Understanding the experiential intersections of violence, gender identities and mental health, in the accounts of male parolees, in Gauteng, South Africa

By

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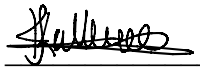
A research project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MA of Social and Psychological Research in the field of Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 15 March, 2023.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.



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15 Day of March 2023.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Brett Bowman, for his invaluable time, guidance and support throughout the research process.

I would also like to thank the staff at Zonderwater Community Correctional Centre, Thandi Maya and Darrian Long, for assisting me with the data collection process and always offering support and guidance.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my family and friends. Thank you for your continuous love and support.

Abstract

Imprisonment in South Africa has been categorized by untold hardships and suffering. Some of the major factors which influence life in correctional centres in South Africa, are embedded within violence, gender identities and mental health. These three constructs – violence, gender identities and mental health – appear embedded within the logic of the correctional centre regime. Thus, to understand the entirety of an offender's experience during incarceration, it is necessary to investigate the intersections of violence, gender identities and mental health. This was achieved using a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological approach to centre on the participants' experiences. This research consisted of six semi-structured face-to-face interviews with male parolees at Zonderwater Correctional Community Centre. The interviews were based on a self-developed questions derived from research by Akhona (2014), Bantjes et al. (2017), Celinska and Sung (2014) and Gear and Ngubeni (2002). The interview questions were open-ended and focused on the participants' subjective meanings, understandings and experiences regarding the dynamic intersection of violence, gender identities and mental health in South African correctional centres. The findings of this research revealed that the exposure to and involvement in violent acts are inextricably related to the fundamental deprivations that offenders are subjected to and the associated "pains of imprisonment". This revelation demonstrated the negotiation of gender that takes place within these confines, making acts of sexual assault and violence deemed more acceptable. In navigating this system of violence and gender identity negotiations, the findings of this study illustrated the emotional and mental impact that this environment has on offenders. This highlighted the pertinent need for the Department of Correctional Centres (DCS) to address current gaps in the rehabilitation models they use. These gaps could account for the recidivism rate in South Africa. It is clear that the intersection of violence, gender identities and mental health play an influential role in determining the reported experiences of offenders. The study thus has the potential to contribute to policies, by illustrating that a multi-layered approach to rehabilitation is required.

Key words: Correctional centre, gender identities, male parolees, mental health, South Africa, violence

Table of Contents

Chapter one: Introduction and background of the study

1.1. Introduction

Upon the formal abolishment of Apartheid laws in 1990, South Africa implemented a correctional centre system governed by the Department of Correction Services (DCS). The DCS has emphasised human rights, in the form of transitioning correctional centres into more humane structures (Bailey & Ekiyor, 2005; Dissel & Ellis, 2002). In line with the promises offered by South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, many believed that the levels of violence would decrease significantly (Davis, 2019). However, these rates have since increased, resulting in South Africa having the third highest crime rate in the world at 76.86 per 100 000 in the population (World Population Review, 2022). As a result of the country's history of fragmented relations and inequalities, as well as the under resourcing, the conditions within South African correctional centres continue to be characterised by the abuse of power as a means to control offenders. In this sense, power and control stem from the mechanisms used during Apartheid, where repressive power was heavily relied upon to maintain a plethora of restraining laws (Filippi, 2011). Thus, offenders' experiences of incarceration are often marked by hardships and suffering. This reflects the philosophy which emphasises oppression and punishment, rather than treatment and care (Posholi, 2019). This, in turn, negates legitimate and dignified forms of punishment and rehabilitation (Human Sciences Research Council, 2008).

Given the abuse of power, violence becomes associated with the acquisition of status within this context (Michalski, 2017). This results in the internalization and normalization of 'pro-violence' values (Bowman et al., 2015). Given that such actions and responses are viewed as an acceptable way to respond to conflict, violence becomes a form of sub-culture within correctional centres (Brankovic, 2019). The violence seen between offenders within these structures is often considered to be 'part of the punishment' and thus, acceptable and normalized (Human Sciences Research Council, 2008). Offenders are exposed to the "pains of imprisonment" which refer to five key deprivations that characterise life in correctional centres. These include (1) deprivation of liberty, (2) deprivation of goods and services, (3) deprivation of heterosexual relationships[1], (4) deprivation of autonomy and (5) deprivation of security

[1] Deprivation of heterosexual relationships: Within this study, this sense of deprivation aims to illustrate constraints of sexual choice in the broader sense.

(Haggerty & Bucerius, 2020). As a result, such deprivations typically accentuate psychological consequences for offenders (Haggerty & Bucerius, 2020).

It is through the process of adapting to this 'new' way of life – known as 'prisonization' – that the intersection of violence and the negotiation of gender identities comes to the forefront. In this instance, gender becomes a phenomenon which is explained through power relations, whereby for men to survive in a hyper-masculine context, they negotiate their position within the correctional centre hierarchy (Iwamoto et al., 2012). This hierarchy reflects ideas associated with traditional understandings of masculinity which emphasizes the importance of dominance, assertiveness and control (Jewkes et al., 2015). As a result of the hierarchical structure, there is a process of gender negotiation which occurs (Iwamoto et al., 2012). It is through this process that some men gain the status of dominance, power and authority over others. In turn, this creates a power dynamic whereby some men are viewed as superior while others are viewed as inferior (Michalski, 2017). This sense of power contributes to the marginalization and oppression of the offenders who do not conform to the norms associated with hegemonic masculinity (Michalski, 2017). In this sense, hegemonic masculinity refers to the dominant form of masculinity that is expected and reinforces the structures and systems within correctional centres (Michalski, 2017). Thus, hegemonic masculinity becomes the basis for understanding how violence reflects the dominant cultural constructions of masculinity and reinforces the status hierarchy within the correctional centre subculture (Michalski, 2017).

By placing offenders in a hyper-masculinized patriarchal space, where their needs are not met and where they are continuously exposed to high-risk environments of violence, as well as the negotiation process which may result in an offender being misgendered[2] , it is likely that these experiences will compound their mental health. This consequently has both a direct and/or indirect impact on the incarcerated offenders (Human Sciences Research Council, 2008). This study therefore hopes to contribute to the understanding of the intersectional experiences of violence, gender identities and mental health that offenders endure, during their time of incarceration.

[2] The term misgendered in the context of this research report has been used to illustrate instances where language, pronouns and behaviours are attributed to an offender who does not align with the associated identity.

1.2. Rationale

The regulation of human behaviour through the formal punishment of transgressions against institutionalised rules or laws has taken many forms throughout history. In contemporary societies, crime (or transgressions against such laws) may be seen as a social construct developed by those in power. They define what is considered to be a criminal act on the basis of it being a threat to security and society, which may be punishable (Akih & Dreyer, 2017). Imprisonment at scale has led to the 'prison industrial complex' – the rapid expansion of offender populations. Specifically, over 11 million people have been incarcerated globally, indicating that the global correctional centre population has increased by 20% between 2002 and 2020 (Penal Reform International, 2020). In South Africa, the total offender population is approximately 159 290, and is full to 150% of correctional centre capacity (Department of Correctional Service, 2020; Muntingh, 2020).

Given the high incarceration rate in South Africa, a significant proportion of this population is subjected to a loss of liberty, desirable goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy and security, as well as degradation, dehumanization, and the danger that one encounters once incarcerated (Haney, 2012; Shammas, 2017). Collectively, these fundamental deprivations have been characterized as the *'pains of imprisonment'* (Shammas, 2017). As a result of these hardships, some of the major factors which influence life in correctional centres in South Africa, are embedded within violence, gender identities and mental health (Akhona, 2014; Bantjes et al., 2017; Celinska & Sung, 2014; Gear & Ngubeni, 2002).

Violence is a ubiquitous phenomenon within correctional centres. Scott (2015) explains violence as being produced through the situational context of the correctional centre regime. Violence becomes normalized and considered acceptable as the conditions and structures within the correctional centre system contribute to the occurrence and perpetuation of violence among offenders (Mears et al., 2013; Scott, 2015). Typically, violent acts create and/or maintain hierarchies (Baggio et al., 2020). In turn, the use of violence, creates some sense of ordered structure within correctional centres (Oritz & Jackery, 2019).

Sexual violence further creates various power relations amongst male offenders by shaping the construction of 'manhood' within the correctional centre subculture (Gear, 2010). This leads to misgendering within this environment. Misgendering in this context refers to actions and/or the use of language and pronouns that do not align with the gender that an

individual identifies as (Maycock, 2020). This type of violence is embedded within elements of identity and manhood, as a means of asserting and claiming power (Gear & Ngubeni, 2002). The constant threat of violence and the misgendering process is likely to have a psychological impact on offenders and continue to shape the individual's identity after release from the correctional centre (Fazel et al., 2016).

By being placed in an environment which is governed by power, status and hierarchy, as well as the threat of being exposed to violence (both physical and sexual), the offenders mental health is likely to be further compounded. Offenders are confined to a high stress environment which is likely to have significant consequences for some, as they are forced to adapt to this 'new' way of life (Haney, 2012; Leban et al., 2016). With this comes the constant fear of being exposed to and/or involved in violent acts and/or victimizations. This arguably takes a significant toll on some individuals' mental health. Therefore, these three constructs – violence, gender identities and mental health – appear to be located within the logic of the correctional centre's regime. To understand the entirety of offenders' experiences during incarceration, it is necessary to investigate the intersection of violence, gender identities and mental health.

There is limited research in understanding the interconnectedness of these elements. The identified gap justifies evaluating and understanding the experiential intersection of violence, gender identities and mental health, amongst male parolees, in South Africa. This will provide a first-hand account of the experiences which define life during incarceration.

The study aims to reveal and disseminate these reported experiences to the general population, practitioners and government officials. Given that incarceration represents an institutionalised and legitimised form of deprivation (Shammas, 2017), the deprivation model will be used to elucidate how the environmental conditions of correctional centres shape an individual and their experiences.

In addition, this research has the potential to contribute to policies, by emphasizing the importance of acknowledging how correctional centres may impact one's well-being. In South Africa, the Mental Health Care Act of 2002 indicates that the responsibilities of citizens, health workers and police officials are to address mental health problems. However, according to Jack et al. (2019), individuals may be detained for months or years, without having access to mental healthcare facilities. For example, Sukeri et al. (2016) demonstrated that the Eastern Cape had no plans or policies in place to assess, manage and/or address mental health

challenges that offenders may face during incarceration. Comparatively, Bantjes et al. (2017) found various challenges in South Africa with regards to providing psychological care to offenders, as a result of the environmental factors and minimal resources. There are various psychological support programs whereby offenders have access to these services, however, healthcare services for offenders need to improve. This research thus aims to raise awareness regarding South African correctional centres' cultures and offenders' mental health, as well as the importance of incorporating mental health programs into the correctional centre's environment and routines.

1.3. Research aims

The aim of this research was to explore South African parolees' accounts of their experiences during their time of incarceration, with regards to violence, gender identities and mental health. By doing this, I aimed to explore the intersectional relationship between these constructs, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences which shaped these individuals' lives during their time while incarcerated.

1.3.1. Research questions

Thus, the two research questions being explored are:

1. What are parolees' reported experiences of violence, gender identities and mental health in correctional centres?

2. What are parolees' reported experiences of the intersection between violence, gender identities and mental health in correctional centres?

Chapter Outline: Layout of the research report

This research report has been divided into five chapters to achieve the above objectives.

The purpose of this first chapter is to introduce the current study and its aims.

Chapter two provides insights into understanding the existing phenomena – violence, gender identities and mental health – and the way in which these facets are interlinked. This chapter further demonstrates how this research is embedded within the theoretical framework of the deprivation model.

The third chapter provides an explanation for why this research has been located within a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological design, as well as the way in which reflexivity played a role. Within this section, further insight into the participants and the recruitment process is considered. Chapter three also outlines the types of data collection and methods of analysis which were utilized. The way in which ethical standards were adhered to, are explored. These procedures were in line with the protocols stipulated for human research by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (non-medical) at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

Chapter four presents the insights drawn from the data during the interview process. In this section, the emergence of pertinent themes comes to light, through the use of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). These themes have been used to gain an understanding of participants' experiences during their time in the correctional centres. In line with an IPA this section compares the findings of the current study to what is currently known about the intersections of violence, gender identities and mental health amongst male correctional centre populations. In so doing, I have been able to identify the areas where the findings from this study are supported and/or contradicted by research presented in the literature review.

This final chapter synthesises the key findings of the study. The final sections of this last chapter outline the study's limitations and provide several suggested areas for further research.

Chapter two: Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1. Introduction

Following the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa, levels of violence were predicted to decrease significantly. Murder rates peaked towards the end of Apartheid, at 66.9 murders per 100,000 (Davis, 2019) and as predicated, by 2011, there were approximately 30 recorded murders per 100,000 (Gibson, 2020). However, by 2019, this increased to 38 murders per 100,000 (Gibson, 2020). By 2019, a total of approximately 2.1 million crimes were reported in South Africa (Maluleke, 2019). South Africa continues to have one of the highest rates of violent crimes worldwide. In 2022 South Africa ranked third in the world where 76.86 crimes per 100,000 people were committed (World Population Review, 2022). The culture within correctional centres across South Africa is embedded within harsh and inhumane living conditions (Warton, 2017).

This literature review unpacks life in correctional centres to inform the study of the reported experiences of offenders during incarceration. To do this, the literature review begins by offering an overview on correctional centres within South Africa. Thereafter, a discussion regarding violence, gender identities and mental health is undertaken. To understand these constructs, the research is embedded within the theoretical framework of the deprivation model. The review concludes by revealing the necessity in understanding the intersection of these constructs, as a means of understanding South African male offenders' experiences during their incarcerations through a more holistic lens.

2.2. Correctional centres in South Africa

South Africa's correctional centres were established in the nineteenth century (Africa Watch Prison Project, 1994). This development was advantageous to colonial rulers as correctional centre camps were widely used to ensure an accessible supply of forced labour, causing an overpopulation in the correctional centre (Havik et al., 2019). Following this, the Prison Act of 1959, implemented by the apartheid regime, instituted racial segregation within correctional centres, resulting in human rights violations and overcrowding (Filippi, 2011). Upon the abolishment of apartheid, racial segregation within correctional centres was legally dissolved and new laws were introduced in the hope of reducing the correctional centre population. However, South African correctional centres continue to have one of the highest rates of incarceration (Akih & Dreyer, 2017).

Correctional centres in South Africa are governed by the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) (Bantjes et al., 2017). Across male, female and juvenile detention centres, 79.6% of the offender population is black, 18.2% is coloured, 1.6% is white and 0.6% is Asian/ Indian[3] (Makou et al., 2017). The role of the DCS is to provide a safe, secure and humane environment and ensure that individuals' basic rights are being met. Unfortunately, this is seldom the case for South African offenders (Bantjes et al., 2017).

Correctional centres form an integral element of the criminal justice system as they play a crucial role in upholding laws and regulations to ensure justice within society (Bert, 2012). Although correctional centres are often characterised as 'evil' structures, to some extent it is believed that the modern correctional system evolved in the spirit of humanism (Jouet, 2021). Foucault (1980 in Bert, 2012) argued that the modern correctional centre system needs to be understood through the lens of its historical and theoretical emergence. As a result of the development of the prison industrial complex, correctional centres appear to be governed by the intersection of capitalism, regulation and punishment (Davis & Shaylor, 2001). This speaks to the interconnection of government and private sector interests that profit from the growth and maintenance of the correctional centre system (Davis & Shaylor, 2001). The prison industrial complex in turn describes the economic and political forces that influence and benefit from mass incarceration, shaping policies, legislation and practices embedded within correctional centres (Davis & Shaylor, 2001). This has possibly influenced the correctional centre population to be the highest it has ever been (Schultz, 2015). For example, in the USA, there are currently 2.2 million people incarcerated, indicating that for every 100 000 people within the USA, an estimated 655, are in jail (Khan, 2019). The increase in correctional centre populations has created strenuous conditions for both offenders and staff (Schultz, 2015).

Those incarcerated are often vulnerable and deprived of their basic human rights (Van Hout & Mhlanga-Gunda, 2019). There are instances where offenders are exposed to humane conditions, for example, in Norway. Within these correctional centres, the focus is placed on improving living conditions for offenders, treatment and the employment of evidence-based interventions to create a positive influence over offenders. These correctional centres are embedded within the ethos that correctional centre life should resemble normality and life outside as closely as possible (Andvig et al., 2020), unlike other correctional centres where

[3] It is noteworthy that these are set categories according to South African national statistics. The use of these is not to reinforce problematic categories.

treatment is governed by deprivation and humiliation (Akih & Dreyer, 2017). The latter conditions tend to characterise correctional centres across South Africa (Akih & Dreyer, 2017).

Imprisonment within South Africa is characterised by untold hardships and suffering, given the abuse of power and force which is exercised as a means to controlling offenders. In this sense, a correctional centre may be seen as an oppressive structure which is governed by a violent history (Akih & Dreyer, 2017). This speaks to institutionally-structured violence whereby autonomy and choices are curtailed, wellbeing is undermined, there is a loss of a sense of safety and security, and human needs are systematically denied through restrictive distribution of resources (Scott, 2015). This violence often goes unacknowledged; however, it is harmful for those who are located within it (Scott, 2015). Correctional centres become specifically designated coercive structures in which human choices, actions and relationships are controlled (Scott, 2015). This process is known as prisonization, and it tends to influence the way in which offenders behave. This is seen as an adaptive strategy in order to cope and manage their life behind bars (Muntingh, 2009).

Within South African correctional centres, offenders are at risk of being coerced, assaulted, raped and/or murdered by fellow offenders, despite the implementation of the Correctional Services Act and case laws which aim to ensure their safety (Bantjes et al., 2017). It appears that violence is part of the daily correctional centres' regimens, and so it is impossible to understand the regime without acknowledging the reality of violence (Scott, 2015). Violence is produced by the structural arrangements of the correctional service system, causing offenders to often experience pains of imprisonment, resulting in a sense of overwhelm and/or psychological distress (Scott, 2015). Given this ubiquity of violence, it appears that offenders may experience deep psychological trauma, realised through a deviant correctional centre subculture (Lui et al., 2021). This subculture is defined by cultural norms and values that exist within the correctional centre system (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014). This may include for example physical assault, sexual abuse, and the development of criminal networks such as drug trafficking, extortion and other illegal activities (Ngubane et al., 2022). This places offenders at risk for experiencing a significant impact on their mental health, as it is likely that they will experience increased levels of stress, anxiety and/or depression (Muntingh, 2009).

2.3. Understanding violence in correctional centres

Violence in correctional centres is a daily occurrence (Baggio et al., 2020). The violent acts which occur include physical and sexual acts (Baggio et al., 2020). Physical violence has

been defined as being hit, slapped, kicked, bit, choked, beat up and/or hit with or threatened with a weapon (Wolff & Shi, 2009). The weapons that offenders utilize during their time of incarceration are typically self-made. The common weapons within South African correctional centres include shanks (knives), daggers, clubs (such as pitchers, hot pots and broom handles), razors and saps (for example, padlocks in socks) (Lincoln et al., 2006). Embedded within the acts of physical violence, sexual violence within correctional centres has been defined as any unwanted sexual contact or threats made by another offender or staff member, with or without penetration (Medina, 2018). The predominant factors which appear to influence violence within correctional centres tend to be embedded within gang rivalries, overcrowding and disagreements (Baggio et al., 2020; Barnes et al., 2010).

Statistics revealing the rate of violence within correctional centres are not entirely accurate as the majority of these violent acts go unreported (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014). Lindegaard and Gear (2014) found that 58% of violent acts, specifically recent assaults, in correctional centres were not reported. Within the same study, 29% of respondents revealed that they had been assaulted during their time of incarceration and 17% had experienced some form of assault in less than a month of being incarcerated (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014). Correctional centre management teams are attempting to manage these issues. However, in South Africa, due to the overcrowding and low staff to offender ratio, they remain a major challenge (Muntingh, 2009). As a result of this, the way of controlling offenders and creating a structure within these correctional centres, is through the use of institutionally-structured violence (Scott, 2015). Gear and Ngubeni (2002) explain that violence does not occur in a vacuum, but rather it is embedded within the way in which individuals learn to relate to one another. It is through this process that offenders become accustomed to the correctional centre norms.

2.4. Gangs and violence

Life in correctional centres in South Africa is characterized by an elaborate system of gangs, through which, violence tends to be mediated (Grobler & Hesselink, 2015). Gangs are formed as a means of creating a structure within correctional centres. They are characterized by rankings and disciplinary codes (Kristine, 2011). This structure is implemented in order to monitor activities and regulate behaviour amongst offenders.

Gangs in correctional centres engage in a range of violent acts including corruption and abuse – both sexual and physical – as a means of asserting their dominance (Lindegaard &

Gear, 2014). These gangs obtain a significant proportion of power, and as a result, gangs have become central to the way in which the correctional centre structure is organized in South Africa (Grobler & Hesselink, 2015; Kristine, 2011; Steinberg, 2004a).

Offenders tend to join gangs as a result of the climate of fear. Gang membership is based on the desire to have some sort of protection from violence, robbery and abuse (Howell, 2011). Gang membership is theoretically voluntary, however, the confinement for up to twenty-three hours a day, in overcrowded communal cells places a significant proportion of power into gang hierarchies, which in turn encourages offenders to cooperate with the gangs in various ways (Pyrooz & Decker, 2019).

The most common gang across correctional centres in South Africa is the Numbers Gang. Each number represents a level in the hierarchy which is associated with various responsibilities and behaviours (Grobler & Hesselink, 2015; Steinberg, 2004a). The predominant Numbers Gang operating within South African correctional centres are the 28s, 27s and 26s (Steinberg, 2004a). The gangs are distinguished based on their aims and activities. For example, the 28s are regarded as the seniors' in the gang and are organized according to a system of 'wyfies' or coerced homosexual partners, which will be explored in the following section (Steinberg, 2004a). The 26s, are required to coercively rob and steal other offender's possessions, such as, for example, cigarettes and/or money. The 27s protect and enforce the codes of the 28s and 26s, often through the use of violence (Steinberg, 2004a). The 28s are prohibited from directly speaking to the 26s. Thus, the 27s mediate the flow of information between these two ranks (Steinberg, 2004a).

Typically, the Numbers Gang members are not antagonistic towards one another, but the potential for violent conflict is great, given the competition for resources (Steinberg, 2004a). The Number Gang follows a strict code of conduct and ideology which each member is required to adhere to (Steinberg, 2004a). Gang members who fail to abide by the gang's legislations and/or betrays fellow gang members, puts them at risk of severe punishment (Steinberg, 2004a). Such punishments often include physical and/or sexual violence, which often have the potential to result in death (Steinberg, 2004a). The fear of betraying the Numbers code of conduct, creates the perception among gang members that once they have joined, the Number will forever be a part of their identity (Steinberg, 2004a).

Another gang within South African correctional centres, which is of more recent origin is known as the Big Five (Nel, 2017). This gang is known for their collaboration with the

authorities. Gang membership is typically symbolized through the use of tattoo symbols which are recognizable to all offenders (Nel, 2017). Each correctional centre in South Africa has a dominant gang, which imposes their own discipline and regulations beneath that of the correctional centre authorities (Filippi, 2011). When there is rivalry amongst different gangs within a correctional centre, it tends to result in violent conflict (Ortiz, 2018). This sort of precipitating feature of violence has a long history. For example, in Kroonstad Medium A correctional centre, a fight occurred between the 26s and the Big Fives. Given the challenge of overcrowding, 200 offenders from the Cape had been transferred as a means of relieving this problem. However, the newly arrived offenders predominantly belonged to the 26s and challenged the previous dominant gang in the correctional centre which was the Big Fives. This resulted in serious injuries in which four offenders were treated in hospital in town and six were treated in the correctional centre's hospital (Africa Watch Prison Project, 1994).

Although this gang rivalry took place in 1994, such tension between gang members remains rife across South African correctional centres. In 2018 at Leeuwkop correctional centre Medium B section, rival gangs rioted, as they were fighting for control over the facility's drug trade (Hosken, 2018). This violence left one offender and a warden dead, and another offender critically injured (Hosken, 2018). There are limited interventions for discouraging and/or preventing gang involvement, as well as managing violent and aggressive behaviours (Herbig & Hesselink, 2016). Gang-related violence is thus prevalent throughout correctional centres in South Africa, making gang violence an important feature of correctional centre life.

Gangs within South African correctional centres tend to offer offenders, and particularly long-term offenders, an alternative means of socialization (Grobler & Hesselink, 2015). This form of socialization is governed by a hierarchical structure which deems some offenders as superior and others inferior (Grobler & Hesselink, 2015). The offenders who are viewed as superior often engage in violence acts as a means of maintaining their status as a gang member, placing those who are considered inferior at a greater risk of victimization and abuse. However, to obtain this status, it typically requires one offender's dominance over another, which is often in the form of physical and/or sexual violence (Steiner et al., 2017). This further deepens the involvement in and occurrence of violence.

2.5. Sexual violence in correctional centres

Sexual violence in correctional centres appears to be a global problem, which is interwoven in the gang hierarchies and practices (Gear, 2010). New arrivals in correctional centres are

subjected to sexual violence as part of asserting rank allocations within the gang hierarchy (Grobler & Hesselink, 2015). Sexual violence relates to roles of 'partnership', which is often referred to as correctional centre 'marriages' (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014). This 'marriage' is often perceived as mimicking heterosexual marriages outside of correctional centres (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014). Offenders who have been exposed to sexual violence are typically categorized as wives or 'wyfies' (Gear, 2010). Once an offender has been deemed a wyfie, his identity becomes feminized, and his role is to provide sexual gratification for other men (Lewin, 2017). Brutality, violence and coercion are embedded within these 'marriages'. The philosophy of these 'marriages' represent a heterosexist type of masculinity which falls within traditional understandings of masculinity and manhood within the South African context (Jewkes et al., 2011; Morrell et al., 2012). This traditional sphere of masculinity takes a patriarchal form and involves implicit violence and glorifies ideas of male sexual entitlement (Morrell et al., 2012). It is through the cultural meanings attached to this idea of manhood that men's control over women becomes legitimate and justified (Jewkes et al., 2011). In turn, the violence may be seen in terms of an 'agreement' between the 'husband' (perpetrator and/or gangster who is of a higher rank) and 'wyfie' (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014), and accordingly it becomes the 'husband's' duty to provide his 'wyfie' with goods, luxuries and protection (Lewin, 2017).

The 'wyfie' is typically an offender who has been deemed inferior, thus, making him more vulnerable to experiencing and being exposed to violence (Gear & Ngubeni, 2002). These offenders have a higher risk of being sexually victimized and abused, resulting from the feminization process. It is through this process, that the victim is turned into a "non-man", and he is coerced to adopt the stereotypically sexist qualities of a woman, for example, that women are weaker than men and/or are viewed as the caretakers in correctional centres, in order to confirm the masculinity of the perpetrator (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014). It is evident that gang culture in correctional centres normalizes violence. This provides insight into how gender identities within correctional centres become highly complex and perpetuate the effects of violence.

2.6. Understanding gender identities in correctional centres

Acts of sexual violence tend to be attached to meanings of 'manhood' within correctional centres, which then shapes the offender's identity. Although gender identification is fluid and flexible in nature, within South African correctional centres this idea is embedded

within the binary model of gender (Ertl et al., 2017). Miller et al. (2009) define gender identity as the act of identifying as masculine or feminine based on socially constructed gender stereotypes. This understanding of gender identities allows an individual to construct and understand their self-concept, roles and behaviours which align with the perspectives of what it is to be male or female (Ertl et al., 2017).

The view of 'manhood' within male correctional centres perpetuates South African societal values and views which correspond to those of hegemonic masculinity (Jewkes et al., 2011). It is important to note that hegemony exists in a fluid set of structures and interactions. Thus, in the context of correctional centres, hegemony may be understood as one offenders domination over another (Trammell, 2011). This provides a platform in which men are able to exercise their power. The social construction of gender encourages individuals to be classed into various social practices which align with apparent gender-appropriate behaviour (Berkowitz et al., 2010). For example, men are typically categorized as being strong, violent, assertive and less expressive, while women are seen to be more caring and nurturing in nature (McKenzie et al., 2018; Subramanian, 2018).

Thus, in correctional centres, when a man is deemed a 'wyfie' he has been feminised and is now considered a woman. Gear (2010) explains that "prison wives are treated just like women outside" (p. 26). A study conducted by Trammell (2011) explored parolees' assertions about the relationship between the men in terms of gender and power. This negotiation of traditional gender identities within correctional centres is bound to cultural norms and institutional roles which exist outside the correctional centres boundaries (Celinska & Sung, 2014). This allows some men to obtain power over others, which does not always involve physical violence. Rather, categories are created and those who are placed in an inferior category tend to be subjugated, in this instance a 'husband' holds power over his 'wyfie' (Gear, 2010). During this process some men become 'misgendered' within the correctional centre system, which aids in navigating relationships amongst offenders (Trammell, 2011).

Interestingly, within male correctional centres, these relationships are not considered to be homosexual, because the relationship mimics heterosexual relationships in the outside world between a man and a woman (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014). This is to suggest that engaging in homosexual relations feminises men, reconfiguring the relationship into a heterosexual structure whereby masculinity is retained. These relationships result in offenders embodying the traditional characteristics of what it means to be a man or a woman, thus allows for the

dominant offender to maintain his masculine status and all the characteristics that go with it (Kupers, 2017). However, in instances where there is no mutual agreement concerning the structure of the male-female (husband-wyfie) relationship, men who engage in sexual acts, are considered to be homosexual and are placed at a higher risk for victimization and abuse (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014). This further contributes to the complexity surrounding gender identities within the correctional centre's environment.

2.6.1. The psychological impact of the misgendering process and violence

This misgendering process which some offenders undergo is likely to have negative implications. When an offender enters a correctional centre and is subjected to this misgendering process, a man who has identified as a man and being masculine throughout his life, is now coerced to adopt a feminine identity. This, consequently, may affect the structures of the self because the individual's sense of self-coherence is broken down, through which, his internalized image and understanding of who he is and the way in which others perceive him becomes disrupted (Zepinic, 2016).

Scott (2015) explains that through this process an offender's self-identity is likely to change, resulting in the demolition of one's former personality and sense of self. Scott (2015) proposes that through adapting to the correctional centre's conditions, offenders often undergo a form of re-socialization. This may result in the individual experiencing a sense of overwhelm and helplessness, in turn placing him in a greater position of vulnerability (Zepinic, 2016). Being subjected to this process, while simultaneously being exposed to violence, is likely to have a significant impact on the individual and their well-being (McCraty & Zayas, 2014).

This is further elucidated through the debates surrounding transgendered women. For example, courts rely on the gender assigned at birth to determine whether an individual is sent to a male or female correctional centre (Masikini, 2016). Even in instances where these women have undergone a full physical transition, they are placed in male facilities. In turn, these women are placed at a greater risk for being subjected to violence. Placing a transwoman in a male correctional centre invalidates her gender identity. This reveals the gross misgendering which occurs within correctional centres, as well as their power to shape social identities and subjectivities (Jennes & Gerlinger, 2020).

This speaks to the structures of power which exacerbate and contribute to the construction of the 'body' as either being male or female. However, these constructions are typically fluid, allowing an individual to attach different understandings and meanings to their

‘body’ at different times and in varying contexts (Smoyer et al., 2021). The understandings attached to the traditional models of gender establishes a set of norms, standards and values which guide offenders’ behaviour. In turn, the normative discourses that surrounds these understandings of gender is enhanced by the institutionally-structured violence. This type of violence emerges as a response to the meanings of gender given by the institution which enforces these understandings and categorizations of gender within this system (Smoyer et al., 2021). As a result, gender is a phenomenon that needs to be understood as a continuum rather than embedded within the binary understandings (Donohue et al., 2021). A body should thus be viewed as a vessel which is the curated expression of who an individual is and the experiences they have undergone, rather than being limited to the categories assigned at birth. Thus, the understandings of gender fluidity should encourage authorities to acknowledge the flexibility and dynamics which are embedded within gender and identity as this will assist in promoting inclusivity, human rights, and improving psychological well-being (Smoyer et al., 2021).

With intolerances heightened owing to this misgendering processes, there is likely to be an increase in abusive and dangerous behaviours, resulting in an increased risk of trauma and/or stress-related affect, which is likely to impact the offender’s mental health. In turn, the violence that is often associated with misgendering is, but one factor involved in the many that intersect to strain offenders’ mental health in correctional centres.

2.7. The impact of correctional centres conditions on mental health

The social construction of gender plays a further significant role in shaping how men express their emotions. As in many cultures and societies, South African traditional gender norms and expectations dictate that men should be emotionless, strong, and dominant (Chaplin, 2015). Expressing emotions such as vulnerability, fear, or sadness is often viewed as a sign of weakness. This causes men to feel the pressure to conform to these expectations in order to be seen as masculine (Chaplin, 2015). Such expectations appear to be exacerbated within the correctional centre context.

Support of this is seen in comparison to the general population as these statistics are significantly higher. Motumi (2018) found that 16.5% of the adult population in South Africa has a mental health problem. Naidoo and Mkize (2012) found that 42% of offenders in South Africa experienced substance and alcohol use disorder, 23.3% were diagnosed with current psychotic, bipolar, depressive and/or anxiety disorders and approximately 46.1% were

diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder. It appears that the rates of suicide are significantly higher across correctional centres in South Africa, at almost three times the national suicide prevalence rate, situating suicides at approximately 40% within correctional centres (Bantjes et al., 2017). Although some offenders enter the institution with already existing mental health problems, it appears that the conditions within this environment are likely to exacerbate and/or trigger these problems (Fazel et al., 2016).

Male correctional centres have typically been described as “emotionally volatile places”, which encompass violence, aggression and domination (Laws, 2016., p. 3). Offenders often undergo a transition into a state of ‘emotional numbness’, as a means of coping with the conditions of the correctional centre, which as the potential to result in psychological implications (Laws, 2016). This often causes the offender to avoid dealing with the affect they experience, resulting in psychological implications (Hemming et al., 2020). These may include signs of anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, paranoia, aggression and/or psychosis (Campodonico et al., 2022; Edgemon & Clay-Warner, 2019). Simultaneously, the constant fear of threat, abuse and harm is likely to impact one’s well-being. Owing to this, the adaptation to incarcerated life is challenging and it is likely to have psychological consequences for those incarcerated (Edgemon & Clay-Warner, 2019; Hemming et al., 2020). Nevertheless, despite the hardships these individuals are exposed to, they are still required to succumb to the pressures of this institutionalization (Edgemon & Clay-Warner, 2019). As a result, offenders are likely to experience a shift in their thinking patterns and behaviours, as a means of survival. However, at times this shift can become dysfunctional, dangerous and/or risky (Akhona, 2014).

The common mental health problems which are prevalent across correctional centres in South Africa appear to be depression, trauma-related affect and behaviour, stress, trust issues, paranoia, rage and anger management problems (Naidoo & Mkize, 2012). Bantjes et al. (2017) argue that South African correctional centres place individuals under inhumane and unsafe conditions which are associated with increased levels of psychological stress, mental illness, interpersonal violence, physical assault and sexual abuse. Statistics reveal that approximately 55.4% of South African offenders meet some diagnostic criteria according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). In conjunction with this, an estimation of 78.4% of offenders who have served a sentence of more than twenty-five years, had diagnosable mental health conditions (Nieuwoudt & Bantjes, 2019).

These statistics demonstrate the lack of mental health care that offenders are receiving during their time of incarceration. According to section 2(c) of the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998, the state has a commitment to improving the psychological and emotional well-being of offenders (Murhula & Singh, 2019). However, given the prevalence of mental health problems across South African correctional centres, it appears that these services are inadequate (Posholi, 2019). This may be due to the limited psychological services available in the DCS. South Africa's psychological resources are scarce in general. There are under 13 000 psychology professionals registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). Within the public sector, there are 2.75 psychologists per 100 000 people (PsySSA Office, 2017). In 2021, 88 permanently appointed psychologists were available to serve an offender population comprising of 47 144 (DCS, 2021). The lack of psychological services has been recognized by DCS (2021) and they plan to implement correctional and skill development programs, education, as well as psychological, social and spiritual care services. The Department is focused on ensuring that there is sufficient capacity to assist offenders with the appropriate rehabilitation and development required (DCS, 2021). However, the lack of resources available continues to have detrimental consequences on the offender, their families, as well as society.

2.7.1. Continued impact on mental health: The importance of rehabilitation and reintegration programs

Upon release, it is common for offenders to experience 'Post-Incarceration Syndrome', which is governed by feelings of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the development of institutionalized personality traits, such as, for example, distrust in others, difficulty with relationships and challenges when making decisions, the onset of antisocial traits, as well as poor affect relating to feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, fear, isolation and anger (Liem & Kunst, 2013).

Experiences faced during incarceration continue to plague offenders, even once they are released from the correctional centre (Liu et al., 2021). This highlights the necessity for correctional centres to implement and enhance rehabilitative and reintegration programs. Such programs are likely to reduce recidivism as they have the potential to provide offenders with opportunities which would benefit and assist them with coping and navigating the outside world (Chikadzi, 2017). Some of these would include educational programs and/or mental health initiatives in which offenders learn to explore and understand their behaviours, affect

and thought processes. It has been found that offenders who have access to such programs, have an easier process of reintegration and adaptation to living within their community and society once released (MacKenzie & Amirault, 2021).

It has been estimated that South Africa's recidivism rate is approximately 87%, which has been attributed to the poor rehabilitation approaches, limited resources, over-crowding, limited staff and the lack of adequate support for the reintegration of offenders once they are released from the correctional centre (Kiewit, 2020; Murhula & Singh, 2019). Murhula and Singh (2019) explain that programs offered by DCS aim to provide a needs-based correctional sentence plan and interventions for offenders. A need-based correction sentence plan focuses on outlining a set of goals and/or targets for an offender to achieve during their time in the correctional centre. This is to assist in guiding the rehabilitation programs the offender should engage in. However, it appears that there is little to no well-structured programs which offer offenders this type of rehabilitation. In conjunction with this, probation officers have limited training in implementing these programs from a personalized position, and so they apply the same approach to different offenders who have served time for different criminal acts (Murhula & Singh, 2019). This speaks to a philosophy which tends to emphasise deterrence and punishment, as opposed to treatment and care (Posholi, 2019), as the emphasis is placed on offenders attending the programs, rather than ensuring that the program positively and effectively contributes towards meeting the desired outcomes and changes in behaviour (Chikadzi, 2017; Murhula & Singh, 2019).

For rehabilitation and reintegration programs to truly address the needs of this population, these programs should focus on vertical and integrative strategies (Onwe et al., 2021), so offenders can navigate the intersection between violence and gender identities in order to fully comprehend the impact this has on their mental health. These programs should centre on maximising the effect at the individual level, as well as optimizing conditions within correctional centres, in order for the learnings from the programs to be effective while the individual is incarcerated, as well as once they are released (Onwe et al., 2021).

2.8. Theoretical framework: The deprivation model

The deprivation model, first introduced by Gresham Sykes in 1958, has commonly been used by a generation of authors across contexts, populations and activities to study and understand offender populations. The deprivation model addresses the offender's social system which is characterised by a culture, society and community within the correctional centre

(Dâmboeanu & Nieuwbeerta, 2016). This model posits that oppressive conditions within correctional centres tends to trigger violent responses from offenders as a means of navigating and coping with their confinements (Tasca et al., 2010). This model describes the process known as prisonization whereby offenders are required to adapt to the volatile circumstances of incarceration (Bosma et al., 2020). In order to fully understand the impact of these conditions and the intersection between violence, gender identities and mental health, on individuals who have been incarcerated, it would be appropriate to place this research within the theoretical framework of the deprivation model. The deprivation model provides a framework into understanding how correctional centre environments may influence offenders' behaviours and lead to increased violence, the possible misgendering process and other forms of institutional misconduct, which is likely to compound their mental health.

This model explains that when an individual enters a correctional centre, they are exposed to major social and psychological challenges, resulting from their loss of liberty, status, dignity, potentially misaligned sexual orientation, autonomy and a sense of security (Walker & Pettigrew, 2011). These conditions are described as the 'pains of imprisonment' which an offender is forced to adapt to in order to survive the period of incarceration. The consequences of adapting to this environment are seen as a direct response to a series of perceived deficiencies and stressors within this setting (Huey, 2008). Under the deprivation model, material and symbolic frustrations appear to arise, as a result of this environment. It is believed that offenders may become aggressive, and engage in violent and self-destructing behaviours, as well as develop anxiety, depression, trauma, distress and/or attempt or commit suicide. Such responses are seen as a product of the restrictive environment, which formulates and constructs offender subculture. In turn, correctional centres with overcrowding and higher security levels tend to amplify these maladaptive behaviours (Shammas, 2017).

The compounding impact of these deprivations explains why offenders find correctional centre life undesirable. It has been suggested that the long-term effects of these conditions, is likely to produce hardened criminal offenders. Through this, a subculture within correctional centres emerges, which tend to redefine customs, beliefs, attitudes, values and lifestyles (Shammas, 2017).

Therefore, locating this research within this theoretical domain provides insight into why certain behaviours become 'normalized' amongst offenders, in this instance, the extensive acts of violence and the allocation and adoption of misgendered identities. This model further

offers an understanding for the psychological implications and affect that offenders experience within the correctional centre environment. Through this, the deprivation model aids in understanding the way in which the subcultures within correctional centres are developed, entrenched and accepted. Thus, drawing on this framework within this research, provides an important theoretical resource on which to draw to better understand the mechanisms shaping the experiences of offenders during incarceration.

2.9. Conclusion

Through the process of prisonization, it becomes clear that violence, misgendering and mental health are interlinked and become normalized within the correctional centre setting. These three constructs appear to be key concepts defining life in these institutions. The deprivation model offers an understanding for why such behaviours, for example, violence and misgendering, become acceptable. It is through these acts, practices and interactions that offenders appear to adopt in order to survive the conditions they are exposed to during their time in a correctional centre. Without having access to appropriate rehabilitation programs, it is likely that an offender's mental health will deteriorate. The psychological consequences associated with incarceration, have the potential to have a continued impact on the individual, once they are released from the correctional centre. Therefore, to fully understand the impact of incarceration, it becomes necessary for one to understand the intersection between the experiences of violence, gender identities and mental health in correctional centres.

Chapter three: Methods

3.1. Research design

For this research, I have adopted a qualitative approach, within an interpretivist paradigm (Djamba & Neuman, 2002). This allowed me to collect, transcribe and explore the meanings underpinning reports by the parolees (Aspers, 2019). Specifically, the study has been aligned with a phenomenological qualitative research design, as it centres on the participant's lived experiences. This allowed me to assess the way in which the participants discussed their experiences regarding the intersection of violence, gender identities and mental health in correctional centres (Creswell, 2013). Since this research aimed to interpret lived experiences, a hermeneutic phenomenological approach was favoured (Laverty, 2003). In accordance with this approach, I collected thick descriptions of the participants' experiences, which allowed for a rich interpretation of this data.

3.2. Research objectives and research questions

The study is interested in the experiential intersections of violence, gender identities and mental health during South African male offenders' incarcerations. Through exploring the various experiential accounts provided by the participants, I aimed to understand the way in which these men managed to navigate the correctional centre environment. The study thus sought, to qualitatively explore the particular experiences and challenges of the participants. This included the meanings that the participants attached to violence, gender identities and mental health, and their experience regarding the intersection between these constructs.

These objectives lead to the following research questions:

1. What are parolees' reported experiences of violence, gender identities and mental health in correctional centres?

2. What are parolees' reported experiences of the intersection between violence, gender identities and mental health in correctional centres?

3.3. Participants and recruitment

The target population for this research was male parolees within Gauteng, South Africa. Through understanding the lived experiences of incarceration through the perspectives offered by these men, I was able to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the facets which define life in correctional centres. This has contributed to a further understanding of how incarceration continues to impact the individual once they are released.

The sample size for this research was six male parolees. Although this group is small, this allowed me to conduct lengthier interviews over a shorter period of time (Hackshaw, 2008; Hammarberg et al., 2016). This has proven useful in research conducted by Abbott et al. (2018) and Beyens et al. (2015). These studies indicate that information-rich accounts are significantly useful when studying a correctional centre population as it provides a platform for the exploration of unique accounts, characteristics and experiences which has been useful in answering my research questions.

Participants were required to have served a minimum sentence of five years, in order for appropriate findings to be generated (Palinkas et al., 2015). This criterion is supported by research conducted by Fazel et al. (2016) which found that the longer the incarceration period, the greater chance there is for an individual to experience psychological distress. This is indicative of the impact this process has on their psychological health (Akhona, 2014; Baćak et al., 2019; Harding et al., 2017). The participants were required to be on parole, speak English fluently and had to be over 18 years of age. It was not necessary for participants to be selected in accordance with the crime they committed, as I aimed to explore subjective experiences, rather than the criminal act itself. This was useful as it provided insight into a range of experiences, through the use of a heterogenous typical case sampling technique (see Appendix A). The participants were sourced by the staff at the Zonderwater Correctional Community Centre. Therefore, a non-probability purposeful criterion sampling procedure was the best suited technique for this study. This allowed me to gain insight into the different experiences surrounding violence, gender identities and mental health during incarceration.

3.4. Procedure

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand and the DCS. The participants were recruited by contacting the head of community corrections and the clinical psychologist at Zonderwater Community Centre. I explained the purpose of my research, the length of the interviews and the necessary requirements. I was informed that the parolees at Zonderwater Correctional Centre attended bi-weekly check-ins. During these meetings, I was able to approach the parolees, explain the purpose of the research and what was required of them. The parolees who volunteered to participate, were subsequently interviewed. The interviews took place over four days. During this time, I was assigned an office space at the correctional centre. This was to ensure that the participants had a private space to disclose their experiences while being interviewed.

3.5. Method of data collection

I made use of semi-structured face-to-face interviews. This allowed for open dialogue between the participant and myself (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019), and created a guided, yet flexible structure which allowed for necessary questions to be answered, in conjunction with creating a space whereby the participant was able to elaborate on and/or clarify any questions (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Jamshed, 2014). The interview length was approximately thirty to sixty minutes long. The interview focused on the participants' subjective meanings, understandings and experiences regarding violence, gender identities and mental health during incarceration (Appendix E).

The interview schedule was self-developed using questions derived from reviewing previous literature presented by Akhona (2014), Bantjes et al. (2017), Celinska and Sung (2014) and Gear and Ngubeni (2002). The interview questions were open-ended, to encourage the use of thick description and in order to ensure that transferability was achieved (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Although it would have been useful to pilot the interview schedule, having a small sample size made this a challenge. I conducted the interviews over four days. This allowed me to adjust the instrument as and if required, through an iterative learning process. In doing this, I was able to collect seven interviews, however, due to a language barrier, one of these interviews were omitted. Thus, there was a total of six interviews which were used to interpret and understand the participants' experiential accounts.

To ensure mine and the participants' safety, the Clinical Psychologist at Zonderwater Correctional Centre was allocated as a mentor, according to DCS regulations. Specifically, the Clinical Psychologist was made available at the interview site. The interviews were carried out in a safe and secure office space within the correctional community centre, which is a separate building from the main correctional centre.

3.6. Data analysis: Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA)

Given the nature of this research, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the collected data. Making use of IPA, allowed me to interpret, consolidate and identify various themes which emerged throughout the data (Larkin et al., 2006). This allowed me to interpret the participant's reported experiences as a means of answering the research questions.

The assumption embedded within IPA is that the researcher is interested in learning about the participant's psychological world, communicated through their lived experiences

(Alase, 2017). My primary interest was to interpret and analyse the respondent's personal accounts regarding their experiences of the intersection of violence, gender identities and mental health in correctional centres through the predominant lens of the deprivation theory. In conjunction with this, theorisations surrounding prisonization and hegemonic masculinity were also drawn upon. By drawing upon these theories, it allowed for me to capture the meanings attached to the participants' experiences (Alase, 2017). These meanings were generated through extensive engagement with the text and the process of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009).

In order to appropriately analyse the data, I adhered to the following steps. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. After the interviews were transcribed, I repeatedly read through each transcript to identify interesting and significant experiences and perspectives that each participant discussed (Smith et al., 2009). This allowed me to become familiar with the varying accounts. When doing this, I commented, summarized, paraphrased and identified various meanings, similarities and differences which emerged throughout the text (Smith et al., 2009).

Following this, I used my initial notes to generate concise phrases which aimed to capture the quality of what was found within the transcripts (Smith et al., 2009). Thereafter, the emergent themes were listed, and I looked for connections between the themes and sub-themes (Smith et al., 2009). The themes have been illustrated in a chronological order, which was derived according to the sequence in which they emerged in the transcript (Smith et al., 2009). At this point, I made use of interpretive skills, in order to make sense of what the participants were saying (Smith et al., 2009). Once this stage was completed, I organized the themes into a coherent table, indicating the clusters of themes and sub-themes which were generated in the previous stage (Smith et al., 2009). During this process, certain themes were identified as useful, while others were omitted (Smith et al., 2009).

The above stages were repeated for each transcript. On completion, a final table of superordinate themes was constructed (Smith et al., 2009; Appendix G). At this point, my primary focus was placed on translating the themes into the analytical narrative which is provided in the next chapter.

3.7. Reflexivity comment

Hermeneutic phenomenology is primarily concerned with illustrating the details and quotidian facets of an experience, whereby the goal is to create a sense of meaning through

which a realm of understanding may be developed (Laverty, 2003). With this, hermeneutists posit that researchers are required to recognize that they are not entirely separate from the outcomes of the research, and ultimately, some form of preconceived understanding will be integrated into the research process (Laverty, 2003). In turn, it is crucial for the hermeneutic researcher to self-reflexively consider their own impact on the research findings.

Given the nature of this study, it was imperative for me to be cognisant of the positionalities and power dynamics which were at play (Lian, 2019). I was aware of how the interactions occurred between the participants and myself. When each participant entered the office, I greeted them with a friendly and welcoming tone. This was to demonstrate the respect I had for them. By doing this, I was able to build rapport with the participants, before the interview began. I did not want the participants to feel that the interview was taking on a hierarchical structure. To ensure that this was not at play, I recognized the importance of enforcing an undertone of humility. Thus, when engaging in conversation, I ensured that the participants were able to lead the interaction, in order to allow them to feel as though they were in control and to emphasise the importance of their personal account and meanings they had attached to their experience. This was to increase their sense of comfortability, as well as to demonstrate that their accounts are worthy, acknowledged and heard. By doing this, I was able to draw on appreciative reflection and encouraged open engagement between myself and the participants (Nel & Govender, 2019).

Since the participants were males who had been incarcerated, I recognized that there were different positionalities at play. I identify as a female, and I have never been subjected to the same experiences as these parolees. I aimed to create a space where the participants felt comfortable to disclose their experiences, by adopting a non-judgemental attitude. It appeared that this positioning did come to the forefront in two of the interviews, when the participants appeared to feel a greater sense of comfort by directly addressing the clinical psychologist, who was a male, when they were disclosing their experiences of sexual behaviour and/or violence during their time of incarceration.

I further found that when conducting the interviews, my knowledge that I had acquired through engaging with extensive literature, allowed me to gain a better understanding of the participants' experiences and accounts. In addition to this, having knowledge on such experiences further assisted in overcoming language barriers as many of the participants would revert back to utilizing 'correctional centre slang' during their interview. Additionally, given

that my first language is English, interpretative challenges arose when participants would offer accounts in Afrikaans. In these instances, I would either ask the clinical psychologist and/or the participant to translate the statement and would check for clarification to ensure that I was appropriately understanding what was being said.

3.8. Ensuring rigor

Within qualitative research, the primary aim is to generate an understanding of the meanings and experiences that the participants disclose (Fossey et al., 2002). Thus, to ensure that the quality of the data and the way the results were interpreted adhered to the standards of qualitative research, the following were taken into account:

Cross-referencing

Cross-referencing refers to the process of drawing on multiple data sources in order to develop a thorough understanding of the phenomenon being investigated and to increase the credibility of the research findings (Noble & Heale, 2019). This was done by conducting a within and an across text analysis which focused on both the internal thematic structures of the individuals and the commonalities between them.

Thick descriptions

I have provided detailed accounts of the research methodology, sampling techniques, participants, research site as well as the methods used for data collection and data analysis. This was done to ensure that the reader would be able to fully understand the setting and nature of the research, as well as the arguments for why the above frameworks and techniques have been selected. It is through this in-depth description that the reader is able to feel as though they have been a part of this research experience (Fossey et al., 2002).

Testing codes and interpretations

Throughout the research process, my supervisor listened to the audio recordings of the interviews as well as read through the transcriptions, which were transcribed verbatim. In addition, the themes created from the collected data were reviewed by my supervisor. This has allowed for consistent testing of the codes and themes with another researcher to ensure that the answers provided for the research questions are meaningful and that accurate conclusions were drawn (Severin & Chataway, 2020).

Reflexivity

As discussed above, my role as a researcher was thoroughly considered throughout the research process. By doing this, it allowed me to acknowledge my own positionalities and possible biases to identify and acknowledge the impact on the research outcome (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022).

3.9. Ethical considerations

I adhered to the protocols stipulated for human research by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (non-medical) at the University of the Witwatersrand (Ethics Protocol Number: 1421/06/12). The risk level for participants was medium, given the focus on personal experiences of violence, gender identities and mental health. Prior to conducting the research, I received a permission letter from Zonderwater Correctional Services, indicating their willingness to provide me with a space to conduct the interviews (Appendix F). Participation was voluntary and no participant was pressurized to partake in this research (Appendix B). Those who agreed to partake in the study, were provided with a participant information sheet, which outlined the purpose and aims of the study (Appendix B). The participants were required to sign the consent form for participating in the interview and for the use of audio recordings (Appendix C). In instances where the participant was not able to provide signed consent, verbal consent was obtained.

Participants were made aware that there was no benefit or reward for participating in this research (Appendix B). Anonymity was ensured when writing up the report, as pseudonyms have been used. The pseudonyms selected were randomly generated (Appendix B). The audio recordings and the transcripts have been kept on a password protected computer, which only myself and my supervisor have access to (Appendix B).

The interview process and requirements were explained to the participants. The participants were made aware that they were able to withdraw from the research at any given point, without facing penalties (Appendix B). The participants were provided with an email address, which my supervisor and I have access to, as a source of direct contact. I was aware that this topic could trigger past-traumas for the participants. However, having involved a clinical psychologist from DCS (Darrian Long) provided an institutional safety net for the participants. The clinical psychologist was deployed specifically as a mentor in this study to mitigate the risk for potential harm for the participants as well as for myself. The clinical psychologist's email address (Darrian.long@dcs.gov.za) was also provided to each participant.

Each participant also received the contact details for the South African Depression and Anxiety group and Lifeline, in case they felt that they needed further therapeutic assistance. I was aware of my own risks as a researcher. Thus, I ensured I had access to adequate debriefing resources, in instances where it may have been necessary.

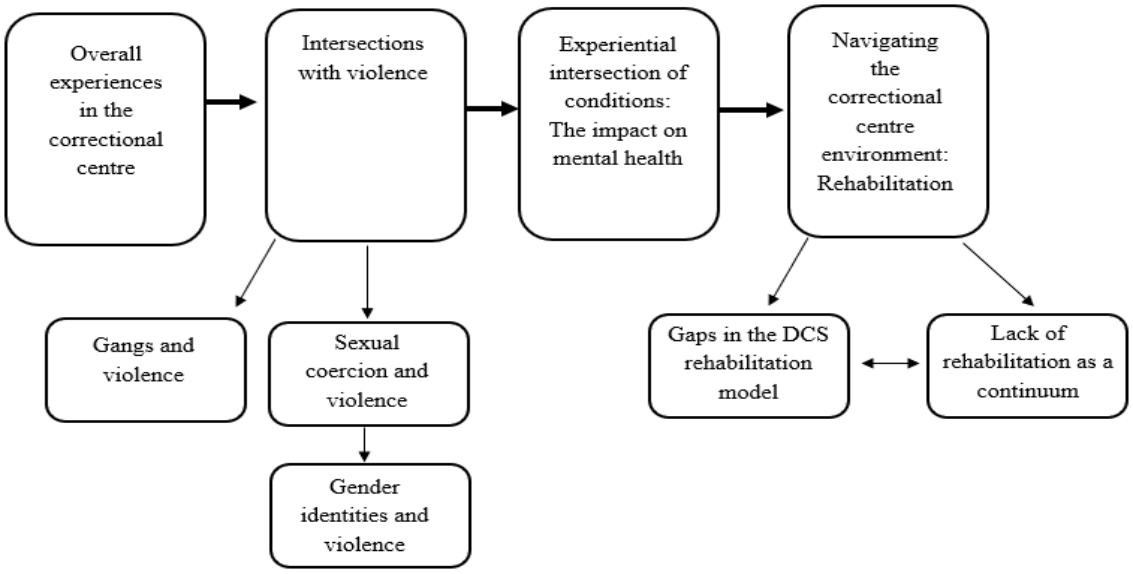
Chapter four: Research findings and discussion

This chapter consists of a synopsis and discussion of the findings. The synopsis is a summation of the key findings which illustrate the similarities and differences across the participants' experiences and perspectives, and the discussion draws on empirical evidence by making reference to the existing literature.

Through analysing the transcripts, four superior themes and five superordinate themes were constructed. These include (Appendix G):

Figure 1

Thematic map of the themes and superordinate themes



The synopsis and discussion to follow will provide responses to the two research questions being explored, namely:

1. What are parolees' reported experiences of violence, gender identities and mental health in correctional centres?
2. What are parolees' reported experiences of the intersection between violence, gender identities and mental health in correctional centres?

This chapter has been presented in the following way to allow for an interpretive narration of the participants' accounts. Through this, I have been able to reflect on the participants' experiences across the various dimensions which defined their time in correctional centres.

4.1. Overall experiences in the correctional centre

The purpose of this theme was to orient the reader by providing an overview of the participant's experiences. This provides a broader perspective of the participants' experiences to assist with understanding the experiential intersection of violence, misgendering and mental health among the participants.

Humanism is believed to have influenced the development of the modern correctional system (Jouet, 2021). Foucault (1980, cited in Bert, 2012) asserts that the modern correctional centre system must thus be understood through the lens of its historical and theoretical origins. It is interesting to note that the DCS is mandated to contribute to the perseveration and promotion of a just, peaceful and safe society by ensuring that offenders are placed in an environment whereby they receive optimal rehabilitation, in an attempt to reduce their likelihood of reoffending (South African Government, 2020). However, three of the interviewees speak to how they and their fellow offenders were treated:

> *There was nothing that was done in accordance with the correctional services…Instead of rehabilitating us, they have more punishment in the way of ill treatment. We were trying to deal with this stigmatizing issue whereby correctional officers will sort of be like the crime you committed [was] against them personally… they all had this personal thing that you know you did this so we are going to treat you like this and this is the way they are treating you… as a state of vengeance* (Steven)

> *… [the] experience inside the prison in correctional centres um it's not it's not…all filled with monsters and bad people…it's people that make mistakes in life* (Jacob)

> *You know it's like they don't believe that you are innocent, most of them are are not nice…because you know they will always just scream on you, come here, verstaan come here* (Derek)

In line with Steven, Jacob and Derek's experiences, Bert (2012) explained that the conceptualization of correctional centres continues to be embedded within the view that these institutions are 'evil' structures filled with 'evil' people. With this, offenders are often associated with such characteristics. Consequently, such attitudes tend to influence the way in which offenders are treated across South African correctional centres (Dixon, 2019). As a result, the experience of being confined to this space continues to be characterized by untold hardships and suffering, given the abuse of power and force which is exercised as a means of controlling offenders (Akih & Dreyer, 2017; Binall, 2008).

The implications of this type of treatment typically results in offenders within this context being subjected to a loss of liberty, desirable goods and services, autonomy and security, as well as degradation, dehumanization, and the dangers that one encounters once incarcerated and for some heterosexual relationships (Haney, 2012; Shammas, 2017). These fundamental deprivations illustrated by Haney (2012), Shammas (2017) and Haggerty and Bucerius (2020), have been termed the 'pains of imprisonment', which define the experiences that offenders encounter during their time in the correctional centres. This sense of deprivation comes through in the participants' accounts:

> *This place…is actually not nice…They didn't do anything against me but it's it's the food, it's the matter where they don't bring the food…then they bring you the pap that was made yesterday…Everybody that goes there says it's not nice* (Derek)

> *The conditions are not the best but as I said you make the best of what can… we were in a cell umm…We were thirty two inmates in one cell… Um you never have like privacy, you can have a bad day and just want to lie in your bed and someone will ask you for a light for a cigarette – you see that's all things that causing a bit of frustration but you accept it… I cannot say we enjoyed it but we we find peace* (Jacob)

Derek and Jacob's experiences illustrate how offenders are required to change their behaviours, attitudes and language in order to conform to the official and unofficial correctional centre rules and regulations (Haney, 2012; Leban et al., 2016). This shift allows for offenders to be able to adapt to this 'new' environment (Haney, 2012; Leban et al., 2016). This adaptation to correctional centre life takes a variety of forms (Crank, 2010). This type of adjustment has been found to be significantly difficult and/or challenging (Crank, 2010). This is supported by three of the interviewees who explained:

> *…it was a hard experience…in there, there are many challenges…negative and positive* (Ian)

> *I survived a lot of bad things* (Jeffry)

> *It was traumatic…that's a hell on its' own…it was really bad…My first week I hated orange…I didn't want to see other inmates because they were the cause of me coming here* (Steven)

> *Ya it's difficult inside the prison. That's why I say, to come in is easy but to come out…it's not easy like umm it's not nice inside the prison…yaaa we say…if you are outside, you must say thanks god* (Simon)

It is interesting to note the sense of blame which emerges in Steven's statement. Tangney et al. (2015) has hypothesized that once incarcerated, offenders often begin to feel a

sense of guilt and shame about a specific behaviour. As a result of this affect, blame tends to become the defensive externalized emotion that the offender portrays. Offenders often lack a sense of responsibility and accountability for their actions (Tangney et al., 2015). In some sense, it appears that it was easier for Steven to make sense of this experience and the hardships he was being exposed to, by blaming others for his current position.

However, it appears that Steven began to gain acceptance around his experience by later explaining:

> *…sometimes god will send you to a place or that's why I say what relieved me was god has a purpose with me here … and let me just serve the purpose and forget about the sentence.*

Maruna et al. (2006) theorised that offenders typically face a crisis of self-narrative. Through this, they are motivated to find meaning, construct coherence and make sense of their 'new' way of living, in an attempt to maintain their sense of self-esteem (Maruna et al., 2006). In this instance, it may be seen that Steven's reference to god, acted as an adaptive mechanism to assist him in resolving the psychological conflict he experienced in navigating the environment of the correctional centre he was placed in.

However, for some offenders, Crank (2010) argues that this environment is preferred given that it provides offenders with a more comfortable setting than the streets. For example, offenders are sometimes provided with educational opportunities which may not have been affordable on the outside:

> *I didn't even complete my matric on the outside so that was the first thing I completed…From there on, I continue[d] with an educational diploma and a Bcom degree* (Jacob)

Throughout the participants' accounts, it becomes apparent that the phenomenon of choice, played a critical role in defining their experiences, as well as the way in which they responded to this environment. This is supported by Crank (2010) who explains that the experiences which an offender is subjected to, is embedded within the view that the individual is seen as a rational calculator:

> *You yourself must choose* (Jeffry)

> *it's difficult like it depend on you…what your behaviour is. If your behaviour is good…and disciplined then everything go[es] well. If you are not good in behaviour, it's difficult for you* (Ian)

> *…you must just be wise and then just take your time before you do something stupid or something reckless or a mistake that's because you got lots of time in prison to think and to plan about your life when you go back home…you think what are you going to do…* (Simon)

These experiences reported by the participants explain that the offender is able to weigh the costs and rewards of certain behaviours (Crank, 2010). The participants' accounts recognize that the experiences one has in the correctional centres, is the result of the way in which an offender chooses to behave and respond to the given environment. This idea of 'choice' as explained according to the self-determination theory, postulates that the provision of choice is associated with autonomy, and together with competence and relatedness, acts as a fundamental and universal psychological need (Van der Kaap-Deeder et al., 2019). Within the boundaries of a correctional centre, offenders are required to internalize a set of rules and regulations. In turn, their sense of autonomy becomes relative to the way in which they choose to respond to this environment (Van der Kaap-Deeder et al., 2019).

Despite the toll of navigating the challenges and/or hardships of incarceration, the participants saw value in their experiences within the correctional centre regime. The participants explained:

> *I became who I am today because I was in prison…Prison turned me around* (Jacob)
>
> *I learn many things. Before I go to prison, I'm a drinker… I like to groove but now, I'm focussing on my life* (Ian)
>
> *You must know what you did outside and you want to come out of those things* (Jeffry)
>
> *Let me serve the time god has given me here to introspect* (Steven)
>
> *To be honest it changed me big time. There's some other things, I was just looking at and let them pass away but now, I'm focusing on this. Ya…it changed me big time. Sometimes I say to friends of mine, I say thanks god I go to the prison because if I was not inside the prison, I will never know them. I now know a person on the inside and the outside but now I think I'm good now* (Simon)

These narratives offered by Jacob, Ian, Jeffry, Steven and Simon speak to Crewe and Ievins' (2019) theorisation that correctional centres offer a space for reinvention. In this setting, offenders are able to reconstruct their sense of self and identity (Maier & Ricciardelli, 2021). It appears that for offenders to undergo this self-change and transformation, it is necessary for them to act as rational decision-makers and hold themselves accountable for their behaviours (Maier & Ricciardelli, 2021). Although, for some offenders, the conditions which they are

subjected to, often hinders their motivation to make positive changes (Chikadzi, 2017). For Jacob, Jeffry, Ian, Steven and Simon, it appears that the correctional centre, in essence, functioned as a time and space for forced self-reflection, which drove them to understand who they were prior to incarceration and who they want to be and continue to be, now that they have been released. However, the insights drawn from these findings give rise to the question with regards to whether it was the correctional centre's conditions, the participants' conscious decisions to reform themselves and/or a combination of these two facets, which provided the opportunity for these offenders to make the necessary changes to improve their lives.

The participants' accounts support the existing literature which explores offenders' broader experiences in correctional centres. In order to survive the conditions and climate within correctional centres, the participants highlighted two pertinent facets, namely adaptation and choice. It appears that these two elements are interlinked in defining the experiences that offenders endure during their time of incarceration:

> *The whole prison environment bec[o]mes a whole environment on its own…you need to deal with…the violence and the crime and everything inside* (Jacob)

Thus, in order to adapt to this 'new' way of life, the participants recognized that the way in which they responded to the environment within the correctional centre, was embedded within their personal choices and decisions. This process is referred to as prisonization, which explains the way in which various phenomena for example violence, gender identities and mental health, interact with one another and thus, define the experiences that offenders are subjected to during their time in a correctional centre. It is through this process that life in correctional centres becomes integrated within three key constructs: encoded violence, gender fluidity and fragmented mental health.

4.2. Intersections with violence

Across South African correctional centres, offenders are at risk of being coerced, assaulted, raped and/or murdered by fellow offenders, despite the implementation of the Correctional Services Act and case law which aim to ensure their safety (Bantjes et al., 2017).

> *…you get different kind[s] of violence* (Jacob)

The types of violence include physical and/or sexual violence (Wolff & Shi, 2009). Wolff and Shi (2009) explain that physical violence includes being hit, slapped, kicked, bit, chocked, beat up and/or hit with or threated with a weapon. For example:

> *You know that pen* (pointed to pen interviewer was holding) *you can take an eye off. There are workshops, there are screwdrivers there those things. If they want to do it they will do it* (Steven)

> *Inside the prison when you talk to him and you just say ey I don't care about my life and then they can stab you, they can kill you…a lot of things. Most people they've done that inside the prison due to some other people, some other drugs inside the prison* (Simon)

It is important to acknowledge the sense of normalization that surrounds Steven's and Simon's experiences with violence. Although Steven and Simon spoke directly to this type of interaction with a tone of casualness, the same essence was seen across the data set. This suggests that the violence that offenders are exposed to is something which is normalized within the subculture of the correctional centre context and more so appears to be the acceptable way of interacting with one another.

Embedded within the acts of physical violence, is sexual violence. This has typically been defined as any unwanted sexual contact or threat made by another offender or staff member, with or without penetration (Medina, 2018). Both these acts of violence are supported by the participants' accounts and will be further explored.

The presence of violence within this environment, appears to be part of the daily regime. The normalization of violence within correctional centres has occurred as a means of being able to control offenders (Scott, 2015). This creates a hierarchy and a sense of order within the correctional centre amongst the offenders which is governed by intimidation and/or manipulation.

> *You don't control yourself, you control other people* (Ian)

This insight offered by Ian suggests that this sense of violence normalization creates a space for offenders to feel as though they have the power to control others, while simultaneously increasing their sense of protection for themselves. In doing this, the offender is able to reduce their likelihood of being exposed to victimization, as well as gain a sense of status and power within the correctional centre context (Wooldredge, 2016). This perspective is explained by Gear and Ngubeni (2002) who state that violence does not occur within a vacuum, but rather it is embedded within the way in which individuals learn to relate to one another. As explained by one of the participants:

> *Nobody was ever like…rude to me…Whenever I was in a situation where I was in trouble, I [would] go to the member on duty and ask him, sir I have this problem* (Jacob)

This view differs from Ian and Jeffry's perspectives, in the sense that these two participants believed that they needed to deal with these conflicts on their own, whereas for Jacob, he would ask for guidance and assistance from the correctional centre officials. The views offered by Jeffry and Ian speak to correctional staff culture (Muntingh, 2009). It has been postulated that the culture constructed amongst officials which encompasses poor treatment of offenders, is more likely to drive violent behaviours within this setting, which has been attributed to the impoverished and oppressive environments (Baggio et al., 2020; Muntingh, 2009). On the other hand, officials who model a more progressive staff culture, tend to treat offenders with more respect. This element of respect allows offenders to feel as though they are being treated as an individual, rather than just a number. Within this environment, respect acts as a form of positive consideration and recognition (Crewe et al., 2011). Thus, if respect is filtered through the correctional centre (amongst both offender and offender relationships and offender and staff relationships), it is more likely that each individual will recognize one another as a fellow being to be reasoned with, which reduces the chances of being subjected to manipulation and/or force (Hulley et al., 2011). The view offered by Baggio et al. (2020) and Muntingh (2009) speaks to the pains of imprisonment whereby offenders are exposed to poor treatment, and/or abuse, rather than an environment where they are treated humanely and with respect (Haggerty & Becerius, 2020). A possible reason for the participants having contrasting views with regards to protecting themselves within the correctional centres, may be due to the participants having been placed in different correctional centres during their time of incarceration.

Jeffry and Steven's experiences dispute the view by Gear and Ngubeni (2002) and Crewe and Liebling (2015) as they explain that:

> *…even if you don't fight, the people will want to fight you…If you see somebody, don't ask that man what you want. If he doesn't want to tell you just keep quiet because if you ask it's going to cause a lot of trouble* (Jeffry)

> *I'm not fighting anyone…They would basically hit an inmate you know beat an inmate to a pulp for thing and then every time you are wondering when is it coming to me* (Steven)

Jeffry and Steven's experience speaks to the social context within correctional centres that acts as a determinant of violence. Offenders are required to judge the intentions of other

offenders with whom they interact with (Edgar & Martin, 2002). If an offender believes that they are at risk of being assaulted, they often will engage first, as a means of protecting themselves. In such instances, correctional centre violence often traces conflicts between offenders back to the way in which they have interpreted a particular situation (Edgar & Martin, 2002). Thus, Jeffry and Steven's accounts are embedded within the view, that despite how one chooses to interact and/or react to a given situation, violence within the correctional centres is inevitable.

On the other hand, in support of Gear and Ngubeni's (2002) position:

> *I didn't fight you…before I will tell you the things you are talking about me…mara before I will tell you these thing you are talking about me, STOP it NOW…you understand mara if you won't stop I will an action you understand mara before I will talk with you mara, if you continue, me I will be an action mara no one like an action. If you are skimming people or you are best friend[s] [and] like want to gossip, the gossips dangerous because [it] make[s] you a fight because you lie too much* (Ian)

Ian's account speaks to power playing a key role in the relationship between strategic social relation and resistance. Thus, in such situations where this form of domination is resisted and/or challenged, violence is often utilized as a means of regaining a sense of power and/or control (Stevens, 2010).

The idea of power within the context of violence extends to the underground economy of exchange that occurs within the boundaries of the correctional centres. This economy provides an outlet for offenders to secure goods and/or services which are not formally available to them during their incarceration. Although having access to such goods and/or services may be useful and beneficial for the offender, it places the individual at higher risk of being victimized (Copes et al., 2011). Three of the participants explained:

> *In the correctional service there another people that doesn't get a visit…if somebody they said I give you a pack of cigarette they do bad things* (Jeffry)

> *Something like ivisitors, your families sometimes they can come and see you mara [they] didn't come…you disturb other people* (Ian)

> *It's not that I got the instruction from my boss or what…it's we just fight for some things inside the prison…it's not about the gangsterism because inside the prison you know, you can come to visit me, you can buy me the cigarettes, the cosmetics, long time, if I don't have cigarette for a long time, just say give me twenty rand, I just want to buy some smoke. Then you take that smoke, and they don't give me the money that's when we start to fight and things* (Simon)

These accounts indicate that if an offender provides access to certain goods, it is then expected that the other offender will give them something in return. Payment in return, may be in the form of:

> *Tell[ing] a man to stick someone because they g[a]ve you a pack of cigarette[s]* (Jeffry)

If the offender does not pay the other offenders back for their assistance, they are at risk of being physically and/or sexually assaulted. Those who participate in the underground correctional centre economy are inherently granted a position of personal power and dominance (Copes et al., 2011). However, Jacob provides further insight into this dynamic by stating that those who have the *"mentality of dagga, smoking and gangsters"*, appear to be the offenders who will most likely be involved in these conflicts. This is supported by Valera et al. (2019) who found that offenders with substance addictions and those involved in gangsterism, were more likely to be involved within this culture of exchange and violence.

It has also been found that communal living within the correctional centre cells in South Africa contributes to the violence within this context (Muntingh, 2009). Correctional centres in South Africa have an average offender population of approximately 159 290, being full to 150% of capacity (Department of Correctional Service, 2020; Muntingh, 2020). As explained by Jacob and Simon:

> *We measured it one day, was sixteen by 3 metres and there we were thirty two guys* (Jacob)
>
> *When we talk about the community cell, we sleep eh almost forty-two prisoners* (Simon)

In turn, the relationship between overcrowding and violence has been attributed to emotional arousals of frustration, which may provoke a violent reaction (Muntingh, 2009). This is explained:

> *Um one day we had a fight in the cell but I think it was pure frustration. For many years, you wake up to the same guy um and he's just farting next to you and you tell him ey man just go to the toilet. Two guys in the cell started to fight neh and I think it was just pure frustration. They don't hate each other, it was just that moment of frustration. They started to fight, a normal fist fight, no weapons involved…You can have a bad day and just want to lie in your bed and someone will ask you for a light for a cigarette…you see that's all things that causing a bit of frustration* (Jacob)

Beyond the emotional arousal of frustration, overcrowding tends to increase the risk of the emergence of violent conflicts, as a result of offenders feeling the need to exert their dominance, in order to maintain a sense of control within this environment (DeVaney, 2003).

Somebody who [you] talk [to] with a crowd, might defend (Ian)

… I never interacted (Steven)

Through analysing the participants' experiences with violence in relation to the existing literature, it becomes apparent that such acts are inherently related to the fundamental deprivations that offenders are exposed to. With this, the deprivation model posits that harsh conditions within these structures often promote offenders to behave aggressively as a means of dealing with the 'pains of imprisonment' (Tasca et al., 2010). Thus, the phenomenon of violence has become normalized through the discourse surrounding correctional centres within South Africa. However, for Ian and Simon the normalization of violence is embedded within a greater sense of acceptance, when compared to Jacob, Jeffry and Steven's experiences. It appears that the attributions and determinants of violence differ across the participants' experiences. However, varied, all of their accounts are supported by existing literature that draws on the range of experiences and determinants of violence as an encoded, structured and thus, normalized process across correctional centres.

4.2.1. Gangs and violence

In understanding violence within South African correctional centres, it appears that this type of behaviour often emerges as a response to the involvement in and the presence of gangsterism. This has been described as:

…the dirty stuff actually (Jacob)

Life in correctional centres has been characterized by an elaborate system of gangs, through which violence tends to be mediated (Grobler & Hesselink, 2015). One of the most common gangs found across the correctional centres in South Africa is the Numbers gang. This gang emerged to create a form of structure, whereby individuals are characterized by rankings and disciplinary codes (Kristine, 2011).

That thing is a military…it's some kind of military that goes rank by rank…It's a rule and graduation (Ian)

The predominant Numbers operating within South African correctional centres are the 28s, 27s and 26s (Steinberg, 2004a). Each Number is associated with different rules and

regulations that the offender is required to follow. For example, the 28s are regarded as the seniors in the gang and are organized according to a system of 'wyfies' or coerced homosexual partners (Skywalker, 2014). The 26s are required to coercively rob and/or steal other offenders' possessions, such as for, example, cigarettes, money and/or other luxuries. However, part of the 26s' code of conduct is that they are prohibited from using violence (Skywalker, 2014). This experience is described by Ian:

Me I am a gangster…of 26…I didn't fight…for ten years I didn't fight

The 27s are required to protect and enforce the codes of the 28s and 26s, often through the use of violence. In turn, to obtain a rank within this gang and to ensure cooperation:

…everything goes through a procedure (Ian)

Bellair and Mcnulty (2010), explain that promotions within the Numbers gang, particularly to the higher ranks, is often obtained through committing acts of violence on persons outside the gang.

> *When a guy want to get like a promotion in the ranks or something, he need to go and stab someone…We had this situation where one was stabbed with a knife and other one one break a glass and then he make like a knife with the glass and then he stabbed people* (Jacob)

> *Meee…I didn't fight inside the prison. The thing I have done I have stabbed three people to get some medals…ya when you have the gangsterism, if you want to have some medals, you must stab someone, but they didn't do anything, but your boss can say you go and stab that one, let me see if you qualify to to be with us. Then you go and stab him…when the blood is out…then they give you one medal…ya ya…– Now I'm a captain for the 28* (Simon)

In line with Simon's account, it is interesting to note his choice of wording with regards to "*I didn't fight inside the prison"*. It illustrates how the act of him stabbing people, was not consciously associated with active fighting and/or violence; rather it was embedded within a tone of acceptance relative to his rank within the Numbers gang.

Extending on the perspectives offered by Jacob and Simon, Ian's accounts support that these acts of violence do not only occur within the vacuum of progressing to higher rankings but are also in line with joining the Numbers gang:

> *Sometimes you want the rank mara…you didn't get the rank without doing anything* (Ian)

This speaks to the inevitable occurrence of violence as a response to the gangs in the correctional centres. Violence appears to be a normalized condition for joining and being a member of the gang, as well as moving up the ranks.

In joining the Numbers gang, each member is required to follow a strict code of conduct. Gang members who fail to adhere to the gang's legislations and/or betray fellow gang members, are at risk of being subjected to severe punishments (Steinberg, 2004a). Ian explains that these types of punishment typically result from a fellow gang member not abiding by the rules, regulations and/or procedures employed by the Numbers Gang. Such punishments often include physical and/or sexual violence (Steinberg, 2004a). Ian and Simon provide insight into the system that determines the type of punishment:

> *…most of the people didn't listen because you make a wrong thing because it's a rule and graduation that got you that number and if you broke that number [and] those rules you get a punishment…First warning any loans or any job company if you make…ya it's a work. After warning, you get like eh physical warning. So, most of the people they didn't like the pain like a physical warning so if you don't want that physical warning [or] something you are undermining us. You supposed to cope and beat other people… it's because you didn't want or didn't listen… so you push yourself to cooperate…It's like you go to school and get a punishment… So, if now didn't listen and didn't use your mind… so everything must be that you listen and discipline is number one…* (Ian)

> *Ya, my general or my colleagues or member, if they do the thing that is not good, we punish him… Mmm all the time, we just hit him…yaaa…all the time we just hit him* (Simon)

It is important to consider the different experiences provided by Ian and Simon. Both these experiences speak directly towards their affiliated number and the code of conduct they are required to follow. For example, for Ian, being part of the 26s prohibits him from being involved in violent acts. Rather, the punishment is a gradual process and has the potential to turn into a violent act. Whereas for Simon, the act of hitting someone, appears to be the initial reaction to a presented conflict. These instances, describe the events that occur as a response to gang members breaching the Numbers gang's code of conduct. It is important to note that violence in this sense is viewed as a coded and orderly experience in order to create structure within the correctional centre setting.

The Numbers gang is embedded within an ideology, allowing the gang to be organized into a hierarchical structure (Steinberg, 2004a). The Number tattoo acts as a statement which reflects the offender's identity and psyche (Lozano et al., 2011). It becomes a symbol of the individual's greater commitment to the gang and its history (Nel, 2017):

> *…I didn't have the tattoo because there's this number that you must put it in your in your body to show that you are 28. But outside, I was just 28 in my mind… So, ya when I go to prison I say but I know this, let me follow this* (Simon)

> *No one can write down 26 on your skin, then remove it mara you still in number because number is there* [points to his head] *… if you take the number, you didn't take it out when you out, if you are in you are in… it's on your mind…There is no… book… you can read. That thing is a history* (Ian)

The accounts offered by Simon and Ian support the claims of the tattoo representing a symbol of the gang. Typically, the removal of the tattoo often symbolizes a statement of leaving the gang. However, it has been theorized that the simple removal of a tattoo, is unlikely to influence or change the rationalization of gang members' behaviours and thoughts (Lozano et al., 2011). The account offered by Ian suggests that although the tattoo acts as a symbol, the gang's ideology becomes embedded within an infectious doctrine, which determines the behaviour of offenders and their associated beliefs and mentalities (Nel, 2017). This indicates that the problem does not lie within the tattoo itself, but rather the beliefs and culture associated with it:

> *…the tattoos [are] not the issue, but the gangsterisms put their signature on people* (Jacob)

The gang embodies a set of norms, values and language which aligns with their distinct code of conduct. This influences the types of behaviours that offenders engage in. Thus, the behaviours which the gang deem as acceptable and appropriate, are endemic to the subculture within correctional centres (Kristine, 2014).

Typically, the Number gang is not antagonistic towards one another, but there are some instances where disagreements between the affiliated gang-members in relation to their practices occur. As a result, the potential for violent conflict is great, given that there are rival versions, each allied to a different and competing doctrinal position. This creates an opportunity for the gang to express their positions. Such acts have been categorized as a crisis of authority. Thus, in instances where resources are limited, the potential for these conflicts tend to increase, in order to maintain a sense of order within the hierarchical structure of the Numbers gang (Steinberg, 2004a). Evidence of the rivalry that may occur between the Numbers gang is provided by Simon:

> *The prison is not good, especially 28 and 26 they starting to fight…ya so it's starting the problems and they must call the police, if they've got the chance*

> *they call the army, then they must come…ya just because a lot of bribes yohh* (Simon)

For example, in 2017 at the Goodwood correctional facility in Cape Town, during a gang ritual fight between the 26s and 28s, a thirty-two-year-old offender was stabbed to death, while 13 others were seriously injured (ENCA, 2017). Given South Africa's elaborate system of gangs in correctional centres, this rivalry extends towards other gangs within a particular correctional centre (Albertse, 2007). The reason for this has been attributed to the phenomenon of dominant gangs needing to protect their territory and invasions by other gangs, which often results in an eruption of violence (Albertse, 2007; Kristine, 2014). However, it is interesting to note, that when questioned about these interactions, Simon explained:

> *…we didn't fight inside the prison, especially me with the other part of the gang gangsterism just because they were liking what I'm doing inside the prison. I was teaching them soccer, I was coach inside the prison…ya*

Despite Simon suggesting that he did not experience violence as a result of gang rivalry, this phenomenon continues to prevail within the South African context. It appears that the violent acts carried out by gang members, are often the response to a set of instructions that have been given to them by their leaders. The leaders of the gang typically determine and decide on the level of criminal activity that the gang will be involved in (Albertse, 2007).

> *There's some other bosses of us they contact they move. If there is someone who run away from Cape Town and they come inside here, and then maybe they call from Bloemfontein and they give some other numbers of Joburg, Joburg Pretoria, Pretoria they come here, until the boss tell you the general, you know some such and guys I know him…go do me a favor, please kill that guy and then I just kill him and phone the messenger and tell him okay it's done and then I get some other medals* (Simon)

This illustrates how the power invested in correctional centre gangs is often underestimated. As seen in Simon's experience, if the gang's leaders have been instructed and/or instruct another gang member to harm and/or murder persons inside or outside the correctional centre environment, these acts are carried out, with no questions asked. Through this, the member and/or leader is able to demonstrate their affiliation and loyalty to the gang. Such instructions serve to ensure and prove the gang's power, control and readiness to employ violent tactics (Grobler & Hesselink, 2015). In turn, gang affiliation appears to generate cycles of violence, whereby the frequency with which individuals are exposed to violence becomes more prevalent within this context (Shamserad & Huebner, 2022).

Furthermore, it has been suggested by Grobler and Hasselink (2015) that offenders often join gangs within South African correctional centres, to gain a form of alternative socialization. Ian found that being part of the Numbers gang provided him with access to goods and luxuries, that may not have been available to him without the support of his fellow gang members. He explains, for example:

> *For the first time I come to prison, I'm a smoker ya… so not every time I have a cigarette so the group of people always smoker and not every time I have visit and I like I LIKE to smoke…*

In turn, Ian explains that his reason for joining the gang, was to ensure he was able to access the goods he desired. This system is explained in terms of the underground economy discussed in the previous section:

> *I was going to the visitor and my family…give me a hundred rand for example. So, that hundred given to you by your family, take only ten rand, give those people then the rest of the change* (Ian)

> *Somebody they smoke, they doesn't get a visit, they put – they use somebody to do the bad thing. They they sit down, they say if I give you the thing you then need to do the bad things* (Jeffry)

These accounts support the claims made by Kristine (2014), which indicates that offenders often rely on gang members for economic gain. However, in these instances, the target is often unaware that an exchange has taken place and that a debt is being created, which the offender will later be expected to repay (Gear & Ngubeni, 2002). Through this process of exchange, offenders often begin to view gang members as a form of surrogate family members (Kristine, 2014).

> *…it's like a family…that thing is good in other words but mara it is dangerous. It put you in danger yaa…if you are not a true man you are a liar mara if you a true man, like you speaking truth and didn't allow other persons speaking a liar…everything goes right…* (Ian)

For offenders who enter the correctional centre, Gear and Ngubeni's (2002) findings indicate that the gang often offers a sense of friendship, protection and support. In instances where an offender may need help or is having a problem, and an official is not available and/or willing to assist, they are likely to turn to gang members (Gear & Ngubeni, 2002).

> *…first time you get in prison or go in prison it's the first time to see a prison warden. He give you ALL the rule…if you want something you come to me mara that people told you that thing, they didn't…sleep with you like eh inside the cell maybe.. there's no prison warden inside the cell, there is the people you understand…that people you will see in here first… not that police or warden*

> *you understand… and if sometimes you want to call your family, you go to the office, officer told you go and play you understand… go and play, didn't disturb me. So, that's why other people get involved in gangsterism* (Ian)

> *I saw a lot of things inside whereby officials would help but they did nothing* (Steven)

In these instances described by Ian and Steven, offenders recognize that they cannot always rely on the correctional centre staff. Offenders are susceptible to experiencing a negative response from the official, such as for example, resentment and/or anger (Martinez-Iñigo, 2021). Support of this is seen in Trammel et al.'s (2012) interview findings where an officer told an offender "I have a headache because you keep asking me for things" (p. 45). The offender replied and said, "I don't know what you mean, I haven't seen you all day and I've never asked you for anything". In this research, the offender reported that the officer showed signs of anger and told him "to mind his own business" (Trammel et al., 2012, p. 45).

Trammel et al.'s (2015) findings, as well as Ian and Steven's accounts, draw attention to the theorisation behind the deprivation model. Experiencing the correctional centre environment exposes offenders to 'pains' and/or deprivations, which uniquely influence and shape their behaviours. As a means of navigating these complexities, offenders often become involved with gangs as it provides them with a sense of status and resources. By creating this sense of alliance, although often in an indirect manner, it exposes these offenders to increased levels of violence, as a means of remaining loyal to the gang (Butler et al. 2018; Howell, 2010). In this sense, violent activities and acceptance for such activities are perceived as normal within this environment (Kristin, 2014).

It is important to note that the realities of gangs are not simply bound to correctional centre structures in South Africa. Similarly, to offenders joining gangs as a result of the deprivation that they experience during their time of incarceration, this reasoning transcends into the broader South African context, given that the gang provides the same type of social support to its' members on the outside, as it does for those on the inside (Van der Westhuizen & Gawulayo, 2021). Thus, these social groups in correctional centres act as a microcosm of the broader deprivations that drive gangsterism in society beyond the correctional centre setting:

> *For me to be honest…I was having some friend and he's a 28 and most of the time, the places we would go together and always he would talk with me and say just make sure to be safe when you go to the prison and when he would talk with me he would just use this language of the prison and I started to enjoy that*

> *language… Umm most of the time, I saw most of the people they didn't go to prison, but they have tattoos and I ask do you know what the meaning of this tattoo is, and they say no I just like it… and then he told me about this gangsterism and about this Number…when I go inside this prison, I didn't panic because I knew some other things* (Simon)

As seen in Simon's reflection, the Numbers gang served as a community for him on the outside. Thus, it is necessary to acknowledge that the possible pains of imprisonment experienced inside the correctional centres, also mirror some individuals' lives on the outside. This may offer a possible reason for why gangsterism within the correctional centre context is a phenomenon that takes a natural form and is something that is viewed and understood as acceptable (Van der Westhuizen & Gawulayo, 2021).

Steinberg (2004b) further postulates that gang members often target younger and weaker looking men. This is derived from the historical belief within the gang's ideology that "weak men needed help from stronger men" (Steinberg, 2004b, p. 9). In turn, younger men who enter correctional centres, often turn to the gang members for protection. In return, this offender will then exchange something for example, services, goods and/or sex, to receive this protection (Steinberg, 2004b):

> *…you do get within the gangsters gangs, they like to prey on – I want to say weak young people that come in neh. This guys very young, he's scared of the whole system* (Jacob)

However, when Ian was asked about this, he stated "*I deny it*" as a reason for an offender to join a gang. Paat et al. (2020) and Albertse's (2007) research disputes Ian's experience and supports Jacob and Steinberg's (2004b) insights. Paat et al. (2020) and Albertse's (2007) have found that coercion and aggression is commonly used in an attempt for gang members to prey on weaker counterparts, in order to display their position of courage and dominance. In these instances, gang members tend to draw on intimidation tactics to instil fear, in an attempt to make weaker offenders more vulnerable and susceptible to further manipulation (Nel, 2017). It has been suggested that often younger and weaker looking offenders join the gang, as a means of gaining protection, having increased accessibility to resources and being able to belong to a culture, despite it supporting the norms of gang-related behaviours (Macfarlane, 2019).

Despite the gang being able to provide younger offenders with certain novelties, these individuals are commonly subjected to certain deprivations, instilled by the gang leaders. One of the interviewees provided an example:

> *Gang bosses they were all studying with Unisa and things, but they would advise other gang members not to go through education… The gang leaders in the gang think the youngsters shouldn't study* (Steven)

A common belief among gang leaders is to deprive youngsters of education. This view is derived from the perception that if youth have the opportunity to learn, it will enable the individual to live a life that they choose. This may result in the younger member questioning and/or challenging their position within the gang. Thus, restricting educational opportunities acts as an additional mechanism for gang leaders to maintain their dominance, as well as ensure that the younger members remain in a vulnerable position, whereby they are indirectly coerced to rely on the gang (Mguzulwa & Gxubane, 2019).

Not all offenders are equally likely to participate in correctional centre violence. Rather, this informally organized social system within correctional centres creates a space for the formation of this hierarchical structuring system. It is through this, that offenders become labelled as either a perpetrator or as a victim. The 'perpetrator' is commonly seen as an offender who is involved in gang-related violence and/or procedures. The 'perpetrator' is viewed as being part of this hierarchical structure and as a dominant entity (Kristine, 2014). It is interesting to note that although Steven was not involved in the correctional centre gangs, his involvement in various rehabilitation programs, as well as his ability and motive to challenge the current system of the gangs, placed him in a position of power, to some extent. As a result, the operating gangs within the correctional centre viewed Steven's position as a threat to their procedures and thus, he was subjected to a sense of 'bullying' and antagonism from the gang:

> *There was a hit list against us…I was the third…because whoever the syndicate was was the suppliers of the drugs and dagga and that stuff…so we were moving inmates away from that, we were sort of slowing down their business or killing their business so they decided to eliminate us (hand action of cutting neck) …you see how hectic prison is* (Steven)

Simon offered insights as to why gang members will act violently towards non-affiliated offenders:

> *Most of the time the people who are not in the gangsterism, it is not easy to fight them…but especially if they cooperate but there's some other one that are not in the gangster, they are seen as the bully and that's where they are going to get the problem… if he thinks he's too clever that's when he's going to find the problem inside the prison… The only thing – you you just want his blood. If I stab you I see the blood and then I'm satisfied* (Simon)

Thus, the gang-related violence extends beyond the interaction between the gang and the fellow gang members. It is common for correctional officers and fellow offenders to

frequently be attacked by gang members (Nel, 2017). Such gang-related violence towards offenders who are not affiliated with the gang typically occurs in instances where these offenders interfere with the gang's operations and is viewed as a form of retaliation (Harris et al., 2011). Two of the participants explained:

> *They would kill you whilst sleeping or doing but like I told you I was as much as dead …They were against me because I am not a gang member and I'm not supposed to interfere with what they were doing* (Steven)

> *…most of the time… I just do it without the instruction, most specially if I stab someone who is not in the gangsterism* (Simon)

In line with this, it is important to understand the role that some of the correctional staff play in these situations. Within South African correctional centres, corruption appears to be rife. There is some evidence to suggest that there is a sense of co-operation and collusion between corrupt officials and gang members (Nel, 2017). In such instances, the prohibition of goods and/or substances creates a market whereby the wardens and/or staff act as the logical suppliers. Through this, there is a benefit and reward system at play, whereby the offenders are gaining access to a wider range of goods, and the wardens and/or staff are gaining a financial profit. Under these circumstances, correctional centre officials, tend to act as motivators and facilitators of the gangs' operations (Muntingh, 2006). These officials adopt a certain tolerance towards the deviant behaviours of the gangs, and are often viewed as a facilitator of the gangsterism system (Sibisi & Olofinbiyi, 2021):

> *…there are those with corruptive behaviour… Gangsterism was reduced in Zonderwater. It was only after I left that the group and the group I left with that there was stabbings in 2015 towards the end and things at Zonderwater. I'm not saying it's because I left but I got worried because it was not yet my term. I was supposed – um court was meant to be 2016 but because of the work I was doing they sort of said ey you must go. I got my medium earlier* (Steven)

These types of interactions between officials and offenders have not typically been viewed as a form of corruption, as officials often develop a certain measure of tolerance for acts and/or behaviours that are embedded within the abuse of power (Barrington et al., 2021). The occurrence of 'corruption' within the correctional centre context has essentially been de-criminalised (Muntingh, 2006). It is common for correctional centre staff to become enmeshed within this social setting, causing some to internalize the beliefs and norms held within correctional centres subculture. This often facilitates a system of shared values, whereby officials have the opportunity to rationalize, excuse and justify such deviances amongst offenders and their fellow staff members (Chappell & Pirquero, 2004). However, this reflects

a major problem as such perspectives appear to warrant the acceptance of this type of institutionalised culture (Nel, 2017). As a result of this, such perspectives tend to allow criminality to proliferate. Thus, corruption not only undermines the safety and security in correctional centres but also the efforts made by the DCS to reform and rehabilitate offenders (Muntingh, 2006).

Thus, gangs and the presence of gangsterism across correctional centres appears to be located within the normalization of violence within this environment. The sense of acceptance surrounding the violence within this context, appears be a reflection of the positions of power, which, enables offenders, as well as some of the correctional staff, to gain a sense of control within the correctional centre environment. Gangs across correctional centres in South Africa continue to maintain a hierarchical structure, despite efforts being made to reduce gangsterism and gang involvement (Lindegaard & Gear, 2017). Gangs continue to govern correctional centres through the process of prisonization, allowing for the implementation of rules and regulations that are derived from their code of conduct (Lindegaard & Gear, 2017). The participants had differing views towards the presence of gangs in the correctional centre. For Jacob, Jeffry and Steven, this was something that they avoided. However, for Ian and Simon, it provided a type of safety net, which assisted them in navigating and surviving the environment in the correctional centre. The insight provided by the participants reflects the subculture of violence and gangsterism within correctional centres. It is through this subculture that violence takes on a form of currency that creates a system of structure within the gangs, as well as the broader correctional centre population. Thus, violence and gangsterism appear to define the intersection of offender's experiences and the way they navigate the complexities embedded within the correctional centre environment.

4.2.2. Sexual coercion and violence

The above sections have explored the participants' experiences, understandings and perspectives towards physical violence within correctional centres. Embedded within these understandings of physical violence emerges the participants experiences with regards to sexual coercion and violence.

Sexual interactions between offenders are largely embedded within a system of exchange. This system of 'exchange' aims to transform boys into men, as well as men into 'women' (Nkosi, 2021). Accordingly, different kinds of sexual interactions occur between men in South African correctional centres. Most of these are categorized as abusive and exploitative

and involve rape (Ngubane et al., 2022). Men in correctional centres are often viewed as a source of material goods, sex and potential new gang members. In this regard, the act of unwanted sex demolishes the victim's manhood, through which, he is then viewed as a 'woman' to the other men (Nel, 2017). Victims of sexual violence are often men who appear to be weaker, younger and/or as having feminine characteristics (Morash et al., 2012). This was explained by Simon, who made reference to the symbolism of tattoos:

> *Inside the prison, you see if you are a man and you put inside the butterfly* [tattoo] *which means you give us the sign that you are the woman, you see we start to pressurize you about the tattoo*

Simon's account speaks to how employing body ink goes beyond the symbolism of in-group membership. Whether a tattoo has been gained on the inside or outside the correctional centre, it represents a set of cultural values for fellow offenders. For example, the ideology associated with a butterfly tattoo has come to resemble a lack of masculinity and power, as well as the sexualization of a woman. Such body art serves as an identifiable metaphor for the unsaid/implicit social bonds between offenders. This culture of utilizing tattoos to identify the 'statuses' of an offender has been labeled as "voluntary stigma", which effectively pushes some offenders away, while simultaneously acts as a form of expression of dominant values within a correctional centre (Tepperman, 2019).

Within correctional centres in South Africa, sex is viewed as a form of currency and a critical component of the intricate systems of power. Within these institutions, sex may be used as a form of exchange for small benefits and/or goods – for example, a cigarette, special favours and/or basic rights such as food or protection against potentially threatening situations (Trammel, 2011). Understanding this system provides insight into how sexual violence may emerge. Two of the participants in this study explained:

> *Mmm to be honest, sometimes we don't get visit…and then you struggle inside the prison for the cosmetic and you don't get to visit…and this other one long time he sells some drugs inside the prison, or he go and get the visit, he got money…he has account inside the prison. We've got the account inside the prison, we don't actually have money…but inside the prison there is money…and then every time they pay you and then they sleep with him…* (Simon)

> *…if they give you the thing you love, they want to give you something back…Somebody they want to touch you… then they going to say ayy they want you to help him* (Jeffry)

In these instances, offenders tend to weigh the costs and benefits associated with engaging in sexual relationships, with the primary motivation being that they will have increased access to the goods and luxuries that they desire. However, this understanding does not provide insight into whether these sexual interactions are consensual or non-consensual (Terry, 2016). As Gear (2001) explains, these boundaries between consensual and coerced sex are significantly blurred. Thus, to understand the occurrence of sexual violence within correctional centres, it is more appropriate to view these acts on a continuum and along a graduated range of coercion levels (Gear, 2001).

It is important to note that where sexual interactions have been reported, they have commonly been linked to the specific workings of the 28s (Gear, 2001).

> *I think especially it's the 28s I think that's involve in the sexual activity* (Jacob)
>
> *Most especially it's the gang. People who sleep with the gays, he's a 28 but there's some other one they not 28 but they have that chance to sleep with gays when they have money, to pay them but most of the time 28 they work there…yaaa* (Simon)

Empirical evidence provided by Gear (2001) supports Jacob's inference and Simon's experience. The 28s' code of conduct requires them to "pamper, protect and organize", by governing sexual relations between men (Gear, 2001, p. 2). Through this, the 28s adopt homosexuality as part of their creed (Gear, 2001), by creating 'partnership' roles which resemble heterosexual marriages outside the boundaries of the correctional centre (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014). These types of relationships are often embedded within brutality, violence and coercion. Evidence of this is provided by Jacob who explains:

> *…the situation was they didn't even rape the guy umm from you know face to face, they drugged him first. Then when he was unconscious, they gang raped him and he was so severely raped that he needed to be hospitalized and not even inside prison he was hospitalized outside*

Such acts of violence are often attributed to being part of the recruitment process into the gang. However, gang members view recruitment as voluntary and will very rarely admit to being involved in acts of coercion (Gear, 2001). In support of this, Simon stated that *"most of the time it is not force, it is just an agreement"*. It is interesting to note the use of the term 'most' in this description offered by Simon as it suggests that there are instances where these sexual interactions do in fact occur through the use of coercion and force. However, he was unwilling to disclose such experiences. This indicates that the correctional centre culture

typically creates a sense of acceptance and support for rape and/or sexual violence (Fowler et al., 2022).

Thus, sex and sexual violence within correctional centres tend to confuse the distinction between the act of homosexuality and sexual coercion. The acts of sexual coercion within the correctional centre are related to the view that men 'must' be masculine. By engaging in homosexual relations men become feminised (Michalski, 2017). However, in order to maintain their masculinity, these relationships are reconfigured by viewing them as a heterosexual relationship, in order to ensure that masculinity is retained (Michalski, 2017). This is supported by the accounts offered by Jacob, Jeffry and Simon. However, the intersection between coercion and sexual violence is undeniably more complex, given the social structures and bonds that emerge within the boundaries of the correctional centre. This will be explored in the following section.

4.2.2.1. Gender identities and violence

In order to fully comprehend the occurrence of sexual violence within correctional centres, understanding the role that gender identities play, is a fundamental facet to consider. Sexually violent instances, according to Wolff and Shi (2009), are often motivated by an offender needing to prove their 'manliness'. This positioning and understanding of the term 'manliness', within the boundaries of correctional centres, draws upon the binary model of gender (Ertl et al., 2017). Miller et al. (2009) define gender as the act of identifying as masculine or feminine based on gender stereotypes which have been socially constructed. Thus, offenders develop their self-identities in accordance with what it means to be male or female (Ertl et al., 2017). The phenomenon of male offenders needing to prove their manliness, is embedded within a particular form of partnership between a dominant and an inferior offender. Evidence of this is provided in this study's participants accounts:

"…sometimes you get a boy who got somebody" (Jeffry)

Jeffry's use of the term 'boy', when explaining the composition of this relationship is noteworthy. Like women, the term boy is associated with weakness and/or inferiority (Jewkes et al., 2015). Jeffry's choice of wording speaks to the negotiation of gender which occurs within the context of correctional centres. The negotiation of gender that occurs is the transition of a boy becoming a man or a boy being assigned the role of a wyfie. Through this, the position of power becomes the core facet, which governs this interaction between offenders (Celinska & Sung, 2014).

In instances where these relationships begin to form between offenders, the view of manhood perpetuates societal values and views which correspond with traditional understandings of what it means to be a man and a woman. For example, a man embodies qualities of strength and assertiveness, whereas a woman is softer and more nurturing. The traditional understanding and characteristics associated with masculinity in correctional centres aligns with the theorisation of hegemonic masculinity (Lewin, 2017). Within this context, hegemonic masculinity takes a patriarchal form whereby violence is accepted, and conceptualizations of male sexual entitlement is glorified (Morell et al., 2012; Lewin, 2017). In turn, the legitimacy and justification of men's control over women is derived from the cultural meanings affixed to this concept of manhood (Jewkes et al., 2011). Thus, offenders who are viewed as a man hold a superior position to those who are seen as subordinate. In these instances, offenders who are viewed as the subordinate counterpart in these relationships, are typically categorized as a wife or 'wyfie':

> *There was two youngsters it was a boyfriend and a girlfriend…but the one other one was the wyfie* (Steven)

Once an offender has been deemed a wyfie, his identity becomes feminized, and his role is to engage in sexual acts with the dominant offender (Lewin, 2017). Although, the adoption of this identity is known to emerge as a result of an offender being exposed to acts of sexual violence, Simon explains:

> *Most of the time it is not force, it is just an agreement…cause some other one when you see that…they started to struggle inside the prison, you then see okay he started to makeup him, to give us – he give us the sign for you to come to him…it's the sign that now I am gay, you can come to him and then you just look okay which one do you want…Alright this one, I know this one can do me some many things*

In theory, the formation of these 'husband and wyfie' relationships and/or acts of sexual violence appear to emerge as a result of the constraints on heterosexual relationships within correctional centres:

> *If sometimes without the women I got the feelings, but ey I go to the social worker and say I got feelings now a days it's been a long time and says you got feelings for the tin fish I can buy it for you and I say no I don't want the tin fish for for in the shop… I say sometimes I need to* [masturbating hand action] *you know and he said you you can do it yourself and catch it…the differences will come out, he always used to tell me because if you go there, you can't come out of the jail* (Jeffry)

> *…most of the time, it's the people who don't get some visit, they struggling inside the prison…they just take the position of ey let me just be a gay, they will protect me and my life will be okay…so it's like this* (Simon)

In both Jeffry and Simon's experiences, the deprivation experienced speaks to the pressures of having limited and/or no heterosexual outlet. In this sense, this type of deprivation has the potential to drive heterosexual men to engage in homosexual acts and sexual predation as a result of the experienced sexual deprivation (Fleisher & Krienert, 2006). Thus, Simon's account offers insight into the formation of these relationships, which is derived from the sex-segregated nature of correctional centres. As a result, offenders adopt and internalize institutional-specific cultural beliefs which shape the accepted beliefs and behaviours relating to sexual violence (Fowler et al., 2022). In turn, these interactions begin to resemble heterosexual relationships outside of the correctional centres (Carcedo et al., 2019; Lindegaard & Gear, 2014). Support for this is illustrated by Simon's experience:

> *…if you can start to think about your wife, that's when you going to pick up the problem…ya especially for me… I check the time yohh 10'O clock, he's starting to sleep with another guy…yohh I start to stress*

This experience described by Simon provides support for the insight offered by Gear (2010) who explain that once a man gains the identity of a wyfie, he is considered a 'woman'. Thus, "prison wives are treated just like women outside" but within the boundaries of the correctional centre (Gear, 2010, p. 26). It is interesting to note that these relationships that form, are often embedded within the hierarchical structure of the gang (Gear, 2001). However, in instances where these acts occur beyond the cooperation with the gang, it exposes non-gang affiliated offenders to an increased risk of violence:

> *…you are sleeping another man and make you a fight…If you knew, you didn't do that thing it's better for your life mara if you did, you go to fight mara if you don't did, you are not going to fight because it's a liar so you are not fighting for a liar* (Ian)

> *…because you start to do that, even if you don't fight, the people will want to fight you… no one is going to trust you if you do it… somebody he hears the rumor and they going to fight you like you fighting your wife* (Jeffry)

> *…you don't do that if you don't belong in the gang. It's only for gangsters to have a partner, a sex partner in prison…if you are not a gangster no ways, no partner…*(Steven)

An important facet to acknowledge is that despite these relationships being between two men, they are not considered to be homosexual. The reason for this is due to the misgendering process that occurs, through which, this partnership resembles a heterosexual

relationship on the outside, between a man and a woman (Lindegaard & Gear, 2014). However, in instances where there is no mutual agreement about the structure of the male-female relationship, men who engage in sexual acts are considered to be placed at a higher risk of victimization and abuse, and are labelled as homosexual (Kupers, 2017). Evidence of the potential violence occurring as a result of sexual interactions is illustrated by the participants:

> *There was a few guys inside the single cells because they were gay…they were promptly out I'm gay…and there was situations where you find relationships but these relationships were not forces, it was mutual…* (Jacob)

> *They are accepted but most of the time the police…they've seen they are going to struggle within the prison and they give them the single cells…you know this one, we see them he's a gay…if we put him in the community – I mean single cell is just one or two ya cause that time they take them and they put him there* (Simon)

Homosexual men being kept in single cells, rather than communal cells is noteworthy. Donohue et al. (2021) explain that the stigma, discrimination, alienation and victimization that homosexual individuals face in general society, is often mirrored and intensified in the correctional centre environment. This places these individuals at a higher risk for experiencing victimization, when compared to the general offender population (Donohue et al., 2021). Thus, a possible reason for placing offenders who identify as homosexual in single cells, separate from the general correctional centre population, is because conditions within correctional centres do not provide direct protection for homosexual individuals (Fleisher & Krienert, 2006). Simon's experience suggests that offenders who are homosexual, are placed in single cells as a means of the correctional centre officials avoiding the eruption of violent interactions, rather than focusing on the safety of these offenders':

> *Sometimes they fight for for gays inside the prison…most of the time they know we are going to fight. You know, if you are woman, if I find you with some other guy, I started fight like ey this is my lady, don't do that. So, they are avoiding the fighting inside the prison* (Simon)

This draws attention to the current debate surrounding transgendered offenders and their placements in correctional centres and raises the question: Why are men who are homosexual, receiving this type of protection, despite the justification behind placing them in single cells, while transgendered women are less likely to be subjected to this same type of protection? Transgender women are subjected to "double-punishment", due to the impact of gender binary sex-segregated correctional centres, which denies gender recognition and the ability to gender-affirm. By the criminal justice system failing to recognize the fluidity of

gender, it places these offenders in a position whereby the likelihood of them being exposed to victimization, and/or physical and sexual abuse by fellow offenders and/or staff, is increased. In turn, the heteronormative values of gender binary sex-segregated correctional centres further fuel the stratified hierarchy of offenders, which places homosexual and transgender offenders at the bottom (Brooke et al., 2022).

The negotiation of gender within the boundaries of the correctional centre is bound to cultural norms and institutional roles which exist on the outside beyond this environment. The participants' accounts support the existing literature by illustrating the way in which such norms and roles are validated within the correctional centre environment. These accounts have also provided insight into the intersection between sexual violence and the misgendering of identities. It is apparent that violence in these instances, acts as an ordered and/or encoded process, through which sex becomes a resource and gender identities mediate these two components of life in correctional centres. This interactional role that violence, gender identities and sexual coercion play, act as defining characteristics of correctional centre life and are thus, likely to have a negative impact on the offender's mental health.

4.3. Experiential intersection of conditions: The impact on mental health

Previous literature indicates that the conditions and environment, as well as personal and social characteristics of an individual, are likely to influence offenders' mental and emotional states (Edgemon & Clay-Warner, 2018; Goomany & Dickinson, 2015; Semenza & Grosholz, 2019). The experiences disclosed by Jacob, Jeffry, Ian, Steven, Derek and Simon reveal the way in which navigating the correctional centre environments, played an influential role in determining their mental and/ or emotional states.

When offenders enter the correctional centre, they are forced to adapt to this new environment. Feelings which may arise include disbelief, overwhelm and/or anxiety (Huey, 2008):

> *You are a wreck actually…I just got quiet…because you totally knocked down* (Jacob)
>
> *So I was experiencing anxiety* (Ian)
>
> *…there other people crying* (Jeffry)

The consequences of adapting to this environment are seen as a direct response to a series of perceived deficiencies and stressors within this setting (Huey, 2008). Common affect

which develops includes anxiety, depression, trauma, distress, suicidal ideation and/or attempted suicide (Shammas, 2017):

> *…they took us for assessments. It's about three floors. When I was at the top – …I can't take things. Fortunately, on the steps there were these steeps which I think they put there specifically for people with my thoughts. I was thinking of throwing myself* (Steven)

> *…most of the time they don't sleep, they sleep just two or three hours and then they wake up just because it's not good. You see for example like say in Port Elizabeth, they've close for almost six years because they kill themselves and the police and then they close that prison…* (Simon)

The ideation presented by Steven and the example illustrated by Simon are not uncommon across male offenders within the South African context. The rates of suicide are significantly high across correctional centres in South Africa, at almost three times the national suicide prevalence rate, situating the suicide rate at approximately 40% within correctional centres (Bantjes et al., 2017). It is important to note, that although some offenders enter correctional centres with pre-existing conditions, it has been postulated that the institutional environment in which offenders are subjected to, is likely to exacerbate and/or trigger this type of emotional affect (Fazel et al., 2016):

> *Like look the time frame I applied to consult the psychologist, during that period, if I wasn't strong enough I would have also committed suicide…We were about 48 when we left here in March…by August, ten of the inmates I went there with died…mostly of stress, being traumatized, some took overdose on medications and things like that* (Steven)

The experience described by Steven reflects the deprivation perspective which posits that suicide in correctional centres may been seen as a direct response to the restrictive institutional environment and other 'pains of imprisonment', which offenders have difficulty in accepting and/or conforming to. It has been suggested that higher rates of deprivation are more closely associated with higher levels of suicidal ideation and suicide (Dye, 2010). The experience described by Steven speaks directly to the intersection between deprivations and the impact on mental health. The insight offered by Steven supports the theorisation of the deprivation model as the numerical figures he revealed, suggest that within a space of five months, approximately 21% of offenders had died, from mental health-related problems and/or suicide.

The ideas embedded within the deprivation model, extend to the poor treatment that offenders often receive from correctional centre staff. Correctional centre staff have the

authority to use force when it comes to ensuring protection, safety and security for themselves and other offenders (Bello & Matshaba, 2022). However, although it is important to consider the stress that correctional centre staff are under, there are instances where offenders are treated unjustly and unfairly. This experience is described by Steven:

> *…it's really traumatizing because they would basically hit an inmate you know beat an inmate to a pulp for nothing and then every time you are wondering when is it coming to me …I told myself I'm as much as dead so whatever happens let it be… I made sure on a daily basis, in the morning I phone my family, during the day I phone them and I tell them on the phone if it takes me more than four hours of not calling, you must know I'm dead… you see how traumatic*

This experience described by Steven speaks to the wealth of literature that connects the exposure to violence to negative mental health outcomes. The regular exposure to violent instances is directly associated with mental health problems and trauma-related affect (Lerman et al., 2022). Maltreatment and/or abuse carried out by officials and/or other offenders, appears to influence the likelihood of an offender acting out violently. Typically, such reactions have been attributed to the correctional centre being categorised as an oppressive environment (Crewe et al., 2011). In turn, offenders may exhibit aggression, and/or self-destructive behaviour. However, the problem arises when the display of this emotional affect is viewed by correctional centre staff as a sense of misconduct, rather than being seen as a response to the conditions and hardships offenders are required to navigate.

Steven offered insight into his experiences with such treatment. He explained that due to the affect he was experiencing, he requested to see a psychologist in the correctional centre. At this point, the correctional centre staff had viewed him as a 'problem', as he actively attempted to challenge the 'status quo'. They labelled him as having "*sensitive personality disorder*". He explained:

> *So I was too sensitive to things like like what I was saying now…some utterances sort of disturb me you know so um you know in a situation – in an environment like prison some things you don't need to cough out. Coughing them out causes you problem…instead of assisting with the problems I was experiencing – you know you won't believe, the one psychologist said I'm suffering with libido, my libidos high…they want to give me injection to reduce my libido but because of the experience that I had within the first months that I've been there that injection they gave them it was that one that makes you stiff and that I don't know for what*

In addition to the mental-health related impact that such conditions have on offenders, those who are unable to manage such affect, are likely to experience physiological symptoms:

> *Um I had a friend Anthony* (pseudonym)*… up to the day I think he got parole, he never accepted his sentence… So, inside prison, Anthony was diagnosed with um high sugar and uh um um what's that um high intensity, high blood pressure… um so that he actually developed in prison and I think it was that thing of not settling* (Jacob)

These accounts speak to the relationship between the conditions in correctional centres and the way in which an individual responds. Porter (2019) explains that the brain determines which stimuli are threatening and attempts to regulate the body's response to such threats. The physical conditions which may arise during an offender's time of incarceration may be a direct response to being exposed to cumulative or chronic stress, increasing wear and tear on the body, and resulting in health complications (Porter, 2019). Thus, the affect and the experiences described by the participants, refers to how mental health is related to physical health. It is important to note that the idea of the 'body' features across the themes in this research in terms of violation, misgendering, tattoos and in this instance, a proxy for the mind. The physical and mental interaction that occurs for offenders is a common response to adapting to the environment of the correctional centres (Campodonico et al., 2022; Edgemon & Clay-Warner, 2019).

To appropriately adapt to this climate, offenders often undergo a transition into a state of 'emotional numbness' (Laws, 2016):

> *I harden myself so that I don't feeling anything… You don't laugh, you don't cry, you just become like this robot* (Jacob)

> *I think if I could cry I would…I would cry because… it's making me not feeling well…Nothings stopping me from crying…maybe I do cry and I don't know* (Derek)

Jacob believed that this sense of emotional numbness was a form of a "*coping mechanism*". Hemming et al. (2020) suggests that this feeling of emotional numbness, whereby offenders tend to avoid their emotions, is used as an attempt to maintain a sense of control. Once one emotion is acknowledged, offenders have described that it turns into a flood of overwhelming emotions, which may result in a lack of control (Hemming et al., 2020). It is interesting to note that Derek's experience emphasises the perception of offenders being unable to and/or having difficulty with fully identifying the affect that they experience.

On the other hand, Hemming et al. (2020) further found that in instances where offenders display their emotional state, it is perceived as a sense of weakness. This perspective aligns with the view attached to the meanings and understandings of what it is to be a man and

to be masculine (McKenzie et al., 2018). For example, men are viewed as strong and less emotionally expressive. In instances where a man displays emotions, they are often perceived as being weak (McKenzie et al., 2018):

> *You supress actually your feelings because you don't want to show any weakness… you become unemotional, you don't cry, you don't laugh… The things that were normally funny, you don't find it funny anymore but I think that was just a coping mechanism…against bullies* (Jacob)

Associating men's emotional states with weakness relates to the socially constructed view that men who are emotionally expressive show signs of femininity and weakness (Wong & Rocheln, 2005). For offenders who are more willing to express their emotion and affect, it places them at a higher risk for experiencing victimization, given the hierarchical structure at play and the other offenders need to exert power and dominance within the environment of correctional centres (Hemming et al., 2020). However, it is interesting to note that the experiential accounts offered by Jacob and Derek, draw attention towards more uniformed accounts of gender, whereas for Simon, he explains that:

> *Most specially us men, we are too weak…Small things…we say fuck let me take the gun…I am a male…Now, if I want to cry, I will cry, it's not like old fathers and grandfathers* (Simon)

This statement presented by Simon, contradicts the experiential account offered by Jacob and Derek, as they both viewed the portrayal of emotion as a sense of weakness within the correctional centre setting. However, for Simon, the insight drawn suggests that there is more weakness in men, who do not overtly show and/or manage the emotional affect which they experience.

Jeffry's form of coping mechanism was to focus on himself:

> *…better to be yourself and save yourself…you must know how to control yourself inside the correctional services… because… they got a lot of people there that doesn't follow the things but if you see somebody do like that, I just look at it like I don't know and I don't answer him, I just leave it like that* (Jeffry)

This speaks to the idea that although the conditions within correctional centres allow for interactions among offenders, offenders are highly aware that their peers have committed some form of social transgression. Thus, they are cognisant that this environment may be embedded within a defensiveness and/or suspicion which may result in conflict. Offenders have described the environment where friendships may emerge as being located within low trust and being emotionally alienating (Crew, 2009).

This sense of isolation is extended on by Ian:

> *I didn't want a friend…you live alone and you come alone*

It is interesting to note, that Ian expresses that he did not want friends in the correctional centre, yet he viewed his fellow gang members as a family. His perception of the Numbers gang being a sense of family to him, may be related to the universal need to belong and to maintain some sense of social relationships (Sentse et al., 2021). This sense of isolation from the outside world came through in both Ian and Simon's experiences:

> *…don't think about too much outside because you will confuse yourself…it makes my mind work too much…it disturb* (Ian)

> *….but the problem it started at the night when the prison it started to close…the prison… you start to think about your family, your friends, your wife…the time always goes so slow* (Simon)

Ian and Simon's experiences relate to the phenomenon of 'prisonization'. This describes the distinct socialization process within the correctional centre that requires offenders to accept different values, customs, and consequences in order to align with the subculture within this setting (Miszewski & Mialkowska-Kozaryna, 2020):

> *…when go to prison…no more enjoy our life because you – our our right is few than when you outside* (Ian)

> *…you sleep with the time; you wake up with the time…you give the time. You don't enjoy anything that you do, the only thing you must do is accept that you are inside the prison…you you don't use your light on your mind inside the prison. You see like if there is a TV, if there is no remote and then the TV will never function but if there is a remote, the TV will function. The remote is the police…when they say do that, you do it, if they say don't do it, then you don't do it. You just stand and always listen to them…but it's not easy inside the prison…it is hard* (Simon)

By undergoing this inevitable process of prisonization, it is common for offenders to experience a sense of confusion given that the correctional centre environment is significantly different to the life they lived, beyond the confinement of this space (Miszewski & Mialkowska-Kozaryna, 2020). Thus, Ian's perception of the Numbers gang being a family to him may be a form of replacement for the social relationships that he had outside of the correctional centre, in turn allowing him to feel as though he belonged. For Steven, the sense of belongingness is derived from the terminology which correctional officers used to address him, whereas for Simon, he felt comfort and familiarity which allowed him to feel as though he belonged:

> *For me it was somehow offensive you know, because to keep calling someone a killer for example, it's like you are triggering what maybe if – I mean a person who kill is a killer but to keep saying killer killer it sort of you know emotionally – some it traumatize some they like it but it's not all we are… I was four years there they had Mr* _____(name omitted*)… He didn't want the word inmate or offender…they knew they had to call us residents because he personally knew how traumatizing it was… because it somehow it give you a sense of belonging in a way that it helps you reconsider if there was things you did wrongly* (Steven)

> *I didn't panic when I go to prison…I was feeling like I'm at home just because most of the members and the police they know me* (Simon)

It is interesting to note that research has found that low levels of social support in correctional centres is associated with higher levels of mental illness and an increased risk of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts (Solbakken & Wynn, 2022). For example, Ian adopted a more isolated nature, despite the incongruence with his perspective towards the Numbers gang, which may explain why he described navigating his emotional and/or mental state during his time of incarceration as being "*difficult…for [him]*". The accounts offered by Ian, Steven and Simon provide insight into how offenders desire a sense of interpersonal relationships, connectedness and being part of a group. Where offenders have an insufficient sense of belonging, it has the potential to cause pathological distress which can affect physical health, mental health and behaviour (Schnappauf & DiDonato, 2017).

Despite the challenging conditions and hardships that offenders are subjected to, these individuals are still required to succumb to the pressures of this institutionalization (Edgemon & Clay-Warner, 2019). Through this, offenders are likely to experience a shift in their thinking patterns and behaviours. At times, this shift can become dysfunctional, dangerous and/or risky (Akhona, 2014). However, for Jacob and Jeffry this shift in mindset was utilized as a form of survival.

> *You do introspection and ask yourself one question and you ask do you like the person you became?... I wanted to do something while I was here…I started goals in my life, [like] the studying and everything and actually getting more involved in the things, you feel more useful… Once you fulfil a purpose in life, even inside prison…you not just a worthless nothing* (Jacob)

> *What I can honestly say to you neh there are things we did in the past but inside you have enough me time to introspect and do all those things… I took account for my actions and held myself responsible* (Steven)

Liebling et al. (2019), found that offenders who find a purpose during their time of incarceration, often feel motivated. This sense of motivation tends to trigger positive affect

which benefits and assists offenders in improving their emotional well-being and mental state. Insights from Liebling et al. (2019) reveal that offenders who were able to find their niche began to feel a sense of purpose, passion and gratification. In such instances, Jacob has described this as *"the whole mind shift thing".*

On the other hand, Jeffry and Ian stated:

> *I survived a lot of bad things you see…I want to feel the punishment and I want to feel it hard…In correctional service that time I spent there, I didn't feel it because I was to see myself to get pain…I was just do my sentence just like that* (Jeffry)

> *…it disturb mara it makes you understand your situation at that time and you always supposed to have a promise that one day you gonna – one day get out and be in an easier place… you know there's a mountain that is difficult to climb but mara you can pass, you eh bekezela* (patient) *to pass* (Ian)

Jeffry and Ian's mind shifts relate to the understanding of societal retribution. In this sense, punishment as located within societal retribution means that those who have made others suffer, in the interest of fairness, are made to suffer as well (Apel & Diller, 2017). This is supported by Morsch (2019), who indicates that modern correctional centres have expanded their goals to use retribution as a means to deter future offenses. It appears that both Jeffry and Ian believed that by facing the hardships and challenges associated with incarceration, they would be able to rectify their behaviour and learn from their past actions.

It is apparent that Jacob, Jeffry, Ian, Steven, Derek and Simon's emotional and/or mental health were impacted by the experiences they were exposed to during their time of incarceration. Despite these participants shifting their mindset, as a means of surviving the hardships and challenges, they all emphasized the toll that this environment had on their emotional and/or mental well-being. Their experiences are supported by empirical findings, which emphasises the dynamic impacts that the exposure to varying experiences of deprivations and violence has on offenders' emotional and/or mental states. This draws attention to the importance of having appropriate rehabilitation and reintegration programs for offenders.

4.4. Navigating the correctional centre environment: Rehabilitation

Experiences faced during incarceration continue to plague offenders, even once they are released from the correctional centre (Liu et al., 2021).

> *When I get in prison after all this time, it's like there's this clamp on my heart… it's like I don't like this place* (Jacob)

> *My life has changed because I didn't think or attempt…committing a crime even a small thing… I didn't want a crime because I don't want to go back to prison because I know that life and I don't want any person to there* (Ian)

Both participants' accounts indicate the impact that the correctional centre and the associated experiences had on them, as well as the way in which these experiences continue to shape the way in which they navigate their life, outside the boundaries of the correctional centre.

This highlights the necessity for correctional centres to implement and enhance rehabilitative and reintegration programs (Chikadzi, 2017). Some of these would include educational programs and/or mental health initiatives whereby offenders are able to learn to explore and understand their behaviours, affect and thought processes (MacKenzie & Amirault, 2021). Evidence of these types of programs have been provided by the participants:

> *…we had a social group of social workers, inmates against crime, where our focus was to try change people's minds around – about crime… So we had programs… – I even myself presented some programs with the social worker… and we had a whole program inside the prison like a function where we get guest speakers… So, I did the basic anger management course and I got SO much out of it and later on… it was like advanced anger management course and if you can listen and apply it to your own life, you can get SO much out of it that you can apply in your life but if you sit there and you you say ugh this course won't help me, it's a matter of it not helping you. So you need to be open to whatever is being presented* (Jacob)

> *We were working with the social works and psychologists to help in rehabilitation of offenders…We were so active neh with rehabilitation more than the officials themselves…We assisted those who couldn't read and write…* (Steven)

> *I must learn… If I get cross, how must I do it, I mustn't fight, how must I do it then… I make life skill, I make like anger management cause I get cross… I go to the psychologist to teach me how… If I got the problem I come to the social worker… The social worker used to teach me… I want to know how am I going to deal with the bad things* (Jeffry)

> *The social worker did two courses with me…one was alcohol abuse and the other one was mmm…I can't remember, I can't remember that one, but it was something also in that* (Derek)

> *I've attended anger management, life skill and then I do this course of peer educator and then after that I just did soccer and that…I learned a lot...I learned a lot from this courses that I do inside the prison* (Simon)

As seen with Jacob, Jeffry, Steven, Derek and Simon's experiences, these programs and/or sessions with professionals were able to provide the offenders with the opportunities to learn how to respond and process various situations, which would assist in rectifying their behaviours and actions, as well as learn how to appropriately navigate the outside world (Chikadzi, 2017). Based on Steven's experience, a sense of purpose emerged during his time in the correctional centre by actively engaging in these rehabilitative programs. However, it is interesting to note that in Derek's case, he attended only two courses, yet the one he could not remember.

For Ian and Simon, they both focused more on engaging in physical activities:

> *I to involve in like activities something like soccer…I can join in that group. Something like… gym mmm…so now I'm a personal trainer* (Ian)
>
> *The prison they organized me that I helped many prisoners inside the prison. I helped them play soccer outside…* (Simon)

The engagement in sports, during an offender's time of incarceration, has the potential to improve and assist with the individual's overall well-being. This allows offenders to not only learn technical-sporting techniques, but also personal and social values which may assist with their reintegration into society (Vila et al., 2020). In addition to this, Ian also learnt the practical skills of "*welding*" and thus, he *"[now] know[s] how to make a burglar gate"*. Findings suggest that offenders who learn vocational skills, such as welding, for example, are associated with fewer disciplinary violations, reduction in recidivism and increased employment opportunities (Bruyns & Nieuwenhuizen, 2003).

However, despite these programs being available in some of the correctional centres in South Africa, some offenders remain disengaged:

> *It's up to you what you want to attend* (Ian)
>
> *They don't leave you, but if you don't listen to them, they will leave you. They say okay if you want to live like this we don't have a problem, but here it is correctional, we want to correct you…we know you've made the mistake and then we are here to rectify your mistakes or we want if you go outside, for you to start a new life. Then the community must come back to you, love you again and yaaa* (Simon)

It appears that the reluctancy to engage in these programs is attributed to these programs being optional for offenders, as well as there being little to no well-structured programs which offer each offender the type of rehabilitation they are needing (Murhula & Singh, 2019). Thus, Jacob believes that *"psychologist's play a very important role…to evaluate…is this person rehabilitatable or is he a lost case"*.

It has also been theorised that hegemonic masculinity plays a contributing role to heightened resistance in psychotherapy and other rehabilitation strategies by endorsing a need to aggressively compete and dominate others. The gendering dynamics at play within correctional centres appear to be acting as a barrier for men to willingly participate in these programs (Kupers, 2005). Steven's experiential account provides insight into this matter:

> *On the rehabilitative side and rehabilitating team side, it's challenging as males to say you please let's try do things – I always say let's – I don't like saying you must do this or – so it sort of it somehow sort of brought some of them to understand that I mean we are men. We have responsibilities, you can be higher but at some stage you are going to be a parent or you are a parent…*

Based on Steven's insight, it may be that the way in which these programs are being voiced to offenders, is acting as a deterrent for them to attend. Thus, perhaps something worth considering is to rephrase and select particular terminology, which aligns with the dominant correctional centre subculture, as a motivator for offenders to take part in these programs.

It is apparent that engaging in these programs is a personal choice for offenders. Across the participants' experiences, it is evident that these programs have assisted them by improving their lives. Support of how these programs have assisted them, as well as other offenders is embedded within the exploration of previous existing literature.

4.4.1. Gaps in the DCS rehabilitation model

The DCS mission is to contribute "to a just, peaceful and safer South Africa through effective and humane incarceration of offenders and the rehabilitation and social reintegration of offenders" (DCS, 2016, p. 23). Unfortunately, these objectives have not entirely been met (Bantjes et al., 2017). Jacob, Jeffry, Ian and Steven provide insight based on their experiences into areas where DCS may improve their rehabilitative programs.

> *Social workers were also doing some of the work of psychologists because there was not a psychologist…the psychologists we had there was actually from medium and was helping out only sometimes with severe cases…but prisons are I think very understaffed…. one psychologist cannot cover a prison of three thousand people* (Jacob)

This insight is supported by the recent DCS (2021) report which revealed that the department has 88 permanently appointed psychologists and 42 community psychologists nationally, to serve an offender population of 47 144. This speaks to the national problem faced in South Africa, whereby psychological resources are scarce. This is supported by statistics released by the PsySSA Office (2017) which shows that there are under 13 000 psychologist

professionals registered with the HPCSA. In turn, within the public sector, there are 2.75 psychologists per 100 000 people (PsySSA Office, 2017) and 0.97 public sector psychologists per 100 000 for people without health insurance (Docrat et al., 2019). The lack of psychologists was evident in Steven's interview where he stated:

> *I just had to see a psychologist, a social worker…it took me about three to four months without response…look at the time frame I applied to consult the psychologist, during that period, if I wasn't strong enough, I would have committed suicide*

Although the scarcity of psychology professionals within the general context of South Africa is beyond the scope of this research, it does provide a rationale for why these services are significantly restricted and/or limited within the context of correctional services. The DCS is aware of this problem, and thus, the department is focusing on ensuring that there is sufficient capacity in order to assist offenders with appropriate rehabilitation and development issues (DCS, 2021). However, the lack of available resources continues to have detrimental consequences for offenders, their family, and society.

Based on Jacob's account it appears that social workers often service in a multidisciplinary domain, due to the need to compensate for the limited resources that are available within the correctional centre setting. However, social work and psychology professionals have been trained to incorporate different skill sets into their practices (Dhavaleshwar, 2016; Wahass, 2005). For example, social workers typically focus on extending their knowledge to assist their clients in improving their lives by offering them professional strategies which they are able to apply (Dhavaleshwar, 2016). Whereas, psychologists, on the other hand, direct their attention towards assisting their clients in understanding their biological, psychological, environmental and social facets, through the use of psychological tools, which may be influencing certain types of behaviours, affect and/or thought processes (Wahass, 2005). As a result of social workers adopting the role of a psychologist, these professionals are likely to face challenges relating to role incongruity, role ambiguity and role conflict (Nduli & Mthembu, 2022; Toi, 2015).

Jacob, Jeffry, Ian and Steven provided insights into the availability of rehabilitative programs in the correctional centres. Murhula and Singh (2019) explain that such programs offered by DCS aim to provide a needs-based correctional sentence plan and interventions for offenders. The purpose of this needs and risk assessment is concerned with matching the individual's level of risk of re-offending and the treatment and/or interventions that they

require. The assumption is that risk acts as a strong indicator of clinical need. Thus, high-risk offenders should receive the most treatment. Offenders who score moderately on this risk assessment should receive moderate treatment, while low-risk offenders warrant little to no intervention (Murhula & Singh, 2020).

However, Jacob's insights reveal that this approach to rehabilitation for offenders does not align with the principles associated with the needs and risk assessment. He provides an example:

> *We were given like ten programs that we need to complete before our profile is going in to the parole board… Now I'm sitting in an HIV course… I know it's a very important thing but I learnt from HIV…I'm sitting there, and I feel like I'm wasting my time but of course I need to have a paper in order to get my parole…I mean the same course cannot be presented for a person that is committed for murder or rape or – it's different problems, it's different people and even within there's two murders committed, it doesn't mean the people have the same problems* (Jacob)

Jacob's experience is supported by an interviewee's account presented in Murhula and Singh's (2020, p. 357) research, whereby the participant said "they put all of us in the same programmes. You can't take a person who committed rape and put him in the same programme with someone like me who committed car theft". These perspectives describe the nature of integrated programming, rather than focusing on addressing a specific and defined objective, for a given condition and/or problem within a selected group (Onwe et al., 2021). Jacob's account demonstrates that within the correctional centre context, emphasis is placed on offenders attending the programs, rather than ensuring that these programs are positively and effectively contributing towards meeting the particular offender's needs in relation to desired outcomes and changes in behaviour (Chikadzi, 2017; Murhula & Singh, 2019).

The problem which arises is that such assessments should be conducted by a social worker and/or a psychologist. However, given the scarcity of mental health professionals within the correctional centre context, these programs are often allocated to offenders by officers (Herbig & Hesselink, 2012; Murhula & Singh, 2019). This is problematic as these officers often have limited training in implementing personalized and individualized programs. In turn, there are little to no well-structured programs which offer offenders rehabilitation programs which are tailored to their individual needs (Murhula & Singh, 2019). Jacob and Simon explain how they believe these programs would be more effective and/or beneficial:

> *If people can be evaluated as they are being sentenced, and you can actually work out and say listen this is your problem, let's work out a plan. This is your half way and this is where we we want you to go because I think people are clueless. They come inside prison and that lock has been closed and you have no idea what the future hold but I think if someone can sit down and evaluate you and say alright I see this and this problem. You have anger issues, let's sort out that anger issues and you know suddenly where you going. I think that make a big difference, it can change that mindset* (Jacob)

> *You know, to be honest, the members, I'm talking about the police of the correctional, they work a lot and then sometimes if you got your management clear at correctional, every time they fight with you, they think you've got anger. You've got a stress, if you work with prisoners, you must know the thing. It's a headache, each and every time you go into prison, you're going to get some headache. You must know each and every prisoner, this one is behaving like this. It's not tough work to understand most of the prisoners…* (Simon)

Research has found that programs which address the offender's personal predispositions to criminal behaviour, as well as their physical and social needs, are more closely associated with positive reintegration outcomes (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2018). The DCS recognizes that offenders have a right to rehabilitation that aims to drive human development and promote social responsibility and values (Muthaphuli, 2008). The goal of these programs is to empower offenders, rather than to focus on punishment. Support of this is illustrated through Simon's experience:

> *Inside the prison there is no punishment. When I talk about punishment, the punishment is this one of gangsterism only but when I talk about the members, they always want things to go well, everything must be clean yaaa…like everything is going well"* (Simon)

However, Posholi (2019) suggests that the South African correctional centre's ethos tends to emphasise deterrence and punishment, rather than focusing on treatment and care (Posholi, 2019). In support of this, Steven states:

> *There is what you call corrective behaviour, which is their responsibility which they don't account for and they not responsible for that…I asked them based on those things on the profiles that you are rehabilitators, you are this, you are that but what you are doing is totally against all those profiles…Instead of rehabilitative us, they have more punishment in the way of ill treatment… The treatment inside…it's not of a rehabilitative nature"* (Steven)

In this instance described by Steven, punishment has been drawn on as a strategy to gain cooperation from offenders (Apel & Diller, 2017). However, Apel and Diller (2017) found that punishment, as a form of rehabilitation, in fact acts as a deterrence to rectifying behaviours (Apel & Diller, 2017). In support of this, Jacob explained:

> *…what I know is that some of the guys that was involved in that rape was taken to isolation and outside cases they were open and they they were add on on their sentences… but the problem with such guys is um they already have like two hundred and thirty year sentence…it's not a punishment anymore…you just making a donkey and I think such long severe cases…they don't give a damn about nothing*

The phenomenon of utilizing isolation is a common form of punishment in correctional facilities. However, it has to potential to cause offenders undue psychological distress and by extension, increases their propensity towards criminal behaviour (Labrecque, 2015). In the above instance described by Jacob, relying solely on punishment, rather than utilizing punishment in conjunction with corrective rehabilitation strategies, for example, psychoeducational programs, provides these offenders with a limited opportunity to understand the implications of their behaviour, as well as learn how to rectify actions. Countries that predominantly rely on punishment-related strategies as a means of correcting behaviour within correctional centres tend to have an overwhelmingly high recidivism rate (Apel & Diller, 2017). These accounts offer some clarity as to why South Africa's recidivism rate is averaging at 87% (within a range between 55% and 95%) (Murhula & Singh, 2019). This pattern has been attributed to poor rehabilitation approaches, limited resources and the lack of adequate support for the reintegration of offenders once they have been released (Kiewit, 2020; Murhula & Singh, 2019). In support of this Steven explained:

> *… I kept telling myself the cause of people inside, for them to reoffend while inside, what's the actual cause, what triggers them to…that when I started dealing with how can we resolve this? How can we deal with this?…There is my concern, that is why I got myself involved with other rehabilitation programs* (Steven)

Moreover, Jacob indicated that he does not agree with long-term sentences because:

> *I think the American system, we can learn from it. Um not punish a guy on the first crime with a life sentence, I think it's too harsh. Um I think give him less sentence but as criminal recommitting the crimes, then obviously harsher sentences is due… The problem with such guys is um they already have like two-hundred-and-thirty-year sentence so they don't give a damn about nothing. They are really really rock hearted*

In support of this, Marti (2021) explains that offenders with long-term sentences often tend to evoke ambivalent feelings because their experience becomes embedded within a sense of uncertainty. Hulley et al. (2015) argue that long-term sentences have a deep and profound impact on the offender and thus, the process of learning to cope, results in fundamental changes in the self. Consequently, this makes implications for release more complex and concerning as

the ‘normal adaptations’ to the ‘abnormal’ environment in the correctional centre may have adverse effects of these offenders. This suggests that the necessary adaptive changes within the context of correctional centres, may actually be maladaptive on release, when the individual is in a more social and familial-oriented environment (Hully et al., 2015). This once again emphasises the need for rehabilitation measures to focus on correcting behaviours, while looking at each case in an individual and personalized manner.

Each participant described their experiences and/or lack of experiences with the rehabilitation programs they were offered during their time of incarceration. However, a noteworthy point is that across these experiences emphasis has been placed on the roles in which each participant personally played in managing and navigating such programs. This may be attributed to the lack of staff presence and/or a disjointed definition and understanding of rehabilitation across these centres. Steven explains his experience as follows:

> *Even the psychologist told me at some stage that you know Steven… Please I ask you nicely. I’m only saying what if on some day you are perhaps at a shopping... complex or something like that or you’re just standing in your garden and there is someone with a gun. When you look, it’s that man who you should have helped but whom you didn’t help. How will you feel? Touched his penis? How will you feel? I’m just saying, I’m honest. I remember of course. If I leave here the same person who won’t change, what will happen?] …The department was never entered into the Guinness Book of World Records because if it wasn’t for us that would never have happened* (Steven)

Steven’s account draws awareness to the greater problem at hand, which is that these rehabilitation programs are not being effectively designed to address each offenders’ needs. Rather, they are programs which are being developed by offenders – perhaps with minimal and/or limited guidance from professional personnel such as correctional officials, educators, psychologists and healthcare professionals – and are being incorporated based on what offenders believe their fellow offenders require. As a result, there is limited professional assessments and/or involvement. In turn, it is fundamental for the DCS to better equip its officials by providing the necessary training on rehabilitation, in order for these programs to be effectively implemented.

4.4.2. Lack of rehabilitation as a continuum

In line with the above insights that reveal the limited rehabilitation available for incarcerated offenders, Jeffry, Ian, Derek and Simon shed light on how this phenomenon continues to play a role in their life, while they are on parole.

Upon release from correctional centres, offenders face a myriad of challenges. Just as the offenders underwent the 'prisonization' process, once released from these institutions, they are fully emersed into an environment, which is one that is now embedded within unfamiliar territory. This is especially the case for offenders who have spent long periods in the correctional centre. Thus, offenders are required to undergo a reintegration process whereby they transition from incarceration to mainstream society. This process is one which is located within complexities and challenges for offenders, as they 're-learn' how to navigate their 'new' world (Chikadzi, 2017):

> *Yoh life on the outside it's challenges…Sometimes life outside is too difficult yohh. Sometimes I think let me go back to prison, I'll get some free food, everything here is free. Outside its difficult we must stand, wake up in the morning, check what am I going to eat. If you got a girlfriend, they just want the cosmetics – they call it now a wife allowance* (Simon)

As seen in Simon's account, the extent of acute social exclusion from being in the correctional centre, has created a number of difficulties in accessing and navigating key areas of one's social life. In order to successfully reintegrate into society, it has been found that upon release, offenders require a significant amount of social care, in order to assist them in overcoming their various challenges (Robinson et al., 2021). However, within South Africa, it appears that there is a lack of support given to these individuals and thus, upon release, there is a sense of unpreparedness when it comes to reintegrating into their communities:

> *Sometimes outside here there's a lot of things…you want to see somebody about how to correct yourself and how to put your head…in jail I was get psychologist for free… who was help me and show how to get my head right but here we haven't got money and there's no one who's going to help us…* (Jeffry)

> *I've been to another planet, I come to another planet, and both are very difficult. It's because outside there's lot of challenges and if you are not strong enough and you don't face it, there's some other people they exile themselves or kill themselves because they are afraid to challenge themselves* (Simon)

The lack of support is problematic as the prevalence of mental health challenges among individuals while on parole significantly high. One study examining individuals on parole found that 27% of parolees reported having some kind of mental health-related issue (Owen et al., 2011). Jeffry's experience and Jacob and Steven's acknowledgement with regards to the challenges of seeking mental health care while on parole, is supported by a study conducted by Owen et al. (2011), whose findings revealed that the most common barriers to accessing these services were not having health insurance and/or not being able to afford mental health care. However, if offenders are returning to their communities and do not have access to these types

of services which will guide them through their reintegration process, it stands that they will be less likely to succeed in their post-release transition and more likely to relapse and commit a crime (Khwela, 2014). Given the known association between mental health care and the reduction of recidivism (Murhula & Singh, 2019; Owens et al., 2011), finding a way to provide accessible and affordable mental health care to individuals on parole would be beneficial.

Furthermore, Jeffry, Ian and Derek argue that DCS officials need to be more structured with their regulations. Jeffry states that he would like to see the DCS "*do[ing] the things [they] [say] [they'll] do*". For example, he was told that he was going to be given medium parole supervision. This means that the correctional centre staff are supposed to come once a month to his house, however, they come every day. With reference to Derek and his experience, he explains:

> *I can't go nowhere. I can't go out in the evening; I must phone if I want to go to my parents and sometimes, I phone…they say no you must wait till they come visit you first. Then I sit there till twelve and sometimes my mom phone and say no we already going to bed because I wait till twelve. So, that's frustrating as well*

In support of these experiences, Louw and Luyt (2019) explain that the level of supervision and the parolee's possible risk to the community are classified according to three supervision categories, namely, high, medium and low risk. The predicted level of risk determines the frequency and category of supervision required. However, Mujuzi (2011) found that the legislations around parole have changed several times in South Africa, resulting in many offenders, correctional officials and parole board members having a sense of confusion surrounding the specifics which govern the parole procedures. This may offer insight into why correctional officials are not appropriately adhering to the parole guidelines (Mujuzi, 2011). In order to ensure that parole proceedings are abided to, it may be worth the DCS developing and/or updating their parole manuals, to ensure that both the parolee and the correctional staff are aware of what is expected from them. In line with this, Ian explains that for the DCS to improve, the correctional officers, both inside and outside the correctional centres need to "*follow [a] procedure, if you want to do a better thing"*. However, on the other hand, this idea of hyper-surveillance may also be due to the correctional official's performance being determined and evaluated in relation to the conduct of the men they control (Alpert et al., 2006).

Parolees being exposed to unnecessary levels of surveillance could have potential social, mental and/or health consequences due to feeling frustrated, anxious, distrustful, paranoid

and/or overwhelmed which in turn increases the chances of people on parole to recommit criminal acts and then re-enter the correctional centre (Harris et al., 2020). This relates to Jeffry's experiences:

> *How do you teach me because you tell me like that but you don't follow because you don't cooperate you'll correct me but you don't follow the things you tell…The police they…don't follow the things…They tell me I must do like that BUT he's [the police] the one who do the bad thing…The police must correct themselves before they correct US*

Jeffry's experience relates to the view which locates police officers' actions within the paradigm of abusing their power and authority. This sense of entitlement has been perceived to be derived from the conditions and interactions that these officers are required to deal with, when working inside a correctional centre. Officers often view offenders and parolees through a lens of inferiority. This creates a hierarchical structure, whereby officers often fail to acknowledge offenders and/or parolees as citizens and as fellow human beings (Skinns et al., 2020). Thus, holding this perspective often results in officials failing to follow correct procedures. It is inevitable that there will be a hierarchical structure between correctional officers and offenders and/or parolees, but for incarceration and rehabilitation to be effective, correctional officials are encouraged to build a sense of trust and confidence among offenders and/or parolees. By doing this, it will increase the likelihood of offenders' and parolees' willingness to cooperate with them (Bello & Matshaba, 2022).

The findings within this theme indicate that offenders' individual needs are not being addressed. This appears to result in increased levels of violence, in turn creating a hyper-masculinized space. The interaction between violence and this hyper-masculinized space leads to the normalization of sexual violence, resulting in a misgendering process. The intersection of violence, hypermasculinity and misgendering, has the potential to compound the mental state of an offender, who is likely to already be in a vulnerable position. In turn, the consequences of not having appropriate rehabilitation programs available to offenders to learn and understand how to navigate this environment while incarcerated, is likely to have a continued impact on them, once they are released.

The DCS are encouraged to improve the services and/or resources that they offer. This is supported by empirical accounts, as well as this study's participants' experiences, insights and perspectives. The issues and challenges raised by the participants in this research, appear to be align with various other research contexts. The predominant DCS-related shortcomings

which have emerged within this research include limited access to mental health care, both inside and outside the correctional centre, generalizing rehabilitative programs across the correctional centre population, correctional officers failing to adhere to procedures and/or regulations, as well as the implications of long-term sentencing. These insights may serve as an opportunity for DCS to consider the way in which their department may be improved.

Chapter five: Conclusions

5.1. Central findings

This study aimed to understand the complex intersection of violence, gender identities and mental health, in the lives of South African men while they were incarcerated. This report has, through interviews conducted with six men on parole, explored five key areas: their overall experiences in the correctional centre, violence, mental health, rehabilitation and gaps in the DCS' rehabilitation model, which aimed to provide a more detailed and textured narrative of the experiences that these men were subjected to. At the same time, these key themes were all supported by literature, which examines the impact that these constructs have had on the individual.

The report began by drawing on the participants' overall experiences and their attached meanings. This aimed to create an overview of their experiences, whereby a top-down approach was used in an attempt to understand the intricate factors at play which influenced their experiences. The key findings spoke to the phenomenon of prisonization and the participants' (in)abilities to adapt to this 'new' way of life. An interesting element which emerged in these accounts was the agency with which the participants responded to their environment. Given that the correctional centre environment is typically categorized as a structure embedded within the deprivations of autonomy, the idea that participants felt this sense of control and independence to choose, is a noteworthy consideration and a possible direction for future research to focus on.

Through analysing the participants' experiences regarding violence in relation to the existing literature, it became apparent that such acts are inherently related to the fundamental deprivations that offenders are exposed to. With this, violent acts appear to be integrated into the 'pains of imprisonment'. In drawing on the theorisation posited by the deprivation model, integrated in the realm of violence, is the elaborate system of gangs which prevails across correctional centres in South Africa. The hierarchical structure implemented by the gangs, creates a subculture of prisonization that is organised by physical and sexual violence, in order to ensure that gang members adhere to the gang's rules and regulations. Integrated into this system of violence and gangsterism, as well as the theorisation of the deprivation model, a key finding which emerged related to the negotiation of gender which occurs within the boundaries of correctional centres. The idea of deprivation comes through in relation to male offenders being deprived from heterosexual relationships. Through this, traditional gender norms are negotiated. However, this process tends to exacerbate the occurrence of sexual violence and

assault. The reason for this is that in South Africa, traditional understandings of masculinity create a backdrop where implicit violence and sexual entitlement is glorified and accepted. It is through these structures and the emergent subculture that a sense of normalization is attached to the discourse surrounding violence and the experiences with violence within these boundaries.

In understanding the experiences that these participants encountered and the environment they were required to navigate, the impact on their emotional and mental well-being became evident. This spoke directly to the importance of offenders needing to have access to rehabilitation programs, in order to assist them in understanding their affect, as well as to rectify their behaviours. However, based on the participants' accounts, it appears that there continue to be gaps in the rehabilitation models executed by the DCS, which may offer some explanation for why the recidivism rate continues to be significantly high within the South African context. Through this, the debate of vertical and integrated programming comes to the forefront. In order to assist offenders in understanding this environment, programs should target both the individual needs of the offenders, as well as provide an understanding for the intersection between violence, gender identities and mental health, in order for offenders to be able to navigate the correctional centre environment, as well as manage the impact of these experiences, once they are released. Therefore, in understanding the intersection across these dimensions of the participants experiences, it becomes evident that the dynamic interaction between violence, gender identities and mental health, are directly attributed to the deprivations and 'pain of imprisonment' that offenders are required to navigate and adjust to, as a means of survival.

5.2. Limitations of the current study and future recommendations

As may be the case in qualitative research, the researcher is often called to make a decision in favour of scope or depth. It is evident that I have favoured the latter over the former. Favouring the scope may have been possible if I had extended the research parameters to other correctional centres, as opposed to utilizing the Zonderwater management area as a single study context. Additionally, the study might have focused on incarcerated offenders' current experiences, rather than parolees' reflective experiences. This could be viewed as a possible limitation; however, this does not negate the participant's experiences, it simply offers a post-hoc understanding. The current sample simply consisted of parolees in the Zonderwater

management area which may have influenced the findings. It might be valuable to replicate this research across other management areas around Gauteng and more so, across South Africa.

In addition, I aimed to obtain approximately between six to twelve in-depth interviews with male parolees. Seven interviews were collected but one was omitted due to a language barrier. It is common for researchers to have a difficult time gaining entry into correctional centres, which is further impeded by the fact that parolees are often disinclined disclose their experience behind bars once they are released. Although the data for this research reached saturation, another avenue for future research is to increase data collection sites and the number of research participants, in order to allow for a broader analysis of experiences within this domain.

As seen in the discussion, Simon's perspectives on the affect that men experience during their time of incarceration differs to the accounts offered by Jacob and Derek. For the latter two participants, they both perceived emotional display as a sign of weakness. However, according to Simon, men who avoid showing their emotional affect, are commonly viewed as weaker. In turn, such conflicting perceptions requires further analysis, and thus, presents an opportunity for the focus of future research.

Concerning the focus of the research questions', upon collecting the data, it became evident the significant role that staff, as well as the presence of rehabilitation and reintegration programs play in defining these experiences. Thus, another avenue for future research might focus on gaining a further understanding into how correctional centre staff, rehabilitation and reintegration programs play a role in defining offender's experiences during their time of incarceration, and the implications at play once they are released.

Given that the data collected was self-reported, there was some evidence of social desirability bias. However, once this was noticed during the interviews, I emphasised my non-affiliated position with the DCS to the participants. Future research using offender and/or ex-offender populations, should accommodate for this possible threat. These are potential avenues for future researchers to consider, which would appear necessary given the limited understanding and insight into the impact of the dynamic constructs which shape the conditions of correctional centres and the experiences which offenders are exposed to.

There is a significant proportion of literature that tackles violence, gender identities and mental health in correctional centres. However, the purpose of this project was to understand

the intersection of these key features that define life in correctional centres. It is through this that I have been able to illustrate the way in which this intersection occurs and operates through the lens of people who have had direct exposure. In order for offenders to appropriately navigate the process of prisonization, rehabilitation programs need to focus on targeting the explicit needs of the offenders, as well as provide strategies for them to understand the dynamic role that these key features play. Doing so, will assist offenders in appropriately navigating this environment and offer them insight into managing the continued impact that the 'pains of imprisonment' following their release. This insight may contribute to reducing the high recidivism rates in South Africa.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Inclusion criteria for interviews

Inclusion criteria for interviews
1. Participants must have served a minimum sentence of five years
2. Males
3. Over the age of 18 years
4. On parole
5. English speaking

Appendix B

Participant information sheet

Participant information sheet

Study title: Understanding the experiential intersections of violence, gender identities and mental health, in the accounts of male parolees, in Gauteng, South Africa: A case on Zonderwater Management Area.

Dear Sir

My name is Jessica Jade Kallenbach and I am currently completing my masters in research psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating the intersection of violence, gender identities and mental health, in the accounts of male parolees, in Gauteng, South Africa, under the supervision of Prof Brett Bowman. The aim of this research is to understand the relationship between gender identities, violence and mental health in correctional centres, in accordance with male parolee's experiences during their time incarcerated.

As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in an online interview. The interview will be conducted face-to-face, in an office space within the community corrections centre of Cullinan, which is a separate building from the main correctional centre. This activity will involve answering questions which will last approximately sixty minutes. With your permission, I would also like to audio record the interview, using a digital device. The recording will be stored on a password protected computer which only myself and my supervisor will have access to. The recording will be deleted after 5 years.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this study. Participation is voluntary and involves no rewards or benefits. You will have the right to withdraw at any point of the study, without facing penalties or consequences. The information you provide, and your identity will remain confidential through the use of pseudonyms (false name). You will be required to sign the consent form prior to the interview being conducted. If you are

unable to sign the consent form, verbal consent will be required. In doing this, I will read out a consent form and you will be required to answer the statements. This will also be recorded, with your permission, as proof of consent. If you experience any form of distress during the interview, we will stop the interview and/or continue another time. You will be provided with the contact details for the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) and Lifeline, as well as have access to Darrian Long's (clinical psychology) email address, if you feel you require additional support.

If there are any queries, questions or you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact myself or my supervisor, on the email address below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you. The data collected from this research project will be stored on a password protected computer and will be kept for five years. With your permission, the data collected from the research project may be used by other researchers in an anonymized format. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Researcher:

Jessica Kallenbach, email ss.2021research@gmail.com

Supervisor:

Prof Brett Bowman, email ss.2021research@gmail.com

Other relevant contact details:

Clinical psychologist at DCS:

Darrian Long, email Darrian.long@dcs.gov.za

Lifeline: Counselling telephone number 0861 322 322

South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG): Counseling telephone number 0800 456 789 or 0800 708 09

Appendix C

Consent form for participation in the interview and audio recordings

Participant consent sheet

Study title: Understanding the experiential intersections of violence, gender identities and mental health, in the accounts of male parolees, in Gauteng, South Africa: A case on Zonderwater Management Area.

I, ……., agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

I have been given a Participant Information Sheet which explains the nature and processes involved in this study	YES	NO
I was given time to read it and understand the study	YES	NO
I was given time to ask any questions I wanted to and found any answers given to me to be reasonable and satisfactory	YES	NO
I believe I fully understand why the study is being conducted and what the intended outcomes will be	YES	NO
I understand that there will be no benefit or reward to me should I agree to participate, nor will I receive any payment	YES	NO

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I understand that, even if I initially consent to take part in the study, I may subsequently withdraw at any time and would not be required to give any reasons; if that happened, any data collected about me for the purposes of the study would immediately be destroyed, unless I give consent for it to be retained	YES	NO
I am aware that the findings of the study will be presented as a research report for the partial completion of a research master's degree in psychology	YES	NO
I have been given a range of contact details, listed below. If I require further information or become concerned about any aspect of this study, I am free to speak to any of these contacts	YES	NO

…….

……..(signature)

----------(name of participant)

----------(date)

----------(signature)

----------(name of person seeking consent)

----------(date)

Appendix D

Interview schedule:

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
PSYCHOLOGY

Interview question	**Purpose for asking question**	**Probe**
1. Thank you for agreeing to participate today. I really appreciate it. How are you feeling today?	The purpose of asking this question is to build rapport with the participants, to ensure that they are feeling comfortable and at ease, given that the nature of these questions are personal and sensitive.	Do you have any questions you would like to ask before we begin?
2. Please can you give me a bit of background regarding your experience with the criminal justice system?	This question will be asked in order to gain a bit of background into the participant. This also allows the participant to be eased into the interview as these questions focus on broader content.	How long were you sentenced for? Why were you incarcerated? When were you released?
3. What were some of your first thoughts/ feelings, when you received your sentence?	This question will be asked in hope that it will get the participant to start thinking about their emotional experiences they endured during their time of incarceration.	I know this may be difficult to think about, but maybe you if can try think back to that time, what were some of the feelings you felt or thoughts that went through your mind?
4. What were the living conditions like during incarceration?	This will provide insight into the living conditions. It will also allow the researcher to start gaining insight into the different relationships amongst the inmates and gain a deeper understanding for the experiences that these	What was your relationship like with your fellow inmates? What was the overall environment like within prison?

	participants may have encountered.	
5. What was your experience with violence during your time in prison?	This question will be asked in order to gain a deeper understanding for the participant's positioning and experiences of violence. It will also be asked to get a sense of gang-related violence.	What kind of violence were you exposed to? Did you engage in any violent acts?
6. What is your understanding of gender?	This question allows the researcher to understand the way in which the participant understands gender, as well as how the participant related this understanding to himself.	How did you experience gender identities during your time incarcerated?
7. During your time of incarceration, what was your emotional state like?	This question focuses on the participant's mental health, during their time of incarceration.	How did you feel?
8. What is your understanding of the relationship between violence, gender identities and mental health in prison?	This will reveal whether there is an intersection between these three constructs, through the lens of the participant and his experiences.	Do you believe that these elements relate? - If yes, why? - If no, why?
9. How do you feel prison has affected you?	This will reveal the impact that prison had on the participant and their well-being.	Which conditions do you feel could have impacted you the most and why?
10. What do you think could or should be done to improve conditions in prisons?	This provides insight into how prisoners believe the prison environment may be improved, based on their first-hand experiences.	
11. Do you have any further questions or comments?	This is to end off the interview and provides a space for the participant to clarify anything which may have seemed ambiguous or to add any additional information.	

Appendix E

Permission letter

Permission letter

Study title: Understanding the experiential intersections of violence, gender identities and mental health, in the accounts of male parolees, in Gauteng, South Africa: A case on Zonderwater Management Area.

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Jessica Kallenbach and I am currently conducting a research report as part of my Masters degree in Research Psychology, at the University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg, under the supervision of Prof Brett Bowman. My research involves investigating the experiential intersection of violence, gender identities and mental health within the correctional centre setting. With this, my research requires me to interview male parolees. Accordingly, I have made an application to the research office at the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). This letter intends to inform you about the overall purpose of my research and what the methodology will include.

My research title is: *Understanding the experiential intersections of violence, gender identities and mental health, in the accounts of male parolees, in Gauteng, South Africa*. Some of the major factors which influence life in correctional centres in South Africa, are embedded within violence, gender identities and mental health. Violence is a ubiquitous phenomenon within correctional centres and is often understood in relation to creating and/or maintaining a hierarchical structure. This creates various power relations amongst inmates, shaping the construction of 'manhood', within the inmate subculture. This leads to the (re)structuring of gender identities within this environment. Violence is thus embedded within elements of identity and manhood, as a means of asserting and claiming power. In turn, the constant threat of violence and the gendering process is likely to have a psychological impact on inmates. Therefore, these three constructs appear embedded within the logic of the prison regime. To understand the entirety of inmates' experiences during incarceration, it is necessary to investigate the intersection of these facets, as it appears that

these experiences shape the overall well-being of the individual during incarceration and continues once released.

I have requested permission to conduct interviews with six to ten male parolees at the Pretoria and Johannesburg correctional centres in Gauteng. The criteria for participant inclusion are as follows: participants need to be male, be over the age of 18, have served a minimum sentence of five years, they need to be on parole, and they need to be fluent in English. Each potential participant will receive a participant information sheet, which will include the aim and purpose of the study, my contact details, requirements for participation, as well as ethical considerations, which address the participants anonymity, confidentiality, right to withdraw at any given time and that no incentives will be provided for participation, as it is voluntary. The participant's will be provided with an email address, if they wish to get in touch with me.

In writing the final report, I will ensure that identifying data is omitted, in order to ensure the participant's confidentiality and anonymity, as a means to protecting their identity. Participants will be provided with the opportunity to accept or decline the invitation to participate in the study. Those who are interested in the study, will be given a consent form which they will be required to sign. I will explain to the participants that the interviews will be transcribed, however, only myself and my supervisor will have access to this and the audio-recordings. It will further be indicated that the audio-recordings will be destroyed upon completion of the transcriptions. The interviews will last approximately one hour, and the space will be an office within the correctional service centre.

In accordance with the Correctional Services Act of 1998, I have filled in the departmental ethics form, agreeing to adhere with correctional service conditions. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the literature on correctional centres and restitutive practices within South Africa, through which, it may contribute to informing policy and rehabilitation programs, by providing a holistic overview of experiences during incarceration.

With this, I respectfully request your permission to proceed with this research.

Kind regards,

Jessica Kallenbach

jesskallenbach@gmail.com or ss.2021research@gmail.com

Appendix F

Template for Feedback information sheet

Feedback information sheet

Study title: Understanding the experiential intersections of violence, gender identities and mental health, in the accounts of male parolees, in Gauteng, South Africa: A case on Zonderwater Management Area.

The primary aim of this research is to understand the intersection between violence, gender identities and mental health in prison, in accordance with male parolee's experiences during their time incarcerated.

Herewith, the results of the study upon completion.

Appendix G

Table of themes

Themes	Participants	Quotes from transcripts
Overall experiences in the correctional centre	**Jacob**	… [the] experience inside the prison in correctional centres um it's not it's not…all filled with monsters and bad people…it's people that make mistakes in life
		The conditions are not the best but as I said you make the best of what can… we were in a cell umm…We were thirty two inmates in one cell… Um you never have like privacy, you can have a bad day and just want to lie in your bed and someone will ask you for a light for a cigarette – you see that's all things that causing a bit of frustration but you accept it… I cannot say we enjoyed it but we we find peace
		I didn't even complete my matric on the outside so that was the first thing I completed…From there on, I continue[d] with an educational diploma and a Bcom degree
		I became who I am today because I was in prison…Prison turned me around
		the whole prison environment bec[o]mes a whole environment on its own…you need to deal with…the violence and the crime and everything inside
	Jeffry	you must know what you did outside and you want to come out of those things
		you yourself must choose
		I survived a lot of bad things
	Ian	it's difficult like it depend[s] on you…what your behaviour is. If your behaviour is good…and disciplined then everything go[es] well. If you are not good in behaviour, it's difficult for you
		…it was a hard experience…in there, there are many challenges…negative and positive
		I learn many things. Before I go to prison, I'm a drinker… I like to groove but now, I'm focussing on my life
	Steven	There was nothing that was done in accordance with the correctional services…Instead of rehabilitating us, they have more punishment in the way of ill treatment. We were trying to deal with this stigmatizing issue whereby correctional officers will sort of be like the crime you committed [was] against them personally… they all had this personal thing that you know you did this so we are going to treat you like this and this is the way they are treating you… as a state of vengeance
		…sometimes god will send you to a place or that's why I say what relieved me was god has a purpose with me here … and let me just serve the purpose and forget about the sentence
		Let me serve the time god has given me here to introspect
		It was traumatic…that's a hell on its' own…it was really bad…My first week I hated orange…I didn't want to see other inmates because they were the cause of me coming here

	Derek	This place…is actually not nice…They didn't do anything against me but it's it's the food, it's the matter where they don't bring the food…then they bring you the pap that was made yesterday…Everybody that goes there says it's not nice
		You know it's like they don't believe that you are innocent, most of them are are not nice…because you know they will always just scream on you, come here, verstaan come here
	Simon	Ya it's difficult inside the prison. That's why I say, to come in is easy but to come out… it's not easy like umm it's not nice inside the prison…yaaa we say…if you are outside, you must say thanks god
		…you must just be wise and then just take your time before you do something stupid or something reckless or a mistake that's because you got lots of time in prison to think and to plan about your life when you go back home…you think what are you going to do…
		To be honest it changed me big time. There's some other things, I was just looking at and let them pass away but now, I'm focusing on this. Ya…it changed me big time. Sometimes I say to friends of mine, I say thanks god I go to the prison because if I was not inside the prison, I will never know them. I now know a person on the inside and the outside but now I think I'm good now
Violence in correctional centres: A defining feature of life on the inside	**Jacob**	…you get different kind[s] of violence
		Um one day we had a fight in the cell but I think it was pure frustration. For many years, you wake up to the same guy um and he's just farting next to you and you tell him ey man just go to the toilet. Two guys in the cell started to fight neh and I think it was just pure frustration. They don't hate each other, it was just that moment of frustration. They started to fight, a normal fist fight, no weapons involved …You can have a bad day and just want to lie in your bed and someone will ask you for a light for a cigarette…you see that's all things that causing a bit of frustration
		Nobody was ever like…rude to me…Whenever I was in a situation where I was in trouble, I go to the member on duty and ask him, sir I have this problem
		mentality of dagga, smoking and gangsters
		We measured it one day, was sixteen by 3 metres and there we were thirty two guys
	Jeffry	…even if you don't fight, the people will want to fight you…If you see somebody, don't ask that man what you want. If he doesn't want to tell you just keep quiet because if you ask it's going to cause a lot of trouble
		in the correctional service there another people that doesn't get a visit…if somebody they said I give you a pack of cigarette they do bad things
		tell[ing] a man to stick someone because they g[a]ve you a pack of cigarette[s]
	Ian	You don't control yourself, you control other people

		I didn't fight you…before I will tell you the things you are talking about me…mara before I will tell you these thing you are talking about me, STOP it NOW…you understand mara if you won't stop I will an action you understand mara before I will talk with you mara, if you continue, me I will be an action mara no one like an action. If you are skimming people or you are best friend[s] [and] like want to gossip, the gossips dangerous because [it] make[s] you a fight because you lie too much
		something like ivisitors, your families sometimes they can come and see you mara [they] didn't come…you disturb other people
		somebody who [you] talk [to] with a crowd, might defend
	Steven	I'm not fighting anyone…They would basically hit an inmate you know beat an inmate to a pulp for thing and then every time you are wondering when is it coming to me
		… I never interacted
		You know that pen (*pointed to pen interviewer was holding*) you can take an eye off. There are workshops, there are screwdrivers there those things. If they want to do it they will do it
	Simon	Inside the prison when you talk to him and you just say ey I don't care about my life and then they can stab you, they can kill you…a lot of things. Most people they've done that inside the prison due to some other people, some other drugs inside the prison
		It's not that I got the instruction from my boss or what…it's we just fight for some things inside the prison…it's not about the gangsterism because inside the prison you know, you can come to visit me, you can buy me the cigarettes, the cosmetics, long time, if I don't have cigarette for a long time, just say give me twenty rand, I just want to buy some smoke. Then you take that smoke, and they don't give me the money that's when we start to fight and things
		When we talk about the community cell, we sleep eh almost forty-two prisoners
The intersection between gangs and violence	**Jacob**	…the dirty stuff actually
		When a guy want to get like a promotion in the ranks or something, he need to go and stab someone…We had this situation where one was stabbed with a knife and other one one break a glass and then he make like a knife with the glass and then he stabbed people
		…you do get within the gangsters gangs, they like to prey on – I want to say weak young people that come in neh. This guys very young, he's scared of the whole system
		…the tattoos [are] not the issue, but the gangsterisms put their signature on people
	Jeffry	Somebody they smoke, they doesn't get a visit, they put – they use somebody to do the bad thing. They they sit down, they say if I give you the thing you then need to do the bad things
	Ian	That thing is a military…it's some kind of military that goes rank by rank…It's a rule and graduation

	sometimes you want the rank mara…you didn't ger the rank without doing anything
	…everything goes through a procedure
	…most of the people didn't listen because you make a wrong thing because it's a rule and graduation that got you that number and if you broke that number [and] those rules you get a punishment…First warning any loans or any job company if you make…ya it's a work. After warning, you get like eh physical warning. So, most of the people they didn't like the pain like a physical warning so if you don't want that physical warning [or] something you are undermining us. You supposed to cope and beat other people… it's because you didn't want or didn't listen… so you push yourself to cooperate…It's like you go to school and get a punishment… So, if now didn't listen and didn't use your mind… so everything must be that you listen and discipline is number one…
	for the first time I come to prison, I'm a smoker ya… so not every time I have a cigarette so the group of people always smoker and not every time I have visit and I like I LIKE to smoke…
	I was going to the visitor and my family…give me a hundred rand for example. So, that hundred given to you by your family, take only ten rand, give those people then the rest of the change
	…it's like a family…that thing is good in other words but mara it is dangerous. It put you in danger yaa…if you are not a true man you are a liar mara if you a true man, like you speaking truth and didn't allow other persons speaking a liar…everything goes right…
	…first time you get in prison or go in prison it's the first time to see a prison warden. He give you ALL the rule…if you want something you come to me mara that people told you that thing, they didn't…sleep with you like eh inside the cell maybe.. there's no prison warden inside the cell, there is the people you understand…that people you will see in here first… not that police or warden you understand… and if sometimes you want to call your family, you go to the office, officer told you go and play you understand… go and play, didn't disturb me. So, that's why other people get involved in gangsterism
	I deny it
	Me I am a gangster…of 26…I didn't fight…for ten years I didn't fight
	No one can write down 26 on your skin, then remove it mara you still in number because number is there [*points to his head*] … if you take the number, you didn't take it out when you out, if you are in you are in… it's on your mind…There is no… book… you can read. That thing is a history
Steven	There was a hit list against us…I was the third…because whoever the syndicate was was the suppliers of the drugs and dagga and that stuff…so we were moving inmates away from that, we were sort of slowing down their business or killing their business so they decided

	to eliminate us (hand action of cutting neck) …you see how hectic prison is
	…there are those with corruptive behaviour… Gangsterism was reduced in Zonderwater. It was only after I left that the group and the group I left with that there was stabbings in 2015 towards the end and things at Zonderwater. I'm not saying it's because I left but I got worried because it was not yet my term. I was supposed – um court was meant to be 2016 but because of the work I was doing they sort of said ey you must go. I got my medium earlier
	Gang bosses they were all studying with Unisa and things, but they would advise other gang members not to go through education… The gang leaders in the gang think the youngsters shouldn't study
	They would kill you whilst sleeping or doing but like I told you I was as much as dead …They were against me because I am not a gang member and I'm not supposed to interfere with what they were doing
	I saw a lot of things inside whereby officials would help but they did nothing
	Gangsterism was reduced in Zonderwater. It was only after I left that the group and the group I left with that there was stabbings in 2015 towards the end and things at Zonderwater. I'm not saying it's because I left but I got worried because it was not yet my term. I was supposed – um court was meant to be 2016 but because of the work I was doing they sort of said ey you must go. I got my medium earlier
Simon	Meee…I didn't fight inside the prison. The thing I have done I have stabbed three people to get some medals…ya when you have the gangsterism, if you want to have some medals, you must stab someone, but they didn't do anything, but your boss can say you go and stab that one, let me see if you qualify to to be with us. Then you go and stab him…when the blood is out…then they give you one medal…ya ya…– Now I'm a captain for the 28
	For me to be honest…I was having some friend and he's a 28 and most of the time, the places we would go together and always he would talk with me and say just make sure to be safe when you go to the prison and when he would talk with me he would just use this language of the prison and I started to enjoy that language… Umm most of the time, I saw most of the people they didn't go to prison, but they have tattoos and I ask do you know what the meaning of this tattoo is, and they say no I just like it… and then he told me about this gangsterism and about this Number…when I go inside this prison, I didn't panic because I knew some other things
	…I didn't have the tattoo because there's this number that you must put it in your in your body to show that you are 28. But outside, I was just 28 in my mind… So, ya when I go to prison I say but I know this, let me follow this
	…we didn't fight inside the prison, especially me with the other part of the gang gangsterism just because they were liking what I'm doing inside the prison. I was teaching them soccer, I was coach inside the prison…ya
	The prison is not good, especially 28 and 26 they starting to fight…ya so it's starting the problems and they must call the police, if they've got the chance they call the army, then they must come…ya just because a lot of bribes yohh

		There's some other bosses of us they contact they move. If there is someone who run away from Cape Town and they come inside here, and then maybe they call from Bloemfontein and they give some other numbers of Joburg, Joburg Pretoria, Pretoria they come here, until the boss tell you the general, you know some such and guys I know him…go do me a favor, please kill that guy and then I just kill him and phone the messenger and tell him okay it's done and then I get some other medals
		Ya, my general or my colleagues or member, if they do the thing that is not good, we punish him… Mmm all the time, we just hit him…yaaa…all the time we just hit him
		Most of the time the people who are not in the gangsterism, it is not easy to fight them…but especially if they cooperate but there's some other one that are not in the gangster, they are seen as the bully and that's where they are going to get the problem… if he thinks he's too clever that's when he's going to find the problem inside the prison… The only thing – you you just want his blood. If I stab you I see the blood and then I'm satisfied
		…most of the time… I just do it without the instruction, most specially if I stab someone who is not in the gangsterism.
The intersection between sexual coercion and violence	**Jacob**	it's the 28s [he] thinks that's involved in the sexual activity
		they didn't even rape the guy umm from you know face-to-face, they drugged him first. Then when he was unconscious, the gang raped him and he was severely raped that he needed to be hospitalized and not even inside the prison, he was hospitalized outside
	Jeffry	…if they give you the thing you love, they want to give you something back…Somebody they want to touch you… then they going to say ayy they want you to help him
	Simon	Most especially it's the gang. People who sleep with the gays, he's a 28 but there's some other one they not 28 but they have that chance to sleep with gays when they have money, to pay them but most of the time 28 they work there…yaaa
		Inside the prison, you see if you are a man and you put inside the butterfly *[tattoo]*which means you give us the sign that you are the woman, you see we start to pressurize you about the tattoo
		Mmm to be honest, sometimes we don't get visit…and then you struggle inside the prison for the cosmetic and you don't get to visit…and this other one long time he sells some drugs inside the prison, or he go and get the visit, he got money…he has account inside the prison. We've got the account inside the prison, we don't actually have money…but inside the prison there is money…and then every time they pay you and then they sleep with him…
		most of the time it is not force, it is just an agreement
The intersection between gender and violence: Understanding gender identities	**Jacob**	there was a few guys inside the single cells because they were gay…they were promptly out I'm gay…and there was situations

		where you find relationships but these relationships were not forces, it was mutual…They were promptly out I'm gay
	Jeffry	…because you start to do that, even if you don't fight, the people will want to fight you… no one is going to trust you if you do it… somebody he hears the rumor and they going to fight you like you fighting your wife
		…sometimes you get a boy who got somebody
		If sometimes without the women I got the feelings, but ey I go to the social worker and say I got feelings now a days it's been a long time and says you got feelings for the tin fish I can buy it for you and I say no I don't want the tin fish for for in the shop… I say sometimes I need to [*masturbating hand action*] you know and he said you you can do it yourself and catch it…the differences will come out, he always used to tell me because if you go there, you can't come out of the jail
	Ian	…you are sleeping another man and make you a fight…If you knew, you didn't do that thing it's better for your life mara if you did, you go to fight mara if you don't did, you are not going to fight because it's a liar so you are not fighting for a liar
	Steven	There was two youngsters it was a boyfriend and a girlfriend…but the other one was the wyfie
		…you don't do that if you don't belong in the gang. It's only for gangsters to have a partner, a sex partner in prison…if you are not a gangster no ways, no partner…
	Simon	…most of the time, it's the people who don't get some visit, they struggling inside the prison…they just take the position of ey let me just be a gay, they will protect me and my life will be okay…so it's like this
		Most of the time it is not force, it is just an agreement…cause some other one when you see that…they started to struggle inside the prison, you then see okay he started to makeup him, to give us – he give us the sign for you to come to him…it's the sign that now I am gay, you can come to him and then you just look okay which one do you want…Alright this one, I know this one can do me some many things
		They are accepted but most of the time the police…they've seen they are going to struggle within the prison and they give them the single cells…you know this one, we see them he's a gay…if we put him in the community – I mean single cell is just one or two ya cause that time they take them and they put him there.
		Sometimes they fight for for gays inside the prison…most of the time they know we are going to fight. You know, if you are woman, if I find you with some other guy, I started fight like ey this is my lady, don't do that. So, they are avoiding the fighting inside the prison
		…if you can start to think about your wife, that's when you going to pick up the problem…ya especially for me… I check the time yohh 10'O clock, he's starting to sleep with another guy…yohh I start to stress

Experiential intersection of correctional centre conditions: The impact on mental health	**Jacob**	You are a wreck actually…I just got quiet…because you totally knocked down
		You do introspection and ask yourself one question and you ask do you like the person you became?... I wanted to do something while I was here…I started goals in my life, [like] the studying and everything and actually getting more involved in the things, you feel more useful… Once you fulfil a purpose in life, even inside prison…you not just a worthless nothing
		the whole mind shift thing
		I harden myself so that I don't feeling anything… You don't laugh, you don't cry, you just become like this robot
		You supress actually your feelings because you don't want to show any weakness… you become unemotional, you don't cry, you don't laugh… The things that were normally funny, you don't find it funny anymore but I think that was just a coping mechanism…against bullies
		coping mechanism
		Um I had a friend Anthony (pseudonym)… up to the day I think he got parole, he never accepted his sentence… So, inside prison, Anthony was diagnosed with um high sugar and uh um um what's that um high intensity, high blood pressure… um so that he actually developed in prison and I think it was that thing of not settling
	Jeffry	I survived a lot of bad things you see…I want to feel the punishment and I want to feel it hard…In correctional service that time I spent there, I didn't feel it because I was to see myself to get pain…I was just do my sentence just like that
		…better to be yourself and save yourself…you must know how to control yourself inside the correctional services… because… they got a lot of people there that doesn't follow the things but if you see somebody do like that, I just look at it like I don't know and I don't answer him, I just leave it like that
		…there was other people crying
	Ian	I didn't want a friend…you live alone and you come alone
		So I was experiencing anxiety
		difficult…for [him]
		…don't think about to much outside because you will confuse yourself… it makes my mind work too much…it disturb
		…when go to prison…no more enjoy our life because you – our our right is few than when you outside
		…it disturb mara it makes you understand your situation at that time and you always supposed to have a promise that one day you gonna – one day get out and be in an easier place… you know there's a mountain that is difficult to climb but mara you can pass, you eh bekezela (patient) to pass
	Steven	For me it was somehow offensive you know, because to keep calling someone a killer for example, it's like you are triggering what maybe if – I mean a person who kill is a killer but to keep saying killer killer

	it sort of you know emotionally – some it traumatize some they like it but it's not all we are… I was four years there they had Mr _____(name omitted)… He didn't want the word inmate or offender…they knew they had to call us residence because he personally knew how traumatizing it was… because it somehow it give you a sense of belonging in a way that it helps you reconsider if there was things you did wrongly
	What I can honestly say to you neh there are things we did in the past but inside you have enough me time to introspect and do all those things… I took account for my actions and held myself responsible
	…they took us for assessments. It's about three floors. When I was at the top –…I can't take things. Fortunately, on the steps there were these steeps which I think they put there specifically for people with my thoughts. I was thinking of throwing myself
	Like look the time frame I applied to consult the psychologist, during that period, if I wasn't strong enough I would have also committed suicide…We were about 48 when we left here in March…by August, ten of the inmates I went there with died…mostly of stress, being traumatized, some took overdose on medications and things like that
	…it's really traumatizing because they would basically hit an inmate you know beat an inmate to a pulp for nothing and then every time you are wondering when is it coming to me …I told myself I'm as much as dead so whatever happens let it be… I made sure on a daily basis, in the morning I phone my family, during the day I phone them and I tell them on the phone if it takes me more than four hours of not calling, you must know I'm dead… you see how traumatic
	So I was too sensitive to things like like what I was saying now…some utterances sort of disturb me you know so um you know in a situation – in an environment like prison some things you don't need to cough out. Coughing them out causes you problem…instead of assisting with the problems I was experiencing – you know you won't believe, the one psychologist said I'm suffering with libido, my libidos high…they want to give me injection to reduce my libido but because of the experience that I had within the first months that I've been there that injection they gave them it was that one that makes you stiff and that I don't know for what
Derek	I think if I could cry I would…I would cry because… it's making me not feeling well…Nothings stopping me from crying…maybe I do cry and I don't know
Simon	I didn't panic when I go to prison…I was feeling like I'm at home just because most of the members and the police they know me
	…you sleep with the time; you wake up with the time…you give the time. You don't enjoy anything that you do, the only thing you must do is accept that you are inside the prison…you you don't use your light on your mind inside the prison. You see like if there is a TV, if there is no remote and then the TV will never function but if there is a remote, the TV will function. The remote is the police…when they say do that, you do it, if they say don't do it, then you don't do it. You just stand and always listen to them…but it's not easy inside the prison…it is hard
	…most of the time they don't sleep, they sleep just two or three hours and then they wake up just because it's not good. You see for

		example like say in Port Elizabeth, they've close for almost six years because they kill themselves and the police and then they close that prison…
		….but the problem it started at the night when the prison it started to close…the prison… you start to think about your family, your friends, your wife…the time always goes so slow
		Most specially us men, we are too weak…Small things…we say fuck let me take the gun… I am a male…Now, if I want to cry, I will cry, it's not like old fathers and grandfathers
		I am a male and you don't want to attend us like that. Now, if I want to cry, I will cry, it's not like old fathers and grandfathers
Navigating the correctional centre environment: Rehabilitation	**Jacob**	When I get in prison after all this time, it's like there's this clamp on my heart… it's like I don't like this place
		…we had a social group of social workers, inmates against crime, where our focus was to try change people's minds around – about crime… So we had programs… – I even myself presented some programs with the social worker… and we had a whole program inside the prison like a function where we get guest speakers… So, I did the basic anger management course and I got SO much out of it and later on… it was like advanced anger management course and if you can listen and apply it to your own life, you can get SO much out of it that you can apply in your life but if you sit there and you you say ugh this course won't help me, it's a matter of it not helping you. So you need to be open to whatever is being presented
		psychologist's play a very important role…to evaluate…is this person rehabilitatable or is he a lost case
	Jeffry	I must learn… If I get cross, how must I do it, I mustn't fight, how must I do it then… I make life skill, I make like anger management cause I get cross… I go to the psychologist to teach me how… If I got the problem I come to the social worker… The social worker used to teach me… I want to know how am I going to deal with the bad things
	Ian	it's up to you what you want to attend
		I to involve in like activities something like soccer…I can join in that group. Something like… gym mmm…so now I'm a personal trainer
		Welding
		[now] know[s] how to make a burglar gate
		My life has changed because I didn't think or attempt…committing a crime even a small thing… I didn't want a crime because I don't want to go back to prison because I know that life and I don't wany any person to there
	Steven	We were working with the social works and psychologists to help in rehabilitation of offenders…We were so active neh with rehabilitation more than the officials themselves…We assisted those who couldn't read and write…
		On the rehabilitative side and rehabilitating team side, it's challenging as males to say you please let's try do things – I always

		say let's – I don't like saying you must do this or – so it sort of it somehow sort of brought some of them to understand that I mean we are men. We have responsibilities, you can be higher but at some stage you are going to be a parent or you are a parent…
	Derek	The social worker did two courses with me…one was alcohol abuse and the other one was mmm…I can't remember, I can't remember that one, but it was something also in that
	Simon	The prison they organized me that I helped many prisoners inside the prison. I helped them play soccer outside…
		I've attended anger management, life skill and then I do this course of peer educator and then after that I just did soccer and that… I learned a lot…I learn a lot from this courses that I do inside the prison
		They don't leave you, but if you don't listen to them, they will leave you. They say okay if you want to live like this we don't have a problem, but here it is correctional, we want to correct you…we know you've made the mistake and then we are here to rectify your mistakes or we want if you go outside, for you to start a new life. Then the community must come back to you, love you again and yaaa
Gaps in the DCS rehabilitation model	**Jacob**	Social workers were also doing some of the work of psychologists because there was not a psychologist…the psychologists we had there was actually from medium and was helping out only sometimes with severe cases…but prisons are I think very understaffed…. one psychologist cannot cover a prison of three thousand people
		We were given like ten programs that we need to complete before our profile is going in to the parole board… Now I'm sitting in an HIV course… I know it's a very important thing but I learnt from HIV…I'm sitting there, and I feel like I'm wasting my time but of course I need to have a paper in order to get my parole…I mean the same course cannot be presented for a person that is committed for murder or rape or – it's different problems, it's different people and even within there's two murders committed, it doesn't mean the people have the same problems
		If people can be evaluated as they are being sentenced, and you can actually work out and say listen this is your problem, let's work out a plan. This is your half way and this is where we we want you to go because I think people are clueless. They come inside prison and that lock has been closed and you have no idea what the future hold but I think if someone can sit down and evaluate you and say alright I see this and this problem. You have anger issues, let's sort out that anger issues and you know suddenly where you going. I think that make a big difference, it can change that mindset
		…what I know is that some of the guys that was involved in that rape was taken to isolation and outside cases they were open and they they were add on on their sentences… but the problem with such guys is um they already have like two hundred and thirty year sentence… it's not a punishment

	anymore…you just making a donkey and I think such long severe cases…they don't give a damn about nothing
	I think the American system, we can learn from it. Um not punish a guy on the first crime with a life sentence, I think it's too harsh. Um I think give him less sentence but as criminal recommitting the crimes, then obviously harsher sentences is due… The problem with such guys is um they already have like two-hundred-and-thirty-year sentence so they don't give a damn about nothing. They are really really rock hearted
Steven	I just had to see a psychologist, a social worker…it took me about three to four months without response…look at the time frame I applied to consult the psychologist, during that period, if I wasn't strong enough, I would have committed suicide
	There is what you call corrective behaviour, which is their responsibility which they don't account for and they not responsible for that…I asked them based on those things on the profiles that you are rehabilitators, you are this, you are that but what you are doing is totally against all those profiles…Instead of rehabilitative us, they have more punishment in the way of ill treatment…The treatment inside…it's not of a rehabilitative nature
	It's very traumatic on its' own but I kept telling myself the cause of people inside, for them to reoffend while inside, what's the actual cause, what triggers them to…that when I started dealing with how can we resolve this? How can we deal with this?
	Even the psychologist told me at some stage that you know Steven… *Please I ask you nicely. I'm only saying what if on some day you are perhaps at a shopping... complex or something like that or you're just standing in your garden and there is someone with a gun. When you look, it's that man who you should have helped but whom you didn't help. How will you feel? Touched his penis? How will you feel? I'm just saying, I'm honest. I remember of course. If I leave here the same person who won't change, what will happen?*] … The department was never entered into the Guinness Book of World Records because if it wasn't for us that would never have happened
	… I kept telling myself the cause of people inside, for them to reoffend while inside, what's the actual cause, what triggers them to…that when I started dealing with how can we resolve this? How can we deal with this?…There is my concern, that is why I got myself involved with other rehabilitation programs
Simon	You know, to be honest, the members, I'm talking about the police of the correctional, they work a lot and then sometimes if you got your management clear at correctional, every time they fight with you, they think you've got anger. You've got a stress, if you work with prisoners, you must know the thing. It's a headache, each and every time you go into prison, you're going to get some headache. You must know each and every prisoner, this one is behaving like this. It's not tough work to understand most of the prisoners…
	Inside the prison there is no punishment. When I talk about punishment, the punishment is this one of gangsterism only but when I talk about the members, they always want things to go well, everything must be clean yaaa…like everything is going well.

Lack of rehabilitation as a continuum: Life on the outside and implications for reintegration	**Jeffry**	Sometimes outside here there's a lot of things…you want to see somebody about how to correct yourself and how to put your head…in jail I was get psychologist for free… who was help me and show how to get my head right but here we haven't got money and there's no one who's going to help us…
		do[ing] the things [they] [say] [they'll] do
		How do you teach me because you tell me like that but you don't follow because you don't cooperate you'll correct me but you don't follow the things you tell…The police they…don't follow the things…They tell me I must do like that BUT he's [the police] the one who do the bad thing…The police must correct themselves before they correct US
	Ian	follow [a] procedure, if you want to do a better thing
	Derek	I can't go nowhere. I can't go out in the evening; I must phone if I want to go to my parents and sometimes, I phone…they say no you must wait till they come visit you first. Then I sit there till twelve and sometimes my mom phone and say no we already going to bed because I wait till twelve. So, that's frustrating as well
	Simon	Yoh life on the outside it's challenges…Sometimes life outside is too difficult yohh. Sometimes I think let me go back to prison, I'll get some free food, everything here is free. Outside its difficult we must stand, wake up in the morning, check what am I going to eat. If you got a girlfriend, they just want the cosmetics – they call it now a wife allowance
		I've been to another planet, I come to another planet, and both are very difficult. It's because outside there's lot of challenges and if you are not strong enough and you don't face it, there's some other people they exile themselves or kill themselves because they are afraid to challenge themselves