THE ASPIRATIONS AND LIFE GOALS OF
YOUTH OFFENDERS AT
LINDELANI PLACE OF SAFETY

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Philosophy (Community and Development)
at Stellenbosch University

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December 2008

DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: 27 November 2008

ABSTRACT

Rising crime rates among the youth in South Africa is a major problem. In the Western Cape this concern is particularly urgent and is compounded by issues relating to gangsterism and drugs. This study analyses why youth offenders, based at Lindelani become involved in crime and how they subsequently see their future. The first part of the study reviews theories of crime and deviance, such as the classical school of criminology, psychological, biological and sociological explanations of crime. The usefulness of the criminological developmentalist approach toward identifying risk factors statistically correlated to the perpetration of crime is discussed. Common factors associated with crime in the South African context are identified including family, peers, gang, drug, school, media and neighbourhood related factors as well as the absence of spirituality. Thereafter the literature associated with the development of aspirations, life goals and the concept of possible selves is explained. The relationship between possible selves, aspirations and life goals are discussed and details regarding how possible selves influence delinquency are presented. Following the theoretical analysis, the problem of crime in South Africa with reference to the youths interviewed is outlined. The strategies pursued by government to combat crime are discussed and the effective potential of these approaches are evaluated. An overview of government's policy toward youth in South Africa is given followed by specific reference to the issues surrounding youth and crime in the Western Cape, with explicit reference to the Cape Flats and gangs. This provides the background to the Lindelani case study. An overview of the operations and challenges facing Lindelani Place of Safety and the profile of offences typically committed by youth are given. Hereafter the findings are presented. The findings are divided into two sections; the first explores the life world of youth at Lindelani by discussing why youth in the Western Cape perpetrate crime and identifies factors that are associated with their involvement. The findings report on the influence of family and household structure, peers, neighbourhood environment, gangs, drugs, school, media, perceived aptitude of youth offenders, role models and spirituality. Section two presents the findings regarding the possible selves, life goals and aspirations of the youth. The general aspirations, possible selves, family aspirations, friendship, neighbourhood, spiritual, educational and occupational aspirations are explored. The study thereby presents the voices of these young offenders.

OPSOMMING

Die stygende omvang van misdaad onder die Suid-Afrikaanse jeug is kommerwekkend. Hierdie vraagstuk verlang veral dringend aandag in die Wes-Kaap, siende jeug-betrokkenheid met dwelms en bendes baie algemeen is. Hierdie studie ondersoek redes waarom jeugdiges, aangehou in Lindelani, betrokke raak by misdaad asook hul toekomsvisie. Die eerste deel van hierdie studie verskaf 'n oorsig van teorieë betreffende misdaad, onder meer die klassieke siening van kriminologie asook sielkundige, biologiese en sosiologiese redes vir misdaad. Die bruikbaarheid van die ontwikkelende kriminologiese benadering om risiko faktore te identifiseer wat statisties korreleer met die pleging van misdaad, word bespreek. Faktore wat algemeen geassosieer word met misdaad in die Suid-Afrikanse konteks is geidentifiseer en sluit onder ander in: die familie, groepsdruk, bendes, dwelms, skool, media, buurt verwante faktore, asook die afwesigheid van geestelike waardes. 'n Oorsig word vervolgens gegee van literatuur wat verband hou met die ontwikkeling van aspirasies, lewensdoelstellings asook die konsep rondom die moontlike alternatiewe idetitietsontwikkeling. Die verband tussen moontlike alternatiewe identiteite, aspirasies en lewensdoelwitte word bespreek ten einde besonderhede te bied hoedanig moontlike alternatiewe identeite oortredings kan beinvloed.

Na die teoretiese analise, word die teenswoordige probleem van jeug misdaad in Suid-Afrika geskets na aanleiding van die onderhoude gevoer in Lindelani. Die regering se strategieë om misdaad te beveg word bespreek en die effektiewiteit van hierdie benaderings word ge-evalueer. 'n Oorsig van die regeringsjeugbeleid in Suid-Afrika word gegee en word opgevolg deur spesifieke verwysings na die jeug en misdaad in die Wes Kaap met klem op die Kaapse Vlakte en bendebedrywighede. Dit het die agtergrond verskaf vir die Lindelani gevallestudie.

'n Oorsig word gegee van die aktiwiteite en uitdagings wat Lindelani Place of Safety in die gesig staar asook 'n profiel van die tipies oortredings wat deur die betrokke jeugdiges gepleeg word. Vervolgens word die bevindinge van die ondersoek aangebied. Die bevindinge word in twee dele verdeel; die eerste ondersoek die lewenswêreld van die jeug in Lindelani, en bespreek die redes waarom Wes-Kaap jeugdiges in misdaad verval. Faktore wat geassosieer kan word met misdaadbetrokkenheid word dan ook geïdentifiseer. Die bevindinge bespreek sekere van die invloede wat betrokke is, naamlik familie en gesin strukture, portuurgoepe, buurt-omgewings, bendes, dwelms, skool, die media, houdings van jeug oortreders, rol modelle en geestelike waardes. Die tweede deel bied aan die bevindinge omtrent alternatiewe

identieite, lewensdoelwitte en aspirasies van die jeug. Algemeen aspirasies, alternatiewe identieite, familie, vriendskappe, buurtes, geesteswaardes, opleidings- en werksaspirasies word ondersoek. Hierdie studie verteenwoordig dus die lewensbeskouing van hierdie groep jeugmisdadigers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Crime among the youth in South Africa has become a national concern, as rising numbers of youth from an increasingly younger age are being drawn into the world of crime, drugs and gangsterism. This realization has prompted politicians, religious leaders and a wide range of civil society organisations to become active participants in the so-called moral regeneration initiative (Rauch, 2005: 9). As early as June 1997, former President Nelson Mandela met with key religious leaders to talk about the importance of morality in nation-building and social transformation. Despite the emphasis placed upon this issue by these high profile leaders, crime and moral anaesthesia continue to plague the nation.

Of particular concern is the increase in crime among youth in the Western Cape. The Review of SA Innovations in Diversion and Reintegration of Youth at Risk reports that the Western Cape has the highest number of youths involved in crime, and that this number is increasing (Kassiem, 2005: 5). The South African National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) found that as early as 1999, 36 700 youth (18 or under) were arrested in the Western Cape (Samara, 2005: 211). The figure was already at 20 000 by mid 2002 with estimations that it would exceed 40 000 by the end of that year. This has prompted a number of scholars to investigate the conditions fuelling this disturbing trend.

Two factors contributing to the increase in crime amongst the youth in the Western Cape have been the expansion of gangs and drug-abuse in the province; something the South African Police Service (SAPS) has not been able to bring under control (Kinnes, 2000; Standing, 2003 & Haefele, 2000). Haefele (2003: 114) claims that the state's inadequate response to the drug crisis is due to under funding and an inability to enforce the legislative controls that have been set in place. At the other extreme is the vigilante movement called People Against Gangsterism and Drugs in the Cape Flats (PAGAD). Though the origins of this movement were seemingly innocuous, concerned parents and community members involved in anti-drug, anti-crime groups and neighbourhood watches, their activities soon progressed into ever increasing acts of violence that ultimately contributed to and increased the prevalence of

crime in this area (Nina, 2000 and Monaghan, 2004). Furthermore the efforts of PAGAD served to organize and spread the influence of gangs in the Western Cape (Standing, 2005). Their actions served to produce the exact opposite effect than was intended, namely to destroy the gangs and spread of drugs among the youth.

As the various forms of intervention by the police and community fail, so the rate of crime among the youth increases. As I write this, SA has been shocked by the news of a young (white) boy murdering a fellow pupil in Krugersdorp by striking him to death with a sword (Du Plessis and Roestoff, 2008: 1). The student reportedly asked onlookers if they want to "see something cool" before he struck the fatal blow. This is not an isolated event. A book has been published that recounts several gruesome murder tales like that of a 16 year old girl who bludgeoned her mother to death with a frying pan while her boyfriend strangled her with a coat hanger (Gladwell, 2008: 12). This same article relates how another teenager with her boyfriend stabbed her mother to death more than twenty times leaving her body to decompose in the house while going on with "life as normal". Another story chronicles the murder of a family by two fifteen year old boys; the only survivor is a heartbroken 16 year old girl who has to go on living with the loss of her entire family. The media is inundated with reports of these brutal crimes- a 16 year old suspect allegedly stabs fellow youth, three suspects between 16 and 18 held for a murder in Franschoek, three boys between 16 and 18 raped and killed a young women, 15 year old youth arrested for pre-school principal's murder linked to another killing, teenager (15) gets 27 years for murder, minor convicted of attempted murder is released and murders four residents (Engelbrecht, 2008: 3; Three suspects held for Franschoek murder, 2008: 1; Mashaba, 2008: 7; Otto, 2008: 2; Oellerman, 2007: 3 & A failure of the justice system lead to a terrible crime, 2008: 18). These are just a few examples reported this past year related to youth and murder.

This is just the tip of the iceberg, but these examples demonstrate that the youth are involved in crimes that are extremely serious and not minor crimes that are associated with juvenile delinquents. The devastating effects of these crimes are not limited to their victims. Becoming involved in such criminal activities destroys the lives of these young people, undermining their future opportunities and ability to achieve positive life goals. They become trapped in a downward spiral of ever increasing involvement with crime, drop out or are expelled from school, get criminal records which in turn decreases their opportunity for meaningful employment and development of their potential. They therefore become increasingly involved with crime, gangsterism and drug-abuse and sink deeper into the underworld of crime.

But how are youths drawn into this world of crime? Some say it is a rational choice (Joubert, 2003: 81 and Cote, 2002: xvii). However, Sigmund Freud, around the turn of the twentieth century challenged this perspective, maintaining that rational decision-making processes were not the sole factor that accounted for an individual's involvement with crime. Sometimes behaviour is induced by various subconscious tendencies. Here Emile Durkheim stressed that certain environmental conditions may sway various individuals to perpetrate crime. He proposed that rapid social change causes a break down in social controls within a community, resulting in anomie (or a state of lawlessness) which in turn leads to an increase in delinquency, suicide and involvement in criminal activity (Durkheim, 1893). Picking up on this in the 1920's, members of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago proposed that rapid changes occurred within specific areas of a city that caused social institutions to become ineffective. Thus, according to this theory, when the conventional institutions like the family, school and church no longer exercise influence over the behaviour of individuals, this is termed social disorganization.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, Bandura (1977:vii) considered how individuals gain knowledge of criminal behaviour in the first place. He proposed that behaviour is learnt through "the reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental determinants". He built his theory upon the influence of the individual's immediate surroundings, but emphasized that criminal behaviour is learnt. Behaviour is observed, and if accompanied by the necessary motivation and opportunity it is emulated. This emphasizes the importance of good role models in the community. Bandura's social learning theory therefore predicts that significant and intimate others play a central role in the onset of criminal behaviour among individuals.

Taking a different angle, Hirschi (1969) noted that it is not necessarily only the presence of, but also the absence of factors that induce individuals into criminal activity. Social bonding theory suggests that when an individual's bond to society, namely with parents, adults, schoolteachers and peers are broken or absent, this leaves an individual vulnerable to the allures of crime. Other popular theories include (sub)-cultural theories that argue that "certain groups or subcultures in (our) society approve of crime or hold values that are conducive to crime" (Cote, 2002: 66). The lower class may be considered a sub-culture unified by a collective sense of anger and frustration. According to Robert Merton (1938 & 1957) these emotions are the primary triggers that cause many individuals to commit crime (Muncie,

1999: 105). He argued that where the lower class were prevented from fulfilling their commonly held goals of economic success and high status through legitimate means, this in turn leads to frustration and anger, and prompts individuals to fulfill their aspirations through illegitimate means.

Given the diversity of factors that may influence any particular individual to perpetrate crime, many of the more recent theories have attempted to draw these various theories or strands together. This has lead to the emergence of the developmental criminological approach, which sought to statistically correlate the presence of various factors in the lives of individuals to the probability that they may become involved in crime (Farrington, 2002: 659). These factors have been divided into domains such as the individual, family, peers, school, neighbourhood and situational factors.

The following factors, identified by Maree (2003: 76) with regard to crime in South Africa, have offered valuable direction to this study. These include family factors such as an economically stressed family, incidence of physical and sexual abuse, poor parental monitoring and support, loveless parents, a lack of supervision, parents using alcohol and/or drugs, negative relationship with parents and harsh and erratic parenting. Added to this are community influences such as poverty, neighbourhoods with a high crime rate, unemployment, socio-economic conditions with reference to a lack of decision making power between sexes and races, illiteracy rate, violence (including political violence), a lack of community involvement, the gap between rich and poor, the conflict of norms, HIV and Aids, the fact that freedoms and rights are taught, but not responsibility, child prostitution, substance abuse and the lack of spirituality. School factors are also identified with regard to lack of education, poor academic performance, failing, truancy, problems at school, poor schooling, inconsistent discipline, inadequate or no school facilities, lack of role models, poor learner/educator relationship and lack of parental involvement. Finally there are also extra-family relationship factors linked with the association with deviant peers, peer pressure and gang membership.

Crime among youth in the Western Cape region is particularly high. In examining this issue in the Cape Flats, various authors have attempted to determine what factors are contributing to this high incidence of crime in the Western Cape (Haefele, 2003; Standing, 2003; Kinnes, 2000; Ward, 2007 and Njomo, 2006). Numerous reasons were cited. Haefele (2003: 18) examined the impact the breakdown in family structure was having on the youth, Standing

(2003:2) the high levels of drug abuse, school absenteeism, inter-personal violence typically with knives, guns and (Standing, 2005; Kinnes 2000 and Ward, 2007) the impact of gangs. Njomo (2006:6) examined how poor parental control, lack of support at home, media and peer pressure was influencing crime levels among the youth. These emerged as important factors influencing the prevalence of crime in the Cape Flats. Based on this literature it was apparent that the factors that induce youth to perpetrate crime has been investigated with regard to the Cape Flats, but information regarding the broader Western Cape region was somewhat harder to come by. This study seeks to contribute to a greater understanding of why youths from other parts of the Western Cape perpetrate crime.

With so many youths involved in serious crime, what future is there for them? Many simply continue with their criminal activities once released from detention. In the battle to reform behaviour, positive psychology proposes the shift of focus from negative factors inherent to the environment of an individual, to positive factors that will help individuals overcome these various negative factors and engage in worthwhile pursuits. One such positive resource is the ability of an individual to imagine their future termed 'possible selves'. "Possible selves represent individual's ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" (Markus and Nurius, 1987: 157).

Oyserman and Markus (1990(a): 146-151) describe a number of links between possible selves and delinquency and therefore understanding what the possible selves of the youth are; will further increase our understanding of youth's relationship with crime. Though not many studies have focused on this topic, a number of aspirations have been positively associated with decreasing criminal involvement notably the family (Schoon, 2006: 120) and spirituality (Johnson et. al. 2001 and Kerley et. al. 2005). Others like education and occupation have been loosely associated (Krau, 1997: x).

It intuitively makes sense that those factors that encourage youth into a life of crime may be instrumental in dissuading youth from participating in crime. If the life of a youth offender can be represented by a road map and their current life course is a highway on course with a lifelong involvement with crime, then their aspirations and life goals represent potential exit signs leading to new paths away from a life of crime. I was struck by the absence in available literature discussing how the youth offenders see their future. It is imperative that the voices of these young offenders are heard. This study therefore investigates what the life goals and aspirations of the youth offenders at Lindelani Place of Safety are.

1.2 LINDELANI CASE STUDY

My unit of analysis was the youth spending time at Lindelani Place of Safety, a home of safety for youth offenders near Stellenbosch. The Department of Social Development, in terms of the Criminal Procedure Act have created numerous places of safety for youth offenders awaiting trial. In the Western Cape there are six for boys: namely Bonnytoun House in Wynberg, Bosasa in Clanwilliam, Horizon Youth Centre in Eerste River, Outenikwa House in George, Vredelus House in Elsies River and Lindelani Place of Safety, Stellenbosch. Since 1996 Lindelani has assumed responsibility for youth awaiting trial and houses up to sixty youths at a time. These facilities are exclusively for boys and no girls are being held at the facility[1]. The boys were all between the ages of twelve and sixteen and had been referred by probation officers to Lindelani. Youth housed at this facility between the period August – December 2007 give an indication of the typical offences youth are charged with. During this period over a quarter had been charged with severe crimes, such as sodomy, attempted murder, robbery, rape, assault with intended bodily harm, armed robbery or were repeat offenders. The majority were charged with housebreaking, theft and robbery. The rest were charged with possession of dagga, narcotics or malicious damage to property.

This facility was chosen as the site of enquiry for the following reasons. The youths spending time at this facility are representative of individuals coming from various parts of the Western Cape, not just the Cape Flats and were charged with a variety of offences. These offences are a fair reflection of the types of crime being perpetrated by youth offenders in the region. I was drawn into this study by my interest into why these young boys serving at Lindelani were being sucked into a life of crime. What factors induced them into a life of crime at such a young age? Furthermore I wondered if the life goals and aspirations of the youth would be useful in directing the youth away from a life of crime. I wondered how these boys envisage their futures, what aspirations and life goals they embrace, and whether they seek change in their lives or not? Do youth seek redemption, rehabilitation or any other form of moral and personal transformation? These were some of the issues that prompted this enquiry.

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[1] There is one Place of Safety for girls awaiting trial in the Western Cape namely Vredelus in Elsies River.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

My research question is two-fold: Firstly, what factors have contributed to these young offenders becoming involved in crime and secondly, what are the aspirations and life goals of the youth? By addressing these issues I also hoped to reflect on what potential areas for development there are that may steer youth away from crime.

1.3.1 Research methodology

The research methodology was primarily qualitative although some of the information recorded was quantified to indicate the extent of the impact of certain factors on the youth. Many of the children were illiterate and would have been incapable of providing a written response. A qualitative approach was adopted in order to promote interaction with the youth and as each of the cases differed, the richness of the contributions of each individual would have been lost had responses only been recorded on the basis of a standard survey questionnaire.

The study made use of semi-structured interviews that allowed for some comparison and quantification of data, but allowed open-ended discussion around specific themes. These themes were identified from the literature review as relevant either to the factors that contribute to crime or to the life aspirations and "possible selves" of the youth. The first set of questions related to the factors that are commonly associated with crime. These related to (1) family structure, (2) relations to peers, (3) perceived sense of crime, (4) influence of gangs, (5) importance of sport, (6) involvement with drugs, (7) involvement with and sentiments toward school, (8) the media, (9) perceived aptitude, (10) preferred role models and also (11) their sense of spirituality. This does not represent a comprehensive range of factors, but I felt these would adequately give a picture of the life world of the youth and include major factors that contribute toward crime in the Western Cape.

The second set of questions related to the aspirations and life goals of the youth at Lindelani. The initial questions sought to identify the general aspirations and life goals such as (1) their most important aspirations (2) the feared for, hoped for and expected possible selves of individuals (3) family aspirations (6) aspirations for future friendships (7) ideal neighbourhood (8) spiritual aspirations (9) education (10) employment and (11) other aspirations regarding personal development and moral transformation. The study therefore attempted to give the youth an opportunity to make 'their voices heard' regarding their desires for a better life.

1.3.2 Interviews

All the youth were interviewed twice within a space of a month. The initial interview was supplemented with a second interview to ask any questions that were missed and to investigate new lines of inquiry that may have arisen. These interviews typically lasted between ten and thirty minutes, depending on the responsiveness of the youth. Interviews were conducted on a one on one basis (privately) in an office on the grounds of Lindelani. Where applicable the youth were accompanied by a peer in order to translate. The interviews were digitally recorded to facilitate discussion, to ensure accuracy of responses and to keep the youth from being distracted. Ethical clearance was obtained from the authorities at Lindelani Place of Safety, the Department of Social Development as well as from the youths themselves. Though the youth are too young to give official permission, the latter was obtained to show that youth participated voluntarily.

1.3.3 Sample

There is a rapid turn-over rate of youth at Lindelani. The interviews were conducted during January-February 2008. All 50 boys present at Lindelani Place of Safety during this period were interviewed. Fourteen of the boys were black and the other 36 were coloured. There were two twelve year olds, eight thirteen year olds, 15 fourteen year olds, 14 fifteen year olds and 11 sixteen year olds. As previously mentioned there were no girls in the sample as this is a facility for boys only.

1.4 LIMITATIONS

The major limitation of this study is related to its scope as it focuses on two very large issues – why youth become involved in crime and how they see their future. In order to properly investigate the life world and aspirations of youth a longitudinal study over time would produce more accurate findings. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that due to the nature of the sample, namely that it is located in the Western Cape and focuses on black and coloured youth, the results can possibly not be generalised to other areas, other race groups or to female offenders. Hence, in terms of comparative value, this study could benefit from further research should it be replicated at other similar centres, and among a demographically more representative group.

Furthermore, it appeared throughout the course of the interviews that many of the responses of the youth seemed "trained" rather than spontaneous. Answers in many cases appeared tailored to satisfy the interests of a social worker, rather than "me" as an independent

researcher. Another issue concerns the language divide. My Afrikaans is good and therefore the majority of interviews are reliable, but a number of youth were Xhosa speaking. A useful addition would have been the incorporation of a professional translator or co-researcher who is fluent in Xhosa to facilitate discussions and responses of Xhosa speaking youth. The use of peers to translate may have affected how the responses were interpreted.

1.5 VALUE

Though this does not represent an absolute authoritative representation of youth offenders across the Western Cape, it does give an insight into common themes that may explain why youth living in the Western Cape, and not just the Cape Flats, become involved in crime and how they see their futures. This may be important in terms of how we choose to prevent youth from becoming involved in crime and rehabilitate them. Their own voices are reflected in this study, which are often not heard, but merely represented in the form of statistics.

The most effective way to target crime is by working with the youth. This population sample represents the potential future of crime in any nation. Without exploring the life world of the youth there can be no clear indication of what processes and factors are responsible for youth perpetrating crime. Furthermore, for rehabilitation and development strategies to be effective, they need to take cognisance of the needs and desires of the youth. This study has attempted to unravel how these young youth offenders became involved in crime, how they perceive their life world, and how they see their future. These findings give a clear indication that youth have specific aspirations and life goals in common. These may serve to inform stakeholders involved in the rehabilitation of youth offenders of the needs and desires of the youth. Focusing upon these issues and helping youth fulfil their aspirations and life goals in turn may direct the youth away from a life of crime and toward a life that contributes to the good of their environment and community.

1.6 CHAPTER PROFILE

The first introductory chapter underlines the extent and urgency of the problem experienced in the Western Cape of youth committing crime. It outlines a number of theories that explain why youth perpetrate crime. Literature regarding possible selves and the value of aspirations and life goals in decreasing the prevalence of crime is outlined. The research problem is defined; the aims of the study are discussed; the research methodology is presented, as well as the value and limitations of the study.

Chapter two reviews theories of crime and deviance, such as the classical school of criminology, psychological, biological and sociological explanations of crime. The usefulness of the criminological developmentalist approach toward identifying risk factors statistically correlated to the perpetration of crime is discussed. Common factors associated with crime in the South African context are identified including family, peers, gang, drug, school, media and neighbourhood related factors as well as the absence of spirituality.

Chapter three investigates literature associated with the development of aspirations, life goals and the concept of possible selves. The relationship between possible selves, aspirations and life goals are discussed and explanations regarding how possible selves influence delinquency are presented. The factors that influence the development of possible selves and life goals are explored as well as aspirations that decrease criminal involvement.

Chapter four outlines the issue of crime in South Africa beginning with a presentation of available statistics describing the extent of the problem. The strategies pursued by government to combat crime are discussed detailing the progression from the National Crime Prevention Strategy to the National Crime Combating Strategy and the effective potential of these approaches are evaluated. An overview of government's policy toward youth in South Africa is given followed by specific reference to the issues surrounding youth and crime in the Western Cape, with explicit reference to the Cape Flats and gangs.

Chapter five presents the findings of this study. It begins with an overview of the operations and challenges facing Lindelani Place of Safety and gives a profile of offences typically committed by youth at the institution. The findings are divided into two sections; the first explores the life world of youth at Lindelani by discussing the factors that are associated with their involvement with crime. Section two presents the findings regarding the possible selves, life goals and aspirations of the youth.

Chapter six places the findings in context. This chapter brings all the threads of the thesis together into a single discussion. The final conclusions offers an ultimate overview and suggestions are made regarding necessary interventions and future avenues of research.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORIES OF CRIME AND DEVIANCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

There are numerous theories on crime and deviance that have sought to explain why individuals pursue criminal behaviour. These theories have varied from biological and physiological explanations to sociological explanations. Many have attempted to identify the risk factors that increase the likelihood of the perpetration of criminal acts.

The focus of this section is on these theories linked to the development of criminal behaviour, with particular emphasis on criminal-sociological theories of crime that are applicable to the youth. In the first part, various theories relating to crime and criminal behaviour are explored followed by a discussion of the risk factor prevention paradigm which explores the environmental factors that may lead to youth becoming involved in crime.

2.2 THEORIES OF CRIME AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

The origin of the classical school of criminology can be traced back to the writings of Ceasaria Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham (Joubert, 2003: 81 and Cote, 2002: xvii). Central to the classical school thought process is that people are able to make rational decisions regarding their involvement in criminal activity. These theories initially led to the development of a uniform penal code. However, these theories did not offer significant insight into why an individual would decide to violate the law. They merely indicated a level of freedom to decide to commit deviant and criminal acts.

The first recorded modern theory to explain why particular individuals engage in criminal pursuits arose in the late nineteenth century. In contrast to the classical school and its emphasis upon rational choice, the idea came to the fore that particular traits and biological predispositions induce criminal behaviour and are thus inherent to particular individuals. These biological explanations of crime suggested that criminals were born with particular tendencies that lead to the perpetration of crime. Certain physical characteristics indicated which individuals were prone to criminal involvement and psychological explanations pointed to experiences in the past that lead to criminal involvement (Curran and Renzetti, 1994: 22).

This led to the development of various psychological theories of crime at the turn of the twentieth century.

At the forefront of this movement was Sigmund Freud's work on the importance of latent childhood memories in shaping behaviour. This opened the way for diverse explanations of crime that contended that "crime is caused, in part, by unconscious tensions that develop in a family environment at different stages of development" (Cote, 2002: 37). Other psychological theories explored the link between crime and low IQ.

More contemporary support for this theory has come from Michael Hindelang and Travis Hirschi who in 1977 concluded that there is a correlation between low intelligence, crime and delinquency, irrespective of social class and race (Curran and Renzetti, 1994: 94-95). The correlation between low intelligence as a cause of crime has been hotly contested by various authors and researchers (Curran and Renzetti, 1994: 95). Others again claim that it is personality that predisposes one to crime.

Barkan (1997: 144-145) reports that many studies have linked temperament problems in infancy and childhood with later criminal involvement in adulthood. However, subsequent studies have failed to consistently show that temperament problems in infancy and childhood lead to perpetration of crime in adulthood (Joubert, 2003: 87). Associated with theories of early development influences are those who focus on the moral development of individuals such as Jean Piaget (1932). He stressed the development of reasoning processes and hypothesized that this development occurs in a set and predetermined fashion. He argued that between the ages of six and ten, the child develops a strong respect for rules. Thereafter, he/she, discovers that rules can be challenged and changed. The ability to moralize is then predicated on the level of cognitive development achieved by the individual.

Along similar lines, Kohlberg (1981) developed a theory of moral development and argued that offenders are individuals that have not progressed through the various stages of moral development (Joubert, 2003: 84). "Whereas biological/physiological theorists and psychological/psychiatric theorists largely see crime as caused by individual (internal) pathologies, sociological theorists view criminals and delinquents as essentially normal people whose behaviour is influenced in some way by the environment in which they live" (Curran and Renzetti, 1994: 135). Sociological theories of crime focus attention upon the conditions of the environment surrounding individuals that commonly perpetrate crime. Many

of these theories are positivist in origin. Social structure theories, for example, propose that the lower class is more susceptible to criminal involvement. Contributing factors include poverty, unemployment and poor education (Joubert, 2003: 88). Then there are scholars who link criminal activity to rapid social change.

Durkheim proposed that rapid social change causes a break down in social controls within a community, which in turn leads to increased criminal activity. This idea was taken up in the 1920's by members of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago as the basis for their theories on delinquency (Cote, 2002: 64). Within a period of rapid urbanization and industrialization these theorists (notably Burgess & Park, 1921) postulated that the growing population increased the level of competition for land. Crime would be averted as long as social institutions could maintain law and order. Rapid changes occurred within specific areas of a city that cause these social institutions to become ineffective. This is termed social disorganization (Cote, 2002: 64). This led Shaw and McKay (1942) to conclude that social disorganization was responsible for high levels of crime.

> "In their 1942 study of juvenile delinquency, Shaw and McKay found that the combined effects of an absence of resources, a highly mobile population, and a cultural uncertainty produced inadequate and unstable social institutions in these areas, which suggested that these individuals were not being socially integrated into the larger social institutions or with each other. This lack of integration lead to an inability on the part of social control agents to control the behaviour of these individuals… (this) led them to conclude that the characteristics of these areas themselves… were what regulated the delinquency in those areas" (Quoted in Cote, 2002: 65).

This definition of a socially disorganized area was adopted and reformed by Joubert (2003: 88) to fit into a common South African context. Joubert defines a disorganized area as one in which institutions of social control, notably the family and school, have broken down. She goes on to indicate that this is typically the case in South Africa. Indicators such as high poverty and high school drop out rates and also high rates of truancy, mental disorders, and adult criminality coupled with housing problems and large squatter settlements are indicative of the applicability of this theory in contemporary South Africa (2003: 88). To some extent this links up to the strain theories of Durkheim, and his theory on the Division of labour and anomie. He asserted that crime is an inevitable consequence of societies that are based on values of competitive individualism and where there is a high division of labour. This often leads to dissatisfaction, anger and frustration and led Robert Merton to develop the notion of lower class frustration (Muncie, 1999: 105). He argued that the lower class were prevented from fulfilling the commonly held goals of economic success and high status through legitimate means and this in turn leads to frustration and anger.

The inability to achieve various aspirations, for example, to acquire a good education, a well paying job and the accompanying status through legitimate means, may cause individuals to pursue criminal activities. With reference to youth offenders (which is the focus of this study) Joubert (2003: 89-90) outlines some of these responses as follows:

- *Innovation*. This occurs when an individual has accepted the goals of society, but is unable to attain these goals via legally sanctioned means. Many young people interpret the goals of society as attaining material wealth and prosperity. The inability to realize these goals may cause young people to steal or sell drugs. Terblanche (1999: 33) reports that amongst young people involved with crime in South Africa, a large percentage are involved in theft.

- *Retreatism*. This involves youth that for whatever purpose have not internalized any clear goals or values of society. These youths do not aspire to any common values held by their parents. Instead youths express a desire to avoid reality and often become involved with drugs. Joubert (2003: 89-90) includes psychotics and chronic drunkards amongst this group.

- *Rebellion*. This includes youth that substitute the existing goals and means with their own goals and means. Youth create alternative goals and means that are opposed to the goals and means sanctioned by society.

The imposition of strain on individuals as a result of the position they occupy within the social structure is a valuable insight, but criticism has been leveled at the universal applicability of these theories. Many young people who experience strain give up criminal pursuits as adults (Curran and Renzetti, 1994: 152). These theories are unable to account for this tendency. This has led to the development of theories that relate to the culture of deviance.

(Sub)-cultural theories argue that "certain groups or subcultures in (our) society approve of crime or hold values that are conducive to crime" (Cote, 2002: 66). Cohen (1955) proposed that "status frustration" lead youths within certain areas to develop a delinquent subculture (quoted in Curran and Renzetti, 1994: 153-155). Sub-cultures typically consist of peer groups that hold similar values and can exert tremendous pressure on an individual to commit various criminal acts. Youths thus become socialized into a culture of deviance which forms part of their identity. Thus, their behaviour is learnt through "the reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental determinants" (Bandura, 1977: vii).

Learning criminal behaviour occurs within intimate groups or with significant others (Joubert, 2003: 91 & Bandura, 1977). Bandura postulated that as people observe others performing various activities they learn and model behaviour. This is then reproduced if they have the motivation to replicate this behaviour. Other criminology theorists have built upon this theory noting that the identification with, for example, gangs, and criminal activity often occurs when an individual's bonds to society, namely with parents, adults, school teachers and peers are broken. Here Hirschi (1969) outlines four integral and interconnected components of these bonds: attachment, commitment, involvement and belief (Akers, 1999: 86-87). *Attachment* refers to the affectionate ties coupled with the level to which significant others are admired and can be identified with; *commitment* refers to the level of commitment an individual holds toward conventional institutions, or aspects of society; *involvement* refers to the amount of time invested in specific (conventional) activities; and *belief* refers to the acceptance of the laws and regulations as just and morally valid. Akers offers a review of the principle measures of Hirschi's social bonding theory in more practical terms (1999: 88):

> "An adolescents' attachment to parents is measured by close parental supervision and discipline, good communication and relationships of the adolescent with parents, and his or her affectional identification with parents (e.g., he or she would like to be the same kind of person as the parent). Academic achievement in school (as indicated by grades, test scores, and self perception of scholastic ability) is taken as indicative of commitment, involvement, and belief, as well as attachment. Attachment to the school is directly measured by positive attitudes toward school, a concern for teacher's opinions of oneself, and an acceptance of the school's authority. Attachment to peers is measured by affectional identification with and respect for the opinions of best friends… Commitment to education is measured by educational aspirations… and commitment is also measured by occupational aspirations… Belief is measured by the reference to the law and the criminal justice system".

This quote clearly demonstrates the importance of a variety of attachments to various members and institutions within the environment of an individual. It also emphasizes the importance of various aspirations.

2.3 RISK FACTOR PREVENTION PARADIGM

Besides these theories that try to explain an individual's *propensity* to commit criminal acts, there are also those that focus on the principal risk factors that increase the *incidence* of crime. These theories fall under the developmental criminological approach and have been labeled the risk factor prevention paradigm. This approach has gained significant attention as it links theories that try to explain crime with policy makers and individuals charged with establishing programmes that reduce offending (Farrington, 2000: 2).

> "The basic idea of this approach is very simple: identify the key risk factors for offending and implement prevention methods designed to counteract them. There is often a related attempt to identify key factors against offending, and to implement prevention methods designed to enhance them".

This approach is based on previously mentioned theories, but seeks to identify the causes of criminal involvement. Maree (2003: 52) expounds the theme of risk factors:

> "Risk factors represent variables within the individual or his environment that are associated with criminal involvement and are associated with criminal activity. The link may be causal or merely statistical, but the presence of the factor is associated with a heightened risk of antisocial behaviour".

Risk factors can be classified into two categories (Camilleri, 2007: 17). Chronic stressors that are common to the entire community and discrete stressors applicable to particular families. Examples of the former include poverty, unemployment, limited community resources, weak social network supports, substandard housing and high crime rates. Examples of the latter include a death of a family member, divorce or relocation. The more stressors present in a child's life, the more at risk the child is toward negative influences (Camilleri, 2007: 18). For the purposes of this study, it is necessary to subdivide risk factors into domains that can become the areas within which the aspirations and life goals for individuals may be formulated and investigated.

Developmental criminology identifies various domains and these include the individual, family, peers, school, neighbourhood and situational factors (Farrington, 2002: 659). Risk factors are subdivided into the following categories: individual, family, school, peers, community and media related risk factors. Individual risk factors are inherent to particular individuals. They are characteristics that an individual is born with (or without) and remain prevalent well into adulthood. Prominent factors include restlessness, impulsivity, poor attention and the absence of empathy (Farrington, 2002: 666). Testing the feasibility of individual risk factors is problematic. Even when it is confirmed that various characteristics are prevalent amongst youth that pursue criminal activities, it is very difficult to prove that these characteristics are inherent to an individual and not fostered in the environment in which this individual grows up. To some extent this theory is excessively deterministic as it argues that a criminal is a criminal because he is born a criminal and will therefore remain a criminal.

Family risk factors are commonly associated with parenting roles and relations. Parents are predominantly responsible for where and how a child grows up. They are usually the first caregivers that convey a sense of what society expects of an individual in terms of personal development. Tragically, they are also often responsible for the abuse and neglect of their own children. Many times the abuse is unintended such as when the parents undergo divorce. The breakdown in the relationship between parents can have a potentially negative impact on

a child. For example, the prevalence of a break down in the family features in the lives of many violent young men (Gabarino, 1999: 44-45).

Gabarino (1999: 46) describes the reasons for the profound influence of the family upon the development of young individuals. For the majority of their youth, individuals are dependent upon their parents. Immediately after birth it is for comfort, nurturing and feeding. Where the child lives, goes to school, even to an extent the friends they make are dependent upon the parents' decisions. At home, children are especially vulnerable to the psychological and physical abuses of their parents. Abuse and estrangement can increase the chances of youth offending (*Ibid*). To a large extent, whether an individual feels accepted or rejected, depends upon their relationship with their parents. Parents therefore have the potential to significantly influence the development of delinquent tendencies within their own children.

According to Loeber and Dishion certain risk factors pertaining to male offenders (quoted in Farrington, 2002: 669) have been linked to "poor parental child management techniques, childhood antisocial behaviour, offending by parents and siblings and separation from parent". Family factors that may predict offending include "poor parental supervision, parental rejection of children, large family size, low parental involvement with children, parental conflict and antisocial parents" Similarly, the conclusions of Maree (2003: 76) for the family related risk factors for youth in South Africa include an economically stressed family, incidence of physical and sexual abuse, poor parental monitoring and support, loveless parents, a lack of supervision, parents using alcohol and/or drugs, negative relationship with parents, harsh and erratic parenting. The conditions within the family and the methods employed in raising a child are therefore of paramount importance with regard to the development of the child and future deviant behaviour.

 Besides the family relations, delinquent peer groups and gang relations have commonly been cited as predicting delinquency and youth offending. Whether these friendships lead toward offending or merely form around offending is not clear. Farrington (2002) reviews a number of theorists that found that delinquent friends predicted later antisocial behaviour (Farrington, 2005: 183). Sharpe and Litzelfelner (2004: 81) in their study on re-offending found that when youth were involved with gang related activity, this was a statistically significant predictor of re-offence.

In a study on why some adolescents engage in friendship with delinquent peers, Warr (2005) found that adolescents with strong emotional bonds to their parents, were less likely to hold delinquent friendships. Adolescents from neighbourhoods with a high crime rate, and that show a low attachment to school, were more likely to be involved with delinquent peers (Warr, 2005). The counter argument, however, is that low attachment to parents and school could be initiated by the adolescents as a result of their delinquent behaviour rather than causing it.

In a study on gang membership Gordon et. al. (2004: 78) found that boys entering a gang showed a higher level of delinquency before entering than do boys that do not join gangs. The same study reports that delinquency levels subsequently increase and decrease with the exit from the gang. Here Maclure and Sotelo (2004: 426), on youth gangs in Nicaragua, found that gang membership filled the need for interdependence and self assurance. These authors argue that faced with little opportunity for socio-economic improvement, the boys respond with aggression and joined gang networks.

Besides the relationship with family and peers, international research has shown that there exist schools with higher delinquency rates. These schools are typically the less affluent schools. Reasons attributed to the high rates of delinquency within these schools include "high levels of distrust between teachers and students, low commitment to school by students, and unclear and inconstantly enforced rules" (Farrington, 2002: 677). Low academic performance is also reported as indicative of delinquent behaviour (West, 2005). The reasons for poor performance at school and delinquency problems may include intelligence and attention problems. Whether these factors are attributed to the schools, or the students attracted to these schools is not clear. However, these factors may be mutually reinforcing. What is apparent from available literature is that low educational attainment does tend to increase the likelihood of offending the law. It would be valuable if similar studies were conducted in South Africa.

Many young men that are consistently exposed to community crime and violence become desensitized to this (Gabarino et al., 1991: 103). Often local law enforcement officials in these areas are unable to protect these young men and this leads to a feeling of hopelessness. Some young men therefore join the ranks of gangs for safety. These dangers are often pronounced in socially isolated areas where individuals have little access to surrounding social networks and infrastructure due to, for example, financial constraints and class bias. Maree (2003: 54-68)

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identifies various criminogenic risk factors that occur within such communities. These include economic deprivation, community disorganization and the availability of intoxicating substances, all factors that increase the prevalence of crime. He also identifies pro-criminal attitudes and beliefs as endemic to various communities. This then often leads to young individuals growing up within a climate, as well as culture of violence.

Looking back at the theories discussed and relating these to South Africa, it is clear that there are many factors within society that support, or rather facilitate criminal activity among our youth. Maree (2003: 76) succinctly summarizes these as follows (See table 2.1):

Table 2.1: Factors associated with crime in South Africa

Broad area	Specific risk factors
Family or home factors	An economically stressed family, incidence of physical and sexual abuse, poor parental monitoring and support, loveless parents, a lack of supervision, parents using alcohol and/or drugs, negative relationship with parents, harsh and erratic parenting.
Community factors	Poverty, neighbourhoods with a high crime rate, unemployment, socio-economic conditions with reference to a lack of decision making power between sexes and races, illiteracy rate, violence (including political violence), a lack of community involvement, the gap between rich and poor, the conflict of norms, HIV and Aids, the fact that freedoms and rights are taught, but not responsibility, child prostitution, substance abuse and the lack of spirituality.
School factors	Lack of education, poor academic performance, failing, truancy, problems at school, poor schooling, inconsistent discipline, inadequate or no school facilities, lack of role models, poor learner/educator relationship and lack of parental involvement.
Extra-family relationship factors	Association with deviant peers, peer pressure and gang membership.
Individual factors	Early aggressive behaviour.

An aspect, which has not emerged clearly from the preceding discussion, is the impact of the media. This risk factor has not commonly been included by criminologists as a potential risk factor. As I write this thesis, South African society is shocked by an incident where a youth murdered a fellow pupil with a sword. In explaining this act Serrao and Foss (2008: 3) write:

"It seems the quiet boy needed elements of the mass media to make him feel like he belonged to something. He adopted things that he saw as strong: the ninja, Satanism and music groups".

Various advocates claim that the media increases the prevalence of violence among the youth. According to Potter (1999: 25) a great deal of research now confirms that the exposure to violent portrayals increases the probability of violence. The most common finding has been termed 'learning to behave aggressively'. Potter cites various studies as evidence that when a child identifies with a character the relevant character will begin to influence their behaviour (*Ibid*: 31). This is especially true for children that are unable or unwilling to identify with their parents or older members of the community. In their response to the effect of media violence on general violence Wright (2003: 28) reports that decades of research has produced more than a thousand studies that confirm the link between media violence and aggression. Similarly, in a study on the effects of music and aggressive lyrics on hostility Anderson et. al. (2003: 960) found a link between the effects of music with violent words on hostile thoughts and aggressive feelings. These and other studies conclude that "violence increases the likelihood of aggressive and violent behaviour in both immediate and long term contexts" (*Ibid*, 2003: 81).

Another concern is that the media and specifically television and movies have become a primary source of information regarding sex for the youth at large. Of particular concern is the representation of women in popular music videos. "The almost always scantily clad women are rarely portrayed as anything other than sexual objects to be lusted after or aggressed against" (Brown & Witherspoon, 2001: 83). Youth react according to expected societal outcomes that are associated with developmental milestones (Schoon, 2006: 12). In the absence of clear familial and communitarian values to indicate appropriate responses to new life stages, youth are forced to seek council from the media. In the case of this current generation this commonly includes MTV and its over sexed, often violent portrayals of adulthood.

The effects of this portrayal of sexuality can be seen in the results of a study undertaken on young men in a rural area of the Western Cape.

> "They presented their sexual urges and behaviour as physiologically driven and did not make reference to individual cognition, perception or sensory stimulation. Issues of attraction, interest and desire for intimacy were not explained outside the realm of physiology. The influence of emotional factors in either themselves or their partners was not referred to. It appears that not only did the adolescent males not take responsibility for the initiation of sexual activity, but they also presented their subsequent participation in sexual intercourse as being driven by physiological and social forces. It is clear that such a construction limits their ability to take responsibility for their own and their partners' reproductive health" (Lesch & Bremridge, 2006: 139).

Clearly in contemporary society the media exercises a significant influence in shaping and directing the aspirations of youth. It is important to remember that risk factors do not exert their effect in isolation, but that there exist cumulative effects as risk factors may reinforce one another. This increases the chances of negative outcomes for particular individuals.

The effect of religion as a moral compass for youth has become an issue of consideration in contemporary South Africa as a result of a perceived moral crisis. "Politicians, religious leaders and social commentators have all spoken about the breakdown in morality" (Rauch, 2005: 9). The effect of spirituality and Christianity on recidivism had been widely investigated. The success of various religious programmes in prison is controversial, but there is consistent empirical evidence that religious instruction is a means to change the behaviour of and even rehabilitate offenders. In their meta-analysis of the effects of religion on crime, Baier and Wright (2001: 17) found: "solid evidence of a moderately strong deterrent effect of religion". Other studies have offered similar support for religious instruction as effectively reducing antisocial and promoting pro social behaviour (Johnson et. al. 2001 and Kerley et. al. 2005). In a study on children's involvement with violence and gansterism in the Cape Town metropole area, Ward found that children saw religion as an important factor that helped them cope (Ward, 2007: 21, 52). Gabarino (1999: 155) confirms this assumption: "Spirituality and love can fill in the holes of a boy's life and help him develop both a strong positive sense of self and healthy limits". Despite the potential significance of its effect, research regarding the influence of spirituality on criminal involvement in South Africa is lacking.

2.4 CONCLUSION

It is clear that no single theory may account for all the reasons why people and youths in particular become involved in crime. Individuals differ and the reasons for the perpetration of crimes surely also differ. Particular problems within one geographical area may be prominent and absent in another. Certain individuals may satisfy the general logic of a particular theory, while other individuals may not. What these theories do is help us explain crime from different perspectives and assist us in formulating an understanding of why various individuals perpetrate crime.

For example, the classical school emphasizes that individuals must be accountable for their actions and that punishments should be set in place where transgressions merit this. Individual positivism introduces the potential biological, physiological and psychological processes that may encourage criminal behaviour. Sociological positivism emphasizes the importance of

social and situational forces in promoting the onset of criminal behaviour. Finally risk factors are specific factors that statistically correlate with the perpetration of crime. Therefore it is clearly necessary to have a broad conception of the causes of crime as neither excessively deterministic, nor the pure result of clear uninfluenced rational decision making processes.

These theories have guided my thoughts in assessing why we have such a high rate of youth offenders in South Africa. In terms of my empirical research, it is particularly the work of sociological positivism and risk factors that has guided my assessment of how the youth offenders at Lindelani have come to be where they are today. Sociological positivism offers keen insight into the effects that various relationships and situational factors may have in encouraging the onset of criminal tendencies. Risk factors have also been useful in this regard and have been incorporated into developing a framework for the potential positive possible selves, aspirations and life goals of youth offenders at Lindelani.

CHAPTER THREE

ASPIRATIONS, LIFE GOALS AND POSSIBLE SELVES

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the various factors that may lead to people getting involved in criminal activities were outlined. The focus of this chapter is upon life goals and possible selves. Life goals can be placed in opposition to the factors contributing toward the perpetration of crime and deviant acts. Whereas theories related to crime and deviance focus predominantly upon negative factors, life goals represent positive future aspirations. Future aspirations may motivate the transformation of negative factors into positive factors. The individual with a dysfunctional family environment may conceptualize a positive family environment of their own in the future. Thus future aspirations may cause individuals to transcend the negative factors in their environment and direct the amendment of their behaviour in order to realize various life goals.

'Positive psychology' directed my interest in the aspirations and life goals of youth offenders. A shift in focus from negative factors to positive potential resources is made by the positive psychology movement. The focus is on both negative and positive factors that affect emotions and behaviour. These include hope, optimism and resilience as resources that help overcome the various sources of emotional disturbance and behavioural difficulties created by the negative factors discussed in the previous chapter (Greene, 2007: 12).

In this chapter I discuss goal setting and the theory of possible selves and its relation to life goals and aspirations. I will then discuss the factors that effect the development of life goals and how this may decrease criminal involvement. Thus, this chapter is focused on the links between aspirations and possible selves and how these might affect behaviour. These concepts increase our understanding of youth offending and are important concepts for subsequent investigations and discussions.

3.2 GOAL SETTING AND POSSIBLE SELF THEORY

How are goals developed and realized? Oettingen and Gollwitzer (2001: 331) identify two determinants of goal setting, namely assigned goals and personal goals. Assigned goals are defined by others. Personal goals are set by the individual. To be effective assigned goals need to be internalized as a personal goal by the individual. For an assigned goal to be incorporated as a personal goal, the goal must be viewed as desirable and feasible, and go through a process where the goal is redefined and integrated with other existing goals. What this implies, is that these goals should be reflective of true desires, and thereby accorded relative importance.

Personal goals are typically short term goals. According to Bandura (1997), the accomplishment of short-term goals leads toward the subsequent employment of more challenging goals. This is due to a heightened sense of efficacy. Positive long-term goals are preferred as these should result in legally sanctioned behaviour. Youth pursue goals that will be harmed by delinquent behaviour and therefore need to coordinate their behaviour.

Research has concluded that goals that become realized are typically feasible and realistic (Oettingen and Gollwitzer, 2001: 333). Important determinants regarding the feasibility of a goal include whether there is the necessary urgency, means, opportunities and time to accomplish the goal. For goals to be realistic individuals need to understand their environment, their own potential and the sacrifices that need to be made. For example, for youth offenders to successfully pursue goals they need an awareness of their own capabilities and the consequences of their behaviour. This may necessitate that young offenders are guided along a step by step process to determine more immediate and clearly defined goals that may lead to the pursuit of greater, longer term goals.

Once youth offenders become aware of longer term goals that they wish to accomplish, a greater sense of who they may become in the future can be developed. This has been termed "possible selves". Possible selves is a construct developed by Markus and Nurius (1987) regarding the perceived potential of an individual. According to them: "Possible selves represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" (Markus and Nurius, 1987: 157).

In fact, possible selves are visible in everyday activities. Dieting, going to gym, going to church, quitting smoking or drinking, gambling and jogging are all the result of conceptions

of some end state (Markus and Nurius, 1987: 159-160). This conception of an end state represents a perceived goal or aspiration and behaviour is directed accordingly. In this sense possible selves serve to motivate behaviour and help individuals control their actions.

The concept of possible selves developed around notions regarding the constitution of "the self". The self refers to the part of an individual around which a sense of meaning is constructed, which is of central importance to the human sciences as it relates to an understanding of what it means to be human. A self-concept according to Oyserman answers the questions ""Who am I?", "Where do I belong?", and "Where do I fit in?"" (2001: 499). These questions seem as old as antiquity and are central to the task of meaning creation. The self "unifies the stream of thoughts and experiences the person has about herself around a single pole, or point of reference" (Yardley and Hones, 1987: 253).

Markus and Nurius (1987: 158) maintain that possible selves link the concept of the self and motivation.

> "The repertoire of possible selves contained within an individual's self system are the cognitive manifestations of enduring goals, aspirations, motives, fears, and threats. Possible selves provide specific cognitive form, organization, direction, and self-relevant meaning to these dynamics. As such they provide an essential link between the self-concept (or identity) and motivation".

Based on this, one can see that the self is constituted of two parts. On one hand the self is the product of specific factors in the environment. On the other, the self is an active force that can transcend factors in the environment and redirect behaviour in order to achieve various goals (Oysermen, 2001: 501). This potential represents possible selves.

As the self develops thoughts and idea structures in interaction with others, and the general environment, these thoughts and ideas can become focused on what is possible. These conceptions include desired and undesired end states. Envisioning future goals can empower an individual to overcome negative factors in his/her environment. These future goals may include longer term goals and aspirations, and eventually the realization of an alternate possible self. In this sense the individual gains increased autonomy and may thus be conceived of as a dynamic entity influencing and shaping his environment. The individual exercises influence over his environment based upon conceptions of what he/she believes they (and others) can possibly become. It is therefore around the single point of the self that individuals can unify their aspirations and life goals and conceptualize greater, more inclusive possible selves.

3.2.1 Possible selves and youth offending

The importance of future aspirations in the lives of youth offenders is emphasized by Segal; Pelo and Rampa (2001: 113-114):

> "A young man who sees no future for himself, and whose self-worth is intimately connected to the power his violence brings him, is unlikely to trade his place in a gang for a menial job on the margins of the informal economy. The most effective people to target are probably the very young; boys at great risk of being seduced into the world of the amagents (a gang), but who are not quite there yet. They need to be shown that there is a life of value to be lead among the rank and file of the law-abiding. They need to be shown their own humanity... They should be encouraged to see that they have choices, that people with similar lives to theirs have chosen a path free of crime. They must be shown values that challenge a world where morality is debased, where material possessions are feted and where lives are cheap. They must be given the skills to realize these values. Most especially they should be encouraged to dream and believe in their future so that they can build their self-esteem and harness their abilities to the ends that they choose".

From this quote it is apparent that youth offenders often lack aspirations and ambitions that are conducive to their personal growth and that are constructive to their social environments. Duncan and Newberry (2001) offer an explanation of the consequences of not having possible selves. In their study these authors found that delinquent youth exhibited fewer possible selves and greater levels of boredom and impulsivity. Without the ability to focus on future goals these youth were more likely to give in to impulsive behaviour and to experience boredom. (2001: 538). However, not all youth offenders drift into crime due to a lack of life aspirations and life goals. Some individuals consciously may choose to aspire to realize delinquent aspirations, especially where delinquent identities are defined as positive identities. Such youth may draw inspiration from a delinquent culture that develops the impression of being daring, adventurous or tough (Oyserman and Markus, 1990(a): 150). Youth that feel unable to establish a positive sense of themselves according to the mores and norms of conventional society are at high risk to seek affirmation from other sources. In this sense the interaction between youth and their parents, teachers and peers is very important.

Desired and undesired possible selves both influence behaviour. Positive goals may include a desired job and negative goals may include an undesired consequence like a prison sentence (Oyserman and Markus 1990(a): 144). In a study comparing more delinquent youth with less delinquent youth, desired possible selves were found to be more effective in regulating behaviour than undesired possible selves (*Ibid*: 148).

> "...the least delinquent youths in their sample claimed the greatest number of positive possible selves as likely (e.g., "work toward goals," "happy," "have friends," "attractive," "manage my own decisions," "interesting," "loved," "helpful to others"). In contrast, delinquent youths expected that a variety of extremely negative possible selves—"junkie," "depressed," "alone," "flunking out of school"— would characterize them in the future".

Balance in possible selves occurs when youth have undesired possible selves that are balanced with relevant hoped for selves (Oyserman and Saltz, 1993: 69). Youth that have only positive possible selves and lack feared possible selves are also at risk of drifting into criminal activities. The apparent lack of regard for the consequences of actions causes youth to be vulnerable to the onset of the pursuit of criminal activities.

Oyserman and Markus (1990(a)): 146-151) succinctly summarize how possible selves influence delinquency:

> 1. Adolescents with few positive expected selves that they regard as likely to be realized will show a relatively greater tendency to "drift" into delinquency than those with more positive expected selves.
> 2. Adolescents with positive expected selves, but *without feared selves* in the same domains (e.g., those who lack balance in their possible selves), may also drift into delinquent activities.
> 3. Adolescents who fail to attain positive possible selves in conventional domains may develop negative expected selves. As a consequence they may turn to delinquent activity as an alternative means of positive self-definition".

Despite the implications that various possible selves may have on delinquency, it appears as if there is little research that has investigated the repercussions for youth offenders. This accounts for my over reliance upon few authors (notably Oyserman). Even little is known regarding the effect of life goals upon an individual's life course, let alone youth offending (Nurmi & Salmela-Aro, 2002: 473). Nurmi and Salmela-Aro conclude that research has uncovered that young people's goals often concern family, education, work, friends, and their own personality, however, the effect that these goals have on subsequent life paths has not been investigated. Shears (2004) draws attention to this lack of study with regard to presenting the perspective of young people

> Despite continual criticisms of young people, society largely fails to engage with them in order to seek explanations for their attitudes and behaviour. Simultaneously, researchers continue to focus on young people as objects of study rather than as meaningful subjects who could provide authentic voices of today's youth" (Shears, 2004: 127).

If life goals and possible selves are important predictors of behaviour and criminal pursuits, then the factors that facilitate or hinder their development must be considered. There exist various factors that influence the development of aspirations. Prominently featured in literature are the family, peers and community.

3.2.2 Factors influencing the development of possible selves and life goals

In a study on the causes of resilience Schoon (2006: 143) found that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds were less ambitious than their more privileged peers. This result was obtained after controlling for levels of skills and ability. In her discussion Schoon (2006: 145) emphasizes the role that the family, the community and school can play in reducing the impact of socio-economic adversity with its relevant negatively impacting factors. The family may help foster a positive future perspective with relevant strategies. Positive social ties created within the community when supplemented with affirmation from significant members of the community and a positive school experience may also help the individual maintain a positive perspective toward life and result in greater perseverance of life goals.

Greene et. al. (2007: 242) confirms the influence the family can exert. In their work on risk and resilience, these authors accord significant priority to the influence of the family on the development of aspirations. Friend et. al. (2006), reported on the necessary reconstruction of identity that young African Americans from low socio-economic neighbourhoods experienced subsequent to losing their fathers. These individuals felt deprived of various life lessons, including what it means to be a man, how to engage in relationships with women and about sex (Friend et. al., 2006: 432). It was then that significant others within the community served as an inspiration for possible selves. These young men then looked up to men and women within their own community that they respected, and learnt by observing these role models.

Communities do not always serve as a positive source for potential possible selves. Discrepancies manifest themselves pronouncedly in various geographic communities. Some of these communities have markedly low social economic status and access to inferior infrastructure and social capital. In this regard, Elliot (In Bajema et. al., 2002: 63) identified isolation as a factor inhibiting the aspirations and subsequent development of possible selves among rural youth. The isolation of youth in various rural areas includes limited access to educational resources and limited exposure. This limited exposure to anything outside of the community creates a sense of fear in the youth towards anything from unfamiliar surroundings.

Peer pressure also exerts significant influence. Collier (In Bajema et. al., 2002: 62), notes that peer groups sometimes limit the development of aspirations in youths, especially in isolated peer groups. Peer groups form an important part in the life of a youth and exert substantial influence over their life choices. Picou et. al. (1976: 12) found that peer influences had an

overall larger impact on aspirations than any significant other. This discrepancy was significant in rural areas.

From these studies one can conclude that positive possible selves occur when healthy ties are formed with members of the community (Oyserman and Markus 1990(a): 144-145). Healthy ties are formed when the youth feel loved, affirmed, respected and empowered. Collectively the influence of parents, siblings, peers, other family members, members of the community, place of work together with the media form the primary source of possible selves (1990(a): 145). This confirms the findings of social bonding theory and other theories of crime and deviance.

3.2.3 Aspirations that decrease criminal involvement

Which aspirations may successfully divert youth from criminal involvement? The overwhelming majority of research focuses upon educational and vocational aspirations as factors that promote positive life experience. "Work careers create socially needed utilities and in this very activity permit the gratification of individual life aspirations, bestowing meaning upon people's lives" (Krau, 1997: x). Krau found the vocational career to be a primary instrument for achieving a sense of meaning in life. Alternatively it has also been established that a lack of work (unemployment) has proven to be dangerous to the self image and psychological integrity of individuals (Krau, 1997: 13). Integral to the development of occupational pursuits is the role of education and ideally vocation should match an individual's interest and education. This in turn maximizes an individual's innate talents, capacity and skill. However, obsessive focus upon career aspirations may lead to disappointment.

There is evidence to suggest that educational and occupational aspirations have increased world wide, yet crime is also increasing (Schoon, 2006: 124). One potential explanation for this tendency is the parallel development of consumerist and materialistic aspirations. The effects thereof have become prominent in the USA. Since the seventies, youth have focused more on material pursuits as a life goal and less (in comparison) on family and public interest pursuits and personal development (Easterlin & Crimmins, 1991: 529). This implies the need for a well rounded development of life goals and aspirations to include family, community and personal (spiritual) pursuits.

Another case can be made for the necessary inclusion of other life goals. Primary focus upon a career project may lead to increased frustration. Jay MacLeod relates the story of two groups of youth growing up in a low-income neighbourhood in Clarendon Heights in the USA (MacLeod, 1987). The Brothers (one of these groups) aspired to vocational success and worked hard at school to attain it. Their hard work however did not transpire into vocational success. The author maintains that this is due to the failure of an achievement ideology purported by schools and teachers. Teachers imply that 'anything is possible' if you work hard enough, however, this is not necessarily true as work opportunities during this period were very limited. The Brothers subsequently experienced a sense of loss with regard to their life goal projects.

The optimal condition would therefore be the well rounded development of various life goals and possible selves. Unfortunately, adolescents in general lack a vision of an end goal incorporating family, community, leisure, vocation, education and spirituality (Buhler, 1968: 41). Buhler attributes this lack of vision to a preoccupation with preliminary goals such as tests at school or a temporary job. Very few youths focus on the long term commitments of married life or permanent field of occupation and even fewer ask what life is all about. The focus of my study is specifically to engage youth in these largely ignored, yet crucial aspects of the human life project. Oyserman and Markus (1990(b): 114) have suggested that:

> "adolescents must be able to construct and have command over a set of positive possible selves that are personally satisfying and absorbing and that can be used as motivational resources in making the transition to adulthood. Those adolescents who are not successful in constructing and maintaining such positive possible selves in the conventional domains of the family, friends, or school are likely to seek alternative ways to define the self. Delinquency can become such an alternative route to positive self definition…"

In a study on different possible selves among older adults, Waid and Frazier (2003) conclude that individuals need to develop aspirations that incorporate issues of personal development and maturation, an idea of family and future parenting as well as social roles within a given community need to be addressed in the development of a fulfilling life goal project.

Evidence of the influence of future family based aspirations in modifying behaviour has been reported by various authors. There have been reports of offenders that express the desire to 'turn their lives around' for the sake of their families (Gabarino, 1999). Strauss and Goldberg (1999) found that men either matured or regressed after fatherhood according to their approximation of ideal fatherhood. The closer a father came to realizing his individually constructed possible self, the closer and more qualitative the relationship that was initiated with his child (Gabarino, 1999: 245). Rutter concludes that the major transitions represented

within the family may be the necessary trigger signifying a turning point for an individual (Schoon, 2006: 120). This includes getting married or having children. Research indicates that the aspiration of family related goals while at school has been correlated with lower unemployment after school (Nurmi & Salmela-Aro, 2002: 411). In a different study these same researchers found that future family goals were predictive of high subjective well-being (1997: 471).

The effects of personal aspirations may be inferred by the effects of spirituality on crime and deviance. Spirituality need not be religion specific. Frankl (1962: 120-122) speaks of the supra-meaning. In this sense spirituality may encompass any definitive definition of ultimate meaning. Social work has also begun to encourage the inclusion of spirituality as part of broader treatment programmes. "Spirituality differs from faith and religion and refers to how a person seeks to transcend the self in order to discover meaning, belonging, and relatedness to the infinite" (Greene and Conrad, 2002: 47). Spiritual aspirations involve the acknowledgement of responsibility toward our temporal existence. This involvement with spirituality and the infinite is believed to inspire an individual toward responsibility and encourage high moral aspirations. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the effect of spirituality on mitigating crime is well known.

3.4 CONCLUSION

Looking back on this chapter one can conclude that having certain life goals and an innate awareness of possible selves, may positively influence behaviour. Positive possible selves develop as the self constructs various life goals that cause an individual to transcend factors within the environment that encourage delinquent behaviour. Influencing this are the family, peers and community which are principal agents effecting the development of youth aspirations. Numerous studies indicate that a well-rounded focus of aspirations has been shown to be the most effective predictor of decreasing criminal involvement. However, it appears from the literature reviewed that research in this field is still limited. The overwhelming majority of research has focused on education and occupation. However, aspirations regarding occupation, personal development and maturation (spiritual), an idea of family and future parenting as well as social roles within a given community (peer and significant other relations) have been suggested as necessary to decrease criminal pursuits. The above mentioned process is believed to help individuals live goal driven and meaningful lives.

I found these theories very insightful. Every human being is consistently involved in a project of meaning construction. From the moment of birth an infant is flooded with millions of sights and sounds that he or she systematically begins to translate into meaning-filled concepts and perceptions. These concepts and perceptions are thereafter incorporated into an understanding of life that can facilitate a deeper sense of meaning. Aspirations and life goals offer youth the opportunity to construct their own personal sense of meaning. One that is coherent and positively influences their own development and the development of those around them. Encouraging goal directed behaviour may reform their behaviour. The youth require consistent and specific target driven behaviour to redirect their course as it could serve as the stimulus and guide that causes these youth to reform their behaviour.

CHAPTER FOUR

CRIME IN CONTEXT

4. 1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the construction of life goals and possible selves as potential resources that help individuals overcome negative factors in their environment. Before investigating the aspirations of youth offenders at Lindelani, an understanding of their specific life world is necessary. This includes their immediate communities and also the national legislation that aims to improve the conditions within these communities. As background this chapter will investigate the conditions of crime inherent within the Western Cape and how government seeks to address the issues of crime and youth development. If youth are to transcend negative factors impacting their development, a discussion regarding their specific surroundings is warranted. How prevalent is crime in the areas where the youth grow up? What are the main obstacles youth have to overcome to lead productive lives?

In South Africa, and in the Western Cape, there exists concern over the rising crime rate among the youth (Kassiem, 2005: 5 and Maughan, 2008: 1). Consequently, in this chapter crime statistics are presented with particular focus on the perpetration of crime by the youth. Government's strategy to combat crime and their policy toward youth offenders is discussed as well as statistics regarding the perpetration of crime by youth in the Western Cape, with additional discussion of conditions on the Cape Flats.

4.2 CRIME IN SOUTH AFRICA

Using police statistics to describe the level of crime in South Africa is problematic as incidences of crime may be severely underreported. A Victims Survey in 2003 suggests that only half the crimes perpetrated are reported to the police (Burton et. al., 2004). Compounding this underreporting are allegations regarding police inefficiency (Samara, 2003: 285).

Despite these concerns South African Police Service statistics are generally used to give an indication of the extent of crime. The most recent statistics confirm the high incidence of crime. Despite a decrease in all forms of contact crime (overall decrease of 6,4 percent) the figures remain troubling. Contact crimes include murder, attempted murder, rape, assault with

the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm, common assault, indecent assault, aggravated robbery and other robbery. One third of South Africa's recorded 'serious' crimes are contact crimes which have dire consequences for victims (South African Police Service, 2008(a): 2). There were 18 487 murders reported, 36 190 instances of rape and 210 104 assaults with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm (South African Police Service (a), 2008: 6). Another unsettling finding of the 2007-2008 crime statistics are the significant rise in non-residential (47,4 percent) and residential robberies (13,5 percent), as well as car (4,4 percent) and truck (39,6 percent) hijacking. There were 237 853 reported burglaries at residential places in South Africa for this period.

A related concern regards the increasing prevalence of youth involvement with crime. Reviewing results from the National Youth Victimization Study, Burton (2006: 6) reports that one in every ten youths have committed criminal acts. This equates to almost one million youths. Twice as many youths have contemplated crime and nearly half of all youths know persons that have been incarcerated for crimes. The future looks bleak. Crimes committed against youth have been linked to future perpetration of crime by these youths (Burton, 2006: 1). Therefore abuses serve to exacerbate causes of crime. According to various press reports between the periods of 2004 and 2005, 85 808 crimes were perpetrated against youths in South Africa (Burton, 2006: 1). This included more than 27 000 sexual assaults and over 1 000 murders. A staggering 42 percent of individuals between the ages of 12-22 were victims of crime. Following the review of the National Youth Victimization Study it is clear that the effects of these crimes on the lives of youth are severe.

> "Fear of crime permeates every aspect of young South Africans' lives. One in five do not feel safe in the community in which they live, and just under one in ten feels scared of criminals when they are at home. This, together with those who feel scared at school, reflects the general conditions of fear that many young people in the country live under" (Burton, 2006: 5).

Civil society has demanded a response from the government and this has led the state to pursue various strategies to counter this serious threat to the safety and security of citizens. Results have, however, not been forthcoming and the civil and business sectors have become increasingly impatient to see a turn around.

4.2.1 Strategies to combat crime

The ANC, after considering the complex causes of crime, initially sought to implement a social developmentalist approach to combating crime (Samara, 2003: 286). This was set out in the document *Ready to Govern* and in the 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy. The philosophy was to identify and eradicate the root causes of crime. This strategy failed to bring down crime levels and following public criticism, government initiated a 'get tough on crime' approach.

This saw the introduction of the National Crime Combating Strategy (NCCS) in April 2000. Parallels can be drawn between this approach and earlier Apartheid techniques. Part of the mandate of the NCCS is to identify 'Hot spots'. These hot spots account for 50 percent of the countries crime statistics (Leggett, 2005: 597). The hot spots are then targeted by military like operations where police and military units enter areas and undertake large scale search and seize tactics. Although the explicit aim of government's 'fight' against crime is to target the social causes of crime and supplement this approach with a get tough on crime approach, government appears to prioritize the latter approach (Leggett, 2005: 593). This latter approach seems to have increased the isolation experienced by township residents and spreads financial and social resources unevenly (*Ibid*). Samara (2003: 303) has commented on the ineffectiveness of this approach:

> "When the police leave, things go back to normal, leaving many residents to wonder what the point was in the first place. In the process, little actual policing happens that makes the streets safer. These police operations can be even more counterproductive. In one seaside community near Cape Town, a law enforcement crackdown on abalone poaching, which gangs are heavily involved with, increased community cooperation with gangs because the community depended upon poaching for income. These problems expose how closely the crime problem and the economic problems are linked in South Africa, and belie attempts to approach crime and security separately from socio-economic development issues… Traditional responses from the police … have not been successful. Their actions failed to take into account the opinions of people in affected communities. Theorists have argued that a tougher approach to gangs is needed, including putting more police on the streets. This argument is short-sighted, and fails to consider socio-economic causes of gangsterism and the level of organisation of gangs in the region".

Implications of this are that the root social causes of crime need to be addressed and also that the crime hot spots need more effective and consistent policing presence. Acknowledgement is made of the need for social crime prevention in the NCCS. This makes up part of the second phase of the intervention and amounts to crime reduction through development which targets the causes of crime. However, there is little indication of how and where this is occurring.

Government's primary response to crime is to prosecute and incarcerate offenders of the law. A tenth of the government's annual expenditure is spent on policing, prosecuting and jailing

this nation's offenders (Schonteich, 2002). This is the same amount allocated to health related services. Youth (under 18) are preferably not sent to prison and when exceptions occur they are locked up separately. Despite this, Dissel (1999: 17) reports that over a thousand youth were serving time in South African prisons in 1999. With regard to youth and criminal justice, the State has made use of diversion as an alternative to conventional correctional facilities. In recent times, these diversion services include family therapy processes and victim-offender mediation (Wood, 2003). These diversion initiatives are essential as research shows that recidivism (from prison) rates are currently very high. Samara (2003: 291) claims a recidivism rate in South African prisons of 60-70 percent in 1997 down to 55-59 percent in 2001.

4.2.2 Youth in South Africa

According to the 1996 census 44 percent of the South African population is under the age of twenty (Samara, 2003: 296). This figure grew to 52 percent by 2001 and was 47 percent for the Western Cape (Samara 2005: 209). The age group 15-25 (also the age group considered most at risk to perpetrate crime) accounts for 20.1 percent of the population and will reach 25 percent by 2010 (Samara, 2003: 296). These high proportions of youth increase the responsibility required by the state, civil society institutions, communities and families to create an environment and pass on a legacy of moral and social worth. Government has set forth a National Youth policy (1997) which gives guidelines toward various youth development strategies. These include:

> ***Integrated youth development***: the development of young people as a holistic, multi-dimensional activity that should cater for all their different needs, involve and empower them.
> ***Mainstreaming youth development***: all government policies and programmes should integrate the needs of young people, and target them as a particular constituency, instead of simply assuming that youth will be catered for.
> ***Targeted youth initiatives:*** Recognizing that youth have special needs, the country should have special programmes for youth.
> ***Strengthen capacity for youth development:*** Encouragement and promotion of best practice in youth development, building capacity of the youth development sector and of other sectors generally on youth development (Umsobomvu Youth Development Report, 2004: 9).

The approach of the above mentioned policy framework incorporates the holistic development of youth "and is concerned with the social, intellectual, psychological, emotional, spiritual and physical growth of young people, as well as the ways in which these facets are related" (Umsobomvu Youth Development Report, 2004: 21). The concrete application of these initiatives requires resources and creative application, which are not in overabundant supply. Despite the noble philosophy recorded here, it seems that initiatives are ineffective in addressing the needs of the youth coming from troubled areas.

Everatt (2000), reports that research regarding the impact of many youth initiatives since 1994 have failed to have any real impact on the youth. He also comments on the waning support for youth in general. Samara has commented that "the political will to address the problems of development for (the) youth appears to be fading in the realm of juvenile justice as well, with the earlier commitment to a human-and-children's-rights-driven approach to reform being replaced with the more crime-control-driven approach that marks criminal justice reform in general" (2003: 299). Du Plessis and Louw (2005: 439-440) echo these sentiments:

> "Ten years later (since 1994), the biggest gap in South Africa's crime prevention effort is in the area of social development, and in particular, programs aimed at children and youth. The focus on law enforcement has drawn attention away from the fact that key institutions for the development of young people - the family and the school - are in disarray".

This is unfortunate for youth plagued with an HIV/AIDS, education, family and community crisis and also various other social ills. Nationwide it is estimated that youth account for two thirds of unemployment (Umsobomvu Youth Development Report, 2004: 15). Why are the youth suffering from employment? Partly to blame is the crisis in education. The proportion of Africans with some primary education is only 55 percent and the percentage of the population with Grade 12 or higher is only 3,08 percent (Presidency's Policy Coordination and Advisory Services, 2006: 43)

Another concern regards youths exposed to extreme forms of violence. Segal et. al. (2001: 96) after speaking to a group of youngsters involved with crime makes the following statement:

> "the youngsters we spoke to all self consciously fashioned a criminal career for themselves. They inhabit a social landscape that is pockmarked by violence and killing and that is characterised by a ruthless and macho attitude to the actions they are involved in… the gross dissention to violence, killing and death and the lack of empathy and compassion expressed in these stories, suggests the total collapse of the boundaries between good and bad in the lives of these youth… they are no longer able to distinguish between the desire to live and die. They have entered into the heart of darkness" (Segal et. al., 2001: 96).

The 2003 National Victims Survey reports that of the 14 percent of persons who have witnessed a murder more than half (53 percent) were between the ages of 16-25 (Burton, et. al. 2003: 16). The future holds additional threats. Various scholars (Schonteich, 1999; Heinecken, 2001: 9 and Samara 2003: 299) have commented on the potential time bomb that the HIV/AIDS crisis contains in the form of South Africa's upcoming orphans who will potentially be predisposed toward high levels of crime and delinquency. These are just a few of the issues affecting youth is South Africa. Conditions in the Western Cape are similar.

4.3 CRIME IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Statistics of crime in the Western Cape are in many instances worse than national statistics. Though the province has only 10 percent of the South African population it accounts for a proportionally higher percentage of crime (South African Police Service, 2008(b): 1). Of the 14 487 murders reported between April 2007 to March 2008, 2 836 (20 percent) were committed in the Western Cape (this despite a 3,5 percent decrease in reported murders for this region). Of the 36 190 rapes committed for the same period 4 000 (11 percent) were reported in the Western Cape. For the category common assault, the Western Cape has 32 663 of the 210 104 (16 percent). This trend is common for most categories of crime. Nyanga in the Cape Flats is also the reported murder capital of South Africa (South African Police Service, 2008(a): 22). The Western Cape therefore contributes significantly to the high crime rate and specifically to violent crimes.

In terms of youth crime, the Review of SA Innovations in Diversion and Reintegration of Youth at Risk reports that the Western Cape has the highest number of youth committing crime (Kassiem, 2005: 5). The report claims that 40percent of these individuals have been sentenced for violent crimes. Reasons cited for the perpetration of crimes include poverty, environment and family influences. These findings have been confirmed by the Justice Department's submission to the parliamentary portfolio committee on the Child Justice Bill. This report confirms that the Western Cape has the largest prevalence of crime committed by youth (Maughan, 2008: 1). Special mention was made of the high level of rape and murder perpetrated. As previously mentioned, the South African National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) undertook a study investigating the number of youth involved in the criminal justice system (Samara, 2005: 211). The report indicates an increase in the numbers of youths arrested and estimated that the number would exceed 40 000 by the end of 2002.

A major cause of this large-scale involvement in crime is related to the excess violence common in the Western Cape. This is indicated by the alarmingly large percentage of youth in the Western Cape that struggle with psychological disturbances after witnessing violence. In a study by the Medical Research Council, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder was prevalent among one fifth of all grade ten students, 83 percent of youth reported being exposed to traumatic events (Samara, 2003: 298). The report goes on to state that indications are that on average youth in the Western Cape are exposed to more than two traumatic events per child, with most being sexual assaults and gang violence. Coupled with the concerns regarding gang

violence is the increasing number of drug related crimes. Various newspaper articles (Bailey, 2006(a): 3; Hweshe, 2007: 5; Breytenbach, 2007: 4 and Oakdale, 2007: 20) report that drug abuse, particularly the use of methamphetamines is on the increase. This has resulted in greater criminal activity combined with the declining age of drug users.

4.3.1 The Cape Flats as an example of a 'crime haven'

Cape Town is a city of contrasts. A clear economic and social divide separates the greater region of Cape Town. The poor and predominantly coloured and black persons occupy an area called the Cape Flats, a region born out of the previous government's separate development policies. This stands in stark contrast to the affluent white areas of Cape Town nearer the city centre. The city of Cape Town has invested significant effort and resources to control crime within the city centre with increased police patrols and closed circuit television. This has led individuals living in the townships surrounding Cape Town to feel neglected (Samara, 2003: 281). These containment policies also leave individuals in crime ridden areas isolated and largely unprotected while individuals in affluent areas enjoy greater protection (*Ibid*: 305). In contrast members of the Cape Flats are subjected to the previously mentioned hot spot search and seize operations that have been ineffective in stabilizing crime in this area.

Individuals in the Cape Flats are not only isolated in terms of police protection, but also in terms of unemployment. Unemployment in the Cape Flats is estimated at 46 percent with youth accounting for over 60 percent (Samara, 2005: 210). Youth in this instance refers to individuals between the ages of 16-30. The poor from the Cape Flats have therefore been conceptualized as the enemy of the development of Cape Town (Samara, 2003: 282). These individuals are seen as a security threat to the growing tourism industry and policing therefore seeks to contain this threat.

In summary the Cape Flats possess a range of social ills associated with the higher prevalence of crime and deviance. These include poor health, stress, high levels of drug abuse, disintegration of the family, school absenteeism and inter-personal violence typically with knives and guns (Standing, 2003: 2). Living without proper role models and within dysfunctional families and communities, the youth have turned toward television and a gangster culture for role models.

4.3.2 The influence of gangs

A notorious feature of the Cape Flats is the gang constituency. The SAPS gang unit estimated the gang membership for the Cape Flats inn 1999 to be about 80 000 - 100 000 (Kinnes, 2000: 12). Gangsters typically target vulnerable youth for recruitment using wealth, gifts, drugs and designer clothing to lure them (Standing, 2005: 9).

> "The reasons youth cite for joining gangs are varied. One interviewee was enticed into the gang because other gang members gave him beers and drugs, another mentioned that he thought girls liked him because he was a gangster and therefore was seen as 'tough', another explained that he joined the gang at school, another joined as a way of protecting himself from his three older brothers and another's reason was to get back at his mother for neglecting him and having an affair (which was also implied through a tattoo reading "My mother does not love me")"

Ward (2007: 24, 29) confirms this in her study on gangs in the Cape Town metropole area. Material wealth and security were two important factors that youth indicated for joining gangs. Youth are therefore enticed by the status and benefits of gang life. Many youths may not join gangs, but partake in gang errands. Gangsters typically serve as a source of delinquent role models in their communities. The gangster culture is one of extreme masculinity and disrespect toward women exercised through acts of rape and exploitation through prostitution (Standing 2005: 12). Clearly not the desired source of values needed to restore the social fabric of society. Yet it seems that this culture is growing in popularity among the youth in part through the influence of the media and music as depicted in the following quote by Haefele (In Standing, 2005: 12):

> "The popularity of gang culture continues to grow at a rapid rate...fuelled in part by the media through the music, movie and television industry. Rap music, along with its parent hip-hop, became a global phenomenon during the '90s, transcending the inner-city minority community and appealing to all racial, ethnic, geographic, socio-economic and gender groups. The crossover appeal of rap is, in many respects, grounded in the rise of gang culture and the 'gangster' style of music, which promotes that lifestyle. It is a lifestyle rooted in the themes of money, women, guns and drugs; the physical posturing in promoting those themes; and the language of the culture and its nonverbal forms of communication such as gang hand signs and graffiti".

Youth therefore receive mixed messages regarding what is acceptable and appropriate behaviour that is to be emulated. Further fuelling the confusion is the acceptance of gangs by many members of the communities. Reckson and Becker (2005: 108) report that despite the terror and heinous crimes that gangs commit, they have replaced local council authorities by providing jobs, social services and recreational facilities. Gangs aid their communities by supplying desperately needed healthcare and material and financial aid.

4.3 CONCLUSION

From the literature it is apparent that South Africa and the Western Cape have high crime statistics. Of particular concern are the high incidences of contact crime and the growing number of residential and non-residential burglaries. The Cape Flats in particular has been identified as an area with an excessively high crime rate. Problems contributing to the high level of crime include high levels of poverty and unemployment, the HIV/AIDS crisis, drug abuse, exposure to violence and an impoverished education system. The prevalence of gangs, in particular, is another important factor affecting the high crime rate in the Western Cape.

Government have implemented various tactics to tackle the issue of crime. The current approach is moving away from a social developmentalist approach to a more 'get tough on crime approach'. In the National Youth Policy, a commitment is made to the provision of programmes catering especially for the youth. These programmes should optimally compliment programmes targeting the root causes of crime. Unfortunately, reports indicate the absence of these programmes. Rather indications are that the 'get tough on crime' approach is completely replacing governments' commitment to target the root causes of crime. Yet when one examines why youth become involved in crime, one sees that many of the causes are related to development challenges that are not being addressed. This is reflected in the interviews with the youth offenders at Lindelani and will be discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter investigated literature associated with the prevalence of crime in the Western Cape. In review, crime and specifically violent crime is a major concern for this region. Gangs also have a strong presence not just in the Cape Flats, but in other parts of the Western Cape. Drug related crime is on the increase and a large percentage of youth participate in criminal endeavours (Bailey, 2006(a): 3; Hweshe, 2007: 5; Breytenbach, 2007: 4 and Oakdale, 2007: 20). It can therefore be expected that these factors influence the development of many young individuals growing up in the Western Cape.

The purpose of this chapter is to report on the findings of my empirical research conducted among youth offenders at Lindelani Place of Safety. The first part provides an overview of Lindelani in terms of how youths come to spend time at this "place of safety" and some of the challenges Lindelani faces as an institution. The second part reports on the findings of this study. Here the first section explores the environment in which the youth reside. The aim of this section is not to provide an in-depth, comprehensive analysis into all the reasons why these youths may have committed various offences, but to ascertain what factors may have negatively influenced their behaviour, such as family structure, peer relations, sense of crime, gang activity, sport, involvement in drugs and so forth. The second section explores the aspirations and life goals of the youth. These are the personal and specific life goals and aspirations of the youth that may mould their future behaviour.

5.2 CASE STUDY: LINDELANI PLACE OF SAFETY

Places of Safety cater for youth awaiting trial in terms of the Criminal Procedure Act, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Social Development. There are six places of safety in the Western Cape, namely Bonnytoun House in Wynberg, Bosasa in Clanwilliam, Horizon Youth Centre in Eerste River, Outenikwa House in George, Vredelus House in Elsies River and Lindelani Place of Safety in Stellenbosch. This facility was chosen to examine the life worlds, life goals and aspirations of youth because it consists of a representative sample of youth that

have committed a variety of offences and that reside in various urban and rural areas from all over the Western Cape. It is also conveniently situated just outside Stellenbosch.

Lindelani was founded in 1991, initially as an institution that would house children in need of care according to the Child Care Act. These typically included children suffering abuse. However, since 1996 the institution has assumed responsibility for youth awaiting trial and houses up to sixty youth at a time. The facility caters exclusively for males between the ages of twelve and sixteen years who have been referred to Lindelani by probation officers after being charged with severe crimes, or are repeat offenders. Youth charged with petty crimes are also admitted when guardians cannot, or will not take responsibility for them, where families are dysfunctional or where a legal guardian is absent. Youth seldom remain at Lindelani for longer than three months, although there are exceptions where youths have stayed at the facility for over six months.

 In order to gain a clearer understanding of the nature of offences with which the youth at Lindelani are charged, a summary of offences pertaining to the period between August and December 2007 is presented. During this period 199 youth were housed at the Lindelani Place of Safety Facility. The charges of these youths ranged from rape (13), sodomy (1), attempted murder (5), attempted murder and robbery (2), murder (8), murder and rape (1), assault with intended bodily harm (14) and armed robbery (8). This brings the youth charged with violent crime up to fifty two (25 percent), just over one quarter of the youth for the period August to December 2007. The majority (119) were charged with housebreaking, theft and robbery (60 percent). The remainder were charged with possession of dagga and narcotics and malicious damage to property. It is important to keep in mind that police usually charge individuals with severe crimes, that later may be reduced. Youth charged with rape may be later convicted of indecent assault. The reason for this is that police can never 'up the profile' of a case once a charge has been laid.

Lindelani staff includes an occupational therapist, two social workers, a nurse, an education programme manager and four educators. Then there are care staff (these watch over the youth) and various administration staff. The number of social workers is few compared to the high turnover of youth. The 2008-2009 Operational plan states that the high turnover of youth and a lack of skills of child care workers are two of the major challenges facing the institution. Although youth are locked up and are under surveillance, as many attempt to escape, Lindelani is not a Secure Centre. There is no Closed Circuit Television and care

workers are unarmed. According to the 2008-2009 Operational Plan of Lindelani, the strategic goals of this institution include the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of youths addicted to various substances. Staff also seek to promote resilience and help families function optimally and promote optimal quality of life for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

In order to achieve these goals, services are offered that provide for both physical and emotional care. Physical care consists of the provision of food, basic health services, beds, bedding and general life space. Emotional care comprises the building of relationships between staff and youth, youths with other youths and youths with their families. Also an Independent Development Plan is set up for all the youth. This remains in the possession of the relevant social worker and is used to consistently monitor and adjust treatment. This affects individual therapeutic sessions and also group sessions which are implemented by the social worker. Other issues that arise may be referred to dentists, optometrists, care staff and medical staff. Issues pertaining to a child's needs for clothes and food may also arise. Social workers and nurses are involved with drug awareness programmes, drug counselling and HIV/AIDS awareness and treatment programmes. Structured programmes are presented by religious groups, volunteers and members of the community. The purpose thereof is to encourage relationships within the community

The facility consists of a special needs school and schooling is compulsory. There are four different levels and youths are grouped according to their ability as many of them are illiterate with little prior education. They attend school for two hours a day with only about five or six per class. With regard to the educational learning programmes, there is a clear need for resources and expertise to deal with the specific educational requirements of these youths. The challenges facing the special needs school is compounded by the relatively short time youths typically stay at Lindelani (seldom longer than six months).

The Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services conducted an oversight visit to Lindelani in October 2004 (Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services, 2005). The findings of this report shed further light on the challenges facing Lindelani Place of Safety. The report expressed concern that there is currently a lack of participation by parents. The report also indicated that youth were not exposed to sufficient recreational activities. Care workers were considered ill equipped to offer adequate care. Prison aligned gangs and the accompanying gang culture were found to exist within the institution. Compounding these issues is the fact that the impending future of Lindelani Place of Safety has been uncertain. There have been

suggestions that the nature of the facility may change. This has clearly limited the long term goal direction of the institution.

5.3 FINDINGS: THE YOUTH AT LINDELANI: THEIR LIFE WORLDS AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Having dealt with the background, this following section reports on the findings of the youths interviewed. As indicated in the research methodology a total of fifty youths were interviewed twice within the space of two weeks. Section one investigates the environment in which the youth have grown up. The focus is on factors commonly associated with the onset of criminal behaviour such as the family, peers, school, gangs, neighbourhood environment, drugs, sport and media.

5.3.1 Section One: Life World of Youth at Lindelani

5.3.1.1 *Family and household structure*

Parents are predominantly responsible for where and how an individual grows up. They are usually the first caregiver that conveys a sense of what society expects of an individual in terms of personal development. Numerous studies indicate that the breakdown in the relationship between parents can have a potentially negative impact on a child (Gabarino, 1999: 44-45; Farrington, 2002 & Maree, 2003). Hence, two specific questions were asked (1) to establish the structure of families, and (2) the involvement of family members with criminal activities or gangs.

Of the children interviewed, only 30 percent live with both parents, 6 percent live with both parents, but their parents are separated, 24 percent do not live with either mother or father and the remainder come from broken homes. Hence, many do not grow up in the classical family structure. Another question, reflected on the involvement of family members in crime, specifically gang activity. Here 34 percent indicated that they have family members that are gangsters. These are typically their fathers, brothers, uncles and cousins. Interestingly, the findings show that slightly more youths from outside the Cape Town region (34 percent) than from the Cape Town suburbs (32 percent) have family members involved in gangsterism. This is an indication that gang membership in other areas of the Western Cape is as rife as on the Cape Flats. The high prevalence of gang member participation is also an important contributor to the incidence of crime perpetrated by youth (Gordon et. al. 2004: 78 & Sharpe and Litzelfelner, 2004: 81).

5.3.1.2 *Relationship with peers*

The influence of peers is another important contributor to criminal behaviour (Farrington, 2005). An important question that was not asked directly was what the youths think of their current friends, whether they see their friends as a good or bad influence. However, throughout the study the impact and importance of friends featured. The importance of friends with regard to the perpetration of criminal activities is clear. Many of the youths reported instances where peers encouraged and often motivated criminal pursuits. For example one youth from Worcester said:

> "Ek soek nie vriende nie. Wil alleen wees. As n mens vriende het dan lei hulle jou in vele tipe dinge soos steel". (I don't want friends. Want to be alone. If you have friends, they will lead you into activities like stealing).

Another youth from the Cape Flats was commissioned to break into houses on account of his smaller body as he could access houses others could not. He commented that:

> "…my groot vriende hulle speel mos nie. Hulle steel mos net… Dan besteel hulle mense se huise. Ek kan deur so n klein venster klim…" (…my bigger friends don't play games. They just steal… Then they rob people's houses. I can climb through (shows with hands) such a small window).

Another youth from Villiersdorp added that:

> "…my vriende sal my weer ompraat om n saak te vang". (My friends will once again convince me to break the law).

Two youths from Gugulethu and Brooklyn stated that their friends no longer played together. They did drugs. These comments were all made without any specific questions being asked regarding the influence of friends. Peers clearly have an enormous impact on the criminal behaviour of youths at Lindelani.

5.3.1.3 *Neighbourhood environment*

Another important consideration is the youth's immediate environment. The relationships youths develop with others occur within a particular geographic location that has specific characteristics. Warr (2005) found that adolescents from neighbourhoods with a high crime rate were more likely to be involved with delinquent peers. Nearly two thirds of the sample

group reported high levels of crime in the areas in which they resided, and those living in the Cape Town suburbs appeared to perceive a higher level of serious crime (see table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Youth perception of and exposure to crime in area

Exposure to crime	Cape Town Suburbs		Other areas of the Western Cape		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
High level of crime	18	36	14	28	32	64
Low level of crime	7	14	11	22	18	36
Witnessed serious crime	21	42	18	36	39	78
Had not witnessed serious crime	4	8	7	14	11	22

Examples of serious crime include murder, rape and violent assault. More youths from the Cape Town suburbs reported witnessing serious crime (42 percent), but this is only slightly higher than for the other youths from the Western Cape (36 percent). An alarming 40 percent of these youths had reported witnessing a murder. Two youths interviewed saw their mothers being murdered. One youth from the Cape Flats said: "Hulle het my ma dood gemaak. Sy is gesteek deur haar eie vriende. Oor drank". (They killed my mom. She was stabbed by her own friends. It was over alcohol). The results suggest that exposure to crime and violence is a major factor impacting on the youth.

In terms of their environment, there appears to be a lack of constructive activities outside school for youth to engage in. When asked if they knew of any community halls or recreational centres the majority knew of a community hall typically used for dances, church functions and political purposes, but not for activities specifically targeting the youth. There are few or no facilities available to stimulate the constructive development of youth. Despite these findings, they appeared content to reside in these communities. This will be elaborated upon later in the section on youth aspirations.

5.3.1.4 *Involvement in gangs*

Another important feature within the immediate environment of the youth offenders interviewed is the prevalence of gangs (Table 5.2). As previously indicated, a significant number of the youth (58 percent) have family members that are gang members. Only 34 percent of youth in the sample did not know any gangsters. These were typically also the younger members of the sample.

Table 5.2: Family and friends involved in gangs

Region	Know gangsters		Friends and family		Family		Friends		Just know		None	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
CapeTown suburbs	3	6	2	4	6	12	8	16	3	6	6	12
Other areas	1	2	6	12	3	6	4	8	1	2	11	22
Total	4	8	8	16	9	18	12	24	4	8	17	34

Despite the prevalence of gang members among the friends and family members, the majority spoke out against gangsterism. Many of the youth had lost family or friends to gang violence and most spoke disapprovingly of them. The remarks were brief. "Ek hou nie van hulle nie". (I don't like them). "Hulle is sleg". (They are bad). In contrast, the youths that supported gangsterism and members of gangs offered more detailed explanations. One youth from Rawsonville commented that "Ek hou van hulle. Hulle is nie onbeskof met my nie". (I like them. They are not rude to me). Another boy from the Strand commented: "hulle is alright. Ek is soos hulle". (They are alright. I am like them). Another from Robertson said that: "as hulle in n groep is vang hulle nonsense aan, maar op hulle eie is hulle rustig". (When they are in a group they make trouble, but on their own (individually) they are peaceful). Another also from Rawsonville commented that they are not as bad as they are made out to be. One youth from Langa commented that he likes gangsters: "…when they have a lot of money and we going to rob someone". A youth from Wolseley claimed that some gangsters were alright, but not all of them.

Several admitted to being involved with gangs and expressed the desire to leave, but claimed that this would place not only their lives, but also the lives of their families in danger. For these youths revelation has come too late. It seems that a clearer more comprehensive understanding of the dangers and ills of gang member life is required to protect youth from the temptations of gang life before it is too late. As one fifteen year old from Gugulethu remarked: "It was nice to learn about the number (prison gang), but now I see it is no use".

In terms of the attitudes towards gangs, there was little difference between those living in the Cape Town suburbs and those coming from other parts of the Western Cape. They indicated similar statistics with regard to the percentage of family members, friends and other members involved with gangs. This confirms that gangs have moved into many communities all over the Western Cape, as well as the link between gangs and criminal activities.

5.3.1.5 *Drug use by youth offenders*

Leggett (2002: 1-2) identifies three ways that drugs may have an effect on crime. The first involves the effect that drugs have on individuals. Drugs may cause individuals to practice behaviour that would ordinarily be avoided by distorting perceptions and increasing the sense of bravado that could facilitate criminal behaviour. Secondly, drugs finance criminal enterprise. The sales of drugs as a lucrative commodity are often used to sponsor other criminal endeavours. Finally, those individuals caught in the grips of addiction, with limited financial resources, may resort to crime to feed their need for drugs.

Regarding the youth offenders interviewed at Lindelani the use and prevalence of drugs as a form of recreation featured in most of the boys' narratives. The most common drugs are tobacco, marijuana (dagga), mandrax (buttons) and methamphetamines (tik). As one caretaker reported "if they are not on drugs they should not be here". As Lindelani is not a rehabilitation centre, the remark was made to emphasize the large-scale incidence of drug abuse amongst the youth as a contributing factor to crime and delinquency. The youths desired to end their drug dependency, but the impression was given that especially ties with friends would lead them back into addiction.

5.3.1.6 *Value of sport*

Sport has been associated both positively and negatively with crime and deviance (Crabbe, 2000: 382 & Cameron and MacDougall, 2000). Research by the Australian Institute of Criminology on the effect of sport programmes on crime suggest that some programmes are effective in reducing crime where they focus on risk factors that predispose individuals toward deviant behaviour (Morris et. al. 2003 & Crabbe, 2000).

 In light of this, the following findings are encouraging with respect to the youths interviewed. Sport is a very important component in the life of the youth. Only two out of the 50 boys did not participate in sport. The overwhelming majority of the boys (37 percent) interviewed play soccer followed by rugby and cricket. Only three youths mentioned boxing, two mentioned athletics and one mentioned swimming. Most prefer team sports and this may in large part be due to the lack of access to individual sports accessories and facilities.

5.3.1.7 *School attendance and deviance*

Schools are a vital element of any community as it equips youth with skills essential in the modern age. As for the youths interviewed, none were currently at school. Some have been expelled and others have left of their own accord. One youth from Hermanus had to leave after stabbing a class mate. Another claimed his family took him out of school, others blame drug addiction for dropping out. Another youth from Durbanville was forced to find work to help finance the family.

All the youths interviewed liked school and expressed the desire to return. They all seemed to understand the importance of education and indeed many saw it as the only lifeline holding the promise of a better life. Only one could mention something he did not like about school. This youth from Villiersdorp said that he did not like the fighting that takes place at school. All were dismayed that the time spent at Lindelani would retard their education. School therefore represents another essential feature missing in the life world of the youth at Lindelani.

5.3.1.8 *Influence of the media*

In current society it is not only factors within the immediate community that impact on the lives of youth. The media also shape the behaviour of the youth (Potter, 1999: 25). The movies and music that the youth at Lindelani enjoy were therefore considered. Unfortunately the specific forms of media with which they engage was not assessed. Instead, attention was rather directed toward the content with regard to music and movies that they preferred.

The majority of youth (86 percent) explicitly stated that they prefer action movies. Commonly cited action heroes included Jackie Chan, Jean-Claude van Damme and Bruce Lee. Only three individuals preferred comedy, one preferred horror movies, one preferred romance and two did not watch movies. In terms of music kwaito was preferred among only two of the Xhosa youth and among seven of the coloured youth. House music was surprisingly popular amongst the Xhosa youth. Five Xhosa youth from the Cape Flats and six coloured youths preferring house music. However, the majority (38 percent) favoured rap and hip-hop. An artist that featured prominently was 50c (Fifty Cents). One of the youth spontaneously broke out into one of his songs about 'killing niggers'. It is not clear to what extent the music and movie interest influenced their behaviour. This would require a much more detailed investigation and it is not possible from my findings to make any concrete deductions except to indicate what they generally prefer to watch and listen to.

5.3.1.9 *Perceived aptitude of youth offenders*

One's perception of oneself affects motivation, behaviour and understanding (Oyserman, 2001: 502). Knowledge regarding 'the self' is therefore crucial in directing personal development. Youth need to be aware of their unique talents if they are to have a positive 'possible self' (what they can become in the future). Possible selves represent the feared for, hoped for and expected possible selves of individuals. Markus and Nurius (1987: 160) maintain that the majority of daily activity is motivated by conceptions of possible selves.

Various questions were asked that could reflect on how the youths perceived their talents and abilities. When asked what were perceived to be their talents, it is noteworthy that 56 percent of the boys saw sport as their greatest talent. This also emphasizes the lack of exposure that they have to various other activities, resources and role models. I am of the opinion that many replied sport out of an inability to consider other alternatives. Few other activities were mentioned (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: Perceived talents of youth

Perceived skill (own)	n	%
Sport	28	56
Read and Write	2	4
Singing	1	2
Helping mom	1	2
School	1	2
Drums	1	2
Food	1	2
Welding	1	2
Sewing	1	2
Graffiti	1	2
Everything	1	2
Nothing	3	6
No response	8	16

5.3.1.10 *Role models*

The role models of the young men can be divided into three groups. Exceptional performers, everyday heroes and none. Exceptional performers represent national and international sport, movie and music stars. Everyday heroes on the other hand represent family and other members of the immediate community. Most of the youths (38 percent) idolize exceptional performers such as Brian Habana, Shaun Pollock and 50c (the rap artist). The importance of sport in their lives is once again emphasized by the number (18 percent) that chose talented sportsmen as role models.

In comparison, relatively few looked up to movie stars. Typically, those individuals that expressed an interest in music looked up to musicians as role models. These musicians were hip-hop and pop stars. Unfortunately these exceptional performers do not live in the communities in which the youths grow up. There is no direct contact with these individuals as they exist on televisions and in magazines and therefore are unlikely to impact positively on the behaviour of youth, or 'speak into their lives'. It is also unlikely that youths can emulate this behaviour.

Everyday heroes were typically family members. A third looked up to family members as role models. Only two members of the sample looked up to individuals (outside the family) that lived in their immediate communities and 20 percent stated that they had no role models. This was despite encouragement from me to name any role model. Does this mean that they see no life worth imitating?

A greater understanding of the lives of these youths may also be deduced by what is not said. None of them looked up to businessmen, innovators, writers, teachers or other extraordinary achievers outside the entertainment industry. This is indicative of what youth are exposed to within their life worlds and indicate that few have really been exposed to aspects of the modern world outside the realm of what they see on television and read in magazines. It would be interesting to see how the youth from affluent backgrounds differ with regard to their role models and future aspirations.

5.3.1.11 *Spirituality and behaviour modification*

The success of various religious programmes in prison is a controversial subject (Johnson et al. 2001 and Kerley et. al. 2005). Even so, it does appear as if religious instruction as a means to change the behaviour of and even rehabilitate offenders could have some value.

Here it was surprising to find that an overwhelming majority (88 percent) of the youths believed in the existence of God. This was most likely influenced by the prevalence of so many churches in the communities in which they resided. Religion could thus be used as a means to encourage youths to alter their current life course and moderate their behaviour if they could be encouraged to become part of these religious communities.

5.3.2 Section Two: Life Aspirations of Youth at Lindelani

The following section provides the findings on the life aspirations and goals of the youths interviewed at Lindelani. These aspirations give an indication of what they deem important in their lives and how they see their future. This may be useful in directing the construction of programmes that redirect the life course of these youth.

5.3.2.1 *General aspirations*

The first set of questions regarding aspirations were intended to uncover what aspirations are important to the youth at Lindelani. Are these youth more concerned about occupation, personal development, or aspirations for a family? In order to avoid influencing the potential answers this was covered right at the start of the interview. It became apparent that the best way to assess life goals and aspirations was to ask the youth what three wishes they would like to see fulfilled in their lives (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: General aspirations of youth

Personal wishes	Cape Town suburbs		Other areas in the Western Cape		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Wealth	10	20	11	22	21	42
Occupation	11	22	7	14	18	36
Family	5	10	8	16	13	26
Redemption and rehabilitation	3	6	6	12	9	18
Freedom	3	6	4	8	7	14
Education	4	8	1	2	5	10
Altruistic	1	2	2	4	3	3
Moral development	0	0	2	4	2	4
Relocate residence	2	4	0	0	2	4
Fantastic	0	0	1	2	1	2
None	0	0	1	2	1	2

Many of the youths struggled to answer this question and could only name one or two wishes that they would like fulfilled. This was despite significant encouragement to 'give any answer'. It seemed that they were afraid to waste a wish and at the same time unable to supply a 'good enough' answer. In general the wishes were not extraordinary or far-fetched. The majority wished for some form of wealth, but this was alluded to by only 44percent percent of the youth and it was not for exorbitant wealth. Only one expressed the desire to be rich. They desired, for example, a car, a house, a bicycle, a pair of shoes or a track suit top. One youth wanted a bicycle, clothes and a stereo. One youth jokingly asked for fifty cents. Interestingly many of the youth were wary of too much money. One youth made the following statement:

"Wil nie baie geld hê nie. Maar jy moet geld hê dat jy kan kos koop. Maar geld is n ander ding. Manne gaan dood oor geld. Meneer ken die dobbel game. Jy dobbel dan wen jy al die man se geld. Dan steek die man jou dood". (I do not want to have a lot of money. But you must have money to buy food. Money is a strange thing. You know about gambling? You gamble and win all of the other person's money. Then the person stabs you to death).

Eighteen youths (36 percent) wished for some form of occupation. Many of the kids hoped for a job, but were not specific as to their dream career. Three mentioned that they would like to be lawyers. Many expressed the wish of being a professional soccer player. One desired to become a singer, one a taxi man, one a policeman, one a magistrate and another wished to be a social worker. The rest did not specify a type of career. Thirteen wished to have a family, with a wife and in most cases two kids. This desire to have a family is significant as this may be a driving force that encourages youth to desist from crime. This point will be elaborated upon later.

Seven youths wished to be free from Lindelani and nine for some form of redemption or rehabilitation. Significantly, the aforementioned two wishes were most prevalent amongst the teens that were older, more emotionally mature. Five youths desired an education. This desire was not specific to a particular field of study or academic path. Two youths wished to relocate to a different community. Three youths expressed altruistic desires. One wished that his grandmother was well, another wished for a society where everyone loved each other and one youth stated that he wished to help people, but could not specify how. Two youths vaguely expressed a desire for personal moral development by wishing to be a better person. These answers show that the youth possess (despite their criminal background) positive existential desires, which are in fact very humble. They are wary of too much money, but desire the ability to provide and care for a family. They desire freedom, rehabilitation, redemption and moral development.

However, these results should be put into perspective. Most of the youths were unable to share three wishes, which is concerning. Are these youth unable to conceive of any positive outcomes? Have they lost all sense of hope or do they feel their aspirations would seem unacceptable? It seemed as if they related to me as interviewer as they would to a social worker and their answers may have been tailored accordingly. They are also unable to fantasize. None wished to travel the world in a hot air balloon or land on the moon and seemed to have lost the ability to dream. Only one youth from Rawsonville wished to be a karate man and one youth from Robertson had a 'fantastic wish', namely to be able to fly. It

seemed these boys no longer have the luxury of being boys and their dreams have suffered accordingly.

5.3.2.2 *Possible selves of the youths*

Possible selves represent the feared for, hoped for and expected possible selves of individuals. In order to gain a clearer understanding of the possible selves of the youths, questions were asked regarding the plausibility of their aspirations, as well as their best and worst case personal possible future scenarios. The vast majority thought that their wishes would come true. The only exception is the one youth that asked for a limo. He said it would not come true because it was unnecessary. Two other youths were not sure. When asked what steps must be taken and what could prevent them from reaching their goals almost without exception they emphasized the importance of school. Others also indicated the importance of a major change in their life course, by for example, leaving drugs and crime. None mentioned higher education or the acquisition of necessary funding. One youth who expressed the wish to become a lawyer seems to have realised that this was a 'long shot'. He commented that "dit kan gebeur. Miracles gebeur". (It can happen. Miracles happen).

To further explore their possible selves, I asked the youths what were their best hoped for, greatest fears and expected outcomes for their lives. In the first instance, they were asked to describe the best possible scenario that they could envision for their lives in ten years. The results confirmed the initial responses regarding the aspirations of the youth (see tables 5.4 and 5.5).

Table 5.5: Positive possible selves of youth

Best possible scenario (ten years)	Cape Flats		Other areas in the Western Cape		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Occupation	10	20	9	18	19	38
Shift in life course	4	8	9	18	13	26
Finish school	2	4	2	4	4	8
Home and family	3	6	0	0	3	6
Family	2	4	0	0	2	4
Home and car	0	0	1	2	1	2
Being with friends	0	0	1	2	1	2
Being a man	1	2	0	0	1	2
None	2	4	3	6	5	10
No response	1	2	0	0	1	2

Occupation featured prominently and 19 youths (thirty-eight percent) hoped to be employed although only 9 (eighteen percent) mentioned a specific employment. Careers included two

lawyers, two sportsman, two social workers, a farm labourer, a policeman or manager and a clothes designer. Twenty six percent of the youths described a desire for a moral transformation seeking rehabilitation and reformation. Two of them also mentioned the scenario of being a church brother, one a converted Christian, one youth was with God (here on earth) and one youth in a church. The rest sketched a vision of themselves where they were better people, had left drugs, and stopped stealing. One youth mentioned a best case scenario where "ek uit die gangs kom en nie dood is nie". (I get out of the gangs and am not dead). Interestingly this youngster was not from the Cape Flats. One of the youth added that "almal moenie baklei en vloek nie. Daais beste". (Everyone must not fight and curse. That is the best). Alarmingly, ten percent could not envision any positive future scenario for themselves. For the youths from the Cape Town suburbs, the family and the home featured more prominently, whereas youths from the other areas of the Western Cape focused more upon a change in life course.

Table 5.6: Negative possible selves of youth

	Cape Flats	Other areas in the Western Cape	Total	
Worst case scenario	**n**	**n**	**n**	**%**
Death	12	14	26	52
Become gangster	3	2	5	10
Drugs	3	1	4	8
Prison	2	2	4	8
Gangster and drugs	2	0	2	4
Keep stealing	1	1	2	4
Scavenge	0	1	1	2
No money for children	0	1	1	2
Surrounded by drunks	0	1	1	2
None	2	2	4	8

The fears of the youths were examined by assessing the worst life outcome they could foresee for themselves (see table 5.6). Their fears are almost to be expected. They are representative of the negative factors inherent to the life world of the youth. Gangsterism, drugs and the very real possible outcome (death or prison) of a life associated with crime are described. They are under no illusions regarding the worst possible scenario that they may be confronted with. One youth commented: "this place (Khayelitsha) is going to make me die because there are lots of gangsters". Despite this realization, some of the youth were undeterred. It seemed they have assumed a sense of bravado. One of the youths later explained that a part of him still really desired promotion in the gang ranks and therefore he was not sure that he would leave the gangs. Four refused to concede a worst case scenario. One youth seemed almost offended that I could assume that there would be a worst case scenario, stating that "ek is bang vir niks nie". (I fear nothing). The youth, it seems, though understanding the potential dangers, will

not admit that this can actually happen to them. Only those that were unsure of their best case scenarios and the one youth that admitted that drugs made his future prospects bleak, conceded that their current life path was worrisome. All seemed convinced that positive change was an inevitable conclusion for their lives.

5.3.2.3 *Family aspirations*

If the family, peers, neighbourhood, gangsterism, drugs, spirituality and employment influence crime then it would be valuable to ascertain what aspirations the youth have regarding these factors. All of the youth expressed the desire to have a family of their own. Many youth (as indicated) expressed this desire with regard to their three wishes. All of the youth except one from Hermanus knew exactly how many children they would like to have. Many sought two kids (one boy and one girl).

All of the youths desired to have only one wife and no extramarital affairs. With regard to what kind of wife the youths sought, eight (16 percent) specified that she must be pretty, eleven (22 percent) that their wife should not drink, smoke or walk around in the 'smokkelyard' and four (8 percent) that she should cook and clean and look after the children. One youth from Rawsonville wants a wife that goes to church. Others were quite patriarchal, stated that "sy moet doen wat ek sê sy moet doen" (she must do what I tell her to do), must "be there when I do something wrong" and be trustworthy.

5.3.2.4 *Aspirations for future friendships*

Many youths when describing their dreams of rehabilitation shared the accompanying fear that friends would persuade them into old habits. They described aspirations for education and occupation and added that they desired that their friends would have similar ambitions. Neighbourhoods and ideal houses were described that would be shared with current friends. Friends are therefore central to the current future plans of these youths. They were asked to describe their ideal friends. Some 50 percent of the youths described how their friends should not be. This included that they should not drink, do drugs, be gangsters, steal, be rude or fight. This is ironic. They have a clear conception of the negative characteristics and behaviours that are undesirable in a friend, yet these are in reality the characteristics of their friends. Their inability or unwillingness to dissociate with these individuals underlines their complex association with criminal endeavours.

Of interest is that the youths struggled to conceive how friends should be. Ten percent said that they wanted friends that tell them when they are doing something wrong. A youth from Brooklyn stated that he desired trustworthy friends. Another youth from the Cape Flats wanted friends that aspired to go to college with him. Another youth from Durbanville wanted friends that go with him to church and to school. Others sought no friends as they felt that friends would only lead them back into old habits. As has been discussed in the previous section, many expressed the desire to give up on friendship as they felt that friends inevitably would lead them into trouble.

5.3.2.5 *Neighbourhood, spirituality and crime*

Another important factor affecting the onset of criminal behaviour was the neighbourhood in which the youths grew up. Aspirations regarding their neighbourhoods showed that despite the prevalence of crime and gangs, youths preferred to remain in their present neighbourhood.

Despite the violent and poorly resourced nature of neighbourhoods in which they resided, 74 percent would prefer not to live anywhere else. When asked what they would change in their community 32 percent referred to the eradication of crime, gangsterism and/or drugs.

The youths were asked what they considered important with regard to their own personal transformation. What aspirations did they have regarding their moral development? Half the youths that answered this question indicated their desire to end their drug use and to stop breaking the law. Another 10 percent wished to change their lives, but did not specify how. Some 14 percent of the boys expressed a desire to convert to Christianity and 10 percent of the boys expressed no desire for specific moral development. These results indicate their desire to end their drug abuse and criminal behaviour and also the importance perceived by them, of Christianity as a means to accomplish this.

5.3.2.6 *Education, employment and role models*

The youths understood that education is central to employment. None are currently in school and this is something that is lamented by them all. They all expressed the desire to return to school, though for many this is not a possibility.

With regard to employment many of the youths were quite ambitious. Over half (52 percent) aspired to a form of employment that would require tertiary education. This includes the occupation of lawyer, doctor, magistrate, pilot, and social worker. Other professions aspired

to were less ambitious such as being gardeners, builders and farm labourers. Another claimed his main desire was to become a drummer and said: "Ek wil eintlik nie werk nie. Net drums speel. As my droom nie waar kom nie kan ek n bergie ook word. Ek en my broer het al gebedel". (I don't actually want to work. Just play the drums. If my dream does not come true I can become a beggar. My brother and I have begged before). Many of the youths mentioned occupations with computers though were unable to elaborate on specific computer skills or professions they would like to pursue because they do not know what alternatives are available.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the lives of youths at Lindelani Place of Safety that have all been charged with various crimes and are awaiting trial. For many conditions at Lindelani Place of Safety are much better than at home. Caretakers reported many instances of malnourished youths entering the facility. For many it is an opportunity to sober up. One social worker informed me that many parents were relieved when their children were sent to Lindelani. The centre has a good reputation in the townships and for many parents it represents a welcome break from their parenting duties. However, the challenges facing Lindelani are significant. Most of the youths are serious offenders and this behaviour is brought to the facility. Staff and resources are stretched thin and youths do not spend much time on average at this facility. This makes it difficult to identify and address various factors that contribute toward their involvement with crime.

There are clearly an overwhelming number of factors that influence the behaviour of the youth. These include negative factors in their environment such as parents and other family members involvement with gangs and crime, delinquent sub-cultures, drug abuse, exposure to crime and violence, gang recruitments and the sanctioning of crime and violence in the media. A number of positive factors are also lacking in the lives of the youth most notably stable family structures, role models, education, involvement in community activities, involvement in spiritual activities and the youth in general showed little awareness regarding their personal abilities and aptitudes.

With regards to their future the youths were generally optimistic. Although they struggled to answer questions about their aspirations for the future they were open and friendly. The majority also seemed sincere in their desires for families, homes, education, occupation and moral and spiritual transformation. Others were less eager to share the details of their

environment and their aspirations, though they gave similar reports. A minority were unable to give any life goals or aspirations. The next chapter will attempt to make sense of these findings in light of the theories and the South African context discussed.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Crime is a major problem in this country and available statistics confirm that there are an increasing number of youths involved with crime (Samara, 2003: 285). Discussing the National Youth Victimization Study, Burton (2006: 6) reports that one in every ten youths have committed a criminal act - this equates to almost one million youths. The Western Cape has a particularly high percentage of youth involved with crime (Samara, 2005: 11).

It is essential to understand why these young individuals are perpetrating crime. What follows is a quick oversight of various theories that explain the causes of crime. The aim of this chapter is to make sense of the findings based on existing theoretical and other research.

6.2 EXPLANATIONS FOR CRIME

Early theories regarding crime emphasized that involvement in crime is a rational decision and suggested harsh penal codes to stop crime. Around the turn of the twentieth century, theory arose that sought to explain why some individuals became involved with crime and others not. Sigmund Freud's work on the role of the subconscious, suggested that rational decision making processes were not the only factor that accounted for an individual's involvement with crime. Events in early childhood affect subconscious decision-making processes that in turn influence behaviour. Around this same time, Durkheim proposed that social factors in the environment of an individual may also contribute to their involvement with crime. This idea was taken up in the 1920's by members of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago as the basis for their theories on delinquency (Cote, 2002: 64). Rapid changes occurred within specific areas of a city that caused social institutions to become ineffective. This is termed social disorganization.

A different line of thought has emphasized that criminal behaviour is learnt. Learning criminal behaviour occurs within intimate groups or with significant others (Joubert, 2003: 91 & Bandura, 1977). Bandura postulated that, as people observe others performing various activities, they will learn and model behaviour if they remember what has been observed and are able and have the motivation to reproduce this behaviour. (Sub)-cultural theories argue

that "certain groups or sub-cultures in (our) society approve of crime or hold values that are conducive to crime" (Cote, 2002: 66). Other criminology theorists (like Hirschi) argue that criminal activity often occurs when an individual's bond to society, namely with parents, adults, school teachers and peers are broken (Akers, 1999: 86-87). Though more contemporary theories of crime commonly combine numerous theories, it seems logical that no single theory will ever be universal in application. Each individual will have a unique combination of factors that influenced and contributed toward their participation in crime. This has led to the developmental criminology approach which seeks to identify various domains that may be important in influencing and/or preventing crime. These include the individual, family, peers, school, neighbourhood and situational factors (Farrington, 2002: 659, Joubert 2003: 88, Maree 2003: 76). These theories helped interpret why youth at Lindelani committed crime.

6.3 WHY YOUTH AT LINDELANI PERPETRATE CRIME

As every individual is unique so too are the factors that cause any specific individual to perpetrate crime. There are, however, common factors and processes that may be identified with regard to the youth at Lindelani, that explain their involvement with crime. Firstly, the youth are exposed to a number of negative factors that facilitate their involvement with crime. These include not living with parents, parents divorced, parents involvement with crime, peers involvement with crime and drugs, exposure to gangs, extreme forms of violence in the community, recruitment by gangs, prevalence and use of drugs, poor role models and crime and violence in the media. A number of positive factors lacking in their community also exist namely: lack of education and school progress; lack self-knowledge, skills and talents; lack of role models in their communities; limited exposure to various sports and sports programmes not designed or facilitated to address issues of crime; no programmes or events that draw youth into involvement with their communities; lack of programmes that address the issues of the youth in the community and their non-involvement in religious communities.

A number of theoretical explanations of crime are prominent in the lives of the youths interviewed at Linedelani. They live in areas characterised by social disorganization and suffer the absence and breakdown of social bonds (social bond theory) and learn delinquent behaviour (social learning theory) from deviant role models and pro-criminal sub-cultures (sub-cultural explanations of crime).

6.4. FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CRIME FOR THE YOUTH AT LINDELANI

These theories and factors will are assessed with reference to the youth at Lindelani. It is important to remember that this is not a comprehensive investigation into all the factors that may be responsible for the involvement with crime by the youth at Lindelani, but rather focuses on a number that may be most critical.

6.4.1 The prevalence of negative factors

This study found that the youth's involvement with crime can firstly be associated with their exposure to certain negative factors. Negative factors associated with the family are clearly visible. Various authors (Farrington, 2002 & Maree, 2003) cite the family as an important factor contributing toward the perpetration of criminal behaviour. Social bond theory predicts that when social bonds with parents are broken this leaves the youth vulnerable to perpetrate crime. The role played by both parents in this regard is important as a breakdown in the relationship between parents has a negative impact on a child (Gabarino, 1999: 44-45). The majority of the youth at Lindelani have grown up in broken homes and many are not living with either parent.

Furthermore Farrington (2002: 669) cites parents involvement with crime as a major predictor of offending. According to social learning theory the effect of these delinquent role models in the home increase the likelihood of youth perpetrating crime. As the primary care givers and role models for their children, the behaviour of parents is often reproduced. A third of the youth interviewed have family members that are gang members. These figures give an indication of the large effect that gangsterism has on the pursuit of criminal activities by the youth. Of interest was that a greater number of youth that come from other areas of the Western Cape (not the Cape Town suburbs) have family members involved with gangs, which is an indication that the problem of gangs is not confined to the Cape Flats area.

(Sub)-cultural theories argue that "certain groups or subcultures in (our) society approve of crime or hold values that are conducive to crime" (Cote, 2002: 66). Cohen (quoted in Curran and Renzetti, 1994: 153-155) proposed that "status frustration" lead youths within certain areas to develop a delinquent subculture. Subcultures typically consist of peer groups that hold similar values and that exert tremendous pressure on an individual to commit various criminal acts. This study indicates that the effect of delinquent sub-cultures causes youths to become socialized into a culture of deviance which forms part of their identity. On their own account the youths related the pressure they felt exerted by peers to participate in criminal

activities and the fear that old friends would persuade them to re-engage in criminal pursuits when released. Youths recounted how they no longer played games with their friends, but rather partook in criminal activities such as doing drugs and breaking into houses. The findings of my study indicate that friends exert enormous influence over their peers and this is a major contributor to the participation in crime by the youth at Lindelani.

Not only peers but the actual neighbourhood in which youth live also contribute toward crime (Maree: 2003: 76). As mentioned social learning theories suggest that gang members that are active in the families, friends and communities of the youth expose and teach them how to participate in crime. Youth are therefore exposed to and learn how to perpetrate acts of violence and crime in these communities. As outlined in the previous chapter on crime in the Western Cape, this is a major problem in the communities within which these youths live. This is reflected in the perceptions of these youths toward their neighbourhoods. Seventy-six percent of the youths reported personally witnessing instances of murder, rape and violent assault. Two youths witnessed the death of their own mothers. The continual exposure to violent crime forces the youth to 'toughen up' and desensitizes them to the evil of these acts. For many youths these acts become a normal part of daily life. As discussed in the chapter on crime, many individuals within these communities protect gang members that commit these acts for various reasons. The youths at Lindelani therefore live in communities that seemingly sanction a culture of violence and this is another important negative factor that influences crime and may contribute specifically toward the perpetration of violent crime.

Understanding the influence of gangs in the Western Cape is very important in order to grasp the extent of crime. Gang members are potential deviant role models that influence the behaviour of youth (Bandura, 1977). Gangs typically occupy specific territory though are often not confined to this territory, as is evidenced in the Western Cape with the expansion of gang activity. Although commonly associated with the Cape Flats the influence of gangs has become widespread, with gangs procuring property and business in West Coast and South Coast areas, hereby expanding their recruitment base for new members. Each gang has its own culture which may include specific hand signs, slang and even dress. They are often depicted as heroes in movies and music. The youth memorize songs about gang killings and gang bravado. Wealth and status are worshipped as objects that are there for the taking. Many of the youth interviewed viewed gang members like Tupac and 50c as role models. These individuals, by their own admission, have been actively involved in gang related violence.

The activities pursued by gang members in the Western Cape typically include the distribution and consumption of drugs and this has contributed to the high percentage of youth using drugs. Furthermore gangs participate in acts of violence and sexual assaults. A report released by the National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) indicates that gangs are largely to blame for youth in the Western Cape being exposed to more than two traumatic events per child (Samara, 2005: 211). It is therefore not surprising that the findings indicate that gang activities are witnessed by the majority of the youth.

What has made the issue of gangs particularly challenging to address has been their acceptance by many members of various communities (Kinnes, 2003). The environment of these youths appears to condone violent and unlawful behaviour. Reckson and Becker (2005: 108) report that despite the terror and heinous crimes that gangs commit, they have replaced local council authorities by providing jobs, social services and recreational facilities. Gangs aid their communities by supplying desperately needed healthcare and material and financial aid. Communities that protect gang members are therefore sending mixed messages to the youth regarding the influence and status of gangs.

These mixed messages are prevalent in the narratives of the youths interviewed. Some of the youths spoke disapprovingly of gangs, but were unable to elaborate on why gangs are bad. Although most admitted that gang members perpetrate despicable acts and many have fallen victim to their crimes, many youths defended their actions. The boys spoke at length regarding the positive qualities of gang members despite their acknowledgement of the very real dangers associated with gang life. Some stated that gang members were nice to them (gave them acceptance). Some directly identified with gang members saying that they were like gang members. The youths that spoke approvingly of the gangs were typically the older boys and it appears that as the boys grow older, their toleration increases and many join gangs. Gangs are embedded in the communities in which the youth reside and this is represented by the number of youths that have close relations with gang members. As indicated, the majority of youths interviewed have close friends or family that are gang members and two thirds of the youths are personally acquainted with gang members.

For ethical reasons youth participation in gang activity was not assessed, however, many youths freely admitted to gang participation. Youth may join gangs for protection, attention of girls, wealth, status or even revenge (Standing, 2005: 9, 12 and Ward, 2007: 24, 29). One

youth interviewed, reported that he would probably return to the gangs when released as he sought promotion. Hence, the findings of this study suggest that youths participate in gang activity for various reasons. Parents and friends of youths are involved with gangs and this affects the way youth view gang members. Youths identify positive characteristics in gang members and receive affirmation from these gang members. The glorified representation of gangs in the media and the rewards of wealth and status also attract participation. Another feature of gang life is that it is for life. Many of the youths interviewed expressed regret at having joined gangs, but were unable to leave. These youths feared gang reprisal against them and their families if they were to exit from the gangs. Programmes that seek to help youths exit gangs will have to deal with the issue of gang reprisals.

Mocan & Tekin (2004) claim that there seems an important connection between drugs and crime. Da Rocha Silva & Malaka (2008: 44) report that drugs play an important role in the rise of crime and found that the criminal's level of involvement with drugs typically mirrored their involvement with crime (2008: 51). In the Western Cape it does appear that drug related crime is on the increase (Hweshe, 2007: 5; and Breytenbach, 2007: 4).

The activities of gangs and drugs are intimately connected and gangs are identified as major distributors of drugs and commonly use drugs (Bailey, 2006(b): 2). Regarding the youth offenders interviewed at Lindelani, the use and prevalence of drugs as a form of recreation featured in most of the boys' narratives. For many the use of drugs have replaced fun and games. The most common drugs are tobacco, marijuana (dagga), mandrax (buttons) and methamphetamines (tik). Some of the youth also commented that drugs were responsible for their leaving school. The findings confirm that this is another important predictor of participation in crime by the youth and the need for adequate rehabilitation centres available for these communities is increasing.

In their response to the effect of media violence on general violence Karen Wright (2003: 28) reports that decades of research has produced more than a thousand studies that confirm the link between media violence and aggression. Similarly, in a study on the effects of music and aggressive lyrics on hostility Anderson et. al. (2003: 960) found a link between the effects of music with violent words on hostile thoughts and aggressive feelings. Another concern is that the media and specifically television and movies have become a primary source of information regarding sex for the youth at large. "The almost always scantily clad women are rarely portrayed as anything other than sexual objects to be lusted after or aggressed against"

(Brown & Witherspoon, 2001: 83). The exact effect of media on the lives of the youths at Lindelani was difficult to assess, except that they tended to favour action-fighting movies which are generally violent. Many of the youths also favoured gangster rap and many had memorized the lyrics of violent songs.

The potential impact of role models has been emphasized throughout the findings. Role models often encapsulate the ideal embodiment of what we believe we can become. Family members, gang members, community members and friends of the youth at Lindelani serve as poor role models. As mentioned previously, social learning theory tells us that behaviour is learnt and modelled by observing others. Most of the role models that the youth idolized live outside of their communities and were therefore unable to exercise positive influence over their lives. A third of the youth look up to members of their family as role models. This would ordinarily seem a positive finding except that the same number of youth have family members who are involved with gangs. A positive finding was that many of the youth looked up to role models that were sports stars. If these role models could 'speak into the lives' of the youth and present an alternative life course, this may help the youth choose a different life path and modify their behaviour.

6.4.2 The absence of positive factors

These negative environmental and social factors are not the sole cause of delinquent behaviour. Positive social ties created within the community are also essential. There exists an absence of these positive factors influencing the youth. With respect to South Africa, Maree (2003: 76) cites the lack of education, poor academic performance, failing, truancy, problems at school, poor schooling, inconsistent discipline, inadequate or no school facilities, lack of role models and poor learner/educator relationships as major factors that influence behaviour negatively. One prominent factor missing in the lives of the youth at Lindelani is education. Farrington lists various issues that may be associated with high levels of delinquency at school including "high levels of distrust between teachers and students, low commitment to school by students, and unclear and inconsistently enforced rules" (2002: 677).

The findings of this study indicate that student teacher relations were not a significant problem, but rather the fact that the youth are no longer in school and that many have received very little academic instruction. Reasons cited included problems with drugs, work obligations and family problems. Many of the youth (over the age of 12) remain completely illiterate. When asked to give their 'handtekening' (signature directly translated as hand sign)

many of the youth proceeded to trace their hands. Their backlog with regards to education is significant and this severely limits their future prospects. It was noteworthy that none of the youth interviewed were critical of the education system. Not one bad word regarding teachers or class work was given, despite my prompting. It appears that external problems were the primary cause of their leaving (or being expelled from) school. All of the youth expressed a sincere desire to return to school. This is a large field of discussion and greater research would be required for a more comprehensive overview regarding the factors relating to school that may encourage youth participation in crime. However, it is very clear that the lack of education and school progress is a factor for all of the youth interviewed. This lack of schooling may be a central reason that youth are unaware of their personal skills and talents.

Victor Frankl (1962) argues that the knowledge of personal strengths is essential in order to find direction and meaning in life. He believed that a sense of meaning can be attained by the coherent alignment of personal skills, aptitudes and strengths. One's perception of oneself affects motivation, behaviour and understanding (Oyserman, 2001: 502). Knowledge regarding 'the self' is therefore crucial in directing personal development. Youth need to be aware of their unique talents if they are to have a positive 'possible self' (a perception of what they can become in the future). The youth interviewed in this study lacked this understanding of who they are and what talents and skills they possess. They were unable to provide valid testimony of what they do well and even of what they desire in life. This lack of knowledge of their aptitudes and who they are severely debilitates their potential. This finding is not surprising as the study confirms that the youth generally lack input and affirmation from significant members of their community. Without participation in school activities and older individuals that can spot and encourage their talents, the youth remain unaware of skills beyond the sports field.

While sport has been used by schools for centuries to instil certain values and character traits, the question arises whether sport has a positive or negative influence on youth behaviour. Research seems to support both sides of the argument. Crabbe (2000: 382) reports that there is little conclusive evidence that sports programmes are effective in combating crime and deviance. In fact, Eccles, Barber, Stone and Hunt (2003: 871) have noted that participation in team sports may in fact promote risky behaviours as it may be linked with excessive alcohol intake. However, in the same study these authors found that the students who liked sports liked school more, were more likely to attend and graduate from college, and were more likely to find promising employment (employment with potential promotion).

The rationale behind sport driven initiatives is that by reducing boredom and increasing supervised leisure time in a supportive social context, programme planners may be able to address a myriad of issues relating to criminal behaviour (Cameron & MacDougall, 2000). Despite the widespread participation of the youth interviewed in rugby, soccer and cricket, this participation is not supervised in a supportive social context and takes place mostly on an informal basis. There are no programme planners involved that can structure the play and social activities to address issues relating to crime and ensure that the games are played in a positive spirit. Furthermore the youth are limited by the low number of sports to which they are exposed. Only six of the youth mentioned one other sport (beside rugby, cricket and soccer) in which they participate. A greater array of sporting activities, facilities and supervision will drastically improve the potential positive affect that sport has on the youth.

The obsession with sports is demonstrated again with reference to their role models. The youth interviewed typically looked up to famous musicians, actors and sportsmen. Even if some of these role models may live exemplary lives, they do not live in the communities in which the youth grow up and their lives cannot be emulated. Despite significant encouragement some youths interviewed failed to identify any person to whom they looked up. This once again begs the question: do they see no life worth imitating?

With the absence of good, moral role models the question arises: where are the spiritual leaders? This has become an important issue of consideration in contemporary South Africa as a result of a perceived moral crisis. "Politicians, religious leaders and social commentators have all spoken about the breakdown in morality" (Rauch, 2005: 9). In 1997 Mandela called on religious leaders to become active participants in a moral regeneration initiative (Rauch, 2005: 15). In their meta-analysis of the effects of religion on crime, Baier and Wright (2001: 17) found: "solid evidence of a moderately strong deterrent effect of religion". Other studies have offered similar support for religious instruction as a means to reduce antisocial and promote pro social behaviour (Johnson et. al. 2001; Gabarino, 1999: 155 and Kerley et. al. 2005).

The attitudes of the youth toward religion are encouraging. Although almost 90 percent of the youth believe in the existence of God (mostly the Christian God), it is clear that the church is not effectively addressing the needs of the youth. Despite numerous churches within their immediate vicinity, the youth did not report active involvement in church life. The findings suggest that the youth understand the distinction between faith in God and conversion and

many of the youth expressed a sincere desire to be 'born again' (part of the Christian faith experience). It therefore appears that the church is missing an opportunity to reach these youths, assist them to achieve worthwhile life goals and discourage them from being drawn into the world of crime.

This becomes even more important given the breakdown in family life of many of the youth who come from families that are characterised by broken relationships and absent parents. Where parents are present many are involved with crime and gangs. Important social ties are therefore severed with moral role models and replaced by poor role models and sub-cultures in an area that is increasingly characterized by a socially disorganized community. These new role models and sub-cultures teach youth how to perpetrate crime and introduce youth to illicit activities such as drug use. The youth no longer attend school and 'doing crime' becomes the only skill that youth develop. The prevalence of violent crime desensitizes youth to more violent acts of crime. Youth and communities strengthen allegiances with various gangs for protection. Communities become increasingly dependent upon gangs for the provision of services and protection. Healthy social ties within the community are broken and the conventional rules and norms become obsolete. Youth therefore are born into a situation in which there are no clear lines between right and wrong. This simple scenario emphasizes how pervasive factors are that may cause youth to commit crime. How can one break this vicious cycle?

6.5 POSSIBLE SELVES, ASPIRATIONS AND LIFE GOALS

How an individual reacts to the influences discussed depends upon a variety of other factors that guide their lives and future aspirations. For this reason it is critical to engage the youth and to discover their hopes, fears and desires as these may direct a youth away from involvement with crime where the necessary motivation and support is available to realize alternative development paths. The following section discusses the possible selves (hoped for, feared for and expected future self), life goals and aspirations of the youth to investigate the extent to which the youth sought to pursue alternative life courses.

6.5.1 Possible selves

According to Markus and Nurius (1987:157) "possible selves represent individual's ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming". Possible selves are therefore intimately linked to an individual's life goals and aspirations in everyday activities. Oyserman and Markus (1990(b): 114) have commented on the importance of positive possible selves as a necessary requirement that steers individuals away from criminal involvement.

In order to discover the hoped for possible selves of the youth they were asked for their best hoped for future for the next ten years. The responses indicate that education, a successful occupation, moral transformation and the desire for a family are important life goals for the youth. When asked to elaborate on these goals the youths were unable to vividly describe or specify what job they would like, how they would find a job, or what they would want to study. The youths were also unable to describe how they would like to bring about moral transformation. Though they had noble desires they clearly lacked the strategy, means and in some cases the opportunity to accomplish many of these goals. As established, the youths lack education and role models in their communities and this may be partly responsible for their inability to describe the necessary steps that would bring about these various possible selves. Particularly worrisome is the number of youths (12 percent) that could not envision any positive outcome for themselves. The question is posed whether these youths see no life worth emulating.

The findings regarding feared possible selves indicate that the youths are not unaware of the potential dangers associated with their involvement with crime. The overwhelming majority feared death, followed by fears regarding gang, criminal and drug involvement. Despite these findings many of the youths seemed undeterred and expressed their desire to continue with their criminal aspirations. This was particularly the case with gang members that sought promotion and appeared to associate this attitude with being courageous. A number of the youths also denied that their lives could have a negative outcome. Most of the youths, even some of those that realize the potential dangers, would not admit that this could actually happen to them. The youths seemed in denial with regard to the potential devastating outcome of their present life course. This may be the result of their collective identity with delinquent sub-cultures that has taught them to assume a bravado that denies fear. Other youths interviewed explained that for various reasons they could not change their life course. Some

felt that friends would inevitably pressure them back into crime, others explained that gangs would retaliate against them and their families if they tried to leave.

According to Buhler (1968: 41) adolescents in general do not have a vision of an end goal incorporating family, community, leisure, vocation, education and spirituality. This lack of vision is attributed to a preoccupation with preliminary goals such as tests at school or a temporary job. In general, very few youths focus on the long term commitments of married life or permanent field of occupation and even fewer ask what life is all about. In contrast, the youths interviewed at Lindelani indicated a desire for family and moral development and spoke about the need for rehabilitation and redemption. It seems that the life circumstances of the youths have forced them to seek a deeper meaning in life. Their desired possible selves are noble and these are very positive indications that youth are open for interventions that could help them achieve these goals and that may help steer them away from crime. The youths did not seem to be driven by the materialistic and consumer needs that have come to encompass the Western world. However, this maturity comes at a cost.

The youths failed to display the ability to dream and many of their hopes seemed dashed. When asked for three wishes most of the youth could only mention one or two. Their aspirations were dull and not very optimistic. This is possibly due to the fact that these individuals have been forced to become 'real' at a very early age and lack the idealism associated with youth. Also the aspirations of the youths indicate their shortfall with regard to alternatives as they could not imagine a creative and wide array of opportunities. This is intimately linked to the fact that they are unaware of the opportunities that lie beyond their communities. Many of the youths are bright young individuals, but are unaware of their potential and have lost the ability to be imaginative with regard to what they could possibly become.

6.5.2 Positive aspirations

Research has confirmed that positive life aspirations may divert youth away from criminal involvement. "Work careers create socially needed utilities and in this very activity permit the gratification of individual life aspirations, bestowing meaning upon people's lives" (Krau, 1997: x). There have been reports of offenders that express the desire to 'turn their lives around' for the sake of their families (Gabarino, 1999). Rutter concludes that the major transitions represented within the family may be the necessary trigger signifying a turning point for an individual (Schoon, 2006: 120). This includes getting married or having children.

Research indicates that the aspiration of family related goals while at school has been correlated with lower unemployment after school (Nurmi & Salmela-Aro, 2002: 411). In a different study these same researchers found that future family goals were predictive of high subjective well-being (1997: 471). Family, education and occupation related aspirations may therefore lead toward a reduction in criminal behaviour.

The research quoted above emphasizes the value of family related aspirations as a means to modify behaviour. All of the youths interviewed expressed the desire to have a family of their own. Many youths (as indicated) expressed this desire before the subject was explicitly introduced. The youths were clear that they desired children and could even specify the number of children desired. They all desired one wife and could describe characteristics they sought in their future wife. This is a very important finding as this desire for a wife can be used to guide the youth in their relationships with girls and to steer youth away from demeaning behaviour toward women. The aspired role of husband and father may be instrumental in turning youth away from crime if the youth are taught the responsibilities associated with these roles. Youth can also be shown the value of relationship and family, thereby discouraging their participation in unlawful behaviour. Clearly the youths currently have poor role models with regard to parenting roles (as can be seen by the few number of married parents and the number of family members involved with gangs). The youths therefore require interventions and role models that can show the youths how to be a good husband and father.

Education is an important factor that opens many doors toward self development, occupation and a sense of contribution and self-fulfilment. The findings indicate that aspirations for education and employment are important potential modifiers of behaviour. None of the youths interviewed were at school yet they all expressed the desire to return to school. About half of the youths aspired to ambitious occupations, but could not describe the necessary steps that would enable them to fulfil this ambition. Nor could they describe the details of their desired profession. Those that spoke of computers could not elaborate on specific types of employment in the computer industry. The findings regarding the vocational aspirations of the youths reflect the environment from which these youths come and indicate a lack of exposure to potential opportunities and various workplace role models. It is also important to point out that if youth are not aware of their individual talents and proficiencies, it is unlikely that they will know what to study and what job they really desire.

The study did not only look at aspirations associated with decreasing criminal involvement. Aspirations for friends, neighbourhood and moral transformation were also considered. Peers are very important as the youths expressed the desire to share their ideal environment and community with their friends. Youths have a clear conception of the negative characteristics and behaviours that are undesirable in a friend, yet these are the characteristics of their friends. Most of the youths did not aspire to have different friends. Those that expressed a fear of friends involving them in crime spoke of being alone rather than making different friends. The youths therefore have an ambivalent relationship with their peers and struggled to conceptualize what a good friend would be like. They could not envision what an ideal friend would look like, only what he would not look like. The youths therefore need to be exposed to positive and accepting peer groups. Unless they are able to pursue healthy friendships, peers will induce them to revert to old practices.

Despite the high prevalence of crime and gangs in their neighbourhoods only a quarter desired to live elsewhere. The eradication of crimes and gangs was, however, an important point regarding their neighbourhoods. This desire to break free from crime and drugs and the role of religion has been referred to previously. Ninety percent of the youths spoke of these desires. Hence the findings conclusively indicate that the youths are open to receive instruction and support that will help them redirect their life course in order for them to achieve their goals.

Research has concluded that goals that become realized are typically feasible and realistic (Oettingen and Gollwitzer, 2001: 333). Important determinants regarding the feasibility of a goal include whether there is the necessary urgency, means, opportunities and time to accomplish the goal. Regarding the youths at Lindelani, the only seemingly unrealistic goals were for those that desired vocations that require tertiary education. Not all vocations aspired to were unrealistic. In fact, the aspirations of the youths were generally realistic. The youth are able to have a family and moral transformation is possible. It is possible for the youths to become more educated, learn various skills, desist from drug use, crime, leave gangs and embrace religion. The youths did not aspire to exuberant wealth or even to live in other neighbourhoods. Their aspirations may be instrumental in turning their lives around, but are they feasible? Friends, gangs and even family members may cause youths to revert back to old habits and ignore these aspirations.

The lack of means, opportunity and support structures are, according to this study, the greatest obstacles deterring youth from fulfilling these noble life goals. The youth require assistance in

order to achieve worthwhile aspirations and to break out of their habits and addictions. They require role models in their communities, father and mother figures and positive peer groups, as well as instruction and education. The study shows that these elements are lacking and therefore need to be provided in order to reduce crime and recidivism.

6.6 CONCLUSIONS

It is my opinion that the policing of crime should not take precedence over dealing with the root causes of crime. In the discussion regarding crime in South Africa it was noted that a reversion to Apartheid-like methods of controlling crime are ineffective without complimentary programmes that alleviate these causes of crime. Getting tough on crime may also prove counter-productive. South Africa has an extensive gang recruitment system within the prison system and greater numbers of incarcerations only serve to increase the breadth and scope of the gang population. This extends the network of organized crime and equips criminals with increased resources and capacity. Hence, government's desired response to address the root causes of crime and restore a sense of morality is commendable and necessary to rebuild the social fabric of society and address critical issues relevant to various communities.

The risk factor theory paradigm underlines factors that are commonly attributed to the perpetration of crime by youth. The findings of this study indicate that there is an overwhelming presence of these factors present in the lives of the youths at Lindelani Place of Safety. As has been stated, this study in no sense represents an exhaustive exploration of those causes of crime associated with the youths interviewed, but it does confirm the work of other scholars, that there exist certain systemic factors within the environment of the youth that incline youth toward and hold youth captive to a life of crime.

The breakdown in family structures and the fact that youth and their friends are often members of gangs mean that these children grow up in a culture of crime, violence and drug abuse. Role models within the immediate environment are often lacking or are undesired, as they model criminal behaviour. There is an absence of outstanding businessmen and other working professionals to serve as role models for youth in these communities. Often the only 'successful' role models are gang members and other individuals perpetrating crime. The adults in the neighbourhoods where these youths are growing up seem to be poor role models as the following quote by a youth from Robertson indicates. Commenting on the possibility

that he will be able to realize his aspired profession he states: "Dis moontlik as ek my net ophou soos n grootmens gedra". (It is possible if I stop behaving like an adult). This is a grave indictment against the adults in his direct community. The role models of the youth, like Brian Habana and Shaun Pollock live far from these communities and if these stars could make themselves available to present sport clinics in the relevant communities and at the same time can promote a clear message regarding the issues that affect the youth, this may have a lasting impact on these youths. Similarly working professionals from more privileged communities could assist in expanding the horizons of these children, as few know what possibilities exist beyond their immediate environment.

Youth are affected by what they are exposed to as well as what they are not exposed to. Lack of exposure to potential opportunities and various workplace role models have left the youth with a limited number of potential occupational futures to envision. The key concern therefore is exposure to numerous alternatives that youth may find interesting, exciting, and stimulating. This is an important consideration that may help steer youth away from crime toward worthwhile career pursuits. Education is essential in this regard. The findings indicate that the youth have no idea what their personal skills and aptitudes are. Without the knowledge of who they are and what they could achieve, youth will never know their own potential value. If youth never believe they can amount to anything they will be tempted to live a life of crime and gangsterism. Here teachers and community leaders need to play a more active role in identifying potential and exposing the youth to the opportunities that are available to them, even if this is through sport – something most tend to identify with strongly. It appears as if the only sports that these youth are being exposed to are rugby, cricket and soccer. A wealth of sporting talent is left undeveloped. In addition, programme planners are missing an opportunity to reach the youth by not presenting specific workshops that may simultaneously address various other issues related to crime. As mentioned, sports stars may be invaluable in reinforcing values and attitudes that may cause youth to avoid criminal pursuits, so too is religion.

South Africans affiliate predominantly with religious organizations, followed by political parties, women's and youth organizations, trade unions, anti-crime and civic organizations (Presidency's Policy Coordination and Advisory Services, 2006: 75). According to the census (2001) 80 percent of South Africans identify with the Christian religion and this report concludes that: "Religion is a critical social force among all communities (Presidency's Policy Coordination and Advisory Services, 2006: 76, 97). It is also seen by many as a critical

instrument of social intervention…" Most youth expressed a desire for spiritual development with particular reference to conversion to Christianity and the various spiritual leaders in these communities can use this to help build a deeper level of devotion and rebuild the moral fabric lacking in these youth's lives. It seems the church has missed an opportunity to reach the youth in their communities as they expressed a sense of exclusion from the religious community.

At the end of the day every individual must take ownership of their own personal development. In this sense it is important that youth are given the opportunity to voice their specific interests and intentions with regard to the direction of their development. Knowledge regarding the aspirations and life goals of youth offenders is therefore imperative. The emphasis is upon assisting youth to realize their dreams rather than coercing them into acceptable behaviour. Youth need to be given the opportunity to specify their own priorities with regard to their own personal development so that the aspirations that are conducive to constructive social development can be fostered. Those factors deemed important by these individuals themselves should be emphasized and programmes tailored and resources mobilized accordingly. The family, peers, poverty, media, spirituality, education, employment not only impact on crime, but all similarly affect the development of aspirations. This is no coincidence. These are important issues that need to be addressed by programmes.

There is a need for programmes that can equip youth with the knowledge and skills that will help them to pursue healthy relationships and have good marriages. So much has been invested in teaching them how to put on a condom. Little is done to teach the youth how to pursue a healthy relationship and how to treat a member of the opposite sex. One of the findings regarding the factors responsible for the perpetration of crime was the break up of the family. Youth should therefore be equipped so that they do not perpetuate the mistakes of their parents and can provide an adequate caring family structure for their own children and pursue healthy loving relationships.

Youth aspired to have friends that did not drink, do drugs and commit crime. Unfortunately, the youth could not envision peers with positive characteristics that they could befriend. Positive peer relations are essential for youth to break free from old habits. The youth need to be exposed to positive peer groups within their own neighbourhoods with which they can identify. They also sought moral transformation. The youths spoke of the desire for rehabilitation and redemption. With the influx of drug related crimes, programmes that

address these issues are a top priority and can be relatively easily implemented if government commits the necessary funding. After all, according to their policies concerning the youth they have already committed themselves to this end (Umsobomvu Youth Development Report, 2004).

The findings of this study indicated that the youth at Lindelani, like so many in their same position, are crying out for guidance and support, for meaningful affirmation and for the opportunities to live a worthwhile life. The challenge is to engage and assist youth with regard to their needs and life goals. The youth need meaningful direction and consistent support. Programmes are necessary that not only focus on the youth, but also target issues related to the broader community. If we are to reach the youth, we must reach their communities and even more importantly their parents. Issues need to be addressed holistically. Various members of the community need to take ownership of participating in programmes engaging youth.

This study has attempted to identify factors present in the lives of youth offenders at Lindelani that induce criminal involvement. Though there exist various explanations for crime and the causes of crime are varied and complex, various common themes and factors are identified. The findings suggest that if we focus on the life goals and aspirations of youth offenders this could direct the youth away from criminal pursuits, while at the same time identifying the interventions necessary for development. By focusing on what the youth deem important, the likelihood that youth will internalize necessary values and principles increases. This approach is especially valuable when programmes are established that deal with the various causes of crime. The challenge is to address these issues in a responsible manner that connects with the aspirations of youth and helps them realize their life goals.

If we listen to what the youth are saying, if we move forward strategically, if we exercise wisdom, if we are less mechanical and more relational, if we co-ordinate the employment of our resources and invest in our youth then we can move beyond being victims of our environments and become the deliberate designers of greater opportunity. This study has attempted to provide a 'voice' otherwise not heard- of the many youths caught up in a culture of violence, crime and despair. Social research studies can help map the issues peculiar to particular environments and relevant strategies of response. Hopefully, this will facilitate more research in this field and solicit the support of not only those involved in the 'management of youth offenders', but also other educators, sports coaches, business leaders

and sports stars to assist in addressing the plight of our youth. The youth are the future so what happens when the only life they see worth emulating is a life of crime?

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APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule

Do you play any sport? Name them.

What games do you play when you are with your friends? Do you play tv games?

What are you really good at doing? What unique skill do you possess?

Who do you look up to? Why?

What kind of movies do you like? Name some. Favourite actors?

What kind of music do you like? What performers?

Who do you live with?

Where do you live? How is it to live in…?

Is there serious crime?

Are there any community centres or places where young people gather? What do you do there?

If I could give you three wishes and you could wish for ANYTHING what would you want?

Do you think your wishes could come true? How? What would you need? What would you need to do? What would need to change?

What job do you want to do one day? How could this happen?

Do you want a family? Only one wife? What character traits are you looking for in a wife? How many children?

Describe the perfect neighbourhood. Where would you live if you had the choice?

What would perfect neighbourhood look like?

What does a perfect friend look like?

What would you like to change about yourself?

Have you ever witnessed a crime? What, where and when?

What do you think about gangsters? Do you know any? Who? Family friends?

What is the best thing you can remember ever happened to you?

What is the best post ten year scenario you can envision?

Is this possible?

What is the worst?

How many professions can you name?