

EXPLORATION OF MALE GANG MEMBERS' PERSPECTIVES OF GANGS AND DRUGS

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ABSTRACT

The Western Cape is notorious for its high prevalence of gangs and resulting gang violence. This is confirmed in the multitude of frequent reports of homicides attributed to gangs. This area of South Africa further has elevated substance abuse statistics. Literature clearly states that gangs and drugs are inextricably linked. The nature of the interaction is however unclear, although the effects of the interaction is significantly apparent as the consequences of gang activities is often felt by innocent bystanders. It is concerning that gangsterism and drug usage is normalised and ceases to be viewed as deviant in some communities. The consequences of the interaction between gangs and drugs has ramifications for community safety and further places much strain on the health, social welfare, as well as defence sectors. Effective interventions need to be informed by insight into the interaction between gangs and drugs. The best source of reliable information in this regard would be gang members. A dearth of research with regards to the gang members' perspective on the connection between gangs and drugs thus motivated the study.

The study was conducted with male gang members within the setting of a substance treatment centre, where drug usage is normalised. An empirical study with a combination of a qualitative and quantitative approach was used, where a semi structured questionnaire was administered with individual participants as well as a focus group. The study illustrated that gangs attract members through their ability to meet the individuals' needs. These needs are linked to those identified within motivational theory. Gangs met physiological needs through access to drugs, safety needs through providing protection, and self esteem needs through the provision of money and status. Significantly, gangs were identified as meeting individuals' belonging needs.

Commonality was established in risk factors for involvement in a gang and as well as in the usage of substances. The study showed unstable home environments with absent fathers and multiple stressors such as exposure to high levels of violence and abuse. Disconnectedness within families was further highlighted. The participants were exposed to elevated levels of

substance misuse within their families as well as elevated levels of familial involvement in the sale of drugs. Familial involvement in gangs was also high within participants.

The findings of the study indicate that drugs are enmeshed within gang activities. Drug usage occurs before and after going out and committing crimes. Drugs were used to heighten gang members' fortitude, diminishing inhibitions. Participants spoke about being incapable of undertaking violent acts, without first using drugs. Gang members used drugs to quieten the conscience and in self medicating after completing a task, in order to cope with flashbacks and intrusive thoughts and images.

Gang norms with regards to the sanctioning of drugs is a complex issue. The study demonstrated that gangs make a distinction between drugs, for example heroin usage is not encouraged by all gangs due to the associated tolerance and severe withdrawal symptoms. Gangs tread a thin line between condoning and discouraging drug usage. Supporting drug usage may benefit the gang, as it encourages and motivates gang activities. Gang members who become dependent on drugs are however a risk for the gang, as they become unreliable and disloyal, as their absolute devotion to the gang is challenged by their physiological needs. Gang members however perceive the gangs' prohibition of certain drugs, as motivated by a concern for their wellbeing rather than self interest. The temporal order of drug usage and gang membership illustrated that drug usage preceded involvement in a gang. Drug usage however significantly increased and progressed after inclusion in a gang.

Recommendations emphasised a need to acknowledge the link between drugs and gangs. Insight provided by gang members is needed in order to inform effective interventions. Within the substance dependence field, the gang member presents with unique treatment needs, which must be understood in order to gain optimum results. Ill-informed, generic treatment is ineffective, irresponsible and costly for service providers, communities affected by gangsterism, and those gang members with some willingness to change.

OPSOMMING

Die Wes-Kaap is berug vir dié provinsie se hoë voorkoms van bendes en gepaardgaande bendegegeweld. Dít word bevestig deur die menigte gereelde berigte van moord waarby bendes betrek word. Hierdie gebied van Suid-Afrika toon boonop verhoogde middelmisbruik-statistieke. Literatuur stel dit onomwonde dat bendes en dwelmmiddels op onlosmaaklike wyse verbind is. Die aard van hierdie wisselwerking is onduidelik, hoewel die uitwerking daarvan onmiskenbaar is: Veral onskuldige omstanders word dikwels deur die gevolge van bendebedryghede geraak. Dit is kommerwekkend dat bendes en dwelmmisbruik oënskynlik genormaliseer en in sommige gemeenskappe nie meer as afwykend bestempel word nie. Die wisselwerking tussen bendes en dwelms hou ernstige gevolge in vir gemeenskapsveiligheid, en plaas daarbenewens heelwat druk op die gesondheid-, maatskaplikewelsyn- sowel as verdedigingssektor. Doeltreffende intervensies moet gerig word deur insig in die wisselwerking tussen bendes en dwelms. Die beste bron van betroubare inligting in hierdie verband is natuurlik bendeledede self. Tog is daar 'n gebrek aan navorsing oor bendeledede se eie beskouings van die verband tussen bendes en dwelms, en dít het dus as beweegrede vir hierdie studie gedien.

Die studie is onder manlike bendeledede in 'n behandelingsentrum vir middelmisbruik onderneem, waar dwelmgebruik genormaliseer word. 'n Empiriese studie met 'n kombinasie van 'n kwalitatiewe en kwantitatiewe benadering is gebruik, en 'n semigestruktureerde vraelys is onder individuele deelnemers sowel as 'n fokusgroep afgeneem. Die studie toon dat bendes lede werf deur hul vermoë om in die individu se behoeftes te voorsien. Hierdie behoeftes stem ooreen met die behoeftes wat in motiveringsteorie uitgewys word. Bendes voorsien in sielkundige behoeftes deur toegang tot dwelms te bied; hulle voorsien in veiligheidsbehoefte deur beskerming te verleen, en hulle voorsien in selfbeeldbehoefte deur geld en status beskikbaar te stel. In die besonder is bevind dat bendes in individue se behoefte voorsien om iewers tuis te hoort.

Daar is 'n gemeenskaplikheid uitgewys in die risikofaktore vir bende-betrokkenheid en vir middelmisbruik. Die studie lewer bewys van onstabiele huislike omgewings met afwesige vaderfigure en veelvuldige stressors, soos blootstelling aan hoë vlakke van geweld en misbruik. 'n Gebrek aan familiebande kom voorts aan die lig. Die deelnemers is in hulle families aan verhoogde vlakke van middelmisbruik sowel as verhoogde vlakke van

betrokkenheid by dwelmhandel blootgestel. Familiebetrokkenheid by bendebedrywighede blyk ook algemeen te wees onder deelnemers.

Die bevindinge van die studie toon dat dwelms en bendebedrywighede ineengevleg is. Dwelmgebruik vind plaas voor sowel as nadat misdaad in bendeverband gepleeg word. Dwelms word gebruik om bendeledede te gee en hul inhibisies te laat verdwyn. Deelnemers noem dat hulle nie geweld kan pleeg sonder om eers dwelms te gebruik nie. Bendeledede gebruik dwelms om hul gewete te sus en hulself ná die voltooiing van 'n taak te behandel om terugflitse en aanhoudende gedagtes aan die gebeure te kan hanteer.

Bendenorme met betrekking tot die goedkeuring van dwelms is 'n komplekse saak. Die studie toon dat bendes tussen verskillende soorte dwelms onderskei: Alle bendes moedig byvoorbeeld nie heroïengebruik aan nie weens die verwante toleransie en ernstige onttrekkingsimptome. Vir bendes is daar 'n baie fyn lyn tussen die kondonering en ontmoediging van dwelmmisbruik. Die ondersteuning van dwelmgebruik kan tot voordeel van die bende wees, want dit dien as aansporing en motivering vir bendebedrywighede. Tog hou dwelmafhanklike lede ook 'n gevaar vir die bende in, aangesien hulle onbetroubaar en ontrou raak wanneer hulle absolute toewyding aan die bende teen hul fisiologiese behoeftes te staan kom. Bendeledede beskou egter die bende se verbod op sekere dwelms as 'n teken van hul besorgdheid oor hulle lede se welstand eerder as selfbelang. Die tydsorde van dwelmgebruik en bendelidmaatskap toon dat dwelmgebruik bende-betrokkenheid voorafgaan. Dwelmgebruik het egter beduidend toegeneem en verhef ná insluiting by 'n bende.

Aanbevelings beklemtoon die behoefte om die koppeling tussen bendes en dwelms te erken. Insigte wat van bendeledede bekom word, is nodig ten einde doeltreffende intervensies te rig. Op die gebied van middelafhanklikheid het die bendelid unieke behandelingsbehoefte wat verstaan moet word ten einde optimale resultate te behaal. Generiese behandeling sonder die nodige agtergrondinligting is ondoeltreffend, onverantwoordelik en duur vir diensverskaffers, gemeenskappe wat deur bendebedrywighede geraak word, sowel as daardie bendeledede wat wél bereid is om te verander.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. PRELIMINARY STUDY AND RATIONAL

Kinnes (2008:5) states that “One cannot separate South African gangs from drugs.” Drugs and crime are inexplicably connected to the construct and functioning of gangs. The nature of this relationship is however complex and unclear. Aside from dealing in drugs, gang members are the primary consumers of drugs (Legget, 2008:307). Standing (2003:7) shockingly reports that due to exposure and high consumption rates, drug usage has become normalised and ceases to be viewed as deviant by some of the South African communities.

According to a study conducted by the Medical Research Council of South Africa in conjunction with the Human Science Research Council of South Africa (2008:11), difficulty is found in identifying an accurate reflection of statistics with regards to drug usage within South Africa. A present initiative to gain information is being conducted by the South African Community Epidemiology Network for Drug Use (SACENDU). Information is gained from treatment centres through the use of a questionnaire which is completed for each patient admitted for treatment. The questionnaire identifies drug preferences as well as variables such as gender, race and age. It however fails to identify prevalence of drug usage and overlooks other potentially important substance related factors such as gang membership.

South African crime statistics fail to identify crimes directly attributed to gang activities. However statistics of drug related crime in areas historically identified as having high gang presence show alarming results. In Mitchells Plain, drug related crimes increased from 829 in 2003, to 6572 in 2010 (SAPS: 2010). This further is reflective of a single form of crime, ie drug related, and does not include other crimes associated with gangsterism, such as murder and assault, the rates of which are much higher in areas in which gangs are known to operate.

It thus becomes evident that there is a need for insight into the interaction between drug usage and gang involvement, as the effects of the interaction has ramifications on health and safety and thus places much strain on the health, social welfare, as well as defence sectors.

Various motivating factors involved in engaging in a gang have been identified, such as social stressors. However the role which drugs play is not clearly defined. Does drug usage precede joining a gang, or is it rather a consequence of engaging in a gang? The temporal nature of this relationship is unclear (Bjerregaard, 2010:6) Some studies have suggested in accordance with the social facilitation model, that drug usage is augmented as a result of being engaged in a gang (Esbensen *et al*, 2002; Hill, Howell, Hawkins, & Battin, 1999). A mixed model in the form of an enhancement model which combines the selection as well as a social facilitation model has however challenged these findings. It is thus suggested that gangs attract individuals engaged in delinquent behaviour or drug use, and once engaged, gang culture promotes this behaviour. A third proposition states that gang membership and drug usage are spuriously related and thus occur co-currently (Bjerregaard, 2010:11).

The 3-Metros Arrestee Study was conducted through a collaboration of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the Human Science Research Council and Medical Research Council (2002), in order to explore the relationship between drug usage and crime. Results of the study identified that questions were left unanswered with regards to the interaction between crime and drug usage, namely which precedes the other. It was further identified that more qualitative research is needed and should be conducted in conditions where drug usage is a norm, thus decreasing the tendency for participants to minimise their usage. It is suggested that this research be conducted by an individual with knowledge about drug usage, in order to earn the trust of participants so that the development of the criminal career and drug history is traced and the interstices identified (Legget, 2002:1). The researcher has experience of working within an in-patient substance dependence treatment centre, where a large percentage of patients were gang members. This experience informed the motivation to undertake such a study, as it has been the researcher's experience that a low success rate exists with regard to a gang member's ability to remain abstinent from drugs. An

interest thus developed in needing to understand the interaction between gangs and drugs, in order to inform more effective interventions with this particular population group.

Hagedorn (1998:169) states that “just as programs need to include gang members, so should research”. This view is reiterated by other authors such as Sheldon, Tracy & Brown (1997:221) where it is stated that “practitioners fail to listen to gang members”. Gang members’ perspectives are viewed as crucial, in order to inform effective policy. Standing (2005:9) in a paper exploring South African gangs, calls for interviews with gang members in order to understand the complexity of joining a gang. Based on recommendations from existing literature and research bodies, it was proposed that research be undertaken within substance dependence treatment centres’ with participants who have been or are presently members of a gang, in order to understand the process of engaging in a gang, as well as the interaction between gangs and drugs.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research conducted has shown a correlation between drug usage and gang involvement. The temporal nature of this relationship is however unclear (Bjerregaard, 2010:11). The Medical Research Council, as well as other organisations involved in the field of substance dependence and security studies, has identified the need for more knowledge with regards to these variables (Legget, 2002:8). Both drug dependence and gang involvement have devastating consequences for those involved, as well for the broader community. This is reflected in crime statistics as well as shifts in norms within communities, where exposure to this interaction is common (Standing, 2003:7). It is thus essential that more knowledge be generated in order to gain insight into the interaction between gangs and drugs. This knowledge may be utilised to inform effective interventions, thus decreasing the devastating consequences of this interaction.

1.3. AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the study is to gain a better understanding of male gang members' perspective of gangs and their interaction with drugs.

In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives were formulated:

- To describe the phenomenon and evolution of gangs with use of the systems theory
- To explore male gang involvement from a ecological perspective
- To discuss substance usage and gang involvement
- To present empirical findings of gang members' perspective of gangs and their interaction with drugs
- To present conclusions and recommendations based on empirical data

1.4. CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

For the purpose of the study the following concepts will be clarified:

1.4.1. Gang

The definition of a gang is a much contested issue, with various views. Miller (1980:121) describes a gang as a

“...self-formed association of peers, bound together by mutual interests, with identifiable leadership, well-developed lines of authority, and other organizational features, who act in concert to achieve a specific purpose or purposes, which generally include the conduct of illegal activity and control over a particular territory, facility or type of enterprise.”

1.4.2. Substance

For the purpose of this study, substance refers to any mood altering chemical with the potential to result in dependency. The term is used interchangeably with the term ‘*drug*’

1.5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.5.1. Research approach

A mixed method approach in terms of combining qualitative and quantitative designs was be utilised for the study. De Vos *et al* (2011:66) describes a mixed method approach as resulting in an in-depth and complete analysis of a complex research problem. Qualitative research aims to understand the meaning which individuals place on events. It thus calls for personalised responses and includes perceptions of participants (Fouche' & Delport, 2002:79 002:79). This approach was implemented in the form of semi-structured interviews. Bless and Higson (2000:106-107) describe semi-structured interviews as a data collection method, where specific and detailed information is gathered directly from participants. This approach was thus integral in addressing the motivation of the study, in terms of gaining the perception of gang members. Qualitative research serves to identify from the participants' perspectives a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (De Vos *et al*, 2011:64).

Quantitative research aims to explain relationships between variables, as well as describe trends. It further undertakes unbiased inquiry by the researcher from theory, into a social phenomenon, in order to draw conclusions (De Vos *et al*, 2011:63-64). The research for the study thus aimed to use deductive reasoning in the form of using theory and perspectives, in order to confirm or validate relationships.

1.5.2. Research design

The study attempted to form a better understanding of gang involvement and substance usage. An exploratory design was thus undertaken, as its purpose is to understand a subject which is relatively unexplored (Babbie, 2005:90). Neuman (1997:20) describes an exploratory study as gathering facts and information, in order to establish tentative theories and conjectures. A systematic inquiry is thus initiated through formulation of questions, where issues are refined. An exploratory design aims to develop insight into a phenomenon which is not well understood, or where gaps in literature exist (De Vos *et al*, 2011:95). It would appear that there is limited information with regard to the relationship between gang

involvement and substance usage within South African gangs. An exploratory design was thus used in order to illuminate this phenomenon.

1.5.3. Research method

1.5.3.1. Literature study

According to Neuman (1997:89), a good literature review serves the purpose of summarising and integrating existing knowledge surrounding the research topic. Further questions may be identified from literature, which may guide the empirical study.

A literature study is essential and was conducted with the use of various sources such as journal articles, books and theses, as well as papers presented. The literature study informed the study and provided a framework from which to work, in terms of identifying current available information which may be used to compare findings. Some literature was not indigenous to the South African context, but however was utilised as a foundation from which to work. Further, literature provided theory and perspectives by which to understand the relationship between drug usage and gang involvement.

1.5.3.2. Population and sampling

De Vos *et al* (2011:223) describes the population as "...the totality of persons, events, organisations, units, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned." The population for this study included male gang members who have been associated with or are currently associated with a gang. Members of all gangs were further included in the population.

A non-probability purposive sample was utilised for the study. Strydom and Delport (2003:334) describe this method as the process of seeking out specific participants who meet the criteria for the study. The size of the sample was guided by data saturation, which is described as the point when information gathered becomes repetitive (De Vos *et al*,

2002:336). Due to the largely qualitative focus, twelve individual interviews were held as well as a focus group with 4 participants. The individual interviews were conducted at Kensington Treatment Centre and the focus group was held at the Lighthouse Therapeutic Community with patients receiving treatment for substance dependence. In the 3 Metro Arrestee Study conducted, a limitation was identified in terms of participants' reluctance to disclose their drug usage (Legget, 2002). By sampling participants in a substance treatment centre, it was assumed that participants would be more likely to provide accurate accounts of their drug usage, as the usage of drugs is normalised within this context.

1.5.3.3. Method of data collection

(i)Preparation for data collection

Preceding data collection, contact was made with participants. The population group is known to be suspicious and cautious and it was thus essential, in order to ensure validity and reliability, that rapport be developed with participants. Techniques of developing relationships were implemented in order to convey empathy and understanding, as well as a non-judgemental stance. It was essential that participants felt at ease, as well as understood, as this would assist in eliciting more truthful responses. The use of language indigenous to gang culture by the researcher provided another means to developing a relationship.

Due to the nature of the study and population group, a very clear explanation of the purpose of the study was communicated. It was essential that participants were assured of anonymity. This is particularly important for this population group, in order to ensure their safety.

(ii)Research instruments

Data was collected by means of a scheduled semi-structured interview utilising a questionnaire which consisted of open and close ended questions (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:105-109). The interviewer administered the questionnaire in order to avoid literacy issues and resulting resistance and embarrassment to participants, as well as to assist in clarifying questions. A guideline of themes as identified from the literature review was

utilised. It was however beneficial for the interview to be flexible and further guided by participants' responses in order to ensure that new knowledge be generated.

1.5.3.4. Method of data analysis

De Vos *et al* (2002:319) describe data analysis as the process of organising data, in order to create meaning. Interviews were transcribed, and qualitative information was interpreted by identifying common themes presented by the participants. Quantitative data, gained mainly from close ended questions, was presented in the form of tables and figures. Data was further summarised and interpreted with the use of literature.

1.5.3.5. Method of data verification

Data verification refers to the generalisability, reliability and validity of the findings (Kvale, 1996:88). It is thus essential that the trustworthiness of the study be evaluated, as well as its applicability, consistency and neutrality (De Vos *et al*, 2011:172-174). This is achieved through credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

(i)Credibility

Credibility is concerned with the accuracy of which the phenomena is identified and described (De Vos *et al*, 2011:420). This was ensured by comparing various participants' responses. An in-depth literature review, as well as a pilot study assisted in informing the credibility of information. It was essential that the researcher be cognisant of credibility as a norm, as participants may offer distorted answers, particularly if they felt insecure, or if they perceived the interviewer to be uninformed about the subject. Questions were further repeated at different times within the interview in another format, so that data could be compared.

(ii)Transferability

The degree to which findings can be applied or generalised to other contexts, is referred to as transferability (De Vos *et al*, 2011:420). In order to ensure transferability, a sound theoretical framework and literature review was undertaken.

(iii)Dependability

Dependability is achieved through a research process which is well documented, logical and audited (De Vos *et al.*, 2011; 420). Care was taken to transcribe the interviews accurately and present the findings in a logical manner, where possible substantiating findings with those found within the literature review.

(iv)Conformability

Conformability is concerned with objectivity, and thus the ability to compare the findings of the study with other literature (De Vos *et al*, 2011:421). In presenting the empirical findings a conscious effort was made by the researcher to maintain objectivity through a reliance on and comparison with existing literature.

1.5.3.6. Ethical considerations

Babbie (2005:27) states that “the fundamental ethical rule of social research is that it must bring no harm to participants. Harm and discomfort may be reduced by implementing certain strategies.

The following ethical considerations were taken into account in conducting the study:

- **Informed consent**

It was essential that participants be informed with regards to the purpose of the study, and that clear boundaries of the study were communicated, in order to protect the participants. It was ensured that participants were aware that participation was voluntary. It was essential that participants not be coerced into participating. Participants were further informed that

they could withdraw from the study at any time and had the right to refuse to answer any question which they might not feel comfortable answering. Finally consent was gained to record the interview.

- **Confidentiality**

Anonymity was strongly emphasised to participants. Participants were thus aware that their identities and responses would remain anonymous. Further, participants were assured that the information which they provided would be safeguarded.

- **Debriefing**

The questionnaire was designed with the intention of eliciting minimal distress to the participants. It is the researcher's experience in speaking to gang members that members readily explore the process of engaging in a gang, with minimal emotional response. Participants were however offered the opportunity to debrief after completing the interview. The researcher's experience working within the substance abuse field was utilised in terms of assessing possible cravings experienced by participants after completing the interview. The questionnaire was further structured in way so that the interview ended with questions that had a motivational undertone.

1.5.3.7. Limitations of the study

Limited literature exists with regards to the process by which South African gang members engage in gangs. There is a dearth of knowledge with regards to the specifics of the interaction between gangs and drugs specifically with regards to the temporal order of events.

1.6. PRESENTATION

The research report is presented in six chapters. Chapter one presents an introduction into the study, where the research methodology implemented is delineated. Chapter two describes the social phenomenon and evolution of gangs in South Africa with the use of the systems

theory. Chapter three explores gang involvement with the use of motivational theory and an ecological perspective. Chapter four discusses substance usage, and gangs' interactions with drugs. Chapter five presents the empirical findings of gang members' responses with regard to their engagement in a gang and their perspective of the interaction of gangs and drugs. Finally chapter six includes conclusions and recommendations based on the empirical findings.

CHAPTER 2

THE EVOLUTION AND PHENOMENON OF GANGS

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to offer insight into the construct of gangs. A starting point for this process would be to examine definitions of what constitutes a gang. Based on this framework a context will be established in terms of the genesis of gangs from international and South African perspectives. Through the use of the systems theory the development of a gang can be explained, as a gang is viewed as a system. As such, the gang's existence is as a result of its interaction with other systems. These interactions will be explored with specific events identified as having had a profound effect on the emergence of gangs in South Africa. In order to fully understand a gang, insight is needed into gang culture in terms of its symbolism, activities and values. Illustrations of identified trademarks of gang culture will thus be explored.

2.2. DEFINITIONS OF A GANG

The definition of a gang is a highly contested issue, with limited consensus. It has been proposed that the gangs are constantly evolving and thus difficult to absolutely define. Gangs are thus not a fixed phenomenon as a result of their permeability with regard to external influences. Bearing this in mind, various well established definitions will be explored. Miller (1980:121) offers the following definition:

“A youth gang is a self-formed association of peers bound together by mutual interest, with identifiable leadership, well developed lines of authority, and other organizational features, who act in concert to achieve a specific purpose or purposes, which generally include the conduct of illegal activity and control over a particular territory, facility or type of enterprise.”

This definition of a gang highlights two main features, namely *illegal activity* and *territory*.

The issue of territory is further highlighted by Thrasher (1927:46):

“An interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict. It is characterized by the following types of behaviour: meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict, and planning. The result of this collective behaviour is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, esprit de corps, solidarity, morale, group awareness, and attachment to a local territory.”

Certain characteristics of gangs are identified, namely *behaviour* and *lifestyle*. This definition offers a highly descriptive image of a gang making it easy to visualise and identify distinguishable gang behaviour, such as time spent in milling, planning and plotting. The definition presented further emphasises the concept of *solidarity* within a gang. The construct of solidarity is represented through the projection of the gang as a unit.

Klein (1971:111) describes a gang as generally identified by means of a *group name* as well as *distinctive from the neighbourhood* in which it exists. Finally a gang is a group involved in a number of *delinquent activities*, which have resulted in a negative response from the community or law enforcements agencies.

Goldstein (1991:7) proposes that definitions of a gang, including those presented above, identify six basic elements. These are namely:

- Identifiable leadership
- The tendency to associate continually
- Identification of a specific purpose
- Organised in nature

- Engaged in illegal activities
- Identified with a territory

Spergel (1990:177) suggests that when defining a gang, the definition is influenced by the definers' perceptions, as well as a changing social reality. This is supported by adaptations to definitions presented over time. For instance definitions in the 1950s and 1960s were socially reformist and liberal in nature. Miller (1958:7) described gangs at the time as not especially aggressive or violent, and further assisting in preparing members to fulfil their adult roles

In the 1970s and 1980s; emphasis was placed on criminal activity, with violence entering the realm of distinguishable gang behaviour. Miller (1975:44) began to describe gangs as a threat to public order, emphasising the danger which they present.

From the above discussion it becomes evident that the definition of a gang has some universal commonalities, but the local context cannot be overlooked. From a South African perspective, Kinnes (2000:5) emphasises the need to acknowledge the relationship between gangs and their social environment. This interaction impacts and further forms the gangs' beliefs. The gang is further open to change and thus adapts and metamorphoses in response to shifts within its environment. The individualism of gangs is thus significant. This is evident in each gang's unique and distinctive history and culture

When defining a gang, common elements emerge. The uniqueness of each gang must be acknowledged which results in a difficulty in presenting a singular universally applicable definition of a gang. However the descriptions of a gang gained from the various definitions presented above provide a foundation from which the historical evolution of the gang may now be explored.

2.3. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF GANGS

Gangs are a worldwide phenomenon and can be found in countries ranging from Japan and China, to Mexico, Peru, Kenya, Tanzania and New Zealand. In the United States of America, the emergence of gangs can be traced back to the 1700s, to the infamous Klu Klux Klan which targeted ethnic and religious minority groups. Their notorious violent conduct included brutal murders, arson and bombing. The first notable organised adult criminal group in America was the Irish-American immigrant gang, the Forty Thieves. Similarly orientated gangs then began to emerge with a shared characteristic, that of feelings of frustration due to their social and economic conditions. This common ground developed camaraderie within the groups. These feelings of frustration further grew into feelings of resentment, which in turn began to manifest into criminal conduct (Goldstein, 1991:6).

South African gangs seem to share similarities with international gangs in their stories of existence. It would appear that South Africa's gangs also developed from feelings of frustration, which lead to resentment, and resulting displays of criminal behaviour. The first gangs in South Africa can be traced back to the 1880's with the Ninevites in the Witwatersrand. These gangs formed in response to resentment towards colonial ruling and law which prevailed at the time. (Kinnes, 2008:1)

The emergence of the Globe gang illustrates a similar pattern. The Globe dates back to 1937 where it developed in an attempt to maintain order in an area of Cape Town referred to as District Six. During this time massive urban migration took place in South Africa as a result of the Second World War. A large population influx occurred in District Six and as result pressure over territory for conducting business, or simply territory to exist, resulted in social and economic strife. Youths began to organise themselves into gangs and engage in illegal activities such as robbing people and consuming drugs and alcohol. Shopkeepers' sons would congregate outside the Globe Furnishing Company, opposite the Star Bioscope. Here they would watch the gangs extract tax from the cinema's patrons. The shopkeepers sons' were soon joined by skilled craftsmen, business owners and more affluent residents in forming a group named the Globe. The Globe initially developed in an effort to protect their community

from crime, and received support from the police who began to rely on the Globe to maintain control within the community. The control which the Globe exerted however began to become sinister in nature; it became a political hit force, intimidating communists and activists, and further taking control of District Six by monopolising its smuggling, gambling and illicit activities (Pinnock, 1984:27-29).

The Globe gang ironically began to commit the very same criminal activities which it had been designed to eradicate (MacMaster, 2010:20). This group may have suffered frustration as a result of the disempowering and restrictive Apartheid policies at the time, which may have been a factor at play in their shift into criminal activities. A common theme thus emerges when the evolution of a gang is explored and feelings of exclusion, frustration and resentment appear to be at the foundation of the gang's emergence and evolution.

2.4.GANGS AS A SYSTEM

In order to understand how a gang is formed and maintained, the social systems theory may be employed. Johnson & Yanca (2010:7) explain that the social system theory states that the individual belongs to various larger systems. These systems interact, often placing conflicting demands on one another as well as the individual. According to Ruble and Turner (2000:120), gangs may be viewed as a system, functioning within a socio-cultural context. Ball and Curry (1995:240) further state that; "the gang is a spontaneous, semi-secret, interstitial, integrated but mutable social system". The gang can thus be described as a system, and as such interacts with other systems. These systems will now be identified and explored.

2.4.1. Suprasystems

Ruble and Turner (2000:122) state that systems exist within larger systems, referred to as *suprasystems*. These suprasystems interact in a mutual and reciprocal manner, and in the case of a gang, influence its formation and maintenance. According to Ruble and Turner (2000:122), the suprasystems most likely to be affected and which in turn affect the gang, include the *community* in which the gang exists, and *law enforcement agencies*. These

suprasystems as well as further suprasystems in the form of the *state* and the *media* will now be discussed.

2.4.1.1. The State

When exploring the evolution of gangs in South Africa, it becomes evident that the State and related politics have played a crucial role. For example the first identified gang formed by Nongoloza Mathebula may be seen as a response to ruling colonialist practices at the time. This gang operated as a quasi-military group, in resistance to colonialist labour practices at the time (Steinberg, 2004:6). Colonial rule supported notions of racial superiority through legislation which enforced racial segregation and repression of non-white individuals. Examples of such racial discrimination included the reservation of skilled work for white citizens through the Mines and Works Act (Act no 12 of 1911), and further the Natives Land Act (Act no 27 of 1913) which prevented non-whites from purchasing land (Deegan, 2001:3). Economic hardship and resentment fuelled gangs at the time to rob farmers as well as labourers, as they resisted against taking up legitimate work for colonialist bosses (Steinberg, 2004:6).

Apartheid law and practices have said to play an influential role in the formation of gangsterism within South Africa. In 1950 the Nationalist government passed two legislatures, namely the Group Areas Act (Act no 140 of 1950), and the Population Registration Act (Act no 30 of 1950). The Population Registration Act (Act no 30 of 1950) stated that individuals be classified into racial groups based on certain criteria. Racial groups were then organised spatially, with certain areas restricted for certain races. Enforcing this law meant removing certain individuals from their abodes, based on their race. One of the most notorious areas affected by the implementation of this Act was District Six, an area in Cape Town occupied at the time mainly by persons classified as coloured¹. Residents of this vibrant area were

¹ The term 'coloured' refers to one of the four racial groups identified by the Apartheid regime. The other three races include Africans, Whites and Indians(Jensen,2008:1).

forced to leave their heritage and endure further humiliation as they were instructed with regard to where they were permitted to live (MacMaster, 2010:30-34).

It can be seen that the implementation of the Group Areas Act (Act no 140 of 1950) had devastating effects on human dignity. Subsequently feelings of disempowerment and humiliation have pervaded generations of families. Forced removals have been identified as playing a role in the evolution of gangs in South Africa due to the social disorganisation which it caused. The emotional responses evoked through implementation of the Group Areas Act (Act no 140 of 1950) resulted in distrust, bitterness and animosity for those displaced (Theron, 1977:38). As discussed, gangs are known to develop from feelings of resentment. Forced removals would certainly elicit feelings of extreme resentment.

However literature (Standing, 2005:14; Jensen, 2008:45) has expressed caution with regard to defining the relationship between forced removals and gang genesis, due to the complexity of said relationship. It has been proposed that the development of gangs in these areas does not correlate with the timeline of removals, gangs becoming more prominent many years later. Residents removed from District Six were relocated to an area known as the Cape Flats². This area was also inhabited by individuals who had migrated from rural areas, and thus not been forcibly removed from their homes. In fact, these residents may have viewed the move as advantageous as it resulted in access to services such as formal housing and schooling which they had not previously had. The move may even have been an opportunity for some to increase their social status (Jensen, 2008:45).

The Cape Flats comprised a diverse population in terms of inhabitants' heritage and places of origin. Some residents had migrated in response to changes in the agricultural economy, relocating to urban areas in search of employment opportunities, whilst other residents had been moved under force. The evolution of gangs within South Africa is thus a complex phenomenon and relying on Apartheid laws as an explanation may not be sufficient in terms

² The 'Cape Flats' is a notoriously flat and sandy area on the outskirts of Cape Town city centre. This area is mainly inhabited by individuals classified as Coloured and African (MacMaster, 2010:2).

of developing an accurate account. Gangs are known to emerge during social upheavals when people migrate to the interstitial spaces within cities (Thrasher, 1927). It has thus been suggested that urbanisation as a result of the political and economic culture at the time was the key factor in the genesis of gangs (Kinnes, 2008:2).

The Cape Flats became notorious for its high population of gangs. Residents in this area shared common experiences of social instability, unemployment and marginalisation, despite their diverse experiences. Some residents experienced social change and resentment as a result of being forcibly removed from their homes, whilst other residents experienced unemployment which persuaded them to migrate from rural areas to the Cape Flats. Kinnes (2008:1) states that inequality in distribution of social power as well as limited opportunities for marginalized groups pre-empt gang formation. These residents thus lived in a community where the precursors for gang formation were highly prevalent.

Developing countries in transition are said to experience increased criminality due to the weakened social controls, as well as political uncertainty and social disorganisation. This phenomenon was evident in countries belonging to the former Union of Socialist Soviet Republics such as Russia, Poland, Argentina and East Germany (Kinnes, 2008:1). South Africa's own political climate shows a similar pattern. Gang trends in South Africa showed notable changes in times of transition such as the ending of World War II and with the abolition of apartheid in the 1990s. Standing (2005:1) explains that changes in gang trends occurred with the ending of apartheid in the 1990s due to slackened law enforcement and shifts made from oppressive apartheid systems. Security systems such as the South African Police Service was restructured and renamed. Loosened controls at this time provided opportunities for gangs to strengthen and operate unchecked. During this transition to democracy, South Africa's borders further became porous, leading to an increased influx of criminal activities. Standing (2005:1) describes a "fertile transnational criminal environment" at this time, as international criminal syndicates began to trade within South Africa. These foreign syndicates imparted their influence on local gangs with the result that South African gangs became more powerful and sophisticated.

The role of the state is further evident in the story of the prison Number gangs in South Africa. When there is political instability and social discord, gangs fulfil the role of providing a sense of solidarity as well as a sense of order (Spergel, 1990:171). The prison gangs of South Africa are an example of this phenomenon. They were formed with the original intention of regulating prisons which were notably chaotic at the time. Whilst the disempowered prisoners, living in lawless institutions during apartheid times, joined the Number gangs to fight for their rights, they were also provided with a sense of unity. Prisoners at the time had no rights and were at the mercy of the authorities who were not held accountable for their treatment of prisoners (Steinberg, 2004; Kinnes, 2008:4).

Gangs exist in the interstitial space between systems, at times fulfilling functions when a parasystem is not operating effectively and are known to be active when there is a lack of leadership. Gangs survive on disillusionment, lack of service delivery and maintained levels of inequality and marginalisation, all providing legitimacy for their cause (Standing, 2003:8). There are several ways that a gang can provide support to its members, financial services and recreational facilities being just two (Merten, 2002:1).

As democracy has unfurled in South Africa, its government's strategy in dealing with gangs is egalitarian in nature, and as a result, has given the media material to sensationalise. Court cases where gang members escape sentencing despite clear evidence of their culpability have elevated their status to the extent that they appear untouchable and thus above reproach (Kinnes, 2000:1). Standing (2005:3) states that "...criminal organisations have infiltrated the state and government structures, thus undermining the optimal performance of their economies and the very system of democratic governance."

As government continues to struggle to meet its responsibilities, so its authority is questioned. Social disorganisation and inequality which prevails leaves the door wide open for gangs to make their mark, and provides them with legitimacy for their actions. Standing

(2003:8) refers to government spending and highlights that it only amplifies discrimination, as it may be viewed as being unbalanced by favouring previously disadvantaged groups, of which coloured communities are often excluded in classification. As previously established, coloured communities have the highest prevalence of gangs. Members of these communities were utilised by political parties before and during the introduction of democracy in 1994 in reaching the parties' political agenda. These active participants however were excluded from the processes involved in negotiating and instilling the objectives of democracy. Neither did they reap the anticipated benefits (Standing, 2003:9).

Steinberg (2004) explains that between March and June 1994, at the time of the first democratic elections, violent protests were held in prisons across South Africa leaving 750 prisoners injured and 37 killed. These protests were held in response to an election law stating that sentenced prisoners would not be permitted to vote. Many prisoners were of the view that they had been instrumental in bringing about democracy as they saw themselves as the oldest anti-colonial army. The Number gangs had used the political climate as fuel for their causes, legitimising their fight. They felt it a huge insult now to be excluded and denied the right to have a say in the democracy which they considered they had given their lives for. This election law also symbolised to them that democracy merely meant a shift of power from one regime to another. The process of amnesty caused more contestation as the criteria was viewed as biased towards prisoners aligned with the ruling party, the African National Congress. In addition the release policy was adapted, resulting in changes which made the release process less favourable for prisoners. Prisoners stated that concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation only applied to prisoners who were right-wing extremist, ie right-wing murderers. Members of the Number gangs felt that they had been fighting against Apartheid from within the prisons through their conflict with authority, such as stabbing warders who they felt were unjust. These prisoners believed that they had earned the right to benefit from the process of democracy (Steinberg, 2004:271). The reality however showed that not only did they not benefit, but they were in fact excluded from being involved in the process.

Double marginalisation has been termed for the process whereby people who experienced feelings of marginalisation during apartheid, again felt disconnected and disempowered when democracy arrived. People were left feeling disillusioned and politically impotent (MacMaster, 2010:38). It would appear that government has failed to address these communities' feelings of marginalisation and have in fact fuelled their existing resentment by presenting itself as inadequate and corrupt. As Kemp (2007:278) who has studied gangs around the world observes, "The wider the gap between rich and poor, and the more poverty it has, the worse a country's gang problem will be."

2.4.1.2. Community

Standing (2005:3) states that gang activities have a profound effect on communities and are reported to be responsible for 70% of crime on the Cape Flats. These crimes involve drug usage and sales, which is often the mechanism by which young people are enticed into committing the gangs' crimes. Youth are coerced into selling drugs for the gang, with schools often targeted as a lucrative market for drug sales.

Gangs bring fear by exposing communities to violent gang conflict with rival gangs. Movements of communities are often restricted and lifestyles are governed by anxiety and unease. Community members may for example avoid certain areas known as gang territories and may even be prisoners in their own homes. If communities or businesses practice assertiveness, they stand the risk of being victimised and are faced with the reality of being assassinated (Standing, 2005:3).

According to Jensen (2008:60), communities have been known to develop strategies of coping with gang related violence through the development of a symbolic order. Communities which have identified gang territories have developed strategies to maintain the order. For example they may avoid certain areas and restrict movements to daylight hours. Should a community member be assaulted or robbed whilst still maintaining the developed strategies, order is maintained by that person by viewing himself as a survivor rather than as a

victim. He would then adjust his view of safe areas. A further coping mechanism is to believe the incident as irregular and therefore not likely to be repeated. In this way, communities appear to have evolved in terms of coping mechanisms to deal with the threat which gangs impose. These coping mechanisms may contribute to communities' normalisation of gang violence and resulting complacency.

At times, gangs have affected communities' abilities to access certain parasystems. For example health care facilities have had to be closed for security reasons (Merton, 2002:1) due to intimidation and violence against medical staff. The risks in treating gang members involved in a gang war, with rivals continuing the conflict within the institutions, compromises the safety of the staff and other patients as well as denying community members access to essential services.

However, gangs have been known to provide services such as structure, financial support and leadership skills to the community (Standing, 2003:9). Gangs ironically often provide security to community members and act as negotiators in conflict resolution. They can fulfil the role of providing governance, brokering peace and providing social support to residents. Sometimes gang members are respected by communities and take on a philanthropic role, for example by developing and supporting recreational activities such as soccer teams (Standing, 2003:10). These deeds are clearly not a purely selfless act but may be an astute strategic move. Beneficiaries are left indebted and gangs buy the power to have their activities overlooked or even supported. Community members may protect gang members, say by keeping illegal items such as drugs and weapons for them, or by not revealing their unlawful actions. Often these communities may be viewed as lacking in legitimate role models of success. Gang members often fill these roles and have been described as having a celebrity status (Standing, 2003:12). In addition, these philanthropic acts may be viewed beyond the gang's ability to merely gain power and linked to its capability to earn gang members' status.

The respect which gangs may hold is earned by intimidation, or through identification of their ability to provide social support. They are recognised at times to be even more effective than law enforcement in terms of resolving crimes and restoring misappropriated items (Standing, 2003:12). This gives a gang even more status and power. Klein (1995:30) suggests that the community plays a crucial role in the maintenance of gangs, as it functions as a looking glass for them, reflecting their behaviour and influence. The interaction between a gang and the community in which it operates may motivate members to persist, as members are faced with their strength and vigour as well as elevated status.

2.4.1.3. Law enforcement agencies and institutions

Law enforcement agencies are a key suprasystem in the evolution and maintenance of gangs. Standing (2003:5) refers to the enigmatic relationship between gangs and the police force which is illustrated by numerous cases of corruption within the police force. This covert relationship is traced back to the period of apartheid, when gangs were reportedly utilised in the civil war against political activists. Gangs were used to plant bombs as well as to intimidate and assassinate anti-state aligned individuals. Ammunition was provided to gangs to conduct the war, and the gangs in return gained protection from prosecution, thus acquiring freedom and monopoly to conduct illegal trade. This relationship prevails, with reports of police officials not only being aware of gangs' illegal activities but also profiting from it. Police officers have been known to establish close relationships with gang members, the alliance beneficial for both parties. Police officials often can benefit from gangs' illegal activities in terms of bribes. The police are provided with protection in a hostile environment in which they often feel inadequate and powerless (Standing, 2003:5).

Numerous cases exist where gangs have succeeded in forcing institutions such as libraries, schools and clinics to close. These incidents have shown law enforcement agencies as impotent in their ability to take control of the situation (Standing, 2005:3). In this way, gangs have established that they hold authority.

Gangs have further expanded through their ability to overrule the justice system which has been criticised as being weak (Kinnes, 2002:3). Gang members have been known to avoid prosecution through various means, such as eliminating witnesses to prevent them from testifying (Standing, 2005:3). It would appear that gangs are very adept at manoeuvring through the justice system with much skill and ease.

2.4.1.4. Media

Literature describes the role which media has played in the past, and continues to play, in the evolution of gangs (Steinberg, 2004; Standing, 2005:14). Since the 1920s, gangs and the cinema have had a relationship, with gangsters taking inspiration from film and developing names based on movies, and even using lines from movies whilst entering into battles. It had been stated that cinema themes during the 1960s and 1970s were often about gangsterism. Gangsterism in turn became highly focused around films. There were many independent cinemas on the Cape Flats, and gangs would regularly frequent the movies and even began to monopolise cinemas, making them their sole turf and controlling their functioning. One of the larger cinema owners fostered a relationship with gangsters as they were his target audience. Gangs would come to watch the violent movies and were free to smoke marijuana. The cinema owner would have to carefully plan the logistics when a new movie such as *The Godfather* was released; he would have to accommodate all gangs and not give preferential treatment to any specific gang. After concern was raised about the effect of such violent films, the cinema owner began to show films about gangsters that contained a moral message. Gang members reportedly watched the movie but extracted their own distorted interpretation of the message and disregarded any attempts to be sidetracked by the moralistic message (Steinberg, 2004).

Gangs would use the established territory of cinemas to create conflict, antagonising rival gangs by going to their cinema. They would watch the movie and feeling inspired and invincible, they would leave with the weapons which they had brought along, ready to attack the gang whose territory they had invaded (Steinberg, 2004).

In conclusion, gangs may be viewed as a system, and as such are embedded in and interact with various suprasystems. Jankowski (1991:33) states that in order for a gang to survive, it must establish links with certain institutions in order to secure its position. Links need to be made with government in order to secure political advantages, the criminal justice system to establish the ability to conduct illegal activities, and finally the media which may be used strategically in promoting and enhancing the gangs' status. Due to the nature of the relationship, gangs have greatly affected the suprasystems with which they are in contact. It would appear that the consequences of gang behaviour are often experienced by the suprasystems, which may account for the negative connotation often carried by gangs.

Social systems theory has been applied to describe the construct of a gang in terms of formation and interaction with various systems. The specific characteristics of a gang will now be explored.

2.5. CHARACTERISTICS OF GANGS

The construct of a gang has various definable characteristics. The first characteristic which will now be explored is the various gang typologies. A gang further has its own distinguishable culture. This culture will now be discussed in terms of language, rituals, beliefs and activities.

2.5.1. Typology

Gang typology involves a complex and varied array of classifications. Gangs may thus be cohesive, loosely knitted, small, large, bureaucratic, or specialised in nature (Jankowski, 1991; Klein, 1995; Ruble & Turner, 2000). It is thus impossible to obtain consensus as to a universal classification of gang structure. Kinnes (2008:1) states that literature pertaining to South African gang typologies appears to be losing its relevance, as gangs are constantly evolving. Activities in which gangs are engaged have further challenged existing typologies (Van Wyk, 2001:136). Therefore the four broad distinctions of gang types will be explored, namely prison gangs, street gangs, the mafia and syndicate gangs.

2.5.1.1. Prison gangs

South African prison gangs' origins can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th- century in response to feelings of resentment due to the migrant labour system at the time. A man named Po assembled a gang of thieves referred to as the Ninevites. The leaders of this gang were the infamous Nongoloza and Kilikijan who later became the respective forefathers of the 28 and 27 prison Number gangs (Steinberg, 2004:8; Jensen, 2008:83).

The 28s function was to fight for better conditions in prison, whilst the 27s were concerned with keeping gang lore and righting wrongs through punishment and revenge. The 26s gang was later introduced with its function being the gathering and extracting of resources through trickery and robbery, which would then be distributed amongst the three Number gangs (Steinberg, 2004; Jensen, 2008). In the early years of the prison gangs' existence, the Number was reported as being highly effective in maintaining order and discipline within the prisons through a highly organised hierarchy and structure. The structure of the gang ironically reflects colonial military configurations. For example prison gangs have positions such as generals and soldiers as well as roles such as a magistrate, assigned for enforcing gang law (Jensen, 2008:83; Kinnes, 2008:4).

Prison gangs provided members with a means to exert their masculinity in the face of oppression and institutional humiliation. They afforded the ability to exercise some form of control in a situation designed to create powerlessness. This is enacted through exhibitions of stoicism and restraint as well as solidarity. For example initiation into the gang called for perpetuating violence, where new recruits are called to assault another prisoner or warder and then to show no signs of pain when the punishment is inflicted (Steinberg, 2004).

Prison gangs are said to be preoccupied with the construct of sexuality which dates back to the story of their inception. Myths about Nongoloza and Kilikijan describe a dispute over sexual activity between Nongoloza and a fellow male gang member, Magubane (Jensen,

2008:86). Details of myths are however often dependent on the storyteller's gang affiliation. Prison gang members' accounts of their sexual activities is further obscure and shrouded in ambiguity with emphasis placed on defining whilst, at the same time, concealing the boundaries of sexual identity (Jensen, 2008; Steinberg, 2004).

2.5.1.2. Street gangs

Street gangs are known for their involvement in extortion of protection money, developing territories and conducting illegal activities. The ultimate goal of the street gang is to seek control over the economic and social activities within their territory. This is often achieved through investments in legitimate businesses such as garages, nightclubs and shops, which serve the purpose of laundering money (Standing, 2003:2; Kinnes, 2008:3). With the abolition of apartheid in the 1990s, South Africa became more globalised. The country was identified by international syndicates as an emerging market and there was a dramatic increase in drug availability. Drug usage shifted to harder drugs such as cocaine and heroin and street gangs became more organised and prosperous (Van Wyk, 2001:53; Kinnes, 2008:3). Street gangs found drug consumption increasing and felt the pressure to make allegiances and incorporate new markets. Gangs responded to international competition by expanding their turf, in order to compete with the likes of Russian and Nigerian criminal syndicates (Kinnes, 2000:5). Operations became more sophisticated and foreign business practices were adopted. Gang activities became more brutal (Standing, 2003:1).

Street gangs are known to control the illicit economy making them favourable to prison gangs. In the late 1980s prison culture began to appear on the streets, as street gangs began to incorporate rituals and structure into their functioning. The Number was further incorporated into the nomenclature, norms and culture of street gangs. For example street gangs began to extort protection money from non-gang members, similar to the way in which the Number treated non-gang members within prisons (Steinberg, 2004:54). Number gangs began to form alliances with certain street gangs. Drug capitalism was managing to erode ancient Number traditions. Initiation rituals became compromised as consensus was made for high ranking

street gang leaders. Order and discipline became less rigid, disintegrating and contaminating the very foundations of the Number (Standing, 2003:3; Steinberg, 2004:53).

2.5.1.3. The mafia

Pinnock (1984:9) describes the mafia as a highly organised family based operation with roots in large extended family units which were involved in informal activities. These families were described as powerful due to their social connections and influence. The mafia are involved in extortion, and large scale illegal activities. They are further described as the wholesalers of drugs. Kinnes (2008:3) supports this view, stating that the supply of drugs is the central activity of the mafia. They have however expanded their activities into the transportation business and entertainment industry. The mafia is a close knit gang with most members having some familial involvement in the gang (Kinnes, 2008:9).

2.5.1.4. Syndicates

Kinnes (2008:9) describes syndicates as the most effective type of gang in terms of their ability to infiltrate and corrupt officials as well as community members. These gangs are able to provide their members with proceeds of the profits gained from crime and thus are able to easily attract members. Syndicates are involved in fraud, extortion, robberies, human trafficking, assassinations, drug distribution, theft and trade of counterfeit goods. This type of gang is characterised by a small close knit operation with contacts to a large extended network (Kinnes, 2008:4).

2.5.2.Culture

Culture is the means by which humans differentiate themselves. It is a fluid concept and constantly evolving, discarding and incorporating element (Pitts, 2008:85). Gangs are viewed as “separate from and antagonistic to the rest of the community” (Standing, 2003:2).

Thrasher (1927:37) states that gangs are “the spontaneous effort of boys to create a society for themselves, where none adequate to their need exists”. This gang culture is defined through dress, language, rituals, and territory. Gangs use clothes, dress style and behaviour to show their refusal of mainstream culture which they believe to have marginalised them (Jensen, 2008:95-97).

2.5.2.1. Language and lifestyle

South African gangs have established a distinctive language called *sabela*. This language combines English, Zulu and Afrikaans in a unique manner such that words hold different meanings. Use of this language results in heightened excitement and fulfils the purpose of emphasising solidarity between members. It fosters feelings of elitism as gang members have their own private communication style (Van Wyk, 2001:114). It further provides secrecy, allowing them to plan activities and withhold information from authorities and outsiders (Smit, 1985:68).

Pinnock (1997:9) describes the close connection between South African gangs and American culture, as American music, media and lifestyles are incorporated into gang culture in South Africa. A South African gang called the Americans has based itself on the American government, incorporating symbols of America, including the American flag as the marker of its territory. This gang has a cabinet and president and further refers to its headquarters as the White House. Money is counted in dollars and iconic symbols such as the Statue of Liberty are incorporated into the gang's symbols and rituals. American culture is viewed as desirable as it often presents displays of excessive wealth and has celebrities and musical personalities who appear indestructible and controlled (Standing, 2003:12). American culture is one which some South African youth seem to want to emulate.

2.5.2.2. Symbols and rituals

Jensen (2008:95) with regards to rituals states that their “...mythological strength lies in the fact that they are known and unknown at the same time”. Rituals provide much fascination

and intrigue, giving prestige to those with knowledge or even better, personal experience of them. Much time is spent discussing prison and all it entails, developing institutions designed to discourage deviant behaviour into mythical places. Knowledge about them provides a gang member the opportunity of increasing his status. Prisons thus become alluring rather than terrifying deterrents. Youth speak about prison as a real possibility and prepare themselves by gaining as much knowledge as possible (Jensen, 2008:83). Proficiency in the workings of prison life is often revered, with the ability to recount myths and converse in the correct manner acting as a kind of insurance policy (Standing, 2005:23).

Prison gangs are steeped in symbolism. The stories of the inception of the Number gangs are extremely powerful and survival in prison can be achieved through the ability to recount the history of the Number, in the language of the gang. A triple murder case which occurred in Nieuwoudtville in 1996 illustrates the enmeshment of symbolism within the Number. Each step involved in this incident demonstrated a clear re-enactment of the Number's initial formation. For example the order to kill was given in the words "Up bayonet!" The reference to a bayonet refers to the weapon used by Nongoloza and Kilikijan to kill a white farmer, in the first most sacred crime committed by the 27s. This crime committed in Nieuwoudtville in 1996, many years after the inception of the Number, illustrated the centrality of gang folk lore and its relevance for members of the Number. The man responsible for masterminding this crime had provided himself with lifelong protection and fame within prison through his ability to comprehend the power of stories (Steinberg, 2004:73-81).

Gang narratives often contain mythological symbols. For example each Number has its own imaginary uniform. When a member is initiated he is told how the uniform which he is being given looks like. The details are extremely intricate with even the buttoning of the jacket being symbolic. For example the jacket of a 28 has the first button open to symbolise belonging to the Number day and night, and the second button is closed, symbolising discipline. The initiation process is further full of symbolism with the final approval shown by the gangs' magistrate through the usage of his four imaginary stamps, with each colour representative of a particular rank. (Steinberg, 2004:31)

Pinnock (1984:103) refers to the distortion between reality and fantasy. Gang members may enact fantasies for example by picturing themselves as an actor in an action movie, losing sight of reality and consequences. Gang members get swept up in gang warfare, losing perspective of reality and resulting in injury and death. As in the movies, death holds little meaning, and is merely a casualty of the plot.

Interactions with gang members will often involve gang members showing their stab wounds or battle scars (Jensen, 2008:90). These are worn as badges of honour representing their involvement in dangerous battles and are regarded as symbols of their invincibility and strength. These battles are further relived and retold at nausea, with defeat and failures interestingly excluded from the accounts (Pinnock, 1984:103).

Pinnock (1984:102) refers to drug usage as a gang ritual, whereby set processes are followed in both preparing the drugs and in terms of how the drug is consumed. For example a person with the highest authority may have the honour of smoking first. Gang members thus get together through the ritual of drug consumption. This view is supported by Van Wyk (2001:133) where he states that availability of drugs and alcohol unites gang members. Drugs and alcohol further fuel gang activities by facilitating the accomplishment of goals, for example providing gang member with the courage to engage in violent acts.

2.5.2.3. Beliefs and values

Gang members have been described as immoral to society's values but extremely moral towards their gang and its members, valuing and respecting them and all that the gang stands for. Gang members further appear to share the view that the world is against them, resulting in feelings of persecution and isolation. Gang members thus feel compelled to defend and fend for themselves and further be self reliant (Kinnes, 2003:38; Standing, 2005:12). Standing (2005:12) refers to gang culture as a "culture of extreme selfishness" as gangs are described as showing disregard for society's values and wellbeing. Jankowski (1991:29)

describes a gang as “organized defiant individualism”, illustrating the narcissistic nature of gangs through their limited insight or regard for others, as they place the gangs’ needs first. Standing (2003:12) identifies consumerism as central to gang members’ values, as obtaining wealth and status is a key motivational force. Gang culture may be described as hedonistic as it promotes acting on impulses with limited regard for consequences (Standing, 2003:12).

Not *et al* (1990:5) states that the gangs’ experiences of physical and emotional injury through their involvement in conflict and violence appear to have affected the value which gang members place on human life. Murder and harm is often inflicted with ease and limited regret. Gang members find means to justify taking human life, feeling entitled to seek revenge from those whom they believe to have wronged them.

Jensen (2008:92-93) refers to the role of masculinity in gang culture. Masculinity is demonstrated by an individual who is resourceful, powerful and respected. Marginalised gang members may seek such an identity. A “crisis of masculinity” could occur when men struggle to exert their masculinity by providing and protecting their family due to social, political and economic trends. This struggle is exacerbated in communities where poverty is present and employment opportunities are scarce. Men in these communities may experience a lack of social capital. They may be uneducated and lacking in ability for upward mobility. The scenario is worsened by the presence of strong female figures who are often the breadwinners of the household. This situation results in feelings of emasculation for many men. In order to restore masculinity, women need to fulfil the role of a means to assert masculinity. They are thus placed in a position of inferiority and exist to fill a sexual function. Women have been described as ‘*poison*’ as they are often a source of conflict with gang members fighting over ownership of women. By reducing women’s status and inflicting sexual violence, gang members are able to elevate their masculinity.

Pinnock (1997:9) states that the gangs’ core belief is the need for discipline and respect. This respect however, is reserved for fellow gang members. Gang members respect protocol and

routines, with unsanctioned behaviour being severely punished. They take pride in the arduous and onerous nature of gang life. Slogans such as ‘*who will bury my dead body*’ and ‘*it’s easy to die, but it is difficult to stay alive*’ are adopted and often tattooed onto their bodies, indicating that they view themselves as martyrs of their fate, albeit self inflicted.

Cohesion may be described as the attraction which members experience towards fellow members and to the gang as a unit, and may be the motivational force behind their willingness to engage in the gangs’ activities and subsequent goal obtainment (Goldstein, 1991:81). Therefore group cohesion is at the core of gang functioning. Gang members will risk their life to defend their gangs’ values and honour. Cohesion within gangs is formidable and impenetrable. Spergel (1990:227) explains that formidable and impenetrable group cohesion may develop through shared experiences of committing criminal acts and near death experiences. Gang members thus give up their individual identity and values and replace these with the gangs’ values and norms, placing the gangs’ best interests as central to their functioning.

2.5.2.4. Activities

From their inception, gangs have been extracting protection money from businesses and individuals. Pinnock (1984:10) states that:

“..gangsters have a vested interest in private property, as pirates have a vested interest in legitimate commerce, being parasitic upon it.”

The activities of gangs include expropriation of property by manipulation or violence, drug dealing and involvement in prostitution. (Standing, 2005; Kinnes, 2008; MacMaster, 2010). In describing gang activities, Pinnock (1997:10) states that “the battle field is a pivotal space in gang life”. The battle field is a symbolic space within a gang’s community where battles are fought over ownership of turf, women, markets and further ownership of the community.

Jensen (2008:79) in describing the concept of territory within gangs explains that gangs have been known to be formed from the commonality of living spaces in highly populated areas where conflict exists over space and privacy. In this situation individuals may find themselves with two choices. The first is stay inside their overpopulated home where they share their living space with many others, or to enter the public shared area where one is prey to the scrutiny of neighbours who live in close proximity. Privacy is thus hard to find and individuals may find themselves struggling to find a place to claim as their own or simply to use for recreational activities such as playing soccer. Groups with a shared interest then begin to form and further begin to protect their interests, gradually becoming a gang (Jensen 2008:79). This process is illustrated by one of the most notorious street gangs, the Mongrels. This gang originally occupied itself with arranging soccer teams. These activities however became tainted with violence and greed for money and further evolved into the formation of a prominent and destructive street gang (Pinnock, 1984:11). The Globe gang as previously discussed is a further example of a group which originated to establish territory for legitimate business to operate and progressed into a gang involved in illegal activities.

Pinnock (1997:9) explains that gang members have been known to be marginalised by society, and as a result they may feel judged. Territories offer a space where they feel they are free from stigmatization. The territory offers a secure area for members in constant fear of attack from rival gangs. Having access and control of an area gives gang members a sense of privilege. The feeling of control is increased by resisting the police and the community, hereby asserting their rights to ownership of their territories. Through the establishment of territory, gangs manage to establish a sense of belonging and further dispel feelings of marginalisation.

Jensen (2008:75) suggests that gang activities appear to have been considerably influenced by the introduction of guns in the 1990s as the use of knives, pangas and axes were replaced with guns. This shift in weaponry resulted in elevated violent behaviour such as drive-by shootings and execution style killing. Disputes began to end in fatality whereas they may

have previously ended with injury. This change may be explained by the feelings of immortality and confidence which possession of a gun afforded gang members. The preoccupation with guns may be due partly to apartheid policy, where possession of firearms was restricted for certain races (Jensen 2008:95).

Van Wyk (2001:130) describes conflict and violence as an integral part of gang culture and identity which is often purposefully evoked by gang members. Violence may result from competition over drug markets, women and territory and may further be escalated by the consumption of drugs and alcohol. Conflict serves the purpose of increasing members' esteem and status, particularly when defending the gangs' honour. The gang-behaviour paradigm presented in Figure 2.1 illustrates the relationship between gang status and activities (Spergel, 1990:226).

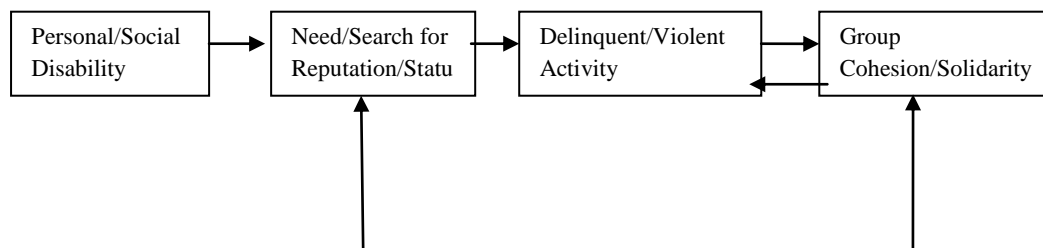


Figure 2.1. Gang behaviour paradigm

Figure 2.1 explains that status is achieved through participation in delinquent or violent activities. These activities further result in group cohesion. The degree of severity of the activity may be directly correlated to increase in status. Thus the more violent or delinquent the act, the higher the recognition and more elevated the status of the gang member. These acts increase the cohesion of the group, as it reflects positively on the group's status, as well as illustrating the deviance which labels the group as different. It however raises the bar in terms of status, compelling the individual members and the gang as a collective to surpass the

newly established standard. Gangs are thus preoccupied with the concept of status. As status is fluid in nature, maintaining it is a constant battle for a gang member. Inclusion in a gang can increase an individual's status as it signifies power, access to illegal opportunities and further represents importance. Gang members may further increase their status through the process of being arrested and incarcerated. As a result incarceration may be viewed by some as means of elevating status (Spergel, 1990:226; Jensen, 2008:89).

The precarious hierarchy of gangs results in constant competition for reputation and status. A gang member's position within the gang depends upon constant confirmation and therefore his ranking is continually evaluated and assessed. The precarious relationship is even more disturbing for gangs existing in unstable neighbourhoods and institutions such as prisons. The Number gangs exhibit fluidity in status, as their structure identifies limited positions for certain ranks. For example should a member who previously held the position of a judge re-enter prison and the role of the judge be already filled, he would become superfluous (Steinberg, 2004).

A further activity pursued by gangs is the process of recruiting new members. This process may be selective and is conducted in order to expand the gangs' operations and increase their control. Vulnerable youth are often targeted and enticed through provision of free drugs and promises of wealth (Standing, 2003:2).

Number gangs within prison have distinctive activities which are conducted through perpetuating well established rituals. For example weekdays in prison are spent taking complaints from members, distributing rations, as well as teaching the traditions of the gang. Saturdays are termed as the year of the wrongs, where the judicial structure meets to deal with offences. Cases are heard and sentences are given after due process is followed. Sundays are identified as the year of the rights. On this day victories are celebrated, promotions are awarded and new members are recruited (Steinberg, 2004:154-155).

In conclusion gang culture is a definable concept illustrated through covert characteristics. Gangs have a distinctive language and lifestyle which distinguish the gang as separate from mainstream culture. Symbols and rituals are further integral to gang culture, as they unify the gang by their secretive and mythical nature. Gangs hold certain beliefs and values which may be contrary to those of society in general. Conflict and violence were identified as behavioural norms, further illustrated through gang activities. Gang activities were finally explored and recognised for their ability in meeting needs, such as in providing status for members and group cohesion for the gang.

2.6. CONCLUSION

It has been established that no single definition of a gang exists. Each gang is unique, as it is influenced by its context and environment. Structures, activities and beliefs may differ, making it difficult to establish an absolute all encompassing definition and view of gangs. The evolution of gangs has shown that gangs act as a vehicle for obtaining social meaning and status. They further form and exist through their interaction with other systems. South Africa's political climate has provided a fertile breeding for gang genesis, as gangs develop when marginalisation and exclusion is present. Gangs afford members the capacity to exercise their resentment and frustration when legitimate avenues are nonexistent. Gang members find themselves belonging to a culture with deeply ingrained rituals and activities, fulfilling the need for demonstrating their masculinity as well as meeting the desire for status, inclusion and cohesion.

Based on this insight into the construct and evolution of a gang, the next chapter will begin to explore on an individual level the process by which a member engages in a gang.

CHAPTER 3

AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF ENGAGEMENT IN A GANG

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter described the phenomenon and evolution of gangs, providing a theoretical base of the concept and characteristics of a gang. The development of a gang was further explored in terms of the systems theory, where various systems which influence the genesis and evolution of a gang were discussed. Based on this foundation, the focus of this chapter will be on the individual gang member in order to achieve the objective of understanding the process of engaging in a gang.

In order to gain insight into the process of engaging in a gang, theory must be utilised. Using the ecological perspective, it is understood that human development is achieved through opportunities and constraints provided through the environment in which the individual finds himself and presents a context for exploring the various systems which impact on said development. The decision to engage in a gang can then be understood through exploring risk factors contained within the environment, which in turn affect the individual's motivation. Before examining the environment, one must however begin with the individual. Motivation theory and insight into the stages of development may assist in explaining the individual's specific motivation to become a gang member. Various theories will be utilised to identify and explain the processes where by an individual chooses to engage in a gang.

3.2. ENGAGING IN A GANG FROM A ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

When analysing human development, the ecological perspective may be utilised. The ecological perspective provides a context, as it proposes that human development occurs within an ecological system.

Bronfenbrenner (1994:38) states that:

“...human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the person, objects, and symbols in its immediate environment.”

Ecology refers to the interdependent and interlinked relationship between the individual's biological and social environment. The individual interacts with various systems within these environments (Muuss, 2006:300). The ecological perspective also proposes a holistic framework for identifying the variety of factors involved in human development.

The environment is viewed as a composition of various subsystems nestled within each other. These interact with one another and include the microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems and macrosystems. Figure 3.1 illustrates the positioning of the various systems.

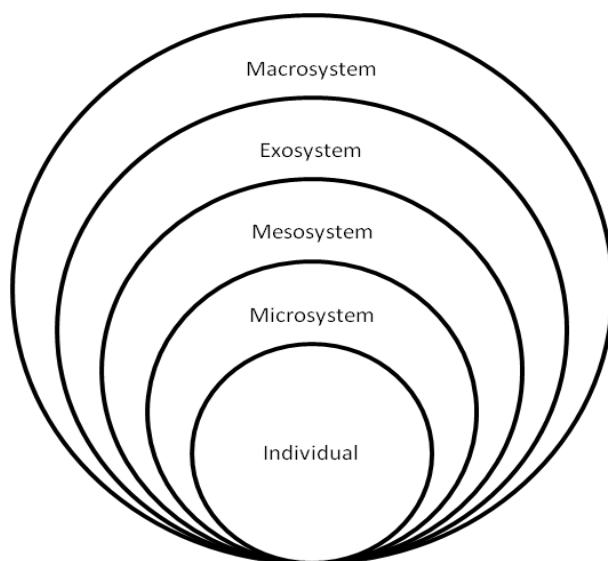


Figure 3.1. Systems of the ecological perspective

Figure 3.1 illustrates that the individual is nestled within various systems. It becomes evident that the individual is influenced by various systems. The ecological perspective is concerned with the fit between the individual and various systems. The individual and his environment have needs which, if met in a mutually beneficial manner, result in congruency. If an imbalance occurs between the individual and the environment, these needs will not be met (Johnson & Yanca, 2010:8). In the case of the process of engaging in a gang the ecological perspective may be utilised. The individual may choose to engage in or avoid joining a gang based on the system's ability to meet his needs. The various systems provide risk and protective factors which influence his decision to engage in a gang. An increased risk of engaging in a gang may thus occur should a system fail to meet the individual's needs (Hill, 2002:134).

The various systems identified in Figure 3.1 will be discussed in detail, with particular reference to their role in the individual's choice to engage in a gang. In order to begin examining the process of engaging in a gang, one must begin with the individual.

3.2.1.The Individual

As identified by the ecological perspective, the individual is a core system, embedded within various systems. In order to understand the process of engaging in a gang it is essential to begin with the individual as a system, identifying intrinsic risk and protective mechanisms as well as motivational factors. To assist in this process Maslow's' (1987) motivational theory may be utilised, as well as Erikson's' (1968) stages of human development.

3.2.1.1. Motivation theory

The motivation theory states that human beings have distinctive needs, which exist in a hierarchy. Once the basic need is filled, a higher need is prioritised (Maslow, 1987:15). Figure 3.2 illustrates the hierarchy of needs.

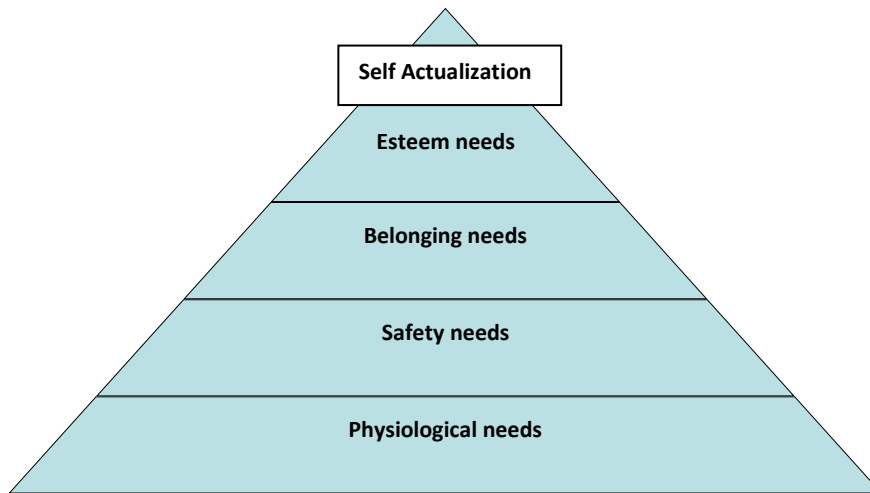


Figure 3.2. The hierarchy of needs

The various needs identified in Figure 3.2 motivate the individual's behaviour. This premise can thus be used to explore the process by which an individual is motivated to engage in a gang. The various identified needs in relation to the process of engaging in a gang will now be discussed.

(i)Physiological needs

Physiological needs refer to the human body's need to maintain homeostasis. In order to survive the body needs to control substances such as sugar, protein, fat, salt and calcium. Equally important is maintaining oxygen content as well as a relatively constant body temperature. These are a few of the basic physiological needs which must be met to ensure survival. Physiological needs are the most primal of needs, and the individual will be motivated purely to meet them, with little regard for higher order needs should there be a dearth in meeting these primal needs (Maslow, 1987:15).

Individuals have been known to be motivated by the physiological need for drugs which have the capacity to create physical dependency. Tolerance can develop, and withdrawals will be experienced should the need for drugs not be met. Gangs are known for being primary dealers as well as consumers of drugs (Legget, 2002:27). Ward (2006:27) states that individuals are motivated to join a gang in order to gain access to drugs in order to deal with physiological cravings (Ward, 2006:27).

By meeting basic needs such as offering food, shelter and money gangs entice individuals to engage in gang activities, (Legget, 2002:27). Philanthropic acts by gangs further trap individuals in engaging in a gang, as they are left indebted and must repay through agreeing to do errands such as transporting drugs and weapons (Standing, 2003:11).

(ii) Safety needs

The next need in the hierarchy is the need for *safety*. These needs are concerned with stability, security, protection and order. Safety needs will emerge when physiological needs are relatively fulfilled. The need for safety and protection becomes the primary focus as the individual's behaviour is motivated for his need for security. It may be important to state that the needs identified in the hierarchy of needs are subjective in nature. The individual may thus experience feelings of insecurity which could be founded, or which may be a distortion. When safety needs are motivating behaviour, the individual may respond as one would in a state of emergency, or in expectation of impending catastrophe (Maslow, 1987:19).

Much literature (Miller, 2001; Padilla, 1992; Vigil, 1988) exists with regard to an individual's motivation to engage in gangs in order to benefit from their protective qualities). Gang members are however at higher risk for violent victimization as engagement in a gang results in vulnerability, as conflict is entrenched within gang culture (Melde *et al*, 2009:566). It is suggested that gangs provide emotional protection rather than physical protection - they may provide security by decreasing the fear of victimization rather than eliminating the

victimization itself. Therefore the individual feels empowered and in control due to his inclusion in a gang (Melde *et al*, 2009:588).

In addition, security may encompass less tangible elements such as financial security. Money has been identified as a strong motivating factor for joining a gang, as the individual seeks financial stability. Gang involvement is viewed as a means to achieving security and further improving financial well being (Jankowski, 1991:40).

(iii) Belonging needs

Should the physiological and safety needs be met, the need for *belongingness* emerges. This need is preoccupied with desire and acquisition of love and affection. The individual thus feels the need to be accepted, and becomes preoccupied with feelings of alienation and loneliness should the need not be met. Subjective experiences of rejection and ostracism may prevail if the need for belonging is not met. It is therefore necessary for an individual to find a position within systems in order to experience feelings of intimacy (Maslow, 1987:20). Social attachment provides a structure by which the individual is able to evaluate his behaviour, and set his norms (Van Leeuwen, 2006:189). Should there be weakened social attachment the individual may be at risk of developing norms and standards of behaviour deviant to desired mainstream values.

A risk factor for engaging in a gang is feelings of alienation (Ferguson & Wormith, 2005:5). Gangs may develop and endure because of an individual's motivation to fulfil needs of togetherness through a shared purpose of fighting against a real or mythical enemy. An external threat may even be generated in order to provide a sense of unity (Maslow, 1987:20). Vignoles *et al* (2006:310) states that when belonging is threatened, the individual may respond by joining a more inclusive group. A gang is a good example of such a group, as it is extremely inclusive and provokes a strong sense of belonging through its secretive rituals and practices.

(iv) Esteem need

The next need in the hierarchy is the *esteem need*. The individual is motivated to achieve a high evaluation of himself. This is manifested in the desire for mastery, achievements and strength. The esteem need further motivates the individual to seek external approval, status and prestige. It is important therefore that others recognise the value of the individual (Maslow, 1987:21).

Ward (2006) conducted a study with South African youth in contact with gangs, in order to explore why individuals join gangs. It was reported that individuals were motivated by the access to guns, money and material goods, such as branded clothes which gangs provided. Women are reported to be attracted to gang members, due to gang members' perceived wealth as well as the protection which they afford. Male gang members were further said to be drawn to gangs by the potential for attracting and attaining women which association with a gang provides (Ward, 2006:26). Possession of commodities such as money, guns, material goods and women result in prestige and status, thus fulfilling the esteem need. Gang members are further revered and respected by others as they are recognised for their strength and power (Ward, 2006:25). Gang association thus results in external affirmation, fulfilling the individual's esteem needs.

A negative self concept has been directly linked as a risk factor for engaging in a gang. Individuals with a low self esteem may thus require external affirmation, afforded by material goods and peer groups achieved through belonging to a gang. These individuals will be motivated to engage in activities which increase their self image. Due to feelings of inadequacy in proving their worth in legitimate means, deviant behaviour may be the most attractive option (Ferguson & Wormith, 2005:31).

(v) Self actualization need

The final need is the need for *self actualization*. This refers to the need for purpose and self fulfilment. The individual is preoccupied with fulfilling his purpose in order to find meaning. This need is highly individualised and varies from person to person. The need for self

actualization may be pursued if limited satisfaction of fulfilment of other needs such as physiological, safety, belonging and esteem needs has been experienced (Maslow, 1987:22). Individuals may find a sense of meaning through engaging in a gang as they may feel a sense of purpose, such as focusing on accumulating power and status, plotting to seek revenge, or attempting to elude the justice system.

Maslow (1987:22) emphasises that motivational theory has exceptions to the hierarchy of needs. The needs may not occur in a fixed order with individuals prioritising certain needs above others, for example prioritising self esteem over belonging. Personality traits also influence the hierarchy of needs. For example a psychopathic personality may have lost the need for love, due to the lack of fulfilment of this need during early development. For the sake of this study psychopathology will not be discussed in detail. It has however been proposed that between 50% to 80% of offenders have been diagnosed with DSM-IV antisocial personality disorder, with the rate of psychopathic personality disorders estimated at 15% to 30% (Hill, 2002:145). These personality disorders have a profound effect on individual motivation and on the decision to join a gang.

It is suggested that some individuals may experience lowered aspirations, particularly if they have experienced chronic impoverished fulfilment of needs. An individual may live in a family or society characterised by surviving on a minimal income, limited social mobility, and lowered priority of self actualisation in the form of education or work achievements. In this instance the individual may become socialised into stagnation. This individual may experience satisfaction or just limited motivation for progression and development. The affect of culture on motivation cannot be overlooked (Maslow, 1987:26).

3.2.1.2. Stages of development

Adolescence is the common stage at which individuals choose to engage in a gang. This stage of development has specific needs identified by Erikson (1968) in stages of human development. This stage of development is when relationships are renegotiated and autonomy

is sorted out. The individual experiences an identity shift as he tries to consolidate his various roles. The shift results in the individual beginning to question identity and roles, resisting and rebelling against his family's social status. Adolescents at this stage become determined to avoid their parents' reality of low paying jobs, and limited opportunities for advancement. They begin to distance themselves from their families' reality, and look to gangs as providing an escape and a possible means for social mobility.

Adolescence is marked by risk taking behaviour, as individuals explore their roles and identity, with the purpose of proving their worth as adults. Pinnock (1997) proposes that cultures have historically developed initiation rites, where adolescents are afforded opportunities to demonstrate their rite of passage into adulthood. Examples include barmitzvahs, African initiation ceremonies and Christian confirmation ceremonies. Humans are further proposed as placing importance on rituals, as they provide continuity and a sense of belonging and meaning. These ceremonies represent separation from the individual's identity as a child, and embracing the new role of an adult. Pinnock (1997:28) suggests that the gang provides a means to a rite of passage through the gang's initiation process and related rituals and symbols. The gang member undergoes an initiation process, thus marking their separation from mainstream culture. From here on a clear distinction is made between gang members and non-gang members and the individual progresses into the new role of a gang member. A new identity is thus formed (Pinnock, 1997:28-55).

The adolescent is further faced with changes, such as a transition from primary to high school. Apart from social changes, the adolescent experiences physiological changes in the form of hormonal shifts. These changes have a profound effect on the individual's mood and motivation. Friendships with peer groups become intense, as adolescents seek their peers' input in determining their identity. The adolescent becomes preoccupied with competence, and peers' acknowledgment of it. There is a great need to conform with peers' behaviour and beliefs. This need can be associated with problem behaviour (Hill *et al*, 2007:369).

It becomes evident that this stage of development contains many risk factors for engaging in a gang. Individuals are easily influenced by their peers, and driven with a need to fit in and conform. Control strategies implemented by the adolescent's guardian become increasingly important at this stage. Excessive control can result in resistance and rebellious behaviour. A lack of control can however also lead to deviant behaviour. Knowledge about an adolescent's peers and their activities is essential to avoid high risk behaviour and behavioural problems (Hill *et al*, 2007:370).

3.2.2. Microsystems

According to the ecological perspective, the individual interacts with physical, symbolic and social entities within his immediate environment, in a sustained and complex manner. These systems are referred to as microsystems. The proximal processes which occur within the environment of the microsystems generate and sustain development. The nature and intensity of this interaction is determined by the characteristics of the microsystems as well as by the uniqueness of the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:39). The individual interacts directly with microsystems, in a bilateral manner, as the individual is affected by the microsystem, so microsystems are in turn affected by the individual. One of the most influential microsystems is the family, followed by peer groups and then other social institutions such as educational institutions, work places and religious institutions. The relationship between microsystems and the individual evolves, and interaction with these systems may be fluid in nature, depending on the stage of development. For example the individual's peer group may change as the individual ages, and relationships with schools may be replaced by a work place (Muuss, 2006:302).

3.2.2.1. Family

The family system has a variety of structures. Some of these include the single-parent family, the intact family, the absent father family and the reconstructed family. Each of these family structures has a unique effect on development (Muuss, 2006:313). Jankowski (1991:39) states that there is no correlation between family structure and gang membership, despite expectations of increased prevalence of gang membership in single parent homes where a

lack of male role model exists. Gang members are just as likely to come from intact-nuclear families. Craig *et al* (2002:54) however suggests that a connection exists between gang membership and alienation from the family. Individuals who feel alienated from their family may be at a higher risk of engaging in a gang.

The individual's family provides the most intimate reference point as it establishes a schema for viewing the world, as well as establishing norms of human interaction (Swick & Williams, 2006:372). Adaptive family patterns help protect the individual and foster healthy development. Maladaptive family functioning can however detrimentally affect the individual's development. Some examples of maladaptive practices include familial drug and alcohol abuse, as well as family violence. Familial drug abuse may affect the individual in numerous ways. As a result of the drug and alcohol abuse the family may become detached from other systems. For example the family may refrain from interacting with other microsystems, such as religious institutions, extended family and the individual's school as a result of the drug abuse (Swick & Williams, 2006:373). The individual may further experience shame and humiliation, affecting his self esteem and sense of belonging.

When family violence is prevalent in a family it can have devastating consequences. Family violence can be in the form of emotional, sexual and physical violence between the individual and a family member, or domestic violence between caregivers. Violence is said to not only impact on present wellbeing, but also impact on future interactions. Exposure to violence can result in long term proclivity towards violence, as relationships become centred on struggles for power (Swick & Williams, 2006:374). Early offenders are more likely to come from families who have a history of violence. In families where abuse occurs, aggression is reinforced and rewarded, and limited problem solving skills are developed. Harsh punishment may prevail, where pro-social behaviour is not acknowledged. Individuals who exhibit early signs of aggression are further more likely to engage in criminal careers (Fraser, 1996:348).

Marital conflict has been identified as a factor in the propensity for deviant behaviour. Exposure to marital conflict can result in the individual developing coping mechanisms, such as lowering emotional affect and restructuring reality. In this case, the individual may minimise the event or even overlook it. Chronic exposure can result in emotional deregulation, with heightened emotional and behavioural reactivity (Hill, 2002:152). The individual may thus become volatile and engage in externalising behaviour such as antisocial activities and violent displays of aggression.

Muuss (2006:302) states that in order to maintain a healthy relationship between the individual and the family system effective communication is essential. When an open relationship exists, where support is given and the individual is receptive, optimal development occurs. However, should there be a lack of communication and solidarity, the risk increases for engaging in a gang.

The ecological perspective as previously mentioned states that systems affect one another in a mutual manner. Therefore parents are in turn affected by their children and are inclined to adapting their behaviour based on their children's personalities. Parents of children who exhibit anti-social behaviour have been known to show inconsistent parenting and often react based on their mood. Children's behaviour can thus evoke negative parenting (Hill, 2002: 149-150). Walker-Barnes and Mason (2001:1816) identify further risk factors within family functioning which may promote engaging in a gang. These include families where negative feelings towards each other prevail over positive feedback and recognition of achievements, particularly pro-social activities. Further risk factors include inconsistent discipline, as well as spending limited time on shared social activities such as eating meals together.

Hill *et al* (2007:372) refers to differences in parenting styles between classes. Middle-class parents are said to engage in fostering their children's talents, skills and opinions, and invest much time and finances into their development. Working class and impoverished families view their children's development as a natural process and refrain from stimulating growth.

Emphasis is placed rather on providing material goods, such as food, shelter and clothing. It follows that individuals from low income homes may be more at risk of engaging in gangs, as their skills and social development is not honed by their families, and is instead left to chance. Thus individuals are often left without the support structure, role models and resources to develop a productive self image.

3.2.2.2. Peer group

The peer group is a microsystem which has a notable affect on the individual, playing a particular role in his decision to engage in a gang. According to Muuss (2006:311), friendships are formed through two processes, namely a *selection* and a *socialisation process*.

A *selection process* suggests that friendships develop through shared interests, values, behaviour and personality traits. Hill (2002:146) provides supporting evidence for this view, stating that aggressive-antisocial children have been known from as young as 5 years old to associate with other deviant youth.

The *socialisation process* refers to an increase in similarities between friends in proportion to time spent together. Through their interaction with each other, peers begin to develop shared values, attitudes and behaviour (Muuss, 2006:311). Walker-Barnes and Mason (2001:1815) further state that exposure to delinquent peers is strongly linked to the development of delinquent behaviour. This view may be applied to the process of engaging in gangs. Through spending time with gang members, individuals begin to assimilate the values and behaviour of the gang culture. In a study conducted by Van Wyk (2001) on South African gangs, it was established that friendships with gang members had a large influence on individuals' decisions to join gangs, further often facilitating the process.

The peer group is a highly influential system in the process of an individual's development, particularly within adolescence, when the decision is usually made to join a gang. The peer

group can provide social rewards in terms of prestige, status, popularity and acceptance. However in order to receive these rewards, deviant behaviour may be required. For example antisocial behaviour may bring acceptance. The individual may thus be encouraged to undertake deviant behaviour in order to feel a sense of belonging. Status may further increase through elevating the severity of the act (Muuss, 2006:302).

3.2.2.3. School

Schools are a further example of a microsystem which affects the individual's development. Ward (2006:50) states that schools play an integral part in adolescents' development, with learners' attachment to school activities and values serving as a protective factor in diminishing delinquent and antisocial behaviour. Schools have been known to foster gang formation however, and there are examples of how they struggle to maintain control of gang activities, as gang behaviour and gang fights ensue. Individuals may even join a gang in order to gain protection, as schools are often a hostile environment.

An individual's progress at school is identified as contributing to aggressive behaviour. Should the individual feel inadequate in his work performance, he may be more likely to externalise his behaviour and become antagonistic towards the school system (Fraser, 1996:352). Schools also highlight individuals' inadequacies and failures, causing gang members to alienate themselves from schools, gang members being usually known to struggle with school work. Gang members thus exhibit high school drop-out rates (Craig *et al*, 2002:55).

Children from low-economic schools where gang prevalence is high often experience a disparity between aspirations and expectations. Goals are often viewed as beyond one's grasp and therefore unattainable (Dudley & Gerdes, 2005:84). Standards of education may further endorse this view, as learners are ill-equipped and disillusioned by schools. These factors may increase the risk of engaging in a gang.

3.2.2.4. The Media

The media has been identified in the previous chapter as playing a role in the development and maintenance of a gang. The media plays a similar role on an individual level in terms of encouraging him to engage in a gang. Ward (2006:23) refers to media's propensity to normalise and even glamorise deviant behaviour. Media in the form of television, film, music and advertisements may be seen to foster consumerism and unrealistic lifestyles. Viewers may begin to engage and admire role models from the entertainment industry and sports teams and start to emulate their values and lifestyles. Individuals can be led to desire and imitate these lifestyles and values (McHale, 2009:1190). The media is seen to be integral in setting trends as well as values, often creating an unrealistic culture of consumerism. Gangs are seen as providing access to this lifestyle and further providing the prestige and status associated with these role models.

3.2.3. Mesosystems

The mesosystem refers to the interactions between microsystems. It is composed of the linkage between two or more of the settings of which the individual is a part (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:40). An unhealthy mesosystem may be characterised by weak linkages between microsystems. For example an impoverished relationship between the individual's parents and the individual's school is likely to affect his school performance (Muuss, 2006:304). Mesosystems which will be explored are that of the peer group and family, and that of the family and school.

3.2.3.1. Peer group and family

The relationship between microsystems can be divergent or congruent. A relationship which is congruent in nature results in a consistent and powerful influence. If the norms and behaviour between microsystems is divergent then a weaker result is found. For example if the family does not promote deviant behaviour, and the peer group differs, the influence may be slightly less fragile than if the individual's family were themselves involved in deviant behaviour. The family system may however endorse behaviour which is in conflict with the general norms of society encompassed in the larger macro- and exosystems. This can be seen

where families are involved in illegal activities such as selling drugs or knowingly buying stolen items. If the peer group is congruent with these deviant norms the behaviour will most likely persist and progress (Muuss, 2006:305).

An impoverished relationship between the family and the peer group can be detrimental for the individual's growth. For example if the individual's peer group and its activities are not known by the family it could be indicative of deviant activity. In conclusion when inadequate family relationships exist the peer group becomes more influential, the peer group filling the role of providing support and guidance, albeit distorted guidance at times (Muuss, 2006:304).

3.2.3.2. Family and school

Family functioning can affect school performance. For example if violence exists within the family, academic performance may decrease. School performance can be affected also by an impoverished relationship between the individual's family and the individual's school. Gaps develop when the individual may feel unsupported and thus lack motivation to succeed. The individual then may utilise the lack of relationship between his family and school, seeing it as providing freedom to stay absent. Absenteeism may lead to involvement in deviant behaviour and gang activities (Muuss, 2006:304; Ward, 2006:50).

3.2.4. Exosystems

Human development is indirectly influenced by non-immediate systems through their interaction with microsystems. The exosystems refer to the interaction between two or more systems, one of which exists within the individual's immediate setting and at least one system which does not contain the individual, but through its interaction, has an effect on the individual and vice versa (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:40). Therefore the individual exists within the exosystem, but does not directly participate in decision making. The exosystem may however impoverish or enrich meso- and microsystems (Muuss, 2006:306).

An example of an exosystem is an institution involved in crime prevention. These institutions have been criticised as encouraging gang membership through their ineffective intervention and gang membership may be viewed as continuing unrestricted. Consequences of gang membership may be perceived as limited and lacking in severity (Ward, 2006:23). Behaviour is seen as activated in response to cues of probable reward and unlikely consequences in the form of punishment (Hill, 2002:138). Gang membership becomes attractive when there appears to be limited consequences.

A lack of pro-social activities has been identified as encouraging gang membership (Ward, 2006:24). Leisure activities can be protective, as they fulfil some of the basic needs, such as a sense of esteem and belonging. Individuals are further afforded the opportunity for differentiation and integration, as well as space to experiment and develop social roles and competencies (Caldwell & Darling, 1999:58). Individuals have been known to drift into gang activities often out of boredom and a lack of purpose, with gangs seen to provide entertainment and excitement. Pleasure can be derived from deviant acts such as vandalism and intimidation and these events are recalled and exaggerated. These stories provide entertainment in an otherwise mundane life for gang members who generally have dropped out of school, are unemployed and have no other recreational activities. Gangs are often the promoters of social events within communities and have the resources to provide alcohol and drugs, and are able to attract people to attend, based on their reputation (Jankowski, 1991:43; Van Wyk, 2001:106).

Prisons are systems which may be found in the microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem. The individual may have direct contact with prisons through his own incarceration, or through his family. He may not have had direct contact with prison, but may still have been influenced by the system, through the prevalent glamorised stories in which imprisonment results in status and power (Ward & Bakhuis, 2010:55). Exposure to prison life directly or indirectly thus plays a role in the individual's decision to engage in a gang.

Some families and communities are involved in the culture of illicit activities. These values permeate other systems as deviant behaviour becomes normalised (Kinnes, 2000:1) Illegal activities are further sanctioned, for example drug usage ceases to be viewed as deviant. The moral code further shifts, for example communities may knowingly buy stolen goods as they are affordable (Standing, 2003:7). Individuals with family members who are presently or have been engaged in a gang are more likely to engage in a gang (Ferguson & Wormith, 2005:5). The decision to join a gang may even be viewed as a tradition which must be upheld. A sense of patriotism could accompany gang membership (Jankowski, 1991:46).

3.2.5. Macrosystems

The macrosystem is the overarching system, encompassing the microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem. It contains the beliefs and culture of society and can be described as the scheme encompassing the individual and all the various systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:40). The macrosystem contains the social, cultural, legal, religious, political, economic and educational values. It sets standards and determines what is appropriate and desirable (Muuss, 2006:307). As discussed in the previous chapter, gangs are known to develop in marginalised communities. Individuals who are disengaged or marginalised from society are more likely to engage in delinquent acts. They lack regard for society's norms because of their impoverished socialisation with mainstream society (Dukes *et al*, 1997:142). Kinnes (2000:3) states that community's perception of political exclusion fuels and maintains gang activity in the Western Cape.

Social order is maintained when individuals internalise society's norms (Dudley & Gerdes, 2005:84). In communities characterised by easy access to drugs and a normalisation of illegal activities, as well as weakened legitimate social controls, gang membership will prevail. Violence within communities can increase the prevalence for offending, as exposure to violence affects behavioural and emotional functioning. Feelings of hopelessness, despair and a lack of control can be externalised through oppositional behaviour and conduct problems (Koffman *et al*, 2009:239). Community violence fosters gang involvement; gangs provide a sense of security and replace systems which the individual is disengaged from and which

have failed to meet the individuals needs, for example the family and law enforcement agencies,. Gangs provide the individual with a chance to gain revenge (Garbarino, 2001:366).

Chronic exposure to violence can result in pessimism and a loss of future orientation. The individual begins to believe that death is inevitable and responds with risky and antisocial behaviour (Garbarino, 2001:372). Violence becomes central to the formation and continuation of gangs and is encompassed in the communication styles and activities of gangs (Melde *et al*, 2009:586). Garbarino (2001: 373) illustrates the effects and centrality of violence through an interview held with a young boy whose brother had been killed in a gang fight. When the boy was asked if he could have anything in the world what would it be, he responded by saying that he would want a gun so that he could take revenge on his brother's killer. Similar reports exist in a study conducted in Mannenberg (Legget, 2002:25) where gang members were asked to identify their reasons for joining the gang. A large majority reported joining after the death of a family member or friend inflicted by another gang. They joined in order to avenge their loved one's death. Violence becomes the motivation, norm and solution.

The need to resist and live in opposition to roles and social norms can be understood by the individual's exposure to them. The individual may join a gang in response to the violence, betrayal and disillusionment which he may have experienced at the hands of his family, police officers, teachers or community members. The individual becomes defiant and seeks to resist the humiliating and hierarchical relationship within which he views his family and community to exist (Sauma, 2008:34). The gang provides an escape, as well as ironically, a perceived means to achieve freedom.

The individual's development is influenced by the interaction with various systems which exist on different levels. The overarching system in which the individual and microsystem, mesosystems and exosystems exist is that of the macrosystem. This system is the source of societal norms and values which permeate through the various systems. With regards to the individual's decision to engage in a gang, the macrosystem subtly shapes the individual's behaviour further providing risk factors for engaging in a gang.

3 3.CONCLUSION

The development of each individual is distinctive due to his interaction with a variety of systems. The nature of this interaction is unique, as is the individual's ability to adapt in varying contexts. The risk and protective factors encompassed within each system varies for each individual. These systems are constantly evolving, resulting in a process that changes based on time and place (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:41). It is important to note that the interaction between the systems can result in healthy, as well as unhealthy, development. The nature of the relationship determines the nature of development. Risk factors for engaging in a gang can exist simultaneously occurring within multiple contexts. Individuals choose to join a gang, based on a variety of factors found within the individual level as well as the various systems identified by the ecological perspective.

Various risk factors contained within the environment have been explored, as well as individual motivational factors. However these factors are not absolute. No clear process of engaging in a gang exists as the process is unique for each individual. The process of joining a gang does not happen by chance but occurs after deliberation. The individual is motivated by various needs and ultimately decides to join a gang based on fulfilment in meeting his needs (Jankowski, 1991:47).

The phenomenon and evolution of gangs explored in the previous chapter, along with the insight into the process by which an individual engages in a gang gained in this chapter, provide a framework for understanding the construct of a gang and gang involvement. Based on this knowledge, the interaction between gangs and drugs will now be explored.

CHAPTER 4

DRUGS AND GANGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study is to understand male gang members' perspectives on the interaction between gangs and drugs. In order to achieve this a sound literature review is needed, exploring each variable of the subject matter. The first variable examined is that of the construct of a gang and gang formation. This was followed by discussing the process by which an individual engages in a gang. These chapters have provided insight into the evolution of gang as well as motivational forces which play a role in gang involvement. The focus of previous chapters has been on gangs. In meeting the aim of the study, the following chapter introduces a further variable, that of drugs. This chapter addresses the objective of exploring drugs and their interaction with gangs. An overview of substance usage will now be presented, followed by a discussion on the interaction between drugs and gangs.

In order to commence, the definition of terms will be clarified. The phenomenon of drugs will then be contextualised through the use of statistics in order to identify the extent of substance usage within South Africa. Theory provides a framework for understanding phenomenon. Substance usage will be discussed, based on relevant theories. Risk and protective factors with regards to substance usage will be identified.

This chapter aims to explore the interplay between substance usage and gangs. Literature will be presented so that the correlation between the two factors may be investigated. Studies linking gangs to drugs will be examined and available statistics highlighted. International and South African gang typologies will be presented and then linked specifically to the role which drugs play within these gang typologies. Drugs are said to play a role in gang formation and organisation as well as contributing to various gang activities. These aspects will be identified and discussed. Apart from gang members' use of drugs, gangs have been reported to be involved in drug trade and this phenomenon will be explored. The temporal

order of gang usage and gang involvement is a highly contested issue, with limited consensus. In conclusion pertinent research in this area will be presented.

4.2. SUBSTANCE USAGE

To begin the process of exploring drug usage, firstly terminology must be clarified. Theory explaining substance usage and relevant statistics showing the prevalence of substance abuse within South Africa will be introduced.

4.2.2. Definition of a ‘drug’

The term ‘drug’ is commonly used to describe a *psychoactive* substance, which is usually *illicit*. Psychoactive substances are chemicals which act on the central nervous system, affecting mind processes and mood. These substances can be classified as stimulants or suppressants and differ in terms of their activation period as well as the duration of their effect. Psychoactive substances may induce states of euphoria or arousal, whilst others may result in tranquillity (Collins, 1990). For the sake of this chapter, the term ‘*substance*’ and ‘*drug*’ will be used interchangeably.

4.2.3. Definition of ‘substance abuse’

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III-R) (1987), *substance abuse* is defined as:

“A maladaptive pattern of use indicated by continued use despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent social, occupational, psychological or physical problem that is caused or exacerbated by the use [or by] recurrent use in situations in which it is physically hazardous.”

According to the above definition, substance abuse is identified by certain symptoms. These symptoms include role impairment, legal and social problems, as well as recurrent use despite hazardous consequences.

4.2.4. Definition of ‘substance dependency’

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV, 1994). states that three or more of certain criteria need to be present over the same 12-month period in order to diagnose *substance dependency*. These criteria include:

- Presence of withdrawal symptoms.
- A tolerance change, i.e. more of the substance is needed to gain the same effect.
The substance has a diminished effect over time.
- Attempts are made to reduce usage. There may also be a desire to control usage.
- Large amounts of time are spent on drug related activities in the form of obtaining and preoccupation with strategies to obtain the substance, using the substance as well as recovering from substance usage.
- Use of larger amounts of substance over a longer period of time than planned. The individual may further use the substance more often than anticipated, e.g. the individual plans to use the substance once in the day, but ends up using numerous times a day.
- Usage is continued despite adverse physical, psychological and social consequences, e.g. loss of job and poor health.
- Reduced interest in recreational and social activities, e.g. lifestyle changes.

From the above definition it becomes evident that in order to meet the diagnostic criteria for substance dependence certain persistent symptoms need to be present. These symptoms are debilitating. For example the preoccupation with substance usage takes control of the individual's life, affecting all areas of functioning.

4.2.5. Theoretical perspective of substance usage

In order to understand substance usage, theory can be utilised. Anton (2010:739) suggests that substance usage can be explained by two theories, namely the *reward/reinforcement theory* and *stress-reduction theory*. The *reward/reinforcement theory* states that experiences of substance induced euphoria are perceived as a favourable, and the individual is as a result motivated to continue usage to sustain this euphoria. The *stress-reduction theory* proposes that daily living creates strain. This stress may be as a result of relationships, economic strain, as well as traumatic life events

Individual resiliency in dealing with stress plays a role in the process, as individuals differ in their capacity for dealing with stressful events. Stressful life events may include exposure to abuse and poverty or fulfilment of needs. Individuals who have experienced severe stress in childhood may be more prone to drug usage as are individuals who experience significant stress in their adult lives but have had limited experience of dealing with stress when younger. Substances are used to alleviate strain by reducing depression, anxiety and symptoms of exposure to trauma, such as intrusive thoughts (Anton, 2010: 739). The individual seeks to preserve and prolong the sense of relief by maintaining substance usage, which may then become compulsive. Substances elevate levels of the neurotransmitter dopamine, which is responsible for feelings of pleasure. After repeated usage of the substance, dopamine levels can increase through mere exposure to cues associated with the substance, such as drug paraphernalia (Anton, 2010; 738). A significant person in an individual's life who previously has adopted the usage of substances in order to deal with difficult situations may also serve as a cue. This means of coping is then internalised as a legitimate and effective method (Bottorff, 2009; 4).

4.2.6. Prevalence of drug usage

This study takes place within the Western Cape. This province of South Africa exhibits decidedly elevated levels of substance abuse. Alcohol abuse is estimated at 34%, with the proportion of alcohol related deaths due to violence being 59%. This statistic is significantly higher than those of other provinces. The Western Cape is further notorious for its high levels of methamphetamine usage, which have been noted as increasing in prevalence since 2003

(Parry, 2004:1). Based on treatment admissions, methamphetamine is reported as the primary drug of choice in the Western Cape, as it constitutes 34% of treatment admissions (Pludderman *et al*, 2010; 1). Marijuana usage has however been identified as the most frequently used drug within the Western Cape (Harker *et al*, 2008; 14). The disparity of these findings may be explained by the minimal likelihood of marijuana users seeking treatment for marijuana as their primary dependence.

Apartheid policies of South Africa have impacted the drug market through their influence in creating racially specific socioeconomic status and trends. It has been suggested that drug preference may be influenced by socioeconomic status. In South Africa's case this would imply that ethnicity becomes linked to drug preferences (Parry *et al*, 2004; 180). However it is suggested that the link between any one race's preference for certain drugs can be understood by economic reasons as well as social factors. This may be demonstrated by a study conducted with arrestees in South Africa, where drug usage patterns were explored. Marijuana is commonly known to be a relatively inexpensive drug, whilst cocaine may be described as more costly. In the study conducted, marijuana was found to be more widely used by respondents who reported having a low income, whilst 78% of white respondents were classified as having middle to high income, and cocaine usage was found to be at 43% among these respondents (Parry *et al*, 2004; 180-181). This demonstrates that a link exists between ethnicity and income, both of which have an impact on drug choice.

4.2.7. Risk factors for substance abuse

As in the process of engaging in a gang, factors are identified which increase the risk of substance usage. These risk factors will now be discussed.

4.2.7.1. Individual characteristics

When exploring substance usage the role of personal vulnerability cannot be overlooked. Inherent and established coping mechanisms serve as protective mechanisms against substance usage. Individuals who have developed effective coping mechanisms are better equipped to deal with stress and strain. Productive techniques may include distress tolerance

skills such as the use of distraction techniques and minimising distress through engaging in relaxing activities. Lack of distress tolerance techniques can be a risk factor for substance usage (Graham, 2004; Van Wormer & Davis, 2003). This view is further supported by Bottorff (2009) in a study exploring the relief provided by marijuana usage. Respondents reported using marijuana to deal with difficult feelings such as anger, disappointment, fear and anxiety. Respondents appeared to lack effective coping mechanisms to manage uncomfortable feelings, and thus relied on marijuana for relief.

4.2.7.2. Exposure to violence

Kilpatrick *et al* (2000:2) states that exposure to violence can motivate an individual to seek coping mechanisms in order to avoid distress. These events may cause distress and manifest in the symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Substance usage may be utilised as means of dealing with the distress caused by exposure to violence. There appears to be a positive relationship between trauma severity and alcohol abuse, as individuals experiencing symptoms of PTSD are more vulnerable to the sedative effect of alcohol. Duncan *et al* (1996) however suggests that victims of physical child abuse are more likely to use drugs such as marijuana, and hard drugs.

4.2.7.3. Family

Familial substance use has been identified as having a modelling affect on adolescents, resulting in an increase in their usage of similar substances (Brook *et al*, 1990; Kilpatrick *et al*, 2000). Familial drug usage is said to increase the prevalence of adolescents' use of marijuana and hard drugs, whilst familial alcohol abuse increases prevalence of adolescents' alcohol and hard drug usage (Kilpatrick *et al*, 2000:11). The modelling effect of familial drug usage is of a specific nature, as similar substances are adopted by the imitator (Kilpatrick *et al*, 2000:26).

In families where substance abuse occurs, elevated conflict and weakened relationships often occur (Moore *et al*, 2010:3). Increased substance usage by the individual who is exposed to

familial drug and alcohol usage has been explained in part by the resulting associated violence and abuse experienced at the hands of intoxicated family members. De La Rosa *et al* (2007:3) however suggests that high substance abuse rates can be understood by accompanying attitudes, rather than the actual behaviour. Individuals may internalise their families' values and norms with regard to the use of substances. This process is suggested to have more credibility in predicting substance abuse. The reason for this is not clear, but may be due to the ability of attitudes to permeate and pervade family life, as opposed to behaviour which can be more inconsistent and less chronic in nature in comparison to values and norms (De La Rosa *et al.* 2007:13).

4.2.7.4. Peer group

The role of peers in substance usage is well documented (Bahr & Hoffman, 2008; Jang, 2002; Cheung & Tse, 2010). Adolescents who have friends who consume alcohol are more likely to use alcohol (Andrews *et al*, 2002; Henry *et al*, 2005; Ennet & Bauman, 1993). Associated with relationship with peers is the presence of peer pressure. Peer pressure may involve encouragement and incitement to use substances. The peer group may present a permissive perspective of substance usage and further accept drug usage. The individuals' beliefs systems and behaviour may be influenced as a result of interacting with their peer groups. If drug usage is normalised, the individual may challenge and shift his view about drugs.

Popularity and inclusion into the peer group can be both a protective and risk factor. Peer groups may reward and reinforce substance usage. Drug usage may be perceived as a means of becoming part of the group, as drug usage may result in cohesion with the peer group. However, isolation from the peer group can be a risk factor as the interaction with substance abuse fosters ego-development, self esteem, competence and general development. Another risk factor is that of feeling a lack of inclusion as the individual uses substances to deal with feelings of loneliness and exclusion (Cheung & Tse, 2010; 578).

4.2.7.5. Exclusion from systems

Exclusion may be experienced in other social arenas, such as failure to engage with educational institutions. Individuals may be at a higher risk of using substances if their school functioning is substandard, or if they have experienced victimization. Harker *et al* (2008; 25) states that a correlation exists between drug usage and school dropout.

Individuals who lack cohesion and inclusion within their family are even more at risk of using substances. Cohesion thus fulfils a protective function, reducing the individual's likelihood of seeking inclusion in peer groups. Moore *et al* (2010;2), suggest that individuals who perceive a lack of intimacy with their family are more likely to be influenced by their peers, as peers begin to play a more influential role in their development of norms of values and behaviour. Familial attachment may result in feelings of emotional security, whilst disconnected families fail to meet the individuals' needs (Pertritis *et al*, 2005; Brook *et al*, 1990). Disorganised families can lead to unresolved feelings of resentment. These feelings may be as a result of family members being estranged as well as the presence of malfunctioning relationships (Bottorff, 2009; 4).

Economic strain and community violence have been identified as playing a role in predicting substance usage (Hawkins *et al*, 1992; Pertritis *et al*, 1995). Families too have the ability to mediate and mitigate stresses experienced at the hands of neighbourhood and broader social contexts (Szapocznik & Coatsworth, 1999).

Substance usage has been defined and explained through the use of theory and prevalence rates have been presented. When exploring substance usage risk factors can be identified. These risk factors occur within the ecological systems mentioned in the previous chapter. The individual has inherent risk factors such as a dearth of coping mechanisms. Beyond the individual, the family system and peer group present further risk factors. The ecological perspective is concerned with the fit between the individual and various systems (Johnson &

Yanca, 2010:8). It would seem that in the case of substance usage, a lack of congruency between the individual and systems increases the risk of substance usage. Should the individual feel detached from systems, he may be more likely to use substances.

The identified risk factors which increase the probability of using substances sound all too familiar, and are poignantly similar to the risk factors explored in the previous chapter which explored risk factors for engaging in a gang. It becomes clear that substance usage and gang membership share common initiating factors.

4.3. GANGS AND SUBSTANCE USAGE

The connection between gangs and drugs will now be discussed. Drugs and gang typologies will further illustrate the connection between gangs and drugs. The role which drugs play in gang activities will be examined, as well as gangs' involvement in the drug trade. In conclusion the temporal order of drug usage and gang involvement will be discussed.

The connection between substances and gang membership can be traced back through the history of gangs. It is suggested that post-Revolutionary War America saw gangs involved in the use and trade of illicit substances (Sante, 1991). Within the South African context similar findings exist. Kinnes (2008:4) states that "one cannot separate the South African gangs from drugs.", and mandrax trade is said to be entrenched within gang activities in the Western Cape (Parry *et al*, 2004:180). This view is shared by international research. Battin and Pearson (1998) discovered that gang members were more likely to abuse substances. This is supported with research by Fagan (1989) where drug usage was found to be a norm within American gangs, with 50% of gang members reporting regular marijuana use, 31% regular heroin use, and 45% regular cocaine use. It can be said then that gang members, in comparison to non-gang members, are more likely to consume substances. (Covey *et al*, 1997; Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Esbesnesn & Huizinga, 1993; Esbensen *et al*, 1993; Esbensen *et al*, 2002; Harris, 1988; Huff, 1996; Klein & Maxson, 1985; Sheldon *et al*, 2001; Spergel, 1995; Swart, 1995; Thornberry, 1998; Thornberry *et al*, 1993; Katz *et al*, 2005) Not only are gangs

members more likely to consume drugs, their usage is said to be more frequent (Fagan, 1989) and higher than those of non-gang members (Bjerregaard, 2008).

Marijuana and alcohol have been identified as the most common drug of choice of gang members. The Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program (ADAM) conducted in Arizona, found that more than three quarters of the gang members interviewed reported using marijuana in the past year, whilst 70% tested positive at the time of the interview (Katz *et al*, 2005:81).

Gang members have been known to combine substances and use poly-substances (Sanders *et al*, 2010:746). A South African example would be smoking a combination of marijuana and mandrax. Multiple substances may be consumed not in unison but in a consequential manner, for example using mandrax as a suppressant after using methamphetamines, or using drugs when intoxicated from using alcohol in order to sober up.

As mentioned previously, substance usage and gang membership share common initiating factors. It is then logical that substance usage and gang membership would co-occur. Vaillant (1988:1150) goes as far as to say that young urban delinquents cannot be easily distinguished from the young urban addict. Heroin addicts are said to share risk factors with those involved in delinquent acts. Chung *et al* (2008:571) states that antisocial behaviour and substance problems co-occur. It is suggested also that etiological risk factors are shared, whilst some factors are more specific for certain drugs. Etiological factors may include negative emotionality and impulsivity, which are related to substance usage and the severity of drug abuse (Magyar *et al*, 2011:236)

Further risk factors shared in the case of substance usage and gang membership include experiences of developing in homes with inadequate supervision, limited parental controls, family cohesion and affection (Vaillant, 1966). Drug use is said to be initiated and maintained

by risk factors on a personal, interpersonal and contextual level (Kim *et al*, 2005). Personal factors may include low self esteem, impulsivity, anger, difficulty in managing distress and feelings of hopelessness in terms of the future. Interpersonal factors include peer pressure, peer functioning, strained family relationships and feelings of exclusion from family and peers. Contextual factors could include socioeconomic stress and academic failures (Barker, 2005; Bourgois, 2003; Hunt, 2006; Mayock, 2005; Rivers *et al*, 2006; Seddon, 2006).

4.3.1. Drugs and gang typologies

Gang typologies have been developed both internationally and within the South African context in order to illustrate the functioning of gangs. Drugs play a part in gang typology. And South African gang typology is said to be linked inextricably with drug trade. Drugs have further played a pivotal role in the formation of gangs and their continued development (Kinnes, 2008;5). As discussed in chapter two, South African gangs are said to have transformed with the onset of democracy in 1994 as globalization took place and law enforcement underwent changes. International syndicates such as the Russian and American mafia and Chinese triads had access to South Africa. Stolen goods became the currency, as South African gangs could exchange the goods for drugs from the international syndicates. Gangs became more powerful as a result of their connection with international gangs. They became more wealthy and modelled business practice on their international cohorts, incorporating more sophisticated and often more violent strategies (Standing, 2005:1).

4.3.1.1. South African gang typologies

Within the South African context, Pinnock (1984) developed the infamous typology of South African gangs. This typology which was explored in chapter two, include the street gang, family mafia structure, syndicate gangs and prison gangs. The link between these gang types and drugs is visible.

Street gangs in South Africa are said to be undergoing transformation. Their activities have shifted towards abusing drugs to supplying drugs as well. Family *mafia gangs* date back to

the 1980s when they were involved in running illegal taverns within informal settlements and low income areas. The inception of democracy and resulting globalization provided new possibilities. These gangs responded to the new opportunities and were able to expand their business, with drug trade becoming their focal activity. *Syndicate gangs* are highly sophisticated and cohesive gangs who often are connected to the justice system and thus manage to engage in large scale drug distribution. The final type of gang is the *prison gang*. These gangs traditionally operated within prisons and consisted of three Number gangs, the 26s, 27s and 28s. Whilst the aim of some gangs is to acquire wealth, the main economic activity of this gang has been described as drug trade (Kinnes, 2008; 3-4).

South African gang typologies illustrate that gangs are linked with drugs, but focus on drug trade. It is of interest to explore drug usage within these typologies as there appears to be little information available.

4.3.1.2. International gang typologies

International researchers have established typologies specific to gang and gang members' involvement in selling drugs. Valdez and Sifaneck (2004) refers to four different types of members in gangs.

The first are named the *Homeboys*. These gang members are drug users or sellers within a non-dealing gang. This type of gang member functions relatively independently from the gang and inflicts violence in response to interpersonal disputes and as a sign of male bravado. This member may buy drugs in small amounts, which is for personal usage and may be distributed to friends and associates. The gang member may work as a sort of broker for associates not connected to the drug market. There is usually a connection to a drug source, someone who is usually an older, more experienced drug user. This individual may have prison gang experience, and is marginally aligned to the gang. This type of gang is motivated by seeking the effects of drugs, rather than the potential profit. Drug dealing is not the primary focus and the gang may be involved in arranging parties and social events.

The second type is referred to as the *Hustlers*. These are drug dealers operating in non-dealing gangs. This gang member is involved in dealing drugs within the context of a street gang. Profits generated are the gang member's own, and the gang offers protection for the gang member as long as he is operating within the gang's turf.

The third type of gang member is called the *Slanger*, who is a drug user or seller, operating within a drug dealing gang. This gang member is excluded from the higher ranks of drug dealing activity and sells drugs in relatively small amounts, mainly in order to sustain his own usage.

The final type of gang member is a *Baller*. This gang member is a drug dealer operating within a drug dealing gang. The gang operates as a criminal enterprise sustained by dealing drugs. Profits may be distributed among members who are involved in running the business operation. An organised leadership structure exists with *Ballers* filling prominent positions, where they control the functioning of lower ranks. These gang members are distinctive as they are involved in the trade of large amounts of drugs but remain relatively aloof from visible gang functioning. These members' behaviour is covert in nature, thus avoiding attracting attention, particularly from law enforcement.

Therefore a distinction is evident in gangs involved in dealing drugs. These gangs are characterised by a highly organised structure with reliable leadership and sophisticated functioning, the emphasis being on entrepreneurial gains. Gang members further take on diverse roles, dependent on the gang in which they are involved. Gangs may provide the support and protection to members, but gang members may act independently from the gang (Valdez & Sifaneck, 2004).

4.3.2. Gang activities and drugs

Nasir & Rosenthal (2009; 207) state that:

“It is in the gang setting that various and complex contributing factors for drug initiation such as satisfying curiosity, fulfilling a sense of rebellion or sensation-seeking, longing for pleasures and excitement, alleviating boredom, and attaining peer status and respect, are situated.”

Drug usage is entrenched within the culture of gangs and has been noted as fulfilling certain functions. Vigil (1985, 1988) in referring to Chicano gangs, identified that substances act as a social lubricant as well as a part of ritualized gang behaviour,

Gang behaviour commonly presents as *idle*. Time is spent hanging around on the streets, passing time by recounting old stories, and seeking distractions. Gangs have been said to hang around waiting for something to happen, and passing time by using drugs (Klein, 1995). Mackenzie *et al* (2006;111) describes gangs members in San Francisco's' lifestyle as standing on street corners, trying to make sales, flirting with passing women, rolling dice and using marijuana. It is proposed that marijuana usage has become so normalised within some gangs that respondents in studies overlook marijuana usage in their reports of drug usage (Mackenzie *et al*, 2006:119).

Gang members may be unemployed school drop-outs and are thus often bored and feel hopeless about the future (Nasir & Rosenthal, 2009; 201). For these life is “neither the workplace nor the school; it is the street” (Messerschmidt, 1993:102). They may utilise illegitimate means to gain respect and acceptance, as they lack inclusion in legitimate systems. Substances fulfil the function of easing the tediousness of life, as well as numbing oneself against reality.

A large component of gang activities is *parties*. These parties may include binge drinking as a fundamental component (Moore, 1991; Moore *et al*, 1978; Vigil, 1988). Drugs often play a crucial role in facilitating the socialising process (Nasir & Rosenthal, 2009:204). Standing (2005:12) describes the gang culture as “...a culture of hedonism-taking drugs, getting drunk and living for the moment...”

Gangs also use substances for *functional purposes*. When used together within the gang, substances can facilitate bonding, developing in feelings of cohesion and solidarity. Marijuana usage has been identified in increasing rapport between gang members, as members are more inclined to become overtly emotional towards each other whilst intoxicated. Usage of substances by gang members therefore is symbolic of belonging and is a means to developing credibility (Mackenzie *et al*, 2006:125-126). Padilla (1992) describes the role which substances play in the initiation into Puerto Rican gangs in Chicago. New initiates may participate in substance usage as a test to prove their worth and commitment to the gang. Substances thus form part of the induction process, marking the rites of passage of joining a gang (Hunt & Laidler, 2001:68).

Drugs may be a way of gaining *power* and status. Gangs may utilise drugs as a means of recruiting new members. Possible new recruits identified by the gang, may be approached with drugs provided as an incentive used to coerce them into joining the gang. Recruits are often attracted to gangs by the access to drugs and the drug lifestyle which gangs promote (Standing, 2005:2).

Substances have been described as providing a means of distinguishing the gang as a unit, by *demarcating boundaries*. Drug usage patterns become distinctive of the gang, identifying it as different from society. Substances have been used to induce rebellion and aggressive behaviour, whilst reducing inhibitions and fear (Nasir & Rosenthal, 2009; 208). Any conflict resulting from intoxication provides the gang with a means to defend and define their turf and credibility, whilst also boosting cohesion (Hunt & Laidler, 2001; 68).

Substances may be chosen for their effect, and used *for specific activities* (Barker, 2005; Collison, 1996; Hunt, 2006; Mayock, 2005; Moore, 1994; Sanders, 2006). For example alcohol may be utilised in times of conflict as a facilitator to initiate violent behaviour (Hunt & Laider, 2001: 68). This view is supported by Sanders *et al* (2010: 746) where the link is made between substance usage and violent behaviour, as in the form of fighting or sexual activities.

A large component of existence and functioning of gangs is the concept of *territory*. Gang activity is focused on defining and defending their turf. This territory may transcend ownership of the space and its facilities by encompassing drug trade turf. As gangs control the rights and monopoly to trade drugs within their turf the stakes are raised. A gang, by focusing on expanding its territory, is able to increase its market for drugs, thereby augmenting its income. (Standing, 2005: 2). Drug trade represents the most profitable activity of the gang. This economic implication makes territory an even more valuable commodity, and something worthwhile to defend. South African media reports regularly on wars between rival gangs over their territories, or rather drug trade turf (MacMaster, 2010: 58). These wars rage over the need to defend one gang's territory from a rival gang, and are often a result of attempts to expand territory.

Discrepancies in literature exist when it comes to gangs sanctioning drug usage. Some state that gangs prohibit usage of substances. The reason being that consumption of substances may be detrimental to gang survival, as it may lead to behaviour that may be harmful to gang activities. If members should become dependent, their loyalties may lie with the substance, rather than with the gang. It would however appear that gangs may be selective of substances which they promote and those which they prohibit. Taylor (1990) and Mieczkowski (1986) found that gangs in Detroit involved in selling drugs, prohibited members from using drugs claiming it may affect their productivity and sales, but sanctioned alcohol use. Some substances are frowned upon because they may lead to disreputable behaviour such as theft, whilst others may be seen as more acceptable. Marijuana may be seen as not being a drug.

This substance is often seen as a herb, and not possessing addictive qualities. Usage is viewed as having limited negative consequences (Katz *et al*, 2005). Marijuana may then be seen as substance with low risk, as it poses limited harm to business, self and others (Mackenzie *et al*, 2006). Gang members can then use marijuana both for its physiological effects, as well as a means to provide a popular image; smoking of marijuana can be seen as rebellious and thus representative of a suave gang image (Katz *et al*, 2005;81).

From the literature presented it becomes evident that drugs are firmly enmeshed within gang functioning, playing a pivotal role in gang activities.

4.3.3. Gangs and drug trade

The gang typologies discussed show that gangs are often engaged in selling drugs. Economic and social changes have resulted in an increased market for drug sales, as well as a shift in gang priorities. Gangs have become more focused on monetary gains. MacMaster (2010: 60) states that “Given South Africa’s unacceptable high unemployment figure, low wages and salaries in many job sectors, combined with human greed, many people are enticed..” into the lucrative business of selling drugs.

Gangs who trade in drugs often are characterised by sophisticated and organised operating units. A South African gang, named the Americans is an example of such a gang. It has been described as operating like a franchise, supplying drug outlets in numerous areas, often outside of the urban centres. A gang operating in this way could be regarded as the wholesaler of drugs, from which independent drug merchants purchase their stock (Standing, 2005:11).

Drug trade has become so enmeshed within gang functioning that norms have even entered the realm of language, changing the way that drug trade is described. Language changes have occurred where definitions have altered. This illustrates an ideological shift. The drug trade has become described as a legitimate form of work and a means to earning an income. An

example of this is the language used for selling drugs is ‘going to work’ (Taylor, 1990; Padilla, 1992; Mackenzie *et al*, 2006).

Drug sales provide opportunities for providing lifestyles often aspired to, thus giving status and respect to the drug traders. This lifestyle can be characterised by material gains such as stylish car, designer clothes and popularity with women (Mackenzie *et al*, 2006:110).

Gang members who sell drugs are more likely to be consuming drugs (Friedeman *et al*, 2001; Fagan, 1989). The correlation between drug selling and drug usage is examined in a study conducted by Decker (2000), where he established that those involved in the drug sales exhibited higher drug usage than those not involved in drug sales. These gangs did however differentiate and classify the various substances, deeming certain substances as less harmful and more socially acceptable within the gang. Marijuana has been proposed as one such substance and is possibly the most widely used substance within groups.

Some researchers have challenged the view that gangs are engaged in drug selling as a primary focus, suggesting that the sale of drugs is a consequence of gang members’ usage, developing out of a need to sustain their usage (Valdez & Sifaneck, 2004; 83).

4.3.4. Temporal order of gang membership and drug usage

The temporal order of gang membership and drug usage is a much contested issue, with limited consensus. Swahn *et al* (2010) states that early marijuana and alcohol use are risk factors for engaging in a gang. In a study with San Franciscan gangs, Mackenzie *et al* (2006:115) found that 51% of members had used marijuana prior to engaging in the gang. Use of hard drugs is believed to have begun after joining a gang.

Theory may assist in understanding the order of events. The *selection hypothesis* suggests that gang members possess certain characteristics and would engage in drug usage and delinquent acts even if they were not part of a gang, being more prone to this type of behaviour. Gang membership does not facilitate involvement in these activities (Thornberry *et al*, 1993.) However this hypothesis has been criticised, as some studies have found that gang members reported higher levels of drug use whilst actively involved in the gang.

The second model is that of the *social facilitation hypothesis*. This theory suggests that there is no distinct difference between gang and non-gang members. The gang realm is thus the dividing factor, as it is influential in fostering drug using behaviour, where gang norms and behaviour act as a facilitator and motivator. Gang members may then exhibit a decrease in delinquent behaviour and drug usage when they disengage from the gang (Gordon *et al*, 2004; Thornberry *et al*, 1993; Thornberry *et al*. 2003).

A third model exists, a mixed model which combines the selection hypothesis, and social facilitation hypothesis. This is referred to as the *enhancement model*. Gangs are viewed as attracting members who already possess certain intrinsic attitudes and behaviours and who already may be involved in drug usage. However the gang culture does play a influential role as it provides a normative structure which facilitates and enhances drug usage (Katz *et al*, 2005:64-65). This is supported by findings of higher levels of substance usage by gang members in comparison to non-gang members (Battin *et al.*, 1998; Thornberry *et al.*, 1993). Esbensen and Huizinga (1993) found that gang members exhibited high rates of delinquency before joining a gang, but inclusion in the gang further elevated these levels and accordingly, leaving a gang decreased these levels.

There are various theories proposed with regard to the temporal order of gang involvement and drug usage. Researchers have not yet reached consensus on this issue and it remains unclear if substance usage precedes engaging in a gang, or if it begins as a result of joining a gang.

The interaction of gangs and drugs has been explored with the use of various literature. Both South African and internationally developed gang typologies illustrate that drug trade is firmly entrenched within all types of gangs. Gang activities emphasis the connection between gangs and drugs with drugs being evident in the day to day functioning of the gang as well as serving functions within it, for example facilitating attainment of the groups' goals. Finally the temporal order of gang involvement and drug usage was explored.

4.4. CONCLUSION

It has been established that certain risk factors exist which may increase the likelihood of an individual using substances. When identifying these factors, they present as reminiscent of the risk factors associated with engaging in a gang. There further is a clear link between gang membership and substance usage. This interaction was explored by reviewing existing literature. It became clear that substances play a role within gang culture. The various functions which substances play within gang activities were discussed. The concept of gang territory highlighted that gang members are involved in drug trade, as well as consumption. Drug trade was explored and it became evident that drugs provide a lucrative income for gangs.

It has been established in literature that drugs and gang membership co-occur. There is however uncertainty with regards to the temporal order. Some theories have been presented, such as the social facilitation model, the selection hypothesis and the enhancement model in order to understand the process. It remains unclear if drug usage precedes gang membership, or if it is a consequence of engaging in a gang.

This chapter presents literature pertaining to drug usage and gangs. It becomes evident that limited resources exist with regards to the role of drugs in gangs within the South African context. Existing literature has focused on the drug trade of South Africa, but little emphasis has been placed on drug usage of gang members. Substance usage and gang functioning are

complex and convoluted, and exist within multiple contexts. Katz *et al* (2005; 84) emphasises that findings cannot be generalized to broader communities, as each gang issue is unique. There appears to be a need therefore for more knowledge about the role which drugs play within South African gangs.

Based on the literature review chapters, the next chapter will present the empirical findings which were undertaken to test the established literature and to fill in gaps in knowledge.

CHAPTER 5

A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF GANGS AND DRUGS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters have explored various aspects of the gang phenomenon. Chapter two presented popular definitions of a gang by Thrasher (1927), Klein (1971) and Goldstein (1991). The evolution of a gang was further explored through the use of the social systems theory, where various suprasystems which play a role in the formation of a gang were identified and discussed. Finally gang typologies by Pinnock (1984) were presented, as was gang culture, in terms of gang activities.

Chapter three explored the motivational factors involved in an individual's decision to engage in a gang. This was achieved through the use of Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological perspective as well as Maslow's (1987) motivational theory. Maslow's (1987) motivational theory identifies human needs such as physiological, safety, belonging and esteem as well as the need for self actualization. These needs motivate human behaviour and were further linked to the individual's choice to engage in a gang. The ecological perspective states that the individual is nestled within various systems, which interact in a reciprocal manner (Bronfennbrenner, 1994:38). Various systems which play a role in the individual's choice to engage in a gang, including the family, peer group and school, were identified.

Chapter four went on to explore the interaction between substance usage and gangs. Risk factors for engaging in drug usage such as familial drug usage were indicated, and the increase in the likelihood of the individual using substances through modelling, noted (Brook *et al*, 1990; Kilpatrick *et al*, 2000). Stressful life events such as exposure to violence and experiences of abuse were identified as further increasing the probability of drug usage (Kilpatrick *et al*, 2000; Duncan *et al*, 1996). Finally the role of drugs within gangs' activities was explored.

Kinnes (2008:4) states that “one cannot separate the South African gangs from drugs”. Chapter four illustrated that a relationship exists between gangs and drugs. However the nature of this relationship is unclear.

This chapter four aims to offer insight into this relationship, identifying how gang activities and drugs interact. Furthermore the temporal order of the relationship was explored. This chapter four aimed to verify the literature review conducted and where possible provide a South African perspective on the phenomenon of gangs and drugs.

Based on the literature review chapters, a questionnaire was assembled and administered and the empirical findings will now be presented. Findings will be presented in tables and figures. Narratives of the participants will further be presented, in order to provide a thick description of themes.

5.2. DELIMITATION OF INVESTIGATION

In the motivation for the study explored in Chapter one, it was suggested that the study be conducted within the context of substance treatment centres, where substance usage is normalised. The reliability of data would be increased as participants are more likely to be open about their drug usage in these settings.

Twelve individual interviews were held with participants at Kensington Treatment Centre in Maitland, Cape Town. The selection criterion for the study was adult males who have been in the past, or are currently associated with gangs. Potential participants meeting this criterion were identified and approached by the Recovery Assistant at the centre and asked if they would be willing to take part in the study.

Also a focus group was held at Lighthouse Therapeutic Community, a substance treatment centre in Retreat, Cape Town. The Recovery Assistant at the centre identified four males who were associated with a gang whom he approached and asked if they would be willing to take part in the study.

Once participants showed an interest in taking part in the study a detailed informed consent form was explained to participants in their languages of choice. Confidentiality was emphasised as was their right to withdraw from the study at any time. When the participants were clear on their rights, they were asked to sign an informed consent form if they were willing to participate in the study. The participants were informed that they could approach the Recovery Assistants at the centres should they want to reach the interviewer in connection with withdrawing from the study at a later stage.

5.3. THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The study attempts to form a better understanding of gang involvement and substance usage and an exploratory design was undertaken to better understand a subject which is relatively unexplored (Babbie, 2005:90). Data was collected by means of a semi-structured interview, utilising a questionnaire consisting of open and close ended questions, based on the literature review. The questionnaire was then administered in a scheduled structured interview (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:105-109). The interviewer administered the questionnaire, in order to avoid literacy issues and resulting embarrassment to participants, as well as to assist in clarifying questions. Themes, identified from the literature review, were utilised in informing the questionnaire. However the interview was flexible and guided by participants' responses.

For all individual interviews, the complete questionnaire covering all themes was administered. The focus group took on the format of an open discussion with regard to the interplay between gangs and drug usage. Participants provided information around the themes of gangs and drugs. Responses from the participants of the focus groups are integrated with those from the individual participants' into the relevant themes.

De Vos *et al* (2002:319) describe data analysis as the process of organising data, in order to create meaning. In order to begin the data analysis process, interviews were firstly transcribed and then interpreted by identifying common themes presented by the participants. Data gained was presented with the use of tables and figures as well as dialogues of narratives and findings. Links were then made where relevant to literature presented in previous chapters.

5.4. RESULTS OF EMPIRICAL STUDY

The findings of the empirical study will now be presented in the form of themes. These themes were identified from the literature review and used to inform the structure of the questionnaire. Data then will be interpreted with the use of literature.

5.4.1. Identifying Information

To begin, participants were asked to provide their ages to provide a baseline for mapping life events. They were asked then about the areas where they presently reside and where they had grown up. This information may provide insight into the stability of participants' upbringing, as well as indicating if the participants have resided or presently reside in areas notoriously affiliated with gang activities. The areas may also indicate the participants' socio-economic system. This information is presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Identifying information

Participant	Age	Area where participant grew up	Area presently residing
1	28	Beacon Valley, Mitchells Plain	Grassy Park
2	26	Beacon Valley, Mitchells Plain	Tafelsig, Mitchells Plain
3	24	Mannenberg	Mannenberg
4	24	Beacon Valley, Mitchells Plain	Beacon Valley, Mitchells Plain
5	19	Ottery	Lost City, Mitchells Plain
6	24	Elsiesriver	Delft
7	24	Eastridge, Mitchells Plain	Eastridge, Mitchells Plain
8	19	Delft and Namibia	Delft
9	33	Lentegeur, Mitchells Plain	Lentegeur, Mitchells Plain
10	26	Vredenburg	Vredenburg
11	30	Tafelsig, Mitchells Plain	Tafelsig, Mitchells Plain
12	28	Various, Bonteheuwel, Heideveld, Reighlands, Lavender Hill	Lentegeur, Mitchells Plain

n = 12

The participants' ages range from 19 to 33 years old with the average being 24 years old. The majority of participants (6 or 50%) had grown up in the Mitchells Plain area with seven (58%) presently residing within the Mitchells Plain area. The majority of participants (11 or 92%) grew up in an area known as the Cape Flats, notoriously associated with the emergence and continued presence of gangs (Van Wyk, 2010:22). Standing (2003:1) states that whilst

the standard of living within the Cape Flats varies from area to area, one can generalise and classify this area as a low income area.

5.4.2. Childhood environment

Muuss (2006:313) states that family structure has an effect on the individual's development. The participants were asked by means of an open ended question to identify with whom they had grown up. This question was asked in order to gain insight into the participant's family system. The results can be found in Figure 5.1

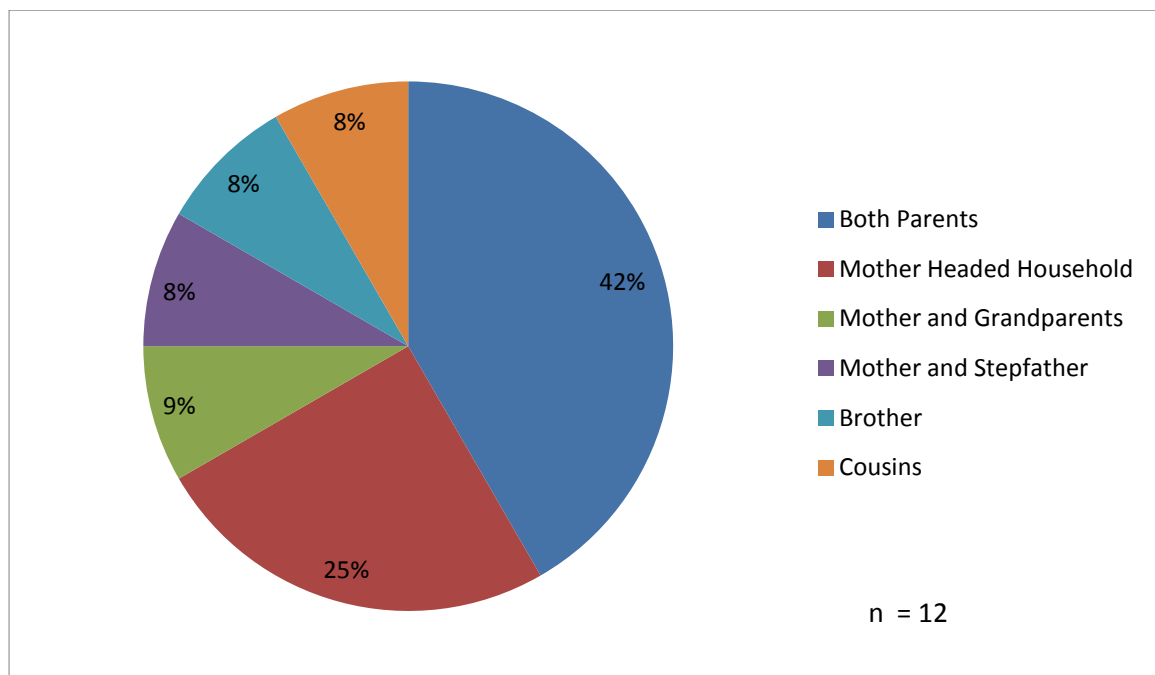


Figure 5.1. Childhood environment

Figure 5.1 illustrates that five (42%) participants lived in a home where both parents were present. The remaining seven (48%) participants lived in non-nuclear households, with no father present. Two (16%) of the participants further lived in households where neither their mother nor their father was present.

Jankowski (1991:39) states that there is no correlation between experiences of an absent father, and gang membership. It is however significant to note that the majority of the participants (7 or 48%) within this study had an absent father and lived within a non-nuclear family system.

5.4.3. Defining a gang

The definition of a gang is a highly contested issue and is said to be influenced by the definer's perception, as well as a changing social reality (Spergel, 1990:177). Participants were asked how they would describe a gang. When the participants were asked this question many eloquent definitions were given, such as:

“A gang is basically a group of guys that actually grew up together. And the way they start is actually they have role models, like older people that live in the community, that came out of prison...Some of us look up to them and want to be like them..A group of guys that grew up together and they get a name for themselves...and there is maybe another group of guys that they don't get along with...”

Participants definitions were varied but similar themes emerged. These themes along with narratives are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2. Definitions of a gang

THEME: DEFINITION OF A GANG		
Subtheme	Narrative	f (%)
Business	<p><i>“dit is soes ‘n maatskappy”(it is like a business)</i></p> <p><i>“It’s almost like, like how can I say...like a security business”</i></p> <p><i>“So basically a gang to me is an organisation.”</i></p>	3 (25%)
Territory	<p><i>“Basically a gang is about territory”</i></p> <p><i>“They fight for ground...territory...”</i></p>	6 (50%)
Drug selling and using	<i>“...it is mostly just drugs involved and a whole lot of drugs...selling of drugs. The using of it.”</i>	4 (33%)
Power	<i>“A gang is power...”</i>	2 (17%)
Money	<i>“...money...when you are in a gang you get everything for free man”</i>	3 (25%)
Crime	<p><i>“...that means that he does naughty stuff, like cruel things, like high jack people, rob people.”</i></p> <p><i>“Armed robberies, car high jacking all that stuff. Like gangsters live.”</i></p>	3 (25%)
Status	<i>“There is a lot of status attached to it. You will get so much respect”</i>	2 (17%)

Table 5.2 illustrates that six (50%) of the participants identified the concept of *territory* in their definitions of a gang. Territory and turf were further linked to drugs and conflict, as a participant described violence currently happening within the Lentegour area in Mitchells Plain. The cause of the conflict was described as “...*mainly because of drugs and turf wars going on.*”

Participants further referred to friends who had died as a result of the war over territory:

“A couple of my friends is in prison now and some have passed away. I lost a friend at the beginning of the year...he was shot because of drugs, drug wars and turf wars going on.”

It became evident that the concept of territory was central to the construct and functioning of gangs. Participants spoke of the need to defend a gang’s turf and reported the experience of being in a state of battle (“*oorlog*”).

The definitions of a gang by Thrasher (1927:46) and Goldstein (1991:7), mirrors participants’ definitions in terms of the common concepts of *territory*, *illegal activities* and as an *organised unit*, which they referred to as a ‘business’. The participants’ definitions however deviated from literature as they emphasised *status* and *power* in their definitions of a gang. Spergel (1990:177) explains that the definition of a gang is influenced by the definer’s perception. Participants who are directly associated with a gang thus identified *power* and *status* as salient in terms of their perception of what a gang represents to them.

5.4.4. Engaging in a gang

Previous chapters have suggested reasons why individuals engage in a gang. The ecological perspective (Bronfennbrenner, 1994) was used to identify various systems which influence the individual, whilst Maslow's (1987) motivational theory was used to explain intrinsic needs which motivate human behaviour. It may be of interest to hear from gang members themselves why they think people get involved in gangs. Participants were asked why they personally had decided to engage in a gang. Participants were then asked what it meant to them to be in a gang. Finally participants were asked to disclose what gang they were associated with and at what age they had become associated with the gang.

5.4.4.1. Motivational factors for an individual to become involved in a gang

Firstly participants were asked why they thought individuals got involved in gangs. The motivational factors which the participants identified are presented in Table 5.3, along with some of the participants' narratives.

Table 5.3. Motivational factors for an individual to become involved in a gang

Motivational Factors	Narrative
Status	<p><i>“People join gangs cause basically they want to be something or someone...If you are not related to someone that is in a gang, then people will just look at you like ‘agh, he’s not worth anything. But if they see you are in a gang...”</i></p> <p><i>“You will get so much respect. You think its good respect but it’s actually fear based. The only reason why people is greeting you is that because they are thinking if they not going to greet back, ‘Jy gaan my seer maak’ you going to hurt me or something like that.”</i></p>
Protection	<p><i>“Dit gaan oor power, as jy ‘n ‘frans’ is, jy kan niks se[^] nie...jy het nie regte...om in die bende tewees is jy veilig” (It’s about power. If you are a ‘frans’ then you can’t say anything, you don’t have rights. You are safe if you are in a gang)</i></p> <p><i>“For protection. Sometimes they can’t protect themselves...”</i></p> <p><i>“...they get bullied all the time...that’s why they join the gang.”</i></p>
Belonging	<p><i>“...they need a sense of belonging. They need to fit in. They need to be a part of something that they haven’t been getting...like their family...Just to be appreciated or acknowledged.”</i></p> <p><i>“...at home they can’t help...and the only love is from the gang.”</i></p>
Money	<p><i>“To get more money”</i></p> <p><i>“To support the household. Your parents don’t ask where it comes from.”</i></p>
Drugs	<p><i>“Because they find out that gangs easily give you drugs.”</i></p>

The first motivational factor listed in Table 5.3 is that of *status*. Participants stated that belonging to a gang resulted in status. One participant's narrative illustrates that gangs are a norm within his community. Failing to associate with a gang may decrease one's status, making one obsolete. Maslow motivational theory (1987:21) states that human behaviour is motivated by a *self esteem* need. Humans thus seek self respect which may be achieved through achievements, as well as through prestige and status. Participants' responses echo theory by identifying status as a motivational factor for engaging in a gang.

The second motivational factor presented in Table 5.3 is that of *protection*. Participants appear to view gangsterism as a survival tactic within a hostile environment, i.e. failing to associate with a gang may leave one at risk. This view is echoed by Miller (2001); Padilla (1992) and Vigil, (1988) in describing how individuals are motivated to engage in gangs in order to benefit from their protective qualities. Safety needs are mentioned by Maslow (1987:21) as a human need, motivating behaviour. The participants' responses are thus aligned with literature.

The third motivational factor presented in Table 5.3 is a sense of *belonging*. The narratives presented to illustrate the need for belonging in Table 5.3 refer to unmet needs, particularly within the home environment. In the interviews, participants identified a need to fit in and be part of something, as well as a need to feel acknowledged and appreciated. These needs were identified by the participants as a motivational factor for an individual to engage in a gang. Concepts of love and acceptance were further mentioned as motivational factors, as gang association leads to what participants referred to as the "*broerse lewe*", or brotherhood.

To be affiliated to a gang means belonging to something, something which offers acceptance and support, albeit for deviant acts. Participants spoke further about feeling that they could go to the gang if they needed support or assistance, as the gang emphasises unity and support. When the individual engages with a gang he is part of something and willing to fight to the

death for his fellow members. This extreme loyalty appears to fill a gap which participants identified as existing due to unmet needs.

Participants' responses are aligned with Ferguson & Wormith (2005:5) and Vignoles *et al* (2006:310), where feelings of alienation are presented as a risk factor for engaging in a gang. Maslow (1987:20) further identifies a need for belonging as a motivational factor for individuals, where individuals may even generate an external threat, in order to provide a sense of unity. Vignoles *et al* (2006:310) state that when belonging is threatened the individual may join a more inclusive group, such as a gang. The participants' narratives are thus aligned with literature with regard to a sense of belonging

Participants referred to *money* as a motivational factor; associating with a gang is seen as an opportunity to gain access to money and material goods. Participants referred to the image and lifestyle which gangs present, for example the smart cars and trendy clothes. Ward (2006:26) findings are similar, stating that individuals were attracted to the commodities which gangs afford.

Finally participants referred to *drugs* as a motivating factor. It was suggested that associating with gangs may increase access to drugs, gangs being said to give gang members drugs in exchange for providing a service of some kind. The participants' responses are aligned with literature as Ward (2006:27) identifies drugs as a motivational factor for individuals to engage in a gang.

Participants had very definitive responses when asked why an individual would get involved in a gang. These responses also appear similar to literature presented in previous chapters.

5.4.4.2. Motivational factors for involvement in a gang

Participants were questioned firstly about why they felt an individual would join a gang, before moving on to ask why they think they had decided to become involved with a gang. The aim of this order of questioning was to allow the participants to respond from the point of view of observers and reporters of events. It was hoped that participants would be more candid when removed from the issue. Common motivational factors and narratives presented by the participants with regard to why they think they had become involved with a gang are presented in Table 5. 4

Table 5.4. Motivational factors for engaging in a gang

Motivational factors	Narratives
Status	<i>"I thought it was cool, to be seen and all that... To be known"</i>
Protection	<p><i>"When I was in Primary school they used to bully me a lot... When I got to High School it was the same thing also..It was almost enough is enough. I don't feel like being bullied anymore..My cousins are all gangsters...They were quiet powerful also because...the guns..."</i></p> <p><i>"Nobody could bother you"</i></p> <p><i>"...as ek nie in die bendes in gaan nie, is ek nie safe nie"(If I don't belong to a gang, then I am not safe)</i></p>
Peer influence	<p><i>"My friends they actually joined the gang...I didn't want to be left out".</i></p> <p><i>"Basically for friends..."</i></p>
Access to material goods	<i>"The neighbours kids came home with name brand clothing and their parents weren't well off. So my parents were like more well off than those people, (and we weren't well off people), and my parents never wanted to buy me name brand stuff cause they couldn't afford it...So I asked my friends like where do they get it. And we spoke about like stealing it from people and robbing people....I thought like I can live like this. This is nice. I dress nice.</i>
Money	<i>"When you needed money they could sort of give you money."</i>
Drugs	<p><i>"Ok it's because of my drug use. Ya, that's all I can think of."</i></p> <p><i>"It's through drugs. When I started using drugs, that's when it all started."</i></p> <p><i>"We were at first drug addicts, so we started our own group..."</i></p> <p><i>"...to support my drug habit, cause they would like give me..."</i></p>

When describing the process of how they became involved with a gang, the participants described certain motivational factors presented in Table 5.4. Participants mentioned that gangs bring *status*. This response is the same as when participants were asked why an individual would join a gang (5.4.4.1.- Motivational factors for an individual to become involved in a gang).

The second factor which motivated individuals to join a gang was the *protection* which a gang afforded its members. One participant spoke about how he had been bullied throughout his childhood. This participant has cousins who are gang members, and he had observed how his cousins' gang association afforded them respect and protection. Joining a gang became his solution to deal with being bullied; the participant saw no other options available to him. He appeared to have a dearth of coping mechanisms as individuals and institutions had failed to protect him or assist him in developing an alternative measure of managing the distress. The gang thus became a viable choice. Melde *et al* (2009:588) suggests that individuals feel empowered and secure when in a gang. This view appears to be supported by participants' responses.

Participants stated that *peers* had facilitated their transition into a gang. Whilst socialising with friends, the participants began to engage in gang activities. One participant spoke about how he began robbing people with his friends and, in the process, was invited by a gang to join. Participants spoke about being influenced by friends who were already a part of a gang, as the participants wanted to imitate their friends. Walker-Barnes & Mason (2001:1815) and Muuss (2006:302) state that exposure to delinquent peers is strongly linked to development of delinquent behaviour.

Literature and participants both state that spending time with gang members can result in the individual beginning to assimilate the values and behaviour of the gang. Apart from friends facilitating the process, a few participants spoke about role models within their communities stating that:

“...there were like two older guys and us. They were like Jakkies. They were like role models to us. They stuff that they had. The stuff that they done. We also wanted to do that.”

Access to *material goods* was mentioned as a factor which motivated the participants to become involved with a gang. It seems that name branded items were very important to the participants, international labels being sort after commodities and appearing to hold much status. Failing to have a name branded item appears to result in feelings of shame and worthlessness. A participant even expressed resentment towards his parents for their failure to buy him branded items, which he viewed as essential. Material goods appeared to be a priority within the participants' communities, as they symbolised status and respect. Gangs are seen as providing access to these material goods.

Participants stated that the possibility of obtaining *money* from gang involvement motivated them to become associated. For participants who are unemployed and with limited education, the possibility of earning some money was highly attractive. Jankowski (1991:40) states a similar view by saying that gangs are viewed as a means to obtaining financial security.

Finally *drugs* were identified as prominent motivational factor. Participants described that their substance usage motivated them to engage with a gang, as they would then be given access to drugs.

Similarities thus exist between the reasons which the participants gave for why an individual might join a gang and why they themselves had become associated. Disparities however existed for some participants, as the motivation factors which they mentioned differed. For example one participant when asked why a person would join a gang was particularly vocal in describing a need for sense of belonging as well as needing to feel acknowledged and

appreciated. When another participant was asked why he had decided to join a gang, he exclusively discussed material goods as a motivational factor.

As anticipated, participants were more open when asked to describe the motivational factors from the point of view of an observer.

5.4.4.3. Meaning attributed to gang membership

Participants were then asked what being in a gang meant to them. It was anticipated that this question might have been too vague for the participants. The participants however grasped the concept, and gave definitive and even impassioned responses. Significantly one participant struggled to verbalise why people join gangs and why he had joined a gang, repeating a dismissive and abhorrent statement (*"I think people are just stupid...I was just stupid."*) However when he was asked what it means to him to be a gang member he immediately responded:

"It means a lot to me. It means a lot...I'm proud actually. It means a lot yes. It's something that I wanted. Also I achieved it."

Other participants also expressed pride to be able to call themselves a member of their gang. A participant associated with the 26 gang stated that:

"...when I am a 26 I feel like proud...if you are a Number in jail...then there is no gangster outside that can say anything or do anything to you."

Labelling oneself as a gang member afforded status (*"It's just that you are known in the area...I feel respected."*). This was reiterated by another participant who stated that *"..most people they just want to be with you..."*

Participants referred to the support and protection which the gang offered by stating:

"...say I'm in trouble, I got people I can go to. So basically it's support."

"Nobody will like hurt you...Most people are bang (scared) for us."

One participant mentioned that he felt like somebody. He felt that calling himself a member of the Bad Boys gang made him feel like an American celebrity, namely Puff Daddy stating:

"...you know I take Puff Daddy in America, he is also a Bad Boy. It's almost like sometimes you want to take other people and almost like I want to be like them."

For this participant being a Bad Boy meant that he felt closer to being an international celebrity and all that it entails. Ward (2006:23) and McHale (2009:1190) show similar findings with regard to the role of the media in promoting gang involvement, the media presenting celebrities and their lifestyles which youth want to emanate.

A feeling of invincibility was referred to by one participant:

“I had power in the gang. So if I want to do something I won’t think twice. Cause to say I can’t do anything wrong. They’ll support me if anything goes wrong”.

5.4.4.4. Gang association

Participants were asked to identify which gang they were presently or in the past associated with, should they feel comfortable enough to do so. Knowledge of specific gang association is needed in order to establish if further information gained is pertinent to a particular gang.

Participants were asked what age they began to become associated with a gang. Apprehension was felt on the part of the researcher in asking this question, as it was assumed that defining the age of association may be difficult and hard to define. This was unfounded however, and the participants could identify specific ages which they recognised as the commencement of their association with gangs. Participants’ gang affiliation as well as their ages of association is presented in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5. Age when gang association commenced

Participant	Age	Gang association	Age of association
1	28	Sexy Boys, 26	14
2	26	26	±17
3	24	Bad Boys	14
4	24	Mongrel	±18
5	19	Americans	15
6	24	Tug Life	13
7	24	Junior Cisco Yakkies (JCY), 26	14
8	19	28	15
9	33	Fancy Boys	16
10	26	The Firm, 28	14
11	30	Wonder Kids	16
12	28	Bad Boys	15

n = 12

Table 5.5 illustrates the various gangs which participants were associated with. For the purpose of the study the inclusion criteria includes males associated with a gang. However the complexity of this association must be noted. For example two (17%) of the participants identified themselves as not fully fledged members, but associated with a gang. One of these participants attributed this to the fact that he did not have the tattoo of the gang. The other participant called himself a member of the 28 prison Number gang, but stated that he was

referred to as a '*frans*' within the 28s, as he had not been to prison to gain his Number. He had however completed some gang activities, and thus could refer to himself as a 28.

Two (17%) of the participants identified themselves as belonging to two gangs, namely a street gang and a prison Number gang. Van Wyk (2010: 22) refers to the connection between street gangs and prison Number gangs, stating that street gangs and prison gangs are known to operate closely with one another. The participants showed that it is possible to be members of both a street gang and a Number gang.

Finally Table 5.5 illustrates the age which participants started to become associated with a gang. The youngest age of association was 13 years old, and the most common age of association was 14 years old. Therefore these participants became engaged in gangs when they were adolescents. In chapter three (3.2.1.2. Stages of development), adolescence was identified as a common life-phase for gang involvement as Pinnock (1997) described specific needs at this stage of development which are met by the gang.

5.4.5. Family

Ferguson and Wormith (2005:5) state that individuals with family members engaged in a gang are more likely to become involved themselves. Based on this premise, participants were questioned about their familial involvement in gangs. De La Rosa *et al* (2007:13) further suggest that familial values are influential in promoting behaviour, particularly deviant behaviour. Thus family norms were explored by looking at the participants' families' responses when they discovered that the participants were in a gang. Familial boundaries and norms of participants were further established through a series of close ended questions. Finally participants' familial interaction and functioning was discussed, as well as establishing if drug usage was present within the participants' families.

5.4.5.1. Family involvement in gangs

Participants were asked if any of their family members have been involved in a gang. The results are presented in Figure 5.2.

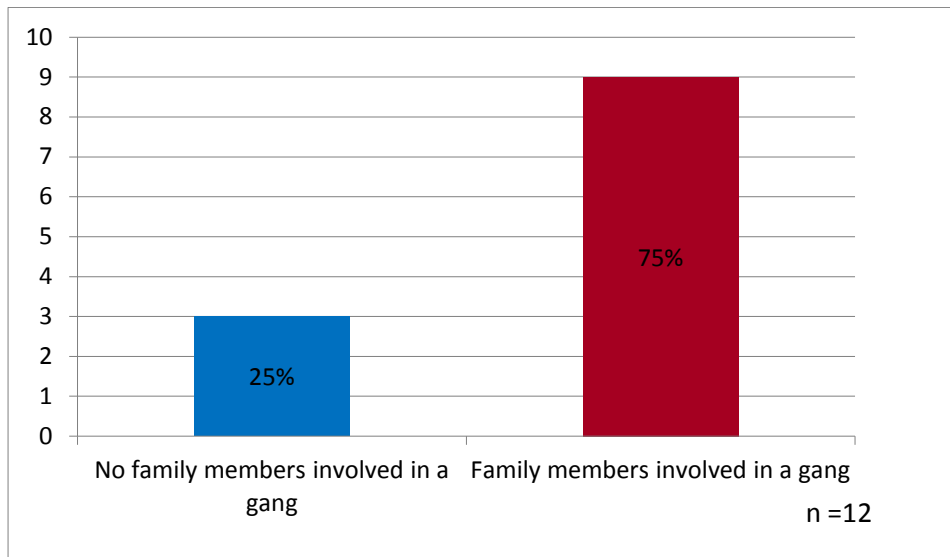


Figure 5.2. Family involvement in gangs

Figure 5.2 illustrates that a remarkable 75% (9) of the participants had family members who were affiliated with a gang. The participants were asked which of their family members were associated with a gang and what gang they were associated with. Table 5.6 contains this information along with whether the family member was the participant's primary caregiver, and the participant's gang association.

Table 5.6. Family involvement in gangs

Participant's gang association	Family member associated with a gang	Family members' gang association	Family member as primary caregiver
26	Cousins	26, 27	Yes
Yakkie(JCY)	Brother	27	Yes
Fancy Boys	Brother	American	No
Mongrel	Father, Brother	27, 26	Yes
Americans?	Father, uncle, cousin	American, 26, 28	Yes
28	Father, brothers	Mafia	Yes
The Firm, 28	Brother	28	No
Bad Boy	Uncles, cousins	Sexy Boys	No
Sexy Boys, 26	Uncles	School Boys	No

n = 9

Of the nine (75%) participants who had family members in gangs, this family member was the primary caregiver for five (56%) of these participants. Thus 56% of participants grew up with a father figure involved in gangsterism.

Three (33%) of the nine participants with familial gang involvement entered the same gang as their family members. When participants who did not join the same gang as their family were questioned about why, varied responses were given. A participant who is associated with the Mongrels and whose father is a 27 gang member, stated that he did not want to go through

the initiation process involved in becoming a 27, as he thought that he would have to kill two correctional service personnel. The participant further felt that his father's association with the 27 afforded him the necessary privileges, negating the need for him to join the 27s.

A participant whose father and brothers are part of the mafia gang, reported a similar story. He alluded to the danger of being involved in the mafia by mentioning the fear which his family experiences. When asked what it means to grow up in the mafia family, he stated that, *"You are treated differently from certain people."* This participant referred to the respect and material gains he acquired by having his family involved. Therefore it was not necessary for him to join the mafia as he already gained from his family's association with the gang.

(i) Signs of familial gang involvement observed by gang members

The participants were asked to explain how they discovered that their family members were involved in a gang. This information might provide insight into the participants' home environments, as well as giving information on family norms. Participants identified the signs of gang membership which they had observed.

Participants spoke about gang *tattoos*. These participants had seen that their family members had tattoos, which they associated with a gang. Participants thus realised that their family member was involved in a gang after seeing their tattoo (*"I did see by the tattoo"*).

One participant described the process of how he found out that his father was involved in a gang:

'...when I started seeing him coming out with drugs. That he potentially sold drugs. And when he started talking another language that I didn't understand...'

This participant referred to *drugs* being an indicator for him, as well as ‘sabela’, the *language* used by gangs.

Participants further referred to *weapons*. The participant whose father and brothers are in the mafia stated that “...*they always carry pistols. One in the house and one in the car.*” This participant spoke about how he would accompany his father when he went to the mafia’s meetings, held four times a week. He would sit in the car whilst his father went to the meeting, fully aware of the purpose of the meeting. This participant described how he had grown up knowing that his father was involved in dealing in blood diamonds and that his mother was involved in dealing in drugs, as their transactions were openly discussed. The participant also told how his father had hoped that he would move into the same business when he was older. It thus appears to be viewed as a legitimate legacy which a father may hope to pass down to his son. This participant’s narrative (“*the family business*”) offers some insight into his family’s norms.

5.4.5.2. Family values and norms

Family values and norms were established by firstly exploring the reaction of participants’ families when they discovered that the participant was involved in a gang. Participants were then asked a series of questions to establish family boundaries and norms

(i) Families’ reactions to involvement in a gang

The participants were asked how their family had reacted when they found out that they were part of a gang. The responses of families to the news that the participant was associated with a gang will be presented separately, for those with no familial involvement and for those with. The reason for presenting these responses separately is to allow for any distinctions to be made with regard to family norms. The responses of the three (25%) participants with no familial involvement in gangs are presented in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7. Responses of participants with families with no familial involvement in a gang

Participant	Families Response
1	<i>"They were disappointed"</i>
2	<i>"They don't know"</i>
3	<i>"They thought it goes part of the drugs, alcohol...My mother's response was just 'oh so you're also a gangster now". That's all.</i>

n = 3

Table 5.7 illustrates that the families of participants had varied reactions. One family was unaware of a participant's involvement, whilst the other two participants described their families' reactions in a rather dispassionate manner. Details of the participants with familial involvement in gangs were presented in Table 5.6. The families' reactions to finding out about the participants' associations with gangs will be added to information presented in Table 5.6, allowing for associations to be made. This information is presented in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8. Familial reaction of participants with familial association with gang

Participant's gang association	Family member associated with a gang	Family members' gang association	Family member as primary caregiver	Family's response
26	Cousins	26, 27	Yes	<i>"They were disappointed. They never thought I would fall into that life..."</i>
Yakkie (JCY), 26	Brother	27	Yes	<i>"They spoke angrily towards me. But my mother...I can't say she's cool. Maybe she just shows she's cool..."</i>
Fancy Boys	Brother	American	No	<i>"My mother was very disappointed because all she said was she didn't raise a gangster."</i>
Mongrel	Father, brother	27, 26	Yes	<i>"Everything was taken from me. I lost the respect of my mother and father."</i>
American	Father, uncle, cousin	American, 26, 28	Yes	<i>"Not lekker(good). Yes I was put out of the house more than two times."</i>
28	Father, brothers	Mafia	Yes	<i>"They don't know...I was supposed to join the Mafias'..."</i>
The Firm, 28	Brother	28	No	<i>"Hulle was tevrede gewees"(They were satisfied)</i>
Bad Boy	Uncles, cousins	Sexy Boys, Bad Boys	No	<i>"...I had to hide it...I come from a decent family, irrespective of my uncles"</i>
Sexy Boys, 26	Uncles	School Boys	No	<i>"My mother took it hard. She was booked into Lentegeur Hospital for a bit, because she couldn't cope on her own. She went into some depression."</i>

The responses of the families relayed by the participants in Table 5.8 appear vaguely spurious in nature. For example the participant associated with the Mongrels stated that his father is affiliated with the Number gangs. The participant however described that his father had lost respect for him after he found out that he was involved in a gang. This might appear hypocritical. Family members reportedly responded with shock and indignation, stating that they hadn't raised their child to be a gangster, despite allowing their children to be raised in an environment where the gang lifestyle is modelled by themselves or their family members.

One participant associated with the Mongrels whose father is a 27 gang member, stated that his father did not support his choice to become a Mongrel. When the participant was asked if his father might have supported him if he had become a 27, he seemed unsure (*"Um...maybe he will..."*). The participant associated with the 28s and whose family is involved in the mafia, stated that his family did not know about his involvement. He appeared to think that his family would be disappointed, not because he was a part of a gang, but that he had not chosen to be a part of 'the family business'. Jankowski (1991:46) provides insight into the issue through the suggestion that gang membership may be seen in some families as a tradition to be upheld.

(ii) Investigation of boundaries and norms

Participants were then asked various close ended questions based on their experiences when they were a teenager. These questions were designed to establish the boundaries and functioning within the family at the formative stages of participants, when they would most likely become involved in a gang. The results can be seen in Figure 5.3.

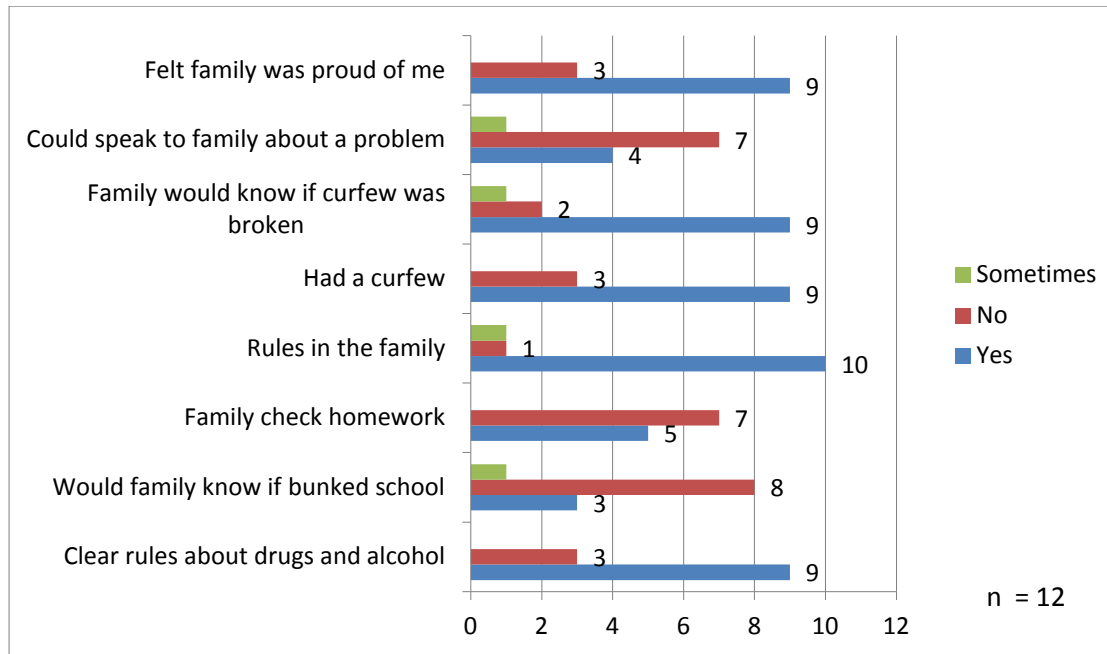


Figure 5.3. Family boundaries and values

Ten (83%) of the participants reported that there were rules within their families, with nine (75%) participants stating that their families had clear rules about drugs and alcohol. Eight (67%) of participants stated that their families would be unaware if they didn't attend school and seven (58%) of participants said that their families would not check if they had completed their homework. An impoverished relationship between an individual's school and an individual's family has been identified as a risk factor for engaging in a gang (Muus, 2006:304). The participants' responses illustrate a lack of communication between their families and their schools, as their absenteeism went unnoticed.

Seven (58%) of participants felt that they could not speak to their families about problems they may have. Muuss (2006:302) states that in families with weak communication and a lack of solidarity, the risk for engaging in a gang increases. Van Leeuwen (2006:189) further explains that a lack of social attachment can place an individual at risk of developing deviant norms and standards of behaviour. This view is expanded upon by Ferguson and Wormith (2005:5) and Craig *et al* (2002:54), as feelings of alienation are identified as a risk factor for engaging in a gang. Participants' responses describing difficulty in sharing their concerns

with their families illustrates a lack of social attachment and alienation from their families, both of which have been identified as risk factors for gang involvement.

The participants were then asked if they thought their families would view certain activities as ‘not so wrong’ or ‘wrong’. The participants’ responses are captured in Figure 5.4.

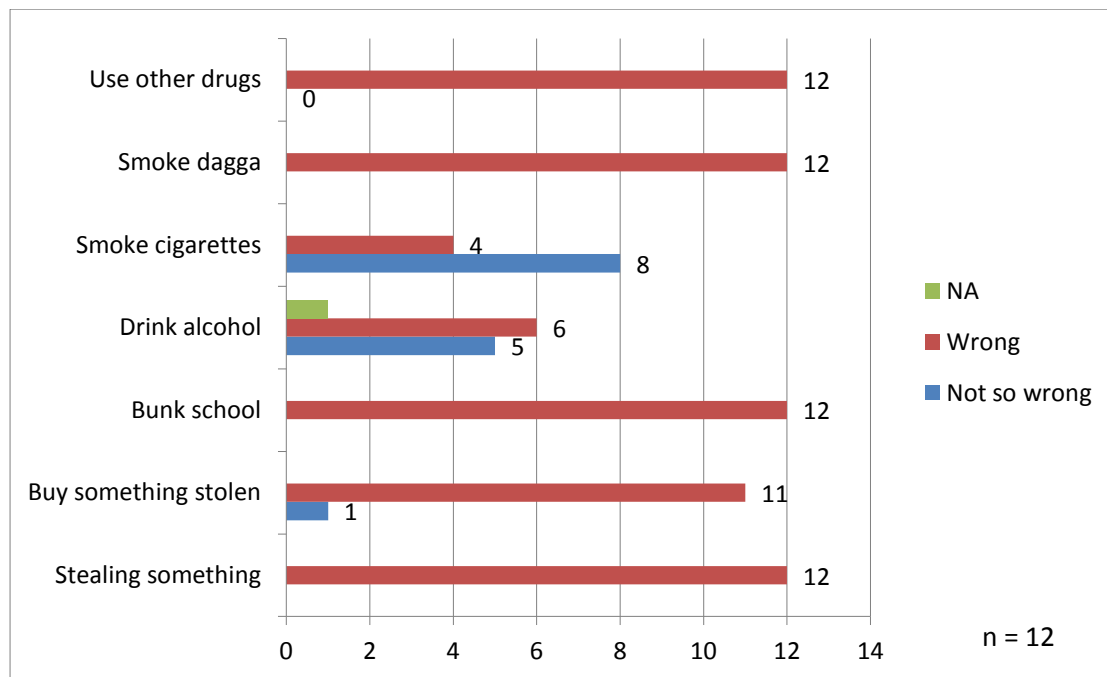


Figure 5.4. Family values

From Figure 5.4 it is evident that smoking cigarettes is viewed as more acceptable, with eight (67%) participants stating that their families would not see it as a wrong (*“At first they said it was wrong, but then afterwards they started to give me money to buy cigarettes”*). Drinking alcohol also appeared to be slightly tolerable with five (42%) participants stating that their families would approve. One participant said, *“It’s not wrong. The drinking, it was nothing.”*

The participants responded definitively that their family would see certain activities as 'wrong'. For example all twelve (100%) participants stated that their families would view stealing something as wrong and the majority (11 or 92%) stated that their families felt that it would be wrong to buy something stolen.

But when asked the questions covered in Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4 participants' responses sounded forced at times. The researcher got the distinct impression that participants were providing responses which they felt should be true, rather than an honest reflection of their families' values and norms. This view was supported by inconsistencies with the rest of the participants' narrative with regards to their family environment. In Table 5.3 such an example is noted in a narrative given by a participant with regard to his family knowingly accepting money gained from his involvement in a gang (*"To support the household. Your parents don't ask where it comes from."*). When this participant was questioned about his family values towards buying stolen items, he adamantly stated that his family would view this activity as morally wrong. A discrepancy thus exists between the participant's narrative and his response to a close ended question clearly designed to test family values and norms.

An investigation of familial boundaries, values and norms identified some poignant issues. Families' reaction to participants' engagement in a gang were varied. Participants with familial gang involvement raised an issue identified in literature (Ferguson & Wormith, 2005:5; Jankowski, 1991:46) in reference to family patriotism regarding gang involvement. The investigation into the family boundaries and values of participants identified weak relationships between family members and the education system, indicated as a risk factor for engagement in a gang. Further an impoverished relationship was identified between participants and their family members resulting in feelings of alienation. These feelings were also identified as a risk factor for engaging in a gang. Finally family values were explored. Participants demonstrated inconsistencies between their reported family values tested by a series of close ended questions and narratives within the interviews. Family interaction may be a more reliable and informative source of information.

5.4.5.3. Family interaction

Swick and Williams (2006:372) state that the family provides the most intimate reference point for an individual, providing a schema for viewing the world, as well as establishing norms of human interaction. Thus participants were asked to describe their childhood home environment. Family violence is identified as playing a role in gang involvement (Swick & Williams, 2006:374; Fraser, 1996:348; Hill, 2002:152). Then participants were asked if there had been any violence present within their homes and whether they had ever experienced any form of abuse.

(i) Home environment

Participants were asked to describe their home environment when they were growing up. Themes which emerged are presented in Table 5.9

Table 5.9. Childhood home environment

THEME: HOME ENVIRONMENT		
Subtheme	Category	Narrative
Instability	Multiple moves	<i>"Ya we moved around a lot"</i> <i>"We were constantly moving around. Going here, going there."</i>
	Multiple dwellers	<i>"I was confused because my mother's sister lived with us, my mother's cousin lived with us. It was never just like the four of us in the house."</i>
Father	Inconsistent	<i>"I was without a father for 4 years"</i>

	Absent father	<p><i>"Let's say because of my dad we had to go through desperate times which we wouldn't have to do if he had played his part."</i></p> <p><i>"Things were fine...it's just that I never had a relationship with my father"</i></p> <p><i>"Daar was nie 'n vaderlike figuer"(There wasn't a father figure)</i></p>
Parents	Permissive parenting	<p><i>"For me it was fun at home. I can do anything. My mother would go out and leave me with the keys."</i></p> <p><i>"My ma het nie rerig geweet wat aan gaan nie.Soes ek kan vriende toe gaan, en dwelms verkoop"(My mother didn't really know what was going on. I could go to friends, and sell drugs).</i></p> <p><i>"When I ask for something I get it."</i></p>
	Absent	<i>"We all used to live here with my brother...they(parents) seker(probably) wanted to be on their own..."</i>
	Substance usage	<i>"He(father) was on drugs...you wouldn't want to be seen with him...Inside of the house he just takes my stuff."</i>
Isolation	Isolated	<i>"For me it was tough because I can never share with anyone."</i>
Conflict	Conflict	<p><i>"My mommy and my daddy use to argue a lot. Used to fight a lot."</i></p> <p><i>"There was a lot of tension with my father not being around most of the time."</i></p>
Abuse	Physical abuse	<i>"...I was a remedial student so I never really knew my school work...my father trying to teach me his way of doing things...he used to smack me around if I didn't want to do it his way."</i>
	Sexual abuse	<i>"I was being sexually abused by my sister and my teacher."</i>

Table 5.9 shows certain sub-themes which participants identified with regard to their childhood home environment. Despite Jankowski's (1991:39) view that a lack of a father figure is not a risk factor for gang involvement, the participants with no prompting, identified a lack of a father figure as a salient characteristic of their home environment.

Participants referred to instability, isolation and absent parents. Alienation has been identified as a risk factor for engagement in a gang (Craig *et al* 2002:54). Participants thus reported factors which increase the likelihood of joining a gang.

Conflict was reported by participants, particularly between participants' parents. Hill (2002:152) states that exposure to marital conflict can adversely affect the individual, whilst chronic exposure can result in emotional deregulation. Heightened emotional and behavioural reactivity may occur, where the individual engages in volatile and externalised behaviour, in the form of anti-social behaviour.

(ii) Presence of violence in home environment

The participants were asked if there was any type of violence in their home environment when they were growing up. The findings are shown in Figure 5.5.

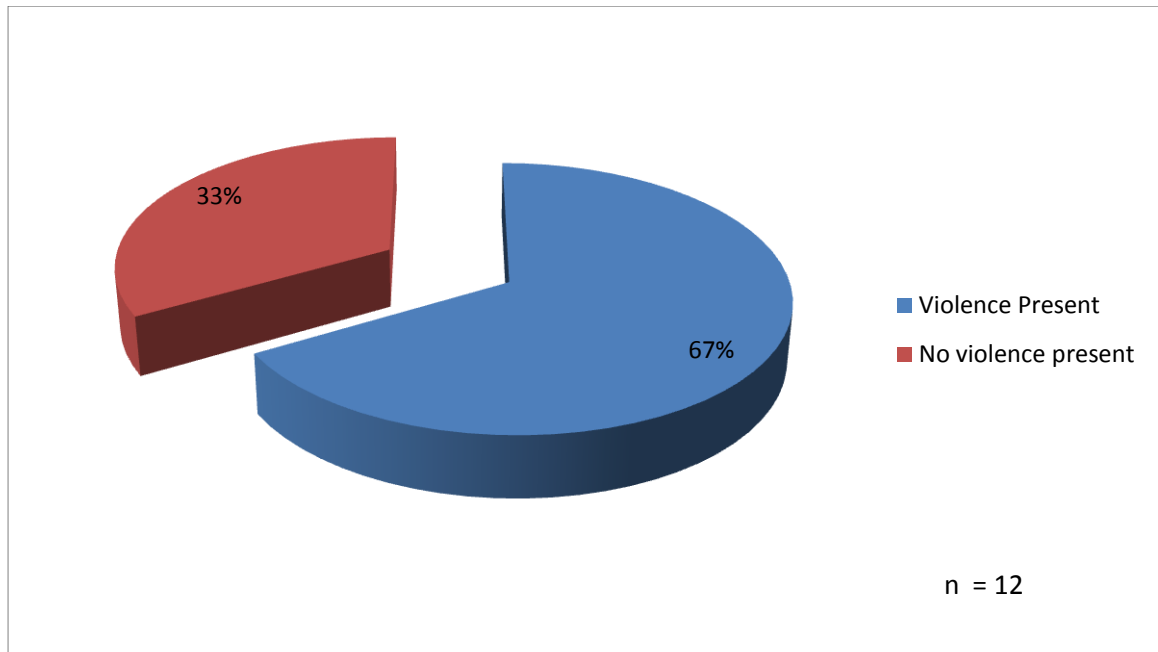


Figure 5.5. Presence of violence in home environment when growing up

Figure 5.5 illustrates that eight (67%) of the twelve participants, had been exposed to some type of violence in their home environment when growing up. Two (17%) of the participants who stated that there was no violence in their homes when growing up, adamantly denied any form of disagreement between their family members. This response appears unrealistic as conflict is a common occurrence in most relationships, thus making their narratives questionable.

Fraser (1996:348) explains that in cases where individuals are exposed to violence, aggressive behaviour is reinforced and rewarded, and limited problem solving behaviour is developed. Thus the individual may internalise violence as a viable coping mechanism in dealing with conflict. Pro-social behaviour may not be rewarded, increasing the risk of gang involvement.

(iii) Experiences of abuse

Victims of abuse have been noted as being at risk of involvement of a gang (Swick & Williams, 2006:374). After the various forms of abuse were clarified, participants were asked if they had ever experienced any form of abuse. The results are illustrated in Figure 5.6.

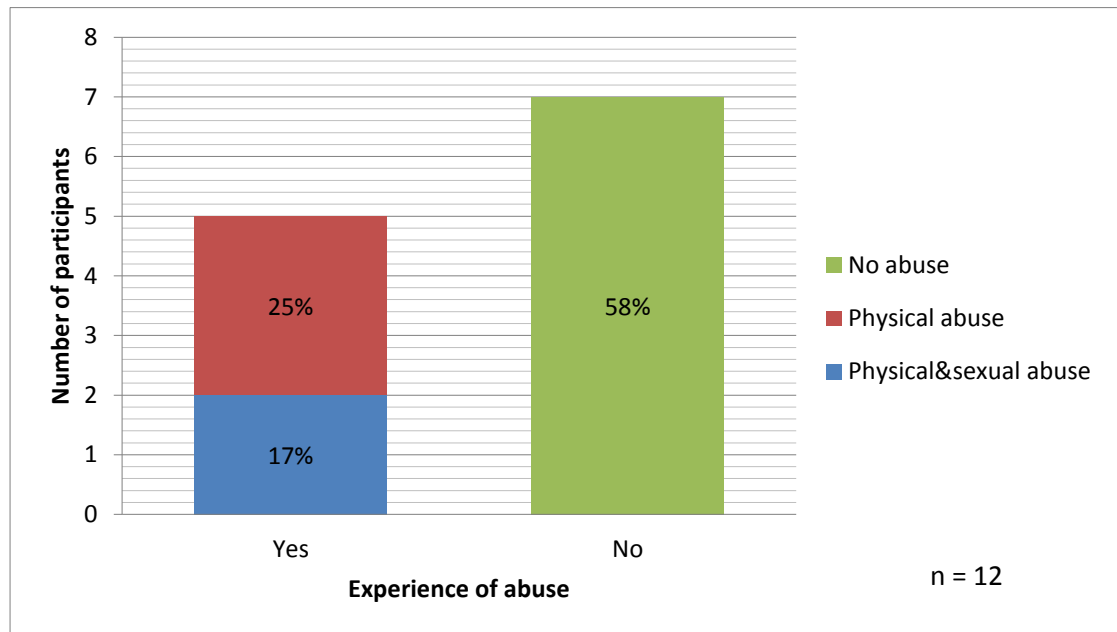


Figure 5.6. Experience of abuse

Figure 5.6 illustrates that seven (58%) of the twelve participants reported never experiencing any form of abuse. Five (42%) participants however admitted to experiencing some form of abuse. Two (17%) of these participants disclosed experiencing both sexual and physical abuse. Swick and Williams (2006:374) explain that experiences of abuse increase the individual's risk of engaging in a gang, as relationships become centred around struggles for power.

However, the validity of the results with regard to participants' experience of abuse is questionable, as self disclosure of being a victim of abuse generally is low, particularly in the context of a once off interview. Even those participants who did admit to experiencing abuse,

minimised the events (*“Sometimes when I was small he (father) would like beat me up, but nothing big.”*).

5.4.5.4. Family and drugs

Swick and Williams (2006:372) state that familial drug abuse can adversely affect the individual's development, resulting in a increased risk for engagement in a gang. Familial substance abuse may further increase the risk of substance usage of an individual (Kilpatrick *et al*, 2000:2) Participants were asked various questions to establish familial drug usage. Participants were asked if any of their family members used drugs or alcohol. They then were asked if any of their family members had sold drugs or alcohol.

(i) Familial drug usage

Firstly participants were asked if any of their family members use drugs or alcohol. For the sake of this study distinction will not be made between substance usage, abuse and dependence. Family members that use drugs or alcohol in a regular pattern, and or in an excessive or problematic manner were included. The participants answered either yes or no to familial use of drugs or alcohol. The findings are illustrated in Figure 5.7.

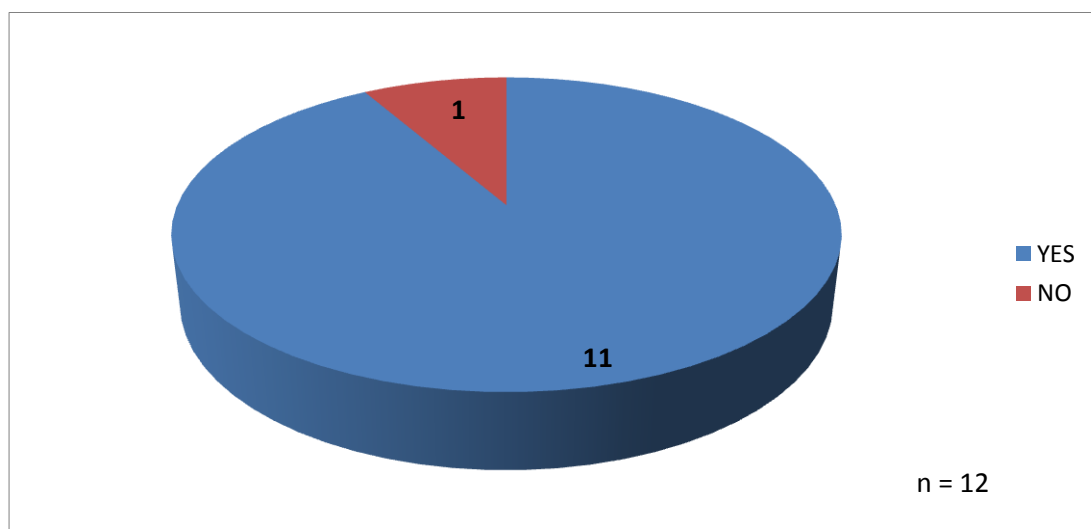


Figure 5.7. Familial drug or alcohol usage

Figure 5.7 illustrates that eleven (92%) of the twelve participants has some family member who uses drugs, alcohol or both, in a problematic manner. This may provide more insight into the environment in which the participants have developed. Therefore drug and alcohol usage may be a norm.

Swick and Williams (2006:373) state that familial drug abuse is a risk factor for engaging in a gang, as it results in an alienation from systems. The family becomes detached from microsystems such as the community, school and other support systems. The guilt and shame experienced by the individual as a result of familial drug usage further compounds the risk of engaging in a gang, as individuals seek to improve their self esteem and find a sense of belonging.

Brook *et al*, (1990) and Kilpatrick *et al* (2000), identify familial substance use as having a modelling affect on adolescents, resulting in an increase in their usage of similar substances. De La Rosa *et al* (2007:13) suggests that individuals who are exposed to familial drug usage, internalise their families' values and norms with regards to substance usage.

(ii) Family involvement in sale of drugs

Participants were then asked if their family members sell or have sold drugs or alcohol. The results are presented in Figure 5.8.

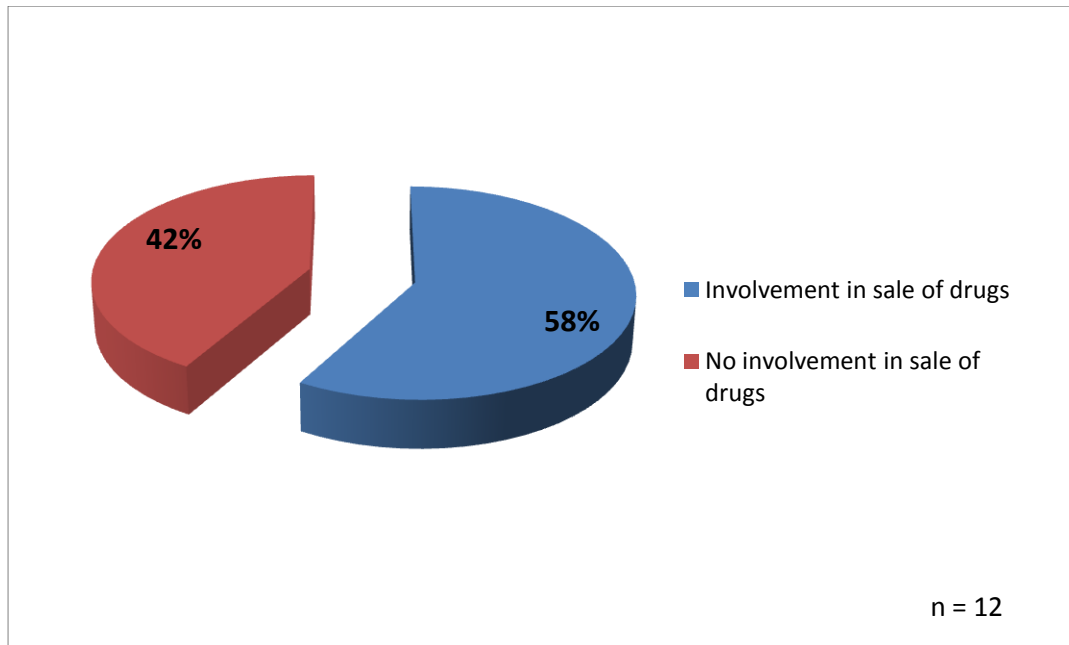


Figure 5.8. Family involvement in sale of drugs

Seven (58%) of participants have family members who are presently or have in the past been involved in selling drugs. From the eleven (92%) participants who have family members who use drugs, six (55%) of these participants have family members who sell drugs.

Interestingly the one participant who stated that none of his family members use drugs or alcohol in a problematic manner, stated that his mother had however been involved in selling drugs. Thus all participants had been exposed to drugs or alcohol in their home environment. These results show an alarmingly high prevalence of illegal activities within the participants' communities. Kinnes (2000:1) refers to the normalisation of deviant behaviour within families and communities. Drug usage and drug sales have shifted from an illegal activity, and have even become sanctioned as a legitimate and acceptable activity within some families and communities.

5.4.6. Drug usage

Kinnes (2008:4) states that within the South African context, gangs' membership cannot be separated from drug usage. One of the objectives of the study is to explore gang membership and drug usage. Thus participants were asked to identify how old they were when they started using each substance. This information may provide insight into the temporal order of gang membership and drug usage. The number of participants who have used each substance appears in Table 5.10, along with the minimum and maximum age of usage, as well as the most common age of onset, identified by means of the mode and median.

Table 5.10. Substance usage of participants

Substance	f	Minimum age	Maximum age	Mode (Mo)	Median (X)
Cigarettes	12	07	21	13	13.83
Alcohol	12	09	22	15	15.08
Dagga	12	07	21	13	14.6
Mandrax	09	11	21	13;16	15.6
TIK	12	13	25	13;15	17.75
Heroin	07	16	26	18	20.42
Cocaine	04	16	22	17	18
Ecstasy	05	16	19	16	16.6

n = 12

Table 5.10 illustrates that all (12 or 100%) of the participants had tried cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana and TIK. In a study conducted by Katz *et al* (2005:81) alcohol and marijuana was

identified as the most common substances used by gang members. The participants in this study add TIK to the list of the most common substances used.

Participants were further asked what their drug of choice was. Eight (67%) of the participants stated that TIK was their drug of choice, whilst the remaining four (33%) participants identified heroin as their drug of choice.

5.4.7. Schooling

Ward (2006:50) states that schools play an integral part in an adolescent's development. Further, attachment to school activities may act as a protective mechanism, diminishing delinquent and anti-social behaviour. Craig *et al* (2002:55) state that gang members are usually known to be struggling with school work, or to have dropped out of school. Participants were asked what grade they completed at school and, if they had not completed their schooling, why they had not done so. The grade which participants completed is illustrated in Figure 5.9.

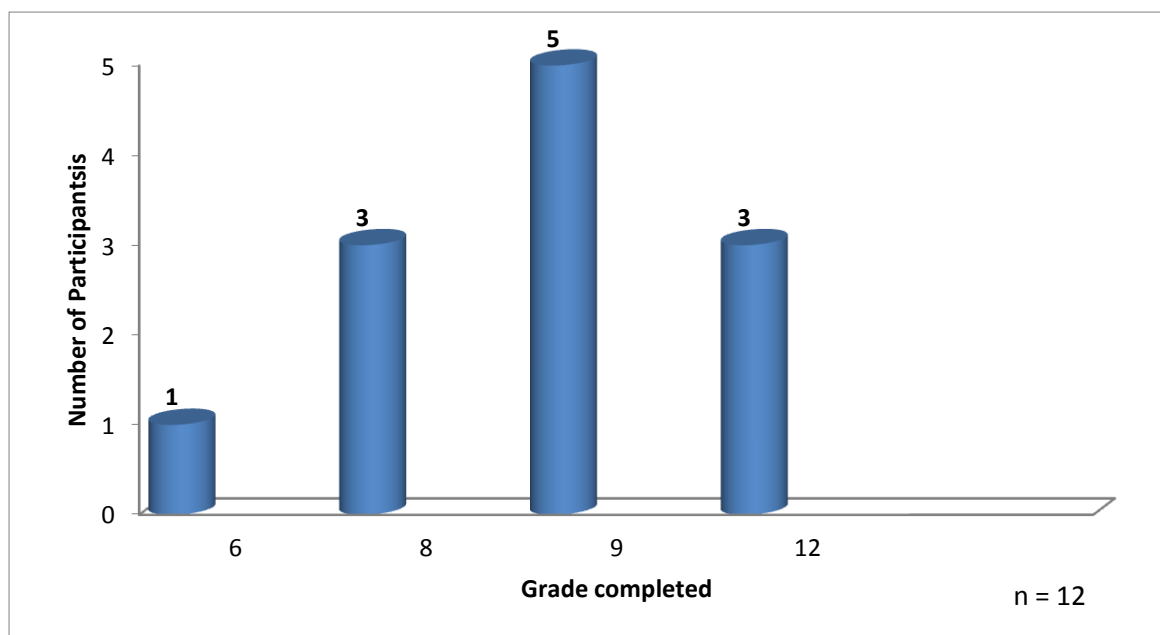


Figure 5.9. Grade completed

Figure 5.9 illustrates that less than half (5 or 42%) of the participants completed grade 9 and only three (25%) participants completed grade 12. Participants' responses are consistent with Craig *et al* (2002:55) in showing a high school dropout rate for those associated with gangs.

When participants were asked why they had not completed school various responses were given. One participant stated that his drug usage made him leave school. He was 16 years old at the time and had completed up to grade eight. When participants were asked what age they were when they stopped attending school, participants appeared older than what the average age for the grade would be. A participant who completed grade eight stated that he was 17 years old at the time, and had failed three years of his schooling. Another participant reported being a remedial student and struggling with his academic work. This study does not endeavour to assess learning difficulties, but it would seem that poor school functioning existed. It is however not clear if this is a consequence or a motivating factor in conduct issues. Fraser (1996:352) states that academic progress plays a role in aggressive behaviour, as feelings of inadequacy are externalised. Feelings of worthlessness as a result of difficulty with school work is a risk factor for engaging in a gang as individuals alienate themselves from the school and align themselves with the inclusive and accepting gang(Craig *et al*, 2002:55).

A participant spoke about being expelled from school due to his violent behaviour (*"I got expelled...Stabbed a guy with a scissor in the eye"*). Another participant spoke about various thefts which he committed at his school, stating:

"...when I was in standard 6 I stole the teachers gun out of his bag...I stole the woodwork teacher's money out of his bag...I broke into the tuck-shop."

Participants described uncontrollable behaviour which resulted in them being expelled from schools. In a study on gangsterism in South Africa, Ward (2006:50) showed similar findings, as schools were described as incapable of controlling pupils' behaviour.

Gang involvement was mentioned as playing a role in participants' decisions to stop attending school. One participant stated:

"...I couldn't go to school anymore cause I joined the gang. The rival gangs...they knew that I went to school, so they would like wait for me."

Another participant said:

"I was bunking. School started getting boring. Started running with the gang. Sitting with the gang and smoking...Coming home at 2 "o'clock, 3 "o'clock. Say I coming home from school, but the whole day I'm sitting there."

Participants' narratives provided some insight into the education system. They imply that the participants' families were oblivious to the fact that they were not attending school. In a previous section (5.4.5.2 (ii) Investigating family boundaries and norms) participants were asked if their families would know if they had bunked school. Eight (67%) of the participants said their families would be unaware if they absconded from school. This indicates a poor relationship between the education system and participants' guardians. The progress of these participants was clearly not traced by the education system or by their guardians. Muuss (2006:304) describes how an impoverished relationship between an adolescent's parents and the school is likely to affect his school performance. When gaps develop the individual's motivation to succeed may decrease.

Therefore the school system has been explored in terms of its role in the process of engagement in a gang by an individual. A further notable indicator of risk factors for engaging in a gang is the activities which the individual took part in with his peer group. These activities will now be explored.

5.4.8. Peer relationships

Muuss (2006:311) refers to the influential role which peers play in an individual's development, particularly in adolescence. Participants were asked about the activities which they had engaged in when they were younger, and if they noticed any change in these activities.

Participants made mention of deviant behaviour from a young age (*"We used to play games. The sex games you know...smoking dagga, drinking alcohol, without anyone knowing"*). Another participant described himself as:

"very very naughty. We used to throw people's windows in...and stuff..."

Participants described a fascination with guns from young ages. Guns featured in the activities of participants and their peers, permeating narratives:

"We were sitting in the house. We had just bought the gun, and we...and no one knew that the gun was loaded and a friend of mine got shot threw his mouth."

"We always used to walk with a pellet gun and then we grew up with that mentality, I want that gun and I want to...My first gun I got when I was 11 years old. I got my first gun. That was my baby."

The participant who provided the above narrative, went on to describe how he began shooting animals, and progressed at the age of eleven to shooting people. His first victim was an ice cream seller who refused to give him and his friends ice creams. Hill (2002:145) states that 50% to 80% of offenders are diagnosed with DSM-IV antisocial personality disorder. The activities described by this particular participant illustrate behaviour associated with such a personality disorder.

Activities which the participants engaged in when younger provide insight and further highlights certain early traits of deviant behaviour. The interaction of gangs and drugs will now be explored.

5.4.9. Gangs and drugs

Santé (1991) states that the connection between substances and gangs can be traced back through the history of gangs. In order to explore the connection between drugs and gangs various questions were established based on the literature used to inform Chapter four. At this stage information obtained from a focus group held with four members will be integrated where pertinent, with the 12 individual participants' responses.

Questioning began with asking participants if they felt that drugs and gangs were related and if so, how. Then the initiation process into the gang was explored, questioning whether drugs play a role in the process. Gang norms with regard to drug usage were examined next. The temporal order of gang usage and gang membership was looked at also, and participants were asked to explore drug selling, as well as gang typologies. Finally the connection between drugs and gang activities was investigated.

5.4.9.1. Perspective of gang members on the connection between gangs and drugs

All of the individual participants (n = 12) and group members (n = 4) strongly agreed that there is a connection between gangs and drugs. When asked to elaborate, the participants had a few common responses.

The first theme was money. Participants felt that drug sales are the foundation of gangs' existence as it provides the gangs' income. One participant stated:

“As gangs’ nie dwelms het nie, dan is daar nie geld nie. En sonder geld is daar nie power nie” (If gangs don’t have drugs, then there is no money. And if there is no money, then there is no power.).

Participants further identified that drug usage played a role in gang functioning, as drug usage was used to encourage gang activities.

“I will never be able to shoot someone being sober. But there, you will maybe sit together and start smoking, and you smoke and you smoke and smoke, and all of a sudden the topic comes up of this one or that one needs to be shot or who needs to die. And then they put a gun in your hand. And you don’t care that time. You don’t have feelings towards someone else. That it’s someone else’s child, or husband or son. You just go. You just do it.”

Literature (Klein., 1995; Mackenzie *et al.*, 2006:111; Nasir & Rosenthal., 2009:207; Vigil., 1985; Kinnes., 2008:4) establishes that a connection exists between gangs and drugs. Participants' responses are thus aligned with literature, as participants vehemently stated that drugs are inexplicably connected to gangs. The nature of this connection was then explored, beginning with the initiation process.

5.4.9.2. Initiation and drugs

Padilla (1992) in describing the initiation process of Puerto Rican gangs in Chicago, identified drugs as playing an integral role in the process. Participants were asked if drugs had played a role in their initiation into the gangs, and if so, to elaborate. Participants described how they would have to complete a task in order to be accepted into the gang, and how drugs would be provided for them to use in the process:

“...you’re on probation. So like they will share you of their secret, “now go shoot at that people”...And when you come back you can drink as much as you want to, smoke as much as you what you want to.”

Therefore drugs were identified as playing a role within the initiation process. Participants explained that before going to complete the task which would prove them as worthy of being in the gang, they would be given drugs by the gang. Once the task was complete, the new inductee would again be offered drugs by the gang. With some insight into the role which drugs play in the initiation process, gangs’ norms with regards to drugs was explored.

5.4.9.3. Gang norms with regards to drugs

Discrepancies exist within literature with regard to gangs sanctioning drug usage. Taylor (1990) and Mieczkowski (1986) state that gangs may be selective of the substances which they promote and those which they prohibit.

(i) Gangs support of drug usage

Thus participants were asked if they felt that their gangs supported them using drugs, and if so how. The participants’ responses are polarised between feelings that the gangs do support or encourage members to use drugs, and those who felt not. Participants who felt that gangs supported drug usage stated:

“Whenever you go out and shoot. So if you come back, you can use whatever you want to. there is always a party.”

“Yes...if I go to them they are always there.”

“Yes. Like when we go rob and steal, or go out and fight. Like when I was craving I could just go to them.”

Participants who felt that gangs did not encourage drug usage stated:

“If you don’t use, they won’t force you or encourage you to use.”

“They won’t come to you and say ‘try this’. If you are known as a drug user then they will perhaps say ‘jy moet kom tot hier daar is nuwe werk’ (you must come here there is new work), ‘nuwe werk’ meaning a higher quality of your specific drug.”

Another participant, when asked if gangs supported substance use, stated *“Nie rerig nie. Want daar kom die korupsie, bedrog in...”* (not really because that is where the corruption, deception comes in). This participant was valued in his gang because he did not use drugs. He was utilised in the drug trade from the age of fourteen as he could be trusted with stock, and because of his age, he could conceal activities easier and would be less likely to be prosecuted if caught. As a non-drug user, this participant became an asset to the gang. When he began using drugs, his role within the gang changed and he was relocated to other tasks.

One participant felt that gangs did not encourage drug usage and in fact, they discouraged usage of some kinds of drugs:

“Not actually because it depends....like this guy..., he doesn’t really want you to smoke heroin cause he knows what it does to you. He would rather advice you to smoke TIK instead of heroin”

Another participant drew a distinction between the two gangs to which he belongs, namely the Yakkies and the 26s. The participant described that at first when he was a Yakkie, his drug usage was encouraged:

“Then they tell me ‘yeah jy mekeer drugs?’ and ek sê ‘ja gee vir my’(hey do you need drugs and I say yes give me). And I’m going to TIK then I’m going to go fetch them that car, go fetch them those drugs, go fetch them that one...”

However when the participant became a 26 gang member, things became more serious and he had to act in a more responsible way (*“I smoked less, cause I just want to think about my Number. Can’t forget my Number.”*). The participant described how the 26s did not support usage of all drugs (*“...they don’t really want me to smoke heroin.”*).

(ii) Gang norms with regards to certain drugs

Participants were then asked to clarify if gangs supported the use of all drugs or just some. It became clear that drugs were ranked and graded within gangs. Participants described that some drugs were condoned but others were discouraged.

“...like the gang I was in our drug of choice was crystal meth. They felt that unga³...is something that you are sleepy, and you can't be on the ball all the time. Crystal meth is something that keeps you awake, so your mind is active.”

“Ya he (gang leader) gives you but he doesn't really encourage heroin cause he knows what it does to you, and where it will bring you. It's not like TIK...I mean you can stay without TIK, but you can't stay without heroin.”

Katz *et al*, (2005) and Mackenzie *et al*, (2006) explain that marijuana usage is sanctioned by gangs as it is seen as substance with low risk. Participants' views bear out the literature, however TIK and mandrax were also reportedly accepted by gangs. Heroin usage was however controversial. Participants whose drug of choice was heroin, described how they would have to conceal its use from the gangs (*“They didn't really know that I smoked heroin because I never smoked it there with them. I smoked other places.”*).

A participant who is a member of the Mongrels and whose drug of choice is heroin stated:

In my gang, basically they don't like heroin addicts...The people that smoke heroin are always Numbers. Cause the Numbers can use...”

This participant made mention that in the street gang life, the power of the Number allows members of the Number the ability to overrule all authority. Heroin usage is thus condoned within a street gang if one is affiliated with the Number. This participant was allowed to smoke heroin within his gang as his father was a high ranking member of the 27 gang.

³ Unga is a name for a heroin derivative.

Another participant with heroin as his drug of choice who is affiliated to the 26s described that his heroin usage is accepted and supported by his gang, and is given heroin by them.

This becomes a complex issue as a participant earlier described how his Number discourages him from using heroin. It would seem that within the rank of the Number, there are those that acquire their Number in prison and there are those that become affiliated on the outside of prison. Those that claim their Number on the outside of prison appear to be less rigid and more flexible in terms of drugs usage, whilst the primordial Number gained in prison emphasises discipline.

A participant states that:

“Most gangs are against heroin. Even in prison also. If you go to prison and they hear you use heroin, it’s almost like they treat you like a dog, cause you are sick.”

One participant puts the debate into context:

“...it’s a difficult one to explain. Like in the gangs, in the Number from jail purpose .Because you have now left gangsterism. Like when you are a 26,27. or 28 you kind of leave being a Sexy Boy, leave being a Mongrel. Cause now you have the highest ranking...You kind of want to do things to the best of your ability for the gang...So smoking dagga is acceptable cause it doesn’t zonk you out like other drugs.”

Gang norms with regard to drugs are thus a complex issue, with distinctions made between drugs. Marijuana, mandrax and TIK usage appears to be condoned within a gang. Heroin usage is however a contested issue, as participants described how their gangs discouraged

their usage of heroin. Gang norms however vary between gangs and are difficult to define and even more of a challenge to present in a conclusive statement.

5.4.9.4. Temporal order of gang involvement and drug usage

Swahn *et al* (2010) and Mackenzie *et al* (2006:116) suggest that marijuana usage precedes gang involvement. It is of interest to explore if participants first began using drugs, or if involvement in a gang came first. In order to establish the temporal order, the information of individual participants will be utilised. Focus group participants were excluded from this investigation as limited background information was collected, for example with regards to age of commencement of drugs usage by the participants. Information provided by the individual participants (n = 12) which informed previous section (5.4.4.4. Gang association and 5.4.6. Participants' drug usage) gives a baseline for establishing a temporal order. Table 5.5 illustrates the age when individual participants became associated with a gang. This information may be compared with Table 5.10 which describes the age of commencement of drug usage of individual participants. This combined data is presented in Table 5.11, along with the responses of individual participants when they were asked to reflect on the temporal order of their involvement in gangs and drugs.

Table 5.11. Temporal order of gang involvement and drug usage

Participant	Gang association	Age of association	Age of first drug usage	Did you use drugs before you joined the gang?
1	Sexy Boys, 26	14	8	<i>"I used to smoke...like dagga, but no hard drugs."</i>
2	26	±17	13	<i>"Yes...Ja you can say so..."</i>
*3	Bad Boys	14	15	<i>"I smoked mandrax before I used to be in a gang."</i>
4	Mongrel	±18	13	<i>"Yes...I was only using TIK..."</i>
5	American	15	14	<i>"Only dagga and TIK. Afterwards I started with buttons"</i>
6	Tug Life	13	13	<i>"...first gang then drinking alcohol"</i>
7	Junior Cisco Yakkies (JCY), 26	14	13	<i>"more or less the same time. We used to smoke buttons and rob the customers as they came there to buy drugs."</i>
*8	28	15	16	<i>"I started using and then I got into the gang"</i>
9	Fancy Boys	16	16	<i>"I started experimenting...I mean experimenting whilst going into the gang."</i>
10	The Firm, 28	14	21	<i>"I joined the gang first and then I started using drugs."</i>
11	Wonder Kids	16	13	<i>"Ok, daar is waar dit begin"(Ok that is where it begun)</i>
12	Bad Boys	15	14	<i>"I was on alcohol".</i>

n = 12

Two (17%) of the participants' narratives (*"...first gang then drinking alcohol"*, *"I joined the gang first and then I started using drugs."*) stated that they had started using drugs after they had engaged in a gang. The narratives of participants appear consistent most of the time (10 or 83%), as reflected in the information gained from Table 5.5 and Table 5.10. Two of the participants marked as participant 3 and participant 8 in Table 5.11., illustrate discrepancies

between the data and narratives. Based on data comparing age of commencement of gang membership and drug usage, these participants are said to have begun using drugs *after* engaging in a gang. These participants however gave clear and repeated narratives, supporting the fact that they began using drugs *before* their involvement in the gangs. A possible explanation may be that the age which participants assigned to the commencement of their drug usage and gang association may not have been completely accurate.

Based on the narratives, eight (67%) of the participants reported using drugs before getting involved in a gang. Two (17%) of the participants reported using drugs after they became involved in a gang, and two (17%) of the participants reported that the commencement of drug usage occurred simultaneously with engagement in a gang. Swahn *et al* (2010) state that marijuana and alcohol use are risk factors for engaging in a gang, and Mackenzie *et al* (2006:115) found that 51% of members had used marijuana prior to engagement in a gang. The majority (8 or 67%) of participants started using drugs before they entered into a gang. These results are relatively consistent with literature (Swahn *et al*, 2010).

All (12 or 100%) of the participants unilaterally agreed that their drug usage increased and progressed whilst engaged in a gang. (*"It got from bad to worse. Because knowing that there was always drugs..."*). Mackenzie *et al* (2006:115) concur with participants' responses, by stating that the use of harder drugs is believed to begin after joining a gang.

Insight into the temporal order of drug usage and gang association was thus gained. The sale of drugs by gangs was then explored.

5.4.9.5. Drug trade

Standing (2005: 11) describes South African gangs' involvement in the drug trade, with particular reference to the Americans, a gang which operates like a franchise, and a wholesaler of drugs to drug merchants. Drug trade is further said to be enmeshed within gang

functioning (Taylor, 1990; Padilla, 1992; Mackenzie *et al*, 2006). Therefore individual participants were asked whether they had sold drugs or alcohol. The results may be viewed in Figure 5.10.

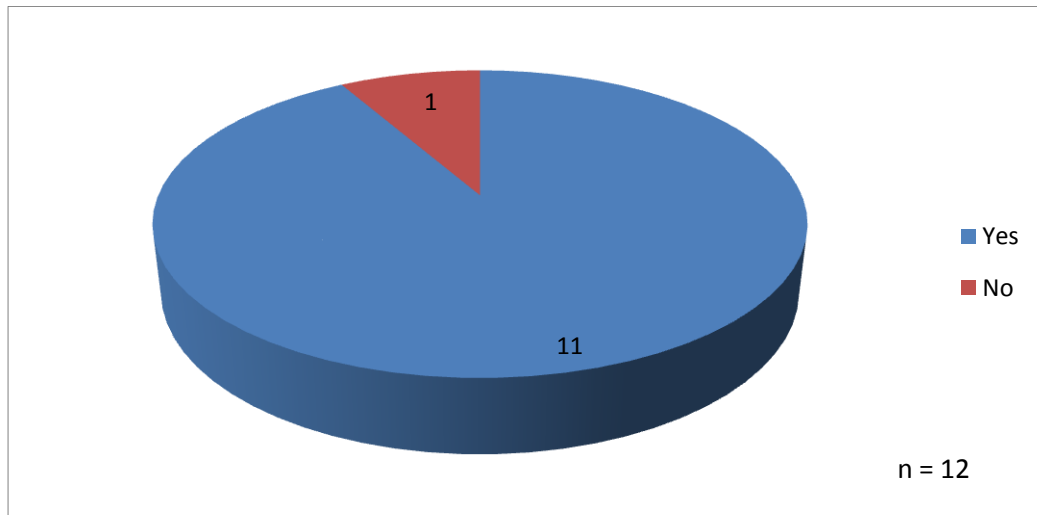


Figure 5.10. Involvement in sale of drugs

Figure 5.10. illustrates that of the twelve individual participants, eleven (92%) of the participants have been involved in selling of drugs. The one participant who stated that he has not sold drugs, is part of the Tug Life gang, which appears to be a very small and unstructured gang primarily consisting of friends. Thus the majority (11 or 92%) of participants were involved in the sale of drugs. These findings support those in literature.

For example, Standing (2005:2) describes how drug trade has become so entrenched in gang activities whilst Taylor (1990), Padilla (1992) and Mackenzie *et al* (2006) reiterate that drug trade is enmeshed within gang functioning.

Participants described the process of selling drugs on behalf of the gang. A participant described how he received a share of the profits:

“...He (the gang leader) don’t mind paying you like R150 to R200 a day cause he made like 25 times R400. That’s a lot of money. And if the police caught you or something, then he would bail you out same time.”

Another participant stated that he would get a salary in return for selling drugs.

“Every month I will get a salary. Say now the boss will buy you clothes and that. He will give a section of the money to your parents, and the other...maybe you owe him a lot of money so he will just take it from there.”

After further clarification this participant explained that he would never see the monetary value of his salary as after deductions were made, he would receive drugs in lieu of the deficit amount. When the participant was asked about his family’s reaction to the money which they would receive from the gang, he stated that they were not happy about it, but as he was not working at the time, they accepted the money.

Participants who sold drugs independently from the gang explained that they would need to conceal their activities, as members are expected to give a share of the profits to the gang. One participant who is a 26 gang member explained that he had sold drugs in prison. Because of the status which the participant held, he did not have to give of the profits, but he did share the profits in other ways, explaining that:

“Like if they want a cigarette I will give them, or airtime I will buy them airtime. But I don’t have to give them money cause I am now standing for this. If the cops must catch me, I must stand”

The sale of drugs thus appears to be a common activity for these participants. Participants demonstrated the ideological shift, mentioned by Standing (2005:2) in the language used to describe drug trade. The word ‘work’ was used to describe the drug trade, illustrating that these activities are viewed as a legitimate means of earning an income. Valdez and Sifaneck (2004; 83) suggest that drug trade is a consequence of gang members’ usage rather than a primary focus. The findings however appear to deviate from this view, as participants defined gang trade as central to gang functioning.

5.4.9.6. Drugs and gang activities

Vigil (1985, 1988) states that drugs are entrenched within the culture of a gang, further fulfilling certain functions within a gang. Participants were asked if drugs played a role in gang activities. They emphatically stated that drugs were a part of daily activities stating:

“Drugs will be like serving tea”

“Say the gang comes together...They first use before anything.”

“It’s (drug usage) an activity because when there are people around like the family members of the gang...we take out drugs and entertain them. So when you are sitting and plotting and planning and stuff...you are going to smoke a slowboat⁴ as it calms you down and makes you relaxed. You are going to think easy.”

“...like say there is a conflict in Tafelsig right, and then the Fancy Boys in Hanover Park, Woodstock, all those places, and then everyone will come together, and then

⁴ Marijuana and tobacco mixture

they will discuss whats happening, and who is fighting, and where they need help....and there is a lot of drugs and alcohol.”

“We get together at times. We may smoke buttons⁵ also. There in prison we TIK also. We get everything.”

Participants spoke about how drugs motivate the gangs’ activities:

“...drugs do play a big role. Especially when you are shooting at someone, robbing someone, stabbing someone. It plays a big role. Cause it’s just over drugs that. Just over drugs.”

Participants’ spoke about how drugs are used before conducting gang activities, as well as after completing a task.

“Voor ek iemand dood skiet is ek op my volle verstand...Dan gebruik ek ‘n klomp dwelms, dan gaan ons.”(before I use drugs I am fully conscious. So then I use a lot of drugs and we go)

“As mense nie gedrug is, sal hulle nie daai doen. Dit vat jou emosies weg”(if people weren’t intoxicated they wouldn’t do that. It takes your emotions away)

⁵ Mandrax

“Like say we fighting maybe, like oorlog(war), TIK is kwaai(cool). You TIK you mad. Then you gonna go. You don’t worry bout nothing. Just got this guy’s photo in your mind. You going to go for it. So ya, it’s cool.”

Participants established that drugs were used before undertaking activities, as well as after the task was completed. Participants spoke about being given drugs when they are given the guns and the instructions to shoot. When participants were asked if certain drugs were used before undertaking activities and afterwards, participants described that it was unique for each person. Each participant had his own preference and this also depended on his drug of choice. One participant described how he would use TIK before the activity, and heroin afterwards to calm himself down:

“Ya, I want to go sleep. I don’t want to think about that that I’ve done. I know its wrong. I want to go sleep so my mind can come off from it.”

This participant’s statement represents a form of coping discussed by Anton (2010, 739) when individuals use substances to alleviate symptoms, such as intrusive thoughts as a result of exposure to trauma. Vigil (1985, 1988) stated that drug usage is entrenched in gang culture. The participants’ responses support this view. Moore, (1991); Moore *et al*, (1978) and Vigil, (1988) suggest that a large component of gang activities is parties. Participants made mention of drugs as a part of the socialisation process. Mackenzie *et al* (2006:125) state that drugs are used for functional purposes, for example assisting in developing cohesion. Participants’ responses appear aligned with this view. For example participants’ narratives describe how drugs are used when various branches of the gangs commune for a meeting. Drugs usage acts as the glue, binding members from different areas.

Thus drugs are fully entrenched within the activities of gangs. Drugs further fulfil certain functions within the gang. For example, by dulling the conscience of gang members and removing any inhibitions it is easier for them to commit violent crimes.

Therefore the relationship between gangs and drugs has been explored. Participants emphatically supported literature findings in terms of establishing that a relationship exists between gangs and drugs. The nature of this relationship was examined, for example, by establishing gang norms with regard to drug usage, and investigating the temporal order of the relationship. Gangs and the drug trade were further discussed, and finally the role which drugs play in gang activities was looked at. After completing an investigation into the interaction between gangs and drugs, gang typology was then explored.

5.4.10. Gang typology

Pinnock (1984) established a typology of South African gangs. Van Wyk (2001:136) however states that gang typologies are losing their relevance as gangs evolve. Thus participants were asked to identify if different roles exist, as well as to describe whether gangs differ from each other.

5.4.10.1. Roles and structure of a gang

Participants identified a hierarchical structure within their various gangs, similar to that of the military. A leader exists, as well as captains, sergeants and soldiers'. These findings are similar to those of Jensen (2008:83) who described the highly organised hierarchy and structure of gangs, reflective of colonial military configurations. Participants identified that the leaders would not usually use drugs and then only on occasions. One participant explained that, "...*Die manne van bo, as hulle dwelms gebruik gaan hulle besigheid onder.*" (*if the men on top use, then their business will go under.*). However a participant who is a member of the Fancy Boys explained that their leader does use TIK, but not often.

Different jobs exist within the gangs, for example a gang may have hit men. (“*Like in gangs you get two or three hitmen in the gang that rotates from area to area.*”). One participant explained that jobs in his gang, the Firm, were broken down into different ways of earning an income, for example drug sales, car theft and robberies.

5.4.10.2. Types of gangs

Van Wyk (2001:136) made reference to the two distinctive types of gangs, namely the *prison gangs* and *street gangs*. Participants also identified *street gangs* and *prison gangs* and further established that a connection exists between some street gangs and prison gangs. For example, the leader of a street gang may be a Number, therefore linking his gang to a Number. Within the study, a member of the Fancy Boys stated that his leader was a 27 gang member; therefore the Fancy Boys are associated with the 27s. Should one of the Fancy Boys end up in prison, the gang will be prepared, as the leader has coached them on how to respond to be protected. Jensen (2008:83-86) supports these findings with regard to the interplay between street gangs and prison gangs, identifying that Number gangs form alliances with street gangs.

Participants further identified two more types of gangs, namely *syndicate* and *mafia* gangs. Two of the participants in the focus group were part of *syndicate gangs*. One participant described it as:

“You see the syndicate I was in was more into the fraud, credit card fraud. We were also known as a gang. So we didn’t necessarily have turf, understand. But we would have people selling our drugs. “

The participant who provided the above narrative has a qualification in banking and financial management. This training was beneficial for the operation of the syndicate. The syndicate was described by the participant as presenting a professional appearance with members

wearing designer suits. This type of gang reportedly manages large quantities of drugs, and also supplies drugs to street gangs.

Another participant who also identified himself as involved in a syndicate was a qualified quantity surveyor. He described how he would employ drug users and gang members to work on the building site which he managed. He would then take a share of the profits from all drugs sold on the construction site. In return he would allow drugs on the site and provide a venue for the workers to use their drugs. He further sold information about the site to the gangs:

“No cops about cause everyone is on the site and I make a nice way for them to smoke. ...I would take R30. Now R30 for 200 people, It’s like R2000. I would take R6000 a week just for allowing access to drugs.

These participants’ described what they called organised crime. They spoke of foreigners such as Nigerians and Congolese who would provide them with a ‘shopping list’. This list would include items such as cars, name brand clothes, furniture, cell-phones and even groceries. In return for these items they would receive some money and the rest would be paid in drugs which they could sell. Stolen goods appear to be the currency in the drug trade. Participants stated that money rarely changes hands. Payment is made in drugs (*‘You never get any real money. Only thing you get is drugs, drugs drugs.’*). Standing (2005:1) concurs with the participants’ responses with regard to stolen items operating as the currency in exchange for drugs.

As mentioned previously, one participant stated that his father and brother were part of the *mafia*. The mafia were distinguished as different from street gangs, prison gangs and syndicate gangs:

“They are the top dogs. That is where the big money is. They smuggle drugs, diamonds...The mafia they are like you see in the movies...with the suits and all this kind of...Ya, they are like in sorted out. They plan things out. Not like the 28s who just do it and get over with. Before they do it, they plan.”

Participants thus described different types of gangs. These include street gangs, prison gangs, syndicates and the mafia. This typology reflects those of Pinnock (1984) who identified the same groupings. Participants provided insight into the functioning of these various types of gangs.

5.4.10.3. Similarities and differences of gangs

When participants were asked if gangs were similar or not, they affirmed that this was so.

“They basically do the same things. They all into girls, power, fancy cars...”

“To me every gang is the same because they all want the same thing. They all want to be the most powerful. The brotherhood and the drugs and the drug using...They all want to be the most feared.”

Participants however highlighted the differences between street gangs and Number gangs.

“You see gangs that aren’t the Number, their work is maybe just to make money maybe and defend their properties...But if you are a Number...I won’t say you can do what you want to, but you can do more than that...You can sell drugs. You can defend your area. You can sell drugs in prison. You can sell drugs whenever you want to. But if you are a Jakkie you must just sell drugs in that one place. But now if I’m a Number I can expand. I can go anywhere I want to.”

The participants described that gangs were similar in their ethos, but differed in terms of their activities and functioning. A clear hierarchical difference between gangs was emphasised. For example Number gangs are revered by street gangs for their power and influence, whilst the mafia and syndicate gangs are admired for the sophisticated manner in which they operate. Once gang typology was established, the process of disengaging from a gang was explored.

5.4.11.Motivation for engaging and disengaging in gangs

Participants were asked about the feasibility of disengaging from a gang and more, what factors would motivate a gang member to disengage.

5.4.11.1. The possibility of disengaging from a gang

When participants were questioned about the possibility of disengaging from a gang, participants stated that it was dependent on the type of gang, as well as the individual’s ranking within the gang. A participant who was affiliated with the 28s stated that since he did not have the tattoo of the gang it could still be possible to disengage. Participants appeared to feel that if once a member of the Number gang then it would be almost impossible to leave.

A member of the 26s stated:

“Gangs outside, if you want to leave and they really know you, you can leave. But you can never leave the Number.”

Another participant who also belonged to the 26s however gave a contradictory view, stating that it is possible to leave. The narrative presented by the participant above, describing an inability to disengage from the Number may be demonstrating a true belief, or it may be reflective of a justification which allows him to remain involved in the gang.

Participants stated that if an individual made a lifestyle change, then it may be possible to leave a gang. Lifestyle changes mentioned included becoming religious and showing devotion to one's religion. One participant stated that the lifestyle change would have to be demonstrated before the gang could see that a real change had been made. Participants further stressed that it is important to make peace with one's gang and rival gangs. Standing (2005:10) describes similar findings, referring to a case where a gang member was allowed to leave the gang with little consequences, when the issue was negotiated with the gang. This individual further describes still remaining friends with his gang.

Participants gave mixed responses on the ability to disengage from a gang. The objectivity of the responses are however questionable, as the researcher got the impression that some participants liked the idea of having no route out. However, the general feeling was that, in most cases, it is possible for an individual to distance himself from gang activities. The question seems to be rather, would one want to?

5.4.11.2. Motivational factors for disengaging from a gang

Participants were asked what would make an individual want to leave a gang. They stated that one motivational factor would be the issue of *safety*. If someone felt that his family was being threatened, he may want to disengage from the gang.

“Cause some of the gangs, if they can’t take it out on you, they take it out on some of your family members.”

Restricted mobility was another motivational factor, as a gang member may not be able to walk freely in all areas. One participant stated that the *fear of prosecution* could also be a deterrent to continuing to be a gang member.

“...like going to court and you were meant to get a life sentence, but you get off scot free. That kind of... Well it opened up my eyes.”

Participants described wanting to leave due to feelings of *disillusionment with the gang*. One participant described how he began to disengage from a gang, when he realised that the gang was operating in its own best interest. Another participant described how his friend had taken responsibility for the leader’s drugs and as a result been imprisoned for possession. The gang has offered no support and does not even visit this gang member in prison.

Another participant stated:

“...ek werk nie rerig vir my rerig nie...ek kan nie my huis koop. Alles gaan na die Firm. Ek wil op my eie voete staan. Ek wil ‘n vrou vat. Ek wil ‘n family begin. Ek wil anders lewe. (I am not actually working for myself. I can’t buy a house. Everything goes to the Firm. I want to stand on my own feet. I want to get married. I want to start a family. I want to live differently.)

There is limited literature with regard to the process of leaving a gang. Spergel (1990:225) however identifies that experiencing consequences such as arrests and incarceration, and

fatigue as a result of gang activities may motivate the individual to disengage from a gang. These findings are similar to the views presented by the participants, as they mentioned safety needs and the fear of prosecution as deterrents. Vigil (1988) further refers to a desire to conform to societal roles as a motivating factor for disengaging from a gang. These are evident in the participants' responses, for example a desire to start a family.

Participants generally expressed that it is possible to disengage from a gang. Factors which would motivate an individual to leave were presented by participants. It would appear that when participants begin to experience the consequences of their gang membership, for example when safety is threatened or when the risk of imprisonment arises, members are motivated to disengage from the gang. A powerful motivational factor identified by the participants was feelings of disillusionment. When participants began to question the supportive function of the gang, and further began to feel that they were not benefiting from the gang, they were motivated to disengage.

5.5.GENERAL COMMENTS

Due to the informality of the interview particularly that of the focus group, various comments arose which have no place in the themes presented, but are of interest in terms of expanding knowledge on the functioning of gangs.

Participants spoke about corruption within the police force. Participants mentioned that high ranking officials would receive a 'salary' from syndicates. One of the participants with knowledge of finances and banking described how the payment would be made into police officers' accounts from fixed deposit accounts. Also, said the participants, the police were weary of accepting money and preferred to be paid with prostitution as the currency. Participants' reference to corruption within the police force is not a new discovery as Standing (2003:5) has made mention of the corrupt relationship between law enforcement agencies and gangs. Participants further spoke about 'quantity' and 'quality' as essential to gang functioning, their income directly related to the quality of the drugs. Participants stated

that gangs go as far as employing biochemists and pharmacists to manufacture high quality drugs.

A further significant comment made by the participants was that of the operating of foreigners such as Congolese and Nigerians. Participants had mentioned that these nationals were the biggest consumers of stolen goods, which could be sold easily on the black market. These goods would be transported into their country of origin and sold at excessively elevated prices:

“You shoplift. That product is worth R1000 in the shop...they give you a R50 packet (drugs) and a R50. That’s a R100. Now how much did that packet actually cost the Nigerian...R10? So he is actually giving you R60 for R1000. These bags go back to their countries and are sold in dollars...You get the gang lords who are now trying to take down the Nigerians. They don’t realise that the Nigerian isn’t in it for the drugs. They in it for the item, because the item is clean.”

These participants anticipate a new wave of violence between gangs and the foreigners

“That’s where the drug war and gang war is leading...The Congo’s and Nigerians are going to be killed. These guys are too quickly climbing the ranks.”

5.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter represents the findings of the empirical study. Based on the literature study, a questionnaire was developed based on certain themes. The first theme aimed to address how gangs evolve. Participants were asked to describe the process of engaging in a gang. These responses when compared to those identified by literature were correlated. Participants unknowingly identified Maslow’s hierarchy of needs described in Chapter three.

Physiological, belonging, status and safety need, as well as a need for self actualization was verbalised by participants. Participants identified these needs as a motivating factor in an individual's decision to get involved in a gang.

Further themes aimed to explore the systems which impact on the individual's engagement in a gang. The family system was investigated, as literature has suggested that this system is a motivating factor for an individual's choice to become involved in a gang, as well as in using drugs.

Participants described home environments characterised by the presence of classic risk factors for engaging in gangs and drug usage. They identified high levels of substance usage and violence within their homes. Familial gang affiliation was further elevated.

Finally the interaction between gangs and drugs was explored. Participants reiterated literature in terms of drugs being firmly entrenched in gang activities. They provided rich descriptions of drug usage and drug trade within gangs.

Participants made clear distinctions of various types of gangs, which were fully aligned with those identified within literature. It was fortuitous that the sample group reflected the various types of gangs. From the researcher's work experience, this is a rare occurrence, particularly to find someone associated with the mafia.

The empirical findings allowed for propositions to be made with regard to the temporal order of events. Data from various themes were correlated with one another, along with the participants' narratives about the temporal order of gang association and drug usage. Results appear to illustrate that the majority of participants began using drugs before entering gangs, but in accordance with literature, drug usage evolved after inclusion in a gang.

Finally participants were asked about their views regarding the absolute nature of gang membership. They were questioned about whether they felt that a person could disengage from a gang. It is uplifting to note that participants appeared to feel that a choice exists in terms of disengaging from a gang. Participants were finally asked what would motivate an individual to leave a gang as this information may be used to inform intervention.

The objectives of the study was met, as participants have provided a thick description of the phenomenon and evolution of gangs, their functioning, and the role which drugs play in the process. The empirical study provided insight into the interaction between gangs and drugs as well as the temporal order of events. The findings of the empirical study are further able to broaden the knowledge base of gangs, and their interplay with drugs. The following chapter will present conclusions based on these empirical findings, as well as recommendations for intervention and further research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

A gap in knowledge with regards to the phenomenon of gangs and drug within South African gangs was identified. There appears to be limited information with regards to the role which drugs play within gangs. In order to begin to explore this phenomenon an in-depth literature review was undertaken. Chapter two discussed the phenomenon of gangs, beginning with the evolution of gangs, particularly within the South African context. Gangs were viewed from a systems perspective, in order to understand how gangs originate and evolve. Further the characteristics of a gang were explored in terms of typology and gang culture. Chapter three explored the theoretical framework presented in literature, explaining how the individual becomes engaged in a gang. Motivational theory was utilised to better understand human needs which motivate behaviour. Systems such as the family and peer group were explored in terms of their influence on the individual's decision to engage in a gang. Chapter four explored substance usage with regards to gangs. Risk factors for substance usage presented in literature were presented, and it became evident that similarities existed between risk factors for drug usage and gang involvement. Within this discussion, drugs were identified as playing an integral role in gang activities. Further the temporal order of gang involvement and drug usage was explored within the chapter.

The literature review identified a dearth of knowledge, with regards to gangs within the South African context, particularly from gang members' perspectives. Literature with regards to gangs and drugs was particularly scarce, especially with regards to South African gangs. An empirical study was thus undertaken, where male gang members were interviewed and asked questions based on themes informed by the literature study. The empirical findings were compiled and presented in Chapter five.

Based on the literature review and empirical findings, conclusions and recommendations will now be discussed, as well as suggestions for future research.

6.2. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this study was to provide insight into gangs and their interaction with drugs. The study does not thus focus on intervention but rather emphasises increasing knowledge, so that the subject may be better understood. Conclusions based on the most relevant themes identified in Chapter five will be presented. Where pertinent possible recommendations with regards for intervention will be suggested. Intervention refers to intervening in preventing gang membership, motivating individuals to disengage from a gang, as well as addressing substance usage, as this can be harmful to the individual as well as society. Since gangs and drugs are intertwined, intervention needs to acknowledge drug usage as an integral part of the issue. A holistic view is thus needed when addressing the issue.

Intervention into the issue of gangs and drugs engages a variety of different role players as well as multidisciplinary teams. Recommendations presented do not merely pertain to the practice of social work, but may fall within other service delivery areas, such as education systems and law enforcement agencies. As a result recommendations may not be specific to the social worker, but addressed to all involved agencies and professionals. The role of the social worker is however as an advocate of change and thus a liaison between these systems.

6.2.1. Defining a gang

The participants' definition of a gang identified common themes found within literature. Emphasis was placed on the concept of *territory* which was reported as fundamental to gang activity. Gangs operate around the central tenant of a need to claim and defend their territory. Territory represented wealth as well as providing abstract functions in terms of unifying members. Gang members described the process of defending their territory as being in a battle or war, similar to that of soldiers who fight wars in order to defend their country.

Further similar themes identified in the findings as well as in literature include gangs' involvement in criminal activities. Definitions are said to be affected by the definer's social reality and perceptions. Salient elements which participants highlighted in their definition

which do not commonly appear in the definition of a gang include an emphasis on drug selling and using, money, power and status.

From the findings it can be concluded that participants highlighted common elements found in established definitions of a gang. These include territory, involvement in criminal activities and the organised nature of gangs. It is however of significance that the findings illustrate further elements as central to the definition of a gang. A gang thus represents money, status, power and involvement in drug usage and selling to the participants.

6.2.2. Engaging in a gang

The process of engaging in a gang was viewed from an Ecological perspective where various systems were identified which plays a role in motivating the individual to join a gang. Inherent individual factors were identified in terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The individual is thus motivated by various needs. The most basic need is *physiological needs*. The study identified drugs as a motivating factor in the decision to engage in a gang. Drugs may become a physiological need, as they are dependence forming substances. Individuals may thus join a gang in order to manage physiological cravings. From the findings it can be concluded that access to drugs which gangs provide motivates individuals to join a gang.

Safety needs are the second level of needs which motivate an individual to join a gang. The study identified that individuals are attracted to the security and protection which gangs are seen to provide. Participants generally described residing in a hostile environment with a high prevalence of gangsterism. Joining a gang was a coping mechanism as it afforded security. Based on the findings it can be concluded that an individual is motivated to join a gang due to protection which the gang affords its members.

Belonging needs are next in the hierarchy of needs. The findings illustrate that individuals join gangs in order to fulfil a sense of belonging. Belonging to a gang makes an individual

feel a part of something, as they are acknowledged and supported by their gang. These feelings can be linked to the next need in the hierarchy, namely the *esteem need*. The findings of the study conclude that belonging needs and esteem needs motivate individuals to join a gang.

At the apex of the hierarchy is the need for *self actualization* which motivates an individual to seek a sense of meaning and purpose. Findings show that belonging to a gang results in feelings of pride, as it provides meaning. It also leads to a purpose through defending territory and the experience of the 'brotherhood' of gang members. It can be concluded that a gangs' ability to fulfil self actualization needs motivates individuals to engage in a gang.

Apart from the individual, the Ecological perspective suggests that various systems affect the individual and their choice to become involved in a gang. The findings of the study show that the peer group is a motivating factor for engaging in a gang.

In conclusion, the findings illustrate that gangs have the ability to fulfil basic needs. Fulfilment of these needs motivate individuals to engage in a gang. It is recommended that any interventions undertaken by any party with regards to addressing gangs should:

- Recognise the hierarchy of needs, for example identifying that physiological need should be addressed before attempting to address higher needs. A drug dependant individual should thus first receive treatment for their drug dependence before attempting to address higher needs
- Offer alternatives of meeting the needs which the gang fulfils, for example by providing a means of achieving a sense of belonging through inclusion within in a group of some kind
- Acknowledge the strength of the peer group in influencing ones behaviour, and further include the peer group in intervention strategies

6.2.3. Family Functioning

The findings of the study with regard to the home environment show that the majority of participants had grown up in non-nuclear families with an absent father. These findings challenge literature which suggests that family structure has no effect on gang membership. The majority of participants further had a family member associated with a gang. This family member was in most cases the participants' male role model. These participants had been exposed to gang culture from a young age and had been aware of their family members' involvement. The ecological perspective describes how development is influenced through interaction with one's environment. Exposure to gang culture would thus affect and inform one's values and norms. In conclusion the study questions the role which an absent father has on gang involvement, as the findings show an associated risk.

The study identified unstable home environments characterised by multiple moves and overcrowded living arrangements also fathers were absent and inconsistent. Parenting styles were permissive and participants were given a lot of freedom as some parents were absent and participants were sent to live with relatives. Abuse and conflict was reported within the participants' homes with the majority of participants reporting exposure to violence within their home whilst growing up. The findings of the study thus showed unstable home environments with multiple stressors present such as exposure to violence and abuse. Further the study highlighted disconnectedness within families.

The findings of the study illustrated a high prevalence of drug and alcohol misuse within families. Deviant norms with regards to substances were demonstrated by families through their involvement in the sale of drugs. Literature presented in Chapter 4 explains that exposure to substance usage can have a modelling affect, increasing the probability of the individual engaging in substance usage as the family provides the model for behaviour and coping mechanisms. Exposure to the stressors reported by the participants are echoed within literature and are further identified as playing a role in facilitating inclusion in a gang. For example if an individual is exposed to violence as a coping mechanism in dealing with conflict, this becomes internalised. Or if substances are utilised as a distress tolerance

technique within ones environment, the individual may implement the same form of coping. The individual may thus have a dearth of coping mechanisms and will rely on those learnt from ones home environment. Exposure to the stressors identified by the participants, as well as a lack of fulfilment of basic needs, such as feelings of belonging, may encourage involvement in gangs and substance usage. In conclusion, the study showed elevated levels of substance misuse, and skewed norms with regards to substances within gang members' families.

Based on the findings of the study it can be concluded that the family system is a risk factor for engagement in gangs. It is recommended that intervention by service providers should:

- Utilise family therapy, in order to improve family functioning and minimise unhealthy behaviour
- Assist the individual and his family in developing distress tolerance techniques as well as healthy coping mechanisms
- Intervene where necessary in order to insure that youth are protected and exposed to minimal stressors, as well as insuring that the individual develops within a stable and healthy environment

6.2.4. Drug usage

Participants identified marijuana, cigarettes, alcohol and methamphetamine as common drug used. Methamphetamine was however identified as the most common drug of choice reported by participants. The findings of the study thus illuminates on drug usage contributing to the knowledge base of substance usage within this particular population group.

It is recommended that service providers:

- Within the substance dependence field when intervening with gang members have insight into the interaction between gangs and drugs. Based on this knowledge

specialized intervention must be developed taking into account their specific treatment needs.

- Increase preventative measures through an open dialogue with at risk youth, calling on them to identify for themselves the pros and cons of usage.
- Offer alternatives for youth, thus providing incentives for abstaining from drugs. For example highlighting upward mobility and attainment of goals
- Utilise motivational interviewing for those abusing or dependant on drugs
- Ensure accessibility to treatment for substance abuse disorders

6.2.5. Schooling

The majority of participants did not complete their schooling. Participants displayed a higher age than normal for the grade which they left school in. School functioning was not explored in detail, but some participants described struggling with academic work and failing the same grade multiple times. Participants were asked what had stopped them from completing their schooling. Some participants spoke about their poor performance and others spoke about being expelled from school, due to their behaviour. Behaviour characterised as conduct disorder was reported by the participants, for example theft and assault.

The participants' narratives about their schooling career highlight key issues about educational institutions, and their poor relationship with the participants' guardians. Schools were reported as a place where participants felt unsafe and needed to defend themselves. It would appear that schools did not supervise students' attendance and performance. Participants reported repeated absenteeism, which remained undetected or overlooked. Schools did not follow up with parents, and parents remained unaware. Participants with learning needs appear to be failed by educational institutions, as they are unsupported. The participants' reports of repeating grades on numerous occasions and being much older than the standard age for the grade, demonstrates a lack of intervention. These participants appear to have slipped between the gaps and consequently entered a gang where their esteem, belonging and self actualization needs were met.

It is recommended that the education systems should:

- Provide support for learners with difficulties
- Closely monitor scholars with learning difficulties and offer alternatives to the traditional school system should they not be coping with their academic work. For example engaging these individuals in occupational training programmes.
- Address unsafe school environments
- Improve the relationship between the school and the scholar's support systems, so that behaviour and performance can be tracked.

6.2.5. Gangs and drugs

The interaction between gangs and drugs was explored through means of a literature review as well as an empirical study. Literature with regards to this issue established that drugs play a role in gang activity. Limited information however existed with regards to the specifics on the interplay between gangs and drugs, such as the temporal nature of the relationship, as well as gang norms with regards to drug usage.

Gangs were identified as involved in the trade of drugs as well as in drug usage. Drug usage was further described as the initiator and lubricant of gang activity. Based on these findings it can be concluded that a clear link exists between gangs and drugs.

6.2.5.1. Initiation process and drugs

Findings illustrate that drugs play a role in the initiation into a gang. Inductees are offered drugs before going out to complete the task that would prove them worthy of inclusion in the gang. Drugs would be provided along with a weapon when being initiated into the gang. Once the act has been completed the individual is rewarded with open access to drugs and alcohol. One participant however identified a different process within the 26 gang. Here the initiation within jail appeared to be a more sombre process. In conclusion, drugs play a role in the initiation process into a gang, with the only discrepancy being in the Number gangs within the prison context.

6.2.5.2. Gang norms with regards to drugs

Chapter 4 explored disparities with regards to gangs' endorsement of drug usage. Gangs have reportedly been known to discourage usage of substance, as it may negatively affect their drug trade and activities. It has further been proposed that gangs support the usage of certain substances, such as marijuana and alcohol.

The findings show mixed responses with regards to sanctioning of drug usage by gangs. It is clear that gangs make drugs available when gang activities are conducted. Gangs were however described at times as discouraging non-drug users from using drugs. Non drug using members were described in the findings as a valuable asset as they are more reliable and can be entrusted with duties, particularly within the drug trade.

The study demonstrates that gangs distinguished drugs from each other and further selectively sanction the usage of substances. Alcohol, marijuana, mandrax and methamphetamine appear to be accepted within a gang. Alcohol and marijuana however are most acceptable, with marijuana usage being a norm within all gangs, including the Number gangs. Marijuana usage within the Number is socially acceptable behaviour. The norm of marijuana usage within the Numbers is illustrated by a gang member who described that he was introduced to marijuana whilst in prison. The study further demonstrates that members of the Number within prison use mandrax, methamphetamine and heroin, which are easily accessible and relatively accepted.

The findings illustrate that gangs make a distinction between drugs. Although drug usage appears to be a norm and relatively accepted by the gang, heroin usage was discouraged by some gangs. Heroin is viewed as a more harmful drug in comparison to other drugs due to the resulting tolerance and severe withdrawal symptoms. Heroin is thus placed in an elevated category. The study described that some street gangs would supply their members with all drugs, except for heroin. Members whose drug of choice was heroin, needed to exchange these drugs for heroin. Once the drugs were exchanged the member could use their heroin

with the rest of the gang. In this process, the gang had not directly bought the heroin for the member. This illogical reasoning allows the gang to demonstrate a moral standing on heroin usage, and perhaps demonstrate what members appear to perceive as concern for their well being.

A more practical reasoning behind gangs' reprove of heroin usage may be due to the detrimental affect which its usage may have on the gangs functioning and thus profitability. The study found that gang members could not perform optimally if they were dependent on drugs, particularly heroin. The drug dependant individual becomes motivated by their physiological craving and further may struggle to function. Members may begin to prioritise feeding their habit above loyalty to the gang and all that it entails. Drug dependence further affects the ability to trade drugs, as the drug dependent individual is more likely to make mistakes and become unreliable, for example using the stock.

In conclusion, gangs tread a thin line between condoning and discouraging drug usage. Supporting drug usage may benefit the gang, as it encourages and motivates gang activities. Members whilst intoxicated lack inhibitions and are willing to undertake any tasks, particularly violent acts, with little thought of the consequences. Gang members that become dependent on drugs are however a risk for the gang, as they become unreliable and disloyal, as their absolute devotion to the gang is challenged by their physiological needs. Physiological needs are the most basic of human needs, and as a result are the strongest motivator of behaviour. Gangs appear to be cognisant of the threat which physiological needs pose to their wellbeing of their business.

6.2.5.3. Temporal order of gang involvement and drug usage

The study demonstrates that substance usage begins prior to engaging in a gang. Further, substance usage is a risk factor for engaging in a gang, as gangs offer accessibility to drugs, as they provide drugs to their members.

Findings illustrate that drug usage progresses and escalates after engaging in a gang. This is demonstrated by increased time spent using drugs, as well as in drug choice. For example members may progress from marijuana usage to methamphetamine usage.

It is recommended that:

- More research be conducted by any interested parties with regards to the temporal order of gang involvement and drug usage in order to inform effective intervention strategies
- Drug usage be the focus in gang intervention by role players in policy formation as well as service providers
- Service providers attempting to motivate gang members to disengage from a gang, explore distortions with regards to gangs' prohibition of certain drugs, highlighting it as self interest rather than a concern for its members.

6.2.5.4 Drug selling

The findings illustrate that drug trade is an activity of gangs. Gang members sell drugs on behalf of the gang and are remunerated in the form of a monetary commission, as well as drugs. Monetary remuneration is however rare, as the common currency of gangs is drugs. These findings may provide another perspective on gangs' tendency to condone members' drug usage, as provision of drugs in lieu of money may be more financially beneficial for the gang.

In conclusion, the results show that gangs and drug trade are intimately linked. The drug trade is central to gang functioning, and further a vital source of income and power for the gang. The drug trade is described as '*work*', illustrating that drug trade is a norm and a legitimate occupation for gang members.

6.2.5.5. Gang typology

The study identified the quasi-military style of gangs as well as clear hierarchy and positions within the gang such as, '*captains*', '*generals*' and '*soldiers*'.

The findings describe four types of gangs, namely *street gangs*, *prison* (or Number) *gangs*, *syndicate gangs* and *mafia gangs*. A power differential between street gangs and Number gangs was illustrated, with the Number identified as holding more status and prestige than street gangs. Members of the Number were reported to have immunity and further cannot be prescribed to by any individual. These members have more freedom in terms of moving and trading in drugs within territories, in comparison to those belonging to a street gang.

The study describes a connection between street gangs and prison gangs. Leaders of street gangs were members of a Number gang, thus forming the link. For example, the Fancy Boys leader is a 27 gang member. He shares some knowledge of the 27s with his members, thus preparing them for the almost eventuality of imprisonment. Upon entering prison, these members would be able to relay some of the information and history of the 27s in '*sabela*', the language of the gang. The ability to communicate in this manner will afford the individual partial association with the Number and in turn, protection. Distinctions occur between the Numbers, as findings show that the 27s and 28s can be prepared outside of prison but that the 26s could not prepare outside of prison.

The findings describe that the Number has been brought out of the sacred niche of prison, and has entered the realm of everyday life as individuals are gaining their Number outside of prison, bypassing the formal initiation in prison. The Number is based on deep traditions and rituals, emphasising stringent rules and discipline. The erosion of these principles is resulting in extreme anger, and warnings of violent retribution for those claiming to be a Number without earning the Number in prison, or anyone who corrupts the Number by selling membership rights to the gang.

The study described the functioning of the *mafia* gang, emphasising it as a close knit, sophisticated and well organised operation with high rates of family involvement. Mafia membership was described as a family tradition, which members hope to pass on to their offspring. The second type of gang identified in the study is *syndicate* gangs. This type of gang is described as different from the other types of gangs as they are more involved in organised crime such as credit card fraud, and are not preoccupied with territory and turf.

Findings illustrate that within a gang a clear hierarchy exists which is headed by a leader. The participants emphatically emphasised that the leader generally does not consume drugs, and if he does it would be on rare occasions. The reason being that it would negatively affect his business. The leaders' abstinence from drugs elevated his status even further as he gained respect and demonstrated his dominance. It has been the researchers experiences that gang members who enter treatment for substance dependence often believe that they can stay engaged in a gang and remain clean from drugs. The study demonstrated a possible explanation for this distortion. In conclusion, the leaders' ability to remain abstinent may account for gang members view that they can remain clean from drugs and still remain engaged in a gang. Gang members appear to revere their leader and further want to emanate him. Gang members may as a result strive to prove themselves as strong as the leader in remaining abstinent, often ignoring the fact that they however suffer from a drug dependence disorder, which strength is futile in fighting.

It is recommended that intervention undertaken within the substance dependence field with gang members focus on:

- Exploring distortions
- Identifying justifications; for example comparing oneself to the abstinent leader
- Emphasising the powerlessness of the disease of drug dependence.

6.2.5.6. Drugs and gang activities

The findings of the study show an inexplicable link between gang activities and drugs. Drug usage is a norm, occurring on a regular basis within the socialization process of the gang. Large quantities of drugs were described as present when the gang holds meetings, particularly when branches of the gangs from various areas convene. Drugs would further be in abundance at parties held by the gang where members entertain friends and family.

Based on the results of the study, drug usage occurs before and after going out and committing crimes. Drugs were used to heighten gang members' fortitude, diminishing inhibitions. Participants spoke about being incapable of undertaking violent acts, without first using drugs. In conclusion, drugs are used by gang members to quieten the conscience and are further used as a form of self medication after completing a task, in order to cope with flashbacks and intrusive thoughts and images.

6.2.6. Motivation for disengaging from a gang

Gang members often felt trapped within a gang, as membership is viewed as eternal. Membership to the Number is particularly perceived as absolute, with the only way out being death. The findings however illustrate that gang members believe that it is possible to leave the Number. Examples of individuals who have managed to distance themselves from the Number are identified. The study alluded to the fact that those with the view that membership is eternal may use this belief as a justification for an unwillingness to distance themselves from their gang. A feeling of martyrdom pervaded the findings, as gang members describe themselves as brave soldiers fighting for a cause. In conclusion, it would seem that some gang members may enjoy the feeling of being enslaved to an immensely powerful brotherhood which calls for the ultimate sacrifice, namely ones freedom.

The study indicates that gang members felt that they can disengage from a gang if they distance themselves from gang activities and make lifestyle changes. Lifestyle changes include committing oneself to religion, or demonstrating living a responsible and stable lifestyle such as being employed and focusing on being a father. These lifestyle changes

however need to be proved to the gang, otherwise the gang may become suspicious and feel insecure about ones intentions.

Based on the study, factors which would motivate a gang member to disengage from a gang were identified. The *fear for safety* and associated feelings of fear and uncertainty with regards to oneself and the wellbeing of one's family motivates individuals to disengage from a gang. Gang membership results in a constant state of anxiety and fear of attack. In response, gang members are often armed at all times, going as far as sleeping with a gun under their pillow. In conclusion gang members are motivated to disengage from a gang by a desire for freedom from the paranoia of imminent attack.

A further motivational factor identified by the study is that of *restricted movements*. Gang members are not able to walk freely in all areas due to territories. In conclusion, gang members are motivated to leave a gang due to the consequence of restricted mobility which belonging to a gang brings.

Findings describe a *fear of prosecution* as a motivating factor for leaving a gang, as the possibility of a life sentence was a deterrent for some gang members. One participant spoke about how he had evaded being prosecuted for a crime which he had committed. This experience had motivated him to distance himself from his gang.

A common motivational factor identified in the study is *feelings of disillusionment*. When gang members feel that they do not adequately benefit from their membership, they begin to see their commitment to the gang as futile. The gang was identified by some participants as failing to support its members, and further exploiting gang members for the leaders own benefit. The study described gang members that had taken the blame and punishment for leaders, resulting in imprisonment. These members once imprisoned would not even be visited by the gang. Gang members spoke about feeling that they were not profiting enough

from the gangs' wealth. They felt that they were putting their lives in jeopardy and not being fairly reimbursed for their contribution. In conclusion, when gang members feel disillusioned or fail to benefit adequately from the gang, they will be motivated to disengage from the gang

Finally, the study illustrated that gang members are motivated to leave a gang when they desire a *lifestyle change*. Gang members describe wanting to progress in their lives and enter a new stable phase of their life. This phase entails settling down with a wife and children and living a generally legitimate lifestyle.

In conclusion, the study identified motivational factors which would encourage gang members to disengage from a gang. It is recommended that role players involved in motivating gang members to disengage from a gang:

- Emphasise the fear for safety which is associated with gang involvement
- Draw attention to the constant state of anxiety and paranoia
- Emphasise the lack of freedom which is associated with gang membership
- Strengthen prosecution for illegal activities as it appears to be a deterrent for gang involvement
- Provide alternative lifestyle choices for individuals
- Assist gang members and at risk individuals to gain an objective view of the gang as a business rather than a supportive brotherhood. Intervention should thus focus on the disillusionment mentioned in the study, assisting individuals to gain insight into the futility of their commitment to an organisation which does not prioritise their needs and well being.

6.2.7 Comments

The study offered information that was not particularly relevant to the identified themes, but which assists in expanding the knowledge base of gang functioning.

The findings emphasise corruption within the police force. This comes as no surprise as it is a well documented phenomenon. A lack of respect for law enforcement agencies exists, as civil servants are easily bribed. The nature of these bribes was further explored and prostitution was identified as a common form of payment by gangs to police officers.

In conclusion it is recommended that law enforcement agencies:

- Focus on minimising corruption
- Hold those guilty of corruption accountable, thus shifting the image of law enforcement agencies
- Investigate prostitution as a currency in bribery
- Work on gaining the respect of the community, for example through proving their effectiveness in ensuring communities safety

The study further raised the issue of the Congolese and Nigerians involvement within the drug trade. These nationals were identified as the main consumers of stolen goods. Gangs were said to provide the stolen items in exchange for drugs. These stolen items were bought with drugs by foreign nationals at a much reduced value, and then resold on the black market within their home country at a much elevated price. The findings of the study prophesise a shift of the parties involved in gang wars, as gangs become united against foreign nationals who are a large threat to their illicit economy.

Based on these findings it is recommended that law enforcement and security research bodies focus on:

- Exploring the nature of the criminal workings of foreign nationals
- Intervene in addressing the movement of stolen items out of South Africa.

6.3. FURTHER RESEARCH

This scale of this study was relatively small. Many more in-depth studies of this nature are required, to include a wider range of participants. It is important that gang members be included in the dialogue when attempting to expand the knowledge basis of gang functioning. It is further essential that gang members be included when formulating any intervention strategies. Social work is based on the premise of starting from where the client is, and acknowledging the individuals values and needs. Gangs fulfil needs within individuals. It is essential that these needs be clearly understood, in order to inform effective interventions.

With regards to exploring motivational factors involved in engaging in a gang, certain issues are in need of further exploration. Traits of personality disorders such as anti-social personality disorders and conduct disorders should be included in future studies, in order to establish if a connection exists. Further, academic abilities and functioning should further be explored as playing a role in motivating individuals to engage in a gang.

Further research is needed with regards to gang norms surrounding drug usage. Disparities exist with regards to gangs' support of certain substances. A larger sample of various gangs is needed in order to establish if norms differ between gangs. Clarity is further needed specifically with regards to Number and their norms surrounding drug usage. Investigations should control for those merely associated, and those fully fledged members who earned their Number in prison, as disparities appear to exist within this set of gangs.

This study showed a high level of drug selling by participants. This may be due to participants association with a gang but it may however be a common occurrence within drug users and not exclusively linked to gang membership. Further clarity is thus needed on this issue.

It is essential that service providers within the substance dependence field undertaking intervention with gang members engage in further research with regards to drugs and gangs. The gang member presents with unique treatment needs, which must be understood in order to gain optimum results. Ill-informed, generic treatment is ineffective, irresponsible and costly for service providers, communities affected by gangsterism, and those gang members' with some willingness to change.

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APPENDIX 1- SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**GANGS AND DRUG USAGE****SEMI-STRUCTURED RESEARCHER ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE**

All the information recorded in the questionnaire will be regarded as confidential. Identity will further be concealed. Involvement in this study is voluntary, and the respondent has the right to refuse answering any question. Please answer all questions honestly. For the purpose of this study, drugs include alcohol and dagga.

1. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

- 1.1.How old are you? _____
1.2.In which area do you live? _____
1.3.Where did you grow up?

2. CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT

- 2.1.Who did you grow up with?

3. DEFINING A GANG

3.1.How would you describe a gang?

4. ENGAGING IN A GANG

4.1.Why do you think people join gangs?

4.2.Why do you think you joined the gang?

4.3.What does it mean to you to be in a gang?

4.4. When did you start belonging to a gang? _____

4.5. What gang do you belong to? _____

5. FAMILY

5.1. Family involvement in gangs

5.1.1. Have any of your family members been in a gang?

YES	NO
-----	----

5.1.2. If yes, who of your family members have been in a gang?

5.1.3. How did you find out that your family member was in a gang?

5.2. Family values and norms

5.2.1. How did your family feel about you joining a gang?

5.2.2. Please answer these questions about when you were a teenager

	Yes	No	Sometimes
Your family had clear rules about drugs and alcohol			
If you bunked school, your family would know			
Your parents checked if you had done your homework			
There were rules in your family			
You had a curfew			
Your parents would know if you hadn't come home on time			

If you had a problem, did you feel like you could speak to your family?			
Did you feel like your family was proud of you			

5.2.4. How wrong would your parents feel it would be, for you to

	Not wrong	Wrong
Steal something		
Buy something stolen		
Bunk school		
Drink alcohol		
Smoke cigarettes		
Smoke dagga		
Use other drugs		

5.3. Family interaction

5.3.1. What was it like in your home when you were growing up?

5.3.2. Was there any violence in your home?

5.3.3. Have you ever experienced any form of

Verbal abuse	
Physical abuse	
Sexual abuse	
Emotional abuse	

5.4.Family drug usage

5.4.1.Do any of your family members use drugs or alcohol?

YES	NO
-----	----

5.4.2.Do any of your family members sell drugs or alcohol?

6.DRUG USAGE

6.1.How old were you when you started using

Cigarettes	
Alcohol	
Dagga	
Mandrax	
Tik	
Heroin	
Other	

6.2.What is your drug of choice? _____

6.3.When did you start using dagga? _____

7.SCHOOLING

7.1.What grade did you get up to at school? _____

7.2. What made you stop going to school?

8.PEER RELATIONSHIPS

8.1.What did you and your friends do together when you were young?

8.2.Did these activities change? If so, when?

8.3.How did your activities change?

9. GANGS AND DRUGS

Do you think gangs and drugs go together? If so, how?

9.1.Intitiation and drugs

9.1.1. Did drugs play a role in your initiation into the gang? If so, how?

9.2.Gang norms with regards to drugs

9.2.1.Did your gang support you using drugs? If so, how?

9.2.3.If your gang supported you using drugs, did they support you using all drugs?

9.3.Temporal order of gang involvement and drug usage

9.3.1.Did you use drugs before joining a gang?

9.3.2.If yes, did your drug usage change after joining a gang? How?

9.4. Drug selling

9.4.1. Did you sell drugs or alcohol?

YES	NO
-----	----

9.4.1.1. If yes, did you sell drugs for the gang?

9.5. Gang typology

9.5.1. Are there different jobs and roles within a gang? If so, what are they?

9.5.2. Are gangs different from each other? If so how?

9.6. Drugs and gang activities

9.6.1. Did drugs play a role in gang activities? If so how?

10.MOTIVATION FOR ENGAGING AND DISENGAGING IN GANGS

10.1.Do you think it is possible to leave a gang?

10.2.Why would people want to leave a gang?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX 2 – INFORMED CONSENT FORM



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Male gang members' perspective on gangs and drug usage

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Marcelle Wijnberg (BSc) (BSW), from the Social Work Department at Stellenbosch University. The research results will contribute towards a Master's thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you have been identified as having experience within a gang.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore drug usage and gang membership, in order to better understand the interaction.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

To participate in an individual interview and answer questions as honestly and openly as possible.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The questionnaire has been developed to cause minimal distress. Some of the questions may however result in mild distress.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The information gained from this interview will be used to better understand the phenomenon of gangs and drugs. Through your participation, we hope to present gang members with experience of being in a gang, perspective and views. This will result in accurate information which may be used for informing effective intervention.

5. **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

Your participation is voluntary and further no financial incentive is offered.

6. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of

- Disguising your identity. No identifying information will be used
- The information will be kept safe
- This study is conducted independently from Kensington Treatment Centre. Kensington Treatment Centre and its staff will thus have no access to the information
- Interviews will be recorded, and you have the right to access these recordings. The recordings will further be erased after the research has been concluded.

7. **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Kamal Kamalodien at Kensington Treatment Centre, and he will make contact with me so that we can discuss the concerns.

9. **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

The information above was described to _____ by Marcelle Wijnberg in [*Afrikaans/English*] and in I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject/Participant

Signature of Subject/Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document. The participant was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions.

Signature of Investigator

Date