & Gobeil, 2012; Bonta et al., 1996) though the measure was originally designed as a measure of general recidivism, not violent recidivism. Although there are other measures designed to assist in assessing risk for violent recidivism (e.g., Violence Risk Appraisal Guide [VRAG; Harris, Rice, & Quinsey, 1993], HCR-20 Violence Risk Assessment Scheme; Webster, Douglas, Eaves, & Hart, 1997), these scales generally require users to have undergone training, and the final scores on these scales were not readily available. With this in mind, I had originally chosen to use the SIR scale as a measure for risk of violent recidivism because past research has suggested that the SIR scale can reliably predict violent recidivism (e.g., Barnum & Gobeil, 2012; Bonta et al., 1996), and the SIR scale was the best estimate for risk of violent recidivism that was readily available from CSC.

Last, the three-point Likert scale used to assess the valence of cognitions may have obscured differences in statements made by offenders. Specifically, it is possible that the findings would have been more informative if the current study had instead assessed these cognitions according to a five-point Likert scale (e.g., *strongly against the use of violence; somewhat against the use of violence; somewhat for and against the use of violence; somewhat for the use of violence; strongly for the use of violence*). Because the current findings suggested that it was possible to reliably code the valence of evaluations and subjective norms on a three-point Likert scale, then it may be possible to code these cognitions with greater accuracy by using a five-point Likert scale. Though it is possible that using a five-point Likert scale would hinder inter-rater reliability, if the valence of these cognitions continued to be coded with acceptable inter-rater reliability with a five-point Likert scale, then doing so may allow quantitative analyses to gain power and be better able to find statistically significant associations between these cognitions and behaviour. However, because the current findings suggested that we were unable to reliably code the valence of perceptions of responsibility, using a five-point Likert scale would likely further hinder inter-rater reliability for coding the valence of this cognition.

Future Directions

In order to account for the general limitations of the current study, future research should include a larger sample size and more sophisticated research designs (e.g., longitudinal, experimental) to better understand the temporal sequence between the appearance of these cognitions and violent behaviour. Future researchers should assess evaluations, subjective norms, and especially, perceptions of responsibility with more accurate and reliable coding manuals. Last, future researchers should also consider testing the predictive validity of the theory of

planned behaviour, by including a measure of evaluations, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and intention to engage in violence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, prior research has suggested that there is a lack of clarity and precision in the conceptualization and measurement of attitudes towards violence. The term attitudes has often been used as an umbrella term for a variety of cognitive constructs, including but not limited to evaluations, subjective norms, and mitigations of responsibility. In order to better understand the nature of these cognitions, I identified statements made by violent offenders that seemed to reflect definitions for each cognition, and quantitized these statements according to their apparent support or aversion to the use of violence. Findings from the current study suggest that evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility are naturally articulated by incarcerated violent offenders, and that statements reflecting evaluations of violence are associated with prior convictions for violent behaviour. In this way, the current study adds to the literature by examining whether theoretical definitions for each cognition correspond to how offenders think about violence, by identifying exemplary statements reflecting theoretical definitions for evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility for violence, and by reporting the results of preliminary tests examining whether these cognitive statements are related to violent behaviour as past research and theory would suggest. Overall, the current study adds to the literature by providing a closer look into how violent offenders think and talk about violence, thereby furthering researchers' knowledge and understanding of evaluations, subjective norms, and perceptions of responsibility for violence. With greater understanding of these cognitive constructs, these cognitions can be conceptualized and measured with greater clarity,

thus allowing for further advances in the assessment, prediction, and treatment of violent offending.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

Consent Form (CSC): Conflict and Violence Interviews (2012-07-26)

A consent form tells you what we want you to do as a participant and allows you to make an informed decision about whether you want to participate or not. Consent forms also list any potential bad consequences and they tell you who to contact in case you have any questions or concerns after the research is finished or in case you have any questions or concerns that cannot be answered by the researcher.

The purpose of this study is to learn more about violent and non-violent conflict resolution. The researcher will ask you to describe conflicts that you have dealt with in violent and non-violent ways. For example, you will be asked to describe the verbal and nonverbal exchanges leading up to and following a violent (or non-violent) incident. The one-on-one interview will be conducted for 1 hour and a half and it will be recorded (audio only). We also would like to review information about your criminal history and psychological assessments in your institutional files to learn more about what happened in any violent offences you may have on record.

Some participants may feel embarrassed or distressed discussing incidents involving conflict and violence. You are free to refuse to answer any of the questions or stop the project at any time without penalty. Not participating will **NOT** affect your treatment by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) in any way. Participation in this study will **NOT** affect any administrative decisions concerning you, such as your institutional placement or parole.

The information you provide in the interviews will be used only for research and teaching purposes and your confidentiality will be respected and protected. You will not be identified as a participant in the publication or presentation of the results. Your name and other personal information will **NOT** be written on the information you provide. **Confidentiality will only be broken if a direct and imminent threat is made to hurt yourself or others or if abuse of a specific person is disclosed.** The information collected will be kept in a secure manner at Carleton University and the Research Branch of CSC in a locked filing cabinet and password-protected computer and will be accessible only to the researchers working on this project. Five years after publication of the final report for this project, we will destroy all the personal information you provided.

This project is a partnership between researchers at Carleton University and the Research Branch of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) conducted under the supervision of Dr. Kevin Nunes (Professor, Department of Psychology, Carleton University, 613-520-2600, ext 1545; kevin_nunes@carleton.ca). If you have any questions or concerns about this study please contact Kevin Nunes. If you are concerned about the ethics of this study, please contact Dr. Monique Sénéchal, at monique_senechal@carleton.ca (613-520-2600 ext. 1155). For any other

concerns, please contact, Dr. Anne Bowker (Chair, Department of Psychology, 613-520-2600, ext. 8218, psychchair@carleton.ca).

This study has been approved by the Carleton University Ethics Committee for Psychological Research (12-274).

I have read and understood the information above. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in this study. There are two copies of the consent form, one of which I may keep.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Experimenter Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Debriefing Form

Debriefing Form (CSC): Conflict and Violence Interviews (2012-07-26)

Thank you very much for participating in my study. Without your participation, this research would not have been possible. I hope the following information answers any questions and concerns you may have.

What Are We Trying to Learn in this Research?

We are interviewing participants from the university, community, and prisons to identify the interactions that lead up to violence, as well as the non-violent ways people deal with conflicts. We will use this information to create a set of stories (vignettes) and a set of responses that can be used as a measure of violent behaviour in future research.

Why Is This Important to Scientists or the General Public?

One of the biggest challenges for research on violence is how to measure future violent behaviour. Criminal violence is hard to study because (thankfully) it does not happen very often for most people. This has slowed the progress of research on the causes and treatment of violence. If we could develop a safe but realistic measure of violent behaviour that could be more easily and quickly measured, then we would be able to make better progress.

Where Can I Learn More?

For an overview of literature on aggression you can read:

Anderson, C. A., & Bushman, B. J. (2002). Human aggression. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 27-51.

<http://www.psychology.iastate.edu/faculty/caa/abstracts/2000-2004/02ab.pdf>

What if I Have Questions Later?

This project is a partnership between researchers at Carleton University and the Research Branch of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) conducted under the supervision of Dr. Kevin Nunes (Professor, Department of Psychology, Carleton University, 613-520-2600, ext 1545; kevin_nunes@carleton.ca). If you have any questions or concerns about this study please contact Kevin Nunes. If you are concerned about the ethics of this study, please contact Dr. Monique Sénéchal, at monique_senechal@carleton.ca (613-520-2600 ext. 1155). For any other concerns, please contact, Dr. Anne Bowker (Chair, Department of Psychology, 613-520-2600, ext. 8218, psychchair@carleton.ca).

Is There Anything I Can Do if I Found This Experiment to be Emotionally Draining?

If you experience any distress (e.g., feel sad or mad) as a result of this study, please seek help from a prison staff member.

This study has been approved by the Carleton University Ethics Committee for Psychological Research (12-274).

Thank you very for making this research possible.

Appendix C

Statistical Information on Recidivism Scale – Revised 1

Item	Description	Scoring	
1	<p>CURRENT OFFENCE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***NOTES***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes all offences under the current total aggregate sentence - If more than one offence, score the offender according to the one that is the “most negative score” –if the offender has 2 convictions at the same time, choose the conviction where the “rate of recidivism” is the “most negative” - Scores define the association between the likelihood of recidivism as associated with certain offences when this offence is the current offence - Where an offence has not been defined within these lists, it is because the likelihood of recidivism for these offences was equal to the general average. These offences did not allow researchers to define the offenders as more or less likely to recidivate. In addition, there were certain offences where the frequency of occurrence was too low to be useful. “0” in this item is not a valued score, simply a default to assure that the item has been considered. <p>Definition of “Homicide”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refers to <i>Criminal Code</i> definition: murder and manslaughter <p>Score on this item may not be static</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there are outstanding charges at time of incarceration and the charges are subsequently dealt with, these new convictions become part of the “current offence” category - If offender has been revoked with new offences, both the new and the original offences are considered “current offences” 		
	<p style="text-align: center;">***SCORES***</p> <p>Incest, sexual intercourse with the underage, seduction, gross indecency</p> <p>Homicide: any act resulting in death, except by automobile</p> <p>Narcotics offences (<i>Food & Drug Act/ Narcotic Control Acts</i>)</p> <p>Unarmed robbery (armed robbery has a 0 score)</p>	<p>+4</p> <p>+3</p> <p>+3</p> <p>+2</p>	

	<p>Dangerous driving, criminal negligence while operating a motor vehicle, arson, kidnapping, hijacking, abduction, obstructing a peace officer</p> <p>Receiving or possession of stolen goods</p> <p>Theft</p> <p>Break and enter (includes B. & E. and commit or with intent), forcible entry, unlawfully in dwelling, illegal possession of firearm, carrying a concealed weapon</p> <p>Escape (includes any CONVICTION for escape or attempted escape from a federal or provincial correctional facility or court, or from an escort; does not include unlawfully at large)</p>	+2	- 1
			-1
			-2
			-4
2	<p>AGE AT ADMISSION</p> <p>***NOTES***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refers to “Admission” on the current total aggregate sentence (i.e., at original warrant of committal admission) - Does not apply to re-admission as a result of a revocation, termination, etc. 		
	<p>***SCORES***</p> <p>40 or over</p> <p>20 or under</p>	+2	-2
3	<p>PREVIOUS INCARCERATION</p> <p>***NOTES***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Previous” refers to a period of incarceration that expired (i.e., WED) before the current total aggregate sentence - An incarceration is a separate original admission to a custodial place - “Penal institution” refers to jail, prison, or penitentiary, in each case - If offender was on the street through parole or statutory release (or mandatory supervision) and has been revoked with or without a new conviction, this is NOT a new period of incarceration. The revocation is still part of the original sentence 		

	<p style="text-align: center;">***SCORES***</p> <p>Has never been in a penal institution (jail, prison, or penitentiary) before</p> <p>Has served a sentence in a penal institution on 3 or 4 previous occasions</p> <p>Has served a sentence in a penal institution on 5 or more previous occasions</p>	+4	
4	<p style="text-align: center;">REVOCAION OR FORFEITURE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***NOTES***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This does not include terminations 		
	<p style="text-align: center;">***SCORES***</p> <p>Has at any time been revoked or has forfeited day parole, full parole, or statutory release (or mandatory supervision) (this excludes day parole termination or full parole termination decisions)</p>		-2
5	<p style="text-align: center;">ACT OF ESCAPE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***NOTES***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes current or previous ACTS of escape or attempted escape from a federal or provincial correctional facility or court, or from an escort, whether or not this act resulted in a conviction. A conviction for UAL for any of the above should be treated as an escape 		
	<p style="text-align: center;">***SCORES***</p> <p>Has escaped or attempted to escape on 1 or more occasions</p>		-3
6	<p style="text-align: center;">SECURITY CLASSIFICATION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***NOTES***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If completed at admission this score = 0 as it refers only to security level at time of parole hearing - Multi-level institution did not exist when scale developed; therefore, at this time they score "0" 		
	<p style="text-align: center;">***SCORES***</p> <p>Is in maximum security at time of parole hearing</p>		-1

7	<p>AGE AT FIRST ADULT CONVICTION</p> <p>***SCORES***</p> <p>Was 50 or over at time of first adult conviction</p> <p>Was between 41 and 49 (inclusive) at time of first adult conviction</p> <p>Was between 31 and 40 (inclusive) at time of first adult conviction</p> <p>Was between 23 and 30 (inclusive) at time of first adult conviction</p> <p>Was 18 or under at time of first adult conviction</p>	<p>+7</p> <p>+6</p> <p>+3</p> <p>+2</p>	<p>-2</p>
8	<p>PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS FOR ASSAULT</p> <p>***NOTES***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Previous” refers to convictions incurred before the current total aggregate sentence - Does not include sexual assault or B. & E. and commit assault - For a conviction with multiple counts, consider each count as a conviction (e.g., assault (3) = 3 convictions) 		
9	<p>MARITAL STATUS AT MOST RECENT ADMISSION</p> <p>***NOTES***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-reported - Includes heterosexual and homosexual common-law relationships - This is a ‘static’ factor only in that it pertains to status at time of the most recent “admission” or “re-admission” 		
10	<p>INTERVAL AT RISK SINCE LAST OFFENCE</p>		
	<p>***SCORES***</p> <p>Has 1 previous conviction</p> <p>Has 2 or more convictions for assault</p>	<p>-2</p> <p>-3</p>	
	<p>***SCORES***</p> <p>Was married or had common-law spouse</p>	<p>+1</p>	

	<p style="text-align: center;">***NOTES***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measure from the date of the original sentence, not the remnant - Must be calculated from beginning of this sentence, i.e., from the original commencement of the total aggregate sentence 		
	<p style="text-align: center;">***SCORES***</p> <p>Aggregate sentence is 5 years and up to 6 years</p> <p>Aggregate sentence is 6 years or more</p>	+3	
	<p style="text-align: center;">***SCORES***</p> <p>Aggregate sentence is 6 years or more</p>	+2	
13	<p>PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS FOR SEXUAL OFFENCE(S)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***NOTES***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Previous” refers to convictions incurred before the current total aggregate sentence - Includes sexual assault and aggravated sexual assault (and rape) - Present offence could be either a sexual offence or any other type of offence (e.g., B. & E.); then reference F.P.S. to see if there is a conviction for any of the defined sexual offences - For a conviction with multiple counts, consider each count as a conviction (e.g., sexual assault (11) = 11 convictions) 		
	<p style="text-align: center;">***SCORES***</p> <p>Has 2 or more previous convictions for any of rape, or attempted rape, or indecent assault, or sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault</p>		-4
14	<p>PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS FOR BREAK AND ENTER</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***NOTES***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Previous” refers to convictions incurred before the current total aggregate sentence - Break and Enter includes B. & E. with intent to commit, and B. & E. & commit - Multiple counts of offences are considered separate convictions (e.g., B. & E. (9) = 9 convictions) - Convictions listed separately at the same time are also separate convictions e.g., B. & E. (2) B. & E. (4) = 9 convictions B. & E. (3) 		
	<p style="text-align: center;">***SCORES***</p>		

	<p>Has no previous convictions for break and enter, or being unlawfully in dwelling house</p> <p>Has 1 or 2 previous convictions for break and enter, or being unlawfully in dwelling house</p> <p>Has 3 or 4 previous convictions for break and enter or being unlawfully in dwelling house</p> <p>Has 5 or more previous convictions for break and enter, or being unlawfully in dwelling house.</p>	+2	
			-2
			-3
			-6
15	<p>EMPLOYMENT STATUS AT ARREST</p> <p>***NOTES***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes either part-time or full-time legal employment - Self-reported at time of arrest - Current offences are those associated with the original commencement of the current total aggregate sentence - Paid for re-training is considered employment - Going to school is not considered employment unless being paid for through programs such as Employment Insurance 		
	<p>***SCORES***</p> <p>Was employed at time of arrest for current offence(s)</p>	+1	

Note. Items that do not apply to the offender receive a score of zero.

Appendix D

Interview Questions

[Current Violent Offence]

Are you serving time now for a violent offence against someone of the same gender and around your age or older at the time of the offence? If so, can you tell me about the violent offence that you're serving time for now and all the things that were said and done that led up to it?

[ask any of the follow-up questions below that remain unanswered about this incident]

[Most Recent Prior Violent Offence]

*Before the violent offence that you're serving time for now, were you convicted of another violent offence against someone of the same gender and around your age or older at the time of the offence? If so, can you think of **the violent offence before the one you just talked about** and tell me what happened and all the things that were said and done that led up to it?*

[ask any of the follow-up questions below that remain unanswered about this incident]

[Most Recent Institutional Violence]

Can you tell me about your most recent violent behaviour in prison (against someone of the same gender and around your age or older at the time of the violence)? Can you tell me what happened and all the things that were said and done that led up to it?

[ask any of the follow-up questions below that remain unanswered about this incident]

[Most Recent Institutional Non-Violent Conflict Resolution]

*While in prison, have you ever been in a conflict with someone (same gender and around your age or older at the time) that you were able to work out without using violence? If so, can you think of the **most recent** time this happened in prison during your*

current sentence and tell me what happened and all the things that were said and done that led up to it?

[ask any of the follow-up questions below that remain unanswered about this incident]

[Most Recent Community Non-Violent Conflict Resolution]

*While in the community, have you ever been in a conflict with someone (same gender and around your age or older at the time) that you were able to work out without using violence? If so, can you think of the **most recent** time this happened in the community and tell me what happened and all the things that were said and done that led up to it?*

[ask any of the follow-up questions below that remain unanswered about this incident]

[Prior Community Non-Violent Conflict Resolution]

*Was there another time when you were in a conflict with someone (same gender and around your age or older at the time) that you were able to work out without using violence? If so, can you think of **the time before the one you just talked about** and tell me what happened and all the things that were said and done that led up to it?*

[ask any of the follow-up questions below that remain unanswered about this incident]

Follow-up questions:

How long ago did this happen?

How old were you at the time?

What got it all started?

Where were you?

What did he/she say/do?

What did you say/do?

How did you feel (before, at each point during, after)?

What were you thinking?

Why did you do that?

Why did he/she do that?

What were you hoping to accomplish? Did it work?

Was there anything else you could have done? If so, why didn't you do that?

How much were you in control?

What was going on with you before the event? (e.g., frustration/satisfaction in relationships/work/school, mood, substance use, etc.)

How do you feel about what you did?

Did you feel angry? How angry?

Did you feel calm?

Was it worth it?

If you had the chance to do it over, would you do it the same way? What would you change?

Who was involved? How well did you know the person up to that time?

How much planning did you do?

How long before did you start planning?

At what point did you know you were going to get violent with the person?

Have you had other situations like this with the same person?

Have you had other situations like this with other people?

If you've been violent other times, do things usually happen the same way as this time you just talked about?

What were some positive things about what you did?

What were some negative things about what you did?

Were you responsible for what happened? Why or why not?

What made your behaviour ok in this case? How? Why?

Do you think of yourself as a violent person?

What are some positive things about being violent (in general)?

What are some negative things about being violent (in general)?

When is it ok to be violent (in general)? (e.g., in which situations or circumstances?)

When is being violent not your fault (in general)? (what would reduce your responsibility?)

Appendix E

Coding Manual with Exemplary Statements from Interviews

For the purpose of this paper, *violent behaviour* is broadly defined as any (non-sexual) behaviour considered to be a violent violation of the Canadian Criminal Code. These include homicide; attempted murder; assault; robbery; criminal harassment; uttering threats; use of, discharge, and pointing of firearms; forcible confinement; kidnapping; abduction; extortion; and threatening or harassing phone calls (Statistics Canada, n.d.).

Intentions⁴ to behave violently or descriptions of past behaviour alone should not be interpreted as one of the cognitions of interest. For example, statements that indicate that the participant did or did not want to commit a violent behaviour should not be coded as one of the variables of interest unless the participant explicitly indicated why he felt this way. The participant must provide additional information to suggest an evaluation, subjective norm, or perception of responsibility when discussing intentions for future behaviour and descriptions of past behaviour (i.e., stating how he thought of the violent behaviour at the time, or how he thought about the violent behaviour during the interview).

Definitions for Cognitive Constructs

Evaluations are defined as the extent to which the actor regards violent behaviour as favourable or unfavourable (e.g., Ajzen, 1991).

Things to keep in mind about *Evaluations of Violence*:

- Do not code statements that imply an evaluation of violence.
- Evaluations refer to how the individual evaluates violent behaviour (in real-life or in a hypothetical situation), not how they evaluate violent people, nor the likelihood of performing the behaviour.

⁴ Ajzen (1991) suggested that evaluations and subjective norms both influence intentions to perform behaviours, therefore intentions should be considered a unique type of cognition, different from those being considered in this paper.

- Evaluations⁵ of behaviour include minimizing the seriousness of behaviour, or justifying why the behaviour was acceptable in specific situations (e.g., victim deserved to be punished, it's not that bad because the guy was a child molester, etc.)
- Evaluations of behaviour include “if...then...” statements. For example, statements should be coded as evaluations when the participant says that he would respond violently if placed in a specific situation (e.g., if someone attacked me, then I would knock them out).
- Evaluations of behaviour⁶ include quotes that indicate direct positive or negative consequences of violent behaviour (e.g., someone was hurt, sent to prison, defended one's reputation, etc.). However, consequences that indirectly follow from violent behaviour should not be considered an evaluation of behaviour. For example, one common consequence of violence is being sent to prison (direct consequence), while being in prison can lead to additional consequences that do not directly follow from violence (e.g., complete General Education Diploma, attend Violence Prevention Program, losing contact with friends and family, etc.). These consequences of being in prison are thus indirect consequences of violent behaviour. Although they may influence an individual's evaluation of prison overall, they should only be considered evaluations of violence if the participant explicitly connected the consequence as due to violence.
 - o Statements that include expected goals/ punishments for the behaviour should be coded as evaluations of behaviour (as these as the anticipated consequences for the violent behaviour).
 - o Statements that indicate how the participant feels about a violent behaviour should be coded as an evaluation, but only when the feelings appear to be emotional consequences of the behaviour (e.g., remorse, feeling bad, feeling proud, etc.)

Subjective norms are defined as perceptions of whether people close to the actor (e.g., peers)

think the actor should commit violence, or perceptions of how violent or how non-violent these people act (e.g., Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Things to keep in mind about *Subjective Norms*:

- Do not code statements that imply a subject norm.

⁵ A study by Maimone, Hermann, & Nunes (2015) factor analysed items of a self-report scale intended to assess cognitions about rape (the Sexual Aggression: Attitudes, Justifications, and Excuses scale) and found 4 factors based on the EFA. Items reflecting a positive attitudes towards sexual violence fell on the same factor as justification items. Furthermore, Scott and Lyman (1968) as well as Mills, Kroner & Forth (2002) have suggested that one of the main characteristics of justifications include their moral tone, which designate some behaviours as acceptable under certain circumstances.

⁶ According to Ajzen (1991), evaluations towards a behaviour are theorized as developing from the beliefs people hold about the object of the evaluation, including the perceived consequences of performing the behaviour.

- There are two types of subjective norms: injunctive and descriptive/ behavioural. Injunctive norms about violence refer to the individual's perception of how people close to him evaluate violence. Descriptive/ behavioural norms refer to the individual's perception of how violent or non-violent these people behave (e.g., intervene to prevent violence), or how often they commit violence. In either case, statements that reflect an injunctive norm, or a descriptive/ behavioural norm should be coded as a subjective norm.⁷
- Statements that indicate that the participant is minimizing the seriousness of a peer's violent behaviour (e.g., it was bad, but it wasn't that bad), should be coded as a neutral subjective norm or evaluation. If the participant is indicating the thoughts and/ or actions of his peers, then it should be coded as a subjective norm. If the participant is indicating his personal thoughts about his peer's behaviour, then it should be coded as an evaluation.

Mitigations of responsibility are defined as explicit attempts to deny or minimize personal responsibility for a negative behaviour, and claim that the behaviour was due to processes outside of the actor's control (e.g., Scott & Lyman, 1968; Snyder & Higgins, 1988; Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Things to keep in mind about *Mitigations of Responsibility*:

- Do not code statements that imply a perception of responsibility.
- Do not code quotes that suggest the participant to deny having committed the behaviour in question. Denial of behaviour and mitigations of responsibility are two different types of cognitions.
- Mitigations of responsibility refer to quotes in which the participant explicitly reduces personal responsibility for a violent behaviour, or explicitly states that they were unable to choose a non-violent behaviour (e.g., because life was in immediate danger, tried to solve problem with non-violent solutions but to no avail thus had to be violent, etc.)
- Statements that indicate that the participant did or did not have control over his behaviour should be coded as a perception of his responsibility for that behaviour. Unless additional information would indicate otherwise, statements should be coded as an acceptance of responsibility if the participant says that he was in full control of his behaviour.
- Mitigations of responsibility are different from descriptions of behaviour. For example, in many circumstances people who committed violence were intoxicated. Although the participant may state that they were intoxicated, this alone does not indicate a mitigation

⁷ According to Ajzen & Fishbein (2005), measures of subjective norms should include both types of norms in order to obtain a complete measure of the cognitive construct.

of responsibility. Quotes should be considered a mitigation of responsibility when the participant explicitly attributes the violence as at least partially due to or caused by intoxication.

Coding Instructions

Step One

While coding, please use the provided definitions, and consider whether individual statements reflect an evaluation of violence (present or not present), a subjective norm regarding violence (present or not present) or a perception of responsibility for a violent behaviour (present or not present). If the construct is reflected in the statement, please indicate by placing a check/ tick mark under the appropriate “Present” column. If the construct is not reflected in the statement, please indicate by placing a check/ tick mark under the “Not Present (NP)” column.

Although some quotes may indicate more than one of these cognitive constructs, please consider whether one cognition is being indicated more clearly than others. If yes, only code the cognition that is most clearly being indicated within the quote as present. If no, code the cognitions which appear to be equally indicated within the quote as present (e.g., evaluation (Present); subjective norm (Present); perception of responsibility (Not Present)).

Step Two

For each of the constructs coded as present, please consider whether the statement reflects the cognitive construct as theoretically supportive of violence (pro-violence/ mitigates responsibility), against the use of violence (anti-violence/ accepts responsibility), or does not seem to take a strong stance for, or against, the use of violence (neutral/ ambivalent). Please indicate the valence of each cognition with a check/ tick mark under the appropriate column. For cognitions that do not appear in the statement, please indicate by placing a check/ tick mark under the “Not Present (NP)” column.

Coding Example

Coder: Carolyn Blank

Participant Number: 123

- 1) “My co-accused points him out and says this guy has lots of money, let’s rob him. At first I didn’t think it was a good idea, because I had a good paying job, and a wife and kids at home.”
- 2) “So sometimes you get drawn into things that you don’t really want to get drawn into. But it’s mostly because you have to prove to the people you associate with that you’re down to [fight] and you’re not a pussy, and you can handle certain situations.”
- 3) “My intention wasn’t to be violent at all, it was just to talk to the guy. But when he grabbed me and we started scuffling, that’s when it started. We started duking, we started fighting.”
- 4) “Well, I’m responsible for killing him right? But I wouldn’t say I’m fully responsible, because me and my [co-accused] put in work on him right? So I’m not fully responsible, but I take my responsibility, I’m not hiding what I did.”

	Evaluations				Subjective Norms				Perceptions of Responsibility			None	
	PRESENT			NP	PRESENT			NP	PRESENT				NP
	Anti-Violence	Neutral	Pro-Violence		Anti-Violence	Neutral	Pro-Violence		Accepts	Mixed	Mitigates		
1)	“My co-accused points him out and says this guy has lots of money, let’s rob him. At first I didn’t think it was a good idea, because I had a good paying job, and a wife and kids at home.”												
1)	■						■						■
2)	“So sometimes you get drawn into things that you don’t really want to get drawn into. But it’s mostly because you have to prove to the people you associate with that you’re down to [fight] and you’re not a pussy, and you can handle certain situations.”												
2)				■			■				■		

3)	“My intention wasn’t to be violent at all, it was just to talk to the guy. But when he grabbed me and we started scuffling, that’s when it started. We started duking, we started fighting.”												
3)													■
4)	“Well, I’m responsible for killing him right? But I wouldn’t say I’m fully responsible, because me and my [co-accused] put in work on him right? So I’m not fully responsible, but I take my responsibility, I’m not hiding what I did.”												
4)			■				■		■				

Appendix F

Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) Coding Manual

Participant number (from Participant Log)	
Date tested (from Participant Log)	
Coder's name	

CPIC available?		Date on CPIC	
------------------------	--	---------------------	--

CPIC available = Is a CPIC available to score the items below for this offender? (yes/no).

Date on CPIC = If the date of the CPIC is not readily apparent, for electronic CPICs (portrait pages formatted like a regular Word document), the date can be found near the bottom of the CPIC on the left side of the page; e.g., if this number were "2005022503317927304822018022", the date of the CPIC is the first 8 numbers: "2005-02-25".

NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS

Only consider offences that resulted in conviction in your coding below (offence categories are mutually exclusive). Do NOT count any offences with dates more recent than the testing date.

Convictions	Index offence (adult)	Prior offences (adult)	Prior juvenile offences
Non-sexual <u>violent</u> offences			
Non-sexual and <u>non-violent</u> offences			
<u>Sexual</u> offences			

Adult = convictions received as an adult.

Juvenile = convictions received as a juvenile/young offender (usually noted on CPIC)

GUIDELINES AND DEFINITIONS

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Record all dates as YYYY-MM-DD.
- For all variables, code "--" if the information is **not applicable**, unless instructed otherwise.
- For all variables, code "?" if the information is **unknown or cannot be determined**, unless instructed otherwise.
- Refer to Canadian Criminal Code when in doubt about the nature of a certain offence name. The current and all past Criminal Codes are available in the Public Safety library – consult them as needed.

NON-SEXUAL VIOLENT OFFENCES

The following guidelines and definitions for coding non-sexual violent offences have been taken from the Static-2002 coding rules. Some sections below have been copied directly and some have been modified to suit the specific needs of our studies. Not all of this information is directly relevant for our studies, but most of it will indicate what sources of information to consider and how to determine what should be considered a non-sexual violent offence:

The following offences are considered non-sexual violence:

- Aggravated assault
- Arson
- Assault
- Assault causing bodily harm
- Assault peace/police officer
- Attempted abduction
- Attempted child stealing
- Attempted robbery
- Compelling the commission of an offence
- Criminal Harassment
- Cruelty to animals
- Extortion
- False imprisonment
- Felonious assault
- Forcible confinement
- Give noxious substance (alcohol, narcotics, or other stupefacient in order to impair a victim)

- Grand theft person (“Grand theft person” is a variation on robbery and may be counted as non-sexual violence)
- Kidnapping
- Manslaughter
- Murder
- Robbery
- Threatening
- Using/pointing a weapon/firearm in the commission of an offence
- Violation of a domestic violence order (restraining order; a conviction for)
- Wounding

In cases where there is uncertainty, an offence is considered violent if the Criminal Code (or other relevant statute) definition of the offence includes a mandatory component involving some sort of force, touching, threats, and/or the behaviour directly leads to concern for one’s safety (except in the cases of dangerous driving or negligence).

Do **not** count driving accidents or convictions for Negligence causing Death or Injury as a violent offence. These are to be coded as a non-sexual non-violent offence.

Resisting Arrest does not count as non-sexual violence. In Canadian and United States law this charge can apply to individuals who run from an officer or who hold onto a lamppost to delay arrest. If an offender fights back he will generally be charged with “assault to a peace/police officer” which counts as non-sexual violence. Alternately, "assault with intent to resist arrest" would also count as non-sexual violence.

Weapons offences do not count unless the weapon was used in the commission of an offence. For example, an offender might be charged with a non-violent offence and then in a search of the offender’s home the police discover a loaded firearm. As a result, the offender is convicted, in addition to the original offence, of unsafe weapons storage. This does not count as non-sexual violence because the weapons were not used in the commission of an offence. Similarly, Possession of a firearm or Possession of a firearm without a license generally does **not** count as a non-sexual violent offence. However, a conviction for Pointing a firearm generally does count as non-sexual violence as long as the weapon was used to threaten or gain victim compliance. Intent to harm or menace the victim with the weapon must be present in order to score a point on this item. However use of an imitation fire-arm are considered non-sexual non-violent offences.

Appendix G

Intrarespondent Matrix for Exemplary Statements Depicting Evaluations of Violence

Statements made by Offenders

Positive Evaluations of Violence

- (VO) The only thing that was on my mind was if anybody tried to touch me, like in a violent way, then fuck that, I'm popping shots.
- (VO) I've had a couple [fist fights] where I've had to defend myself in Provincial or jail, where you're actually happy afterwards because you feel like you stood up for yourself. Whether you won or lost, you stood your ground, and you know people are going to respect you for that.
- (I) What are some positive things about being violent? (VO) Immediate solution right? It's an immediate solution, that's it. That's probably the only thing about it.
- (I) What are some positive things about being violent in general? (VO) Well in jail, it can get you a certain level of demanded respect, and you can protect yourself. Guys won't mess with you if you've proven yourself.
- (I) What were you hoping to accomplish by [fighting him]? (VO) Showing him that, I don't know. I guess that I'm the alpha male I guess you could say. Don't ever do that again type of thing.
- (I) How were you feeling? (VO) Before? I always get butterflies in my stomach like I'm not sure what's going to happen, but I guess after [the fight] happens and you're doing good, it's kind of invigorating. You feel empowered.
- (I) What are some positive things about being violent in general? (VO) In general? Depending on how your violence is used, I would say it gives you a lot of power. (I) In prison or in the community? (VO) In both.
- (VO) Like on the streets, down there, if someone tried to stab you, and you don't get at him, you're a bitch. Cause if a guy tries to stab you and you don't do nothing, that's just a gateway to guys just come and try and rob you.
- (VO) [Rapists are] taking advantage of people that can't help themselves. You're not a man if you do that. I don't think [the assault] was a lesson, it was just what he deserved, you know?
- (VO) I wasn't really like into snowboarding or whatever, like that's how most people get pumped. I more like the bar fights, you know what I mean? Stuff like that is basically my thing.

Neutral/Ambivalent Evaluations of Violence

- (VO) I was going give [his girlfriend] the shots too, but she's pregnant and I'm like, you're fucking lucky you're pregnant lady. I'm going to stomp your boyfriend for that one now. So I went downstairs and broke his arm, and was like there you go, you throw a chair at me I'll break your boyfriend's arm.
 - (I) What in general are some positive things about being violent? (VO) I guess a positive thing about being violent is that people won't try to take advantage of you, and I guess the weaker ones can look to you for help and support if they can't handle situations. That's pretty much it, I don't think there's really positives about being violent.
 - (I) When is it okay to be violent? (VO) I'll give you two answers. My answer, is it's okay to use violence when words fail. But the real answer, would be it's never okay to use violence.
 - (I) Was there anything else going on that day? (VO) I believe just being around certain people could have had a lot to do about [the bar fight], right? Just having that name, that was a major factor I think. If I had been [at the bar] with other people, if I was there with my boss and his
-

wife, I wouldn't act that way. Cause I wouldn't want him thinking of me as that kind of a person.

- (I) How do you feel about what you did in that [violent] situation? (VO) How do I feel about it now? (I) Yeah. (VO) It was just one of those things where it was just another day in that life.
- (I) Do you think it's ever okay to be violent? (VO) I'd say if it means protecting yourself yeah. If you can avoid it, avoid it. But if that's the only way you can protect yourself, then I guess it's alright.
- (I) How do you feel about what you did? (VO) In a way I feel bad, in a way I don't. In a way I honestly don't care. In a way I think she deserved what she got.
- (I) So drinking makes it easier for you to be violent? (VO) Yeah, you almost think it's justified. (I) And then when you are sober the next day...? (VO) You feel like an idiot.
- (VO) So I feel I want to hit him, I know it's wrong in a way, but at the same time I don't really care about the consequences.
- (VO) But I can justify using violence many times. But that doesn't necessarily make it right. Just because I can justify doesn't necessarily make it right.

Negative Evaluations of Violence

- (I) What were some negative things about what you did? (VO) Well there was another fight, I broke my hand. Somebody ducked just as I threw a punch, and this knuckle bent the finger up that way.
- (I) What are some negative things about being violent in general? (VO) You can end up inflicting serious harm. You can end killing somebody by accident, or purposely. You could get yourself in a lot of trouble.
- (I) When do you think it's okay to be violent? (VO) It's never okay to be violent.
- (I) What were some negative things [about being violent]? (VO) Jail. Missed out on my baby being born, still missing out on seeing her right now. A lot of things could have been done.
- (I) How do you feel about [the assault]? (VO) I'm ashamed I reacted that way.
- (VO) And like I said I never would have shot anybody because the stress my mom's going through right now, I would rather I got shot than me shooting the person. If I can go back in time, I would let him shoot me.
- (VO) I remember starting the fire. I don't remember the feeling, or how I got over to the other neighborhood, but I remember starting the fire. And I feel bad about that. I could have hurt somebody.
- (VO) I'm not really a too religious person, because I don't consider Buddhism a religion, but it can hurt you spiritually to be violent to somebody. It could hurt you.
- (VO) Like [the victim] got the shit end of the stick, and it shouldn't have been like that. And it wasn't because I was afraid of going to jail, it was because the guy was a man and he had kids. He's a human being just like me, like who am I to play god with people?
- (VO) I don't like violence, I don't get off on it, it doesn't make me feel good, I smash somebody or punch somebody or whatever, it brings me no pleasure, it actually makes me feel bad.

Note. I = Interviewer; VO = Violent Offender.

Appendix H

Intrarespondent Matrix for Exemplary Statements Depicting Subjective Norms about Violence

Statements made by Offenders

Pro-Violent Subjective Norms

- (I) Can you remember how you felt right after the [violence] stopped? (VO) Right after? I felt satisfied. That how I felt, that I proved my point basically. That I didn't let my friends down, didn't let my reputation down, and stuff like that.
- (VO) [My friend's] gung-ho to go to the violence right away, but I tell him you need to smoke more weed or something, cause you're too much [unclear], and he's ready to go all the time. I tell him relax, it's not a big deal.
- (VO) Like you don't know my wife, she'll kill you, and my wife is just as violent as I am. Like, the papers called us Bonnie and Clyde.
- (VO) So if being violent gives you that, or gives you that power, some [people] live off that right? I know some guys that live off of that. They love it, and they're not letting nothing slide. I have friends that don't let nothing slide.
- (I) With your buddies there I imagine it would feel pretty cool. (VO) Well yeah, because they just beat someone up too you know. It's like a regular occurrence. Like, oh I got someone too you know! So we all got one.
- (I) What did your friend say during that [violent] incident? (VO) He just kept telling me hit him, hit him. You know, quit telling him off, just hit him. So I took his advice.
- (I) What did your friends do at the time, while this was...? (VO) They were nothing but cheering me on up on the balcony.
- (VO) So sometimes you get drawn into things that you don't really want to get drawn into. But it's mostly because you have to prove to the people you associate with that you're down to [fight] and you're not a pussy, and you can handle certain situations.
- (VO) The reason why I return to gangs is because I didn't like being on my own. I didn't really feel comfortable being on my own in my house. I mean, I didn't really like my mom, and my step pops, and then the streets felt like home to me. My friends felt like family and that's just how stuff is handled. Violence.
- (VO) My co-accused points him out and says this guy has lots of money, let's rob him.

Neutral/ Ambivalent Subjective Norms

- (VO) My boys, they didn't fuck him up, they just gave him one-two punches right? Just to show like, you punch my boy upstairs, you're going to get some licks.
- (VO) His ex was down there saying this to [M], he's not going to do nothing, and [M] said oh you don't know [N], and then as soon as she said that, boom. I hit him and started kicking him right? So it happened and she predicted it would happen.
- (VO) I just thought of what all my boys thought. Something like that. (I) And do you think that they expected you to be violent? Is that kind of what you mean? (VO) Not really, just if someone fights with us type of thing. We just never took it kindly you know?

- (VO) I got into it before with [my sister's] other boyfriend, because he was pounding the shit out of her. So I was sort of protecting her, and then when I beat him up, she was yanking at my hair again.

Anti-Violent Subjective Norms

- (VO) I don't ever want to hear those [violent] charges again; I don't want my mom to ever hear those charges again.
- (VO) Because that's what my mom said, she said if you had got shot you wouldn't have died, cause [the man I shot] didn't die. God was there, but this is your punishment, this is what's going happen for what you did.
- (VO) [My friend] said, I remember telling you to put it away. You know, when you were kind of in a daze and you had this knife out. My friend said put it away before you do something stupid.
- (VO) My mom says it's just words, just let it roll off your back. [Fighting's] not going to accomplish anything. (I) Cause your mom wouldn't want you to do that. (VO) Exactly. She's always saying something like, they don't know me, I don't know them, don't worry about them.
- (VO) I just clocked him right in the face, and that was it. That was just the one thing, [then] my boy jumped in and stopped it.
- (VO) So I chased him out into the hallway, and I got him in the hallway. That's when I put the choke on him, because then my girlfriend was trying to get me off this guy and begging me just let him go.
- (VO) I try to surround myself with [people who] are more thinkers and doers than violent and so forth. We would rather sit down with you and explain something to you that will get you out of trouble down the road, than to give you the trouble right away.
- (I) You feel like when you got to that point you needed help to get out of [the fight]? (VO) Yeah. I honestly think if that other friend of mine, if she didn't come and pull me off [the victim], I probably would have killed him without realizing it.
- (P) I've stabbed a few people now, but whenever I stab people, I just give them a poke behind the shoulder. I wouldn't want to kill them. Like the only guy I would want to kill in my life is the guy who touched me when I was a kid, but even then, I promised my brother I wouldn't. So I would never [let it] escalate that far.
- (VO) So I look at my friend and I'm like why are these guys watching us? So I was getting paranoid right? So I'm like, I'm going to go deal with this right now. So I pulled out my shank and my friend grabbed my hand and was like no, no, no. Let's keep walking. So I just put it back in my pocket and we keep walking.

Note. I = Interviewer; VO = Violent Offender.

Appendix I

Intrarespondent Matrix for Exemplary Statements Depicting Perceptions of Responsibility about Violence

Statements made by Offenders
<p>Mitigations of Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (VO) My lawyer and I were trying to argue it was like a temporary psychosis, a cocaine psychosis, because I was using a lot of cocaine for weeks and months leading up to this [violent] incident. I think at that point I had pumped myself up thinking it was either him or me, because he told me he was going to kill me, and I had reason to believe it because he was a big man. ○ (I) Was it your fault, hitting [your sister's boyfriend]? (VO) Well, no not really, because he shouldn't have been beating [my sister] up anyways. So, it was sort of his fault, her fault too. Like why are you with this stupid ass? He's going to hit you. ○ (VO) So I had no choice, I had to get up, and I had to hit him. Just because if I didn't do that, the guard would open the door and get him out of there quick right? So if I didn't do that, [the other prisoners] would say hey what's wrong with you? They would turn their sights on me after the guard was gone and be like, you can't do that, you can't just let someone you know [unclear] you, you have to do something right? And that's kind of the way the world is inside. ○ (I) When do you think being violent would be not your fault? (VO) If you're in danger, if your life is in danger. I mean you have to protect yourself. ○ (I) When would being violent be not your fault in general? Like what would reduce your responsibility in the situation? (VO) If somebody hits you first. That's probably about it, self-defence. ○ (I) When is being violent not your fault in general? What would reduce someone's responsibility in a violent incident? (VO) It's never my fault. (I) It's never been your fault? Like the one you were telling me about earlier? (VO) A deep seated bitterness was buried in me a long time ago when I was a child. So now I believe it's not my fault. ○ (I) How much were you in control of the situation? (VO) I would say I wasn't in control at all. (I) How come? (VO) Probably because of the alcohol, and the drugs. ○ (VO) I've learned a lot in jail, and jail's different from the street right? In jail you have to fight. Like in jail if someone calls you a goof you have to fight. No questions about it. ○ (VO) You never asked me about how I became violent in the first place. As a kid growing up, we're surrounded by violence. The music I listen to is violent, it's on TV, it's around me, it's everywhere. ○ (VO) Sooner or later somebody has to do something [violent], because every time you say something and don't follow through, the repercussions to that are grave. And when an addict learns, when he or she learns that there are zero repercussions to his or her actions—remember I'm speaking from experience, from more than just experience, from all sides of the spectrum—when they learn there's no repercussions, it's open season.
<p>Mixed/ Mitigates some and Accepts some Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (VO) Sadly he died yes, but it wasn't all my fault, you know? There's two sides to the tale.

-
- (I) Did you feel in control in that [violent] situation? (VO) I felt very in control at first, but then I felt like I was losing control, even though I was losing control I was loving it.
 - (I) When is being violent not your fault? (VO) It's always your fault, it just depends on the situation. If you're defending yourself, then you have to do what you have to do.
 - (I) How much were you in control of the situation? Or you fighting? (VO) I don't know. I wasn't really in control. I was in control because I was fighting him and I was winning, but I wasn't in control because my mind was telling me to do something that I shouldn't have done.
 - (VO) All that [violent] shit that was happening, is because of my [social] circle and the choices I make, you know what I mean?
 - (I) Did you feel in control in that [violent] situation? (VO) A little bit but not really, because I didn't know what was going on.
 - (I) Were you responsible for [the violence that] happened? (VO) No I wasn't. Well I was responsible for my own actions, but I wasn't responsible for the situation that was going on before I awoke.
 - (I) Is there a time when being violent is not your fault? Like in general. (VO) There's only that time, like not fully, but I take part of the responsibility for killing him. Cause I was trying to save my own life.
 - (VO) So I don't take full responsibility, but I take part responsibility. I take responsibility, my [co-accused] takes responsibility, and the guy that's dead should take his piece of responsibility because he fucked up.
 - (VO) I was really intoxicated, but I'm not saying that's the only reason. I could have just as easily have done that sober too. I won't blame [the violence] on alcohol, but alcohol was definitely a contributing factor.
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Accepts Responsibility

- (I) Do you feel responsible for what happened? (VO) Yeah of course I take responsibility, it was me that did everything.
 - (I) Were you responsible for what happened, why or why not? (VO) Sure I was responsible. It was my house. I did it, I hit him. I never denied it at all throughout the case.
 - (I) When is being violent not your fault? (VO) It's always your fault. You have to choose to be violent.
 - (I) Were you responsible for what happened? (VO) Yeah I was. I don't blame anyone else, like any of my friends. Like they say well your friends drove you there, but it wasn't their fault.
 - (I) When is being violent not your fault? (VO) I don't know; I'd say it's always your fault. Even if you're protecting, you're still being violent. Anytime.
 - (I) Do you feel responsible for what happened? (VO) Yeah, I am responsible for what happened. I'm responsible for my actions right? Like I said, I could have just not engaged. Could have just walked away.
 - (I) Is there a time when being violent is not your fault? (VO) It's your choice, so it's always your fault. It's your decision to make right? Takes two, but it's your fault to be involved in it.
 - (VO) I feel a lot more responsible in this current [conviction] I'm facing now. Because, like I said before, if I wasn't selling drugs, then none of this would have happened. So I blame myself a lot for the [violent] situation.
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- (VO) [With the violent incident,] alcohol played it's part by me consuming too much. And I blame me because the alcohol didn't go down my throat, I put it down my throat.
 - (VO) When violence comes into your worldview or your surroundings, I think in most cases it's because you've allowed it to happen in some way or another. If it continues, then you most certainly have responsibility to get out.
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Note. I = Interviewer; VO = Violent Offender.