

The Recruitment and Initiation of Girls into Gangs in the Western Cape

by

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*Research thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
(Psychology) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University*



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March 2021

DECLARATION BY AUTHOR

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ABSTRACT

Gangsterism is a worldwide phenomenon with serious consequences for community well-being. Locally in the Western Cape, South Africa, gangs present a complex phenomenon which impairs community functioning and hampers community development. Young girls and women have been largely absent and voiceless in gang research and this thesis sought to give a sample of women the chance to tell the stories of their direct experiences within gang culture. Particularly, the thesis sought to examine how young girls and women in the Western Cape are recruited and initiated into gangs. The thesis also aimed to find out from the research participants what their suggestions are for prevention and intervention efforts for young girls at risk to gang involvement, and for women who are or have already been involved with gangs, wanting to start a new life. Secondary research aims included learning more about the roles of females in gangs, their motivations for gang membership, and what benefits came from their time in the gang culture.

The study adopted a community psychology framework and a feminist perspective in examining the research topic, analysing the data, and reporting on the research findings. A qualitative, Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) methodology was deemed appropriate, given the research aims and the context in which the research was initiated and implemented. The research formed part of a pilot project which emerged as a collaboration between numerous international and local organisations. Qualitative data collected via individual interviews were transcribed and analysed using a manual thematic analysis of the data.

The findings of the study are presented deductively in the following themes: 1) Gang recruitment; 2) Gang initiation; 3) Prevention and intervention; 4) Benefits of gang membership; 5) Gang culture, and 6) Gang exit. The findings showed that various active and

passive recruitment methods are used to recruit young girls and women into gangs; the most common reported being a romantic connection between young girls and women with a male gang member and the lure of drugs and alcohol offered in gang spaces. While no specific initiation rituals were reported, it was evident that there is a need for the new member to prove her loyalty to a gang in order to earn and secure their trust, and this can be done in numerous ways.

Findings revealed that the most critical factors to consider in prevention and intervention efforts, from the point of view of the research participants, include sustained post-intervention support, employment, recreational activities for young girls, and tools for navigating life in gang plagued communities. This indicates a need for a holistic response to the multiple needs of young girls at risk to gang involvement and women who have left, or are wanting to exit a gang.

OPSOMMING

Bendes is 'n wêreldwye verskynsel wat ernstige gevolge vir die welstand en ontwikkeling van gemeenskappe inhou. Bende betrokkenheid onder die jeug is 'n ingewikkelde verskynsel veral in die Westelike Provinsie van Suid-Afrika en die gevolge is deurlopend.

Die betrokkenheid en die impak van jong meisies en vroue binne bende kultuur word selde by navorsingstudies ingesluit. Om hierdie rede beoog die huidige studie om aan agt vroue die geleentheid te bied om hulle stories en ervarings binne die bende kultuur te deel. Die studie beoog om veral klem te lê op hoe jong meisies en vroue in die Westelike Provinsie gewerf en geïnisieer word binne bendes. Deelnemers in die studie was gevra om voorstelle te gee vir die voorkoming van jong meisies in bende aktiwiteite asook ingrypings om vroue wat alreeds betrokke in bendes is, te help om 'n nuwe lewe aan te durf. Parallel tot bogenoemde beoog die studie ook om meer te leer oor die rolle van vroue in bendes, wat hulle motiveer om by bendes aan te sluit, asook watter voordele bende betrokkenheid vir hulle inhou.

Die studie geskied binne 'n gemeenskapsielkundige raamwerk en 'n Kwalitatiewe Gemeenskap Beseerde Deelnemende Navorsing metodologie was as toepaslik vir die doeleindes en konteks van die navorsing beskou. Die navorsing vorm deel van 'n loodsprojek wat in samewerking met verskeie internasionale en plaaslike organisasies onderneem was. Die data was deur middel van onderhoude versamel. Onderhoude was opgeneem en daarna getranskribeer. Tematiese analise was toegepas.

Die uitkomstes van die data was binne die volgende temas deduktief geplaas: 1) Bende werwing; 2) Bende inisiëring; 3) Voorkoming en ingryping; 4) Voordele van bende lidmaatskap; 5) Bende kultuur en 6) Bende verlating. Die bevindinge wys dat verskeie aktiewe en passiewe werwings metodes gebruik word om jong meisies en vroue by bendes te betrek; die mees

gerapporteerde metode is die romantiese verbintenis tussen 'n jong meisie of vrou en 'n mans bendelid saam met die dwelms en alkohol wat binne die bende spasie geoffer word. Geen spesifieke inisiëring ritueel was gerapporteer nie, alhoewel dit duidelik was dat daar 'n verwagting was omdat die vroue hul lojaliteit tot die bende bewys ten einde hulle vertrou te wen. Hierdie kan op verskeie maniere gewys word. Die bevindinge bewys dat die mees kritiese faktore wat in ag moet word binne voorkoming en ingrypings pogings is aanhoudende na-ingrypings ondersteuning, werksgeleenthede, gesonde ontspanningsaktiwiteite vir jong meisies en wenke om binne gemeenskappe wat oorweldig is met bende aktiwiteite te leef. Die data beklemtoon die belangrikheid van om 'n holistiese response tot die veelvoudige behoeftes van jong meisies wat riskant is tot bende betrokkenheid en vroue wat bendes verlaat het of wie wag vir 'n geleentheid om 'n bende te verlaat te ontwikkel.

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We have completed the proofreading, editing, layout, syntax, spelling and grammar check on a 42 771 word/158-page **RESEARCH THESIS** titled: **THE INITIATION AND RECRUITMENT OF GIRLS INTO GANGS IN THE WESTERN CAPE** for **IMANUELLA MULLER**, Student No.: 16875729 submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES** at **STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**.

Brenda van Rensburg

Brenda van Rensburg

Hugo Chandler

Hugo Chandler

Date: 22 October 2020

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I believe that people and relationships are a crucial part of any person's life. Therefore, I would like to say thank you to the following people, without whom, I definitely would not have made it to the end of this journey:

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents:

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I love you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GIGI	Girls in Gangs Initiative
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
USA	United States of America
US	United States
UK	United Kingdom
CBPR	Community Based Participatory Research
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigations
CP	Community Psychology
WOS	Women of Strength

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Gangs are becoming an increasing social concern, both locally and internationally (Buthelezi, 2012; Joe-Laidler & Hunt, 2001; Molidor, 1996; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001), for a variety of reasons. Gang membership and affiliation pose an increased risk for dysfunction and violence in community, family and school contexts (Aldridge et al., 2011; Dziejanski, 2020) as well as increased chance for members of risky health behaviour, commission of serious criminal offences and violent acts, and victimisation (Gover et al., 2009; Joe-Laidler & Hunt, 2001).

Over the years, this social concern has been reflected with research examining gangsterism in various contexts taking place worldwide: the ‘maras’ gangs from the Northern Triangle in Central America, youth gangs and Aboriginal gangs in Canada, UK gangs, and Australian ‘bikie’ gangs (Aldridge et al., 2011; Aulakh, 2008; Cooper & Bowden, 2006; Goodwill, 2009; Harrington et al., 2000; Umaña & Ridders, 2012).

Locally, gangs present similar challenges in South African communities. Gangs contribute to high levels of drug use and crime and death related to gang conflict and violence, particularly in the Western Cape region of South Africa (Buthelezi, 2012; Pinnock, 2016; Vetten, 2000). Concomitant to the escalation of gang presence in many communities, there has been a rise of girls in gangs, with changing roles and unique experiences of gang life and culture. As Pinnock (2016, p. 132) points out, girls in gangs are a “complex social phenomenon”, and because of this, a “deeper and more sympathetic understanding of their situation is urgently needed”. There is also a need to look beyond the typical depiction of girls in gangs as either accessories in delinquent gang activity or as victims of gang culture; this highlights the fact that gang

membership can be both empowering and disempowering for its female members (Dziewanski, 2020).

Gang recruitment and initiation are core aspects of introduction into gang activity (Densley, 2012; Saavedra, 2015). Gangs are constantly on the lookout to recruit new members to increase capacity and sustain income (Pinnock, 2016). Young people are especially vulnerable to gang recruitment as they are less likely to be imprisoned for criminal activity than older members, and thus they are the main source of income for gangs (Buthelezi, 2012). Successful recruitment and initiation symbolise an important rite of passage to the gang for new members, bringing a sense of belonging and commitment.

Of particular interest for this research study is the process of recruiting and initiating girls and women into gangs, from the perspectives of females who are or have been gang-involved. Girls and women are particularly vulnerable to gang recruitment for the unique roles that they can play in gangs. These roles have evolved throughout gang history from carer, to assisting in carrying out various criminal activities, to acting as a link to imprisoned gang members (Umaña & Ridders, 2012). In addition, young girls may also enter gang life looking for a place or a social group to belong to or for protection from unfavourable home and family circumstances (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Moreover, females may be attracted to gangs for much of the same reasons that men are, to leverage their positions of marginality, and in an attempt to empower themselves or due to threats of sexual violence they face (Dziewanski, 2020). This highlights the adaptive function that gangs can play and fulfil in a girl's and women's lives. Although there has been an emergence of female-only gangs, the focus of this research study will be on women who have been involved in gangs comprising both male and female members.

1.2 Contextualising the study

This research study forms part of a pilot intervention project in the Western Cape region of South Africa. This intervention project is funded by the Girls in Gangs Initiative (GIGI), a global partnership, located in Usiko Stellenbosch, a non-profit organisation (NPO), where I am employed as the project manager. I am a registered counsellor, and was also involved as a group facilitator for one of the GIGI intervention programmes, which allowed me to engage with a group of women who have been involved in gang culture. During the project, I was wearing different hats; namely, project manager, intervention facilitator, and in the context of this study, I also took on the role of a researcher.

Not much is known about the involvement of women in gangs in the Western Cape, although gangs have a long history in the province. Some authors assert that these gangs can be traced back to 1937 (MacMaster, 2007). Pinnock (2016) drew attention to the alarming size of the South African criminal underworld and gang enterprises in the 1980's. In 2012, the reported number of gang members in the Western Cape was 100 000 and the number of gangs present was reported to be 137 (Buthelezi, 2012). It is likely that these numbers have since increased. Gang members were also reported to be between the ages of 11 and 40 (Buthelezi, 2012). Somewhere in the midst of these numbers there are women present in gangs, who have not received much attention.

1.3 Usiko Stellenbosch

Usiko Stellenbosch is a non-profit organisation that was founded in 2000, based in Jamestown, Stellenbosch. The organisation provides support to vulnerable and at-risk young people, through imparting life skills, rites of passage programmes, community rituals and wilderness therapy activities (Usiko Profile, n.d). These interventions aim to build resilience, self-esteem

and independence. Various youth challenges are addressed via a range of programmes that include school-based prevention, after-school clubs, crime prevention and diversion, sustainable livelihoods, an aftercare programme and more recently primary and secondary interventions with girls and women at risk to gang involvement.

In the absence of positive role models, Usiko endeavours to provide positive mentors and rites of passage programmes to support young adolescents' transition into responsible adulthood (Wild Resilience Manual, Usiko Trust, 2014.). This is opposed to the lure of the gang members who may present themselves as attractive role models with an easy going lifestyle but following the traditional route of substance abuse, crime and gangsterism that many youths in low-income communities are at risk to follow. Usiko believes in the healing power of wilderness as can be seen in this excerpt taken from the Usiko Wild Resilience Manual, Usiko Trust (n.d):

Through wilderness work, young people are taught how to communicate without violence and aggression. They're shown how to co-operate and contribute to the wellbeing of the group. They learn about honesty, awareness, openness and responsibility. They become accountable for their actions. Another important thing is that they learn about the beauty of nature and how to draw positive energies and inspiration from nature. (p. 20)

1.4 Girls in Gangs Initiative

The Girls in Gangs Initiative (GIGI) is a three-year pilot programme which started in February 2017, in collaboration with three other non-profit organisations - one based in the United Kingdom (UK) and two in Cape Town, namely Usiko Stellenbosch and the Ruben Richards Foundation (Usiko Profile, n.d). The aim of this project was to gain a better understanding of gang culture, as well as the roles that women play within it, through creating an opportunity

for women to voice their real life experiences (Girls in Gangs Initiative Grant Start Up Form, 2017). The project involved the use of mediation, life skills development and therapeutic work, with the goal of supporting alternative life choices and pathways out of gang life, for young women (Girls in Gangs Initiative Grant Start Up Form, 2017). The GIGI project forms part of a larger, worldwide initiative working with other organizations, that are doing similar work in the UK, Nigeria and Columbia, with a view of sharing learning and best practice, to develop appropriate interventions for the participants (Usiko Profile, n.d).

Initially, Usiko Stellenbosch experienced challenges in recruiting women for the adult women's diversion programme in the local and surrounding prisons. The organisation then reached out to a rehabilitation centre in a local community and proposed a partnership to present the programme to the participants at the centre, as an add-on to the programmes that were being offered as part of their residential rehabilitation programme. In their struggles with alcohol and substance abuse, some of these women have been a part of or were exposed to gang culture. Many have been on the periphery of gang life due to friendships and romantic relationships with gang members. These women were referred to the Usiko group and were invited to participate in the group, for the duration of their stay at the centre. As such, with participants starting and completing their rehabilitation programme at varied times, the group was set up as an open group.

Due to the stigma attached to the name "Girls in Gangs" – a label that was inherited from the GIGI funding document, Usiko staff decided that the group would choose its own name and that this name would be used when referring to the programme. The first cohort of participants collectively decided to call themselves "Women of Strength", and this is now the name that is used when speaking about the participants in the group.

It appeared that having the participants choose their own name gave the impetus for the women to have a greater sense of involvement and ownership of the programme; which may also have increased the sense of belonging and sisterhood that the programme aimed to create. This sense of belonging is an important aspect of any programme targeting gang-involved women, as it might reduce one of the key motivations for gang membership (Shaw & Skywalker, 2017).

1.5 Rationale of the study

Within gangs themselves, and particularly in research, girls have not been very visible. Gover et al. (2009), however, proposed that in recent years females have experienced an “enhanced visibility in gang research” (p. 105). While this may be evident in international research, local research on this specific group is much harder to find. According to Vetten (2000), women are almost entirely excluded from local gang research, both “as researchers and researched” (p. 1).

While research has been conducted on the gang experiences of male gang members (Densley, 2012; Goodwill, 2009; Pinnock, 2016), research (particularly South African research) focusing exclusively on the experiences of female gang members regarding gang recruitment and initiation is scarce, and these particular experiences require more attention (O’Neal et al., 2016). Gangs are an increasingly growing phenomenon in South Africa, and more so in the Western Cape. Indications are that young girls are becoming more involved in gang culture (Pinnock, 2016). A recent study by Dziewanski (2020) has contributed to this lifting of the veil on women in gangs.

What little research that has been available so far has emanated from north of the equator. Much of the reviewed literature regarding the topics for this research study, namely gang recruitment and initiation may be out-dated and may not be relevant for the South African

context. Most of the research that was consulted for the above literature review was conducted either in the United States of America (USA) or the UK.

There is a need to understand this in the South African context, as several researchers have implicated the pernicious historical and social contextual factors of the apartheid system as contributing factors to the lack of research (Buthelezi, 2012; Dziewanski, 2020; Pinnock, 2016).

There is a critical need to study what Harrington and Cavett (2000) termed the internal vulnerability which makes young women so susceptible to the gang lifestyle. This research can assist in identifying these vulnerabilities that contribute to the successful recruitment of females into gangs, and our understanding of the motivation for females to join gangs and go through negative initiation experiences, can be deepened. This kind of research is necessary, not only because females are an “invisible” group in gangs and in gang research, but also because little research on this topic has been conducted in South Africa. Moreover, within this patriarchal institution, women may be at greater risk because of their gender.

Dziewanski (2020) began to examine the nature of female experiences with gang culture, to gain more insight into their motivations for gang involvement in the Western Cape. Further, evidence-based programmes can only be developed by gaining a deeper level of understanding of the unique characteristics and challenges of this vulnerable population (Hayward & Honegger, 2014). Gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences of girls in gangs and their motivation for joining gangs, has the potential to provide insight to better understand this phenomenon and guide both prevention and intervention programming, to adequately meet the needs of this group (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012), as well as young girls who are vulnerable to gang recruitment. The current research study might be useful in gaining knowledge about how

young girls become recruited and initiated into gangs, to inform prevention and intervention programming for girls in gangs, or girls who are at risk of becoming gang members.

Based on the literature, most prevention and intervention programmes are targeted towards males and when there are programmes for females, they have followed the same design as those used for males. It is rare that prevention and treatment programmes target females (Hayward & Honegger, 2014). The literature has indicated that there is a need for programmes which not only target females, but are designed intentionally, with females in mind.

1.6 Aims and objectives of the study

The main research question that this study aims to engage with is how young girls are recruited and initiated into gangs.

This research study aims to gain an understanding of the unique experiences young girls have in gang culture, particularly how they were recruited and initiated into gangs in the Western Cape. Furthermore, it aims to give a voice to females and to provide them the opportunity to tell their own story from their own perspective. The study aims to adopt a Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach, by engaging participants to be a part of the data validation process after the analysis, inviting them to do member-checking of the themes that have been identified from the collected data. This type of community engagement can be described as transitional, incorporating consultations as well as collaborations (Lazarus et al., 2015). Another objective of this research is the exploration of how gang-involved females construct their identity in a gang that is dominated by males and that functions under a patriarchal system. Ultimately, this research aims to understand these phenomena of female gang recruitment, initiation and membership, to establish a real connection with participants

and allow them to gain a sense of empowerment, enabling them to become agentic in their contexts.

As this study is located in an intervention programme, the research also aimed to empower participants to engage with their own challenges and to feel that they have contributed to an important social issue, by being a part of this research process. This aim is in line with the CBPR which seeks to make a contribution, not only to scientific knowledge, but also to empower the various community partners and stakeholders with resources to experience lasting and sustainable benefits from the research collaboration (Collins et al., 2018).

1.6.1 Research objectives

This study has several objectives:

- To ascertain, from female participants who are involved in gangs, how they were recruited into gangs.
- To ascertain, from female participants, who are involved in gangs, how they were initiated into gangs.
- To explore from female participants, who are involved in gangs, the roles and the functions that girls perform in gangs.
- To ascertain how the collected data regarding female recruitment and initiation into gangs can be used to inform interventions targeted at girls in gangs.

1.6.2 Secondary research objectives

This study has two secondary objectives:

- To explore from female participants, who are involved in gangs, what their main motivations were for becoming involved in gang activity.

- To ascertain from female participants, who were involved in gangs, what gangs meant to them and what they contributed to their lives.

1.7 Core constructs of the study

In the ensuing section, the core constructs of the study will be defined, to illustrate how they are operationalised in this study.

- *Gangs*

There are various definitions of the term “gang” and, according to Vetten (2000), there is no clear conceptualisation of what constitutes a gang. Some authors have defined gangs as groups that are created and structured around delinquency, and that are often involved in committing violent acts and selling drugs (Gover et al., 2009). Buthelezi (2012) asserted that gangs in the Western Cape context are organised groups of criminals involved in violence and violent activities.

This research study defines a gang as a group of individuals (men and women) who are involved in criminal and violent activities, including selling drugs, female prostitution and physically violent acts, such as murder and assault. Within the context of this study, gangs are construed as operating (having their base of operation) in a particular community setting. Gangs are known to be territorial over the community or the space within which they operate and will often go to extreme violent lengths to protect this territory (Vuninga, 2018). This is due to the fact that gangs operate in drug dealing and other financial operations in specific territories, and any other gang represents competition for their business (Vuninga, 2018).

- *Recruitment*

Recruitment in this study refers to the process by which gangs obtain new female members and the strategies that they employ to do so. One of the most effective strategies that gangs employ

is taking advantage of the vulnerability in young women, due to unpleasant family and home circumstances which includes domestic violence, sexual violence, poverty, loneliness, low self-esteem, and substance abuse (Hayward & Honegger, 2014; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001; Umaña & Ridders, 2012; Vetten, 2000).

- ***Initiation***

For the purpose of this research study initiation refers to the process that female recruits have to go through, to be accepted into a gang and solidify gang membership. Although the initiation process looks different for each gang (Harrington et al., 2000), initiation for females into gangs is often harsh and violent (Umaña & Ridders, 2012).

- ***Girls***

The term ‘Girls’ in this study refers to females from early adolescence up until eighteen years old. The term ‘girl’ may sometimes be used to infantilise older women with the effect being that they are depicted as being “more childlike and less mature and independent” (Huot, 2013, p. 36–37). Female gang members have been reported to be as young as fourteen years old and adult women in their mid-thirties have also been active in gangs (Vetten, 2000). Both ‘girls’ and ‘women’ are referred to in this study given the inclusion of both younger and older females as participants.

1.8 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis will comprise six constituent chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter of the thesis presents an introduction to the research topic. It contextualises the study and provides a rationale for the study, together with a short discussion on the

significance of the study. Here, a brief overview of the current state of the literature is also presented. The research aims, as well as the primary and secondary research objectives, are stated. A description of how the core concepts of the study are defined is provided, followed by a discussion of the organisation of the thesis. The chapter ends with a discussion on how the research results will be applied.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The current status of literature on girls in gangs is discussed in this chapter. The chapter presents what the available body of knowledge purports about gangs, female membership in gangs, how members are recruited, initiated into gangs, the motivations for joining gangs, and the consequences of gang affiliation. The chapter will also include a focus on prevention and interventions targeting gang-involved females and females at risk to gang involvement.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the theoretical framework from which the identified research topic will be examined is discussed. The theoretical framework of community psychology has been chosen as suitable for the research topic.

Community psychology examines people in context and views them holistically and ecologically, as they exist within numerous social systems (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Based on this, the research participants and their experiences of gang life will be examined in the context of their communities, family life and upbringing, relationships, and social and economic positions. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model will also be utilised to look at the various sub-systems in which gang-involved females find themselves.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The methodology for the research study is presented and discussed in this chapter. The research design for this study is guided using a Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach. The goal of CBPR is: “to create positive, transformative and sustainable change, together with, for and in communities” (Collins et al., 2018, p. 2). This research study aims to involve research participants at various stages in the research process. The larger intervention within which this research falls also places value on the involvement of participants in project feedback, evaluation and design.

Population, sampling, research procedures, data collection, data collection instruments and data analysis are discussed. The last section of this chapter is devoted to a discussion of the relevant ethical considerations. I also present a reflexive section to position myself as a researcher in the study.

Chapter 5: Findings

The findings and themes taken from the interview data of the eight participants are presented in this chapter. The six themes identified within the data are as follows: gang recruitment, gang initiation, prevention and initiation, benefits of gang membership, gang culture, and gang exit. Each theme is individually presented.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

In the final chapter of the thesis, the findings of the study are discussed and integrated, according to the research aims and objectives that were set out in the first chapter. Implications for research and practice are also discussed. The strengths and limitations of the study are highlighted and recommendations for future research are made.

1.9 Summary

The intention of this research study is that potential benefits for both the research participants and Usiko Stellenbosch as the NGO will mutually benefit from the community participatory and research-action design of this study. Recruited participants will receive the opportunity to tell their own story for themselves, to be a part of and to shape a significant initiative, and hopefully find sufficient empowerment to engage with their own meaning-making process to determine their own restorative pathway.

This research will be useful to Usiko Stellenbosch and specifically the Girls in Gangs Initiative (GIGI), to learn directly from the participants about the learning questions which have been set out in the grant start-up. Learning more about how young girls are recruited into gangs can inform interventions targeted at girls who are vulnerable to gang recruitment. Learning about the initiation process for girls will shed light on the kinds of interventions that are necessary to work with a very specific group of women who have been through this unique experience. Overall, this knowledge could contribute towards improved intervention practice so as to understand and work more effectively with this vulnerable population.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the literature pertinent to the focus of this study, namely the recruitment and the initiation of girls into gangs, will be presented. Firstly, the literature on gangs, females, and females in gangs will be reviewed, then the literature reviewing prevention and intervention will be set out, before the identified gaps in the literature and the value of the study are assessed.

Femininity has not usually been associated with the deviant behaviour that typically characterises gang involvement (Dziewanski, 2020; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001; O’Neal et al., 2016; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). Despite this, females are involved in gang culture, with research conducted in the USA showing that nationally females account for 32 percent of gang membership (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). The statistics for women’s involvement in gangs in South Africa are much harder to locate. These gang-affiliated women largely share histories of poverty, sexual abuse, violence in the household and community, absent parent figures and community isolation (Fleisher & Krienett, 2004; Hayward & Honegger, 2014; Umaña & Ridders, 2012). These are all prominent risk factors for gang affiliation and once part of a gang, despite the potential benefits that gang membership can offer, women are usually vulnerable to further adverse conditions and treatment, including exploitation, violent victimisation and sexual abuse (Cooper & Bowden, 2006; Dziewanski, 2020; Gover et al., 2009).

South African research on women in gangs is sparse, with scant research studies focusing on the place that girls have in local gang culture, or their experiences of it. A recent study by Dziewanski (2020) begins to bridge this gap, highlighting the dual nature of female gang participation, as something that can be both liberating and oppressive. There is a solid body of

knowledge emerging from international research providing insight into the phenomenon of girls in gangs (Cooper & Bowden, 2006; Fleisher & Krienett, 2004; Gover et al., 2009; Harrington et al., 2000; Hayward & Honegger, 2014; Joe-Laidler & Hunt, 2001; Molitor, 1996; Moloney et al., 2011; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001; Nimmo, 2001; O'Neal et al., 2016; Umaña & Ridders, 2012; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). Local research, however, particularly research focusing on the processes of gang recruitment and the initiation of females from a female perspective, is warranted.

The current literature review will firstly focus on females and gangs in the literature pertaining to the international context; it will then examine gangs in the Western Cape, females and gangs, recruitment, initiation, the experiences and the consequences of gang involvement. Lastly, there will be a focus on prevention and intervention endeavours to forestall or mitigate female involvement in gangs. The definition of gangs, and what constitutes a gang, will also be explored.

2.2 Females and gangs in the literature

Females have not featured much in gang research and have not been a research priority, with the research agenda on gangs having been shaped for many years by studies focused exclusively on males (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Before the 1970s, criminological research in the USA either neglected women or depicted them in a sexist manner (O'Neal et al., 2016).

In South Africa, unless they are featured in magazine articles, the voices and the experiences of female gang members are absent from gang research (Vetten, 2000). When females were present in research, the focus was usually on how they fitted into theoretical frameworks that were largely male-oriented. This characterisation of the literature (Joe-Laidler & Hunt, 2001; Vetten, 2000) might underscore the need for more feminist perspectives on the phenomenon,

with a clear intention of highlighting the voices and the unique experiences of female gang members. In a recent South African study by Dziejanski (2020), the representation of the South African female gang experience in the literature is said to be falling short of reflecting the true multidimensional nature of their participation in gang culture.

Gangs have come under the research spotlight as they are a major social concern, stemming from the typically masculine acts of violence, vandalism, and other serious threats (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). The paucity in the research focusing on female gang members might stem from the original belief that gangs and delinquency were only male phenomena (Joe-Laidler & Hunt, 2001; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). Gangs were originally described as a male enterprise (O'Neal et al., 2016), and female gang membership was perceived as shocking, as it seriously challenged gender-role norms and involved actual (female) deviance (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). It was assumed that females did not participate in this kind of behaviour and therefore researchers had no interest in female gang members and delinquency.

Initially in the USA, there were a low number of arrests for girls for most criminal offences (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) noticed a spike in arrests for girls and this gave rise to an increase in research focusing on girls' delinquency (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). Research conducted in the USA has revealed that there are a significant number of gang-involved females (Sutton, 2017; Vigil, 2008; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). There is no research in South Africa that can confirm whether this is also the case locally.

Another potential reason for the lack of focus on females in gang research might be the fact that early gang research depicted female gang members as living only on the fringes of gangs (Dziejanski, 2020), and fulfilling less significant functions in gangs than their male counterparts. The role of female gang members was usually trivialised (Moloney et al., 2011) and their presence and involvement in the gang overlooked. Recent research conducted by

Dziewanski (2020) in the Western Cape, illustrated that there are females taking part in gang violence and core gang activities.

Early literature on female gang members was largely dominated by portrayals of sex objects or tomboys, where female gang members were depicted in terms of their sexuality; there was only occasional mention of females functioning as weapon carriers in gangs (Dziewanski, 2020; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). The sex lives of female gang members have been an ongoing point of interest, and males have often provided early reports about the easy sexual access to females that exists in gangs (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). According to Vetten (2000), South African research and literature on gangs up until 2001, through its “emphasis on woman as victims, girlfriends or property” reinforced “stereotypes of women as passive, somewhat parasitical, and living on terms predominantly dictated by men” (p. 9).

What did emerge very clearly in earlier research was the fact that choosing to join a gang was a significant decision for a young female; one which carried real consequences later in life (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). This was also reported by female gang members in the Western Cape that were part of a recent study (Dziewanski, 2020), who reflected on the lasting negative consequences that they were living with, as a result of their participation in gang culture. These included imprisonment, criminal records, loss of important relationships, low career prospects, lack of education and poverty (Dziewanski, 2020). Recently in the USA, there have been advances in studying the roles of both women and gender in gang research (O’Neal et al., 2016). This research has focused on violence towards women, violence perpetuated by females, whether the motivations and the risks for gang membership are gendered, and the different gendered experiences of gang life (O’Neal et al., 2016).

- **Gangs**

There are various definitions for the term ‘gang’ and the question of what constitutes a gang has been an important empirical one in the research community (Aulakh, 2008). Sanchez-Jankowski (2003) reported that gangs have been treated in research “either as a gathering of individuals with a specific negative set of personal attributes or a group of individuals who act in a deviant and/or criminal manner” (p. 191).

Pinnock (2016) presented a broader definition for the term ‘gang’ describing this to be “a group of people with common interests, who continue to meet over time, be it social or criminal” (p. 86). Despite the various ways in which they can be defined, ultimately, gangs are described in the reviewed literature as predominantly negative and stifling to individual and community development and health. What is common across the reviewed literature is that gangs thrive in low-income communities where various social challenges exist, including community violence, high crime rates, domestic violence, single parent households and substance abuse (Aldridge et al., 2011; Aulakh, 2008; Moloney et al., 2011). Gangs may engage in illegal activities to survive, or they may inherently be high-level and very structured criminal organizations (Buthelezi, 2012).

Choosing to join a gang is an important decision which has the potential to significantly change the life of a new member (Dziewanski, 2020; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Consequences of gang membership and involvement include: “intergenerational poverty, dropping out of school, drug dependence, cognitive impairment, injury and disability or death” (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012, p. 2).

When studying or looking at gangs, it is important to also consider the context of the antecedent and prevailing conditions out of which gangs as a social phenomenon developed. This is necessary because in some societies, particularly in the South African context, neighbourhoods and communities have been created that have made it almost impossible for gangs not to exist

(Pinnock, 2016). It is also necessary when studying gangs, to consider the pernicious violence of poverty (D. Matroos, personal communication, May 16, 2019), the effect it exerts on communities and those trapped in the cycle of poverty, and how it contributes to the role and power of gangs in the Western Cape. This will be explored further in the following chapter.

2.3 Gangs in the Western Cape

It has been suggested that the history of gangs in the Western Cape can be traced back to as early as 1937 (Buthelezi, 2012). A *Marie Claire* article featured in the September 1997 edition quoting police sources, stated that there were approximately 80 000 gangsters and 135 gangs in Cape Town's townships (Vetten, 2000, p. 2). Years later, in 2012, Buthelezi (2012, p. 1) reported that there were "more than 100 000 gang members in about 137 gangs in Cape Peninsula", with ages ranging "between 11 and 40 years".

According to Buthelezi (2012), various authors identified different antecedents and time periods accompanying the emergence of gangs and gang violence in the Western Cape. Bowers Du Toit (2014) posited that the roots of gangsterism on the Cape Flats are "deeply rooted in socio-historical factors and highlight the contrasts of a socially and economically fragmented city" (p. 1). Pinnock (2016) contended that the formation of gangs is the consequence of young people struggling in their search for identity.

During the apartheid era, many coloured¹ people were forcefully removed in terms of the Group Areas Act, from their well-established community in District Six. Many families were forced to settle into the area now known as the Cape Flats. One of the consequences of this forced removal and the period of anomie that followed was the loss of a sense of identity and

¹ The term 'coloured' is used to refer to South African individuals from a multiracial ethnic background, historically categorised as 'coloured' during the Apartheid regime.

belonging, which Pinnock (2016) suggested provided ripe conditions for the formation of gangs on the Cape Flats, as well as other Cape Town townships. Communities were forcibly removed, social bonds disrupted, and people were displaced from their established social contexts. With their hands tied, many displaced residents were left with a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness and a lack of social cohesion.

Many young people endured stressful and difficult home environments with fathers and mothers, and the entire family unit, being put under an enormous amount of strain (Pinnock, 2016). This dislocation and breakdown of the home and family is regarded by Pinnock (2016) as one of the driving forces which pushed the youth into the arms of gang culture. Even though street gangs were present before the forced removals in Cape Town, the effect of the Group Areas Act removals can be seen in the evolution of these informal street gangs into the highly structured criminal syndicates that exist on the Cape Flats communities today (Bowers Du Toit, 2014).

After the forced removals, residents in new neighbourhoods were rendered powerless and this created ripe conditions for gangs to emerge and thrive with gangs and gang leaders usurping social power (Pinnock, 2016). To date, urban renewal has still not taken place in these communities, and Dziewanski (2020) highlighted this as one of the most significant drivers of gangsterism. The evolution and the formation of gangs in their current form can then be seen to have been conditioned in response to the structural violence that was enacted towards communities and the cycle of poverty that many families in these communities find themselves trapped in.

The need for identity and belonging is also recognised as a crucial aspect in gang affiliation and in normative adolescent development. The search for identity is central to Erikson's psychosocial stage known as adolescence as the individual seeks to assert his/her own sense of

self. Although there is some variation in the exact age that marks the start of adolescence and the age at which adolescence is complete (Wild & Swartz, 2016), it commonly refers to the period between the ages of 10 and 21 years old (Curtis, 2015; Wild & Swartz, 2016).

The period of adolescence is characterised by rapid and simultaneous physiological, social and emotional growth. This typically includes puberty, psychological autonomy, moving successfully through high school, tertiary education and into the world of work, developing close same and opposite-sex relationships, marriage and parenthood (Wild & Swartz, 2016).

According to Erikson, adolescence is particularly characterised by the developmental crisis of identity versus role confusion (Meyer et al., 2011). This is recognised as the most important stage of development in Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009). This stage refers to commitments that adolescents make which marks a transition from being a child dependent on others to becoming independent young adults (Marcia & Josselson, 2012).

The successful resolution of this developmental crisis leads to the development of what Erikson referred to as reliability or fidelity (Meyer et al., 2011). An individual possessing this ego strength is certain about her or his identity and accepts an awareness of the other possible identity choices that were available to her or him. Ideally, this ego strength is given the opportunity to develop in a supportive and confirming context; "one which acknowledges the individual's unique abilities and needs and provides appropriate demands and rewards" (Marcia & Josselson, 2012, p. 3). However, considering adolescence from a more global perspective, there is a need to accurately capture what adolescence looks like particularly in the African context (Mwale, 2012). To more adequately capture the experience of adolescence in the South African context, one needs to keep in mind the unique circumstances faced by many youth living in marginalised communities and in contexts that are not characterised as

supportive, but more turbulent and unstable. This complicates and thwarts the process of the successful resolution of Erikson's developmental crisis in the adolescent stage.

This process of discovering one's identity and moving from childhood through adolescence into young adulthood, speaks of an adolescent rite of passage. When this rite of passage is eroded, gangs offer a seductive alternative for youth seeking to find space to assert their identity, belonging, mastery and independence. These are considered salient adolescent outcomes for negotiating the transition to adulthood (Botha, 2007). Perhaps, in the absence of positive recreational opportunities, healthy schools and sound family structures (Aulakh, 2008; Bowers Du Toit, 2014; Pinnock, 2016), Western Cape gangs offer disaffected, searching and confused youth available space to belong and try out their identity.

Buthelezi (2012) described gangs operating in this context as a structured group of criminals participating in violence. In line with this definition, in the Western Cape context, there is a strong association of gangs with violence. The Cape Flats, specifically, has seen an increase in gang-related violence since the beginning of 2005 (Buthelezi, 2012). The Hard Livings and the Americans are amongst the most notorious gangs in the Western Cape, and these, along with many other gangs in the Western Cape, exercise power and control to such an extent that community growth and well-being are stunted and seriously undermined (Bowers Du Toit, 2014).

2.4 Motivations for gang membership

Gangs can be attractive for various reasons and the reasons why young people join gangs are complex. Based on some of the reviewed literature, gangs can offer a social space for meeting the emotional needs of its members, while also providing a sense of identity, connection, and a sense of belonging (Buthelezi, 2012; Pinnock, 2016). Gangs function in communities

characterised by poverty, and in these poor communities, gangs are able to meet the basic needs of many people, in the form of food, access to resources such as cell phones, school fees and pocket money (Buthelezi, 2012). Joining a gang may seem like a survival mechanism or a lucrative option to alleviate some of the financial strain faced by families and communities. Despite having a myriad of deleterious effects on individuals, families and communities, gangs are able to meet the very real material needs that these individuals, families and communities have, and thus they may present individuals with an attractive option to overcome poverty. Haushofer and Fehr's (2014) research on the relationship between poverty, affect and stress and the effect of this relationship on risk-taking and time discounting appears to confirm this dynamic. While there may be a legal way of acquiring the finances to purchase groceries and pay for school fees, the chances are that individuals living in a marginalised community may struggle to find employment and thus may not be in a position to meet the needs of their family. Thus, taking part in gang activities, despite their illicit nature, enables individuals to meet their immediate financial needs. Haushofer and Fehr (2014) outline a feedback loop in which poverty perpetuates itself by influencing psychological outcomes (i.e., negative affect and stress), which may result in potentially disadvantageous economic behaviours. Therefore, even though it is poverty, coupled with deep unhappiness and stress that may push individuals into gang involvement, this involvement only exacerbates their families and communities remaining dependent on community gangs and on being trapped in the poverty cycle.

Some gang members join gangs because they have family who are already involved in the local gang culture and activity (Aldridge et al., 2011). This family involvement in gangs may lead to an expectation for young individuals to follow in the footsteps of parents, siblings and relatives. Many females may choose to join a gang to find friendship and self-affirmation,

although research has also shown that this decision may also be motivated by economic and family pressures (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001).

2.5 Risk Factors for Gang Membership

Young people are successfully recruited into gangs for a variety of reasons. According to Fleisher and Krienett (2004), the doorway to gang membership is opened up by early childhood “abuse, poverty, community isolation and parental crime” (p. 612). One common reason why individuals join gangs is because their family is already involved in gang activity (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). This may result in an expectation that children will continue in the family tradition of gang involvement. Absent fathers or abusive relationships with fathers or stepfathers or guardians have also been identified as possible contributing factors (Aldridge et al., 2011; Aulakh, 2008), due to the effects of low self-esteem, as a result of the abuse. According to Aulakh (2008), joining a gang may be a sort of survival strategy for these victimized girls. Another common precursor for joining a gang may also be living in a home where one or both parents are substance abusers (Aulakh, 2008). This is a characteristic that increases the potential for gang involvement and delinquency, as well as other at-risk behaviour (Fleisher & Krienett, 2004).

There is research revealing that the risk factors for gang membership are similar across females and males (O’Neal et al., 2016). Various studies have found that keeping company with delinquent friends, a lack of social bonds and early problem behaviour are risk factors for both females and males (O’Neal et al., 2016). An additional risk factor identified as similar for males and females is a lack of supervision (O’Neal et al., 2016). Overall, while it is suggested that common risk factors and motivations for joining gangs are shared by males and females, there are also distinct features for female transition into gangs and their gang experiences (O’Neal et al., 2016).

A gender-specific risk which leads girls to join gangs is a history of domestic abuse (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). Research shows that many female gang members have been victims of sexual abuse at home (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Most participants (71.6 percent) in a UK study focusing on female-only gangs reported physical abuse and victimisation in their early home life (Fleisher & Krienett, 2004). A large majority identified family problems, drug addiction and abuse as the biggest contributing factors to joining a gang (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). For women who share abuse and other early life trauma, gangs become a coping mechanism as well as a secure place (Fleisher & Krienett, 2004; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012).

The constant aspect of female gang life is the gang as a social space offering refuge for young women who have experienced victimisation at home (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Often young women express that when they join a gang they are provided with friendship, love and an escape from their domestic problems (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). Many female gang members join gangs for protection from abusive families (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Unfortunately for these young girls, Wolf and Gutierrez (2012) asserted that the same gangs that provide girls with the allure of safety and comfort, often sexually abuse and exploit them once they become members.

2.6 Females and gangs

Historically, the female presence in gangs in the USA was traced back to Detroit in the 1950's (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). In South Africa a 1990 study done by Glaser reported the presence of women in tsotsi² youth gangs on the Witwatersrand as early as 1935 (Vetten, 2000).

Although the negative aspects of gang involvement for women and young girls are largely reported in the literature and the term gang is very closely linked to the idea of drugs and

² A common South African slang term for a criminal.

violence (Fleisher & Krienett, 2004), it is important to explore the functions that gangs fulfil in the lives of females, in the absence of alternative viable life options and resources (Dziewanski, 2020; Molidor, 1996; Pinnock, 2016). Gang life and gang involvement look different for different female members. For some, joining a gang may be only part of a phase, while others who choose to join a gang experience a significant turning point which leads to a life with very little potential for a career that is acceptable to society (Dziewanski, 2020; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Many females may choose to join a gang to find friendship and a sense of family or belonging, although research has shown that this decision may also be motivated by economic pressures (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Gang involvement may also offer women a place of safety and serve as a source of protection (Dziewanski, 2020). This protective factor has been found to be a significant motivator for female gang involvement (Sutton, 2017).

The risks specific to female gang members include being the victims of domestic violence, pregnancy at a young age, and marriage to a gang-affiliated partner (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). Sutton (2017) talked about adversity and victimisation in multiple spheres of life that also serve as risk factors for female gang membership, such as domestic violence and abuse, loneliness, family and social rejection, peer pressure, unsafe school environments and exposure to community crime and violence. There is a need to explore the risk factors for female gang involvement in the South African context. These may include romantic relationships with a male in a gang, poverty and domestic problems (Dziewanski, 2020).

Most female gang members are involved in delinquency to some extent. While the delinquency rates of female gang members were found to be consistently lower than those of male gang members in youth surveys, they were both higher than in non-gang females and males (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Girls, who self-reported as gang members in a 2012 study (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012), committed a considerably higher number of crimes in all offence categories,

than did girls and boys who were not gang-involved. Although females in gangs are often portrayed as passive in the gang context and depicted as operating only on the side-lines of core gang activity, they are, in fact, involved in carrying out delinquent and criminal activities within gangs (Dziewanski, 2020).

The types of delinquency which female gang members have been reported to be involved in include property crime, dealing drugs and robbery (Joe-Laidler & Hunt, 2001; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001; Sutton, 2017). According to Pinnock (2016), while female gang members generally fulfil less violent roles in gangs, there is a shift taking place away from these more passive roles. Some of the delinquent acts which South African female gang members in the Western Cape have been reported to take part in, include violent acts (stabbing, assault, murder), housebreaking, shoplifting and car break-ins (Dziewanski, 2020).

Girls who remain in gangs into adulthood face a higher rate of incarceration and recidivism than those who are not in gangs (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). For females wanting to leave a gang, pregnancy and ageing are two of the known factors that are acceptable reasons for reducing or ending gang involvement and those who choose to leave for reasons other than pregnancy or ageing face brutal consequences which can include being raped, beaten or even killed (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). When it comes to girls in gangs, Pinnock (2016) highlights an urgent need for a “deeper and more sympathetic understanding of their situation”, as well as the “development of meaningful pathways out of their gang orbit” (p. 120).

Various research studies have examined the concept of femininity among young women living in ‘rough’ communities and among those active in gang culture (Aulakh, 2008; Joe-Laidler & Hunt, 2001; Van Wyk, 2015). Gangs are a difficult social space in which to accomplish or negotiate femininity (Joe-Laidler & Hunt, 2001; Moloney et al., 2011). It is necessary for gang-involved women to construct their own notion of femininity, as well as masculinity, to be taken

seriously and respected by male gang members (Aulakh, 2008). This need for respect is an important one for gang-involved females (Dziewanski, 2020; Moloney et al., 2011). Women have reported this need to gain the respect of male gang members by attempting to be tough and independent within this highly patriarchal gang environment (Dziewanski, 2020).

At the same time, this is constantly challenged by the high risk of victimisation, which may be an unfavourable consequence of defying the acceptable or the expected notions of femininity held by male gang members (Joe-Laidler & Hunt, 2001). Some of the different roles (assigned and dominated by men) taken on by females in gangs include 'loose' girls, 'good' girls, mother figures and tomboys (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Across the literature, it appears that gang-involved women who take part in partying, multiple sexual encounters and drug use, are not deemed worthy of respect.

2.7 Sexual vulnerability and exploitation of female gang members

A common reason why females join gangs is for access to finances (Dziewanski, 2020). Often, women who become involved with gangs are illicit drug users (Cooper & Bowden, 2006; Dziewanski, 2020) and join gangs in an effort to fund their addiction. It is reported that women in gangs are often exposed to coercive sexual practices and are raped frequently (Cooper & Bowden, 2006). These women are at risk of being adversely affected, both physically and emotionally. Research has also suggested that male gang members may use their own young female gang members as objects for sex (Gover et al., 2009). Findings from a US study (Gover et al., 2009) suggest that females are at greater risk for sexual assault, as well as dating violence. Sometimes female gang members may experience sexual exploitation and violent threats from older male gang members (Hayward & Honegger, 2014).

The victimisation of females in gangs has been reported to be shaped by gender roles (Gover et al., 2009; Sutton, 2017). Young women in gangs may adopt masculine attributes which make them more susceptible to victimisation, as they become more involved in risky behaviour and criminal behaviour (Dziewanski, 2020; Gover et al., 2009). However, in other gang contexts, gender may also moderate the victimisation risk for female gang members, as they may not be engaged in the more serious forms of gang violence (Gover et al., 2009). There is also a reported difference in the source of victimisation for females in gangs. Women in all female gangs are more likely to experience external victimisation from outside of the gangs, whereas women in mixed gangs are more likely to experience victimisation from male members of their own gangs (Sutton, 2017).

Females are also at greater risk of being victimised through gang initiation processes (Gover et al., 2009). The fact that sexual intercourse is offered to girls as a way to become a part of a gang, “reflects the use of their bodies as territory for their male colleagues to exercise their strength, which turns the exercise into an act of humiliation and gender violence” (Umaña & Ridders, 2012, p. 11). Even after initiation, this risk still remains high, as females find themselves in the patriarchal system that dominates male/female gangs (Gover et al., 2009). Some women who were interested in joining a gang reported being tricked into having sex with multiple men by male gang members, claiming that this was part of an initiation ritual, which was untrue (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). These females were then denied gang membership after taking part in the group sex. Some women may also feel pressured to become sexually involved with older male members in gangs (Moloney et al., 2011). This state of male dominance is perpetuated by gang norms (Vigil, 2008). The sexual exploitation of female gang members in their homes and in their gangs highlights the importance of regarding female gang

membership as a serious social concern (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Female gang members, however, are reticent about talking about sexual abuse (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001).

2.8 Gang recruitment

A study of female gang members in Minnesota identified three main ways in which females can be recruited into gangs (Harrington et al., 2000). The first way is through a family history of gang affiliation, which is considered passive recruitment. Families can also reach out and actively encourage and invite relatives to join gangs (Densley, 2012). Another form of passive recruitment is via peer involvement and gang activity, which is located dynamically in local neighbourhoods. As community youth begin to promote the benefits of gang involvement, the attraction becomes natural (Harrington et al., 2000). These are considered passive recruitment, as the female chooses to explore gang life (Harrington et al., 2000). In addition, the gang is not actively doing anything to capture the attention of the female. Linked to this could be instances where young females intentionally join gangs for protection from other local gangs (Nimmo, 2001). Many women also choose to join a gang after becoming romantically involved with a gang member (Umaña & Ridders, 2012).

The third way for a female to be recruited is by active recruitment, as charismatic and charming males seek to seduce females into the gang lifestyle (Harrington et al., 2000). Gang recruitment usually takes place in local community settings where most individuals are familiar with one another (Densley, 2012). Common recruitment locations include schools, correctional facilities, churches, teen events, athletic events and malls (Gang Enforcement, n.d).

2.9 Gang initiation

The reviewed literature supports the idea that just like males, females formally join gangs through an initiation process. Being initiated is a primary ritual for any new gang recruit. Every

gang uses some variation of an initiation ritual before a new recruit can become an official member of the gang, and it is important to recognize that different gangs may have different ways of initiating new recruits (Harrington et al., 2000).

The reviewed literature reveals various initiation rituals for females joining gangs. The particular initiation method that is enforced may also be selected by the gang leader (Molidor, 1996). The easiest way to be initiated into a gang would be to get 'blessed into' the gang. This refers to young people who are born into gangs through parents who are gang members (Nimmo, 2001).

Females may also get 'jumped' into a gang, just like males (Sikes, 1994). Getting jumped into a gang implies being physically beaten by a group of gang members for a designated period of time; and choosing to get initiated into a gang in this manner can communicate toughness to the gang members (Sikes, 1994).

Another gang initiation ritual for girls involves getting 'sexed' into the gang. Although this type of initiation can be voluntary, it may in some instances also be similar to rape (Molidor, 1996). A sex-in can involve one-on-one sex with numerous gang members over a period of time, or gang rape, with multiple gang members, which occurs all at once (Harrington et al., 2000). Across the literature, it has been reported that girls in gangs view being sexed in as the less dignified method of initiation. For this reason, many girls have chosen instead to be jumped into gangs, to preserve their dignity (Umaña & Ridders, 2012). Harrington and Cavett (2000) also report that female gang members who choose the 'beat-in' method of initiation are usually considered to have a higher status than those who choose to be sexed into the gang. This is supported by research conducted by Aulakh (2008) which reports that 'sexed-in' females are looked down upon by both male and female gang members, who have chosen to be beat into the gang. Even those females who have the opportunity to be blessed in through relational

connections might choose to be beat into the gang in order to gain more respect as new gang members (Harrington et al., 2000).

Interestingly, it has been reported in some of the literature that women who become part of a gang through their involvement with a male gang member, are exempt from a 'jump-in' or the degrading initiation process of a 'sex-in' (Umaña & Ridders, 2012). Rank and status may also be associated with different female initiation rituals (Harrington et al., 2000).

2.10 Prevention and intervention

Based on the literature, most prevention and intervention programmes are targeted towards males and when there are programmes for females, they typically follow the same design as those used for males. It is rare that prevention and treatment programmes target females (Hayward & Honegger, 2014). The literature has indicated that there is a need for programmes which not only target females, but are designed intentionally, with females in mind.

Although research highlights a general need for prevention and intervention programmes that meet the unique needs of female gang members, Wolf and Gutierrez (2012) report that service providers of such programmes have noted that these needs may differ, depending on the level of gang involvement. Some females may be in gangs already, some may be at risk of joining a gang, and some may or may not be incarcerated.

Moore and Hagedorn (2001) suggested that research focused on gaining a better understanding of the reasons why females join gangs, might be useful to communities when they develop programmes with the aim of deterring female gang membership. Girls also need support when they decide that they want to attempt leaving gang culture (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). Examining whether the transition out of gang culture is gendered can inform programming efforts which aim to identify points of intervention and providing resources and services to

gang members (O'Neal et al., 2016). From a practical perspective, more effective targeted policy and intervention can take place if there is a deeper understanding of female disengagement (O'Neal et al., 2016).

Moore and Hagedorn (2001) reported on the key features of services that were effective, as identified by the participants. These included creating support groups for females at risk of gang involvement, sharing information on the risk factors for adolescent females for gang or criminal involvement, promoting opportunities for employment, strengthening spirituality and offering consistency and support.

Research findings from Dziewanski (2020) suggest that the economic and social exclusion that is experienced by women in gang-afflicted communities needs to be addressed. This points to a need for holistic, long-term, sustainable prevention and intervention programmes which address not only psychosocial needs but also allow young women access to opportunities to support and sustain themselves financially. Recent research conducted by Pohl (2019) further highlighted that prevention programmes for young, at risk females should also pay specific attention to facilitation styles as well as programme relevance, with regard to programme content and whether or not target groups find it attractive and applicable to them and to their contexts.

2.11 Conclusion

The above literature review suggests that there is very little known about female gang recruitment and initiation, and data on this phenomenon is scarce, particularly in the South African context. Although the main points of focus for this study are female gang initiation and recruitment, the reviewed literature provided a broader context to understand these core processes in the gang culture. The limited writings that explore female gang members and the

presence of females in gang research are out-dated. Moreover, there has not been much attention given to girls' involvement in gangs in recent years; which indicates that this gap in the literature has not been sufficiently addressed. Hence, this study seeks to examine the experience of female gang members and provide an opportunity for their voices to be heard.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Gangs are an increasing social phenomenon, located and nested within societal and community structures. Invariably, gangs exert an insidious impact on the functioning and the wellbeing of communities. For this reason, this research study will examine the identified topic through the lens of Community Psychology (CP). One of the central goals of community psychology is to engage with the wellbeing and functioning of communities (Lazarus et al., 2017) and to enhance the quality of life of individuals, communities, and societies (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

There is also a focus on the experiences of marginalised groups of people and their wellbeing (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). In addition, community psychology advocates for the use of participatory processes that involve the research respondents actively in the research design, processes and outcomes. This study focuses on young women as a particularly vulnerable and marginalised group, within the context of high-risk communities in general, but particularly with regard to gang culture.

In keeping with a focus on studying individuals within different social contexts and structures, an ecological perspective will also be adopted. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1994), specifically, will be used to examine girls involvement in gangs within the various systems in which they exist and between which they move; and on how these systems and the relationships between them impact on the experiences that girls have with gangs and gang culture. This model will also be useful in developing prevention and intervention initiatives; targeting and taking into account the multiple systems that young women find themselves in.

This chapter will also include theorising about identity, poverty and resilience.

3.2 Community psychology

Community Psychology (CP) is deemed to be a suitable theoretical lens for this study, given its emphasis on the relationship between individuals, their communities, and society (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Community psychology emphasises the need to study people in context, from more holistically and ecological vantage points, and as embedded within multiple interacting social systems (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). As such, this research study will also adopt an ecological perspective, where both understanding and working with individuals (and the gang as a social microcosm) in context, is emphasised (Lazarus et al., 2017). In holding to this view, the phenomenon of female gang recruitment, initiation and involvement, will be examined in the context of not only women's personal experiences, but also within the context of their relationships, families, upbringing and their communities. The research study will explore how the circumstances and the conditions experienced by gang-involved females in their multiple social systems, may contribute to their involvement in gang culture.

3.3 Ecological perspective

Risk factors and motivations for female gang involvement exist in multiple domains and systems, including individual, family, peer, school and community, and these systems should be considered simultaneously (Sutton, 2017). The multiple systems in which risk factors and motivational factors for female gang involvement can be located, can also be described in terms of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model. The ecological system is made up of the following five systems: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) presented

an updated version of the model, namely the bioecological model. This revised model consists of the following defining characteristics: process, person, contexts and time.

The process component comprises the various forms of interaction that occur between an organism and its environment, namely proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). These processes take place over time, and are regarded as the primary mechanisms by means of which human development occurs (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). In addition to these proximal processes, the characteristics of the growing and evolving *person*, the individuals' immediate and more remote *contexts*, as well as the specific *time* periods in which the proximal processes take place, are considered (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

The processes referred to by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) take place within the various contexts within which an individual exists. Within these contexts exist the following systems: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem. The first and most proximal system is the microsystem that includes all the social settings in which an individual interacts (Ettetal & Mahoney, 2017). For the adolescent girl, this will include her family and home, her friends, her peers, and her social circle, which may include school, neighbourhood, and broader community interactions.

The risk factors identified in the literature for gang membership include family gang involvement (Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012), absent male and father figures (Aldridge et al., 2011; Aulakh, 2008), abusive fathers and male figures (Aldridge et al., 2011; Aulakh, 2008), substance abuse in the family (Aulakh, 2008), childhood abuse (including physical and sexual) and victimisation (Fleisher & Krienett, 2004). All these risk factors are located, and they all interact within an individual's microsystem. Additional risk factors existing within the individual's microsystem include peer relationships, as well as the gangs themselves.

Delinquent peers and romantic involvement with gang-affiliated men are well documented risk factors for female gang membership. Gangs can operate within an individual's microsystem in instances where family gang involvement already exists (Aldridge et al., 2011; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). Due to the many risk factors present in the family context, it is clear to see that this social unit is an important system to consider when examining female gang involvement. This might also be an indication towards a need for holistic prevention and intervention efforts that include a strong focus on family, as well as peer relationships.

The second system comprising the ecological system is the mesosystem, which includes all the relationships and interactions taking place between the various microsystems of an individual. This can be referred to as a system of microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). At this level, one can situate the power that gangs display in communities and over families. The relationships between individuals, families and gangs are often characterised by fear and unequal power relations. Due to the poverty that characterises many communities where gangs exist, families and peer groups may be lured into or gravitate towards engagement and interaction with gangs, due to the financial resources which gangs are able to offer them (Buthelezi, 2012).

The next ecological system is the exosystem, which "includes the microsystems in which individuals are involved, but not directly embedded", and which "trickles down to influence development through the other people involved in individual lives" (Ettetal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 4). Gangs can be said to operate and exist within this system too. Young females may find themselves in romantic relationships with gang members. While they may not be directly involved in gang culture, what happens in the gang may have consequences for the young female, through her relationship with her gang involved partner. This same risk exists with gang-involved peers in social circles. Exposure to community violence and crime may also

pose a risk factor for female gang involvement. This may be an even more “salient reason to join a gang than poverty” (Sutton, 2017, p. 143).

The fourth system is known as the macrosystem, which refers to the “set of overarching beliefs, values and norms, as reflected in the cultural, religious and socioeconomic organization of society” (Ettetal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 5). Two examples of macrosystems are social class and culture (Ettetal & Mahoney, 2017). In the South African context, when looking at social class for example, and female gang involvement, numerous sources have reported that gangs thrive in marginalised communities characterised by poverty and limited social and economic resources (Pinnock, 2016). The apartheid legacy is one of these macrosystems that has been linked to the emergence of gangs. After the forced relocation of the Western Cape coloured population under the Group Areas Act of 1950, this population found themselves in communities who experienced delayed development in terms of resources, infrastructure, economic activities and services (Van Schalkwyk, 2020). Post-apartheid urban renewal in these areas continues to be slow, and this has been a strong contributing factor to the rise of gangs on the Cape Flats (Dziewanski, 2020).

Poverty in the South African context, can be understood as a form of structural violence that perpetuates inequality. Communities that are impoverished often experience discrimination and they usually find themselves marginalised and caught up in a cycle of poverty (Ngoma & Mayimbo, 2017). Poverty can be described as not having enough to meet one’s basic needs (Ngoma & Mayimbo, 2017), but it can also be seen as something that leads to further negative consequences such as social exclusion (Mood & Jonsson, 2015). Poverty was identified by Ward (2007) in the broader socio-political context, as one of the risk factors for childhood gang involvement. Children may view gang involvement as a survival strategy when families are not able to obtain a legitimate income (Dziewanski, 2020).

Poverty is also part of the apartheid legacy (Ward, 2007) in many South African communities, which has created a fertile space for gang formation and gang influence in these communities (Pinnock, 2016). With a lack of basic needs, individuals may be forced to remain in a place of survival and escapism (Dube-Addae, 2019). According to Pinnock (1997), the effect of poverty in South Africa resulted in many strained communities, and the formation of gangs was the natural teenage response.

Patriarchy can also be considered a macrosystem in which gang-involved females, as well as young women at risk to gang involvement, live; particularly in gang culture. This patriarchal nature of gangs compounds the risks that females face in this environment (Dziewanski, 2020). Females in mixed-gender gangs, due to their patriarchal nature, are vulnerable to both physical and sexual violence at the hands of fellow male gang members, as well as rival male gang members, which is not something that was mentioned by females in female-only gangs (Sutton, 2017). Furthermore, under the patriarchal belief that by hurting a female member from a rival gang, women also find themselves vulnerable to violent sexual acts which can be performed as a means of achieving the male goal of revenge on a rival gang (Sutton, 2017). In a recent study conducted in the USA (Quinn et al., 2019), female participants expressed the existence of persisting expectations of sexual availability to male gang members, reinforcing power differentials and gendered hierarchies.

The final system is called the chronosystem. This system is made up of the ongoing changes as well as consistency in an individual's personal characteristics and of their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This includes "changes over the life course in family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, place of residence or the degree of hecticness and ability in everyday life" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). Considering the chronosystem in the life of girls involved in gangs, it is evident that the need and the motivation to belong to a gang or

become involved with gangs can evolve and look different, over time. These changes that form a part of the chronosystem may also contribute to a woman's decision to exit gang culture, for example, falling pregnant or deciding to live a drug-free life.

Examining gangs and female gang involvement from the bio-ecological systems perspective, it is evident that many factors and systems interact with one another to create spaces and circumstances ripe for gang involvement (and often an increased risk for victimisation for females), and often unavoidable routes into gang life.

3.4 Identity

One of the most important questions a person will be faced in their life is “Who are you?” (Vignoles, 2017, p. 1). Erikson's psychosocial theory of human development presents the essential crisis of identity versus role confusion in the adolescent and in the young adult phase (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009). It is in this stage of development that an individual is presented with the task of discovering who they are, finding their identity and a sense of self-continuity (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009). Throughout this time, the youth and young adults are also tasked with societal expectations (Marcia & Josselson, 2012) of ‘growing up’, for example successfully navigating puberty, completing matric, pursuing tertiary education or employment, entering a romantic relationship, marriage and parenthood. For this to happen successfully, it is assumed that an individual's environment provides the necessary space in which a young person can safely and successfully explore their identity (Marcia & Josselson, 2012).

Many youths growing up in marginalised South African communities, such as the townships on the Cape Flats, face high levels of structural disadvantage, namely poverty and a lack of access to resources and services (Dziewanski, 2020; Van Breda & Theron, 2018). These

communities often have to deal with the challenges of crime, unemployment and single-headed households (Van Schalkwyk, 2020) and in the Western Cape, particularly, high levels of gang violence (Dziewanski, 2020). These are difficult conditions in which to navigate adolescence and the transition into adulthood. This rite of passage is often provided in gangs, when the appropriate guidance and healthy rites of passage are not present in communities for young people.

In a more modern and westernised culture where ancient, traditional practices of guiding youth (both male and female) into their new identities as a man or a woman, are for the most part not present, gang formation can be seen as the outcome (Pinnock, 2016). Young women involved in gangs have the additional task of negotiating their femininity in a heavily male-dominated space. Gender norms in gang culture dictate for the most part, that women “act like women” (Joe-Laidler & Hunt, 2001) and when they do attempt to behave in ways that are seen as more typically masculine, this is often resisted by their male peers (Dziewanski, 2020). It is necessary for women to push back hard against the patriarchal nature of gangs, in order to establish an identity for themselves within a gang, that is accepted and respected; one that encompasses both the ‘girl’ and the ‘gangster’ (Dziewanski, 2020).

According to Oyserman (2012), identity relates to a sense of knowing oneself and experiencing a sense of belonging, as well as knowing how to belong or fit in. Identity is something that is personal as well as social (Oyserman, 2012). For this reason, it seems logical that girls may be more motivated to join gangs (Oyserman, 2012) in a search to find identity as well as a sense of belonging (Buthelezi, 2012; Pinnock, 2016). Vignoles (2017) also spoke about the possible future self/identity, and how this can serve as a motivator for personal development and change, as well as something to measure one’s current self against. This may be relevant in gang exit,

as women might wish to discover a future identity outside of the gang, or they may experience dissatisfaction with their sense of identity as part of a gang.

3.5 Resilience

Definitions of resilience vary and “the complexities of defining what appears to be the relatively simple concept of resilience are widely recognized, especially within the behavioural sciences” (Windle, 2010, p. 1). Despite the different ways in which resilience may be defined, authors do agree and stress, that resilience is a complex construct that can have different meanings in different contexts, and that can look different in different dimensions in an individual, a family, a community, or in an organisation’s life (Southwick et al., 2014). The general idea behind resilience is that it speaks of the ability to adapt, survive and even thrive in the face of adverse and negative circumstances. This speaks of a strengths-based approach, seeking to understand the healthy development of individuals despite the risk (Windle, 2010). After an analysis Windle (2010, p. 12) put forward the following definition of resilience which is believed to embody all the key characteristics of resilience, and which will be used for the purpose of this study:

Resilience is the process of effectively negotiating, adapting to, or managing significant sources of stress or trauma. Assets and resources within the individual, their life and environment facilitate this capacity for adaptation and ‘bouncing back’ in the face of adversity. Across the life course, the experience of resilience will vary.

This definition approaches resilience as a multi-level construct, including both individuals and their wider context and environment (Windle, 2010). This definition is one that is compatible with and reflects Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, and this is highlighted by Windle

(2010) who pointed out the complexity of resilience and its functioning across multiple, interacting levels. Because of this theory's notion that people exist, interact within and are influenced by, various physical, environmental and social systems, "the functioning of the defining attributes of resilience can be further explained within this theoretical framework" (Windle, 2010, p. 13).

The sources of stress or trauma in Windle's definition of resilience (2010) were labelled as 'adversities' in a systematic review conducted by Van Breda and Theron (2018), seeking to identify the specific factors that assist in enhancing the resilience of South African youth. These adversities included trauma exposure, structural disadvantage (poverty and unemployment), exposure to violence, food insecurity, drug use, street involvement, child sexual abuse and father absence (Van Breda & Theron, 2018). These adversities are echoed in gang research on South African gang involvement (Buthelezi, 2012; Pinnock, 2016) and specifically, female gang involvement (Aulakh, 2008; Fleisher & Krienett, 2004; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001; Sutton, 2017; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). In light of this, it appears that the development of resilience in female youth and adults in gang culture, or at risk of gang culture, is needed in order to adapt to these adversities, to manage them, and to navigate life in this space.

Regarding prevention and intervention, Southwick et al. (2014) pointed out that individual resilience depends greatly on multiple layers of society. For this reason, effective interventions would need to look beyond the development of individual strengths and take into consideration the dynamic relationship between these multiple levels (Windle, 2010). There is also a theoretical acknowledgement that protective factors operate across multiple levels (Windle, 2010). These protective factors can also be thought of as resilience enhancers (Van Breda & Theron, 2018) which occur at the personal, relational, structural, and spiritual and cultural social ecological layers (Ungar, 2011).

Some of these identified resilience enhancers (Van Breda & Theron, 2018) include high self-esteem and commitment to education (personal layer), acceptance and belonging (relational layer), financial wellbeing and community safety (structural layer), and spiritual beliefs and cultural values (spiritual and cultural layer). The most important layers of resilience enhancers were found to be the personal and the relational layers (Van Breda & Theron, 2018). The resilience enhancers identified specifically at the relational level such as a sense of acceptance and belonging were mentioned by various authors (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001; O'Neal et al., 2016; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012) as strong motivations for gang involvement, where these enhancers were not present in an individual's family or home life.

Based on the multi-layered nature of resilience, efforts in prevention and intervention aiming to enhance resilience within young girls and women in gang contexts, should be holistic and address needs on multiple levels. There are additional resources and assets that are able to facilitate resilience within different layers. These include motivation and temperament at an individual development level, stability and cohesion at a family and household level, transport and services at a neighbourhood and social context level and health and welfare at a social policies level (Windle, 2010). In this vein, Pinnock (2016) writes that moving towards resilience in an attempt to solve the problem of gangsterism in the Western Cape, includes strengthening resilience on both a community and on a personal level.

3.6 Summary

Because gangs are considered a social concern (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001), an appropriate theoretical lens to examine it one that emphasises contextual as well as individual factors, namely Community Psychology and more specifically, the ecological systems theory. From this perspective, this study aims to examine the recruitment and initiation of girls into gangs, but also the various factors involved in their journey into gangsterism. The literature (Hayward

& Honegger, 2014; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001; O'Neal et al., 2016; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012) also pointed towards a need for a holistic and integrated approach to prevention and intervention efforts, aimed at deterring young girls from becoming entangled with gangs, or assisting women who wish to exit gang culture.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The main aim of this study was to engage with understanding how girls are recruited and initiated into gangs. This study aimed to gain an understanding of these unique experiences by voicing the experiences of identified participants and allowing them to tell their own story from their own perspectives.

In this chapter, the research design and methodology will be presented and discussed. This includes a discussion on the rationale for adopting a qualitative approach as well as a discussion on the chosen research approach, namely a Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach. Here, I will include a section that focuses and presents the various research and community relationships and partnerships that make up the greater intervention in which this research study is located, and that constitutes the context for the study.

Following that will be a discussion on the population, sampling methods and the procedure used for the research study. A brief profile for each of the participants constituting the research sample will be presented in this section. The data collection process will be discussed, as well as the data collection instruments that were developed and used. The data analysis process, and the ways in which the thematic analysis method was used and applied to analyse the collected data will then be described.

This chapter will end with a review of the ethical considerations which were addressed throughout the research process; institutional permission and access to participants, research information and informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, data protection and storage. Given the vulnerability of the participants, due consideration was given to mitigating any risks

attached to participation in the project. Lastly, researcher reflexivity and self-care pertinent to the study are described.

4.2 Research design

The exploratory nature of this research study with its objectives to highlight the unique individual experiences of, and perspectives on, certain gang phenomena made an explorative qualitative approach the most suitable. A qualitative approach enables an emphasis to be placed on the female participants' own experiences and interpretations of their engagement with gangs and gang culture (Bryman, 2012). This qualitative study was conducted using a CBPR approach. Research that is conducted from a CBPR approach typically is relevant to the community's developmental needs, and involves community members differentially in the research process, on a continuum from minimal participation to full participation in the research process and activities (Lazarus et al., 2014).

In keeping with this CBPR value, various community stakeholders (Usiko Stellenbosch and a partner rehabilitation centre in Cape Town), as well as the participants, were consulted at various stages throughout the research process (in an advisory capacity). One of the benefits of CBPR is the opportunity that is created for collaboration and partnership (Christopher et al., 2008). With the strong partnership already existing between Usiko Stellenbosch and a Cape Town based rehabilitation centre, the current research was able to build on that relationship and bring a new level of collaboration (Marais et al., 2007). This type of community engagement that features in CBPR fosters community-based research that can then be taken further, through application in the concerned community; which is particularly relevant in the South African tertiary education context (Lazarus et al., 2015), with its growing emphasis on community engagement.

4.2.1 Community based participatory research

One of the main aims of CBPR is to increase understanding and knowledge of a given phenomenon and to integrate this gained knowledge with changes in intervention and policies to improve community members' health and life quality (Israel et al., 2005). Further aims include keeping a balance between research and action and building on community strengths and resources (Lazarus et al., 2014). This research approach has been framed as having a greater focus on relationships between research partners and goals of societal transformation, rather than on a specific set of research methods or techniques (Wallerstein & Duran, 2006).

According to Israel et al. (2005), CBPR research integrates a balance between knowledge creation and intervention, with mutual benefit for all partners; disseminates results to all partners who are also involved in this process; and involves a long-term process and commitment to sustainability.

There is a challenge of participation that exists in CBPR research, which can be viewed through a continuum of control, from control being exercised solely by the research unit involving minimal or manipulated participation, to the other end of the continuum, though this may be less common, control being exercised completely by the community (Wallerstein & Duran, 2006). There are several ways in which community participation has been conceptualised, with the most apparent similarity across the different perspectives being the concept of a continuum of power or control (Israel et al., 2005). On the low end of the spectrum, although community members may serve on advisory boards and have some involvement, they do not really have influence or control over the research project (Marais et al., 2007), whereas on the other end of the spectrum, full control over all aspects of the research process is exercised by the community (Israel et al., 2005). What should be noted is that not every CBPR partnership will achieve the same level of community participation (Israel et al., 2005).

The benefits of conducting research using a CBPR approach include the potential for true partnership and collaboration to take place (Christopher et al., 2008), an assurance that the research topic represents something that is a significant concern for the local community (Israel et al., 2005), with the goal of improving the health and the wellbeing of the communities who are involved in the research (Israel et al., 2005). Lazarus et al. (2017) also highlighted CBPR as a community building strategy. With a focus on building partnerships, coupling knowledge with action, CBPR can contribute to the development of long-term interventions which may strengthen communities (Lazarus et al., 2017).

Some of the challenges of CBPR include examining the role of power and privilege in the research relationship, as researchers often have the perceived power base of being the experts with “scientific knowledge” (Wallerstein & Duran, 2006). Another significant challenge is to realign researcher-community relationships on an ongoing basis, so that the different partners and the partnership can be nurtured (Taliep et al., 2016). The current study sought to intentionally use a CBPR to enhance the collaborative relationship between the organisations.

4.2.2 Research and community relationships and partnerships

This research study was conducted as part of an existing project under the auspices of the NPO Usiko Stellenbosch, which provides support and services to youth and young adults through various programmes (Usiko Profile). One of Usiko Stellenbosch’s newest programmes is the Women of Strength (WOS) programme, which forms part of an international grant labelled the Girls in Gangs Initiative (GIGI). In 2017 the South African leg of the GIGI began a three-year pilot programme among three non-profit organizations (Usiko Profile, nd). The programme focused on gaining a better understanding of gang culture in South Africa specifically the role of females within the gangs, with the view to supporting alternative life and economic choices for young women in gang culture, and also attempting ambitiously to engage with gang leaders

around the safety and the respect of women within the patriarchal gang system (Girls In Gangs Initiative Revised Start-Up Form, 2019). Usiko Stellenbosch is one of these non-profit organizations that was tasked with developing a secondary level intervention with young women who were involved with gangs. The aim of this programme is to learn about the various issues that young women in gangs face and to develop appropriate intervention and prevention programmes to help this particular group (Usiko Profile, nd).

The WOS programme is a six-month residential programme comprising weekly group sessions which take place at a rehabilitation centre in Cape Town. For the first year of this programme, the Usiko Stellenbosch social worker fulfilled the role of facilitator. In the second year I joined the programme as co-facilitator with a new social worker and worked with the second cohort of new group members. The group members are women who entered the rehabilitation centre at the beginning of 2018, and as part of their rehabilitation programme, they also participate in the WOS group.

Participation in the WOS group was voluntary. The centre offers a residential rehabilitation programme which consists of individual and group counselling, mentoring, skills training and various faith-based activities. The Usiko WOS programme consisted of group workshop sessions, individual counselling (where needed), recreational excursions and a three-day wilderness experience. The Usiko Stellenbosch social worker provides continued support to the remaining group members from the initial group. To collect the data pertinent to the study, members of the existing programme and those who have completed the programme were approached as potential research participants for the study. Figure 1, below, illustrates the partnership within which the current research study is located, as well as the various roles that I fulfilled throughout the duration of this research study and pilot initiative.

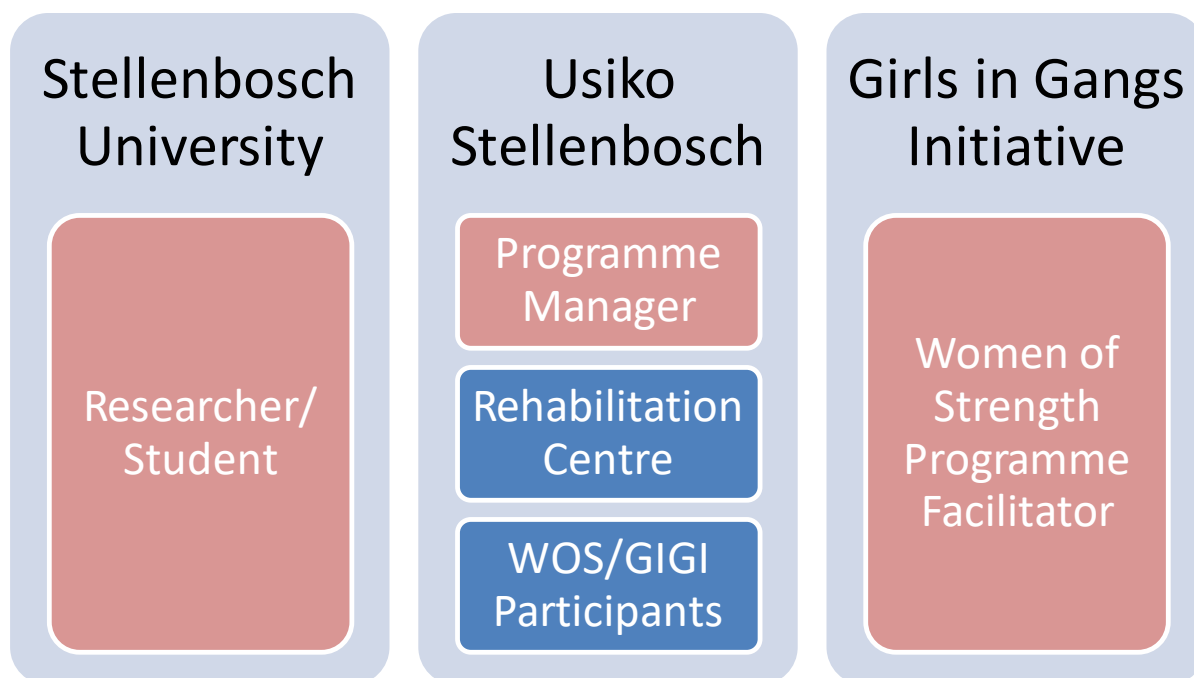


Figure 4.1 *Research and community relationships and partnerships*

Playing dual roles in a research process, in this case the researcher and the facilitator, can be complicated (Fleet, 2016), and as such it is important to address various issues. These include ethical considerations as well as ensuring adequate research and clinical supervision (Fleet, 2016). Ethical clearance was granted by the relevant research ethics committee, after adhering to recommendations and making the necessary changes required by the committee after the initial research proposal, which is a practice that is likely to avoid harm to research participants (Fleet, 2016). Regular research supervision has taken place throughout the duration of this research project, as well as supervision with an independent registered counsellor, where discussion of groups and individual cases took place.

The matter of playing dual roles was made less complicated due to the fact that four out of the eight research participants had already completed their group sessions with me as a counsellor, and three out of the eight participants had been part of a group prior to my involvement in the programme with the previous group facilitator. One of the participants was a member of a

group that was still on-going during the time of data collection, with me playing the role of group facilitator and researcher.

4.3 Population and sampling

The participants for the study were recruited from women who participated in a rehabilitation programme based in the Western Cape and were part of the Usiko Stellenbosch's WOS programme. Participation in the WOS programme was voluntary for all women in the rehabilitation programme. These women come from different backgrounds, with some having been through gang life.

The main inclusion criteria for this study were women who have been involved in gang life, whether the involvement might have been in the past, or they were currently involved; women who had been recruited into gangs, and who have gone through gang initiation rituals. Women at this rehabilitation centre are predominantly Afrikaans speaking, coloured³ or black⁴, and their ages ranged from 18 to 30. They come from various locations throughout the Western Cape region.

Purposive sampling was used to identify the intended sample, relevant to the research questions that were presented (Bryman, 2012). With purposive sampling, participants who meet the inclusion criteria can assist in identifying and referring other potential participants who meet the same inclusion criteria. In keeping with a CBPR approach, this type of sampling is able to identify how individuals are connected within different networks (Bryman, 2012). The ideal sample size is between 6 to 12 participants or until data saturation is reached. In the present study, eight women were recruited. All eight of these women entered the rehabilitation centre

³ The term 'coloured' is used to refer to South African individuals from a multiracial ethnic background, historically categorized as 'coloured' during the Apartheid regime.

⁴ The term 'black' is used to refer to South African individuals historically classified as 'black' or 'African'.

voluntarily seeking help for drug addiction. A brief profile for each of the women in the sample will be provided below.

4.3.1 Participants

A brief description of the participants will be provided in this section. A detailed description of each participant is provided in the beginning of the findings chapter of the thesis.

The participants for this research study consisted of eight women ranging in age group 26 to 36. Within this group of women there were differing levels of gang involvement, although all the women grew up in communities with regular gang exposure. Six out of the eight women were directly involved in core gang activities, while three out of the eight women were exposed to gang culture, either through socialising in gang spaces or gang-involved family members. Seven out of the eight women are mothers and all eight of the women have histories of substance abuse, having been introduced to the WOS programme during their stay at a residential rehabilitation centre.

4.3.2 Procedure

Due to the vulnerability of the research group, it was necessary to ensure ethical diligence, to maintain the safety and the wellbeing of any potential research participants. Hence ethics permission was obtained at five different levels; departmental permission from the Psychology Department at Stellenbosch University, the university's Research Ethics Committee, Usiko Stellenbosch, the rehabilitation centre we were partnering with, as well as participant consent.

Once ethical clearance was granted by the university and Usiko, the rehabilitation centre management was contacted to request permission for the study, and contact information of the group of women who were part of the first cycle of the WOS programme during their six month stay at the rehabilitation centre. I contacted the women and communicated with them directly,

to retain confidentiality regarding their participation in the research study. The women were given a brief description of the research study and they were asked whether it would be something that they might be interested in taking part in. I met with all eight women individually and provided a verbal description of the research intention and the data collection process. The participants were given an informed consent form that was available in both English and Afrikaans (see Appendix E, F, G and H), explaining the research topic, as well as the aims of the research. I also used a verbal informed consent form (in both English and Afrikaans), in instances where potential participants were not able to read through the entire consent form. These potential participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions they had regarding the research and the data collection process.

The women were informed of their rights regarding participation in the research process. The women who decided that they wanted to participate in the research, were asked to sign the appropriate consent form which shared the benefits and the potential risks of harm of the research, and which also made it clear that participation was entirely voluntary and that participants had the right to withdraw from the research process at any time without any negative consequences. The participants were informed about the processes to ensure that their data would be kept anonymous (pseudonyms were used), secure (password protected and encrypted), and confidential (only myself and my supervisor would have access to the data).

4.4 Data collection

Data were collected through individual interviews (see Appendix I and J for English and Afrikaans interview schedules). These interviews lasted between forty to sixty minutes and were all conducted at the rehabilitation centre where the participants were or had previously lived for six months. If the participants lived elsewhere, the necessary arrangements were made to conduct interviews in a safe location (which would be documented), free from noise and

distraction, which was convenient for the concerned participant. One of the participants, who had already moved out the rehabilitation centre and was back in her home, was picked up from her home to take part in an Usiko intervention as a guest speaker and indicated that it would be convenient for her to conduct the interview at the venue for this session (at an NGO based outside of Stellenbosch).

The interview was conducted after her participation in the Usiko intervention session, after which the participant was again dropped off at home. Written permission for the audio recording of individual interviews was obtained from all participants, prior to commencing the interviews. The participants were not required to provide any personal information such as their names or addresses. Interview data was also scrutinised to ensure that all personal data or identifying references were anonymised in the transcripts.

4.4.1 Data collection instruments

Individual interviews were semi-structured (see the interview schedule Appendix I AND J). Semi-structured interviews offered the benefit of flexibility, allowing interviewees to talk about issues that were significant to them, while at the same time allowing the researcher to follow up on questions for richer, more detailed responses (Bryman, 2012). Interview questions did not limit the direction that the interviews proceeded in, based on the interviewee's responses, some of which explored new themes and elicited new questions. All interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder which was transcribed after the session. I also kept a diary to record field notes and had access to Usiko Stellenbosch's repository of minutes and programme documents that provided important secondary data to the study.

4.5 Data analysis

I conducted the interviews myself and transcribed all the individual interviews, which gave me the opportunity to engage closely with the participants and the data. Throughout the transcription process I kept notes on each interview, of ideas and thoughts that I wanted to revisit at a later stage. The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, which involved the identification of themes or patterns in the collected data.

To analyse the data, I adopted Braun and Clark's (2006) steps for deriving themes from qualitative data. This process entailed analysing data, identifying themes within the data and reporting on those themes. This approach was advocated by Braun and Clark (2006) due to its flexibility and usefulness as a research tool, which allows for a rich, thorough and complex description of the data. Braun and Clark (2006) recommended the following 'phases' for carrying out thematic analysis: becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing the identified themes, defining and naming themes, and reporting on the themes.

For this research, themes or patterns relating to gang recruitment and gang initiation for females were identified, to create a picture of what these two phenomena may look like in the Western Cape. In addition, further themes were derived from the data, based on questions that were asked relating to further primary and secondary research objectives, as well as information that was commonly shared by research participants.

The first step in Braun and Clark's thematic approach to data analysis required me to familiarise myself with the data (Braun & Clark, 2006). This began in the interviewing phases, in which I conducted all of the individual interviews. This allowed me to begin the analysis process with "some prior knowledge of the data" (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 16). The decision to transcribe

the interviews myself gave me the opportunity to do this; listening and re-listening to interviews numerous times. Throughout this transcription process I kept ‘transcription notes’, highlighting key ideas and thoughts that I would want to revisit during the discussion of the research findings. I was also able to detect linkages between the different interviews when points of commonalities could be seen. During this phase I also made notes of some coding ideas to revisit in later phases of the analysis process (Braun & Clark, 2006). Once the transcription of all the interviews was completed, I read through all the interviews before moving on to the generating of initial codes.

The second phase of Braun and Clark’s data analysis approach requires one to generate initial codes (Braun & Clark, 2006). Coding was done manually and although I approached the data with certain questions in mind (based on the research objectives), additional codes were also generated based on the data itself. I coded the entire data set, and this was done by working through the data set and identifying and recording interesting aspects of the data (Braun & Clark, 2006). I highlighted and numbered extracts of data. To keep record of the codes, I began with a mind map, which was then transformed into a list of all the initial 268 codes that were identified across the data set (Braun & Clark, 2006).

Searching for themes was the next phase of the data analysis process. I made use of visual representations to assist in sorting the various codes into themes (Braun & Clark, 2006). Codes were colour-coded and rearranged into groups, based on the colours that were assigned to them. These colours represented initial themes that were generated after reading through all the generated codes. This phase ended with an initial list of themes, each with the relevant codes assigned to them.

Phase four of the data analysis process involved reviewing the generated themes (Braun & Clark, 2006). Braun and Clark (2006) recommend two levels of reviewing and refining themes.

During the first level coded data extracts for each theme were read to ensure that they formed a coherent pattern (Braun & Clark, 2006). During the second level of reviewing and refining themes, which considers “the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set” (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 21), it became apparent that some themes needed to be grouped together as sub-themes belonging to new themes. Other themes were discarded as they were not particularly meaningful or relevant to the research aims and objectives.

Phase 5 of analysing the data involved defining and naming themes (Braun & Clark, 2006). As part of this phase, I also identified sub-themes for all the themes. Afterwards themes were presented in a table, together with their sub-themes and codes. The different themes and sub-themes were defined before writing up the thematic analysis for each one. Below is a visual representation summarising the data analysis process:

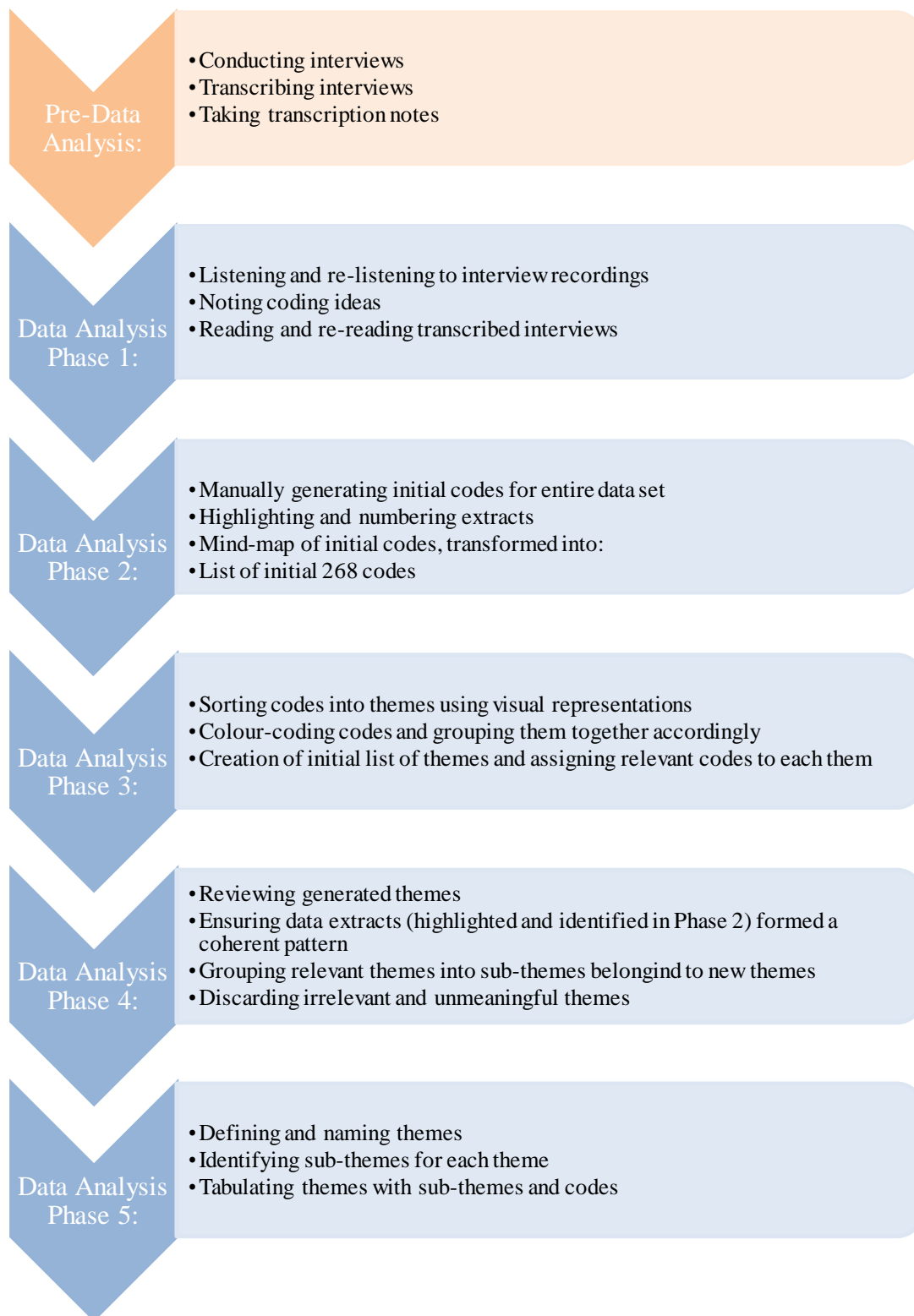


Figure 4.2 *Visual representation of the data analysis process*

4.6 Ethical considerations

4.6.1 Institution permission and access to participants

Permission was granted by the director of the rehabilitation centre to contact previous residents who were participants in Usiko's first cycle of the WOS programme and to conduct individual interviews as well as any research-related meetings at the rehabilitation centre (See Appendix C). Permission was also granted to conduct this research under the auspices of Usiko Stellenbosch (see Appendix B). Furthermore, Stellenbosch University's Research Ethics Committee (REC) granted permission to conduct the research study and carry out data collection with the participants. I was advised to contact and speak to the participants directly about the research study and their potential participation in it, for their safety.

4.6.2 Research information and informed consent

Potential research participants were given an informed consent form (see Appendix E, F, G and H) explaining the purpose and the aims of the research. This form explained the research process and how the participants would be involved in the various stages throughout the research process. The potential benefits and risks to the participants were also shared on the information sheet. Furthermore, debriefing and access to counselling services were indicated. This ensured that the participants had accessible resources for counselling/debriefing should the need for them arise, and if their involvement in the research became in any way traumatising or emotionally upsetting to them. Arrangements were made for the participants to have the opportunity to have a debriefing with the Usiko NPO's social worker. None of the participants needed to be referred for counselling. The researcher and the supervisor's contact details were also shared on this information sheet so that the participants had access to communication regarding any research-related matters.

4.6.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Given the vulnerability of the participants, extreme caution had to be exercised to protect the identities of the participants and to anonymise the data. No identifying information, other than age and language was requested from the participants. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the participants

The participants were informed that this research study fulfils the study requirements for my master's degree at Stellenbosch University. They were informed that my research supervisor would be consulted regarding data collection and analysis, and that for this reason, would have access to the information shared in the interviews. Research information pertinent to my processing of the research process was also brought up in supervision sessions with a registered counsellor that I was seeing throughout the research process, as part of my debriefing. The participants were assured that I would protect their confidential information and would not share any information regarding their identities with other individuals.

Limits to confidentiality were also explained in the informed consent forms. The participants were informed that I have a legal duty to report any incriminating information that would be shared with me during the interview. I was instructed by the REC to share any incriminating information that was shared with me in an interview, with my supervisor, who would assist me in deciding how to proceed with the information in accordance with the appropriate legal requirements. Due to this requirement, the participants were encouraged to be cautious about what information they chose to share in the interview. Some of the participants appeared to be a bit apprehensive at the mention of this. However, all were still comfortable enough to proceed with the interviews.

4.6.4 Data protection and storage

Given the safety issues involved in conducting research with a vulnerable group, extreme caution was exercised regarding how the data was managed and recorded. All the participants were given pseudonyms and a code which was used to identify the participant. All data documents were password protected and encrypted. Data memory sticks and audio recordings were stored in a locked cabinet in my supervisor's office, to which only he had access to. Any hard copies of data (for example, information sheets and consent forms) were also stored in a locked cabinet in my supervisor's office. That minimised the risk of data going missing on flash drives or laptops etc., or any damage, loss or theft of any physical data. Data will be destroyed after five years.

4.6.5 Researcher reflexivity and self-care

In this study I found myself wearing many different hats and engaging in different roles. In this section I locate myself as the subject in an attempt to acknowledge my role not only as the researcher, but also that of a participant in the process of constructing knowledge; more than just "outsider-observer" of the phenomenon under study (Patnaik, 2013). As the primary researcher, I am a young, English-speaking, coloured woman from a middle class and higher education background. I was aware that in many cases the participants' first language was not English. I do, however, understand Afrikaans fully and was able to conduct interviews in Afrikaans as well as translate from English into Afrikaans for participants, when requested.

I was also aware of the differences in the socio-economic and educational backgrounds. I am also a registered counsellor and was very aware of the duality of being researcher and facilitator in the programme. This awareness was important for exercising reflexivity throughout the research process, and being aware at all stages of how the researcher might be impacting the

research, and how I was being impacted by the research. I had parallel reflections when I was facilitating group sessions. The duality of being the researcher and the facilitator brought with it a burden of care. I made use of the regular debriefing opportunities with the Usiko staff, my registered counsellor consultant, and my research supervisor to engage with this reflective functioning.

In exercising personal (Palaganas et al., 2017) and introspective (Patnaik, 2013) reflexivity it was also important to consider the multiple roles that I was fulfilling in this context. I was not only the researcher, but was also the programme co-facilitator for most of the participants who were being interviewed for the study. As a result of that, I had already walked quite a journey with the women who were participating and had gotten to know them, as well as their personal histories and backgrounds.

Due to this connection, the researcher had to make it clear to the participants that the interview was entirely separate from the WOS sessions; and that the two should be kept separate from each other. In retrospect, this was difficult for the participants to maintain at the time. I would gently shift the focus back to the question at hand or suggest that the issue raised should be taken up after the interview. I wondered whether such a separation could be realistically achieved. I also informed the participants that their refusal to take part in the study would not result in any negative consequences for them in the group setting. All the women who were approached however, were eager to take part in the study and to share their stories and knowledge with me. In retrospect, a benefit of already knowing these women was the trust and rapport that had already been established and thus the participants seemed to be at ease throughout the interview process; except for a few who started out quite nervous in the interview, but they eased into it after a few minutes. I was open to this, and was aware that not all the participants would react in the same way to the interview process. The research

participants who had not been in the groups that I had facilitated, had also gotten to know me through my various engagements with the rehabilitation centre.

As this research topic dealt with sensitive issues and the participants were sharing details of very traumatic experiences, I, as the researcher needed debriefing to ensure my wellbeing also. I constantly monitored my emotional needs and energy levels and was proactive and intentional in ensuring that adequate care was being taken. This care came in the form of monthly supervision sessions with a registered counsellor, as well as regular supervision sessions with my research supervisor. There was also a weekly team meeting at the Usiko office for staff members involved in the broader project. This not only served in protecting my wellbeing, as the researcher, but it also ensured that I engaged with the research in the most appropriate and ethical manner. Any ethical questions that arose during the research process were brought up with both supervisors to be resolved in the best manner possible. These measures allowed me to bracket my roles in the intervention. I was, however, very aware of how different my life was compared with that of the participants through their stories.

In the next chapter, the findings of the study are presented.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The findings from the data provide a complex picture of the gang experiences of eight women in the Western Cape. This study aimed to explore how women in the Western Cape get recruited and initiated into gangs and what their thoughts are on how young women at risk to gang recruitment can be protected against gang involvement, and how women already involved in gangs seeking to leave gang culture can be best assisted. The primary and the secondary objectives of the study will be restated below.

5.1.1 Primary research objectives

- To examine data from female participants who are involved in gangs on how they were recruited into gangs.
- To examine data from female participants who are involved in gangs on how they were initiated into gangs.
- To discover from female participants who are involved in gangs the roles and the functions that girls perform in gangs.
- To ascertain how the collected data regarding female recruitment and initiation into gangs can be used to inform interventions targeted at girls in gangs.

5.1.2 Secondary research objectives

- To ascertain from female participants who are involved in gangs what their main motivations were for becoming involved in gang activity.

- To ascertain from female participants who were involved in gangs what gangs meant for them and what they contribute/d to their lives.

These research objectives will frame the discussion for this concluding chapter, which will be augmented with a discussion of the contributions of the study and implications for research and practice, as well as the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

To preface the findings of this study in this chapter, a short description of each of the research participants will be provided:

Jessica is a 26-year-old woman and a mother of two. She grew up with family who acted as her foster parents. She knew her father, but she never had any relationship with him. She became involved with gangs after leaving home and started doing drugs. For her, being in a gang gave her a place to stay and gave her access to drugs.

Christine is a 35-year-old woman who grew up with three older brothers who were 28 gang members. All three of these brothers were shot and killed due to their gang involvement.

Amy is a 29-year-old woman who grew up with both parents until the death of her father in her early teens. Her father was an alcoholic and growing up she regularly witnessed her father physically abusing her mother. After her father's passing, her mother became seriously ill and Amy was moved around amongst various family members until she left on her own at the age of 16. Amy turned to gangs when she needed protection in her community and she started dating a male gang member.

Chinelle, who preferred not to share her exact age, is in her late twenties and spent twelve years of her life addicted to drugs and grew up with a father who was also a heavy drinker. She does, however, refer to her younger years as a "good childhood". She became involved with gangs to gain access to drugs. She removed herself from gang life before she became too deeply

entangled with it. Interestingly enough, she was involved with two different gangs during the same time period. For her, being involved with gangs was something that was fun and exciting, until she realised the seriousness and the danger in the situation.

Dana is a 39-year-old woman who is the youngest child in her family. She followed her sister into gang culture and although she started out just socialising in gang spaces, she stayed for the easy access to drugs. For her, the drugs gave her peace during difficult family times. She was also romantically involved with a male gang member.

Emily is a woman in her late twenties who started dating a male gang member as a teenager, with whom she has a young daughter. After leaving her family and school, she moved in with him. It was during this time that she started doing drugs.

Kaylee is 36-year-old woman who was raised by her grandparents. She was involved romantically with an older man who was a gang member, during her high school years.

Melissa is a 36-year-old woman who grew up without a father. She started socialising with gangs and became romantically involved with male gangsters at the age of thirteen. She has a child with a male gang member that she was romantically involved with in her teens. As an adult she was involved in a long-term relationship with a male gang member and during this time her drug abuse increased.

In the individual interviews, the participants shared their knowledge and their experiences relating to gang initiation, gang recruitment, as well as other aspects of gangs and gang culture. These stories reflected complex journeys in and out of gang culture, with most participants having to navigate difficult early life experiences, including challenging domestic conditions, troubled parental connections as well various socio-economic difficulties. They also shared their thoughts and ideas on how to prevent young girls and women from becoming involved in

gangs and intervening in the lives of those already entangled in gangs and gang culture. The transcribed interview data was subjected to thematic analysis and yielded the following themes: gang recruitment, gang initiation, benefits of gang membership, gang culture, gang exit and, prevention and intervention. In this chapter, each theme will be introduced, discussed and supported with relevant quotations from the collected data. Some of these quotations have been translated from Afrikaans to English. (See Appendix K for the original comments). Each theme with its respective sub-themes and codes is summarised in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Themes derived from interview data

Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Gang recruitment	Recruitment techniques	Fear
		Entry points into gangsterism
		Deception
		Exploitation
		Targeting
		Offering access to finances/drugs/ appealing lifestyle
		Girls in gang families
	The gangster boyfriend	Perks/benefits of dating a gangster
		Bad boy appeal
	Risk factors for gang membership	Contact with gang world/culture
		Drugs
		Homelessness
		Lack of fatherhood

		Lack of parental figures/guidance
	The role of girls in gangs	Spies and informants
		Hiding and handling contraband
		Sex providers
		Trap girls
		Selling drugs
		Steal/rob
Gang initiation		Methods of initiation
	Proving yourself/ your loyalty	
	‘Spilling blood’	
	‘Tests’/ tasks	
Benefits of gang membership	Physical and tangible benefits	Access to drugs
		Access to finances/financial provision
		Lifestyle
		Safety/protection
	Emotional and psychological benefits	Sense of belonging
		Sense of acceptance/affirmation
		Sense of accomplishment/pride
		Sense of identity
		Status
Gang culture	Violence/abuse risk	Danger
		Murder
		Death

		Sexual abuse
		Rape
		Gender- based violence
	Patriarchal Dynamics	Patriarchy
		Gender roles/expectations
		Gender inequality
		Exploitation
	Crime	Prison
		Crime encounters with gangs
	Gang Exit	5.1 Practical requirements
5.2. Reasons for gang exit		Disillusionment with gang life
5.3. Factors involved/ determining factors		Level of involvement
		Action to change/ leave gang life
Prevention and intervention	Participant recommendations	Knowledge
		Life Skills
		Sustainable Exit Plans
		Employment
		Real life learning from others
		Recreational activities
		Long-term intervention
		Association/ power of association
		Address gangsterism

5.2 Gang recruitment

The research participants shared their experiences of how they became involved with gangs, but also how gang recruitment of other young girls and women occurs in their communities. In engaging with the transcribed interview data of the eight participants, it was apparent that the gang recruitment of young women into gangs can occur in a number of ways. This was linked to several risk factors that were mentioned by the research participants that render young women more vulnerable to gang recruitment in their communities.

5.2.1 Recruitment techniques

Regarding recruitment into gangs, the reviewed literature highlighted active and passive recruitment (Densley, 2012; Harrington et al., 2000). This was reflected in the research findings. The research participants mentioned fear as a tactic that is actively used by gangs to intimidate young women into becoming involved in gang activity. It appears that this may be a very strategic technique due to the perceived power that gangs hold and exercise over many communities. The fear may pertain to personal threats or to potential threats to one's family members or home:

Extract 1

The first time yes; that's why I ... I started sleeping out of the house. Because why, I must ... for him, otherwise my family suffers as a result. They're gonna do something to my family ... or ... so I just went with him. (Emily, late twenties).

Dana explained about how dangerous it is for girls to be amongst gangs in the first place. When socialising with gang members and being in gang spaces, one is exposed to many details regarding the activities of gangs. She explained that having this knowledge of gang activities as an outsider puts the gang at risk, and due to this, you need to then become a part of the gang to prove that you can be trusted. Resisting that pressure puts you and your family at risk:

Extract 2

And you, you at that place every day, so once you in the circle every day they talk a lot of stuff; you hear what they do, how they roll. So, once you hear something that you shouldn't have heard, you must be a part of them because now you can't leave. Because you know this about us now. So, we can't let you go. You gonna be a danger for us, so either you decide you are here, or if you go and you heard something, then your life is at stake now. (Dana, 30 years old).

Some girls are deceived or seduced into becoming involved with gangs. This can happen through socialising with gang members or by dating a gang member. This may begin as a normal social interaction, spurred on by material enticements and 'nice times' on offer, but the situation can easily be manipulated and taken advantage of by gangs, trapping many girls. Gangs are social entities but they are also aware of the needs and the vulnerabilities of girls in their communities, and they tug at these vulnerabilities to exploit them for their benefit and gain:

Extract 3

They lure you in with money, with drugs, with nice times ... like buy you wine ... it starts with the wine you know. (Melissa, 36 years old).

It was also noted that sometimes gangs will target specific female individuals for specific purposes. These may be financially well-off women from families with good social standing in communities. These women are seen to offer more status and social value for the gang. Gangs also target women, who are in financial need and are destitute; whom gangs know will be attracted to the material benefits that gang lifestyle offers. This also speaks to the exploitative nature of gangs. This is reflected in the following extract:

Extract 4

It's the drugs because ... usually like uhm ... in our communities, like you know poverty, you know like ... in today's ... especially in our community; women goes after money. They go after money and it's mostly women that is addicted to drugs already you know ... so that's just drawing them closer ... pulling them more into the ... into that ... that uhm ... how can I say ... that environment of gangsterism and so. And like ... once you in, like once they have you there ... they do anything. Like they don't care, like you are there; it's almost like you ... they own you. (Melissa, 36 years old).

A more passive form of gang recruitment occurs when women may unintentionally become involved with gangs through various pathways or entry points. It was reported that young women may be attracted and drawn to gangs because of the easy access to, and the availability of drugs:

Extract 5

And because I used to be on the drug of heroin, they said that I won't suffer, like there will always be. (Amy, 29 years old).

Extract 6

You don't have money every day to smoke. So later on, you're going to do anything to be able to smoke. And they offer you certain things, and in that moment it's not wrong because you ... your body wants it. So, you're going to do anything and later on you'll see that you're stuck to these people. (Dana, 30 years old).

The bad-boy appeal that gangsters carry may also be alluring to young women. Dating a male gang member may be accompanied by access to certain social and material rewards and

benefits, which have the power to draw young women more easily into romantic relationships with them. These benefits include finances, status, protection, respect in the community and an elevated social standing in the community. This may seem like the only or better option for many young women who may have limited viable life options or choices available. This finding also concurs with Dziewanski's (2020) that young women join gangs to access protection, status and income.

The literature further highlighted a family history of gang affiliation as a potential natural progression into becoming a gang member (Densley, 2012). Amy referred to this when speaking about girls who grow up in gang families:

Extract 7

There is some girls that's not on drugs but that grew up in a gang-related life that grew up, like their whole family is maybe gangsters; they will recruit that girls but like I said, but that is if girls are like that themselves. (Amy, 29 years old).

5.2.2 The gangster boyfriend

A common social entry point for several participants was that a romantic connection with a gangster invariably leads to entry into the gang space, and deeper involvement as the romantic relationship grows. Umaña and Ridders (2012) highlighted a romantic relationship with a gangster as a precursor to gang involvement for females. Almost all the research participants mentioned romantic relationships with a gang-involved male, which marked the beginning of their immersion into gang culture. The decision to date a gang-involved male was usually motivated by the desire for status, financial benefits, and the protection that comes with being the girlfriend of a gangster in the community.

Gangsters are seen as powerful men in communities and this is something that young women may be attracted to (Vuninga, 2018). Chinelle believes that young women are drawn to men in gangs because of their status and appeal; they may be attractive, well dressed and idolised in their communities:

Extract 8

Perhaps if they're an attractive gang then the women will fall for them quickly, because you get very attractive gangs. They're dressed well; Nikes are on place and that is what women want. They always want someone that is dressed nicely, that can be seen with them. So, then they will always make contact with someone in a normal way. And once you're so in love, then you'll see but okay, what you've let yourself in for and by that time it's actually too late. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Melissa admits that she was drawn to the cars and the money that came as fringe benefits of dating a gangster:

Extract 9

But then uhm ... ja they had like ... you know they have this luxury cars and they have money, and everything, like they dress the best clothing and so we started going out. We went out for like a year and like, just when we started going out, I started bunking school. (Melissa, 36 years old).

There are also further benefits associated with dating gangsters, which adds towards the pull factor of gang culture. These include status as well as protection (Nimmo, 2001). For Jessica, dating a gangster meant safety in her community and respect from fellow community members:

Extract 10

*It is powerful because everywhere ... like me hey, people knew, okay I'm with *Big; a guy that I was with; his name was Big. And everybody was afraid of him hey. Then I could walk around at night-time, nobody could say or do anything, then they would say "no that's Big's girl, you need to be careful". (Jessica, 26 years old).*

Melissa also related how her relationship with a gangster afforded her a level of status and protection:

Extract 11

*But I could walk in that roads, in that streets, and they would just see me, and they will say no okay, it's *Michael se girlie. I would've ... I would be safe ... you know. (Melissa, 36 years old).*

Amy also explained her intention of protecting herself:

Extract 12

I used to take uh, a boy that is a gangster you know and you can't like be anything you have to be you know something that you know other people would be scared of and know other people won't take advantage of me now because of him. So that was actually how I got involved. (Amy, 29 years old).

Although she herself never dated a gangster, Christine related that girls date men who belong to gangs because they believe that it will elevate them socially. When a woman is dating a gangster, automatically she is also respected and has a certain degree of power. Christine added that there is a perception amongst young girls that because people might be afraid of a certain gangster, they will fear you too, as his girlfriend or significant other.

Despite warnings that they may receive against romantic involvement with a gangster, women may still choose to pursue a romantic relationship with a gangster as this could mean an escape from a difficult home and financial situation, as well as an elevation of their social status (Vuninga, 2018).

It was also due to these relationships that these women remained entangled with gangs. Having a child fathered by a gangster was often a complicating factor for the women. This means prolonged or intermittent contact with the gangster as the father of her child, as well as close contact or exposure with gang culture. These social and relational ties may make it difficult, if not impossible for a woman to disentangle herself from the gang world.

5.2.3 Risk factors for gang membership

The participants alluded to certain factors that rendered them more susceptible to being recruited into a gang. These factors are called risk factors and are grouped together under the sub-theme of ‘risk factors for gang membership’. These risk factors exist and are exploited by gangs for their benefit (Cooper & Bowden, 2006; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012).

Certain risk factors for gang membership are present in the lives of young women at different levels or in different spheres of their lives. In many communities, girls come into unavoidable, regular contact with gangs/gang culture which makes them more vulnerable to gang membership. This proximity or regular contact may happen at a physical/geographical level, but it may also happen at a family or community level (own family, school, peers, dating). Christine was connected to the gang world through her brothers who were 28 gang members:

Extract 13

I grew up the youngest of 7 children. We are ... we were three daughters and four boys: like three sisters and four boys. Three of the four boys were gangsters. They belonged to the 28's gang group. (Christine, 35 years old).

For Kaylee, contact with gangs was inevitable as they were very present in her community:

Extract 14

*I used to live in *** where there were a lot of gangs. (Kaylee, 36 years old).*

Kaylee also experienced direct exposure to dangerous gang activity as a child:

Extract 15

... so, they were shooting at each other man and it was like dangerous for us to even go to school, or go to the shops or ... (Kaylee, 36 years old).

Research by Pohl (2019) reflects that regular, unavoidable contact with gang culture renders young girls and women vulnerable to gang membership. Although girls and young women may not consciously make a decision to become associated with gangs or gang members, they may also voluntarily choose to socialise in gang spaces (Pohl, 2019). For Melissa, her exposure to gangs came after she decided to date a gang member, due to her friends' relationships with their gang member boyfriends:

Extract 16

But then I think like, like I started playing netball and I started mixing with the wrong type of friends because the girls that used to play netball with me, they were ... had gangster boyfriends and stuff. So, I also start ... I, I left the normal boyfriend ... the civilised one and I went on in dating a gangster boyfriend. (Melissa, 36 years old).

Dana spoke about the risk inherent in socialising with gangs in gang spaces, due to the information one hears about when moving in gang circles, and how easily one may find oneself part of a gang:

Extract 16

So, I went there every day and whomever gets to go there every day; automatically as the time goes, when you uhm ... you're up for anything; because of what they do, automatically later you're a part of them. (Dana, 30 years old).

These gang spaces might be more appealing for young girls because of what they offer; partying, alcohol, drugs and maybe even just excitement and an escape from a dull or strained home life.

The participants' narratives confirm that easy access to drugs is another entry point and a major risk factor for gang membership (Diewanski, 2020; Shaw & Skywalker, 2017). Gangs offer easy access to drugs, and this vulnerability can easily be manipulated by gangs for their benefit. Two of the participants indicated that they became involved with gangs because of their drug use:

Extract 17

I would say I did it for drugs. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Extract 18

It all happened when I was on drugs. Because when one is on drugs, you don't care anymore; you go anywhere that you know you will get easy access to drugs. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Women with addiction problems will more easily become involved with gangs as a means to sustain their drug use. Although these women do not pay for these drugs, they are never really free. Participants in the research study referred to the fact that usually sex is the currency which is used in exchanges such as these. Women may not pay with money, but there is always a price. In her interview, Melissa spoke about the extent to which women would go to feed their drug habit:

Extract 19

*I can see like where the women is concerned, in our communities especially I can speak about *. I thank God for not ... having to do the things that they do for their addiction you know. They will just sleep with someone for a twenty-rand packet, or a thirty-rand packet; just to feed their habits you know. (Melissa, 36 years old).*

Homelessness also presents a risk factor that may drive women into the lure of gangs. This is an immediate need that a gang may be able to fulfil for a woman. This is also a basic need which, due to limited social resources in communities (Pinnock, 2016), may leave women vulnerable and desperate. Because Jessica had nowhere to go, her only available option was the gang:

Extract 20

I would say I did it for drugs, and because I had nowhere else to go. So, then I just went along with anything. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Chinelle shared something similar about her entry into gangs:

Extract 21

Or maybe you're just lost and you don't have a place to sleep and at the end of the day one of them comes to get you and they say "come, there's a place to sleep" and then you go. That's how I got involved the first time. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Young women with absent fathers and no healthy father figures can be easy targets for gangs, as gangs may offer powerful alternative male role models. Given the absence of fathers in many communities, this may prove to be a more common and insidious risk factor than is realised. An absence of a father at home was mentioned by several of the participants. This can also be a possible risk factor for gang membership among young women (Aldridge et al., 2011; Aulakh, 2008). According to Jessica, this is one of the things that gangsters take advantage of when it comes to young girls. She spoke about her own experience of growing up without having her father in her life:

Extract 22

That's the sad part. My father hey, at my aunt ... he lived around the corner there. But he never came to my aunt or anything like that. We literally walked past each other every day and I knew that was my father, but we never had a relationship. (Jessica, 26 years old)

Extract 23

Without me knowing, it did affect me a little bit, because the man ... the man doesn't bother with me, you understand? (Jessica, 26 years old).

Absence of a father has also been reported by Van Breda and Theron (2018) as an adversity for South African youth. It appears that the vacant space left behind by absent fathers needs to be filled by healthy father figures and male role models. Dana brought up her relationship with her father and how it was a factor in her involvement with gangs:

Extract 24

... a lot of people can say a lot of stuff. But what I've learnt through my journey till today, it all starts at home. My growing up was good, but my father failed me. So, I went out to go look for someone else to fill that, just to keep his word. (Dana, 30 years old).

For Dana, the lack of fatherhood in a young girl's life or the absence of someone to fulfil that role in her life leaves young girls broken. This leaves a soft spot, a vulnerability, for getting into gangs.

A lack of parental figures as well as parental guidance also serves as a risk factor for gang membership. Pinnock (2016) spoke of the absence of parents in a young person's life as a significant reason why many young people are in gangs. When considering Erikson's psychosocial stages of development; youth in the adolescent phase of development are looking for spaces to fit in and groups with which to identify. A young person with no adult supporting or guiding them with their decisions may fall prey more easily to risky peer groups and social circles and become more susceptible to gang membership.

5.2.4 The roles and functions of women in gangs

Gangs recruit girls because they carry a certain value for them; they are valuable to gangs for various reasons and because of a range of different roles that they fulfil in gangs; despite these roles being mostly trivialised and overlooked in the literature (Moloney et al., 2011). Young girls and women in gangs can be used to perform several different functions.

Women can be valuable to gangs because of information that they can carry for them, and to them. Four of the participants spoke about the role of women in gangs as spies and informants. Amy shared how some girls would be sent out to do reconnaissance, particularly during gang

wars, to find out what was happening in other gangs. This is similar to what Dana related about gangs sending girls out to other gangs to befriend them with the aim of gaining insider information.

Chinelle admitted that, despite the danger in doing so, she was actually moving back and forth between two gangs:

Extract 25

Then I sat with the 8's and at the same time with the 6's, at one time. Maybe I'm there, and then I walk over, then I go to the other one. So, then I must always find out what both are planning; find out what the one is planning then I'll quickly say there, so both ways. So, it's actually just luck that I am still alive today you understand? Because at the end of the day, they're not about people that betray them. (Chinelle, late twenties).

According to Jessica, women are useful to gang members while they might be in hiding, as a means to stay up to date with what is happening on the outside:

Extract 26

Gangs need girls because it's like someone must, how can I say ... you need someone to ... sometimes your life is in so much danger hey, that you need women to tell you what is going on outside while you're in hiding, you understand? So, I will say more as a shadow, or a hiding place, ya. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Consequently, these women can be referred to as 'human hard drives' (GIGI Partner Meeting Notes, 2018). This places them in a position of danger due to the nature of the information that they carry with them.

Another role that women fulfil in gangs is that of handling contraband, but more commonly, hiding contraband. This may be hidden either in their homes or even in their bodies if and when required. For Christine, many women do this willingly, due to the fact that they also benefit from their boyfriends selling drugs; if they are doing well then it means that the women are also being provided for.

During her time in a gang Jessica was cleaning guns and rolling drugs ('meth'). She also spoke of how far women sometimes have to go to hide drugs:

Extract 27

Mostly like, if you're at the yard, then you need to hide the drugs. And they use you so deep hey, that you have to push it inside of you, because the police come inside the place and then they search it, and they don't go for you ... they don't search women, because it's already inside of you. Or some people, I've done this already hey ... or you swallow it hey ... and when the boere [slang for police] are gone, then you throw it up again. (Jessica, 26 years old).

The role of sex provider was commonly referred to, and is in line with what previous research also reported (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). This perpetuates the current climate of gender violence that is pervasive not only in local Western Cape communities, but also in our country (National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, 2020). During some of the interviews, it became apparent that women were expected to play the role of sex providers in gangs, usually engaging in sex with multiple men. This corroborates findings presented in several studies (Cooper & Bowden, 2006; Gover et al., 2009; Sutton, 2017).

Dana spoke about the requirement that exists for women in gangs to sometimes fulfil the sexual needs of more than one male in the gang, apart from their own romantic partner. Chinelle spoke of the exchange that takes place through sex, where drugs are gained in exchange for sex:

Extract 28

And then they also use the women to have sex with them, you understand ... sometimes you even have to satisfy everybody. Because that is how you get a hold of the drugs.
(Chinelle, late twenties).

Melissa felt as though she didn't have a say in who she was having sex with, inside the gang, despite the fact that she had a boyfriend:

Extract 29

*... he cared about me but ... I mean you don't care ... how ... how do you care about someone and do the things that they did like, while I was staying there you know? It's almost like whenever you feel like having sex and when you wanna have sex with Melissa, then I'm just there. And *Nick isn't there you know ... then they can just have sex and I couldn't refuse and stuff.* (Melissa, 36 years old).

The role of the trap girl was mentioned numerous times. One of the participants described having to lure a male member from a rival gang into a situation where her gang was able to murder him:

Extract 30

Now they have used me already hey, to mislead one of the [x's] men to a certain point, and then that person doesn't know man. And so, I brought that person there, and then they killed that person, like that. (Jessica, 26 years old).

This role of a trap girl was referred to by other participants in their interviews as well. Chinelle referred to the role that women play in gangs as trap girls, by seducing men. She mentioned that this role is unique to women as it is something that men cannot do; and this makes women valuable to gangs.

This role of ‘trapping’ men is further illustrated in the following extract from Dana’s interview:

Extract 31

So, if they want to kill another guy, then they gonna send you as a woman because you can persuade a man very good. If I use the right word now. Then they use you to befriend him; you must make friends with this guy, or just show that you like him, then you know his every day’s doing; what he’s doing where he is. So, the time when they want to kill him, then you know exactly where he is, and then you inform them; “okay, now you can go”. (Dana, 30 years old).

Two participants mentioned that gangs also use women to sell drugs for them. In Emily’s interview, she spoke about how gangs go as far as using schoolgirls to sell drugs for them:

Extract 32

After a while they use you to go to school, then you sell for them. Then you make money for them at the school. (Emily, late twenties).

Finally, women may also be directly involved in the criminal activities of a gang. Three of the eight participants mentioned stealing/robbing as one role that girls may also play in gangs. Chinelle refers to this as ‘fraud’:

Extract 33

Now I really loved doing, committing fraud and so that was my part; fraud, you understand, so maybe steal people's wallets and then I'd go shopping ... whatever we would need, you understand. That was my thing. (Chinelle, late twenties).

These findings confirm what was reported by Pinnock (2016); that women are moving away from more passive roles and becoming more active in daily gang activities. In a recent study Dziewanski (2020) similarly found that young women joined gangs and took part in gang-related acts of aggression and violence for many of the same reasons that men do—protection, income, status, agency, as well as due to threats of sexual violence faced specifically by females.

5.3 Gang initiation

It was clear throughout the data collection process that gang initiation for females was a somewhat confusing concept for the participants. In the interviews none of the participants mentioned any specific initiation ritual to initiate women into gangs. What did, however, surface in the participants' narratives is that there is an expectation for one to have to prove oneself to a gang; and that the method whereby this is done looks different in different gangs. This supports what is reported by Harrington and Cavett (2000) that each gang may have unique ways for initiating new recruits.

The related literature indicates the presence of a range of specific initiation rituals reported in other countries, including the USA, UK and in South America. Some of these rituals include sex with a male gang member/s (Umaña & Ridders, 2012), being 'blessed in' as a child of gang-involved parents (Nimmo, 2001) and taking on the gang's 'chappie' or tattoo (Dziewanski, 2020). None of these forms were however pertinently mentioned by research participants. Surprisingly, there was no mention of being offered gang membership in return

for sex, which was reported in the reviewed literature (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001; Umaña & Ridders, 2012). Given the reality that sexual violence against women and girls in South Africa (and elsewhere) is already vastly underreported due to shame, blame, retaliation, and other factors (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002), the dearth of reported initiation should not be construed as evidence of the absence of initiation (particularly of a sexual nature) practices.

5.3.1 Methods of initiation

As highlighted by Harrington and Cavett (2000), it is important to recognize that all gangs have their own unique initiation rituals and that while no formal initiation rituals were reported in this study it does not rule out the possibility of other women experiencing a gang initiation ritual in the Western Cape. Initiation or becoming a member of the gang may take on other forms. There was one initiation experience ritual that was mentioned by a research participant that was consistent with some of the reviewed literature (Sikes, 1994):

Extract 34

Then ... they hit you into it. (Emily, late twenties).

This practice involves being ‘beat in’ to a gang, which speaks of violence, and being on the receiving end of violence to cement your membership status in a certain gang. Several research participants indicated that their loyalty to the gang was tested and that it needed to be proved. This can be done in various ways, perhaps with the aim of signifying your commitment and loyalty to the gang (Wood, 2014). To prove your loyalty a gang may require you to perform a certain act, which is usually criminal (Dziewanski, 2020; Wood, 2014). This may involve taking part in a robbery or even murdering somebody (Dziewanski, 2020). ‘Spilling blood’/killing somebody was referred to by one research participant as the only real way to become a true gangster, and to be viewed as a true gangster by others:

Extract 35

... the gangsters say you must do something to be a part of the gang. So, you must let blood spill to prove yourself. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Extract 36

But to be a real gangster, or if I want to become a gangster, I have to kill someone in order for that to happen. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Something that is unique to female gangsters is the act of ‘trapping’ a male gang member. This was also reported in previous South African research conducted with gang-involved females in Cape Town (Shaw & Skywalker, 2017) and involves luring in or seducing a male member from a rival gang that may be on your gang’s ‘hit’ list, so that your gang has access to him, in order to kill him. Dana speaks about a woman having to execute a certain task before becoming a part of a gang; in this case trapping a male gang member from a rival gang:

Extract 37

How they initiate a girl; what I’ve heard, where I’ve sitted ... So, if they want to kill another guy, then they gonna send you as a woman because you can persuade a man very good. If I use the right word now. Then they use you to befriend him; you must make friends with this guy, or just show that you like him, then you know his every day’s doing; what he’s doing, where he is. So, the time when they want to kill him, then you know exactly where he is, and then you inform them; “okay, now you can go”. (Dana, 30 years old).

This act is something that can be extremely traumatic to the female who might still be present with the person when he is killed (GIGI Partner Meeting Notes, 2018). This also highlights

how a woman's sexuality is taken advantage of for the purposes of the gang. Shaw and Skywalker (2017) speak of sex as a currency used in gangs. A woman is required to offer her body and trade an act that is often very intimate for something that is violent, cold, emotionally detached, and ultimately an act that represents nothing more than a business deal.

Although there were no specific initiation rituals reported by participants, what is clear is that the practice of initiating a woman into a gang is not so much about the act itself, but rather what this act symbolises or communicates to the gang; that the woman can be trusted and has proven her loyalty and commitment to a specific gang:

Extract 38

Yes, you must prove yourself. But everybody is not the same in how they have to prove themselves. (Chinelle, late twenties).

5.4 Benefits of gang membership

Gangs offer both physical and tangible benefits and emotional/ psychological benefits, which add to their appeal (Vuninga, 2018). While they are viewed as a social concern, one cannot overlook the fact that add some sort of value to a young girl or to a woman's life, in the absence of alternative sources of satisfaction for their needs. Particularly, the lack of urban renewal post-apartheid, in areas like the Cape Flats, has provided gaps which gangs have been able to fill, providing opportunities for income and protection (Dziewanski, 2020). The benefits of gang membership described by participants below highlights these greater systemic forces that are at play in these communities.

5.4.1 Physical and tangible benefits

One of the physical and tangible benefits of belonging to a gang included having access to drugs. The participants shared that drugs were readily available and easy to gain, upon joining a gang. Chinelle strongly felt that access to drugs is a core reason why women become involved with gangs, even if it means that these women have to go through unfavourable ends to gain that access:

Extract 39

And maybe if you're on drugs they'll give you drugs then it's not necessary for you to go beg or steal because they feed you. And then they also use women to have sex with them, you understand ... sometimes you even have to satisfy everybody. Because that is how you get a hold of the drugs. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Gangs are able to meet very real physical needs. For this reason, particularly in marginalised and impoverished communities, becoming involved with a gang seems like a reasonable thing to do to benefit in some way that can make one's life easier. This may be an inviting offer for young women who have dropped out of high school and are unable to find employment. Young girls and women who date male gang members are taken care of financially and do not need to worry about paying bills or looking after themselves (Vuninga, 2018). This was mentioned by Chinelle when speaking of the benefits to joining a gang:

Extract 40

... they will like buy you clothes; you don't need anything. Toiletries ... (Chinelle, late twenties).

Melissa speaks in this following extract, of how a gangster whom she was living with, provided for her as well as for other women living in his home:

Extract 41

... he used to ... look after us like there was like three of four girls in the house. I was one of them; he used to look after us, he used to give us money. He used to buy us clothes ... like everything ... (Melissa, 36 years old).

The lifestyle that comes with being involved with a gang can also be very enticing to young girls and women. Dziewanski (2020) also reports this, stating that women may enjoy the parties and drinking that are a constant part of gang life. Upon becoming involved with gangs there is an unlimited supply of drugs and alcohol that comes with the regular and on-going parties. Women in relationships with gangster, experience being spoiled with expensive clothes and shopping trips that they may not be able to afford otherwise. This might also overshadow the more negative aspects of living in gang culture. Young girls may be especially deceived by the seemingly glamorous and luxurious life of a gangster. This is reflected in the following extracts:

Extract 42

And I enjoyed it; you know when a person gets spoiled unnecessary or just out of the blue; anyone would likes it. (Kaylee, 36 years old).

Extract 43

You can do your nails. You can get whatever clothes you want. You just living a high life, but on his terms. (Dana, 30 years old).

With many communities being controlled by gangs, sometimes women feel that the only way to protect themselves from the danger that comes with living in a community characterised by gangs and gang violence is to become part of a gang (Dziewanski, 2020; Shaw & Skywalker,

2017). Sutton (2017) reported this protective factor as a significant motivator for females to become involved with gangs, which was something that was reported by Jessica in the following extract:

Extract 44

I would say hey, my personal point of view ... is sometimes to feel safe man. (Jessica, 26 years old).

5.4.2 Emotional and psychological benefits

In addition to the physical and tangible benefits of gang membership, participants also highlighted several psychological and emotional benefits to being a part of a gang. Some of these benefits according to the literature include safety, identity, connection and a sense of belonging (Buthelezi, 2012; Pinnock, 2016).

An important need that gangs offer is to experience a sense of belonging (Dziewanski, 2020; Pohl, 2019):

Extract 45

Maybe some of them don't have fathers or something like that. Or some of them don't have parents. Then the people make them feel as though they belong somewhere. So that is the reason why they go there in the first place, because they feel like they belong. That is you understand, according to ... they feel that they have nobody. So yes, you feel like you belong there. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Belonging to something or to a group also contributes to a sense of identity (Pinnock, 2016). In a way gangs can act like a surrogate family and offer young women a space where they feel like they belong (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2017). The sense of identity

and the feeling of connection that is created can be powerful ways to combat the loneliness that young girls and women may be experiencing. Being a part of a gang offers members a certain level of status or popularity in their community. Young people in search of this may feel that belonging to a gang can elevate their social standing in their communities too, or if not, they will at least be respected or feared.

A sense of acceptance and affirmation was further mentioned as one of the psychological benefits of gang membership (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2017). Sometimes this is not present in a young woman's own family and so it is looked for elsewhere and can be found in unfavourable places, namely, gangs.

Belonging to a gang can also offer some sense of success when you feel like you may be 'falling behind' your peers in the more acceptable or socially desired form of success namely education, employment, purchasing a home, having a car and finances:

Extract 46

Like when I go study now and I get a degree ... you busy studying, you getting done.

When you done, you have something to look back with like, okay this is mine. So, in the gang, okay you somewhere now and there is also requirements what you must do.

(Dana, 30 years old).

Being part of a gang offers a way to gain some of these things, even though they may be gained through illicit or illegal ways (Dziewanski, 2020). Achieving some of these things leads to a sense of accomplishment and pride. This also points to a certain rite of passage that normally takes place for young people; matriculating and becoming an adult by either going on to complete further studies or going on to find employment and start earning a salary. In the absence of being able to achieve this, which may be due to very real challenges and obstacles,

joining a gang is often the only other viable choice for many young women (Dziewanski, 2020). In this sense, a gang offers their own rite of passage for young women which is echoed by Pinnock (2018). This also gives a sense of agency as depicted in the following statement:

Extract 47

Our parents are sometimes too hard on our children and then they find the wrong peace outside, and then in that gang they feel like something and someone because they can do something now for other people. (Dana, 30 years old).

They may not be able to feel valued or worth anything in their community or society, but in the gang spaces, they are able to become something and to feel like they are something; like they have achieved something which gives them some sense of pride.

Status was identified as another perceived benefit of being associated with a gang. For Emily, getting involved with gang culture was a way to fit in and be popular:

Extract 48

And then uhm ... it was just a good time and so then ... one Saturday, then I got ... then I got involved with a guy but I wanted to go after my friends, because they are in, so what's wrong with me now? I also want to be in ... (Emily, late twenties).

Chinelle says that she also became involved with gangs to be popular:

Extract 49

I would say it was maybe a little bit to be popular. At that time or that stage, one is a teenager, so if you're moving with them, you're the man and so. (Chinelle, late twenties).

5.5 Gang culture

Gangs are usually associated with violence (Buthelezi, 2012) and danger (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001). Gang culture, in the conducted interviews, was described and manifested in a variety of ways. These descriptions have been collated into the following sub-themes: Violence and abuse; Patriarchal Dynamics; and Crime.

5.5.1 Violence/ abuse risk

By nature of their illegal operations, gangs engage with a range of activities that involve interpersonal violence and coercion. According to Jessica, there is a concerted level of danger involved in being a part of a gang, due to the nature of gang activities and gang rivalry:

Extract 50

And I was cleaning the guns, and I was rolling the ... the meth and rolling and so. And that also put my life at risk because people heard now, and when I was walking with other people then people would say things like “people are still gonna kill you and other people heard about you guys”. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Christine and her family experienced the effects of violence in gang culture when several of her brothers were murdered and shot dead due to their gang involvement. Melissa spoke about her experience of rape and sexual abuse during her involvement with gangs. She shared the story of how she was gang raped after being intimate with her boyfriend, and how this was something that happened commonly with other girls in the same environment:

Extract 51

*And uhm ... I was there once and me and * was like in the room and we were intimate. But then when we were done, then I was still laying and then like ... someone else came*

*in. * came in and then he just slept with me and I was thinking “what is going on?” ... you know? And then after him it was *, after * like ... it was quite a lot of guys, I think it was almost 10 guys that just had sex, like raped me ... like you know, took turns, like most probably queuing outside like when the one is done the other one comes in. And uhm ... the girls that was there, it happened to them as well you know. So, it was normal for it to happen and ... I mean I was so young at the time. (Melissa, 36 years old).*

The above extracts support reports of coercive sexual practices and frequent rapes (Cooper & Bowden, 2006), as well as the idea that female gang members are used as sex objects by male gang members (Gover et al., 2009).

Four out of the eight participants spoke about gender-based violence; violence that was only inflicted against women in the gang community, and in the gang circles in which they found themselves. Jessica shared how male gang members will beat a female gang member up physically if she does not keep her physical appearance and hygiene up to a certain standard. Men would discipline women and nobody else was allowed to interfere, even if they saw blood, because the male gang member is disciplining his woman in an accepted way in the gang culture. Chinelle described a similar account of how females get treated in gang culture:

Extract 52

They get treated very badly. Because if you just do something wrong, they've ... most of them are on drugs look, some of them. Now drugs make you very, how can I say ... like frustrated. Irritated and so. They get hit very badly and then when he's done hitting you, you have black eyes, maybe your bones are broken, and then you have to walk with him down the street as though it's nothing because you can't ... where are you going

to? And even if you walk away, you anyway have to come back because you're so scared of him. They don't treat you well at all, really. (Chinelle, late twenties).

In her interview, Emily recalled a friend of hers who dated a male gangster, and how he allowed other male gang members to have sex with her once he felt that he had had enough of her. She also said that women are misused in gangs and she was able to share this out of what she herself had witnessed during her involvement with gangs:

Extract 53

They ... like in ... they misused them ... the fact that uhm ... the guy ... a gangster guy gets over you very quickly ... and ask me how; because why ... he's already got you ... okay he already got what he wanted. He's also not gonna give you to another man. Or all the guys are going to get through you if they get you. That's how it works; they abuse them man. It's very hard, because why I know what I'm talking about. (Emily, late twenties).

Melissa spoke about how her boyfriend would hit her and her feelings of not being able to do anything about it because it seemed to her that this was the norm of how females were treated by male gang members:

Extract 54

And if it is that he hits me, they can't jump in or tell him so and so because they ... I think that is probably how the ... how it works, in the ... in gangs and so. And ja, it was just like totally unhealthy and I just gave up everything for this man. (Melissa, 36 years old).

The above extracts illustrate the uneven power balance that appears to be characteristic of gang culture, showing a clear picture of the unhealthy patriarchal dynamics that exist in this context.

5.5.2 Patriarchal dynamics

Features of patriarchal dynamics in the context of gang culture, and the manner in which they are manifested in this context, were alluded to by participants. Three out of the eight participants spoke explicitly about the very patriarchal nature of gang culture. According to Jessica, men have more control than women and they use women for their own gain and benefit. She also spoke about the poor treatment of women in gangs:

Extract 55

And they get treated bad man because you must lower yourself beneath them because the idea is that he's the man, and you are the woman. And that guy will just tell you "look here, fuck that way or go sit there" and nobody will say anything if that guy is wrong, nobody says anything. Because he is the man so, it's ... you get treated badly. And not like a woman should be treated, you understand? (Jessica, 26 years old).

Jessica also believes that the interests of men in gangs will always be prioritised over those of women:

Extract 56

Men will always have the first privilege, before women. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Chinelle spoke in a similar way about the subservient relationship between men and women in gangs:

Extract 57

The man is always the head and the women are the feet, if I can put it that way. Because if the man says so then you must ask how high, you understand; you must submit. You must be beneath them. You can't be above them. Because they have the last say. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Gender roles and expectations are important in gang culture and it appears that it is necessary for women to stick to these. Two of the participants spoke about the fact that men in gangs do not respond well to women acting like men or trying to be too masculine; they want women to be women. Amy says that there are quite a few women acting like men, although this is not something that is appreciated by men. According to Kaylee, there can be serious consequences if women don't stay in their lane:

Extract 58

They will kill a woman if a woman tries to be like a guy man. (Kaylee, 36 years old).

According to Dana and Kaylee, there is very little respect for women in gang culture due to the belief that being in a gang, and being a gangster, is a man's business and is not for women. For Dana, if a woman wants to be in a gang, she needs to take what she gets as she does not belong there in the first place:

Extract 59

So as a woman they won't respect you at all. Because for them it's no women's job to be there, but if you want to be there, you gonna take what we give you because you mos want to be that ... there's no respect at all. (Dana, 30 years old).

All the participants spoke about relationships and the nature of those relationships with male gang members. Gender inequality is something that was brought up by several participants;

Jessica spoke about how women are not allowed to speak up against ill treatment even if what they are saying is valid:

Extract 60

Because if a woman wants to correct you then they want to kill you, but the way that you're treating me is not how it should be, but I say that I love you so you're gonna sit with what it is. (Jessica, 26 years old).

According to Amy, men and women in a gang are not equal, with women attempting to act like men to gain a sense of equality:

Extract 61

And there's a lot of girls that act like guys. So, the guys they don't like that cause they say like, you're a girl, you're a woman, you are supposed to act like a woman. You know, or you must, like, or they will tell you, you should act like a bitch. But they are not actually equal. You know, because like a man is still a man and a girl is still a girl. (Amy, 29 years old).

Kaylee also spoke about how unlike men, women do not get gang numbers; no matter how competent they are in performing their gang duties, or even how much power they might have in an all-girl gang. Getting a number is something that is reserved only for men:

Extract 62

You can go to a women's jail, you can be like a what and a what but, women don't get a number. That's what I know; you can be like the biggest gangster of the women's jail, but you won't ... you will never get a number. That's for the guys. (Kaylee, 36 years old).

5.5.3 Crime

According to the literature, most female gang members are involved in delinquency to some extent (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012). A few of the participants recounted experiences of various criminal activities as a consequence of their gang involvement. These ranged from stealing everyday grocery items that were needed by the gang, to stealing money from people to return to the gang, and doing break-ins.

One of the participants, Jessica, during her time in gangs, experienced time in prison due to being caught while attempting a robbery with fellow gang members:

Extract 63

And when we came up by the hill, we saw there were armed people standing that were rotating like they do, and they caught us, and we went to the cells again. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Jessica also shared a previous crime encounter with the gang, which she agreed to partake in in an effort to prove herself to the gang:

Extract 64

And because he is now a [x]. And I need to prove myself now; look here I am ... I'm with you guys. And so, we went and broke in by the houses and we got away the first time. (Jessica, 26 years old).

5.6 Gang exit

Based on the literature, leaving a gang or exiting gang culture, is not a straightforward or easy process (Pinnock, 2016). Research participants highlighted various factors that need to be considered when choosing to leave a gang, as well as the factors that led to the decision to leave

gang culture in the first place. The literature reports that support is needed when choosing to exit gang culture (O'Neal et al., 2016; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012) and this was echoed by the participants in their interviews.

5.6.1 Practical requirements

When leaving a gang, an important thing that a woman needs is a place of safety. Dana speaks about the importance of this:

Extract 65

And once you get into a relationship, with a guy, you know everything by now ... you know his every move; what he's doing, when he's doing it, so they can't let go of you. And if you do, they gonna kill you. Or you must hide; your people must send you to another place, where they don't know you, where you must start a new life ... (Dana, 30 years old).

5.6.2 Reasons for gang exit

The main reason for leaving gang life was disillusionment. After a few months of living in gang culture, Jessica told her mother that she didn't want to live that life anymore. She had realized that it was not what she wanted for herself:

Extract 66

... and I realized at that moment that what was going on here now is not for me, and I never went back there again. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Melissa had a similar experience and says that one morning when she woke up things were just different for her:

Extract 67

... and then this morning I just woke up and things was just like, almost like ... I just saw things the way it is and it's almost like I was blind all along. (Melissa, 36 years old).

Melissa also realized the difference between her life in the gang and the way that she was raised, and for her the two were worlds apart:

Extract 68

And at the end of the day like ... I wasn't raised like that ... like my family also ... if I see my family and I see how prim and proper they are, you know ... how their lifestyle is ... it doesn't ... that lifestyle doesn't suit me. (Melissa, 36 years old).

Although the above extracts refer to instances where a decision was quickly made to exit gang life, this does not mean that the actual process of gang disengagement is as easy or simple.

5.6.3 Determining factors affecting gang exit

Three factors emerged in the interviews that influenced how easy or difficult it would be for a woman to exit gang culture. The first of these determining factors is the level of gang involvement of the woman wanting to leave the gang. According to Chinelle, the deeper your involvement in a gang, the more difficult it will be for you to remove yourself from that life. For some women, their exposure to and time spent in gang spaces is brief, while others become more entangled in daily gang life and activities:

Extract 69

It depends on how far into the thing you are. Because otherwise you must go to the big boss himself and he will tell you, okay you can go, or you can't go. Because you

also can't just stay away. There's somebody everywhere, you understand. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Despite the need to gain approval to leave a gang if you were involved at a deeper level, Chinelle says that if you were not deeply involved it would be easier to leave:

Extract 70

It depends how deep into the thing you are. But if you are still in it lightly, it's not that difficult to get out. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Another factor that determines how easy your gang exit can be is whether or not you take the decision to take your life seriously, as gangs observe you and observe the changes that you make and how you stick to them. Jessica, Dana and Emily believe it is because their previous gang mates saw them checking in at rehab and moving around with the rehab community, that they were able to gain their respect. Their gang family saw that the girls had been sober and drug-free for a long period, and because of that, they allowed them to live their life in the way that they wanted, thereafter. This is suggestive of a certain amount of power that is exercised over the exiting gang member by the gang community.

While it appears that participants have less difficulty in exiting from gangs than their male counterparts as reported in Pinnock's (2016) study, leaving a gang can also be risky depending on how much knowledge you have of what occurred in the gang during your time as a part of that community. According to Christina:

Extract 71

You know their secrets so are you gonna now tell on their secrets? So, it's a bit tricky.
(Christine, 35 years old).

5.7 Prevention and intervention

The research participants were asked for recommendations regarding community programmes and how they can prevent young women from getting caught up in the gang culture, as well as how they can assist those women already involved in gangs who are looking to leave and begin a new life. They offered a number of recommendations regarding prevention and intervention for females involved in or at risk of gang involvement. This may reflect where they currently are in their lives with their rehabilitation process. Suggestions were given by the participants for preventing young women from getting caught up in gang culture, and for assisting women who are already involved in gangs or are looking to leave and begin a new life. Previous South African research asserts that a broad intervention package needs to be presented to this group of women (Shaw & Skywalker, 2017) and this was reflected in the research findings. Some of the suggestions given by research participants in the data collection process will be discussed below.

5.7.1 Participant recommendations

Teaching young girls and women practical skills as well as life skills should be included in prevention and intervention programmes and initiatives. Life skills can enable young girls and women to make wise choices and navigate challenges that they may be presented with. Teaching life skills was reported by youth as a resilience-enhancing resource or process in the structural social ecological layer (Van Breda & Theron, 2018). Fostering resilience in young girls and women may also inspire feelings and beliefs in having more confidence in dealing with the obstacles that they encounter and may still encounter in their lives. Some of these life skills include building self-esteem, healthy assertiveness and self-reliance (Kahn et al., 2013).

A feature of intervention programmes that was stressed is sustainability (long-term interventions with continued support post-intervention), together with clear exit-plans for women involved in the intervention. Amy felt very strongly that any intervention needs to be long-term, and that the assistance that will be received actually extends beyond the time of the intervention:

Extract 72

Proper support yes, so that they won't be lost. Because the girls is gonna join the programme cause they wanna leave gangs, right? They gonna meet a new set of people. And they gonna build their confidence in the people. They're gonna trust the people. You know? So, so ... that just, that should continue man. The people mustn't disappoint them at the end of the day because once you know ... once you wanna change your life and the people disappoint you then that will lead you back into the gangsterism. (Amy, 29 years old).

This also speaks of direction, clear action steps and a sense of purpose. Ideally, this should be a person-centred approach and individual goals should be set together with the women concerned (Jury-Dada, 2018). It also highlights the need that women have for assistance and support in completing and exiting an intervention programme (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2017). It is apparent that there is a need to address how a young woman or a girl can realistically and practically distance herself from gang culture, which is often very difficult to do with the strong gang presence in the communities of the research participants. Christine addresses this in the following extract:

Extract 73

Ja and maybe other options for them as to how to live their lives. Other ways out cause sometimes they live with someone from a gang; they don't have any other way out. You still entertain the guests that come there. You still know about stuff being done, you hear about the plans being done; if they rob people or kill people, or whatever. You see ... so to remove yourself from that lifestyle as best you can if it's even possible. (Christine, 35 years old).

This challenge must be recognized and taken into consideration regarding prevention and intervention. It points to a need to remove unrealistically high expectations placed upon programme participants, and to rather equip them with positive and healthy ways to deal with and navigate life in gang culture. This also suggests a need for the relevant tools and life skills to navigate life and adolescence in gang spaces or communities where there is almost unavoidable contact with gang culture.

For older women, employment post-programme graduation is an important and pressing need. This is something that can very easily push women back into gang culture, as the need for finance is one of the risk factors pulling women into gangs in the first place. Amy referred to the importance of guaranteed employment after the completion of an intervention, which has also previously been highlighted by research participants as a key service feature for intervention effectiveness (Moore & Hagedorn, 2001):

Extract 74

And yes, uhm, there must be a guarantee that there will be jobs available for them. Or there will be things that keep them busy in the meantime. (Amy, 29 years old).

Employment and earning one's own money are also something that can boost a woman's confidence and foster her independence and mastery of her own life. This also has the potential

to widen the worldview of women who have previously been involved with gangs and assist them with determining their future life path (Shaw & Skywalker, 2017).

Intervention and prevention efforts might also focus on strengthening and nurturing resilience in young women living in communities with gangs. The relevant assets and resources would need to be made available to young women within the various layers of their lives (individual, family, community) to foster resilience (Windle, 2010). This also speaks to constructive ways to spend time and to develop young women's personal aspirations and future goals, as well as instilling and reinforcing a healthy value system. Introducing young women to positive role models might also be an effective tool for keeping their dreams and their aspirations alive. This was suggested by Shaw and Skywalker (2017) who spoke specifically about women who have already successfully removed themselves from gang culture, who can act as mentors for young women at risk of gang involvement, or those already involved with gangs.

Learning from the real-life experiences of others was also highlighted by the research participants as something that can be effective in preventing young girls from becoming involved with gangs (primary prevention), and also in assisting women who have already been involved with gangs who want to move away from gang culture (tertiary intervention). This can be approached and implemented in two ways with two different aims: firstly, in showing young women the very real potential consequences of gang involvement with the hopes of preventing their own; and secondly, in helping already gang-involved women to open up and share their own stories and experiences. This can help to break through fear and the lack of trust. By seeing and hearing other women tell their stories they may receive the courage to open up and tell their own. This can also encourage women who need reassurance that their dreams for a life outside of gang culture can become a reality (Shaw & Skywalker, 2017).

Jessica proposed taking young girls to a prison to hear from female prisoners:

Extract 75

I think you should maybe take them to a prison so that those people can tell them “look here, this and this resulted in me ending up here”, you understand? Because the reality is that these things happen, it’s yoh ... easy to get involved. And you have to show them, look here these people, like I said, take them to jail maybe, uhm ... to scare them a little bit man. And maybe get people in that can share their stories with them, you understand? (Jessica, 26 years old).

In a similar vein, Chinelle believes that giving young gang-involved women the chance to hear from others who are or have been in similar positions, will assist them in opening up about their own stories:

Extract 76

Uhm, sometimes they just need to hear from someone who went through the same thing; because it’s not easy for everyone. Some of them are still very scared to talk about it, understand. As a result of, understand, almost like what I said betrayal or so. People don’t know who to trust anymore. Because some people are so deep in that situation then they come to a programme, for example, rehab, then they’re still scared to talk. So sometimes it will be better just to hear from someone who went through the same thing. Then it will be easy for them to talk about it. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Recreational activities were also suggested to provide girls with alternative activities over weekends. These are usually the times when young girls are looking for recreational and socializing opportunities, and most of the time, it is easy for them to find themselves socialising amongst gang members in spaces with an unlimited supply of alcohol and drugs (Dziewanski, 2020). Group activities might be useful in providing young girls with a healthy sense of

belonging and identity (Pohl, 2019; Shaw & Skywalker, 2017). It was also suggested that input be received from young girls in the choice of activity that is offered to them over weekends. It might also be a good idea to match weekend recreational activities with the specific developmental needs of adolescents.

Long term and sustainable intervention was emphasised in order to help sustain changes and create lasting, meaningful impact. This speaks to maintaining trust and expectations that were created during the programme. This also points to a need for maintaining support after the completion of a programme, which was a critical factor that was addressed by Pohl (2019) when evaluating the success of a community based intervention with young girls at risk to gang involvement.

Addressing the importance of peer group association and emphasising the importance of discerning association was suggested and this can be very relevant and important in the prevention of gang involvement considering the very social nature of young people entering gang culture:

Extract 77

And especially there ... if I, if I can say so, like I know you guys do, do, or telling them, who you let into your space. Because not every friend is good. And you can help the friend, but there is people that can help them, but be specific with whom you let into your space. (Dana, 30 years old).

Forming the right, healthy and positive relationships may be what can save a young person from becoming involved in gangs, as relationships are often critical to young women in joining a gang (Kahn et al., 2013) Being selective with the type of friends that one associates with can be just one of the good choices that can be encouraged in young girls at risk of gang

involvement. Providing access to a community peer group such as described in Pohl's (2019) study may keep young girls from becoming entangled in gang culture and give them the social support to engage with the challenges they face in their lives. This may be especially important for young girls growing up without a father, who are looking for approval and validation from a male figure that usually comes from a boyfriend who is involved with a gang

Another suggestion was to address gangsterism explicitly and to talk openly about it with young girls and women. According to Amy, it is important that girls know the realities of being involved with gangs:

Extract 78

It's that, they should know man, that the gangs even if they say that they will protect you, but they can't really and that they won't be there for you. You understand? And they shouldn't look at that there will always be money or drugs, you know, that ... to prevent them from going to gangs they just they should, how can I say, just stay away man. (Amy, 29 years old).

This echoes findings reported by Pohl (2019) who also suggested a more explicit focus on gangsterism in a prevention programme with high school aged girls at risk to gang involvement. This will allow girls and women to better understand the consequences and the realities of gang involvement. The inclusion of previous female gang members in these activities is vital to debunk myths and to engage realistically with the questions likely to be posed by participants in the programme.

Overall, it is evident that any initiative aimed at preventing or intervening in gang involvement for young girls and women needs to be holistic and must support individuals at multiple levels and in all different spheres of their lives (Howell, 2010; Kahn et al., 2013; National Council on

Crime and Delinquency, 2017). The participants in this study referred to a variety of needs on a personal and relational level, educational needs, recreational needs, as well as the need for improved economic opportunities. A UK study further emphasised the importance of and the need for developing gender-specific interventions for females involved in gangs (Kahn et al., 2013).

Specifically, for females with a history of gang involvement, financial stability is an urgent need. Without any source of financial income, a woman is vulnerable to returning to gang life to gain the financial provision which a partner in the gang is able to offer her. Dziewanski (2020) asserts that the motivations for female gang involvement are a reflection of the inequality and insecurity that exist in a province like the Western Cape, and that true freedom from multiple forms of oppression and disadvantage needs to address both the social and economic exclusion faced by young Capetonian girls and women.

The findings presented in this chapter show that various recruitment techniques exist which gangs utilise in order to bring in female members. Young girls and women may also unintentionally enter into gangs through other avenues, which involve choosing to date a male that is a gang member, or socialising in gang spaces. It is clear that although there was no specific initiation ritual reported by research participants for new female gang members, there is still a need for them to prove their loyalty and commitment to the gang. This process of displaying loyalty to a gang may look different for different gangs, but is vital in gaining the trust of the gang. The recommendations shared by participants regarding prevention and intervention efforts emphasised the need for long-term, holistic and individualised support for young girls at risk to gang involvement, as well as women who are still in gangs or have already exited gang culture.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

The current research study aimed to identify how young girls and women in the Western Cape are recruited and initiated into gangs. The research aimed to engage around these topics with women who had been in contact with gang culture, and who were able to speak to the research objectives based on their own experiences. The research participants had differing levels of gang involvement. A further research objective was to find out from these women what their recommendations are for efforts that aim to prevent young girls and women from joining gangs, as well as how women who are wanting to exit gang culture or who have already chosen to leave, can be best assisted and supported.

The research study also had secondary objectives to find out from women who had been involved in gangs, what their main motivations were for this gang involvement, and what needs gangs were able to fulfil in their lives. The research participants were able to share their own motivations for gang involvement, and were also able to address the role that gangs play in the lives of other women in their communities.

This research study aimed to identify what female gang involvement looks like in the South African (particularly in the Western Cape) context and add to the limited body of research on this phenomenon.

The current chapter will focus on presenting the research conclusions, highlighting the contributions and implications of the findings for research and practice, and conclude with recommendations for future research.

6.2 Summary of findings

The research findings highlighted various ways in which gangs recruit women and young girls. It was here that the power that gangs hold in local communities was revealed, with fear and intimidation being used to keep women trapped in gangs, due to the knowledge that they may have been unintentionally exposed to, regarding gang activity. Gangs also sometimes target certain women; these may be women who are addicted to drugs or women who come from family backgrounds of financial wealth and standing in communities, in order to utilise their financial resources and status for the benefit of the gang. Drug-addicted women are usually desperate for access to drugs and this is a need that gangs exploit (Cooper & Bowden, 2006; Dziewanski, 2020), with the knowledge that this addiction will drive women to do almost anything in order to sustain the drug habit. Another risk factor for gang involvement is the lack of safety some women experience living in communities where gangs are common (Dziewanski, 2020; Nimmo, 2001; Sutton, 2017). A common pathway to becoming involved with gangs is through becoming romantically involved with a male gang member. This was reported by most of the research participants. It is also clear from the findings that there are a number of different functions women fulfil in gangs. These range from using their sexuality to 'trap' rival male gang members in situations where their own gang will have easy access to them, to being carriers of information for their gangs, to participating in robberies and hiding contraband on their bodies due to females not being searched by police men. For these reasons females have a functional value to gangs.

Gang initiation for females is reported in international literature (Harrington et al., 2000; Sikes, 1994; Umaña & Ridders, 2012), however, the research participants were unsure about this concept. No specific initiation rituals were identified, although it is clear from the findings that

it is necessary to prove one's loyalty and commitment to a gang. Participants mentioned various ways in which this can be done and emphasised that this process can look different in different gangs each having their own rite of passage or loyalty test, which is consistent with some of the reviewed literature (Harrington et al., 2000).

Research participants were open in sharing their own reasons for joining and sometimes remaining in gangs, despite poor treatment. As mentioned above, access to drugs and alcohol was one of the most significant benefits of gang membership for women with substance addiction. Financial provision was also mentioned by a number of participants; boyfriends in gangs would provide a place to stay, basic necessities, as well as certain luxuries. This is consistent with findings that were reported in the reviewed literature (Dziewanski, 2020; Molitor, 1996). There were further emotional and psychological needs that gangs were able to fulfil for the research participants. Some found a sense of acceptance and worth in joining a gang. Some participants also mentioned experiencing a sense of belonging and identity in a gang, which was something that was important for them as young adolescent women. Being a part of a gang also offered popularity, status and respect from communities in which the research participants come from.

When speaking about gang culture, research participants described an environment characterised by violence and abuse, and strong patriarchal dynamics which served to justify gender-based violence, sexual victimisation of females and gender inequality. Across the reviewed literature this was also commonly reported (Cooper & Bowden, 2006; Gover et al., 2009; Hayward & Honegger, 2014; Sutton, 2017; Umaña & Ridders, 2012; Vigil, 2008).

The findings indicated that choosing to exit a gang can be a complicated process, but it is not impossible. Generally, the more involved one becomes in gang activities, the more difficult it becomes to exit. Research participants shared that their main motivation for choosing to leave

their gang was a desire for a healthier life; two participants described moments when they distinctly felt that they did not want the life that they were living as part of a gang.

With regard to prevention and intervention, it was clear that it is necessary to offer young girls and women spaces and opportunities for healthy recreational activities where they can experience a sense of belonging, and be encouraged to choose the spaces and people with whom they come into contact with wisely. Moore and Hagedorn (2001) also made similar recommendations in earlier research including groups for females at risk of gang involvement which offer consistency and support. This was also mentioned as a method to build resilience in youth facing adversities such as poverty, exposure to drug use and violence (Van Breda & Theron, 2018).

For women seeking to leave a gang, employment (or some way to gain financial independence) was mentioned as critical. This is important as poverty and lack of financial resources are considered risk factors for gang membership (Dziewanski, 2020). Support post-intervention was also an important need that was identified by participants, in order to sustain the changes and progress made in any intervention programme.

6.3 Contributions and implications for research and practice

This research has allowed at a secondary level for a strengthening of community-based partnerships and collaboration between organisations and NGO's, specifically between Stellenbosch University, Usiko Stellenbosch and the Teen Challenge rehabilitation centre, as well as Comic Relief (UK funders of GIGI). This is a critical feature and benefit of CBPR (Christopher et al., 2008). Collaboration among community organisations and agencies allows for resources, expertise and skills to be harnessed to address the needs of the participants holistically. The research findings will contribute to improved intervention collaboration

between Usiko Stellenbosch with its prevention and development focus and Teen Challenge with its secondary and tertiary intervention approach. These findings can be shared with Teen Challenge, to inform their own work with gang-involved women. As this research was embedded within numerous partnerships, an opportunity existed to conduct research that would be of benefit to all parties. In addition to knowledge creation, intervention with gang-involved women and girls at risk to gang involvement can be strengthened by the findings of this research.

Playing the role of both programme facilitator and researcher has allowed me to approach the participants and the interview process with already established relationships. This meant that rapport and trust had already been established with all the research participants due to my prior interactions with them. In this regard, in approaching this research from this dual role, participants may have been more comfortable in opening up about their past experiences and sharing their sensitive stories of gang involvement. Reflexively, the established relationship may also have had the opposite effect, influencing participants to be less forthcoming with sharing their difficult experiences, out of fear of judgement and shame. This research study has contributed towards filling an existing gap in the literature by focusing on women in gangs, particularly in the South African context. There is a need for relevant and up-to-date gang research, with a focus on females and their unique experiences of gang culture (Pinnock, 2016).

The research findings can be used to inform community-based interventions and can also be utilised in the development of future intervention and prevention programmes. Programmes designed specifically for females have been highlighted in the reviewed literature as an important need (Hayward & Honegger, 2014), and this can only be done with an understanding of the female experience of gang culture. The findings from this research have contributed towards informing the body of knowledge on girls in gangs, in the global Girls in Gangs

Initiative funded by Comic Relief. The findings have contributed to answering specific learning questions that were set out at the beginning of this initiative (Girls in Gangs Initiative Revised Start-Up Form, 2019), specifically:

1. To better understand gang culture and the role that girls and women play within it.

The research findings show that women play various roles in gang culture. These include being information carriers, hiding and handling contraband; ‘trapping’ rival male gang members, selling drugs and taking part in robberies. This clearly shows that women are in fact part of core gang activities, and do not just exist on the periphery of gangs. Providing sex to fellow male gang members was also reflected in the data as a role of women in gangs. Many women actively seek to avoid being sexually taken advantage of in gangs by adopting a firm and tough stance in the gang (Dziewanski, 2020). This was reported by some of the research participants, although there were also participants who had personally experienced sexual victimisation during their time of gang involvement.

2. How can girls be prevented from joining gangs and what early intervention measures are necessary to help them not to get more entangled in gang culture?
3. What are the best methods and programmes to build and sustain the resilience, identity and self-worth of girls and young women who are vulnerable to gangs?

In answering question 2 and 3 above, on a prevention level, when working with girls and young women at risk to gang involvement, the research findings point towards the need for tools and life skills to navigate living in a gang-plagued community. On an individual level, preventative measures should include developing and strengthening resilience in young girls and women, providing healthy role models, instilling healthy value systems, nurturing dreams and goals, providing weekend recreational activities, addressing gangsterism explicitly, and also group activities which promote a sense of belonging. The best methods and programmes to build and

sustain the resilience, identity and self-worth of girls and young women who are vulnerable to gangs will be methods that are holistic and adopt an ecological perspective in their approach.

On a macro level, the strong patriarchal dynamics that operate in gang culture need to be addressed. Toxic beliefs and norms that exist in this space around the sexual health and rights of women in gang spaces should be challenged. Due to the compounded risk of sexual violence and exploitation that gang-involved females face (Dziewanski, 2020), this is an important area for both prevention and intervention efforts with this population. Psychoeducation initiatives focused on raising young girls' and women's awareness of their sexual health may be useful in this regard, as well as increasing access to local community services to women who are experiencing sexual violence and victimisation.

Poverty, limited economic resources and activities (Pinnock, 2016), as well as lack of infrastructure (Van Schalkwyk, 2020) that characterise many marginalised Western Cape communities, are also important factors to be considered at the macro level when considering intervention methods. As mentioned by participants in the research interviews, employment is critical for a young woman in order to sustain herself. Lack of financial resources makes the decision to distance oneself from gangs difficult and could easily be the reason for returning to gang culture. Women wanting to leave gang culture will be looking for opportunities to advance their level of education and opportunities for skills training in order to increase their chances of gaining employment to sustain themselves financially. The recreational activities recommended by participants also has the potential to keep young school-aged girls occupied in productive and healthy ways. This would require not only funding, but spaces and resources in communities to facilitate these kinds of activities and recreational programmes.

This research was able to address the research objectives set out in the beginning of this thesis, investigating: the recruitment of girls and women into gangs, the initiation of females into

gangs, the role of women in gangs, the benefits of gang membership for women and the prevention of girls and young women being at risk to gang-involvement, and intervention in the lives of women already involved in gangs and gang culture.

The research findings from this study have highlighted gender differences in the experiences of gang culture. Although it is true that women may join gangs for many of the same reasons that men do, including income, protection and status (Dziewanski, 2020), women experience the added burden of being at risk to sexual victimisation due to the patriarchal nature of gangs and the expectations of women that are held by men in these spaces. The research has been useful in seeking to present a deeper, more contextual understanding picture of female gang involvement, as suggested in South African gang research conducted by Pinnock (2016). In the collected data, we have seen that becoming involved with gangs is not a straightforward or easy decision for women who have lived through diverse and numerous adversities and struggles, with a lack of family, social, community and structural support. This may be equally important in prevention and intervention efforts, in creating a more sympathetic approach to working with this group of women and understanding their behaviour, their choices, their needs and their motivations.

Finally, this research has been able to identify certain risk factors which may make girls and young women more susceptible to gang involvement. These risk factors exist on multiple levels, which is important to consider when examining female gang involvement from an ecological approach. These risk factors include poverty, exposure to gangs (geographically, in gang-involved families, through socialising with gang-involved peers), drug addiction and substance abuse, homelessness, absent father figures and a lack of parental figures and guidance.

6.4 Limitations and recommendations for future research

The research was conducted using a small sample size of eight women, and as such, this sample of women is not representative of the entire population of gang-involved females in the Western Cape. I was also dependent on the availability of women who were a part of the Teen Challenge community at the time of recruitment, for participation in this study.

I was not able to conduct member data-checking via focus group with participants as was initially planned, which is a significant limitation. This was due to the extended time frame of the research study, as well as the changing life circumstances of the participants. As a result, the level of community engagement from an important group in this research was reduced.

Future research would do well to include research participants in this data checking process, to ensure that their stories and the meanings they have attached to them have been adequately captured in the research, and also to amplify their voices in the research as far as possible, thus keeping in line with a CBPR approach. This will also aid in enhancing the validity and reliability of the research.

The data transcription process was something that I did on my own. Although this may have been a benefit in allowing me to immerse myself and work very closely with the research, the interpretation of the data may have benefited from an added outside perspective. This may also have assisted in identifying different themes and key aspects in the data. I had come into this research process with dual relationships, meaning that I came into the process with prior knowledge and background information of the research participants. It was necessary for me to remind myself to work only from the collected data and not from my previous interactions with research participants, when interpreting the data.

Given the limited amount of South African research on female gang involvement, it is necessary for continued research to be conducted with this specific group. Further research

examining the risk factors for gang membership, specifically for females, can assist in a greater understanding of why young South African females are attracted to gangs. This may also be useful in developing intervention and prevention efforts with the aim of keeping young girls from joining gangs.

Research looking at what have been the most significant protective factors in keeping young girls out of gangs in the same communities as gang-involved women may point towards ways in which these protective factors may be buttressed, facilitated and supported in the lives of girls and young women who are most at risk to gang involvement.

Finally, research focusing specifically on the gang disengagement process for females (or gang exit) will be important in identifying the specific gendered needs of these women in this transition phase of getting out of gang culture. This is a critical time, as women may return to gang life and involvement, if they do not have the necessary support and intervention.

In conclusion, overall, this research has contributed towards the important task of moving away from depicting women as solely passive members, accessories and victims of gang culture (Dziewanski, 2020). The findings have shown that the women in this research study who were involved directly with gangs, performed core gang activities, and also utilised their gang involvement in ways that fulfilled certain needs they had, which were mostly safety and financial needs. It was also apparent however, that female victimisation is still very much part of the gang experience for most women who come into contact with gang culture. An important and deeper understanding of women's journeys into gang life has been facilitated through this research, which can be useful in work being done with this group of women. These women were given a rare opportunity to share their own, deeply personal stories of their time in gang culture and their experiences of it. The research study has also contributed towards strengthening community partnerships and collaboration between organizations who are

actively involved in seeking realistic and practical solutions to the complex and multidimensional problem of female gang involvement in the Western Cape.

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APPENDIX A

ETHICAL CLEARANCE



NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC Humanities New Application Form

3 October 2018

Project number: 7140

Project Title: Recruitment and Initiation of Girls into Gangs in the Western Cape

Dear Miss Iramuella Maller

Your REC Humanities New Application Form submitted on 3 September 2018 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Humanities.

Please note the following for your approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
3 October 2018	2 October 2019

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (7140) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Informed Consent Form	English Consent Form	10/08/2018	2
Informed Consent Form	Afrikaans Consent Form	10/08/2018	1
Data collection tool	Afrikaans Interview Schedule	10/08/2018	1
Data collection tool	English Interview Schedule	10/08/2018	1
Proof of permission	Uiko Stellenbosch Permission Letter	10/08/2018	1
Proof of permission	Tsun Challenge Permission Letter	10/08/2018	1
Default	English Verbal Consent Form	10/08/2018	1
Default	Afrikaans Verbal Consent Form	10/08/2018	1
Default	Afrikaans Interview Schedule	10/08/2018	1
Default	Uiko Stellenbosch Permission Letter	10/08/2018	1
Default	Tsun Challenge Permission Letter	10/08/2018	1
Informed Consent Form	English Verbal Consent Form	10/08/2018	1
Informed Consent Form	Afrikaans Verbal Consent Form	10/08/2018	1

APPENDIX B

ORGANISATIONAL PERMISSION (USIKO STELLENBOSCH)

Usiko Stellenbosch
37 Webers Valley Road, Jamestown, Stellenbosch, 7600
Western Cape, South Africa
Tel: 021 880 2157
<http://usiko.org.za/>
www.facebook.com/UsikoSTB/



23 March 2018

To whom it may concern

Permission is hereby granted to Imanuella Muller to conduct her research under the auspices of Usiko Stellenbosch on its global initiative young adults. This initiative is called Women of strength and will be conducted at Teen challenge rehabilitation centre in Eerste River.

We also give her permission to conduct one on one interviews, attend meetings, make recordings of sessions and conduct focus groups.

Please contact me on the above office line for any further queries.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arnold Okkers', written in a cursive style.

Arnold Okkers
Executive Director

NPO Registration: 093-025-NPO **PBO Ref:** 930028502
B-BBEE: Level 3 Certified, 100% beneficiaries defined as 'Black' counting to full scorecard contribution
Board: Vernon Adams (Chair)

APPENDIX C

ORGANISATIONAL PERMISSION (TEEN CHALLENGE)



1 August 2018

To whom it may concern:

I hereby confirm that permission is granted to Imanuella Muller to contact Teen Challenge participants who have taken part in and completed the first cycle of the *Usiko Women of Strength* program in 2017, for the purposes of her Master's research study. Permission is also granted to her to conduct any meetings related to her research, as well as interviews with participants, at the Teen Challenge center in Eersteriver. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Kind Regards,



Thanking you in advance for your contributions
Mrs. E Nomdoe
Should you however require additional information, please contact:

Pastor Erica Nomdoe 072 774 0657
E-mail: erica.nomdoe63@gmail.com
Enon Office – 021 904 1055

Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jacobus & Pastor Erica Nomdoe
18-28 Mimosa street, Somerset heights, Eersteriver, 7100
Website: www.enontab.co.za email: admin@enontab.co.za

APPENDIX D

PERMISSION REQUEST FORM (TEEN CHALLENGE)

Usiko Stellenbosch
37 Waberg, Valley Road, Jamestown, Stellenbosch, 7600
Western Cape, South Africa
Tel: 021 880 2157
<http://usiko.org.za>
www.facebook.com/UsikoSTB/



PERMISSION REQUEST FORM

To whom it may concern

My name is **Jacquella Muller**. I am currently a Master's student at Stellenbosch University, in the Psychology department. I am also a staff member at **Usiko Stellenbosch NPC**. My research focus will be the recruitment and initiation of girls into gangs in the Western Cape.

I am writing to request permission to conduct my research within one of the programmes at your organisation, and to approach programme participants to potentially recruit them as research participants. They will be given a comprehensive information sheet regarding the research and research procedures and their participation in the research study is completely voluntary.

Should they choose to participate, their confidentiality and anonymity will be protected throughout the research process and referral for counselling or debriefing will be made available to them should the research affect them negatively in any way. They are also free to withdraw from the research process at any time and for any reason, without any negative consequences.

I am also requesting to conduct individual interviews and focus groups at Teen Challenge.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries.

Kind Regards,

Jacquella Muller (jacquella@usikostb.org.za / 061 304 5432)

APPENDIX E:
CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH)



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

Participant Informed Consent Form

Research Study Title: Recruitment and initiation of girls into gangs in the Western Cape

My name is Imanuella Muller. I am currently a Master's student at Stellenbosch University, in the Psychology department. I am also a staff member at Usiko Stellenbosch NPO. With this information sheet I am inviting you to participate in my research study, which is part of the programme requirements for the MA Psychology degree. I am seeking women of all ages who have been recruited and initiated into gangs in the Western Cape, to confidentially share their stories of these experiences. Hopefully these women can help bring light to a very important issue in the Western Cape and contribute to programmes that assist girls in gangs.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research study is to find out how girls in the Western Cape get recruited into gangs and how they get initiated into gangs. There is not much known about this topic and female gang members have not really been given the opportunity to share their own stories and experiences of how they have become involved with gangs. This research also aims to give women the opportunity to talk for themselves and to have their voices be heard. This will contribute to research on this subject. Findings from this study will not only play an important role in the improvement of Usiko's existing programme for young women in your community, but will also hopefully contribute to the development of similar programmes in other communities and countries.

2. PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this research study, you will be asked to take part in an individual interview. The individual interview will be between forty and sixty minutes and you will be asked a few questions about gang recruitment and initiation. You will also be invited to share your own story of how you were recruited or initiated into a gang, should you wish to do so.

These interviews will be conducted by myself and will be audio recorded on a digital audio recorder, in order to be transcribed and analysed. By signing this consent form, you are giving your permission to have your individual interview digitally audio recorded. The interviews will take place at Teen Challenge.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS & DISCOMFORT

As this research focuses on sensitive issues and topics, at some time during the individual interview process you may be asked to discuss things that could be uncomfortable and bring up negative feelings and emotions. This may trigger certain memories and feelings for you of negative experiences. If you are feeling distressed as a result of the interview process, arrangements have been made for you to have a counselling session with Mariska Marais-Morkel, the Usiko Stellenbosch Social worker. She can be contacted at 021) 880 2157 or mariska.marais86@gmail.com and a counselling session can be arranged with her. She is willing to meet you at Teen Challenge for this session and the counselling services will be provided to you free of charge.

Collected data will be confidential and only discussed with my research supervisor (Prof. Anthony Naidoo) and my personal supervisor (Dr Serahni Symington). All the data and audio-recordings will be kept in password protected files, on a password – protected computer. Physical data will be stored in a locked cabinet in my research supervisor's office and only him and I will have access to this data.

As a participant you have the right to withdraw from this research at any time. Should you wish to do so, there will be no negative consequences. You can also request that your audio-recorded interview be deleted. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS

There will be no financial compensation or direct benefit for taking part in this research study. However, your story and contribution will be extremely valuable as research on females in gangs is very scarce, especially in South Africa. Telling your story will give a voice to the mostly 'invisible' female gang members. Further, your insight and contribution will assist Usiko in determining how we (through our Women of Strength programme) can best assist other young women leaving gang culture.

As mentioned above, there will be no payment for participation. Refreshments will however be served at the interview.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY & ANONYMITY

Any information you share with me during this study and that could possibly identify you as a participant will be protected. This will be done by using a false name instead of your real name in the research study. This false name will also be used in future publication of this research study. You will only be asked for your age and first language. The results of this research study will be shared with Usiko Stellenbosch and its partner organisations (Comic Relief, Ihata Shelter and the Ruben Richards Foundation) as part of the Women of Strength programme and will be used to answer some of the learning questions that have been set up for this intervention. Your identity will be completely protected through the use of false names (as mentioned above).

Any information that you share will be kept confidential. However, my research supervisor will have access to interview recordings and transcriptions. All of this data will be stored electronically (and it will be password-protected) and the only people who will have access to it are myself and my research supervisor. This data will be erased after 5 years.

There are however, certain limits to confidentiality. As a researcher I have a legal duty to report any incriminating information that is shared with me (e.g. information regarding involvement in a criminal act). Should you share such information with me, I will be obligated to report it to my supervisor who will assist me in deciding how to proceed with this information in accordance with legal requirements. Due to this requirement, I encourage you to be cautious about what information you share in our interview. You will also have the option to go over the information that you have shared and to have the information edited.

6. PARTICIPATION & WITHDRAWAL

As a participant you have the right to withdraw from this research study at any time. Should you wish to do so, there will be no negative consequences. You can also request that your audio-recorded interview be deleted. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

Should you be asked a question which you are uncomfortable answering, you are free to express that you do not wish to answer that particular question and still remain a part of the research study.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this research, please feel free to contact:

Professor Anthony Naidoo (Research Supervisor)
Department of Psychology
Stellenbosch University
021) 808 3441 / avnaidoo@sun.ac.za

Imanuella Muller (Researcher)
Stellenbosch University
061 604 5432/ 16875729@sun.ac.za

8. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

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 participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by Imanuella Muller in English and I am in command of this language. I was given the opportunity, and encouraged to ask questions. Any questions that I had were answered to my satisfaction.

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

Name of Participant

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

Signature of Participant or Legal Representative

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I have explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of participant*]. He/she was encouraged to ask me any questions. This conversation took place in English.

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM (AFRIKAANS)



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

Toestemming om aan navorsing deel te neem.

Titel: Verwing en inisiasies van meisies in bendes in die Wes Kaap

Jy word hiermee uitgenooi om aan 'n navorsingstudie deel te neem, wat deur Mej. Imanuella Muller en Prof Anthony Naidoo, van Stellenbosch universiteit se sielkunde departement onderneem is. Die bevindinge van hierdie studie sal bydra tot Usiko Stellenbosch se evalueringsprosesse en die verbetering van die Women of Strength (WOS) program, sowel as die publikasie van 'n meesters tesis en verskeie akademiese artikels. Jy is gekies as n potensiele deelnemer, aangesien jy deel was van Usiko se eerste Women of Strength (WOS) program, en ons stel belang in jou ondervindinge wat jy as vrou moontlik gehad het as gevolg van bende betrokkenheid.

1. OOGMERK VAN DIE STUDIE

Die doel van hierdie studie is om te bepaal hoe meisies van die Wes Kaap verwerfen geiniseer word om deel te word van bende. Daar is nog nie veel kennis oor hierdie onderwerp nie en vroulike bendelede het nog nie die geleentheid gehad om hulle eie ervaringe te deel nie. Ons wil graag vir vroue bendelede die geleentheid bied om namens hulleself te praat. Dit sal n groot bydrae lewer tot die navorsing oor hierdie onderwerp. Bevindinge vanaf hierdie studie sal nie net 'n deurslaggewende rol speel in die verbetering van Usiko se bestaande programme vir jeug in jou gemeenskap nie, maar sal hopelik ook bydra tot die ontwikkeling van soortgelyke programme in ander gemeenskappe en lande.

2. PROSEDURE

Indien jy instem om deel te neem aan hierdie studie sal ons van jou verwag om die volgende te doen:

- Voltooi 'n ingeligde toestemmingsvorm (hierdie dokument), wat aandui dat jy vrywillig instem om aan die studie deel te neem.
- Neem deel aan 'n een-tot-een bespreking met my, waartydens ek jou n paar vrae sal vra oor bende- werwing en inisiasies. Jy sal ook versoek word om jou storie te deel oor jou werwing en inisiasie, sou jy instem on dit te deel. Hierdie gesprek sal met 'n bandopnemer opgeneem word.

Die onderhoud sal ongeveer 40 minute tot 'n uur lank duur. Deur hierdie toestemmingsvorm te onderteken, gee jy toestemming dat jou gesprek met my met 'n digitale bandopnemer opgeneem mag word. Die opnames sal in 'n elektroniese formaat op 'n wagwoord-beskernde rekenaar gestoor word.

3. MOONTLIKE NADELE OF ONGEMAK

Hierdie studie word beskou as medium tot hoë risiko, aangesien dit mag raak aan onderwerpe wat vir jou moeilik of ontstellend kan wees om te bepreek. Jy sal nie forseer word om enige iets te deel waarmee jy nie gemaklik is nie. Die data wat ons vanaf jou verkry sal as konfidensieel behandel word en sal veilig op 'n geheuestokkie binne 'n geslote kabinet gestoor word, waarvan toegang tot die navorsingspan beperk is. Jy sal ook die opsie hê om op enige stadium, sonder enige gevolge, van die studie te onttrek. Indien jy wel enige ongemak of ontsteltenis gedurende of na jou deelname aan die studie ervaar, sal jy hulp vanaf Usiko se maatskaplike werker ontvang. Sy is Mariska Marais-Morkel, wat jou met graagte sal help. Hierdie berading sal gratis aan jou voorsien word.

Usiko Stellenbosch

Tel: 021 880 2157

Epos: mariska.marais86@gmail.com

Fisiese adres: 37 Webersvallei-pad, Jamestown, Stellenbosch

Daar is ook die moontlikheid dat mense in jou gemeenskap (byvoorbeeld bendelede) nie daarvan sal hou dat jy met ander mense praat oor dit wat in die gemeenskap aangaan nie. Die studie sal al jou besonderhede, insluitende die feit dat jy daaraan deelneem, geheim hou en ons bespreking sal by Teen Challenge plaasvind. Jy word ook aangemoedig om nie vir enige iemand wat nie nodig het om te weet nie, te vertel dat jy aan die studie deelneem nie.

4. MOONTLIKE VOORDELE VIR DEELNEMERS EN/OF DIE SAMELEWING

Daar is geen onmiddellike voordele assosieer met deelname aan hierdie studie nie. Deur deel te neem aan die besprekings sal jy egter jou betrokkenheid by Usiko kan voortsit en toegang tot hulle voortdurende ondersteuning verkry. Jy sal ook die kans kry om uiting te gee aan jou opinies in 'n ruimte waar dit na geluister en gewaardeer sal word. Dit sal bydra tot die sielkunde en Usiko se kennis van meisies se ervarings en intervensies gerig op meisies, en kan baie waardevol wees vir ander programme wat meisies van soortgelyke gemeenskappe wil help.

5. BETALING VIR DEELNAME

Daar sal geen betaling vir deelname aan hierdie studie wees nie. Daar sal wel verversings voorsien word by die onderhoud.

6. KONFIDENSIALITEIT

Enige inligting rakende jou, enige ander persoon of jou gemeenskap wat in die verloop van hierdie studie verkry word en wat gebruik kan word om jou te identifiseer, sal konfidentieel gehou word en sal slegs met jou toestemming of in ooreenstemming met regsvereistes, gedeel word met ander. Konfidensialiteit sal deur die gebruik van skuilname (wat jy self kan kies) onderhou word. Geen identifiserende persoonlike inligting sal onder jou skuilnaam gebruik word nie. Die enigste mense wat toegang gaan hê tot die inligting is die navorser (Imanuella Muller) self, en haar studieleier (Prof Anthony Naidoo).

Daar is egter 'n uitsondering hier. Vertroulikheid mag wel gebreuk word wanneer kriminele inligting gedeel word. Kriminele inligting sluit in enige inligting rakende 'n krimenede oortreding waar u of iemand anders betrokke is. Dit is my plig as navorser om kriminele

inligting te rapporteer aan die relevante owerhede. Om hierdie rede wil ek dus vra dat jy versigtig moet wees met die inligting wat u deel gedurende hierdie onderhoud. Jy sal die geleentheid gegun word om deur die informasie wat u gedeel het te werk en mag dan waar toepaslik is die inligting aanpas.

7. DEELNAME EN ONTTREKKING

Jy is vry om self te kies of jy aan hierdie studie wil deelneem of nie. Indien jy inwillig om deel te neem, sal jy op enige latere stadium van die studie steeds kan onttrek, sonder enige nadelige gevolge. Jy kan ook kies om sekere vrae nie te antwoord nie en steeds deel van die studie bly. Die navorser hou egter die reg voor om jou van die studie te onttrek indien enige omstandighede opduik wat dit regverdig.

8. IDENTIFISERING VAN DIE NAVORSERS

Indien jy enige vrae of kommernisse het oor die navorsing, kan jy vir Prof Tony Naidoo (021 808 3441/ avnaidoo@sun.ac.za) of Mej. Imanuella Muller (061 304 5432/ 16875729@sun.ac.za) kontak.

9. REGTE VAN NAVORSINGSDEELNEMERS

Jy mag jou instemming tot deelname op enige tyd onttrek en sal deelname aan die studie staak sonder enige straf of nadeel. Jy laat vaar nie enige wetlike regte of eise deur jou deelname aan die studie nie. Indien jy enige vrae het rakende jou regte as 'n deelnemer aan navorsing, kan jy Me. Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] by Stellenbosch Universiteit se afdeling vir Navorsingsontwikkeling kontak.

HANDTEKENING VAN DIE NAVORSINGSDEELNEMER

Bogenoemde inligting is aan my in Afrikaans, deur Imanuella Muller, verduidelik en ek is die taal magtig. Ek is voldoende geleentheid gegee om vrae te vra en hierdie vra is bevredigend vir my beantwoord.

Ek stem hiermee in om deel te neem aan hierdie studie. Ek is met 'n kopie van hierdie vorm voorsien.

Naam van deelnemer

Handtekening van deelnemer

Datum

HANDTEKENING VAN NAVORSER

Hiermee verklaar ek dat ek die inligting wat in hierdie dokument weergegee word aan _____ [*naam van deelnemer*] verduidelik het. Sy is aangemoedig om enige vrae wat sy gehad het rakende die studie te vra en is voldoende geleentheid gegun om dit te doen. Hierdie gesprek was in Afrikaans.

Handtekening van navorser

Datum

APPENDIX G
VERBAL CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH)



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

Research Study Title: Recruitment and Initiation of Girls into Gangs

You are invited to take part in a study conducted by Imanuella Muller, from the Psychology department at Stellenbosch University. You were approached as a possible participant because of your participation in Usiko's Women of Strength programme and because of experiences that you may have had relating to gang culture as a woman.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research study is to learn about how women in the Western Cape get recruited and initiated into gangs. This study wants to give women an opportunity to talk about their own experiences of being involved in gang culture. The study also wants to use the findings to plan future interventions (e.g. Women of Strength) so that other women involved in gang culture, or coming out of gang culture can receive the help and assistance that they need.

2. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF ME?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to take part in an individual interview (conducted by the researcher, Imanuella Muller) and answer some questions about your knowledge of gang culture and also about your experiences of being involved in gang culture. This interview will last between 40 to 60 minutes. These interviews will take place at Teen Challenge Eersterivier and will be recorded with a digital audio recorder.

3. POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

During the individual interview process you may be asked to discuss things that could be uncomfortable and bring up negative feelings and emotions. This may trigger certain memories and feelings for you of negative experiences. If you are feeling distressed as a result of the interview process, arrangements have been made for you to have a counselling session with Mariska Marais-Morkel, the Usiko Stellenbosch Social worker. She is willing to meet you at Teen Challenge for this session and the counselling services will be provided to you free of charge.

Collected data will be confidential and only discussed with my research supervisor (Prof. Anthony Naidoo) and my personal supervisor (Dr Serahni Symington).

As a participant you have the right to withdraw from this research at any time.

4. POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO THE SOCIETY

There will be no financial compensation or direct benefit for taking part in this research study. However, your story and contribution will be extremely valuable as research on females in gangs is very scarce. Telling your story will give a voice to the mostly 'invisible' female gang members. Your contribution will also play an important role in the development and planning of programmes targeting girls in gangs. Through your contribution Usiko Stellenbosch will be able to provide the best and most necessary assistance to other young women who are leaving gang culture.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

As mentioned above, there will be no payment for participation. However, refreshments will be served at the interview.

6. PROTECTION OF YOUR INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND IDENTITY

Any information you share with me during this study and that could possibly identify you as a participant will be protected. This will be done by using a false name instead of your real name in the research study. This false name will also be used in future publication of this research study. You will only be asked for your age and first language. The results of this research study will be shared with Usiko Stellenbosch and its partner organisations (Comic Relief, Ihata Shelter and the Ruben Richards Foundation) as part of the Women of Strength programme and will be used to answer some of the learning questions that have been set up for this intervention. Your identity will be completely protected through the use of false names (as mentioned above).

Any information that you share will be kept confidential.

There are however, certain limits to confidentiality. As a researcher I have a legal duty to report any incriminating information that is shared with me (e.g. information regarding involvement in a criminal act). Should you share such information with me, I will be obligated to report it to my supervisor who will assist me in deciding how to proceed with this information in accordance with legal requirements. Due to this requirement, I encourage you to be cautious about what information you share in our interview. You will also have the option to go over the information that you have shared and to have the information edited.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you agree to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. You may also request that your audio-recorded interview be deleted.

8. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Do you have any questions or concerns about this study?

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

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 participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.



DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT
--

As the participant I confirm that:

- The above information has been read to me and has been read to me in English, which I am in command of.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.
- All issues related to privacy, and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide, have been explained.

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in this research study, as conducted by Imanuella Muller.

Signature of Participant

Date

DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

As the **principal investigator**, I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been read and thoroughly explained to the participant. I also declare that the participant has been encouraged (and has been given ample time) to ask any questions. In addition I would like to confirm that:

	The conversation with the participant was conducted in English, which the participant is in command of.
--	---

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX H
VERBAL CONSENT FORM (AFRIKAANS)



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

Toestemming om aan Navorsing deel te neem

Titel: Verwing en inisiasies van meisies in bendes in die Wes Kaap

Jy word hiermee uitgenooi om aan 'n navorsingstudie deel te neem, wat deur Mej. Imanuella Muller en Prof Anthony Naidoo, van Stellenbosch universiteit se sielkunde departement onderneem is. Die bevindinge van hierdie studie sal bydra tot Usiko Stellenbosch se evalueringsprosesse en die verbetering van die Women of Strength (WOS) program, sowel as die publikasie van 'n meesters tesis en verskeie akademiese artikels. Jy is gekies as n potensiele deelnemer, aangesien jy deel was van Usiko se eerste Women of Strength (WOS) program, en ons stel belang in jou ondervindinge wat jy as vrou moontlik gehad het as gevolg van bende betrokkenheid.

1. OOGMERK VAN DIE STUDIE

Die doel van hierdie studie is om te bepaal hoe meisies van die Wes Kaap verwerfen geiniseer word om deel te word van bende. Ons wil graag vir vroue benedeledede die geleentheid bied om namens hulleself te praat. Dit sal n groot bydrae lewer tot die navorsing oor hierdie onderwerp. Bevindinge vanaf hierdie studie sal nie net 'n deurslaggewende rol speel in die verbetering van Usiko se bestaande programme vir jeug in jou gemeenskap nie, maar sal hopelik ook bydra tot die ontwikkeling van soortgelyke programme in ander gemeenskappe en lande.

2. PROSEDURE

Indien jy instem om deel te neem aan hierdie studie sal ons van jou verwag om die volgende te doen:

- Voltooi 'n ingeligde toestemmingsvorm (hierdie dokument), wat aandui dat jy vrywillig instem om aan die studie deel te neem.
- Neem deel aan 'n een-tot-een bespreking met my, waartydens ek jou n paar vrae sal vra oor bende- werwing en inisiasies. Jy sal ook versoek word om jou storie te deel oor jou werwing en inisiasie, sou jy instem on dit te deel. Hierdie gesprek sal met 'n bandopnemer opgeneem word.

Die onderhoud sal ongeveer 40 minute tot 'n uur lank duur. Deur hierdie toestemmingsvorm te onderteken, gee jy toestemming dat jou gesprek met my met 'n digitale bandopnemer opgeneem mag word. Die opnames sal in 'n elektroniese formaat op 'n wagwoord-beskernde rekenaar gestoor word.

3. MOONTLIKE NADELE OF ONGEMAK

Hierdie studie word beskou as medium tot hoë risiko, aangesien dit mag raak aan onderwerpe wat vir jou moeilik of ontstellend kan wees om te bepreek. Jy sal nie forseer word om enige iets te deel waarmee jy nie gemaklik is nie. Die data wat ons vanaf jou verkry sal as konfidensieel behandel word en sal veilig op 'n geheuestokkie binne 'n geslote kabinet gestoor word, waarvan toegang tot die navorsingspan beperk is. Jy sal ook die opsie hê om op enige stadium, sonder enige gevolge, van die studie te onttrek. Indien jy wel enige ongemak of ontsteltenis gedurende of na jou deelname aan die studie ervaar, sal jy hulp vanaf Usiko se maatskaplike werker ontvang. Hierdie berading sessies sal by Teen Challenge plaasvind. Die maatskaplike werker se naam is Mariska Marais-Morkel, wat jou met graagte sal help. Hierdie berading sal gratis aan jou voorsien word.

4. MOONTLIKE VOORDELE VIR DEELNEMERS EN/OF DIE SAMELEWING

Daar is geen onmiddellike voordele assosieer met deelname aan hierdie studie nie. Deur deel te neem aan die besprekings sal jy egter jou betrokkenheid by Usiko kan voortsit en toegang tot hulle voortdurende ondersteuning verkry. Jy sal ook die kans kry om uiting te gee aan jou opinies in 'n ruimte waar dit na geluister en gewaardeer sal word. Dit sal bydra tot die sielkunde en Usiko se kennis van meisies se ervarings en intervensies gerig op meisies, en kan baie waardevol wees vir ander programme wat meisies van soortgelyke gemeenskappe wil help.

5. BETALING VIR DEELNAME

Daar sal geen betaling vir deelname aan hierdie studie wees nie. Daar sal wel verversings voorsien word by die onderhoud.

6. KONFIDENSIALITEIT

Enige inligting rakende jou, enige ander persoon of jou gemeenskap wat in die verloop van hierdie studie verkry word en wat gebruik kan word om jou te identifiseer, sal konfidensieel gehou word en sal slegs met jou toestemming of in ooreenstemming met regsvereistes, gedeel word met ander.

Vertroulikheid mag wel gebreuk word wanneer kriminele inligting gedeel word. Kriminele inligting sluit in enige inligting rakende 'n krimenede oortreding waar u of iemand anders betrokke is. Dit is my plig as navorser om kriminele inligting te rapporteer aan die relevante owerhede. Om hierdie rede wil ek dus vra dat jy versigtig moet wees met die inligting wat u deel gedurende hierdie onderhoud. Jy sal die geleentheid gegun word om deur die informasie wat u gedeel het te werk en mag dan waar toepaslik is die inligting aanpas.

7. DEELNAME EN ONTTREKKING

Jy is vry om self te kies of jy aan hierdie studie wil deelneem of nie. Indien jy inwillig om deel te neem, sal jy op enige latere stadium van die studie steeds kan onttrek, sonder enige nadelige gevolge. Jy kan ook kies om sekere vrae nie te antwoord nie en steeds deel van die studie bly.

Die navorser hou egter die reg voor om jou van die studie te onttrek indien enige omstandighede opduik wat dit regverdig.

8. VRAE OOR DIE NAVORSING PROCESS

Het jy enige vrae of kommernisse oor die navorsing?

9. REGTE VAN NAVORSINGSDEELNEMERS

Jy mag jou instemming tot deelname op enige tyd onttrek en sal deelname aan die studie staak sonder enige straf of nadeel. Jy laat vaar nie enige wetlike regte of eise deur jou deelname aan die studie nie. Indien jy enige vrae het rakende jou regte as 'n deelnemer aan navorsing, kan jy Me. Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] by Stellenbosch Universiteit se afdeling vir Navorsingsontwikkeling kontak.

HANDTEKENING VAN DIE NAVORSINGSDEELNEMER

Bogenoemde inligting is aan my in Afrikaans, deur Imanuella Muller, gelees en verduidelik en ek is die taal magtig. Ek is voldoende geleentheid gegee om vrae te vra en hierdie vra is bevredigend vir my beantwoord.

Ek stem hiermee in om deel te neem aan hierdie studie. Ek is met 'n kopie van hierdie vorm voorsien.

Naam van deelnemer

Handtekening van deelnemer

Datum

HANDTEKENING VAN NAVORSER

Hiermee verklaar ek dat ek die inligting wat in hierdie dokument weergegee word aan _____ [*naam van deelnemer*] gelees en verduidelik het. Sy is aangemoedig om enige vrae wat sy gehad het rakende die studie te vra en is voldoende geleentheid gegun om dit te doen. Hierdie gesprek was in Afrikaans.

Handtekening van navorser

Datum

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (ENGLISH)

1. Can you tell me about yourself, your family and your childhood?
2. What were your family relationships and issues like when you first became involved with gangs?
3. Tell me about how you became involved in gangs?
4. What can you tell me about how gangs recruit girls?
5. Where do gangs recruit girls?
6. How were you recruited into a gang?
7. Do girls get initiated into gangs?
8. If yes, how do girls get initiated into gangs?
9. Can you talk about your initiation into a gang?
10. What do girls do in gangs?
11. What were your personal reasons for joining a gang?
12. What was your home or family life like when you first became involved with gangs?
13. Why do you think girls are recruited into gangs?
14. Why do gangs need girls?
15. How did you become involved with gangs?
16. How old were you when you first became involved in gang life/activity?
17. Why do you think girls join gangs?
18. What does a girl gain or benefit by joining a gang?
19. How do male gang members treat female gang members?
20. How were you treated?
21. Are girls equal to boys/men in a gang?
22. How does a girl gain respect in a gang?
23. How have you managed to exit from the gang?
24. What recommendations do you have for how to prevent girls from getting caught up in gangs?
25. What recommendations do you have for assisting women who are wanting to leave the gang culture?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX J

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (AFRIKAANS)

1. Kan jy vir my bietjie vertel van jouself, jou familie en jou kinderjare?
2. Hoe was jou familie verhoudings toe jy eerste betrokke geraak het met bende?
3. Hoe het jy by bende betrokke geraak?
4. Kan jy vir my vertel hoe bende meisies intrek?
5. Waar kry bende toegang tot meisies?
6. Hoe was jy by bende ingetrek?
7. Word meisies in bende in geiniseer?
8. Indien ja, hoe word meisies in bende in geiniseer?
9. Voel jy gemaklik om te praat oor hoe jy geiniseer was?
10. Watter rol speel meisies in bende? Wat doen hulle?
11. Wat was jou persoonlike redes om by n bende aan te sluit?
12. Hoe was jou husilike en familie omstandighede toe jy eerste by bende betrokke geraak het?
13. Hoekom dink jy word meisies by bende ingetrek?
14. Hoekom het bende meisies nodig?
15. Hoe oud was jy toe jy vir die eerste keer met bende betrokke geraak het?
16. Hoekom dink jy sluit meisies by bende aan?
17. Watter voordele kry meisies as hulle by bende aansluit?
18. Hoe word vroue in bendes behandel deur die manlike bendelede?
19. Hoe was jy deur manlike bendelede behandel tydens jou betrokkenheid met bende?
20. Word meisies gesien as gelyk as mans in bende?
21. Hoe kry meisies in bende respek? Wat moet hulle doen om respek te kry?
22. Hoe was dit vir jou moontlik om die bende gemeenskap te verlaat?
23. Het jy enige raad oor hoe om te voorkom dat meisies by bende betrokke raak?
24. Het jy enige raad oor hoe om meisies te help wat nie meer by bende betrokke wil wees nie?

Dankie vir jou tyd.

APPENDIX K

EXTRACTS FROM THE FINDINGS

Extract 1

The first time yes; that's why I ... I started sleeping out of the house. Because why, I must ... for him, otherwise my family suffers as a result. They're gonna do something to my family ... or ... so I just went with him. (Emily, late twenties).

Die eerste keer ja; dis hoekom ek...ek begin van die huis af slaap. Because why, ek moet...ek moet gou vir hom, anderste ly my familie daaronder. Hulle gaan iets maak aan my familie...of...toe gaan ek maar saam met hom.

Extract 2

And you, you at that place every day, so once you in the circle every day they talk a lot of stuff; you hear what they do, how they roll. So, once you hear something that you shouldn't have heard, you must be a part of them because now you can't leave. Because you know this about us now. So, we can't let you go. You gonna be a danger for us, so either you decide you are here, or if you go and you heard something, then your life is at stake now. (Dana, 30 years old).

Extract 3

They lure you in with money, with drugs, with nice times ... like buy you wine ... it starts with the wine you know. (Melissa, 36 years old).

Extract 4

It's the drugs because ... usually like uhm ... in our communities, like you know poverty, you know like ... in today's ... especially in our community; women goes after money. They go after money and it's mostly women that is addicted to drugs already you know ... so that's just drawing them closer ... pulling them more into the ... into that ... that uhm ... how can I say ... that environment of gangsterism and so. And like ... once you in, like once they have you there ... they do anything. Like they don't care, like you are there; it's almost like you ... they own you. (Melissa, 36 years old).

Extract 5

And because I used to be on the drug of heroin, they said that I won't suffer, like there will always be. (Amy, 29 years old).

Extract 6

You don't have money every day to smoke. So later on, you're going to do anything to be able to smoke. And they offer you certain things, and in that moment it's not wrong because you ... your body wants it. So, you're going to do anything and later on you'll see that you're stuck to these people. (Dana, 30 years old).

Extract 7

There is some girls that's not on drugs but that grew up in a gang-related life that grew up, like their whole family is maybe gangsters; they will recruit that girls but like I said, but that is if girls are like that themselves. (Amy, 29 years old).

Extract 8

Perhaps if they're an attractive gang then the women will fall for them quickly, because you get very attractive gangs. They're dressed well; Nikes are on place and that is what women

want. They always want someone that is dressed nicely, that can be seen with them. So, then they will always make contact with someone in a normal way. And once you're so in love, then you'll see but okay, what you've let yourself in for and by that time it's actually too late. (Chinelle, late twenties).

As hulle miskien nou n mooi bende is en so sal n vroumens gou val vir hulle want n mens kry baie mooi bendes. So lekker aangetrek, nikes is op die plek en daai is wat n vroumens soek. Hulle soek altyd iemand wat lekker aantrek, wat gesien kan word saam hulle. So dan sal hulle iemand altyd aan roep met n normaale wyse. En as jy nou lekker verlief is, dan sal jy sien maar okay, waar jy jouselfingelaat het en by daai tyd is dit eintlik al te laat.

Extract 9

But then uhm ... ja they had like ... you know they have this luxury cars and they have money, and everything, like they dress the best clothing and so we started going out. We went out for like a year and like, just when we started going out, I started bunking school. (Melissa, 36 years old).

Extract 10

*It is powerful because everywhere ... like me hey, people knew, okay I'm with *Big; a guy that I was with; his name was Big. And everybody was afraid of him hey. Then I could walk around at night-time, nobody could say or do anything, then they would say "no that's Big's girl, you need to be careful". (Jessica, 26 years old).*

*Dit is powerful because oral...soos eke neh, mense het geweet , okay, ek is saam met *Groot; 'n ou saam wie ek was gewas het se naam is *Groot. En almal was bang vir hom neh. Dan kan ek loop in die nag, niemand mag praat of niks nie, dan se hulle "nai daai's *Groot se girl, jy moet pasop".*

Extract 11

*But I could walk in that roads, in that streets, and they would just see me, and they will say no okay, it's *Michael se girlie. I would've ... I would be safe ... you know. (Melissa, 36 years old).*

Extract 12

I used to take uh, a boy that is a gangster you know and you can't like be anything you have to be you know something that you know other people would be scared of and know other people won't take advantage of me now because of him. So that was actually how I got involved. (Amy, 29 years old).

Extract 13

I grew up the youngest of 7 children. We are ... we were three daughters and four boys: like three sisters and four boys. Three of the four boys were gangsters. They belonged to the 28's gang group. (Christine, 35 years old).

Extract 14

*I used to live in *** where there were a lot of gangs. (Kaylee, 36 years old).*

Extract 15

... so, they were shooting at each other man and it was like dangerous for us to even go to school, or go to the shops or ... (Kaylee, 36 years old).

Extract 16

But then I think like, like I started playing netball and I started mixing with the wrong type of friends because the girls that used to play netball with me, they were ... had gangster boyfriends

and stuff. So, I also start ... I, I left the normal boyfriend ... the civilised one and I went on in dating a gangster boyfriend. (Melissa, 36 years old).

Extract 16

So, I went there every day and whomever gets to go there every day; automatically as the time goes, when you uhm ... you're up for anything; because of what they do, automatically later you're a part of them. (Dana, 30 years old).

Extract 17

I would say I did it for drugs. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Ek sal se ek het dit gedoen vir drugs.

Extract 18

It all happened when I was on drugs. Because when one is on drugs, you don't care anymore; you go anywhere that you know you will get easy access to drugs. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Dit het alles gebeur toe ek op drugs was. Want as mens op drugs is, jy worry nie meer nie, jy gaan enige way waar jy weet jy kan gou drugs kry of so.

Extract 19

*I can see like where the women is concerned, in our communities especially I can speak about *. I thank God for not ... having to do the things that they do for their addiction you know. They will just sleep with someone for a twenty-rand packet, or a thirty-rand packet; just to feed their habits you know. (Melissa, 36 years old).*

Extract 20

I would say I did it for drugs, and because I had nowhere else to go. So, then I just went along with anything. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Ek sal se ek het dit gedoen vir drugs. En omdat ek het nerens gehet om te gaan nie. So, toe het ek maar net gegaan met enige ding.

Extract 21

Or maybe you're just lost and you don't have a place to sleep and at the end of the day one of them comes to get you and they say "come, there's a place to sleep" and then you go. That's how I got involved the first time. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Of jy's net verlore dan het jy miskien nie n plek om te slap nie en einde van die dag dan kom kry een van hulle vir jou en hulle se "kom, daar's n plek om te slap" en dan gaan jy. Daai's hoe ek die eerste keur betrokke geword het.

Extract 22

That's the sad part. My father hey, at my aunt ... he lived around the corner there. But he never came to my aunt or anything like that. We literally walked past each other every day and I knew that was my father, but we never had a relationship. (Jessica, 26 years old)

Daai is die hartseer part. My dad ne, by my auntie, hy het om die draai gebly daar. But hy het nooit gekom tot daar of so nie. Ons het letterlik elke dag verby mekaar geloop en ek het geweet daai is my pa but ons het nie n relationship gehad nie.

Extract 23

Without me knowing, it did affect me a little bit, because the man ... the man doesn't bother with me, you understand? (Jessica, 26 years old).

Sonder dat ek geweet het, het dit vir my n bietjie affect, 'cause die man..die man worry nie van my nie, verstaan?

Extract 24

... a lot of people can say a lot of stuff. But what I've learnt through my journey till today, it all starts at home. My growing up was good, but my father failed me. So, I went out to go look for someone else to fill that, just to keep his word. (Dana, 30 years old).

Extract 25

Then I sat with the 8's and at the same time with the 6's, at one time. Maybe I'm there, and then I walk over, then I go to the other one. So, then I must always find out what both are planning; find out what the one is planning then I'll quickly say there, so both ways. So, it's actually just luck that I am still alive today you understand? Because at the end of the day, they're not about people that betray them. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Dan het ek by die agge gesit en die selfde tyd by die sesse, op een tyd. Miskien ek is nou daar, dan loop ek oor, dan gaan ek na die ander ene toe. So dan moet ek met altwee uitvind wat beplan die ene dan gaan se ek gou daar, so; both-wise. So dis maar net eintlik gelukkig dat ek nog lewe vandag, verstaan. Want op die ou einde van die dag, as hulle nie oor die mense wat hulle betray nie.

Extract 26

Gangs need girls because it's like someone must, how can I say ... you need someone to ... sometimes your life is in so much danger hey, that you need women to tell you what is going on outside while you're in hiding, you understand? So, I will say more as a shadow, or a hiding place, ya. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Gangs het meisies nodig because is like iemand moet hoe se ek...iemand moet vir jou...sometimes is jou lewe so in gevaar neh, dat jy het 'n vroumens nodig om vir jou te kan se wat daar buite aangaan terwyl jy in hiding is. Verstaan? So...ek sal meer se as 'n shadow of, of 'n skuiling. Ja.

Extract 27

Mostly like, if you're at the yard, then you need to hide the drugs. And they use you so deep hey, that you have to push it inside of you, because the police come inside the place and then they search it, and they don't go for you ... they don't search women, because it's already inside of you. Or some people, I've done this already hey ... or you swallow it hey ... and when the boere [slang for police] are gone, then you throw it up again. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Meestal like, as jy by die yard is, dan moet jy die drugs wegsteek neh. En hulle gebruik jou so diep neh, dat jy dit in jou moet druk, because die polisie kom tot binne in die plek dan skud hulle dit en, hulle gaan mos nie vir jou...vroumense skud nie because dit is mos nou klaar in jou in. Of som mense, ek het al die gedoen neh, of jy sluk dit neh, en wanneer die boere weg is en dan gooi jy dit weer op.

Extract 28

And then they also use the women to have sex with them, you understand ... sometimes you even have to satisfy everybody. Because that is how you get a hold of the drugs. (Chinelle, late twenties).

En dan gebruik hulle ook dames om seks saam met hulle te het, verstaan...jy moet sommer somtyds saam almal, almal tevrede stel. Want daai is jou way van drugs in die hande kry of so.

Extract 29

*... he cared about me but ... I mean you don't care ... how ... how do you care about someone and do the things that they did like, while I was staying there you know? It's almost like whenever you feel like having sex and when you wanna have sex with Melissa, then I'm just there. And *Nick isn't there you know ... then they can just have sex and I couldn't refuse and stuff. (Melissa, 36 years old).*

Extract 30

Now they have used me already hey, to mislead one of the [x's] men to a certain point, and then that person doesn't know man. And so, I brought that person there, and then they killed that person, like that. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Nou hulle het al vir my gebruik al, neh, om een van die 26's se manne te mislead tot by 'n sekere call, en dan daai persoon weet mos nou nie man. En dan bring ek daai persoon tot daar, en dan maak hulle daai persoon dood, so.

Extract 31

So, if they want to kill another guy, then they gonna send you as a woman because you can persuade a man very good. If I use the right word now. Then they use you to befriend him; you must make friends with this guy, or just show that you like him, then you know his every day's doing; what he's doing where he is. So, the time when they want to kill him, then you know exactly where he is, and then you inform them; "okay, now you can go". (Dana, 30 years old).

Extract 32

After a while they use you to go to school, then you sell for them. Then you make money for them at the school. (Emily, late twenties).

Later van tyd gebruik hulle vir jou om skool toe te gaan, dan verkoop jy gou vir hulle. Dan maak jy gou geld vir hulle by die skool.

Extract 33

Now I really loved doing, committing fraud and so that was my part; fraud, you understand, so maybe steal people's wallets and then I'd go shopping ... whatever we would need, you understand. That was my thing. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Nou ek was mos baie liefom fraud te doen en so daai was my deel; fraud, verstaan, so miskien nou mense se wallets geruk en dan sal ek nou gaan shopping, so, whatever ons nou mekeer en so, verstaan. Daai was my ding.

Extract 34

Then ... they hit you into it. (Emily, late twenties).

Dan kom...hulle slat vir jou daar binne in

Extract 35

... the gangsters say you must do something to be a part of the gang. So, you must let blood spill to prove yourself. (Jessica, 26 years old).

...die gansters se jy moet iets doen om part te wees van die gang. So jy moet bloed laat spat om jouselfte bewys.

Extract 36

But to be a real gangster, or if I want to become a gangster, I have to kill someone in order for that to happen. (Jessica, 26 years old).

But om 'n regte gangster, of as ek nou 'n gangster wil word, moet ek iemand dood maak om daai te kry.

Extract 37

How they initiate a girl; what I've heard, where I've sitted ... So, if they want to kill another guy, then they gonna send you as a woman because you can persuade a man very good. If I use the right word now. Then they use you to befriend him; you must make friends with this guy, or just show that you like him, then you know his every day's doing; what he's doing, where he is. So, the time when they want to kill him, then you know exactly where he is, and then you inform them; "okay, now you can go". (Dana, 30 years old).

Extract 38

Yes, you must prove yourself. But everybody is not the same in how they have to prove themselves. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Ja, jy moet jousefbewys. Maar almal is nie dieslfde hoe hulle hulselfbewys nie.

Extract 39

And maybe if you're on drugs they'll give you drugs then it's not necessary for you to go beg or steal because they feed you. And then they also use women to have sex with them, you understand ... sometimes you even have to satisfy everybody. Because that is how you get a hold of the drugs. (Chinelle, late twenties).

En as jy miskien op drugs is sal hulle vir jou drugs gee dan is dit nie nodig om te gaan skarrel of te gaan steel nie want hulle voed vir jou. En dan gebruik hulle ook dames om seks saam met hulle te het, verstaan...jy moet sommer somtyds saam almal, almal tevrede stel. Want daai is jou way van drugs in die hande kry of so.

Extract 40

... they will like buy you clothes; you don't need anything. Toiletries ... (Chinelle, late twenties).

Voordele...hulle sal nou vir jou like klere koop, jy't niks nodig nie. Toiletries...

Extract 41

... he used to ... look after us like there was like three of four girls in the house. I was one of them; he used to look after us, he used to give us money. He used to buy us clothes ... like everything ... (Melissa, 36 years old).

Extract 42

And I enjoyed it; you know when a person gets spoiled unnecessary or just out of the blue; anyone would likes it. (Kaylee, 36 years old).

Extract 43

You can do your nails. You can get whatever clothes you want. You just living a high life, but on his terms. (Dana, 30 years old).

Extract 44

I would say hey, my personal point of view ... is sometimes to feel safe man. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Ek sal se, neh, my personal point of view...is is sometimes om safe te voel man.

Extract 45

Maybe some of them don't have fathers or something like that. Or some of them don't have parents. Then the people make them feel as though they belong somewhere. So that is the reason why they go there in the first place, because they feel like they belong. That is you understand, according to ... they feel that they have nobody. So yes, you feel like you belong there. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Som van hulle het miskien nou nie pa's of so nie. Of som van hulle het nie ouers nie. Dan laat die mense vir hulle voel hulle 'belong somewhere'. So daai is die rede hoekom hulle in die eerste plek gaan tot daar, want hulle voel hulle belong. Daai is verstaan, volgens die mense hulle voel hulle het niemand nie. So ja, jy voel jy hoort daar.

Extract 46

Like when I go study now and I get a degree ... you busy studying, you getting done. When you done, you have something to look back with like, okay this is mine. So, in the gang, okay you somewhere now and there is also requirements what you must do. (Dana, 30 years old).

Extract 47

Our parents are sometimes too hard on our children and then they find the wrong peace outside, and then in that gang they feel like something and someone because they can do something now for other people. (Dana, 30 years old).

Extract 48

And then uhm ... it was just a good time and so then ... one Saturday, then I got ... then I got involved with a guy but I wanted to go after my friends, because they are in, so what's wrong with me now? I also want to be in ... (Emily, late twenties).

En dan uhm...lekker gegaan en soe en dan...een Saterdag, toe kry ek...toe raak ek betrokke by 'n outjie but ek wil mos nou agter my vrinne aangaan because why, hulle is dan nou in, wat mekeer ek dan nou? Ek wil ook nou in is...

Extract 49

I would say it was maybe a little bit to be popular. At that time or that stage, one is a teenager, so if you're moving with them, you're the man and so. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Ek sal se bietjie om 'popular' of so te wees. Daai tyd of op daai stadium is mens 'n tiener, so as jy nou saam hulle beweeg is jy mos nou die mens en so.

Extract 50

And I was cleaning the guns, and I was rolling the ... the meth and rolling and so. And that also put my life at risk because people heard now, and when I was walking with other people then people would say things like "people are still gonna kill you and other people heard about you guys". (Jessica, 26 years old).

En ek maak die guns skoon en ek rol die, die tik en ek rol af en so. En daai het my lewe ook in gevaar gestel because why mense het mos nou gehoor, en wanneer ek saam met ander mense loop dan se die mense van "mense gaan jou nog vrek maak en ander mense het gehoor van julle".

Extract 51

*And uhm ... I was there once and me and * was like in the room and we were intimate. But then when we were done, then I was still laying and then like ... someone else came in. * came in and then he just slept with me and I was thinking "what is going on?" ... you know? And then after him it was *, after * like ... it was quite a lot of guys, I think it was almost 10 guys that just had sex, like raped me ... like you know, took turns, like most probably queuing outside like when the one is done the other one comes in. And uhm ... the girls that was there, it happened to them as well you know. So, it was normal for it to happen and ... I mean I was so young at the time. (Melissa, 36 years old).*

Extract 52

They get treated very badly. Because if you just do something wrong, they've ... most of them are on drugs look, some of them. Now drugs make you very, how can I say ... like frustrated. Irritated and so. They get hit very badly and then when he's done hitting you, you have black eyes, maybe your bones are broken, and then you have to walk with him down the street as though it's nothing because you can't ... where are you going to? And even if you walk away, you anyway have to come back because you're so scared of him. They don't treat you well at all, really. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Hulle word baie lelik behandel. Want as jy nou net iets verkeerd doen, hulle het,,meerderheid van hulle is op drugs kyk sommige van hulle. Nou drugs maak jou mos baie hoe kan ek se, frustrated so. Irritated, en so. Hulle word baie lelik geslaan en dan moet jy as jy jou gou klaar geslaan het blou oe, jou bene is miskien gebreek, dan moet jy weer saam hom in die pad in loop amper asof dit niks is nie want jy kan nie..waarntoe gaan jy? En al loop jy weg, jy moet tog weer terug kom want jy's so bang vir hom. Hulle treat jou niks mooi nie, rerig.

Extract 54

And if it is that he hits me, they can't jump in or tell him so and so because they ... I think that is probably how the ... how it works, in the ... in gangs and so. And ja, it was just like totally unhealthy and I just gave up everything for this man. (Melissa, 36 years old).

Extract 55

And they get treated bad man because you must lower yourself beneath them because the idea is that he's the man, and you are the woman. And that guy will just tell you "look here, fuck that way or go sit there" and nobody will say anything if that guy is wrong, nobody says anything. Because he is the man so, it's ... you get treated badly. And not like a woman should be treated, you understand? (Jessica, 26 years old).

En, hulle word bad getreat man because jy moet gou sak onder hulle because die idee is mos nou die man, en jy is mos nou die vrou. En daai man sal jou sommer se “kyk hier, f- haarntoe of gaan sit daar”, en niemand se niks nie al is daai ou nou verkeerd ook niemand se niks nie. Because hy is die man so, is ...jy word bad getreat. En nie soos ‘n vrou moet getreat word nie. Verstaan?

Extract 56

Men will always have the first privilege, before women. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Mans sal altyd die eerste voorreg het. Voor vroumense.

Extract 57

The man is always the head and the women are the feet, if I can put it that way. Because if the man says so then you must ask how high, you understand; you must submit. You must be beneath them. You can't be above them. Because they have the last say. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Die man is altyd die kop en die vroumense is nou die voete, as ek dit so stel. Want as die man so gese het dan moet jy vra hoe hoog. Verstaan, jy moet submit. Jy moet onder hulle wees. Jy kan nie bo hulle wees nie. Want hulle se die laaste se.

Extract 58

They will kill a woman if a woman tries to be like a guy man. (Kaylee, 36 years old).

Extract 60

Because if a woman wants to correct you then they want to kill you, but the way that you're treating me is not how it should be, but I say that I love you so you're gonna sit with what it is. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Because as 'n vroumens vir jou regsê dan wil hulle vir jou doodmaak. Maar die way hoe jy my treat is nie die way hoe dit moet wees nie, but ekke se ek is lief vir jou en jy glo ek is lief vir jou so jy gaan maar sit met wat is.

Extract 61

And there's a lot of girls that act like guys. So, the guys they don't like that cause they say like, you're a girl, you're a woman, you are supposed to act like a woman. You know, or you must, like, or they will tell you, you should act like a bitch. But they are not actually equal. You know, because like a man is still a man and a girl is still a girl. (Amy, 29 years old).

Extract 62

You can go to a women's jail, you can be like a what and a what but, women don't get a number. That's what I know; you can be like the biggest gangster of the women's jail, but you won't ... you will never get a number. That's for the guys. (Kaylee, 36 years old).

Extract 63

And when we came up by the hill, we saw there were armed people standing that were rotating like they do, and they caught us, and we went to the cells again. (Jessica, 26 years old).

Toe ons nou opkom by die bult, sien ons nou net daar staan die armed mense wat so rotate en hulle vang vir ons en ons gaan toe weer selle toe.

Extract 64

And because he is now a [x]. And I need to prove myself now; look here I am ... I'm with you guys. And so, we went and broke in by the houses and we got away the first time. (Jessica, 26 years old).

*En hy is mos nou 'n [x]. En ek moet mos nou myself bewys; kyk hier ek is...ek is saam met julle. En onse gaan toe, en ons gaan toe daar by *** in *** daar by daai huise daar agter, en ons gaan breek by die huise in en ons kom toe weg die eerste keer.*

Extract 65

And once you get into a relationship, with a guy, you know everything by now ... you know his every move; what he's doing, when he's doing it, so they can't let go of you. And if you do, they gonna kill you. Or you must hide; your people must send you to another place, where they don't know you, where you must start a new life ... (Dana, 30 years old).

Extract 66

... and I realized at that moment that what was going on here now is not for me, and I never went back there again. (Jessica, 26 years old).

...en toe realize ek daai moment dat die wat nou hier gebeur is nie vir my nie, en ek het nooit weer daarna toe gegaan nie.

Extract 67

... and then this morning I just woke up and things was just like, almost like ... I just saw things the way it is and it's almost like I was blind all along. (Melissa, 36 years old).

Extract 68

And at the end of the day like ... I wasn't raised like that ... like my family also ... if I see my family and I see how prim and proper they are, you know ... how their lifestyle is ... it doesn't ... that lifestyle doesn't suit me. (Melissa, 36 years old).

Extract 69

It depends on how far into the thing you are. Because otherwise you must go to the big boss himself and he will tell you, okay you can go, or you can't go. Because you also can't just stay away. There's somebody everywhere, you understand. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Dit hang altyd af hoe ver jy in die ding in is. Want anderste moet jy maar by die hoe kop gaan selfen hy sal vir jou se, okay kan jy gaan of kan jy nie gaan nie. Want jy kan ook nie net wegbly nie. Ooral is daar mos iemand. Verstaan jy...

Extract 70

It depends how deep into the thing you are. But if you are still in it lightly, it's not that difficult to get out. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Dit hang af hoe ver jy in die ding in is. Maar as jy nog liggies in is, is dit nie nog so swaar om uit te kom nie.

Extract 71

You know their secrets so are you gonna now tell on their secrets? So, it's a bit tricky. (Christine, 35 years old).

Extract 72

Proper support yes, so that they won't be lost. Because the girls is gonna join the programme cause they wanna leave gangs, right? They gonna meet a new set of people. And they gonna

build their confidence in the people. They're gonna trust the people. You know? So, so ... that just, that should continue man. The people mustn't disappoint them at the end of the day because once you know ... once you wanna change your life and the people disappoint you then that will lead you back into the gangsterism. (Amy, 29 years old).

Extract 73

Ja and maybe other options for them as to how to live their lives. Other ways out cause sometimes they live with someone from a gang; they don't have any other way out. You still entertain the guests that come there. You still know about stuff being done, you hear about the plans being done; if they rob people or kill people, or whatever. You see ... so to remove yourself from that lifestyle as best you can if it's even possible. (Christine, 35 years old).

Extract 74

And yes, uhm, there must be a guarantee that there will be jobs available for them. Or there will be things that keep them busy in the meantime. (Amy, 29 years old).

Extract 75

I think you should maybe take them to a prison so that those people can tell them "look here, this and this resulted in me ending up here", you understand? Because the reality is that these things happen, it's yoh ... easy to get involved. And you have to show them, look here these people, like I said, take them to jail maybe, uhm ... to scare them a little bit man. And maybe get people in that can share their stories with them, you understand? (Jessica, 26 years old).

...dink ek julle moet miskien vir hulle like na 'n tronk toe vat en laat daai mense vir hulle kan se "kyk hier, die en die en die en die het gemaak dat ek hier opeinding". Verstaan? Because reality is dat die is ie dinge wat gebeur, is yoh...is gou om involved te raak. En jy moet vir hulle

wys, kyk hier die mense, soos ek gese het, miskien tronke toe vat, uhm...vir hulle bietjie bang maak man. En mense miskien in kry wat hulle stories saam vir hulle kan leer, verstaan?

Extract 76

Uhm, sometimes they just need to hear from someone who went through the same thing; because it's not easy for everyone. Some of them are still very scared to talk about it, understand. As a result of, understand, almost like what I said betrayal or so. People don't know who to trust anymore. Because some people are so deep in that situation then they come to a programme, for example, rehab, then they're still scared to talk. So sometimes it will be better just to hear from someone who went through the same thing. Then it will be easy for them to talk about it. (Chinelle, late twenties).

Uhm, somtyds het hulle nodig net om by iemand te hoor wat deur die selfde ding gegaan het, want vir almal is dit nie maklik nie. Sommige van hulle is nog baie bang om daaroor te praat, verstaan. As gevolg van, verstaan amper soos wat ek gese het betrayal of so. Mens weet nie vir wie om meer te vertrou nie. Want sommige mense is so erg in daai situasie dan kom hulle by 'n program soos byvoorbeeld rehad, dan is hulle nog steeds bang om te praat. So somtyd sal dit altyd beter wees om net by iemand te hoor wat deur die selfde ding gegaan het. Dan sal dit vir hulle maklik wees om daaroor te praat.

Extract 77

And especially there ... if I, if I can say so, like I know you guys do, do, or telling them, who you let into your space. Because not every friend is good. And you can help the friend, but there is people that can help them, but be specific with whom you let into your space. (Dana, 30 years old).

Extract 78

It's that, they should know man, that the gangs even if they say that they will protect you, but they can't really and that they won't be there for you. You understand? And they shouldn't look at that there will always be money or drugs, you know, that ... to prevent them from going to gangs they just they should, how can I say, just stay away man. (Amy, 29 years old).

APPENDIX L

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT EXAMPLE

Interviewer: So can you tell me about yourself and your family, and your childhood?

Amy: I am, uhm, I'm the middle child. I'm 29 years old and I have a younger sister and a older brother. Brother is about 40, 42 now and my sister is 20, 22. I grew up with my mom and my dad. Like they were still married and my daddy was very abusive. But my brother is my step-brother, it wasn't his dad. His father passed away when he was about three years old, then my mommy met my daddy when my brother was 7 or 8 years old. So I grew up in a house where...okay let's start with my brother. He was naughty since a young age and he's been out of the house since a young age, I remember. He's been in and out of jail since the age of 18 up until now, and my daddy; my mommy and my daddy they drink. Weekends. And what I can remember of my daddy is always when, you know when he's drunk he used to perform and he used to beat my mommy and he used to beat me too since I was a teenager, 11 or 12 years old. I didn't know why because...I couldn't understand why and there was no reason why. I know why he beated my mommy cause he wanted more wine money. And she used to explain but there's only food money and the travelling money for the week. And I remember me, me and brother like we begged my mommy to leave my daddy and she didn't want to cause she didn't believe in divorces, and things like that. Then when I was 14 years of age my father died...of a heart attack. He was 36 years of age, yes. And the day after his funeral my mommy got a stroke and a brain haemorrhage. So she was in hospital for a couple of months. From there me and my sister we moved. Like, we lived by my aunty, by my godmother then we moved to my grandma, my daddy's mommy. So It was, that was where I also started...feeling free because when my father was alive I wasn't allowed to, like allowed to have friends. So I never really had friends or so I didn't know what's it to have friends or be outside cause I was always in the house. And then that is where I experienced like the tik and heroine, and got involved with the wrong friends. For me that time it was just, I wanna experience all of that things, because for me it was like I didn't know what my life meant at the time cause I lost both of my parents at the same time, although my mom was alive but she was in hospital and she was unconscious. So ja, that was, and then I don't know but I just went skew from that time. Then I still went school, but grade 9 when I failed cause I.

Interviewer: And what was your relationship with your mom like?

Amy: it was good.

Interviewer: Okay, so what were your family relationships like when you first became involved with gangs?

Amy: My mommy....my mommy she was very hard on me. Like I said, like my brother used to be in and out of jail, she would always run for him. But, when I was 15 years of age that was the first time I went to go jail. My mommy she only came once to court and never again. You know, she was very hard on me and she told me it's out of tough love. She's gonna show me she's not gonna be there for me in order for me to stop. And that actually didn't work you know, for me it was almost like she didn't care because she runs for my brother all the years and he doesn't want to listen but for me she wouldn't come. And my mommy she tried getting me away, she went to go fetch me with the police already, you know there by the house where they used to go sell drugs, and with the boyfriend I was involved with. So she tried but I didn't want to listen either. At the end of the day I still went back. And she evens tried, she got me to live with a friend of hers, a work colleague in Hanover Park and I went to go live there for about a month, went to go detox myself out and then I moved back to my mommy but then I was clean for like a couple of months and I just went back, so I guess the relationship was, my mommy she tried helping me but when I didn't want to listen she cut herself off from me. She just left me and she always told me whatever happens it's gonna be your own fault. If I should die it's gonna be my own fault but she did her part.

Interviewer: [But you feel like she was tougher on you than she was on your brother?](#)

Amy: Ya, more tougher. And she always said cause she expected more from me cause I was the clever one at school and I disappointed her.

Interviewer: [Okay, so can you tell me about how you first became involved in gangs?](#)

Amy: Uhm, because I was a girl and I put myself out of the house at the age of sixteen, I never used to live at home, because of the drug I smoked and I used to do shoplifting so I used to be involved with the wrong people, neh. And I always wanted a boyfriend that can also protect me and because I was a girl that was always on the road and I know how guys can take advantage and so that's where it comes in. I used to take uh, a boy that is a gangster you know and you can't like be anything you have to be you know something that I know other people would be scared of and know other people won't take advantage of me now because of him. So that was actually how I got involved.

Interviewer: [So it was kind of for protection for yourself?](#)

Amy: Yah.

Interviewer: [So can you tell me anything about how gangs recruit girls? How they get girls to be a part of them?](#)

Amy: Uhm, ya, like they will tell the girls you know that they will be able to protect the girls and that they will look after the girls you know, and that there will always be money, and that there will always be drugs. Things like that. And most of all, like for protection, you know. But uhm, like as a girl when you get involved with them, the

gangs, you can't like, you just have to stick by this one gang, you understand. You can't jump from gang till gang cause then they will do horrible things to you.

Interviewer: So it's kind of like if you with that gang then you are their...you belong to them?

Amy: Yah.

Interviewer: And where do gangs recruit girls or, like where do they find girls?

Amy: Like on the street. And they'll mostly recruit girls that's on drugs.

Interviewer: Okay, why do they do that?

Amy: Because girls that is not on drugs you know they, they won't still live that lifestyle. There is some girls that's not on drugs but that grew up in a gang-related life that grew up, like their whole family is maybe gangsters; they will recruit that girls but like I said, but that is if girls are like that themselves. But they like to recruit like you know sturvy girls.

Interviewer: What does that mean?

Amy: It is, you mos get different kinds of girls. You get sturvy girls, you get rough girls.

Interviewer: Okay, so what's a sturvy girl?

Amy: You know, the English girls.

Interviewer: Okay...

Amy: Yah, the English girls. The sturvy girls. They come from a English home.

Interviewer: And why do they prefer those girls?

Amy: Because they can make them hard and also they can take advantage of them. You understand? Because they know that they can get that girl (clears throat), they can let that girl do anything they want to do. Cause the tough girls they are not so easy. You see, they, the guys can't get them to do anything that they want them to do so...

Interviewer: okay, so how were you recruited into a gang?

Amy: it was also like that because I was shoplifting and they said, you know like they said that if I should go to jail that they would look after me. But if I steal then I must also steal for them. You understand? And because I used to be on the drug of heroin they said that I won't suffer, like there will always be.

Interviewer: Do girls get initiated into gangs?

Amy: How do you mean initiated, like...

Interviewer: You know for guys, maybe they'll give a guy a job to do and say "Okay, now you're part of the gang."

Amy: Oh, yah, for girls they do ya. They, like some girls, they used to go stand on the road also, some girls they used to...to go to other gangs you know. Like, to be like a spy. So for other gangs like, they will send them out, like if there's a war especially ya. They use girls like that and then they use girls to keep their drugs and they will use girls to keep their guns or to carry the guns around, and things like that.

Interviewer: And that's how they initiate them?

Amy: Ya.

Interviewer: Can we talk about your initiation into a gang?

Amy: Uhm, no.

Interviewer: Okay. So what do girls do in gangs? Like, what's their main function?

Amy: Their main function is to make more money. So to be involved in the robberies and things you know, because they always want to have money; the best clothes, you know the name fashion clothes and you know, the latest things.

Interviewer: Okay, so you already spoke about your personal reasons for joining a gang. Can you maybe elaborate a bit more on that? You said for protection, safety...

Amy: Yah, it was basically just that and the gang where I was, I dunno, under the other gangs neh, I know like this gang is like the most respected. A lotta people is scared of this gang, yah. So for me it was just like, okay I knew I sit by this gang, because, because like, like in the outside world things that's in the fashion, you understand. And then you wanna show off, you understand, so, that is basically it. Also why I was with a gang because you know they get respected. There, okay there is wars between other gangs but you know a lot of people will be scared for this gang. So yah the gang that I was with I know a lot of people was scared of this gang, but we also concentrated always on making money, and selling drugs...making money. Things like that.

Interviewer: So the community respects the gang?

Amy: Yah.

Interviewer: Would you be comfortable saying what gang you were in?

Amy: Uhm, the 28's.

Interviewer: So what does a girl gain or benefit by joining a gang?

Amy: She gains nothing really. Like really, you actually gain nothing. But, like I can't, really I can't say but for me personally evens though like that time when I was smoking, then I knew I gained nothing, you understand? But there is some girls, like, for themselves they would feel like they gain I don't know whatever but...but for me personally...I gained nothing.

Interviewer: Okay...if you look back now?

Amy: Yah if I look back. But like I said, evens that time I knew man. I gain nothing. For me I knew that was just the way I lived my life at that time. I knew eventually I was gonna get out. And there is uhm, some gangs, they do allow you know, like if you wanna change your life then they leave you. Like, to change your life. But then there is also some girls, maybe, that is good at lying and manipulating, you know, skills...that they don't allow to leave. You understand? And then they will keep you there. Like there's some girls that they will keep just so. And like I said, it's all for money. You know, robberies and fraud yah. So...

Interviewer: Okay. Uhm, okay how do male gang members treat female gang members?

Amy: Uhm, like they treat another guy, so...with no respect. You understand? Like they will speak to the female like they want to. Yah.

Interviewer: How were you treated?

Amy: Okay, because with the guys that I used to sit with, they used to treat me like I'm their friend. They never used to disrespect me so much, okay, and because I only had like one boyfriend, you know? I didn't have more than one boyfriend. I only had one so they couldn't still, they, they didn't treat me with much disrespect, but they did also treat me with disrespect because I was on heroin. You understand? Especially if you're a girl and you're on heroin, and then they don't have much respect for you.

Interviewer: Okay, why not?

Amy: Because, like there, especially in Mitchell's Plein, cause heroin is like, for them it's like a other kind of drug. See, and a lot of, especially a lot of gangsters, they don't like heroin addicts. They don't like heroin because of what it do to the people. You see, because you end up being like a bergie and you end up scratching in bins. So yah. So they don't like heroin or heroin addicts.

Interviewer: So because of that they didn't really respect you?

Amy: Yah. But they also respected me , like, almost like they faked you know, like they respected me but that was because I used to shoplift and bring items to them. You know, if they could benefit...yah.

Interviewer: Are girls equal to boys or men in a gang?

Amy: No. They not equal.

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

Amy: Because like the guys, there's girls that always say they can do anything neh, they can do anything and everything a guy can do, you know. And there's a lot of girls that act like guys. So the guys they don't like that cause they say like, you're a girl, you're a

woman, you are supposed to act like a woman. You know, or you must, like, or they will tell you you should act like a bitch, like that. But they are not actually equal. You know, because like a man is still a man and a girl is still a girl.

Interviewer: So how can a girl gain respect in a gang?

Amy: Maybe if she murders, if she show them she can commit a cold-blooded murder.

Interviewer: So how did you manage to exit from the gang? To leave the gang?

Amy: I just, I, I disappeared. And then I went to rehab. You know, and then I was clean after and I went back, and they saw me, like you know I changed my life and that. And that is where they told me, like it's better I must rather stay so, off the unga, and then they said okay I can tik. Like really, you see, I can rather tik, I musn't unga. You understand, because I look better and...but then they still wanted you to you know. Like I said, they said you must leave the one drug alone. The drug that they hate, but you can do the other drug and they asked would you like to go back and start to shoplift again because you know I was being good again. But then I explained to them like, no. No, and yah.

Interviewer: And they were satisfied with that? They didn't try to force you or...

Amy: No they didn't try to force anything, yah. Cause like I said yah, when I was in a gang I wasn't actually like deeply involved, like in, of their things, and that. And especially of their crimes and that, I wasn't deeply involved cause like I know once you involved you involved for life. That's what I knew that time already.

Interviewer: Okay, so what recommendations do you have for how to prevent girls from getting caught up in gangs?

Amy: It's that, they should know man, that the gangs even if they say that they will protect you, but they can't really and that they won't be there for you. You understand? And they shouldn't look at that there will always be money or drugs, you know, that...To prevent them from going to gangs they just they should, how can I say, just stay away man. You know. Whatever life they are living, they must do things on their own and they must remember, look like, now the gangsters, all the gang members they in jail. And dying, you know? Like as the years now is going, there's more people than you know that time. So life is not the same anymore. So, how can I say it, they must just stay away. You know, not try to go there or to take a gang member as a boyfriend.

Interviewer: So in terms of like, let's say programmes that wanna work with girls, young girls, to prevent them from joining gangs. What do you think they could focus on? What areas do you think they could focus on with girls?

Amy: Like, explain more.

Interviewer: Let's say you have a programme, let's say it's a six month programme maybe. What do you think the programme should consist of? What do you think the girls would need out of a programme like that?

Amy: Oh, uhm, a programme like that, the girls would need neh, like guidance neh, and steps man. What they should do to keep themselves busy, you understand? And like how they should ignore, you know ignore certain facts and how they should choose their friends. And yes there is some guys, especially gangster guys neh, and there's some girls they like bad boys. But it's just gonna, you understand, they just gonna have to make themselves hard and you know look past that. That that guy can be how good looking, he can have how much money. But they must know he's a gangster. So they have to concentrate on other things like these other guys, there's also other guys that got money. There's other guys that is good-looking. And they should...it's just choices. You know, so the programme that I'll be involved in, I'll teach them about choices. There's a choice you gonna have to make. At that moment it won't seem clear to you. But the end of the day, always when you've gone through it neh, you're gonna say if I knew back then what I know today, I wouldn't have made the choice. So, don't tell yourself that after a year or after two years, you know. You must tell yourself that the minute you have to make that choice. You're gonna have to know. And what I, in the programme I will like, my group of girls I will make an example, I will take them to girls that's currently involved in gangs, I'll take them to that girls. You understand? And let them speak and see how that girls is living and what they are going through.

Interviewer: And, what age do you think would be a good time to start with them? Cause, at what age do girls join gangs?

Amy: Thirteen, twelve. Thirteen, twelve years of age, they start. Really.

Interviewers: And then are they dating gang members?

Amy: Yah, older gang members.

Interviewer: And what recommendations do you have for assisting women who want to leave gangs? What kind of help do they need?

Amy: I can't say. Like how do you mean what kind of help?

Interviewer: Like you said, so a lot of women join gangs for protection and for money. Uhm, so what can, let's say there's a programme that's trying to help girls get out of gangs. What would they need, like accommodation maybe? Or would they need help with jobs, training? Or finances?

Amy: Yes, Yah, they would need that that you mentioned. You know, accommodation. And like, like the people that was offering the programme to the girls you know, they must obviously trust that people you know. The people, they musn't just say so. The girls must be able to be confident that the help that they getting is not just for that six months. You understand? It's gonna go beyond the six months. You understand? And

yes, uhm, there must be a guarantee that there will be jobs available for them. Or there will be things that will keep them busy in the meantime. Yah. Not just, just for them to be certain that okay they won't be lost. You understand?

Interviewer: So that there will be support for them? Proper support?

Amy: Proper support yes, so that they won't be lost. Because the girls is gonna join the programme cause they wanna leave gangs, right? They gonna meet a new set of people. You gonna meet new people. And then they gonna build their confidence in the people. They're gonna trust the people. You know? So, so...that just, that should continue man. The people musn't disappoint them at the end of the day, because once you know...Once you wanna change your life and the people disappoint you then that will lead you back into the gangsterism. Because you gonna tell yourself, the gangsters will also be there. But look like you meet new people and the new people is not always there. Yah.

Interviewer: Okay, I've got two more questions. So, would you say that a gang can feel like a family for some women?

Amy: Yah.

Interviewer: And then you said you were part of the 28's right?

Amy: Mmmm.

Interviewer: So what do they do, or what are they known for? Or what's their main thing that they focus on?

Amy: Like also money; money-making. And...murdering. Really. Uhm, how can I say, like the gang, the 28 gangs, especially in jail, they always say that that is the last gang. All the other gangs, they have to come through that gang first. You know, something like that. Like the gang of the 26 and the gang of the 27, if they get, uhm, if, like if they get uh, a heist, if they get money or a job or whatever it is, it has to go through the gang of the 28 first. And the gang of the 28's have to approve it and if they feel they want to take that off from that gang then they can. You understand? And, yah they known for that. And they known for not having a heart. Like no really, they know for like really not having a heart.

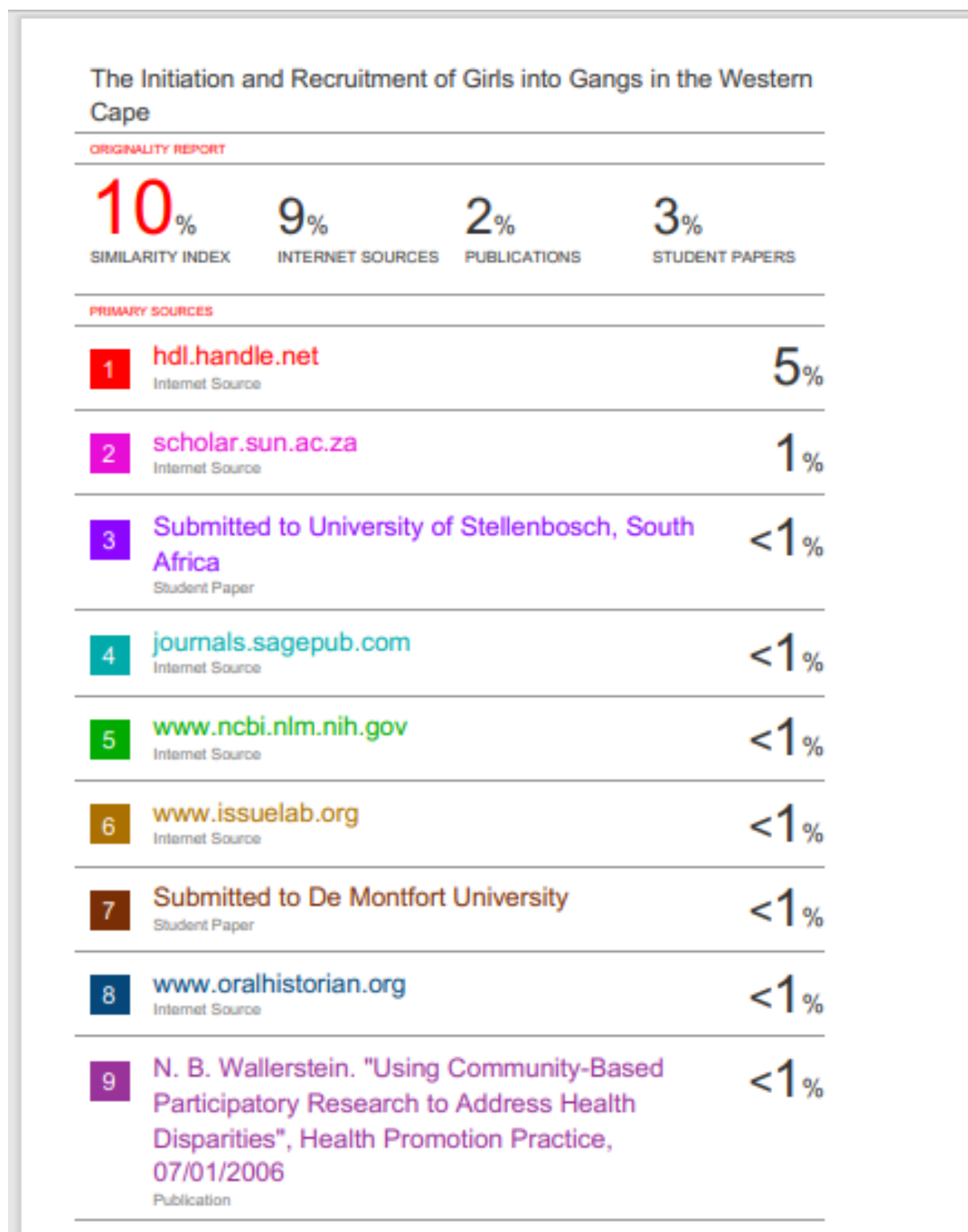
Interviewer: So would you say out of the three gangs they are at the top?

Amy: Yah.

Interviewer: Okay, thanks.

APPENDIX M

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