RECIDIVISM:

AN EXPLORATION OF JUVENILE PRISON INMATES' SUBJECTIVE
PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR RETURN TO PRISON

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KEYWORDS:

RECIDIVISM, PRISONERS, REHABILITATION, PUNISHMENT,
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ABSTRACT

Despite the unpleasant living conditions in prison, recidivism seems to be an uncontrollable phenomenon. It is evident that prison life is harsh with inmates having to sleep on the floors due to overpopulation, frequently subjected to physical and sexual abuse, and overpopulation leading to numerous communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. Prison should therefore, be the least favourable ecosystem in which to be incorporated. However, research indicates that thousands of youth return to prison habitually. This study aimed to explore juvenile inmates' perceptions of their return to prison. Although recidivism is often measured in terms of the success of rehabilitation programmes, this study focused on eliciting socio-economic factors influencing recidivism. Juvenile inmates from the participating Correctional Services Institution received opportunity to express their subjective experiences and perceptions concerning their habitual returns to prison. The study employed a qualitative research methodology, embedded in an interpretative paradigm. Permission to conduct the study was sought from prison authorities at a Correctional facility in the South Cape Karoo. This was coupled with the informed consent of inmates. Six juvenile re-offenders, between the ages of 16 and 19 years were presented with an individual in-depth interview, which was tape-recorded. These interviews were then systematically analyzed using thematic analysis. The themes that were deduced supported the view that incarceration does not always produce rehabilitation. Rather, incarceration itself, seem to foster criminal behaviour. Poverty, substance addiction and gangsterism were reported as enormous influences on their habitual re-incarceration. The results of the investigation indicated that even those inmates who received intervention experienced difficulty after being released. Accordingly, it is recommended that post-release assistance should get more attention as it may enhance inmates' integration in their respective communities and give them a head start to becoming productive individuals in their communities. Recidivism is a psychosocial phenomenon that is multifaceted in its causation. The need for a comprehensive explanation of habitual re-incarceration needs to be explored in future research.

DECLARATION

I declare that this study; Recidivism: An exploration of juvenile inmates' subjective perceptions of their return to prison; is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Jacqueline Carol Matthews

2004/6

Signed…………………….

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Institutionalization was for a long time considered a panacea to the problem of youth offenders in many countries, including South Africa. The belief was that society's misfits should be locked up. However, society itself could be considered guilty of developing these misfits. Youth are endowed with their own uninhibited vitality and passions leading them into diverse directions. However, the lack of firm direction and purpose contributes to their lawlessness. In South Africa some youth have become desensitized to violence and violent crimes. So much so, that violence has become the best and even the most effective resort for problem solving for some youth.
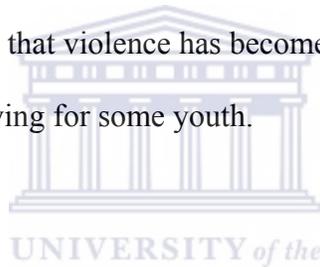
It is not the intention of this study to blame society for the behavioural dysfunctions displayed by our youth today. The study is aimed at exploring juvenile inmates' subjective perceptions of their returns to prison. It is hoped that this study will assist in gaining a multifaceted understanding of re-offending youth. The study will also provide some insight about the well being of South African juveniles in the Correctional system. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the development of rehabilitation programmes in South African Correctional Services, particularly with respect to pre-release and community based programmes that will supplement juvenile rehabilitation. Furthermore, it is hoped that the juvenile justice system, when developing policies, will take these findings into consideration. However, even more important, is the hope that

policy-makers and social science researchers explore recidivism in South Africa, focusing on measures that will ensure the success of rehabilitation programmes.

The study will develop as follows: In Chapter Two, literature relevant to the study will be discussed. This section contains an overview of the history of the South African penal system. It highlights basic assumptions and causation theories pertaining to delinquent behaviour.

Chapter Three deals with the preferred methodological framework. The utilized methodological framework lends itself to a qualitative research paradigm. The preferred sampling technique, gathering the data tools and the analysis of the data is discussed and motivated in this chapter.

Chapter Four is in actual fact the reporting of results. A more in-depth overview of the characteristics of the participants is provided in this chapter. This is followed by a report of the main trends, patterns and connections that emerged in the synthesizing of the data.

Chapter Five contains the discussion of the concepts contained in the literature review in chapter two and facilitates a platform for correlating these concepts with the synthesized data provided by the participants. This chapter will also focus on the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of the study.
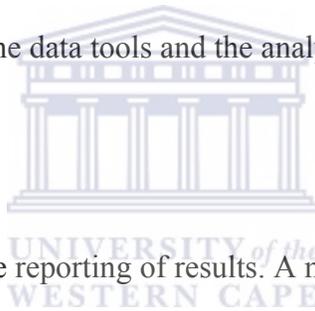
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite the unpleasant living conditions in prison, recidivism seems to be an uncontrollable phenomenon. It is obvious that prison life is harsh. Inmates have to sleep on the floors due to overpopulation. Physical, sexual and emotional abuse is evident, and overpopulation lends itself to numerous communicable diseases. The latter range from tuberculosis to HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and other blood born viruses. Prison should therefore, be the least favourable ecosystem in which to be incorporated. However, research indicates that thousands of youth return to prison habitually.
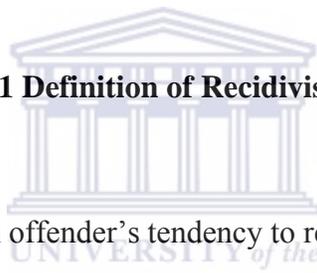
2.1 Definition of Recidivism

Recidivism can be defined as an offender's tendency to repeat his/her criminal activity even with efforts toward reformation (Winnicott, 1984). Scholars of psychology classify recidivism as habitual deviant or delinquent behaviour. This delinquent behaviour is also labeled as anti-social behaviour or conduct disorders (Weiten, 1995). According to Kratcoski and Kratcoski (1990) a juvenile delinquent is "…any child that deviates from normal behaviour so as to endanger himself, his social career, or the community…" (p 4). For the purpose of this study, recidivism will thus be defined as juvenile habitual re-offending or reincarceration despite efforts towards reformation.

2.2 Evolution of South African Correctional Services

It is important to put into context the issue of imprisonment. The aim of this section is to understand the purpose imprisonment served historically, and presently. Howe (1994) concludes that it is impossible to attempt the debate of punishment or penalty "...without supporting historical evidence at ones fingertips" (p. 56). However, he considers which 'history' would be most appropriate and essential, and whether it would be deemed suitable to the context of the established debate. For the purpose of this section the central focus will be to develop a South African history of imprisonment as 'punishment' and 'rehabilitation'.
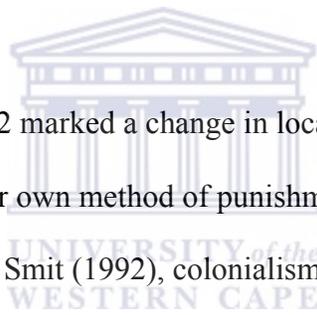
The arrival of Europeans in 1652 marked a change in local punishment mannerism in South Africa. 'Natives' had their own method of punishment, but imprisonment was not part of it. According to Van Zyl Smit (1992), colonialism attributed most imprisonment characteristics, now incorporated into the South African Penal System.

Trick and Tennent (1981), argue that retribution were almost always present in the penal system and the offender would usually suffer pain equal to that experienced by the victim. Van Zyl Smit and Hansson (1990), show how the body was the focal point of punishment during the eighteenth (18th) and nineteenth (19th) century. "Punishment was the public infliction of physical pain…" and "… a symbol of power of rulers and kings" (Van Zyl Smit, & Hansson 1990, p. 196).

However, this practice of corporal punishment deteriorated when incarceration was employed. Incarceration offered the ability to control and discipline inmates. So much so that those in control never lost their power to control, but gained a new and more humane way of enforcing power and control. Van Zyl Smit and Hansson (1990), argue that although whipping and flagging were seen as barbaric during the 20th century, some institutions permitted this form of punishment. During the 1900s punishment of offenders included whipping, additional labour, solitary confinement and dietary constraint (Department of Correctional Services, 2003). The Amended Act 51 of 1997 states that whipping were or could be enforced for certain offences. These ranged from demolishing property to arson.

Furthermore, apart from the above-mentioned European influences on the South African penal system, Apartheid policies and ideologies also created and structured the penal system as it is today. Legislation informed racial segregation and the inhumane treatment of those imprisoned. During the 1960s, the South African prison population by and large consisted of political prisoners. Further political unrests between 1985 and 1990 exacerbated the already existing problem of overcrowding (Department of Correctional Services, 2003). Incarceration was seen as penalty for criminal behaviour and was managed as such. Therefore rehabilitation of inmates was secondary or even non-existent. "Although rehabilitative processes were taking place, they were insignificant" (Department of Correctional Services, 2003 p. 13).

Subsequent to the separation of the Prison Service and the Department of Justice in 1990, drastic reformation of prison legislation aspired. As advocated by the democratic

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the fundamental human rights of every citizen had to be preserved. Correctional Services (as the Prison Service was renamed) observed and phased-in this human rights culture.

Contrary to the retributive approach to management, a rehabilitative approach was endorsed. In aid of enhancing this rehabilitation process, demilitarization of the correctional system was evident (Department of Correctional Services, 2003). National diversion programmes were established and implemented. Juveniles or youth in conflict with the law were one of the risk groups identified by the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS). Juvenile offenders convicted of petty crimes were referred to diversion programmes and those that were incarcerated, were protected against additional trauma.

Since this move toward reformation, numerous rehabilitative interventions have been formulated. Governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and faith-based organizations share the responsibility of providing diversion process to inmates.

2.3 Imprisonment

In February of 1998, it was established that for every 100 000 individuals of the South African population, 382 individuals were imprisoned (Oppler, 1998). Currently "4 of every 1000 South Africans are in prison" (Department of Correctional Services, 2003). According to Rose and Clear (1998) society is a concentration of humans, functioning

interdependently as a whole with humans, therefore, crucial to process the conditions or activities of this 'whole'. They argue that incarceration weakens the functioning of this 'whole'. Therefore, the functioning of our society weakens when a great proportion thereof constitutes the prison population.

The escalation of the inmate population is a direct cause of high crime rates. However, it is also due to the extensive 'red tape' of an overstretched and still developing judicial system. Due to this extensive procedure, long pre-trial detention significantly contributed to overpopulated prisons. Recidivism (habitual re-offending or re-incarceration) also exacerbates the rapid population growth (Department of Correctional Services, 2002).

Currently South African prisons are 70% overcrowded (Department of Correctional Services, 2002). As a result, the population of inmates exceeds the amount of space available to them. Most of the time inmates are confined to their overcrowded cells. Overcrowding also lends it to numerous communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, blood-borne viruses like Hepatitis, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. Prison gangs, gang initiation rituals, sodomy and violence are also part of prison life. According to Lauer (1995) "Such conditions are stressful and make any effort at rehabilitation difficult" (p. 48).

Some researchers advocate the position that the primal focus of imprisonment should be punishment and isolation. Secondary to this focus, they argue, is providing rehabilitation

to those imprisoned (Lauer, 1995). However, the very nature of correctional facilities, as established above, fosters little, if any, platform for rehabilitation.

These proposed foci should therefore, constitute as deterrent. However, Orsagh and Chen (1988) argue that the probability of inmates returning to prison increase when they serve long sentences. Prisons then become a "training ground for making criminals more competent and more committed to a life of crime" (Lauer, 1995, p. 48). In South African context prisons are conceived as 'universities of crime'. At best, correctional facilities evoke a 'deep freeze' effect. Zamble and Porporino (1988) argue that the 'deep freeze' effect cause the inmates' pre-prison behaviour pattern to stay in tact, but frozen in time. The authors argue that no rehabilitation takes place while the individual is imprisoned.

Similar to the inhumanity of corporal punishment during the eighteenth 18th and nineteenth 19th centuries (Van Zyl Smit, & Hansson 1990), prison became a 'total institution'. So much so, that the "totality of the individual's existence is controlled by various external forces" (Lauer, 1995, p.148). Firstly, inmates are subject to the rule of prison authorities. Secondly, the controls of prominent prison gangs. Even individual sexual preferences are compromised in the quest for survival. Personal development and behavioural change indeed become secondary to the need to survive. Holley and Arboleda-Florez (1988) found that some inmates even abandoned the need to survive and assumed a self-destructive behaviour.

The literature reviewed suggests that prison should be the least favorable ecosystem in which to be found even though rehabilitation as primary service delivery is intact. It has also been established that prison environment do not cultivate the process of rehabilitation and aid in the development of criminal careers. The probability of inmates returning to prison, therefore, increase and reformation deems to be less possible.

2.4 Youth

According to Erikson (1963) adolescence is a stage in which the youngster is in pursuit of making sense of the self as part of the greater world. This pursuit, he argues, should not be perceived as "…a kind of maturational malaise", but as a process vital to the development of the ego-strength. Besides the physical changes attributed by this stage, it also signifies the birth of and search for identity. Adolescence or youth ushers the launching period in which the person (in all facets) is molded. This period is marked as a highly important developmental phase. Freudians argue that the delinquent behaviour of a grown man can only be understood when their youth or childhood are investigated. The latter observation deems to highlight the significance of 'youth' experiences and the influences it has on adulthood.

Youth are endowed with their own uninhibited vitality and passions leading them into diverse directions. However, the lack of firm direction and purpose contributes to their lawlessness. According to Marks (1992) traditional, parental and religious authorities also became less popular, but were not replaced with 'modern' workable and appropriate

moral grounding. Youth became desensitized to violence and violent crimes. So much so, that violence became the best and even the most effective resort for problem solving. Marks (1992) further argue, "violence of youth is most often reactive" (p. 5). Youth, Marks (1992) concludes, are therefore reacting to stimuli or situations that could have been otherwise avoided.

This dispensation of youth is inevitably exposed to numerous stressful events. Some even fear the uncertainty of the future. For some youth South Africa has become synonymous to unemployment, the devastation of the AIDS pandemic, high crime rates and easy access to alcohol and drugs.

Youth have been identified as a particularly vulnerable group (International Conference on Population and Development, 1994). Meeting the needs of youth today is critical, because the actions of young people will shape the size, health, and prosperity of the world's future population. However, youth remain the most unprotected victims of all forms of abuse. The South African Minister of Social Development, Dr. Zola Skweyiya, noted that in 2002 4000 youth between the ages of 13-18 are incarcerated. Of these, 44% were in custody for economic crimes; 40% for aggressive crimes and 16% for sex and drug related crimes. According to the October 1995 Household Survey, (cited in the Youth Development Policy Framework and Implementation Strategies, 2001) 21% of youth in South Africa fall between the age cohorts of 18 –21 years. This age cohort is also significant in that a large number of inmates fall between the 18 –25 years age cohort (Department of Correctional Services, 2002).

Subsequent to 1994, the influx of juvenile inmates into the correctional system increased significantly. An increase of violent crimes amongst these inmates evidently precipitated. This caused a chronic need for juvenile facilities. These facilities needed to be significantly effective in rehabilitating youth in conflict with the law; however, it was also mandatory that it be aimed at providing safe and secure incarceration for youth incarcerated. Legislations were enforced so as to develop secure youth correctional facilities. Enshrined in the 28th section of the South Africa Constitution youth were to be incarcerated separate from adult inmates and incarceration itself, were to be enforced as matter of last resort. This view is echoed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by South Africa in 1996.

International juvenile justice legislation is based on basic principles. These encourage the well-being of children; determines that children should be prosecuted in accordance with both their offences and circumstances; and that children understand the consequences of their actions.

2.5 Causation Theories of Delinquency

Several hypotheses have been proposed regarding the causation of delinquent behaviour. These ideological perspectives were formulated according to various paradigms based on disciplines such as biology, psychology and sociology. However, the credibility of these theories seemed to subject to the era in which it was established (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1990).

The biological school determined that criminal behaviour is predisposed. The proponents this thought argue that certain physical characteristics indicate the individual's predisposition. Such were "the shape of the head or hands, body type or chemical imbalances in the system" (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1990, p. 27). Heredity-based theories suppose that criminal genes are passed from one generation to the next. However, in the light of new theoretical findings, this biological view was discredited.

The school of psychology has developed numerous personality development theories. Unlike the biological school's focus on the individual's biological make-up, psychological theories focus on the individual's maturational processes. They argue that any trauma or disturbances experienced during this process will distort youth development (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1990).

In understanding the causation of juvenile delinquency, Sigmund Freud's (1953) psychoanalytic theory deems to be the foundation of many research explorations. Psychoanalysts' emphasize the importance of early childhood in personality development. Successful personality development, they argue, are dependant upon the child's mastery of various developmental stages and the acquisition of good moral grounding. Moral development is determined by the strength of the individual's superego. The superego is one of the three structural components of personality development as suggested by Freud. The child's superego strength is regarded to be dependant on the influences of their parents. Kratcoski and Kratcoski (1990) argue that

any parent-child relationship deficiency may result in personality and conduct disorders. Parental guidance is therefore crucial during personality formation.

Personality theorists, further, argue that external causes for juvenile delinquency (for example, dysfunctions in the family, at school or in the community) should not be emphasized. Rather, personality dysfunctions experience by the delinquent and its negative effects on their external environment, should take precedence in determining causation for criminal behaviour. Criminal personality theory as proposed by Yochelson and Samenow (1976) posits that delinquents should take responsibility for their criminal behaviour and that juvenile delinquents act upon their external environment. This theory holds strong appeal in that it provides an explanation for criminal behaviour of youth growing up in loving supportive homes, schools and community situations.
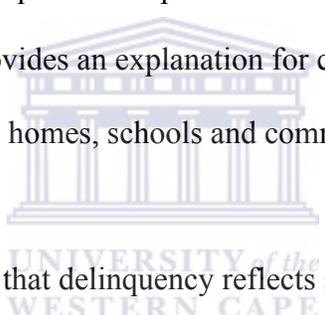
In contrast, sociologists suggest that delinquency reflects social disorganization rather than individual pathology. Causation is therefore located within the individual's environment and social relationships. Durkheim (1933) introduced the concept of 'anomie'. This concept describes the transition during "which many of the old customs, values, and beliefs…" are "…discarded, and a new value or belief system has not yet been ingrained" (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1990, p. 54). Society then experience a state of 'normlessness' or structural breakdown – anomie. Merton (1957) advocates this view by arguing that every society desires the attainment of certain goals. He maintains that these goals are symbols of economic affluence. Society therefore establishes "certain legitimate means of reaching those goals" (Lauer, 1995, p. 19). However, marginalized groups or

individuals within that society may experience difficulty in attaining these desired goals. If attainment is impossible through legitimate means, "they react by seeking success through illegitimate means" (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1990, p. 54).

Cloward and Ohlin (1960), based on their ideology of structural strain, suggest that individuals who experience a deprivation of socio-economic success may display deviant behaviour as result. This theory further argues that individuals marginalized from basic means and opportunities may develop delinquent subcultures in aid of recognition and social support. Furthermore, as established by Sutherland's (1939) differential association theory, delinquent behaviour is learnt. Sutherland (1939) suggests that youth experience diverse associations. They receive input from both criminal and non-criminal sources and whichever source appears most favorable, they will internalize. It can therefore be concluded that individuals (youth) who experience social and economic dilemmas may seek refuge from delinquent subcultures or gangs (as commonly known) for security and will acquire associated delinquent behaviour.

The above theories established multiple causes of delinquent behaviour. It also provides motivation for habitual re-offending. However, no 'one' theory should be deemed exclusive in understanding this phenomenon. Rather, one theory may overshadow the other, depending on the theoretical preference or affiliation of the researcher. For the purpose of this study a combination of psychological and sociological perspectives will be adopted as causation. The use of this binary perspective is motivated by the perception

that both the inner strength of the child and their external environmental influences construct behaviour.

2.6 Treatment and Rehabilitation

Flanagan (1996) conducted a survey, to establish whether American citizens believed imprisonment should be punitive or rehabilitative. One of his focal questions enquired about the participants' opinion on whether inmates (prosecuted for violent crimes) would be able to rehabilitate, given rehabilitation be used as an intervention. The researcher observed that most participants agreed with the notion of reformation instead of retribution. However, he also found that these views differed in terms of demographic variables with younger respondents viewing rehabilitation as plausible. While older participants held the view that violent criminals were impossible to reform.
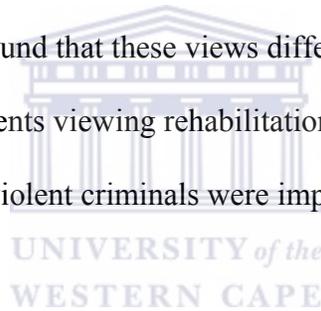
An additional focus was to determine whether respondents thought prisons should be punitive or rehabilitative. Even though respondents' answers to the earlier question were predominantly rehabilitative, an almost overwhelming view still determined penalty as a core focus of imprisonment. However, in the participants' view, although imprisonment should be punitive, programmes should be available to keep inmates busy with acquiring skills or practical trades (Flanagan & Longmire, 1997).

Synonymous to causation perspectives, treatment or rehabilitation of delinquents evolved in relation to the "specializations of those using them" (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1990, p.

340). Treatment therefore, might focus on the individual, with the help of aversion therapy or behaviour modification. If deviance is observed as a reaction to family malfunctions, family therapy is used to examine and treat the family as a system. Milieu therapy involves the modification and manipulation of "…all aspects of a youth's environment…" (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1990, p. 353) with the hope of developing a productive citizen. However, to achieve the latter, the individual needed to be institutionalized.

Authors like Pehrsson and Pehrsson (1975) highlight the part society plays in the institutionalization of youth. The tendency to institutionalize, the authors argue, is based on society's incapacity to rehabilitate its juveniles' social ills. Pehrsson and Pehrsson (1975) further determine that institutional control may foster a dysfunctional environment that may lead to the deterioration of maturational processes and youth development.
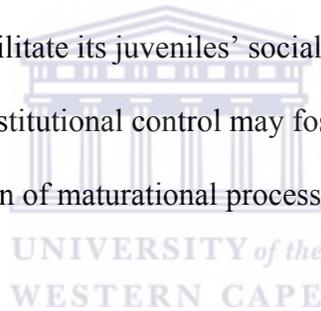
In South Africa the retributive method of the penal system, as described by Trick and Tennent (1981), was replaced with a new goal of reformation. Incarceration was rated less as a form of punishment (retribution) and more as a process of rehabilitation (reformation) of offenders. Rehabilitation then, refers to the process of deterring offenders from a deviant behaviour to one that is more socially acceptable. Institutionalization is almost always synonymous with rehabilitation. Institutionalization thus, one can imply, is a method used to divorce the offender from the larger society in the quest to help him/her, using the process of rehabilitation, to ultimately reach

productivity as a healthy individual in society. This process basically aims to bring about a positive behavioural change.

Ortmann (2000) argues that the 1960s and 1970s marked the period in which people were highly optimistic in relation to the rehabilitation of prisoners. This period they hallmarked, "treatment euphoria." Ortmann reviewed Lipsey's (1992) study around the treatment of juvenile delinquents, in which Lipsey established a decrease in recidivism of between 5 - 8%, if reformation is determined by means of treatment (Crime and Delinquency, 2000). Researchers like Dunkel (1991) confirmed a recidivism decrease of up to 50%, provided incarceration is treatment based.

From the above-mentioned studies, one can come to the conclusion that rehabilitation has become the core business of imprisonment. It will help prisoners develop skills, personal and technical, to deal with their responsibilities outside prison. Rehabilitation, therefore, should also result in a decrease in recidivism rates.

The South African Department of Correctional Services has numerous rehabilitation programmes. These range from skill development to sport venture and life-skills programmes. The Amakhaya Farm Programme, amongst others, proves to be a very good example of a skill development programme. The Amakhaya Farmers Association (AFA) approached the Piet Retief Correctional Services with the following proposal in October of 1999:

AFA proposed that Piet Retief Correctional Services utilize six hectares of land for a period of three years with the following purpose in view:

1. To help inmates with re-integration into society.

2. To teach agricultural skills that will benefit prisoners when they are released.

3. To help prisoners with rehabilitation

4. To plant more vegetables to supply other prisons.

It was also indicated by A.F.A., that the contract would be renewed if the land were utilized successfully during the stipulated three years. The request was approved two days after the memorandum reached the commissioner.

The climate and water supply were suitable for production and indicated that the project was worth an attempt. The equipment needed were donated, borrowed or bought. In 2000 twenty inmates had been allocated to work at Amakhaya. This number was deemed to be sufficient for the labour needs of the project. However, AFA helped create approximately 20 job opportunities for inmates. Prisoners even have the opportunity of being trained by an external firm (Skills for Africa) that was contracted by the Correctional Department. This training firm empowers inmates with the needed knowledge around vegetable produce and awards them with a certificate at the completion of every course (Department of Correctional Services, 2000). The Amakhaya programme is rehabilitative and aims to give inmates an opportunity to learn and apply new skills.

Prison farms and vegetable gardens are becoming extremely prominent in South African correctional facilities. Currently the Department manages 20 prison farms throughout South Africa with correctional staff trained as agricultural technicians and 4 300 job opportunities have been provided for offenders (Department of Correctional Services, 2003).

The Department of Correctional Services also developed production workshops in aid to provide inmates skills in wood and steel production, textile manufacturing, welding and heavy metal and upholstery. The objective of this project is to expand the self-efficiency of the Department of Correctional Services in that they produce their own product. To date there is 32 production workshops in the Department that employs approximately 2 500 offenders countrywide.
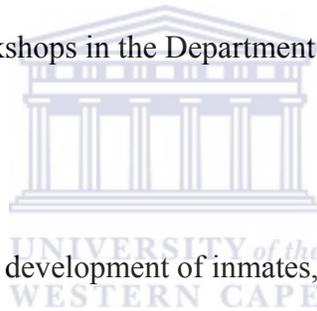
With regard to the psychosocial development of inmates, the Department of Correctional Services recently introduced the concept of Restorative Justice. This approach is described as a "restorative response to crime" (Department of Correctional Services Report, 2002). This response deviates from the ideals of retributive justice. It is a process that is future orientated and fundamentally focused on healing everyone involved. Restorative Justice highlights the importance of multiple role-players. This includes the victim, offender, the community, government departments particular to justice, mediators, the families involved and non-governmental and community organizations (for example, National Institution for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders). These role-players provide an intertwined network motivated to deal with the harm of

criminal offences, but also with the secondary harm overtly imposed by the criminal justice system (Berzins, 1996).

The National Institution for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) is a well-established non-governmental organization in South Africa. Their diversion programmes are geared toward crime reduction and community development. Amongst others, their diversion project for children and youth in conflict with the law is aimed at channeling the delinquent away from the criminal justice system. These programmes assist the young offender in accepting responsibility for their actions and help their family reflect on what went wrong and how to avoid re-offending. Participation in these diversion programmes is determined by court as an alternative to actual incarceration (NICRO Research Report, 2002).
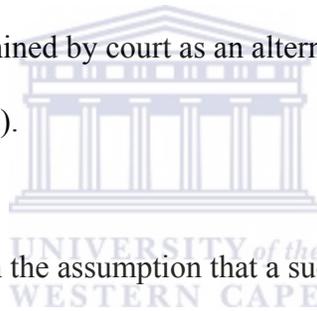
These programmes are based on the assumption that a successful rehabilitation programme would reduce recidivism. One of the critical questions, however, is whether rehabilitation programmes (aimed at deterrence) are appropriately implemented so as to rehabilitate inmates and therefore, reduce recidivism.

The present study was aimed at understanding the perceptions of inmates about reasons for their returns to prison. This study deems the success of rehabilitation programmes but one variable from which to determine recidivism rates and not the focal point from which to measure, understand and explore recidivism. When the success of rehabilitation programmes is evaluated primarily based on the percentage of inmates who re-offend, it

seems to imply that factors like social influences, responsibilities and environmental pressures caused by post-incarceration have minimal, if any, effect on their relapse. It is therefore, imperative to look at the above-mentioned psychosocial factors in order to understand reasons for recidivism.

The literature discussed thus far, highlights the unfavorable situations experienced in correctional institutions. It can also be established that rehabilitation programmes, used as intervention in prison or as alternative to actual incarceration, are important. Its (rehabilitation programmes) aim to reform inmates should therefore, aid in reducing recidivism rates. However, this is not the case. A substantial number of youth still flood prison institutions each year (Department of Correctional Services, 2002). Most often inmates who enter correctional facilities illiterate and unemployable leave the same way. Against this background, the present study aims to shed light on the participants' perceptions of re-offending or re-incarceration.

2.7 Theoretical Considerations

It is not the aim to discover "truths" or "law-like" knowledge about the causes for recidivism. As discussed above, scholars of numerous disciplines have already established causation theories. However, the aim is to make sense of subjective explanations, held by inmates, about their returns to prison. The study will focus on their experiences from within its context. Interpretive Social Science, as a general sense of Hermeneutics, will be employed to obtain the aim.

The interpretative tradition of social theory can be traced to German sociologist Weber and German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (Neuman, 2000). Diltheyians suggest that nature and culture are inherently different and therefore require different methods of study. Natural science is tailored to dissect the non-human, inanimate world, objectively. Its ideology is conceived in a positivistic framework, which claims that human beings experience one unified reality, which in turn should be empirically investigated. However, Interpretative theory is grounded in the belief "…that the social world must be understood from within…" the bounds of whatever is being studied (Hollis, 1994. p. 143). Interpretative theory further highlights the importance of observing the peculiarities conveyed through social action. Weber suggests that action becomes social when a social actor assigns meaning to his or her conduct (Neuman, 2000).

Scholars of this discipline noted four ways in which meaning can be peculiar. Firstly it is considered that every action performed by human beings have meaning. Human action is

embodied with emotion, reason, ideas and values. Secondly, interpretative scholars consider language to be more than just an instrument in communicating. It conveys human purpose. The researcher using this ideology should be able to observe how the participants construct meaning in their own context using language. Thirdly they hold that human action is loaded with normative practices and expectations. These may stem from personal ethics and values or religious beliefs. Fourthly, it is supposed that comprehending meaning is influenced by Meta theories held by the social world. Meaning therefore becomes relative to the ideology of the day.

"For interpretative researchers, social reality is based on people's definitions of it…" (Neuman, 2000, p. 72). Unlike the claims made by positivist ideologies that people experience one unified reality, interpretative ideas hold that individuals experience life differently. There is no unified physical reality. Hermeneutics, as an interpretative perspective, expands the interpretive methods with a deeper understanding of social phenomena.

The implementation of this theoretical framework will help the researcher discover knowledge about patterns of subjective explanations held by inmates about their returns to prison. However, positivists would question the trueness of these interpretations. Interpretations are based on what the researcher deems as important. The researcher might be very subjective and could be seen to be manipulative. Although the latter statement holds some truth, interpretive social science argues that theory is valid if it

makes sense to those being studied. Truth, therefore, is whatever assists us to take

actions that produce the desired results (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study aimed to explore juvenile inmates' subjective perceptions of their returns to prison. Another aim was to highlight the importance of looking deeper than the success of rehabilitation programmes so as to determine a multifaceted understanding of re-offending youth. Although it is evident that recidivism is most often measured in terms of the success of rehabilitation programmes, this study focused on eliciting psycho-social factors influencing recidivism. Juvenile inmates from the participating Correctional Services Institution received an opportunity to express their subjective experiences and perceptions concerning their return to prison.
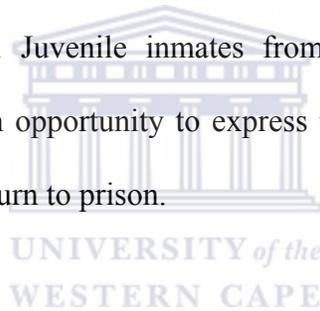
3.2 Methodological Preference

Social science has never had the luxury of feeling secure in its identity or social role. Since its inception, the meaning of social science has been contested. Questions about the epistemological, political and moral status of social science have persisted to this day. Are the social sciences really scientific or are they part of the humanities? Is social science different from natural science in its concept-formation explanations? These are but some of the questions and concerns emphasized about the intellectual and institutional legitimacy of social science (Seidman & Wagner, 1992). It is these questions

that have brought about alternative methods of researching social phenomena. Interpretative social science as the preferred theoretical framework (as established in Chapter Two) employ qualitative research methodology as alternative to the stringent pragmatic ideologies of positivist quantifications.

This study was located within a qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative methodology served as a means through which the researcher could establish an understanding of underlying issues of the phenomenon being studied. This method provided the researcher with the capacity to reflect and develop ideas prior to data collection and even more frequently, during the collection process (Neuman, 2000). It was, therefore, a means whereby the phenomenon became an event in need of understanding (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

Qualitative methods furthermore supplied the study with the needed richness, peculiarities and complexities invoked by the research question. By utilizing a qualitative approach, an attempt was made to understand the inmates' subjective perceptions about how they feel the social environment has influenced their habitual re-incarceration. These perceptions could only be captured through understanding their descriptions of their everyday lives, the context in which they operate as well as their frame of references.

3.3 Research Method

Against the above-sketched methodological preference, the specific method selected for this research project was an interpretive method. Terre Blanche and Durrhiem (1999) define interpretive methods as an approach, which aims to describe and interpret subjective experiences and feelings common to human beings. This method diverts from establishing quantifications and measurements, and complies with eliciting more in-depth, peculiar and richer meanings for social interaction.

This method is highly suitable in that it relies on first-hand accounts, describes observation in rich detail, and introduces findings in evocative language. It is also a method used to understand human action in terms of broad principles; however, it observes peculiarities and distinctiveness of these social phenomena (Terre Blanche & Durrhiem, 1999). This method aids and elevates underlying traits and preoccupations that hinder inmates from achieving and exploring productive lives outside prison.

3.4 Participants

Participants for the study were recruited from a Correctional Service Institution in the South Cape Karoo. Due to the authority held by the gatekeepers of this institution, the supervisors of this institution monitored access to the participants. The sample consisted of six Afrikaans speaking, "coloured" male juvenile inmates between the ages of 16 and 19 years. The use of Afrikaans speaking inmates reflects the population of inmates

incarcerated in this region. Afrikaans is also the predominant mother tongue of the "coloured" population in this region. Also due to the language barrier, Xhosa speaking inmates were not keen to participate. The participants were incarcerated for crimes ranging from economic crimes like theft to serious assault and murder. They were known to be habitual offenders and incarcerated twice or more.

The above participant profile lent itself to a purposive sampling technique. This technique assisted the researcher in purposefully selecting inmates appropriate to the study. To substantiate reasons for the use of a purposive technique, it is important to note that the study specifically intended to highlight and evoke questions around the construction of the participants' social reality. The use of this sampling technique conformed to the overarching qualitative research methodology. Although qualitative methodology does not aim to generalize, it is important to highlight and even reveal subtle ideas that may enrich the study when using the sample described above.

3.5 Data Collection Technique

In-depth individual interviews were used as data collection technique. Rather than eliciting responses within a standard format for comparison, in depth interviews elicit subjective experiences and meanings particular to those being interviewed (Banister et al, 1994). In-depth interviews have been one of the traditional means of eliciting qualitative data and are concerned with subjective meaning and experiences (Banister et al, 1994).

Individual interviews were conducted in order to give voice to inmates' perceptions and facilitated the emergence of data that is enriched with personal experience.

Individual interviews were most suitable for the interpretive method being used. Interpretive methodology aims to understand subjective feelings and, as mentioned above, in depth interview aims to do the same. Interviewing creates an opportunity to meet participants intimately and aids in understanding the dynamics of their thoughts and feelings (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

The study utilized semi-structured interviews that were audiotape-recorded with consent from the participants. The interviews were conducted in Afrikaans. In the quest to accurately describe the participants, a short demographic questionnaire was used.
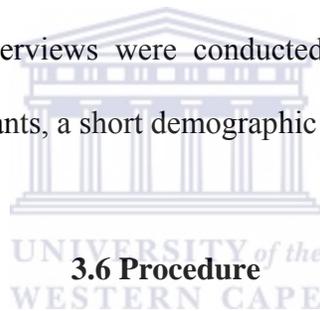
3.6 Procedure

It is important to recognize the necessity for the involvement of all basic stakeholders of this Correctional Services Institution.

These include:

1. Permission from gatekeepers or authorities involved in institutional research,

2. Informed consent from the participants themselves, and;

3. Verbal consent from participants under the age of 18 years, coupled with informed consent from the Correctional Service Institution as guardians of these participants.

In the case of this institution, permission to conduct research preceded the submission of a satisfactory protocol of this research project. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Higher Degrees Committee of the University of the Western Cape.

After permission to proceed with the research project was obtained, the approved proposal was submitted to the Research Unit of the Department of Correctional Service. On permission to access the inmates, the researcher (with the help of Correctional Services' staff) approached interested juvenile inmates that fitted the participant profile as stated above. Potential participants were given an informative overview of the study and were assured that their decision about participation in the study will not influence them positively or negatively.
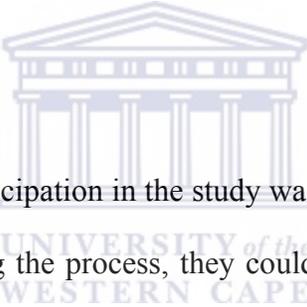
Inmates were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and should they wish to withdraw at any phase during the process, they could. Inmates were informed about the significance, aims and objectives of the study and were assured that information gathered during interviews (although tape-recorded) would remain strictly confidential and anonymous. Inmates were encouraged to seek support from social workers at the institution if participation in the research evoked psychological distress of any kind. After their participation were ascertained, individual in-depth interviews were scheduled. Interviews were conducted over three days during the month of November 2003 and were one hour per interview in duration.

3.7 Data Analysis

"In an interpretative study, there is no clear point when data collection stops and analysis begins" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). These two, usually separate steps in research, somehow flow from collection to analysis. Interpretive analysis deemed to be the most appropriate data analysis technique to utilize.

According to Terre Blanche and Durrhiem (1999), the key principle of this technique is to remain intimate with the data so as to interpret and 'Verstehen' (understand) it from an empathic position. Further, this method familiarizes people with peculiar phenomena, but also makes familiar things or events peculiar.
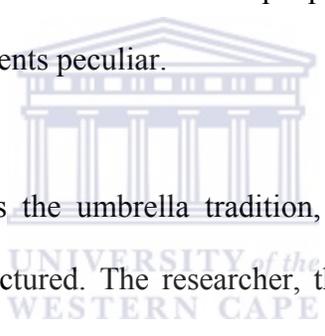
Interpretive analysis is seen as the umbrella tradition, under which thematic content analysis (among others) is structured. The researcher, therefore, made use of thematic content analysis to deduce themes from the data. The tape-recorded individual in-depth interviews were transcribed. Based on an initial reading of these transcripts a number of themes or re-occurring categories were established. Each interview was then systematically analyzed using these categories (Seale, 2000).

It should be acknowledged that the peculiarities and interpretations that evolved from the data were subjected to researcher bias. However, as previously mentioned, the methods employed here expected of the researcher to be the primary tool in conducting research. Therefore, the thematic interpretation was based on the researcher's own source of

understanding with relation to the context (Banister et al, 1992). As previously discussed, the scientific status of interpretive social science has come under constant criticism. However, interpretative understanding provides social observers a method of investigating social phenomena in a way that does not distort the social world of those being studied (Neuman, 2000).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is focused on describing the participants in terms of their understanding of the "reality" they experienced. In so doing, the main results, elicited through the preferred sampling technique, will be summarized. This sampling technique assisted the researcher in purposefully selecting inmates appropriate to the study. Individual in-depth interviews were used as data collection technique, in order to give voice to inmates' perceptions. The utilization of this data collection technique facilitated the emergence of data that was enriched with personal experience. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in Afrikaans and were audiotape-recorded with consent from the participants. In the quest to enrich the study with descriptive data, short demographic questionnaires were completed before the interviews were conducted.

4.2 Results deduced from Demographic Questionnaire

The participants of the study were residents of the township areas surrounding the Correctional Service Institution in the South Cape Karoo. Synonymous with the preconceived 'township culture' in South Africa, drugs and alcohol deemed to be readily available to anyone with the needed funds. The participating Correctional facility, where these and other inmates were incarcerated, was overcrowded, understaffed and notorious

with violent acts of self-defense and power play which ranged from physical and emotional to sexual assault. Due to a new structural endeavour from the Department of Correctional Services, all male juvenile inmates of the participating Correctional Services Institution were moved to a new facility, which functioned as a Correctional Youth Center. The Department of Correctional Services hoped to develop this center into a center of excellence.

The participant sample consisted of six Afrikaans speaking "coloured" male juvenile inmates between the ages of sixteen and nineteen years. Four participants were 19 years of age; one 18 and the other 16 years of age at the time the interviews were conducted. Three of the participants were raised in single-parent homes, having access to only their mothers with two having lost their fathers at a young age. Two inmates said that both parents raised them and the other participant was raised by extended family.

While growing up, their friends mostly consisted of individuals that were affiliated with gangs and gang-related activities. Only one participant claimed to not have been affiliated with gangs while growing up, however, were adopted into a prison gang only during his first incarceration.

The participants were known to be habitual offenders and were incarcerated twice or more. It should be highlighted that being 'incarcerated twice or more' only reflects the times they were actually sentenced and excludes the occasions they were incarcerated as awaiting trail inmates. This, also, does not imply that prior offences were not committed.

The participants were incarcerated for crimes ranging from theft to drug possession to serious assault and murder. Two participants that were inmates at the time are currently out on parole. Two inmates sentenced to 12 months and 8 months respectively, were out on parole, but were re-incarcerated in the Correctional Youth Center. The remaining two inmates were still serving their sentences.

With regard to education levels, two inmates finished their grade 10 while the other inmates' levels of education ranged between grades 5 and 8. Two inmates reported that they had run away from home. While one inmate reported that he had gone job hunting with friends in Cape Town. The last one had left because he felt that his needs were not being met.

THEMES

4.3 Results deduced from interview protocol

With the use of thematic content analysis, the following themes emerged as reasons for participants' return to prison. The first theme was participants' views of the prison environment and consisted of sub-themes. These were violence and insecurity in prison; the importance of gang affiliation in prison; and rehabilitation programmes in prison.

Subsequent themes highlight ideas that are peculiar to their way of life outside prison. They consist of substance abuse, peer pressure and their family environments.

4.3.1 Prison environment

4.3.1.1 Violence and insecurity in prison

With regard to questions around safety of correctional institutions, a general sense of insecurity was deduced. Inmates fell victim to physical, sexual and emotional manipulation or witnessed others' misfortune.

Participant 5: "They do funny things to another mother's child…sodomy and all those things".

Inmates reported to be unable to sleep comfortably due to fear of being sodomised.

Participant 1: "…the first time I got here…I just sat up straight on my bed…so I asked myself…what if I fall asleep and something happens to me? Every time I woke I would open my eyes to make sure everything was 'OK'…then I would lie awake".

Participant four highlighted that his specific fear was of the brother of his murder victim (also an inmate at the same facility).

Participant 4: "It's alright…it's just, I'm sometimes a bit scared".

He was afraid that the brother of his victim would send some inmate to take his life.

Participant 6: "The first I came to prison it was very difficult for me. They took my 'takkies'. If you return from a visit then your things will be taken from you".

Inmates reported that their first experience of being incarcerated were unbearable. They suffered intimidation and were stripped of the little personal possessions they were allowed.

Contrary to the common insecurity experienced by the inmates, two participants maintained that they experienced the prison environment to be safer than the community they grew-up in.

Participant 3: "It's safer because it keeps me out of mischief".

Based on Zamble and Porporino's (1988) concept of the 'deep freeze effect', the participant supposed prison to be an opportunity to stay out of mischief, a facility where he did not modify his criminal behaviour (in other words rehabilitated), but took some time out from the chaos of his community. His pre-prison behaviour, therefore, stayed intact, just frozen in time.

Participant 2: "If I was outside...how can I say...ahmmm...I would have been dead...people are hunting me down outside..."

Participant two argued that being incarcerated was safer than having to run from community gangsters who hunted him.

From the above responses related to prison safety, the overarching idea was that prison facilities were unsafe. However, some inmates also portrayed prison as a safe-haven from community instability. The next sub-theme will show that incarceration was perceived as 'not that bad' if an inmate developed the necessary affiliations and survival techniques.

4.3.1.2 Importance of gang affiliation in prison

Based on the insecurity of the prison environment, inmates are forced to use established safety measures to insure their survival. Gang affiliation in prison seemed to be the most

prominent means of insurance. Participants reported that gang membership (which ever gang you choose to affiliate with) ensured safety.

Sodomy, described as the most gruesome experience, could be avoided if one became part of a gang as your 'brothers' would protect you.

Participant 6: "Funny things happen to a person…sodomy and other things…they (the gang) can protect you from everything".

The 'gang protection' does not only apply to one specific prison institution. Gang membership, inmates argued, served as a lifetime affiliation. Where ever you go and whichever institution you were transferred to, the protection benefit of your affiliation was secured. Inmates argued that if you were to became part of a prison gang you acquired a certain 'brotherhood' that were useful to you throughout your life. This 'brotherhood's' rules and regulations participants refused to divulge or expand on; since each gang utilized a specific lingo that only members understood.

Participant 5:"I can do these things because I'm an adult..."

Prison gang membership also provided a certain status when inmates were released. As quoted above, participant five reported that his father allowed him to openly partake of alcohol and drugs because he was seen as a man. Gang affiliation in this case was seen as a form of initiation into adulthood.

Participant 5: "You see miss…today…I see what your own 'brother' can do to you…"

Gang affiliation also had its down side. Although inmates convincingly argued that it ensured their safety, they reluctantly admitted that even though they were part of a gang 'bad things' still happened to them.

Participant 5: "The best thing they can do, if you don't want to be part of their gang would be to kill you. They are scared that you will divulge their secrets…"

Inmates said that when one took the decision to become a gang member, one would never be able to undo that decision. As stated earlier, fellow gang members could take one's life if one wants to discontinue. Since the gang feared that one might divulge information that could influence them negatively.

4.3.1.3 Rehabilitation programmes in prison

Ideally prison environment should ultimately foster a culture of rehabilitation. Inmates, especially juveniles, were incarcerated as means of reformation and not retribution. However, when enquiring about their participation in rehabilitation programmes only participant five, reported active participation in a life skill programme. This programme (The President's Awards Programme) facilitated outings and provided life skills orientated programmes to inmates.

Participants reported that there were only scholastic and sports programmes available. These were not compulsory and they, therefore, did not partake. Participant two was incarcerated for six months at the time of his interview and reported that he still were not allocated or compelled to a rehabilitation programme.

Participant 1: "Why…this is not a youth centre. Now 'juveniles' only has a few privileges here. You just 'exercise' in the court yard…then you are locked-up again till the next morning".

Participant one reported that this Correctional Facility were not a juvenile center and therefore did not fulfill their needs as youth offenders. Inmates were only allowed an hour's exercise in the courtyard and then were locked up in their cells the rest of the day. Watching television and partaking in gang activities, like tattooing, therefore occupied their leisure time.

The prison environment as distinguished by its three sub-themes may be seen as reasons for recidivism, because although this environment is supposed to foster deterrence, it seemed to encourage further education in a criminal lifestyle. The harshness of the incarceration experience was overshadowed by the sense of 'brotherhood' provided by gang affiliation. Even more so, the fact that rehabilitation was secondary to both inmates and authorities made reformation difficult. However, as stated earlier, the aim of this study was not to evaluate the success of rehabilitation programmes. Rather, this theme showed the importance of reformation techniques, that would enable inmates to become resilient even if they were again faced with that same unstable community were deviant behaviour found root.

4.3.2 Substance addiction

Substance use was a familiar phenomenon among the participants. They described their communities as desensitized against substance use, with alcohol use evident everyday. Anyone able to afford alcohol or drugs could easily obtain it.

Participant 1: "…you can be ten or eleven years they will still sell to you. Yes you can get it easily. There are lots of 'taverns' and 'merchants'".

Participant one reported that even young children aged 10 years could buy legal or illegal substances freely. All the other participants echoed this view. Substance use became recreational with inmates reporting that they were exposed to substance use from an early age. This exposure varied from observing parents and family members to friends and the greater community.

Inmates stated that they were convinced that their substance use was their primary reason for recidivism.

Participant 6: "…if I didn't use that stuff (mandrax) I never would have come to prison".

They argued that if they did not use substances they would not have been incarcerated. Participants highlighted a direct link between their criminal activities and substance use. All participants claimed to have been under the influence of some kind of substance while committing these crimes.

Participants reported that their criminal activities were either motivated by the substance they used or their addiction motivated criminal activities. So once they were under the influence they felt the need to impress their friends (as expressed below).

Participant 2: "Maybe if I see a car standing in the street I have to prove myself to them…".

On the other hand, their need for obtaining the next 'fix' was motivation enough for committing an economic (theft or robbery) crime.

Participant 6: "Miss...to tell you the truth...if you smoked just one pill (mandrax), it stays

in your body only 15 minutes. Then it tells you...you want more".

Community exposure and easy access to substances in the community were inevitable. However, although somewhat tricky, access to drugs in prison was also evident. Participant five even admitted to drug dealing while he was incarcerated. Most of the other inmates reported that they refrained from drug use in prison.

4.3.3 Peer pressure

The participants were asked to formulate their own ideas about their definition of friendship. Participants reported that close friends should understand them and help them stay out of mischief.

Participant 1: "Ahmm...like what I would say...friendship is how your friends can

understand each other all the time. Not putting each other down".

Participants explained that they discovered that those they deemed as their friends were not fitting the categories they formulated. Their friends never visited them while they were imprisoned.

Participant 1: "Not one of them came to visit me".

They argued that although they were always "thrashed" (high) when committing the crimes, friends most often coerced them into it. Participant two argued that his friends had a negative influence on him.

Participant 2: "It's just when I'm with my friends that I get these ideas".

Participant two further argued that he felt like he had to prove himself to is friends all the time. He found himself doing these things just to please his friends.

4.3.4 Family environment

Most of the participants grew up in single parent homes. Only two of the six inmates had their father at home. Participant five knew both his mother and father, but did not have parent-child relationships with them. He concluded that both of his parents were alive, but the he grow up with his aunt. The fathers of participants one and two died when they were still at a young age. The last mentioned participants even accounted a change in familial dynamics after the death of their fathers. Participant one attributed his incarceration to the death of his father. He argues (as quoted below) that his father provided them with some stability.
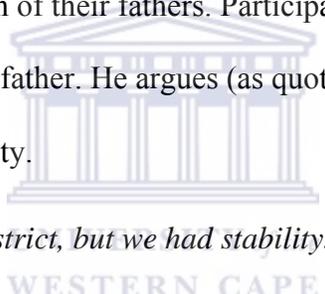
Participant 1: "He was very strict, but we had stability. You see Miss, if he was alive today i would not have been here".

They experienced closeness with their mothers or in the case of participant five, his aunt. They reported always feeling loved and supported by their mother figure while they were incarcerated. While their mothers begged them to stop their criminal behaviour and drug use, even after many promises from their side, inmates still continued these destructive behaviours.

Participant 6: "Many times, when I'm here in prison Miss...then I tell my mother...then I promise my mother that when I'm released from prison I will leave my 'things', but as soon as I'm released I start using that 'stuff' (mandrax) again".

Due to norms established in the communities they grew up in, they were exposed to various forms of substance use and criminal activities. Violence was also evident in their home-life. Participant one account that his father comes home drunk every Friday evening and fought with his mother. He continues to say that although his father gave them some stability (as highlighted above) he was scared of him most of his life.

Participant 1: "My relationship with my father? While I was still growing-up I was a bit scared of him".

Inmates did not share detailed discussions about their family's socio-economic status. But as were deduced from participant three and five, access to basic needs at home was limited. Participant five reported that he robbed someone's clothes once, because his family was unable to get him what he wanted that specific month.

Participant 5: "Now I rob this 'bro' (man)...you see miss...Now my family couldn't afford to get me the stuff that I needed...".

These were the main themes deduced from the data collected during the interviews. The themes support the view that incarceration does not always produce rehabilitation. Incarceration itself, seem to foster criminal behaviour. However, the primary reasons for recidivism mentioned by inmates, were influences external to the prison environment. Poverty, substance addiction and gangsterism were reported as enormous influences on their habitual re-incarceration.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the concepts explored in the literature review will be discussed, and together with the results obtained in Chapter Four a synthesized discussion will be presented. Evidently, much discussion has been evoked during data analysis. This chapter, however, will emphasize the theoretical implications of the results obtained during the data analysis. It is not the aim to prove the validity of psychosocial theories as causation for recidivism. However, it is hoped that these causation theories facilitated the study in its exploration towards understanding the participants' perspective on recidivism.
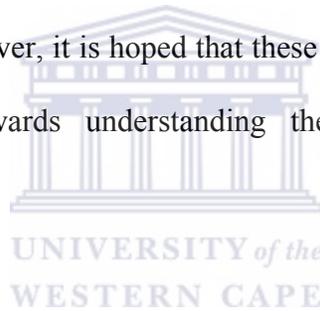
For the purpose of this study, recidivism was defined as a juvenile's habitual re-offending or re-incarceration despite efforts towards reformation. Authors like Lauer (1995) advocate the view that the primal focus of imprisonment should be punishment and isolation while rehabilitation should be a secondary focus. However, the nature of correctional facilities, as established in Chapter Two, foster little, if any platform for rehabilitation.

However, although prison environment facilitate some level of rehabilitation, inmates return habitually. With this view in mind this study was undertaken to establish an understanding of inmates' views on their habitual returns to prison.

5.2 Themes and Causation theories

It was established in Chapter Two that a combination of psychological and sociological perspectives would be adopted as causation theories.   The use of this binary perspective was motivated by the perception that both the inner strength of an individual and their external environmental influences, construct behaviour. In the aim to make sense of these theories, the themes that were deduced would be correlated with the responses obtained from the participants.
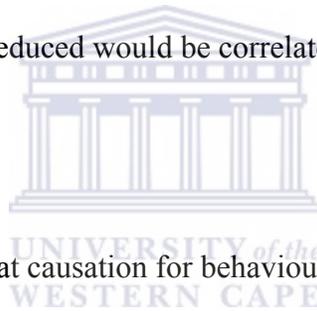
Sociological theories suggest that causation for behavioural pathology is located in the individual's environment and social relationships. According to the data, this perspective deems to be relevant. As discussed in Chapter Two 'anomie' represents a state of normlessness (Durkheim, 1933). Participants reported experiences of social disorganization, and attributed it to either their family environment or community. Durkheim (1933) concluded that 'anomie' is experienced when "…old customs, values and beliefs are discarded", and not replaced with new value systems. This therefore, leads to a structural breakdown. Participants one and two reported a sense of familial disorganization after the death of their fathers. They argued that, the stability and norms

enforced by their fathers were not re-enforced after their fathers' death, and were also not replaced with new systems that could develop structure and serve as guidance.

Participants unanimously reported their experiences of instability in their communities. Substance use and abuse and gangsterism were common and participants were therefore exposed to various kinds of criminal behaviour. Based on Sutherland's (1939) theory of 'differential association' it was evident that delinquent behaviour was learnt. Sutherland (1939) argued that individual's observed and received behavioural input from both criminal and non-criminal sources. Whichever source appeared more faviourable, they internalized.

Participants reported that they received most of their behavioural input from their friends. They reported that their friendship circles predominantly consisted of individuals that were affiliated with gangs and gang-related activities. Participants were also habitual offenders. As reported by participant six, they spend very little time in their community before being re-incarcerated. It can therefore, be implied that inmates internalized destructive behavioural inputs from those they were associated with in their communities and developed those inputs while they were imprisoned.

The use and abuse of substances could also have been learnt through modeling. This connotes that participants observed this behaviour and internalized it as normal behaviour. Participant five reported trying marijuana (dagga), because he saw his friend smoked it. This led to hard drugs and addiction, which in turn led to criminal activities

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and ultimately, recidivism. It can be deduced that inmates experienced a sense of vulnerability (anomie), which were exploited by behavioural inputs received from criminal sources.

Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) ideology of 'structural strain' may also have contributed to inmates' re-offending behaviour. This theory argued that individuals who experienced a deprivation in socio-economic success would likely display deviant behaviour as result. Although participants did not document their socio-economic status, a deprivation in their basic needs was deduced from the data they provided.

Three of the six participants were raised in single-parent homes. Participants also reported that basic resources were limited. One participant even committed a crime to obtain clothes. Social deprivation and poverty may, therefore, be highlighted as contributory factors to recidivism.

In contrast, correctional facilities provide inmates with three meals per day, clothes, shelter and medical facilities. Re-offending and re-incarceration might then be seen as means through which inmates could satisfy basic needs. If this holds true, the latter may then also serve as a reason for recidivism.

Similar to the sociological theories discussed above, psychoanalysis suggested that behavioural pathology was located within the individual's environment and social relationships. Psychoanalytic theory also suggested that the individual's external

environment, during childhood, had an influence on personality development. This ideology focused mainly on the parent-child relationship and emphasized the importance of early childhood in personality development. Successful personality development, they argue, were dependent on the child's mastery of various developmental stages and the acquisition of good moral grounding.

Moral development was determined by the strength of the individual's superego. The superego is one of three structural components of personality development as suggested by Freud. The child's superego strength was regarded to be dependent on the influences of their parents. Kratcoski and Kratcoski (1990) argued that any parent-child relationship deficiency may result in personality or conduct disorders. Parental guidance was therefore crucial during personality formation.

It was evident that four participants grew-up in single-parent homes. These participants only had access to their mothers. Although two of the participants grew-up with both their parents, none of them mentioned the presence of a positive male role-model in their lives. It can be suggested that the absence of a same-sex role-model, may have contributed to unsuccessful moral development.

Contrary to the above ideology, Yochelson and Samenow (1976) argued that delinquents should take responsibility for their criminal behaviour. These authors argued that external causes (like family, school and community environments) for delinquency should not be emphasized. Rather, personality dysfunctions experienced by the delinquent and its

negative effects on the external environment, should take precedence in determining causation for delinquent behaviour.

When participants were asked why they would return to prison, they acknowledged drug addiction. One participant argued that he had a choice to refuse participation in criminal activity, while another reported that although basic needs were sometimes difficult to meet, his criminal behaviour was unnecessary. This theory held strong appeal in that it provided an explanation for criminal behaviour of youth growing-up in loving, supportive homes, schools and community situations. Indeed one participant stated he was never exposed to substance use at home.

5.3 Recommendations

Although it was evident that recidivism was most often measured in terms of the success of rehabilitation programmes, this study focused its attention on eliciting socio-economic factors influencing recidivism. The importance of developing appropriate intervention strategies to facilitate rehabilitation became unequivocal. However, recidivism, as defined by this study, connoted that inmates were re-incarcerated even with efforts towards reformation. Rehabilitation interventions, therefore, becames an irrelevant variable through which to measure recidivism rates.

During the discussion it became evident that psychosocial theories can still be used to understand habitual criminal behaviour. Based on the history of South Africa and the

demographics of these participants, poverty and social deprivation became relevant reasons for recidivism. Substance abuse was also at the forefront as causation for recidivism, due to its effects on these participants and their families. However, personal responsibility and parental guidance were found to be almost non-existent.

The overall recommendation this exploration would, therefore, put forth, is that the Department's move toward unit management, in facilitating needs assessment of inmates, should reinforce their network with Community Corrections and NGO's so as to assist offenders even after they are released. This would help sustain whatever intervention the inmate received whilst incarcerated.

This study evoked many underlying issues facilitating recidivism. As highlighted throughout the study, the feasibility of current rehabilitation programmes and the implementation thereof was not the core subject of this discussion. However, the results of the investigation, presented the view that inmates (even those who received intervention) experienced difficulty after being released. This is why the study suggested that post-release assistance should get more attention. This will help re-integrate inmates back into their respective communities and give them a head start to becoming productive individuals in their communities.

5.4 Limitations

It became evident that recidivism was a psychosocial phenomenon that is multifaceted in its causation. This therefore, elicited the need for a comprehensive explanation of habitual re-incarceration. The nature of this research exploration limited the study to developing an understanding of inmates' subjective perceptions of recidivism. The methodology used to obtain this understanding was qualitative in nature and can therefore not be used to constitute a general perspective.

5.5 Conclusions

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to explore juvenile inmates' subjective perceptions of their returns to prison. It become evident that substance abuse was seen as the primary obstacle in their way toward deterrence. Although family difficulties were experienced, friends were seen as the secondary influence attributing to their re-offending nature. However, it also became evident that these inmates were lacking positive role models and social support. Finally, imprisonment should cease to be regarded as a panacea, the inter-connecting influences should be addressed.

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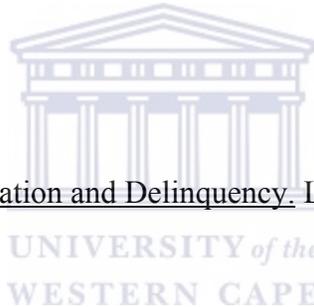
Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire (Afrikaans)

1. Deelnemer nommer

2. Hoe oud is jy?

3. Voordat jy tronk toe gekom het, by wie het jy gewoon?

	Enkel ouer
	Albei ouers
	Famielie bv. oom, tante, ouma, ens.
	Op straat
	Inrigting bv. weeshuis of herberg

4. Hoeveel goeie vriende (braza, homezas ect.) het jy gehad voor jy inhegtenis geneem was?

5. Hoeveel van hulle was al ooit in hegtenis geneem?

6. Was jy al ooit voorheen in die gevangenis?

	Ja
	Nee

7. Indien ja, hoeveel keer voor die keer?

	Eenmaal
	Tweemaal
	Driemaal
	Meer as driemaal
	Net verhoor afwagtend / stokkies gele

8. Wat was die redes vir elke keer wat jy in die gevagenis was en hoe lank was jy elke keer in die gevangenis?

	Vonnis	Rede	Legte van vonnis
8a	Eerstekeer		
8b	Tweedekeer		
8c	Derdekeer		
8d	Vierdekeer en meer		
8e	Verhoor afwagtend / stokkies gele		

9. Wat was jou oortreding hierdie keer, en hoe lank is jy gevonnis?

Rede	Vonnis

10. Wat is die hoogste vlak van opvoeding wat jy voltooi het?

	Geen opvoeding
	Graad 1 – Graad 4
	Graad 5 – Graad 8
	Graad 9
	Graad 10
	Graad 11
	Graad 12

11. Was jy al ooit in diens geneem?

	Ja, voltyds
	Ja, deeltyds
	Nog nooit

12. Wie was die hoof van julle huisgesin terwyl jy groot geword het?
(Definisie: Huisgesin is 'n groep mense wat in 'n eenheid woon en kos en hulpmiddels deel.)

13. As jou vader nie die hoof van die familie was nie, waar was hy?

14. Baie jong mense hardloop weg van hul huis. Het jy al ooit weggeloop van die huis?

	Ja
	Nee

15. Indien ja, hoekom het jy die huis verlaat?

Demographic Questionnaire (English)

1. Participant number

[   ]

2. How old are you?

[   ]

3. Before coming to prison, whom were you living with?

	Single parent
	Both parents
	Family e.g. uncle, aunt, granny, ect.
	On the street
	Institution e.g. orphanage or hostel

4. How many close friends (braza, homezas ect.) did you have before your arrest?

[   ]

5. How many of your close friends have ever been arrested?

[   ]

6. Have you ever been to prison before?

	Yes
	No

7. If yes, how many times before?

	Once
	Twice
	Three times
	More than three times
	Just awaiting trials

8. What were the reasons for you being in prison each time and how long did you spend each time?

	Sentence	Reason	Length of

			sentence
8a	First time		
8b	Second time		
8c	Thrid time		
8d	Forth time or more		
8e	Awaiting trails		

9. What was your offence this time and how long is your sentence?

Reason	Sentence

10. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

	No education
	Grade 1 – Grade 4
	Grade 5 – Grade 8
	Grade 9
	Grade 10
	Grade 11
	Grade 12

11. Have you ever been employed?

	Yes, full time
	Yes, part time
	Never employed

12. Who was the head of your household when you were growing up?
 (Definition: household is a group of people who live in a unit and share food and resources.)

13. If your father was not the head of your household, where was he?

14. Many people run away from home. Did you ever run away from home?

	Yes
	No

15. If yes, why did you leave home?

Appendix B
Interview Protocol (Afrikaans)

1 Gevangenis Lewe
- Hoe sal jy sê is tronk lewe?
- Beskryf jou hoe jy die eerste aand in die gevangenis ervaar het?
- Hoe spandeur jy jou tyd?
- Hoe veilig is die gevangenis?
- Beskryf wat gebeur na toesluit tyd?

2 Bende Aktiwiteite
- Neem jy deel aan bende aktiwiteite in die gervangenis?
- Beïnvloed deelname aan bende jou veiligheid in die gevangenis?
- Was jy 'n bende lid buite die gevangenis?
- Het deelname aan bende aktiwiteite enigsins jou opname en her-opname in die gevangenis beïnvloed?

3 Persoonlike Verhoudings
- Beskryf jou huishoudelike omgewing terwyl jy opgegroei het?
- Beskryf jou verhouding met jou ouers, broers en susters?
- Hoe sal jy vriendskap definieer en het jy goeie vriende?
- As jy 'n bende lid was terwyl jy buite die gevangenis was, het jy hulle gesien as jou vriende?
- Beskryf skool lewe?
- Het jy skool geniet?

4 Gemeenskap
- Beskryf bie gemeenskap waar jy in opgegroei het?
- Het jy al ooit onveilig in jou gemeenskap gevoel?
- Hoe verkrygbaar is dwelms in jou gemeenskap?
- Was bende aktiwiteite 'n probleem in jou gemeenskap?

5 Redes vir Her-opname
- Hoekom dink jy is jy terug in die gevangenis?
- Wat dink jy het jou her-opname beïnvloed?
- Dink jy miskien dat jy verkeerde besluite in jou lewe geneem het? Indien ja, watter keuses het jy gehad?
- Sal jy weer terug kom?

6 Rehabilitasie Programme
- Het jy deelgeneem aan enige groep rehabilitasie programme terwyl jy in die gevangenis was?
- Wat het jy daar geleer?
- Hoe dink jy sal die programme jou help om nie weer terug te kom gevangenis toe nie.

Interview Protocol (Engilsh)

1 Prison Environment
- What would you say prison life is like?
- Describe experiences of the first night you spent in a prison cell?
- How do you occupy your time?
- How safe is prison?
- Describe what happens after "lock-up" time?

2 Gangsterism
- Do you take part in gang activities in prison?
- Does gang affiliation influence your safety in prison?
- Were you part of a gang outside prison?
- Did being part of a gang influence being in and returning to prison?

3 Interpersonal Relationships
- Describe your home environment while you were growing-up?
- Describe your relationship with your parents and siblings?
- How would you define friendship and do you have close friends?
- If you were part of a gang outside prison, did you see them as your friends?
- Describe school life?
- Did you enjoy school?

4 Community Environments
- Describe the community you grew-up in?
- Did you ever feel unsafe in your community?
- How available is drugs in your community?
- Was gangsterism a problem in your community?

5 Reasons for Recidivism
- Why do you think you are back in prison?
- What do you think influenced your returns?
- Do you perhaps think that you made wrong choices in the past? If so which choices did you have?
- Would you come back again?

6 Rehabilitation Programmes
- Did you take part in any group rehabilitation programmes while in prison?
- What did you learn from them?
- How do you think these programmes would help you not to return to prison again?