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“Spaces of authority: moving in and out of spaces of incarceration in Giyani”

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2020
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SPACES OF AUTHORITY: MOVING IN AND OUT OF SPACES OF INCARCERATION IN GIYANI

CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

My interest in popular understanding of the South African justice system, particularly the police holding cells in Giyani and the awaiting trial prison, was prompted by the arrest of Hlulani. He was arrested for robbing someone of their cell phone and went to the police holding cells before being released again after a short while. When he went into the police holding cells, officially speaking, his journey of "rehabilitation" had begun. At least officially, it is often propagated by officials and occasionally by members of the community that perpetrators of crime will get rehabilitated in prison. This was also echoed in a speech by Correctional Services Minister Sibusiso Ndebele when he said that "The work of the Department of Correctional Services, since the advent of democracy and the White Paper on Corrections, is human rights centred. The White Paper on Corrections calls upon all of us to transform places of incarceration, to centres of hope and second chance." (Patel, 2012). The minister further added that "For example, the name of the Qalakabusha Correction Centre, in Kwazulu-Natal, means a place to start over, or new beginnings, and is largely seen by the community where it is located as such." This however fundamentally jarred with when I spoke to Hlulani. He told me the following about his prison experience:

"I went to prison because it is part of being a K-9 member, you cannot be part of the K-9 if you have never been to prison. I went into prison so that they could accept me as one of their own."

I went on to ask him what happens when you get out of prison?

"When I get out of prison everyone in Giyani fears me. Haven't you seen how they fear me?"

These are the words of a K-9 gang member in Giyani, Limpopo, South Africa.

The K-9 gang is a group of young men from Giyani Limpopo who are allegedly responsible for a series of house robberies and terrorising residents in the area. It is not well known when the k-9 group was formed. The only mention of the group's formation involves the founder's first arrest as will be discussed, but no interview or any other source of information indicates the actual year, month or date the group was formed. The founder of the group Jabu is active in as much that he is the founder, but no longer does criminal activities. This could be due to the fact that his grandmother's house was burned down during a manhunt by a mob justice comprising of members of the community. The approximate size of the K-9 gang is not known which makes it difficult to break down the age range of the members. Some members join through initiation as will be shown in the research report, some are not actual members but claim to be in order to be feared and gain respect in the community, which makes it more likely that there could be core members, those who are well known, and peripheral members. Gang members do not have a special look or dress, they do not have any identifiable clothes, or hairstyles or identifying tattoos. the gang does not have an identifiable territory, they are found in all residential sections of Giyani, and hang out in local drinking or "chilling" places, where basically everyone hangs out. The group does not have a particular identifying graffiti, or gang slang, but mostly use the youth slang that is used by the local youth.

The K-9 gang is well feared by the community and also the police officers in Giyani. Their reputation is such, that "all", arguably so, K-9 members have been to prison as part of their initiation. From the stories which I was told as a young boy about the Giyani police station holding cells, I feared prison. Yet, members of the K-9 gang do not fear prison – at least so

they claim. They use the awaiting trial prison to gain and to regularly refresh the respect from their peers as well as the community of Giyani.

Awaiting trial is the process of keeping a person who has been arrested and charged with an offense in prison until their court hearing. Although I make mention of the awaiting trial prison in the report, the report is not particularly interested in how and/or what the awaiting trial prison looks like. The report also does not seek to explain the functionality of the awaiting trial prison with regards to length of term or conviction. The purpose of the study is to understand how people use their experiences in awaiting trial prison to negotiate and recreate the structures of authority and power. It is in this regard that the study will try to answer how the power struggle of the K-9 gang fits into the broader landscape of power and authority in Giyani.

Drawing from the stories coming out of the Giyani police holding cells and awaiting trial prison the K-9 gang is well respected and they protect each other.

What becomes clear from these remarks is that for the K-9 gang prison is not about rehabilitation, as the ideology of what prisons are for has it, but it is a space they use to gain a fearsome reputation within the Giyani community. Rehabilitation is often thought in Foucaudian terms. According to Foucault (1977), the idea of the prison is a place in which we can see the workings of discipline as capillary power, producing self-disciplining subjectivities. This as Foucault (1977) states, is what is behind the practice of stripping inmates of their freedom, surveiling them and separating them from each other in order to rehabilitate them.

In Giyani however this does not seem to apply very much. At least for the K-9 gang members. In contrast, the K-9 gang members use the space of the Giyani awaiting trial prison to create new meanings of the prison. They use the prison to become more fearsome when

they get out of jail. Also, even though they might be locked up, they are not simply striped of their freedom because they still command authority within prison. Further, instead of being disciplined and because of the violent experience they undergo the K-9 gang members seem to come out of prison more dangerous than when they went in. Would it then make more sense to understand their experience in terms of Agamben (1995). And indeed African prison are often seen as places where prisoners are reduced to bare life and their rights being taken away from them. Yet again, this is not the case when one looks at the awaiting trial prison. Something different occurs. The inmates use this space to create their own authority, and as a result, when most inmates are released from prison, they come out with more authority within the streets of Giyani.

To just give a few example, this authority takes on its own logics. It was the summer of 2012 when I first had an encounter with the whole K-9 gang. I knew some of them way before as individuals but my first real encounter with the gang was in 2012.We were at 'Cheap Cheap', a local tavern in Giyani on the 24th of December 2012. My friend was involved in a fight with one of the K-9 gang members. Apparently my friend responded in a harsh and not so respectful way to the member and the gang member got upset because he felt belittled and disrespected given their reputation. He wanted to make an example with him so that everyone in the tavern could see and learn what happens when one disrespects members of the K-9 gang. It soon became clear to me that being a gang member was a very local phenomenon, it was about being known by one's peers, and had to do with dignity derived from some form of respect and fear by those peers.

Also, popular stories have it, that the K-9 gang was formed by Jabu, the grandson of a famous traditional healer in Giyani. It is rumoured that Jabu was initiated at an early age by his grandmother to protect him from dangerous situations. Jabu named his gang K-9 because he was first arrested by the K-9 police unit in Giyani. After his release from prison Jabu was

well feared in the streets of Giyani. Even the most notorious criminals respect him because of rumours that he killed another gang leader in prison. These rumours quickly spread throughout Giyani and Jabu was also successful in mobilising teenagers into the K-9 gang. I was struck by the fact, that there was this overlap between the traditional realm of healing and the rather modern realm of criminal justice.

Finally, it soon became clear that due to the economic circumstances of the residents of Giyani, there is little room for young men to manoeuvre. The poverty compels some, emphasis on some, men to engage in practices that are associated with the gang and its criminal activities. It is worth noting that this does not necessarily mean or imply that poverty and unemployment compel people into gangs. Everyone has a choice in terms of which life they would like to lead, but given the economic reality in the area, joining the gang for some young men, emphasis on some, seems to be the easy way out or a coping mechanism. By joining the gang, young men manage to emerge as respected men. So by joining the gang not only some sense of survival can be secured but also one can obtain not only respect but even authority.

The purpose of the study was then also to investigate and analyse everyday practices of criminal justice in South Africa. Specifically, the study tried to understand how people use their experiences in awaiting trial prison to negotiate and recreate the structures of authority and power. It is in this regard that the study will try to answer how the power struggle of the K-9 gang fits into the broader landscape of power and authority in Giyani.

Additionally, numerous attempts have been made to investigate and analyse the impact of socio-economic change on young men's lives and how these young men are dealing with their current situation, which in turn often serves as motivation for their involvement and participation in gangs. Literature in this regard attempts to understand this immediate, yet

usually persistent social problem focusing on urban and modern gangs, neglecting rural gangs. Thus this paper will try to understand this phenomenon from a peri-urban and rural perspective, and in so doing address this gap in literature. Existing literature on former homelands tends to focus on chiefs, political parties, traditional healers, religious leaders for example in terms of authority, neglecting authority asserted by gangs. This will also be addressed by my research paper, adding to the existing literature on authority in former homelands.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The literature review that follows looks at literature pertaining to gang theory and authority. Specifically, the literature tries to understand how the K-9 gang members survive in prison while maintaining their dignity and at the same time gaining authority. The focus is on the co-production of domination and dignity. The literature review also identifies three different forms of authority namely authority in the homeland, the role of gift giving in creating authority in prison, and authority that comes with belonging to a prison gang. The section stresses that there are multiple forms of authority in Giyani as a case in point.

1.2.1 Authority in the homeland

To give a short overview, I begin with what is generally known about Giyani. Towards the end of the 1990s race circumscribed most aspects of people's lives in South Africa. The Group Areas Act not only assigned people to spaces according to race, but also according to the tribes to which they belonged. The Act was to be superseded in 1959 with the passage of the Homelands Act (Jensen, 2008: 40). The study area for this research was Giyani. Giyani is a small town situated in the north-eastern part of the Limpopo Province of South Africa and

was established in 1969. The town lies on the northern bank of the Klein Letaba River and to the west of the Kruger National Park. When Gazankulu became a self-governing homeland assigned by the apartheid government in 1973, Giyani became the official capital of Gazankulu and was designated a homeland for those classified by the *Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act 26 of 1970,* as Tsonga-Shangaan. The Tsonga-Shangaan were forcefully relocated and allocated land within the borders of Gazankulu**.**

Giyani, like other parts of South Africa was affected by white rule and people's lives were altered significantly. After the first democratic elections in 1994 post-apartheid South Africa experienced a major political transformation. But the people in the Giyani area did not experience the transformation as positively as many previously disadvantaged people who lived in some other parts of South Africa (Buis, 2011). The re-incorporation of the homelands into a unified South Africa led to the establishment of new provincial and local government structures. The seat of decision-making moved from Giyani to the new provincial capital for the Limpopo Province, Polokwane (formerly known as Pietersburg), which is 150 km away from Giyani (Buis, 2011). In 2000, Giyani became once again its own entity and the main centre of the Mopani District, housing both the local and district municipalities. Giyani eventually became reintegrated into the province since the dismantling of homeland structures. ANC won the recent local government elections and holds the administrative position.

Yet, because there is hardly any literature about Giyani and its establishment, I had an oral history conversation with my father Mr H.A Risimati about the history of the development of Giyani and how it may have contributed to the present realities of Giyani residents, particularly the youth as a case in point. My father is a long standing resident of Giyani. He started living in Giyani less than a year since its formation. Hence he is a witness of the development of Giyani under Gazankulu Government, the end of homeland system and the

beginning of new government led by the ANC. I therefore felt that he was a better person to relay the history to me than other people who may have come to Giyani way after its development. Also since there has not been a lot written about Giyani, and Tsonga people specifically, talking to my father would help shed some light onto this topic. Also, I thought it would be convenient since we would be living under the same roof during the course of my research. It would be easier to cross reference a lot of the information shared with me by other participants with him. It is worth mentioning that my father is not a historical authority. Yet, by tracing the development of Giyani through his narrative I was hoping to not only trace its spatial development but to begin to identify the different sources of, and the competing authorities. I therefore will recount his version of Giyani's development with an eye on Max Weber's (1978 [1922]) thinking of authority.

Authority according to Weber is when power is accepted as legitimate by those subjected to it (1978 [1922]). He also identified three types of authority: charismatic authority, traditional authority and legal-rational authority. Charismatic authority is defined by Weber as power centred around a particular person. The power is legitimized on the basis of a leader's extraordinary appeal and/or his special personal qualities. It is through belief and trust in those special qualities of the leader that people follow the command of such person (Weber, 1978 [1922]). Traditional authority is rooted in a mythical past and custom which forms the foundation for the legitimacy of a certain elite or patriarchal figure. Power is passed on through a family line. When traditional authority does not just rule a household but becomes a form of government then we speak of patrimonial rule (Weber, 1978 [1922]). Rational-legal authority is rooted in a set of rationally conceived and evenly applied rules. The loyalty of followers is not to a person but to a particular office which fulfils a certain function (Weber, 1978 [1922]). Listening to my father's story, all three forms of authority correspond to a form of leadership which is operative within contemporary society of Giyani.

My father started living in Giyani in 1970 with his father when they were forcefully removed from Sibasa (Venda) by the apartheid government during the formation of homelands or Bantustans in 1969 in his words *"The apartheid government ruled through segregation systems and through this isolated South Africa's ethnic groups. People were grouped according to their languages. So because we were Tsonga speaking in a Venda speaking area, they forcefully moved us to go and live with other Tsonga Speaking People".*

My father's father was a retired policeman but was fortunate to get a job in the superintendent's office (an equivalent of municipal office). He continued :

"The Giyani township was created as an admirative centre for Vatsonga/ Machangani under the leadership of Professor H.W.E Ntsanwisi in 1969. He was recruited from the University of the North by Vatsonga/ Machangani chiefs to lead Gazankulu. The community of Risinga were forcefully removed from their land where Giyani township was created. The Giyani township started with the homeland government departments like Chief Minister, Justice, Education, Works, Health, Finance, Agriculture and Interior. There is also the Giyani Police Station which relocated from Bendstore to section A and The Giyani Magistrate Offices."

It is clear that the artificial act of setting up homeland authorities was a juridical administrative act by the apartheid government. Often however homeland leaders lacked any legitimacy. Yet my father's description of the leadership of Professor H.W.E Ntsanwisi and how he created Giyani as an administrative centre fits Webers (1978 [1922]) definition of charismatic authority which is power centred around one person. As stated above the power is legitimized on the basis of a leader's extraordinary appeal and/or his special personal qualities. It is through believe and trust in those special qualities of the leader that people follow the command of such person. Professor H. W. E Ntsanwisi was popular amongst the Tsonga people because of his academic background. He had a Master of Arts Degree from

the University of South Africa, and went on to study Linguistics at Georgetown university in Washington DC and at Hartford Seminary in the USA. Apart from his mother tongue Xitsonga, Ntsanwisi was also fluent in other South African and international languages.

However, it is worth noting that Professor H.W.E Ntsanwisi was not the only authority in Giyani because he was recruited by local chiefs who also serve as authority figures. Weber (1978 [1922]) termed authority held by chiefs as traditional authority because it is power which runs from a family line. From this early description of the development of Giyani one can notice that there are multiple layers of authority present at the same time. Recounting his memory, my father further stated that:

"Giyani Township had a small residential area called Section A which was a residential area for government employees. The residents did their shopping at Bendstore a shop next to the Old Khensani Hospital. Later on other shops were built such as Cheapside Bantu Bazaar, City Wholesalers and Modern Restaurants such as wimpy, Nandos, KFC and Steers Giyani Bakery, Giyani Beerhall, Manombe Butchery and others."

"A residential area for whites was created called Kremetart. During that time, white people owned factories in Giyani, Dairy's and farms. They also had loan and housing companies. Because they did not want to live in the same area as black people, they had their own residential area, which was gated. Black people were only allowed to enter this area if they went there to work as house-boys and maids. It was fenced and had one gate. It was also guarded 24 hours. Whites staying there were mainly Afrikaans speaking people occupying senior government positions. Giyani Township developed very fast as people moved in in search for government jobs and shops. Today we have the following sections on top of Section A and Krematart: Section, B, C, D1, D2, E, F, Risinga, B9 and Xikukwani. There is also an increase in the number of schools."

He went on to say that:

"When apartheid was abolished in 1994 Giyani township became the capital of Mopani, one of five districts in Limpopo Province. Giyani Township is also the capital of the Greater Giyani Municipality, a municipality that comprises of villages under chiefs like Ngove, Thomo, Nhlaniki, Ndegeza, Makhuva, Dzumeri, and others."

The abolishment of apartheid and the dawn of democratic government in South Africa has increased the growth and development of Giyani township because now other ethnic groups have the freedom of working and living in Giyani Township without fear of prejudice. Xenophobic attacks are not uncommon in Giyani. This is an advancement which he acknowledges:

"During homeland regime, only Xitsonga, English and Afrikaans speaking people were the only languages taught in schools. The majority of the residents were Xitsonga native speakers. But today, on top of our country's language policy and the eleven official languages adopted in South Africa, languages such as Venda, Sepedi, Zulu, Swati and Sotho are spoken and taught in some public and private schools in Giyani."

He also mentions that Giyani also has foreign nationals like Zimbabweans, Mozambicans , Ethiopians, Nigerians, Somalians, Ghanaians, Indians and Egyptians who came to Giyani township in search for jobs and to start their businesses.

He recounts how local chiefs who have claimed some land as their own in Giyani are selling residential land and business sites to willing buyers which helps Giyani grow in size. He mentioned that like many growing townships in South Africa, Giyani Township is experiencing an increase in crime and social ills like high theft rates, drug and substance abuse and murder. He says that according to some residents of Giyani, this in part is because

all the above mentioned ethnicities and nationals now compete for the same opportunities, and given the financial circumstances of Giyani residents, it is not easy for them to start-up businesses because they do not have the capital to do so. In some way he seems to share this sentiment when he talks about that:

"It is also not easy for them to secure teaching jobs since Zimbabweans offer their expertise at a ridiculously low income. Salons, which a lot of people in Giyani would open to make a living also make less money since Mozambicans, Nigerians and Ghanaians offer the services at a low price. One cannot also rely on spaza shop income since Ethiopians and Indians dominate that market. What then in these competing realities can the youth of Giyani do rather than resort to the life of crime in their own words?"

What becomes clear from his account is that as Giyani was developing throughout the years different figures such as business people, religious people, politicians, traditional leaders and educated people were able to assert their own authority in an area which already had multiple layers of authority. This is very much in line with the body of literature by Isak Niehaus (2015), Hylton White (2015), Steffen Jensen and Olaf Zenker (2015), who are all concerned about the multiple and parallel sources of authority as they play themselves out in former homelands. In the following section I will then trace the development of authority in former homelands and how different individuals and groups assert their own authority. Ultimately I will be doing so in order to identify how the K-9 gang create their own authority within an area which already has multiple layers of authority.

A study conducted by Isak Niehaus (2015) in Bushbuckridge looks at how different people such as Christian ministers, teachers, businessmen, the ZCC church and politicians assert their own authority within the area. By looking at the different authority figures Niehaus (2015) demonstrates how former South African homelands had multiple layers of authority.

Niehaus uses the sport of football to show this creation of authority. Football in Bushbuckridge was first run by Christian ministers and teachers, but as football grew in the area, independent businessman took over the local teams (Niehaus, 2015:1055). Most of the teams used potions to enhance their performances or to hinder their opponents. Other teams used religious products such as holy water, prayer and ZCC tea to protect themselves from teams which also used potions (Niehaus, 2015). Political activists also used football fields and matches to organise meetings which fought against the apartheid regime (Niehaus, 2015:1062). The above mentioned is thus a depiction how different people create their own authority through sports within a former homeland. This is similar to Giyani and the K-9 gang using the space of the awaiting trial prison to create their own authority.

Another study by Hylton White (2015) in northern KwaZulu-Natal shows that people in former homelands are governed by a number of authorities competing against each other. In White's (2015) study the different competing authorities are local chiefs and traditional healers both involved in customary law and religious beliefs. According to White (2015) the different authorities mentioned above have been involved in the application of norms, including customary norms just as chiefs do in most traditional settings (White, 2015: 1006). But White (2015) shows the limited role of chiefs, and instead highlights the role of healers in relation to certain normative fields.

By the same token, Steffen Jensen and Olaf Zenker's (2015) study conducted in KaNyamansane Township in Mpumalanga demonstrates how authority is negotiated and constructed as people try to make sense of their new surroundings, which is similar to Giyani after forced removals were enforced. The township was the urban centre for the former KaNgwane homeland (Jensen & Zenker, 2015: 937). After Swazi people were forcefully removed to KaNgwane from the Ten Bosch area, they slowly started their new lives in a different location, which resulted in the creation of their own authority centred around

traditional authority as termed by Weber. The people in KaNgwane, were also able to create their own authority after they defeated migrants from Mozambique in war. Older people in the area who had ties with the ANC had created their own authority which was not contested (Jensen & Zenker, 2015: 943-944).

These bodies of literature and the oral history conversation I had with my father demonstrate the multiple layers of authority that existed in former South African homelands, and depict how different figures are able to assert their own authority within former homelands including Giyani as a case in point. However the discussions in these literatures make no mention of youth. They are left in what is termed the liminal state within all this competing authorities, and by this token my research fills this gap in literature.

Considering the different types of authority that are present in Giyani it is important to look at, and understand how the concept of authority has been theorised, and the types of authority that scholars such as Weber have come up with. For my research project I want to find out how the K-9 gang create their own authority within an area which has multiple layers of authority. The known narratives about the K-9 gang, and their reputation reveal that they have a different type of authority than that which can be theorised in a single term. The authority that they possess incorporates a mixture of different authorities. The K-9 gang form a different type of authority which is incorporates a mixture of authorities. In the case of the K-9 gang for example, charismatic authority was centred around the group leader Jabu. The extra-ordinary appeal that legitimised his authority was his imprisonment and having killed a notorious gang leader in prison and also being the grandson of a traditional healer which resulted in his following because his followers believe he has supernatural powers which he got through initiation when he was still a child. Traditional authority is manifest in how the K-9 gang uses prison as a form of initiation to the group. One can argue that initiation through imprisonment is their "tradition" passed on from old members to new members who

are interested in joining their group and assert authority not only in the awaiting trial prison but the community as well. With regards to the K-9 gang, rational-legal authority manifests itself in that there are applied set of rules one must follow in order to become a member of the K-9 gang, and not only in becoming, but as long as one is a member of the gang. Although the gang is loyal to the founder of the gang Jabu, they are also loyal to "a particular office which fulfils a certain function" as Weber states, and that could be said to be the awaiting trial prison because essentially that is the backdrop of becoming a member of the K-9 gang. Without having being arrested and spending time in awaiting trial prison it is impossible to become a member. This is the rule that is applied and never compromised.

1.2.2 The role of the gift in prison, in creating authority

Adding to the fruitful insights I grasped throughout my fieldwork was that the exchange of things, violence and protection featured prominently in all accounts by gang members. I became aware of the sense that the exchanges played a huge role in the everyday performance of the gang members. If one is a member they can receive special gifts, but also if one is an established member they can bestow gifts on others.

It is for this reason that I would like to think through the prospect of applying the theory of the gift by Mauss (1925) in relationship to the theory of authority by Weber. With this I anticipate to get an even closer look at how the legitimacy which underwrites authority is being established in it its everyday form.

The gift according to Mauss (1925) is defined by three fields of obligation. First obligation is to give a gift. Then there is the obligation for other people to accept the gift.. Lastly the person being given the gift must repay the gift. A similar dynamic can be seen at the Giyani awaiting trial prison, a new inmate can give the gang leader a gift. If they accept the gift then they can repay him by offering him protection. And it is through constant exchange of gifts

that protection applies and forms some sort of a pledge. Gifts are not only given to gang leaders but may be given to prison and court officials so that the gang members can navigate their way around prison and do as they please. And in contrast to Foucault (1977) and Agamben (1995), the inmates in this sense will not be stripped off their rights and will not be rehabilitated during their stay in prison.

This goes with Weber's (1978 [1922]) charismatic authority because knowing that there is a leader is knowing that power is centred around that particular person and the person has some form of appeal. So in giving the gift to the gang leader in exchange for protection, or giving the gift to prison and court officials is acknowledging that the person has power and is able to command things to existence, hence legitimizing their authority.

In terms of Weber's (1978 [1922]) traditional authority and how it links to gift giving, one gradually progresses to becoming a full member of the gang as time goes. One does not remain in the position of giving gifts but progresses to the position of receiving. This is because as new members come in and produce gifts for protection they are being initiated to the group. And as old members who have served their sentences get released from jail, the reigns are passed down to members who have been initiated, and then they take on the duty to initiate new members and protect them. This means that this authority is continuously passed down and kept alive through the initiation of new members in prison.

This further links to Weber's rational-legal authority in that there are "set of rationally conceived and evenly applied set of rules" (Weber, 1978 [1922]). One such example is the rule that for one to receive protection in prison they must continuously provide gifts to the K-9 gang so that they not only become a member but they are represented and protected in prison. So basically the gift is given to a "particular office" (Weber, 1978 [1922]) which in

this case is the gang, and in return the gang "fulfils a certain function" (Weber, 1978 [1922]) which is providing protection, and thus legitimizing this form of authority.

Gifts according to Mauss (1925) can create relationships not only between individuals but also between groups. Mauss (1925) asserts that relationships created by the exchange of gifts take the form of total 'prestations'. For my research project I wanted to find out if gifts can create relationships between individuals and groups inside the Giyani awaiting trial prison as hypothesised above. I also wanted to find out if gifts are used to stop or prevent gang violence.

1.2.3 Prison and gangs

In this section of the literature review I look at the history of South African gangs and how gangsterism has historically infiltrated into the prisons. I will also look at prison life and how prison gangs run the prisons. In South Africa there is an established literature on gangs and this literature focus on big cities such as Cape Town and Johannesburg and only highlight modern-urban phenomena. Little attention however is given to gangs in rural settings. What my research shows is that what happens in the big cities gets mirrored in Giyani and the documentation of such mirrored realities, especially in peri-urban societies is limited. The literature discussion that follows will look at the theorization of prison gangs in the big cities, and how this possibly shapes my research on authority and prison gangs in a rural setting. .

In The Number, Steinberg (2004) writes about the end of apartheid and South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994 and the impact this had on prison communities which were essentially structured on the principles of apartheid and the logic of discipline and punishment in prisons. He argues why under apartheid, generations of young black men lived violently, and how still under democracy generations more will live violently (Steinberg, 2004: 11). The central argument of the book is that for prisoners to change and become better

people, the outside world must be accommodating to them. If they are still labelled criminals, denied jobs they will always go back to prison. And if they are inside they are still told what to do and when to do it which is an enslaved mentality. Such person cannot be expected to take responsibility on the outside, and they will always come back to prison (Steinberg, 2004: 29). Steinberg also argues how prisoners consider social structures manufacture criminals because of their unaccommodating nature. "Criminals" are not given a platform to voice their predicaments and frustrations with the world and this is where the system fails them, and keep reproducing criminals. In similar vein, Pinnock (1997) asserts that teenagers join gangs because of pressure to conform and also to gain respect from their peers. South African prisons were not designed for rehabilitation but they were designed in order to control (Pinnock, 1997).

Steinberg articulates the story of William Steenkamp (false name acquired through a stolen ID) whose real name is Magadien Wentzel. Through this he is able to demonstrate prison gangs. Referring to a story in Steinberg's *The Number*, Steinberg writes that in 1978 there was a court case of prison murder at Victor Verster Prison. During investigations it emerged that the 26s, 27s and 28s, three of South Africa's national prison gangs, which operate in all prisons around the country had organised the murder. The victim was identified as a member of the Big Five, a prison gang spies on the Number gang to the authorities (Steinberg, 2004: 2-3).

During the court trial, a witness was interrupted by a man who spoke in 'prison language'. What he said left the judge amused. He did not know what had just happened. What had just happened, was that people witnessed the authority which Number gangs have. They organised the murder, they selected the witnesses and they also wrote a script for the witnesses (Steinberg, 2004: 3).

Between 1974 and 1977 in Western Cape prisons: Victor Vester and Brandvleir, a war was fought between 26s and 28s. The war was labelled the 'general elections' to determine which gang would rule the prisons. During the war 21 prisoners were killed in the process (Steinberg, 2004: 4).

What this illustrates is the struggle by different gangs to have authority in prisons, to be feared and to call the shots. This is mirrored in Giyani by what the K-9 gang members do. It shows that gangs have indeed infiltrated all prisons as Steinberg states, because although Giyani is a rural setting it is not isolated to what is happening in other parts of South Africa. The influence of the urban is always at play. And what one sees when looking at what motivates some of the criminal activities done by K-9 gang members is exactly what Steinberg writes. The system is failing dismally, and in that case manufactures criminals. Lack of opportunities and criminals not given a voice to raise their predicaments play a role in why prisoners keep going back to prison, and acting the way that they do. Identity also comes into play because the outside world is not accommodating. The prisoner identity will always hang, and one will always be considered a criminal. What this then does is allow prisoners to hang on to that identity and use it to their advantage. In the case of the K-9 gang that involves terrorising the community but there are two folds to this phenomenon. Some gang members will always try to go back to prison because that is where their self-worth is. That is where they are feared and respected.

Adding to this as Jensen (2008: 168) writes, men have little room in which to manoeuvre. So some men tend to negotiate the tensions of masculinity in order to emerge as respected or, as dignified persons. Jensen frames his discussion within the wider context of 'crisis in masculinity'—in other words a crisis in some men's ability and attempt to provide for, and protect family and kin. In Jensen's account in the Cape flats, he found that gangs represented one way of emerging as a respected man. Gangs engaged in practices in order to gain a

position of strength. Gangs used the suffering, marginalization, and extensive system of incarceration as the medium through which social maturity was achieved. They emerged as respected men through being 'a bad mother fucker' (Jensen, 2008: 168-169). Gangs then become a generated response to outside pressures on young men. One can thus argue that failure to fulfil masculine ideals (socially and economically constructed) can be played out at a personal level, resulting in crisis of masculinity—moral panics about men and boys (Reid & Walker, 2005: 10). Because men find it very difficult to assert their manhood through traditional avenues, gangs become the scapegoat for popular understandings of 'masculinity in crisis'. In this context, alternative means of achieving manhood, such as violence and belonging to a gang, take an exaggerated significance (Reid & Walker, 2005: 10).

One can argue this to be the case in Giyani because to this day growth and development has been and remains relatively slow in the area. There is still a great deal of unemployment opportunities in Giyani especially for the youth. The level of youth education in the area is also relatively low, with a low number of the population having finished grade 12 or attained a higher education qualification, and a very high number of those with no formal education at all. This has serious implications in terms of employment and money generating opportunities for the population. It can thus be argued that it is these economic realities that contribute and act as a driving force in some young men joining the K-9 gang. With unemployment and problems fulfilling social roles, male identity and self-esteem thus become increasingly linked belonging to a gang.

In *The Number* Steinberg (2004) also documented that the 26s, 27s and 28s all derived from bands of outlaws who ran Johannesburg in the late 19th century and early 20th century. The Ninevites were the famous gang during that period, led by a young charismatic leader 'Nongoloza' Mathebula. The gang lasted almost two decades, they terrorised labour compounds and they also controlled the inmate population in Transvaal prisons. It is said that

Nongoloza used magic and bullets could not penetrate his skin when shot. The gang were brought to a halt in the mid-1910s, but most of the gang leaders had spent time in prison where they were recruiting (Steinberg, 2004: 6-7). By the 1930s, South African prison gangs had derivatives of Nogoloza's Nivevite gang; his memory is carried by all prisons in the country. The Number gangs have continued with Nogoloza's ideologies, as they are organised around his career. (Steinberg, 2004: 7-8) feeding into Weber's notion of traditional as well as charismatic authority. Nongoloza's story shows how through stories that people hear they are able to create their own narratives and in this sense their own authority. Nongoloza's story as a leader who had magic, and Jabu's supernatural powers through initiation as a child are very similar, further showing the influence of the urban in a rural setting, and how rural settings mirror narratives of urban cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town.

What the literature review on gangs reveal is that the life of gangsterism is not a clear cut choice of living as many people would assume. For one to join a gang there are a lot of factors which may be at play. As discussed above, in Steinberg's (2004) findings, the social structures which are not accommodating to ex-prisoners could also be attributed blame to why people remain in prison and join gangs. Failure for one to establish themselves after having gone to prison, and having the prisoner identity always hanging around them limits them to the outside world opportunities such as jobs. This makes it difficult for them to reinvent their identity and gain respect. As a result the system is said to be manufacturing criminals. It is not rehabilitating but the logic of punishment and discipline strips them of being responsible beings. What the literature also reveals is that failure to fulfil traditional avenues of manhood, as Jensen (2008) asserts, also contributes to the life of gangsterism. Belonging to a gang thus offers a form of respect and dignity that would otherwise have been impossible given actor's economic circumstances. There is also the influence of the urban

that that demands recognition - for example, rural settings copying the urban gangsterism styles of operation. All in all in order to understand gang life one must take all these factors into consideration, otherwise the theorization remains simple and partial. What is at the backdrop of these practices is gaining respect, dignity, and authority that seems difficult to manoeuvre through other avenues for young men.

To sum up my theoretical approach, I therefore look at what kind of form the authority of the gangs takes. As evidenced in the discussions above, the form the authority of the gangs take shape is a mixture of all three authorities as Weber theorised – charismatic, traditional, and rational-legal authority. In relationship to big city gangs, traditional authority manifests when new inmates accept commands on the basis of a divine origin or past history of the gang. Rational legal authority manifests when rules and regulations are accepted on the basis of a higher universal principle regarded as legitimate: the legacy of Nongoloza for example. In terms of charismatic authority one's personal qualities makes them appealing. Authority thus function to rule, attain and command respect. Also in relation to big city gangs, it is evident that rural gangs such as the K-9 copy their rules and functioning from them, and they do not operate in isolation per say. They incorporate rules of the big city gangs such as the number gang and in this case dominate. How this authority takes shape through gift giving is through constant exchange of gifts that protection applies and form some sort of a pledge. For one to receive protection in prison they must continuously provide gifts to the K-9 gang so that they not only become a member but they are represented and protected in prison. As evidenced in the literature above, it is within this backdrop that gifts create relationships not only between individuals but also between groups.

It is worth mentioning that while theoretical literature from a broader perspective is limited, the literature review brings together a whole set of works which have not yet been made to speak to each other, for example, Weber and Mauss, or the writing on authority (former)

homelands with literature on gangs thus, while the literature review might not have been covering the whole canon with regards to gangs it has done something much more valuable, namely, bringing iconic and select works together in new ways in order to appropriately attend to the phenomenon of contemporary provincial gangs – a topic which equally represents a foray into a so far unresearched field.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

This section describes where and how the fieldwork was carried out. A qualitative-ethnographic research approach was used for the study. Purposive sampling was used to identify participants relevant to the research questions. The question if Giyani is a rural or provincial town is a question of perspective. The crucial point with regards to context and location is that it is not a gang as operating in one of the big cities.

1.3.1 Context and location of the study

The study area for this research was Giyani, a town in Limpopo Province of South Africa. Giyani is found under the Giyani Municipality and under the Mopani District. Giyani was the capital of the former Gazankulu Homeland.

Giyani and the local people were chosen for this study because little research has been conducted in Giyani and also on the local people of the Giyani community. Also, most prison studies take place in urban centres, for example studies by Steinberg (2004) and Pinnock (1997), thus a study of the Giyani awaiting trial prison will add more knowledge to existing literature and by focusing on the rural area, the study will bring a different angle to what has already been written. Since Giyani is the former capital of Gazankulu Homeland, my research study takes a historical as well as localised approach, using ethnography to explore the

actions of young men belonging to a gang called the K-9, and how they exercise their authority in the Giyani awaiting trial prison, and in the community. It documents the ways in which members of the gang sought to maintain respect and dignity in the face of economic hardships.

A study by Hylton White (2015) conducted in northern Kwazulu-Natal, shows that former South African homelands have multi-layers of authority. Giyani is also a former homeland and has multi-layers of authority. The authorities layered in Giyani are the government, the chiefs, political leaders, sangomas and within these layers of authority imbedded in Giyani we also see the K-9 gang having authority in the awaiting trial prison, and also the streets of Giyani. This shows that a research study of this kind theoretically requires an ethnographic approach. Since I was unable to gain access in places of incarceration, looking at prisons from the outside through an ethnographic approach can be very helpful because it allows me to see how the authority gathered inside prisons plays out, outside prison, and how it manages to compete with the other layers of authority such as that of police officers who try to maintain order in the community, of traditional and religious leaders, political leaders and etc.

1.3.2 Research methodology

This research involved conducting participant observations and interviews at spaces which are occupied by the K-9 gang members namely the local drinking areas. I was unable to gain access to the Giyani police holding cells or the awaiting trial prison, hence I interviewed people who have been inside the police holding cells. I was also unable to visit K-9 gang members during visiting hours because of how police officers eavesdrop on conversations. I also did not want to interview people inside prison because they are vulnerable people.

Conducting the study outside prison meant that I was able to follow K-9 gang members in places which they hang out. I was also able to go to these hang out places hoping for a chance

encounter with them. What this meant is that I was able to witness them exercise their authority in these places. I was able to witness them command people around, and start fights to assert their authority and to show those who know, those who have heard about them, and those who do not know about them that they are not afraid of anyone and that they basically call the shots. There is little about the gang on the streets and much action takes place in drinking places because this is mostly where the gang members are accessible. It is not so much the researcher, in this case myself, who determines who I want to speak to, and what I get to know about. Instead, by the nature of the immersing. I have to take my cue from what the people who allow me to hang out with them reveal to me. Thus, if they do not take me with them when they move around at night in streets then this also forms the natural limit of the research and the insight it can provide. This however is ideally outbalanced by the depth of insight of being there, meaning where I am engaging not just in interviews but actual conversation, and where I can witness wide and complex interactions. This is called serendipity.

The study being conducted outside prison also meant that the gang members were able to relay the stories to me as truthfully and openly as possible because they saw me as one of their home boys, not a threat. The study would not have yielded the same results if it was conducted inside prison because of the confinement quality of the place. I would not have been able to see their much celebrated authority played out. The stories relayed to me would have also been limited in terms of truth because of fear of being given a harsher sentence if the truth comes out, and the fear of police officers eavesdropping on our conversations. This is not to say that conducting the study inside prison would not have yielded fruitful results but for the purpose of my research conducting the study outside prison opened up the platform to witness the lived realities of the members. Not only did I rely on hearsay, but I was able to witness their actions with my own eyes, ask for elaborations and clarity where needed.

The study also employed extended case study research approach. According to Burawoy (1998:5) extended case study methods applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique to move from "micro" to "macro", and connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future all by building of pre-existing theory.

During the winter of 2015, the K-9 gang was at the peek of their powers. They were in and out of the police holding cells. The community of Giyani decided to take matters into their own hands because they believed that the police were not doing their work. The majority of the gang members were caught and violently assaulted. But the community could not find Jabu the K-9 gang leader; many believed that he used his grandmother's muthi to disappear. The community then decided to burn down his grandmother's house because they believed that she was protecting him. After the K-9 gang members were violently assaulted, they decided to open cases against members of the community. Many of the community members were arrested, but door to door donations were done in order to bail out the community heroes. The case between the community and the K-9 gang ended when the community decided to buy the case from the gang. Each of the gang members which was assaulted received R10 000 to drop the case. During my fieldwork I constantly spent time with the K-9 gang members at drinking places and also other members of the community.

Spending time with the gang members was not a difficult process since I knew most of the young men. Some of the older members are friends with my older brothers and I spent time with them on a couple of occasions when they visited my brothers at my place. Some of them are from the section in which I live so they are practically "homeboys". Also, if one member did not know me, another member would introduce me to them and thus ease their presence around me. Giyani is also not that big of a township so it is easier for people to know each other. Me coming from the community and having insider knowledge thus made the research process, finding participants, and people opening up to me easier. It also resulted in my

interaction with the K-9 gang members not dangerous. The fact that I was a university researcher also allowed people to see me in a positive light. Unlike most of the young men stuck in Giyani without higher education I was viewed as one of those who have made it in life, those who have studied for an actual career.

Additionally, upon hearing that I am a researcher from the university of Witwatersrand conducting a research study on their gang a lot of the members were willing to participate because they believed it was their opportunity to finally tell their story, and let the world know about their existence. The more people know about them, the more they will be feared, and to them this was their way of legitimizing their gang because in their performances and acts of violence, what they really want is to be seen, and for people to know how dangerous they are so that they fear them, and tell others narratives about them. So my research study was also a platform for them to be known and demand legitimacy from the wider world.

1.3.3 Ethical issues

First and foremost informed consent was treated as a fundamental consideration before conducting interviews and participant observations, but because most of my participants did not want to sign anything related to prison studies, verbal consent was used. The research project was described to the participants with emphasis placed on how the respondents' participation will be useful to the success of this research project. It was also stressed that the research project is purely done for academic purposes and to fulfil the requirements of the course and hence will not result in any benefits. I also made it clear that I am not a state official hence whatever information communicated to me will not be used against participants to change the court's verdict or improve its functionality so as to avoid expectations. Issues of voluntary participation, the right not to answer or withdraw participation anytime deemed necessary, the right not to answer questions when participants are not comfortable with the

question, was explained and stressed to the participants before the interviews commenced. Emphasis was also placed on issues of confidentiality and anonymity regarding any information that the participants share. However, since ethnographies are thick descriptions I cannot guarantee anonymity, and the people of the Giyani community might be able to identify the people described. Since Giyani is my hometown, I was aware that there was a need for me to consciously distance myself from my 'insider' status and become an 'ethnographic stranger'.

1.3.4 Time frame

The study was conducted over a period of 13 months. The month of May 2017 was dedicated to refining and revising the research proposal. June to July 2017 and November to December 2017 was dedicated to data collection and January, February, March 2018 was used to write the research report.

1.3.5 Chapter outline

The Research report is divided into three ethnographic chapters. Chapter 2 'myth making and building a reputation through narratives' – this chapter focuses on how the K-9 gang build their reputation through myth making and narratives. Chapter 3 'in prison' – This chapter looks at how the K-9 gang turn their prison experience of trauma and violence into a feared image. And also considers how gift exchange become a form of authority amongst the gang members. Chapter 4 'after prison' – This chapter looks at how the K-9 gang perform the authority they have acquired after prison. The performance of the acquired authority is limited to drinking areas, and also limited to people who know their narrative.

CHAPTER 2

MYTH MAKING AND BUILDING A REPUTATION THROUGH NARRATIVES

It was the beginning of spring when I travelled to Giyani from Johannesburg. I was going to conduct my last round of fieldwork. As I was travelling to Giyani I reflected on my contribution to writing on Tsonga people and Giyani, Limpopo, South Africa. Not a lot of research has been conducted in this part of the country and neither has a lot of research been conducted on Tsonga people; and how I want to contribute to the scholarship on places like Giyani so people could better understand what it is like to live there and paint an honest representation of Tsonga people..

I finally arrived in Giyani after five hours of reflecting and listening to avant-garde/free jazz. Not a lot had changed since I left my home town beginning of the year. But as I was walking home I overheard two ladies saying that finally we can walk freely through Murogolo because they are clearing the forest due to the construction of another mall. Murogolo is a stream which separates section D1 and the Giyani CBD (Central Business District) known as Bendstore. It further separates both from section E. Since Murogolo separates two residential areas and the CBD it is well known that criminals usually hide there to pry on people walking to the CDB or to their residential areas. I recall around 2014 when I was still studying at the University of Venda, when I was walking home past Murogolo I found an old lady crying saying a group of young man had pointed a knife at her and took all her belongings. She was not the only victim many other people have been robbed around there. Most of the crimes occur during month end because most people get paid around this time. Many people blame the crimes on the K-9 gang, which is the subject of this research.

This chapter is built around a conversation I had with Vusi. It covers the life of the K-9 gang members before prison, and the circumstances that may have led to their imprisonment and

thus joining the gang. The role prison plays in the gang's existence and how prison is part of initiation into the gang is discussed. Furthermore the myths that hold the group together and forms the backdrop of its existence are also discussed. The chapter then incorporates the gang's need for recognition which is done through performance.

When I got home I did not spend a lot of time there. I just greeted my parents and rushed to the Giyani CDB (Bendstore) because I knew that my time was limited in Giyani and I had to make the most of the little time I had there. When I got to Bendstore I met up with Vusi, who has been instrumental in my research. He knows a lot of stories about the K-9 gang members and their crimes. I know Vusi because we stay in the same area. He is much older than me, he is in his late 30's. Vusi is well known in Giyani especially amongst people who frequent drinking places because he sells cigarettes and sweets at drinking places for a living. Vusi is also into politics, and because of his affiliation with the ruling party the African National Congress, he has had quite a number of temporary jobs whenever there were new projects and/or new developments in Giyani. As such, whenever there are political meetings in the Giyani area, Vusi is always there. Vusi does not have much of an intimidating figure. He is slender and dark in nature. He has a really bubbly and funny personality, which makes it no surprise that he gets along with people from all walks of life. We were both jubilant to see each other after a long time. We did not waste any time and we went to 'Bus Rank Bottle Store' to purchase a few bottles of beer. When we got there it was around 16:00 pm and it is usually busy around this time. The year was 2017 around September. The bottle store is located near the local taxi rank and in close proximity to the mall. It is very small and dark inside, most people who go there to drink prefer to sit outside and are often heard greeting passer-by's. Some are also scheming who their next victim to rob will be. Most customers who frequent the bottle store are "struggling citizens" as people around Giyani refer to them. They do not work, they spend most of the day in the CBD and in the bottle store, debating

about local issues. The bottle store is also close to the magistrates court. So some customers go there to listen to criminal cases. The bottle store is the right place to visit especially when you want to find stories relating to Giyani crime. As we were drinking I constantly looked around but did not recognise any of the faces around us. But the dress code was familiar. Almost everyone was wearing bright coloured shirts with flowers, bright coloured pants and abita shoes or all-star sneakers. Other young men were still wearing their school uniform. Most of the young men had scars which appeared to from stab-wounds.

I asked Vusi who the people were, referring to the many faces I did not know, and if they were dangerous.

He replied knowingly:

"These are young boys from neighbouring villages and section F. They are very dangerous and are always looking for a fight. Just let them be but make sure you salute them and most importantly make sure that you respect them but do not fear."

I went on to ask him why so many of them were still in their school uniform? Is this the life they choose for themselves? Shouldn't they be at school?

He laughed at me and looked at me before he replied?

"For them a life of crime is a way of earning a living and supports their families. Some of these boys come from extreme poverty. Most of them dropped out of school they just wear uniform to deceive their parents and also they get free lunch at school hence most of them arrive at Bendstore after lunch."

I then asked Vusi if any of the young men are part of the K-9 gang. He replied that:

"It is difficult to know who's a K-9 gang member and who is not. I mean most of these boys claim to be K-9 gang members. They commit serious crimes in the name of the K-9. Giyani has a lot of criminals and to get away with the crimes because they refer to themselves as K-9 gang members."

This is interesting in terms of how not everybody is a K-9 gang member but people try to rub up against it or get some of the aura. I went on to ask if any of the K-9 gang members have been to prison. He replied that:

"Most of the K-9 gang members have been to prison, don't you know that once you have been to prison you come out with street cred? Even during my youth we used prison to gain street cred. Everyone in Giyani knew me because I was in and out of prison. I can relate to the members of the K-9 gang. They remind me of my youth."

For the purpose of this research, youth refers to individuals who are able to join and be part of gangs, and as the demographics of the K-9 gang members has shown, this can be as early as thirteen years to thirty-five years.

I then asked Vusi, how were the K-9 gang members before prison. He replied that:

"They were just like all of us with dreams and hopes of a better future. You played soccer with a lot of them. You know most of their backgrounds and academically they are not gifted. Hence reality struck them man. I mean put yourself in their shoes, there are not so many jobs in Giyani. It is either you work at the parliament or at the municipality and those positions require a degree. Jobs which do not require a degree require a matric certificate which most of the K-9 gang members do not have. The jobs which do not require a degree or a matric certificate do not pay anything man. It is hard for these boys to earn a living, construction

companies' employ people outside Giyani the same as shops. The problem is that the managers are not from Giyani so they employ their own."

I did not have more questions for Vusi. I was struck by his response to my previous question. How could I have been so ignorant, I always thought that the youth of Giyani were lazy and relied on their parents to provide a living. With little opportunities to escape the cycle of poverty maybe if indeed I placed myself in the shoes of the K-9 gang members or the youth that claims to be members of the K-9 gang then a life of crime would be the only way to escape the cycle of poverty.

My conversation with Vusi changed the way I approached this chapter. It made me aware of the role of apartheid in the high rates of poverty. The poverty and lack of jobs in Limpopo, specifically in Giyani as a case in point dates back to the period of apartheid, under apartheid rule and the homeland system, Giyani was known as Gazankulu. The system disenfranchised the parents of the youth of today. As a result a lot of them do not have formal education and better paying jobs. This also has a direct impact on the youth of today. Most parents cannot afford to send their children to school, University particularly, which results in people attempting different methods of breaking the cycle of poverty. More people are moving today. People are not necessarily moving to the city to work in mines but many still go to cities for other employment opportunities, and for the youth it is mainly for University. The youth of Giyani, particularly students, move to cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Polokwane, and Cape Town etc to acquire a degree which they can use to better their chances of employment. So what happens to the students that remain behind in Giyani due to a lack of funds to further their education? Or those who do not succeed academically and don't even finish school? Don't they want a better future? Don't they have dreams? These questions were answered when a few members of the K-9 gang approached us because they recognised Vusi. Vusi introduced me to a K-9 gang member by the name of Ndzalama as a researcher.

Ndzalama appeared relatively young and he was still wearing his school uniform. He spoke with so much confidence and used forced tsotsi taal (street language). I say forced tsotsi taal because he could not articulate the language correctly. His utterances were shaky. When I enquired from Vusi, he told me that his mother works as a cashier at Spar and his father is a self-employed mechanic. He sat with us because he wanted to buy cigarettes from Vusi. He was willing to contribute to my research report because he believed that people will know the truth about them. As we were conversing and drinking more people joined us especially other K-9 gang members. They were clearly attracted by the curious presence of a researcher interested in their lives.

This reveals their need for recognition. The recognition shifts from only street credibility to wanting to be known worldwide. It reveals how they want to be seen, and the need to contribute to the narratives about them. The K-9 gang wants to receive a recognition which they are lacking at the moment. It also reveals that their illegality is not built on secrecy and doing things clandestinely – but on visibility and being talked about.

At this moment I felt like I was given another role which I was not sure I would be able to fulfil. As much as my research would document their lives and stories, It is not its sole purpose. My role then was to go out there and let other researchers and the people out there know that they exist. I had to reiterate that their stories will be known by those who will read my research, and it was not my duty to let the people know about them. At that point I felt like I was disappointing them, and their willingness to participate would change. None the less it would not have been right to deceive them and give them false hope.

The first question I asked Ndzalama was how the K-9 gang was formed because I have heard different versions of the formation. He replied in a calm and humble voice that:

"The group was started by Jabu when he was arrested by the K-9 police unit. He had never been to prison before it was his first time being arrested. He knew that he was going to see hell in prison because of the stories he heard. He also did not have a prison number which would make matters worse. When he got to the police holding cells, the leader inside the cell asked him about the reason for his arrest; he fabricated a story that he killed someone because they tried to run away with the money they stolen. They further asked him for his number and he told them that he was a K-9, He also further fabricated another story that he killed someone during his first arrest using only a blanket. After that everyone respected him, a few guys approached him asking if they could join the group."

The information is similar to the information I got when I was doing my honours fieldwork. From what I know, the K-9 gang was invented by Jabu, whose grandmother is a sangoma. He is feared because they believe he has supernatural powers from his grandmother. This is very similar to one of the key elements of witchcraft which is deceit and being able to get away with everything, in this case crime and offence, and also influencing the course of justice as theorised by Ashforth (2004: 67). It is this belief that people hold about the founding father of the K-9 gang that makes him so feared in Giyani, and resulted in the popularity of the gang. The role of stories being told in such instances help with legitimizing one's authority, charismatic authority in the case of Jabu and the beliefs they hold about him that make him appealing as a leader. This charismatic authority is mixed with traditional authority because entrance into the gang is legitimate through a set of rules, and initiation process that must be passed down to new members. This thus helped in establishing the group through a founding myth.

Ndzalama's response reveals a lot about the horror that is prison life if one does not have a story that will afford them respect, and make sure that they are feared. If one does not belong to a certain gang (number gang in some instances), they are subjected to a lot of physical,

emotional and sexual abuse. Weighing out these dynamics the founding father of the K-9 gang saw it necessary to lie and create his own group and own stories, like murdering someone and belonging to a group in order to gain credibility. This worked in his favour. Ever since, the K-9 group is not only known in the community but in all prisons in Limpopo. It is said, members of the K-9 gang receive good treatment in prisons and in courts. They get access to services not allowed for other prisoners – they have access to own food, cell phone, TV's etc. As soon as one gets to prison and claim that they are a K-9 gang member, even if they are not, other inmates know to keep their hands off them. Because once you mess with any of their members, even if you are to get out of prison, outside members will find you and torture you, this information was part of the stories relayed to me by Ndzalama.

All this respect and authority for a group that was founded on a fabrication. I could not help but wonder what would happen if people were to find out the real story behind the groups formation. Would the K-9 gang still have the same powers it has today? Or has the gang already cemented their place in the community that even if the truth was to come out about how the gang was formed the damage is already done? The gang was clearly formed through successful myth making.

To sum it up, his quotation reveals two things: First, fear and reputation of prison and second, the K-9 gang is made up of an invention—claiming to have done murder—embellished storytelling to create fear and respect.

Similar to the literature by Steinberg, being a member of the K-9 gang is a way of surviving in prison just as others in South African prisons survive by being members of number gangs such as 26s, 27s and 28s, all derived from bands of outlaws who ran Johannesburg in the late 19th century and early 20th century (Steinberg, 2004: 6-7). Just as the K-9 gang members terrorise the community of Giyani, the famous gang called the Ninevites led by a young

charismatic leader ‘Nongoloza’ Mathebula terrorised labour compounds and they also controlled the inmate population in Transvaal prisons. Similarly to the story of Jabu the founding father of the K-9 Gang, it is said that Nongoloza used magic and bullets could not penetrate his skin when shot. The gang were brought to a halt in the mid-1910s, but most of the gang leader had spent time in prison where they were recruiting (Steinberg, 2004: 6-7). What this actually shows is that they are similarly indeed in the mix of magic and other forces, and that they have a mythical past now.

Like I discussed in my literature review, large number of black South Africans had been criminalised by the white racial law which resulted in them spending time in and out of prison. By the 1930s, South African prison gangs had derivatives of Nongoloza’s Nivevite gang; his memory is carried by all prisons in the country. The Number gangs have continued with Nongoloza’s ideologies, as they are organised around his career. (Steinberg, 2004: 7-8). And perhaps it is through the story of Nongoloza that Jabu came up with a story and in that regard formed his own gang. Also discussed in my literature review is Steinberg spending two weeks at Pollsmor prison in 2002 and during his visit to the prison he found that the gangs organisation was no longer secretive, ideas of the gangs are taken to the streets. Similarly the K-9 gang member’s operations are also not based on secrecy, meaning that for most gangs, there is a need for recognition and being known. The success of their existence depends on being known and being feared, and the narratives people spread. Based on existing literature on South African gangs and prison gangs one can argue that gangs are an urban phenomena, but their operations are copied in rural settings such as Giyani, and hence we see the emergence of rural gangs such as the K-9.

I then went on to ask Ndzalama the significance of the K-9 gang and the role prison played in his life. He replied that:

"The K-9 is a brotherhood. We understand each other even if the rest of the community does not understand us. We have each other's backs in and outside prison. Prison played an important role in my life. If Jabu was never arrested the K-9 gang would never had been established. After his arrest everyone in the community knew about the K-9 gang."

As we were talking more members of the K-9 gang who just arrived at the bottle store joined us partly because they saw me sitting with one of their own, or they might have received a communication from someone to come and join us so they could tell their stories in numbers, or prove that they are a bigger community than people imagine. As the members arrived to the bottle store to join us where we were seated, they constantly asked who I was and why I was talking to their member. I had to reintroduce myself a couple of times. Time and again other members of the community would join to listen as they purchased cigarettes from Vusi. The atmosphere became sort of a party because we had a lot of drinks.

I went on to ask them if going to prison is part of their initiation. Ndzalama replied laughing that:

"I cannot reveal such information to you"

Before he could finish his sentence Nhlamulo interrupted him. Nhlamulo Nhlamulo is a 31 year old male. He is dark and chubby in nature. Nhlamulo is unemployed and also does odd jobs whenever an opportunity avails itself. He left school after completing grade 9 and his reason for leaving school is that he repeated grade 9 a couple of times until he gave up. He tried to enrol at an FET in Giyani but only passed practicals because he is good with hand-work, but struggled with theory so he then decided to forget about school altogether. Nhlamulo replied that:

"Prison provides you with life lessons which no university can give you. I went to prison as a boy and came out a man."

His response was supported by nodding of heads by the other members of the K-9 gang. It is from this that I became conscious of the fact that indeed prison might play a role in initiating them into the gang. Nhlamulo's response is quite interesting because rumour has it that he is not a fighter but a talker. He gets away with things because he is a member of the K-9 gang so he always has their protection. His response is also interesting because he only spent two days in prison for being a part of a group that fought at an event at Giyani stadium and the fight was dissolved by the police. The police then arrested the group for two days just to teach them a lesson. As it is Nhlamulo has no criminal record but only spent two days in prison because of that incident. Yet, Nhlamulo capitalises on this and being part of the K-9 gang to get away with his mischievous ways. It is thus interesting when he responds to prison being part of initiation into the gang, and that he went to prison a boy but came out a man.

In African culture, initiation refers to the rite of passage centred on the ritual act of manliness, that is, transition from childhood to manhood – from boys to men. Initiation is about the passing of knowledge that is essential to becoming a real man. The idea behind initiation is achieving a masculinity that is different from other masculinities. Defined by Morrell, "Masculinity is defined as a collective gender identity and not a natural attribute. It is socially constructed and fluid. There is no one universal masculinity, but many masculinities" (Morrell, 1998: 607). These are 'not fixed character types but configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships. The contours of these masculinities also change over time, being affected by changes elsewhere in society and at the same time, themselves affecting society itself' (Morrell, 1998: 607). In this regard, the masculinity achieved by K-9 gang members through initiation has been altered and configured to suit their operations and desired image.

The most well-known form of initiation in Africa is cultural male circumcision, but initiation can take many forms. For those that join the K-9 gang, initiation into the group involves having spent time in prison. Without prison credibility one cannot join the gang. For many, this results in committing petty crimes just for the sake of spending time in prison and thus being able to join the gang and being viewed as "real men". Prison knowledge has to be passed on, and prison hardship has to be endured for one to be eligible of a membership. The idea behind this, as communicated by the members, is to ensure that no "pussies" join the gang and ruin their credibility. Other rituals that have come to play in the existence of the group are the protection rituals of Jabu the founding father. It is said that his grandmother always gives him herbs for protection, and to influence the decision by the judge whenever he has court cases. Other members of the K-9 gang have also gone through this ritual however it is said that Jabu remains the most "powerful".

Earlier on in the year I had an interview with one of the members of the community by the name of Sipho. Sipho is a taxi driver in Giyani. Like many other residents of section F he came with his family as a young boy around the year 2000. Sipho grew up with one of the K-9 gang members and he told me that:

"I grew up with him. We used to have dreams of playing soccer professionally but due to the lack of opportunities we gave up that dream. He was a quiet and humble guy; he was also very focused on succeeding in life. We stopped hanging around together when he decided to drop out of high school. But it did not take me long before I also dropped out man. When we always had conversations he would always say that we failed in life. By that time we had started smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol. But I was fortunate to get a job at one of the supermarkets. It did not take long before I heard that he was arrested and that he is now part of the K-9 gang. He has changed from the guy I grew up with."

The same was expressed by Hlamalani and other members of the community that the members of the K-9 gang all had dreams like any other kid growing up. But due to the lack of opportunities, family background and failing at school they resort to other endeavours to realise their dreams. This suggests that their dreams are not completely null. This is supported by the words of one of the K-9 gang members who said that:

"Giyani is too small for me, there is no money here. I want to move to Johannesburg and make serious money. If I can get two revolves I will take over Johannesburg when I come back to Giyani I will come back with a BWM gusheshe and a Zulu princesses."

During our interview session one community member spoke about another K-9 gang member and had this to say about him:

"He comes from a well-off family. While growing up he had everything we envied him. We all wanted to be like him. He started to change after he failed for a few times in varsity and his parents forced him to come back to Giyani, soon after he was a member of the K-9 gang."

These words suggests that not all members of the K-9 gang come from poor backgrounds, but other factors such as being unable to go through varsity and being seen as a failure in the eyes of the community can contribute to people joining the K-9 gang. By joining the K-9 gang they are able to relive their dreams and it is also a pathway to prove to the community that they are not a failure.

Basically, what this means is that for the youth of Giyani, consumption and education are different paths through which status is achieved. With regards to consumption: the action of using up resources - the life of crime, stealing from others and getting away with it, as well as being feared, becomes a means of status for those that cannot afford to go to university to further their studies. For others, furthering their studies and securing employment outside

Giyani, and coming back once after a while affords them respect from their peers - it becomes a competition for recognition on different grounds, it is about blockage and alternative life options.

Even though Giyani is the centre of Mopani District, nothing much has changed for the youth of Giyani. The youth carry the burdens of racial segregation; students who are fortunate enough to continue their education after matriculation have to relocate to cities such as Polokwane, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town. Some of the students who have relocated to these cities are forced to return to Giyani due to financial problems or being unable to complete their studies. For those who remain in Giyani and do not have academic qualifications, opportunities to become "someone" are hard to get. Hence the youth pursue their own cultural projects to become something in life and also be able to attract girls, drink expensive alcohol and also assert their own authority within a former homeland which has multiple layers of authority.

Although not explicitly obvious from the responses of the participants - it is clear that apartheid contributed to the lack of opportunities in Giyani. Just like other parts of South Africa, Giyani was strongly impacted by apartheid rule. Having being made a homeland, people's lives were altered significantly. There is still a great deal of unemployment opportunities in Giyani. The level of adult education in the area is also relatively low. Household dynamics at home are set up in such a way that only one person in a household has a job, and the rest of the family depends on their income. A lot of opportunities, work wise and education wise were snatched right out of people's hands. The system was oppressive and self-serving. I thus argue that the present situation in Giyani has led to the youth of Giyani to use Orter's (2006) words, "creating their own cultural projects".

Jabu and his family moved to Giyani township in order to better their lives. Jabu's family are not religious in the sense that they are not Christians but believe in ancestral spirits and powers. This could be prompted by the fact that his grandmother is a sangoma. One cannot tell which political party Jabu and his family follows, they are not into politics, at least not that I have heard of, but Jabu did mention that Julius Malema of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) is his role model since he believes they have the same personality. Just like Julius, if the ANC is not willing to work in favour of the people, then the EFF will operate so as to take things by force, like the recent land expropriation without compensation debate. So Jabu in this sense states that since the government is failing a lot of South African youth, what better way to make a living than by taking things by force? In his words "If the government and the municipality cannot respond to our cry for employment, maybe they will respond to the high rates of crime since that will make South Africa look bad". A lot of discussions with my participants show that they are not just passive victims, but informed individuals who make decisions and choices having first weighed their consequences.

Jabu and his family settled at section F which was created in the early 2000s because of the demands of housing by people migrating to Giyani Township. Section F has mixed form of housing because people residing there occupy different forms of Jobs. Since Jabu resided at Section F before the community burnt his house, he was able to recruit most of his gang member from section F. Jabu thus pursed his own cultural project by forming a group called the K-9 gang.

Ortner (2006) looks at the process of identifying the self, by centring on the idea of "serious games" which can be defined as "the intense play of multiply positioned subjects pursuing cultural goals within a matrix of local inequalities and power differentials." She further asserts that these cultural projects are themselves serious games and the social play of cultural goals are orientated within local relations of power (Ortner, 2006: 144). By being unable to

acquire employment or better his life Jabu decided to form the K-9 gang and in so doing was able to provide for himself and his family. Jabu was able to successfully form the K-9 gang because it was believed that he has connections with ancestors. Additionally, his grandmother is also a well-known strong sangoma in the community. A lot of people in the community fear her because of the stories that have been told, and still go around about her "magical ways", being able to inflict pain spiritually, send lightning to people, and cause people a lot of costly misfortunes. Jabu's K-9 gang members are able to assert their authority within the community of Giyani because their narrative is based on Jabu having connections with his ancestors, which is one of the competing authorities in Giyani.

In this chapter I looked at the history of the K-9 gang and how their reputation has been built on a fabricated narrative by the founding father. To solidify their narratives the K-9 gang use prison as a rite of passage because of the narratives which come out of prison. The reputation which the K-9 gang have acquired, is used by other members of the community when they commit crimes. This is because Unlike big city gangs like the number gang, the K-9 gang are not secretive they rely on people to spread their narrative. Hence making it easy for other members of the community to use their profile. When I was introduced as a researcher the K-9 gang members were happy because they believed that I would help spread their narrative, which shows their desperate need for recognition. It is also important to note that the K-9 gang is a cultural project to use Orter's (2006) words. In the next chapter I will try to find out a bit more what really goes on in prison, not destroying but moving behind the myth.

CHAPTER 3

IN PRISON

This chapter will focus on the trauma and violence encountered by the K-9 gang members inside awaiting trial prison, the police station holding cells and the prison. What I will show is how the K-9 gang members are able to convert this trauma and experience of violence into a feared image, and how from this they are able to assert their authority when they get out of prison and are reintegrated into the community. The chapter will also look at the logics of the prison through theorizing it around 'gift-giving' of cigarettes, sexual abuse and social relationships which become a currency inside prison, and how this relates to authority. I will be engaging particularly with Mauss' theory of gift giving.

I walked to 'Filani', a local car wash with a tavern not far from my home to play pool. When I got there I spotted one of my participants named Ndzalama whom I was introduced to by Vusi at Bus rank Bottle Store, and have written about in the previous chapter. I walked towards his direction. As I approached him he also recognised me. In a loud jubilant voice he said that today he is going to get drunk. Without a waste of time I gave him R50 to buy beers. When he came back he introduced me to his friend Maponyani who is short and dark. They were both dressed in similar bright coloured shirts with flower prints, bright coloured pants and caps pointing up. Maponyani was excited when Ndzalama introduced me as a researcher, like when I first met Ndzalama at Bus Rank Bottle Store. As we were conversing I finally had the courage to ask if they had ever been arrested. They both responded that they have been arrested on a number of occasions. I then asked what were their experiences behind bars. Maponyani replied that:

"Everyone knows me in prison; it is like my second home. I can get arrested now nothing will happen to me, sometimes I go inside just to refresh."

The way he talked about being in prison surprised me. He seemed to be rather proud of it, and was showing off to me about it. I was wondering what they thought was so impressive about it to be so familiar with prison that one can consider it a second home. But then this tone shifted slightly when I asked him about his first time in prison. He replied in a low voice that:

"You are unearthing old wounds; I was first arrested for cell phone theft. My friends had told me everything about prison, so when I got into the cell I told them that I was a K-9 member. But the leader of the cell did not want anything to do with my membership. It was me and another guy who were new in the cell. The other guy agreed to satisfy people in the cell sexually but I refused. That's when they ganged up on me and beat me up. Fortunately a message was delivered to my friends who were outside that I was having it hard hence they got themselves arrested so that they can come protect me. From that day no one has ever touched me in prison."

In his response there was a slight shift from showing some pain and vulnerability to rather heroic rescue by loyal gang members and a sense of overcoming. The response by the K-9 gang member exposes possible abuse and exposure to violence by John, who is in his late 30s and doesn't stay far from my house in section D1. John is well known in Giyani because he was a womaniser and never missed a party during his high school days. What John's story is lacking however is the overcoming part. John is a non-gang member who has no investment in the gang story of coming out of prison strong. Perhaps this is why his response does not have a heroic ending to it.

He said that:

"There was a guy I only knew that he was a K-9 gang member after our release from the holding cells. I recalled him because he searched me at Bus Rank Bottle Store, but when we were inside the cells he and two other guys used to satisfy fellow inmates sexual. This K-9 guys act as if they control the cells but inside they are nothing I saw it with my own eyes. I know that there are a few of them who are well feared inside the cells from the stories I heard during my stay. But most of them are nothing inside from what I saw."

John's response creates another image of the K-9 gang members inside the holding cells which they do not relay themselves. He also hints on the trauma and violence the K-9 gang members undergo inside the cells. John's response of trauma and violence resonates with interviews I once read conducted by Sonke Gender Justice with prison survivors, that prison gangs have power structures and target new inmates for sexual favours and abuse them. Even more so it is an immense achievement for the K-9 gang to be able to turn the trauma and violence they encounter into a feared image. At least this is what was relayed to be by Nhlamulo in the previous chapter that one goes into prison as a boy, but through the violence one encounters in the holding cells and prison one comes out a man.

Going back to the conversion with the K-9 gang member, I asked him how his friends were put in the same cell as him, he laughed and replied that:

"They asked the police officers to put them in the same cell I was in."

From the response of the K-9 gang member one can clearly see the shift from wounds to grandeur, which is the transformation that occurs from when one first enters the holding cells to when one becomes "someone". His friends having managed to be put in the same cell as him allows them the claim that they can tell the police what to do.

I then asked him the type of relationship they have with the police officers since they are the ones putting them behind bars, Ndzalama jumped in and replied that:

"It is simple when you break the law the police officers have to arrest you it doesn't matter who you are. But we help the police officers bring criminals to justice by showing them hell inside the cells. Once criminals encounter us you know they will tell the truth."

What we see from this response is that the K-9 gang members put themselves on the same level as the police. They have their own in-between role, as if they are the ones in charge. From his tone it was clear that he was trying to impress me.

I then asked what their benefits are. He replied that:

"We get VIP treatment; I can contact you from prison anytime of the day. They also throw out cases when we commit petty crimes. We help each other out."

From these descriptions it is not necessary evident that there is a relationship between K-9 gang members and the police officers in Giyani. What is clear is that the K-9 members *claim* the connection between themselves and the police. But importantly the K-9 gang members understand that in South Africa there is law and if you break the law you will be prosecuted. But from the relationship they have forged with the police officers they are able to exercise their authority inside the prison as I mentioned above and in return they do favours for the police.

The following discussing is based on an interview I had with Dzunani, a local resident of the Giyani community. The discussion shows that there is a certain practice where police use violent inmates as a threat, and it is quite possible that the K-9 gang build upon this common practice. Dzunani states that he wrongful arrested for an ATM robbery which occurred at

Giyani CBD, and was detained inside the Giyani Police Station holding cells. He told me that:

"My experience inside the Giyani Police Station holding cell was a horrific one. Before I went inside the holding cell I was taken into a small room where the police officers without uniform brutalised me until they broke my arm. One officer told me that when you get to the cells you will tell us the truth about the robbery. I was taken inside a cell with close to 30 people inside, with a terrible smell. As the police officers locked the door behind me I was dragged to a man who appeared to be the leader of the cell, he asked me if I had a number which I replied that I do not have. He further asked me if I had anything on me, I told him that I do not have anything on me. He sparked a cigarette and threw the match stick on my face. As he was smoking, the men who dragged me to their leader stripped me naked I feared for the worst, but thank God they only wanted my clothes. I was then given an old pair of jeans and a t-shirt. The leader then asked me why I was arrested; I told him that I was wrongfully arrested in relations to an ATM robbery. "

Similar to John's response, Dzunani's response highlights abuse and exposure to violence in prison. Dzunani speaks about his vulnerability and his response does not have a heroic ending because he is not a K-9 gang member. When I asked about his experience inside the police holding cells. Dzunani's response, echoes the relationship which the K-9 gang claim to have with the police officers but it is important to note that the people who were tasked to assault Dzunani were not K-9 gang members. They were just a group of men in a cell that had a leader. As Dzunani stated, they never voiced their alliance or relationship with the K-9. K-9 gang members seem to want their presence to be known and felt. I was eager to know what happened to Dzunani as I asked him to continue. He went on to say that:

"The leader asked me what happened to my arm, I told him that it dislocated when the police officers were trying to get answers. The leader then told me that the police officers informed them that they would bring me into this cell so that they could further assault me. To my surprise they did not harm me; the leader asked one of the guys in the cell to make an arm rest for me out of a piece of cloth."

What is interesting From Dzunani's response is that the inmates decided to help him and not carry out what the police expected from them. I further asked Dzunani what happened for the rest of the night:

"Not a lot happened after they made an arm rest for me, all the attention moved from me and they continued with their own doing. But I did not sleep."

I went on to ask him if he encountered members of the K-9 gang during his stay inside the Police holding cells:

"I am not sure because none of the people I was with stated that they were K-9 gang members. And I also did not know any of the people inside the cell. But they could have been."

From Dzunani's response one could argue that the K-9 gang are relatively small in size because they have not infiltrated all the holding cells compared to the 'numbers gang' which have infiltrated Pollsmoor as documented by (Steinberg, 2004, 2008), (Jensen and Rodgers, 2009) and (Pinnock, 1997). It can also be suggested that prison gangsterism is not a big thing in Giyani because Dzunani was not recruited to join a gang unlike in Pollsmoor where one interlocutor said that he joined a gang because prisoners with a gang are treated better than those without a gang. The K-9 gang likes to act and make people believe that they are like the number gang but they hardly have the reach, however this does not stop them from making

claims in this direction. I said my goodbyes to Dzunani and promised to keep in contact with him.

Here I try to bring in people who are not part of the K-9 gang to compare their accounts of prison with that of the K-9 gang members, and to corroborate their accounts with that of the K-9 gang members. What comes out from these different accounts is the fact that non gang members allow their vulnerability to come through, and seem to have different accounts to those experienced by the K-9. The K-9 have an image and a reputation to uphold it almost seems that in every bad situation that they find themselves in prison there is "saving" by their gang members, there is protection and they are untouchable but this is different to how others relay the prison stories. Also it seems as though they are not as big a community in prison like they claim, and authority not only rests on them, but there are other gang leaders calling the shots in Giyani prisons. There is a common police practice on which they build their narrative about their privileged relationship with the police – so their authority is about being able to outdo the law by owning it, by having an influential relationship with it.

After a few days during my fieldwork stay in Giyani I arranged to have an interview with Vukosi, who once had been arrested for being in possession of marijuana. Since he had been arrested on a Friday he could only appear in court on Monday which meant that he had to spend the weekend inside the Police holding cells. I first asked him to explain his arrest, he replied that:

"I was walking home from buying marijuana; as I noticed a police van driving slowly behind me. I wanted to throw away the marijuana but the van was too close now. I continued walking hoping that they will drive past me. But unfortunately they stopped. One officer asked me where I was going? I told him that I was going home, then he asked me why am I making him a fool because I stay in section F and I am walking towards section D1. He then

searched me and found cigarettes and the box of marijuana. They then put me inside the van and drove off."

I then asked him what happened when they got to the police holding cells he replied that:

"When we got to the police station they did not take the cigarettes and the box of marijuana, they just took the money I had and my cell phone for safe keeping. When they finally put me inside the cell everyone inside the cell stopped everything they were doing. A group of guys were playing cards and a guy whom appeared to be the leader was sitting on top of about 5 mattresses. When I looked at the guy sitting on top of the mattresses he looked familiar. He then pointed towards my direction and used his fingers to signal that I should come towards him. When I got to where he was I thought that he would recognise me because we usually smoke marijuana together, but he acted as if he did not know me. He asked me what I was arrested for and what I had on me. I told him that I was arrested for being in position of marijuana. I took out the box of marijuana and the cigarettes and offered them to him , to my surprise he invited me to come sit with him.

What we see happening between Vukosi and the leader of the cell resonates with Mauss (1925) theory of the gift. Mauss (1925) defined the gift by three fields of obligation. First one has to give a gift, then the other person being given the gift must accept the gift. Lastly the person being given the gift must repay the gift. Vukosi gave the gift to the leader of the cell in the form of cigarettes and the box of marijuana. Then the leader of the cell accepted the gift. Lastly we see the leader of the cell inviting Vukosi to come sit with him suggesting that he is repaying the gift by assuring protection and a rite of passage for Vukosi to sit with the leader on top of the 5 mattresses.

I then asked him if the leader was associated to any gang and things they were conversing about while they were sitting together. He replied that:

"He is part of the K-9 gang. Everyone inside the cell respected him. The police officers would sometimes visit the cell to talk to him. He also had a cell phone which he borrowed me to inform my family of my arrest. During our conversations I asked him what I needed to survive prison. Before he replied to my question he laughed at me and said that I should not worry on Monday I would be going home. But if I had to spend longer I would have to find someone from the outside to bring in cigarettes and marijuana and other thing."

Vukosi's response suggests that inmates rely on people coming from the outside for goods such as cigarettes and marijuana, and by so doing these gifts become prison become part of social relations because you can use them to acquire protection, but it is important to note that the protection is temporary and one needs to constantly renew the protection by finding a way to get goods from the outside. Again we see the relationship the K-9 gang claim to have with the police officers, because they would visit the cell just to converse with the K-9 gang member.

I then asked him if anything happened to him throughout the weekend. He replied that:

"Nothing bad happened to me, the only challenge I had was a shortage of food. One of the guys whispered to me that if you want enough food then you would have to exchange sexual favours. I told myself that I would rather starve to death but the marijuana was not helping either it was giving me great appetite. On Monday morning I thought that I was going to court but the officer asked me where they should drop me. When they dropped me they only gave back my cell phone but I was not even worried about the money."

From Vukosi's response, that nothing happened to him, it shows that the gift which he gave the K-9 gang member assured him protection. At least that is the way he makes sense of it. Further, we can see that the gifts which he gave the K-9 gang member were not enough to

guarantee him food. Hence, a guy whispered to him that he should provide sexual favour in exchange for food.

The role of the gift building social relations was echoed in the interview I had with Jacob, when I asked him to share his experience inside the police holding cell, he replied that:

"Before I was arrested I was contacted by a private number, the person did not give away their name. He just informed me that they are coming to arrest me so I should prepare myself. Because I knew that I had committed an offense I quickly changed my clothes and went to the spaza shop to purchase a box of cigarettes. The police van finally arrived, they did not even hand caffs me they just simply asked me to enter the van then they drove off to the police station. When we got to the cells I was welcomed by two energetic young boys. They told me that the boss was waiting as they pulled me towards the boss. They asked me why I was I arrested, I informed them. The two young boys started assaulting me after a while they stopped, then the leader of the cell told the boys to search me. They took out the box of cigarettes and a few notes. The leader than asked me if I did not know that money does not have value inside this walls? He then asked me when I was due to appear in court I told him that in two days' time."

From Jacobs experience we see the workings of the police officers, even though Jacob does not know who contacted him since they used a private number, the person that contacted him had some sort of relationship with him. From that Jacob was able to prepare himself for his arrest by purchasing a box of cigarettes and changing his clothes. Even though Jacob was assaulted inside the cells after he was searched and they found a box of cigarettes and money they stopped assaulting him. This again demonstrates Mauss' (1925) theory of the gift. Since Jacob knew that he had to carry a packet of cigarettes, one can argue that cigarettes and other gifts have become prison relations. And importantly these currencies have become the logic

of the prison. Also importantly when Jacob was searched they found money in his pockets but he was informed that money does not have any value in these 'walls'.

Vukosi and Jacobs prison encounters also shines light into the aspect of authority – when power is accepted as legitimate by those subjected to it (Weber, 1978 [1922]). Here the fact that there are group leaders deemed legitimate to accept gifts in return for protection or a favour legitimises their power and thus authority. There is a leader who always demands and accept these gifts, and this leader could be thought of possessing what Weber terms Charismatic authority—which is power centred around a particular person, and this power is legitimised on the basis of this leader's extra-ordinary appeal and/or his special personal qualities. It is through believe and trust in those special qualities of the leader that people follow the commands of such person. In these prison encounters we see that when the leader signals or calls the new inmates, in this case being Vukosi and Jacob they submit. There are also other inmates alerting them of the presence of such leaders, and their leadership qualities is made visible by exaggerated acts such as sitting on top of 5 matresses.

Also for these leaders to possess such an authority they have a mythical past. They must have done something for them to possess qualities that affords them the leadership role. For example it could be that they have murdered someone, they have committed what is considered an "important" crime, or they may have done something inside prison in the view of other inmates that resulted in them being feared. There must also be a tradition or custom which forms the foundation of the legitimacy of a certain elite or patriarchal figure. This is what Weber (1974 [1922]) terms traditional authority. So the leaders in these prison cells have authority and are able to demand things to happen in the cell. There is an expectation to produce gifts to them in exchange for protection or favours. If it was not for the authoritarian qualities in which they possess gifts could be given to anyone in prison in exchange for something, but the fact that gifts are given to certain individuals it means they have extra

ordinary qualities, and people follow them and are loyal to them in that regard. The performance of authority is done through the medium of gift giving. Authority is established through gifts and exchange, and forming relationships with the police – police officers sometimes visiting the cells to talk to leaders. This particular process of gift giving has a violent character. It is more the extraction of gifts than gift giving but nevertheless there is a return in exchange.

There is also value to each good which has limit. Gifting cigarettes and marijuana could afford one protection but will not guarantee access to food like in Vukosi's case. He was told that if he wants enough food he would have to exchange sexual favours, meaning gifts have ranks in terms of what one gets in return.

We come to see social relations come to play when I interviewed Wisani. Wisani is a 27 year old male from Giyani section A. He is a freelance painter and stays home with both parents. His mother is unemployed and his father is also a painter. Wisani completed grade 12 and after completion he enrolled for computer studies. He also has an office administration certificate however he has not been fortunate in obtaining a job hence he followed in his father's profession. Wisani is quiet and one could say he is not amongst well known trouble makers in Giyani, at least since I have not heard of any bad references to him during the cause of my fieldwork, and my stay in Giyani. Wisani was arrested by his uncle since he was the police officer on duty on the day of his arrest. I asked him to explain the experience of being arrested by his uncle and he told me that:

"It was extremely weird but he had to do his job. He did not even call me by my name he acted as if he did not know me."

I further asked him what happened after he was arrested he replied that:

"They drove around the residential areas and after sometime they headed to the police station. When we got to the police station it was very late, I was made to wait in a room when my uncle was speaking to someone. After a few minutes I was taken towards the direction of the cells, when we got there I was told that I would sleep at the corridor. But after a few hours I asked my uncle to be put me inside a cell because it was cold."

I then asked him what happened when he got inside the cells he replied that:

"When I got inside cell everyone was sleeping but most of the guys woke up due to the sound of the unlocking and locking. Nothing happened to me inside the cell to be honest they only asked me why I was arrested and what I had brought with me from the outside, I gave them a packet of cigarettes and in the morning I was released."

From Wisani's arrest we can see how having a relationship with police officers can protect one from police holding cells violence. Because his uncle drove around with him until it was quiet at the police office and his uncle was able to negotiate for him to sleep at the corridor. Because he knew that if he put him inside a cell he would get violated also. This shows that also having relationships with police officers is part of prison social relations. Being related to a pre-established relationship which in turn does not require an exchange is a social relation in itself. It is more a form of a generalised exchange. When Wisani asked to be put inside a cell we can see social relations in the form of cigarettes being used. Again we can see that prisoners rely on new inmates to bring in goods from the outside. One can also argue that the relationship between Wisani and his uncle assured his protection inside the cells and also placing him in a less dangerous cell.

This chapter reveals that behind the reputation and the performance of authority by the K-9 the is a story of trauma and violence when they are in prison. But what we notice is that they transform the trauma and violence they encounter in prison into a feared image when they

come out. The chapter also shows us the logics of the functioning of the prison, theorizing it using Mauss' (1925) theory of the gift. What we see happening inside prison and outside is the constant exchange of gifts. The gifts can guarantee protection from violence and sexual abuse. The exchange of gifts allows for the creation of social relationships between gang members, police officers and inmates. The next chapter will be focusing on how the K-9 gang assert their own authority after being able to usefully turn their trauma and violence into a feared image. It also reveals how the authority crumbles, or that the narrative can only be held up under certain conditions.

CHAPTER 4

AFTER PRISON

This chapter will be focusing on how the K-9 gang assert the authority they have acquired from spending time inside the awaiting trial prison. The K-9 gang assert their authority within the community through performance at drinking areas. Goffman uses "performance to refer to all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (Goffman 1956: 13).

I was taking an afternoon nap when my friend Rhulani entered my bedroom shouting that lets go to a soccer match. I woke up and told him that I was not feeling well because of all the alcohol I consumed the previous night at Quick Café, a local club in Giyani section A. Rhulani's facial expression changed when I told him that I was drinking the previous night. It was as if he was disappointed that I did not invite him. He managed to persuade me to go with him to the soccer match. As we were driving to the soccer fields he asked me how it was last night with the same facial expression he expressed earlier. That's when I decided to tell him that I went to the club because I went there to collect data for my research report. I further explained my research focus to him. That's when his facial expression started to change, he then told me that a few weeks ago he was at Malamulele Township and he was involved in a fight with a member of the K-9 gang at a musical festival. I asked him what happened and if it's possible if I can add this information to my research report.

He replied that:

"You see I should be your research assistant because now you are asking me for information, but because you are my friend you can use it for your research. You see what happened at

Malamulele, just enjoying music and drinks. As we were enjoying a group of women approached us and asked if they could join us. We did not refuse. Who could refuse such beautiful women? As we were enjoying the company of the women a young boy approached us and asked, what we were doing with his girlfriend? He started dragging the woman. That's when I jumped in to stop him. I punched his face a couple of times. He ran off shouting that he was coming back. The woman told me that the guy is a member of the K-9 gang and he probably went to get reinforcements."

I interrupted him by asking him what happened and weather they came back or not?

"That boy came back with a few more boys holding empty beer bottles. They broke the bottle in front of us and shouting that 'yinge chayi kahle' (it won't end well for you) I immediately jumped into the car and locked all doors. They started shacking the car and shouting that I should come out. After a few minutes it cooled off. They eventually left with the women, one could notice their excitement as they walked off".

I then asked him if he would have punched the boy if he knew from the beginning that he was a K-9 gang member. Ironically, I think he punched the K-9 gang members, because most of the gang members have a small stature and appear to be weak.

"Never! I would never risk my life for that woman. If I knew I would have let him do anything to his girlfriend. Those boys are dangerous I have heard a lot of stories about them."

The encounter my friend had with the K-9 members at Malamulele Township shows that with fear and intimidation the K-9 gang are able to rule the streets. After prison the K-9 gang are able to assert their own authority, but this particular encounter shows that people need to know the members of the K-9 gang in order for them to be able to assert their authority. One can argue that when the K-9 gang member dragged the woman with them, because of their

reputation and assumption that they are well known and feared so he did not expect anyone to stop him. But because my friend did not know the K-9 gang member he punched him a couple of times. This encounter shows that the authority the K-9 gang members possess is restricted to people who know them physically, even though they might know their narratives.

The K-9 gang members authority was also limited in terms of practise because the incident happened in another location where they are not well known, even when people know about them, they do not know the faces behind the narratives. So at that particular moment, the member was conceived as any ordinary human being. Which is interesting because in places where they are not known, it seems that a lot of them are beaten, and often have to call for assistance from the other members, meaning they are not as powerful as they think, and would like to believe they are. Because most of them, especially those from section F, join the group at a young age, it is easy to overlook that they could be K-9 gang members, and they could be dangerous. Some of them look young and innocent. They join the gang as early as thirteen years old. My friend also overlooked this aspect and hence their interaction. Because he is older than the K-9 gang member, he referred to him as a boy, as well the other members he was with. It is worth mentioning that the K-9 gang members age group ranges from thirteen years old to around 20s and late 30s. But, as soon as the K-9 gang member is mentioned, the atmosphere, and perceiving them as boys changes for those who know, or have heard about them. Which was the case with my friend who ran to the car for cover.

We eventually reached the soccer fields and he said that after the soccer match you should tell me about last night. I started the match on the bench because I was not feeling well and I wanted to conserve my energy so that I could continue with my fieldwork. After the match Rhulani suggested that we go to another house and have a few beers. I agreed who could say no to a few beers after a soccer match?

After drinking a few beers with Rhulani I decided that we should go to Manombe Butchery (Manombe Butchery is a local chisa nyama located in section A) as we were chilled with guys from section A, playing cards and drinking. We were enjoying ourselves the only problem we had was that people constantly asked for R2 or R5 to buy cigarettes or add so that they could buy a beer. One guy suggested that we go to Quick Café which is a walking distance from Manombe Buchery. When we got to Quick Café it was full, it took us 10-15 minutes to buy alcohol. As I was standing next to the till waiting for my turn to buy a member of the K-9 gang approached me and asked if I could buy him two cider cans of hunters dry. I laughed at him and asked why was he drinking women's drinks? He replied that he wanted some sugar to give him a kick. I did not refuse to buy him because he was one of my participants. After buying him the two cans, I saw him giving the two cans to his girlfriend with great confidence. From the way he gave the lady the cans of alcohol you could see that he was trying to keep up an image that he could afford her, but in reality he was having a limit of money. The limit of money – immediately means limit in keeping up their image.

Here we see masculinity at play. As Jensen (2008: 168) wrote that men have little room in which to manoeuvre, men tend to find ways to negotiate the tensions of masculinity in order to emerge as respected or, as dignified persons. Gangs thus come to represent one way of emerging as a respected man, and overcoming this crisis in masculinity. And as Reid and Walker further asserts, "because men find it very difficult to assert their manhood through traditional avenues" gangs become the scapegoat for popular understandings of 'masculinity in crisis'. In this context, alternative means of achieving manhood, such as violence and belonging to a gang, take an exaggerated significance (Reid & Walker, 2005: 10). There is a need to be seen as a provider, as a real man, and this is why the K-9 gang member approached me to buy drinks for him so he could confidently give them to his girlfriend as if

he had bought them. Similar with the situation of Rhulani in the beginning of the chapter, seeing Rhulani with his woman threatened the K-9 gang member's manhood, his masculinity, and he had to find other avenues to assert himself so he resorted to violence by fetching his other group members and coming back with beer bottles.

We decided to find a table with Rhulani as we were drinking and enjoying the music. One of the K-9 gang member who was tall and skinny approached us "stepping" and said that:

"I have finally got you; today you are going pay for your sins."

One could see the fear in Rhulani's face before anything happened. But the K-9 gang member I just purchased the two cans for intervened. He rushed to the rescue of Rhulani. They both moved aside and another member joined them. They spoke for a few minutes, at that time I did not only fear for my friend but for myself. Even though sometimes it is a feeble performance it has its effect. Here we also see the aspect of gift giving as theorised in the last chapter come to play. The K-9 gang member I had purchased alcohol for was able to negotiate with his members on my friend's behalf. The K-9 gang member I purchased the cans for called me aside and told me that:

"I have spoken to my friend and he said that if your friend can pay him then nothing will happen to him."

I called Rhulani and explained the solution to the mess that he had put himself in. At once he took R200 and gave it to the K-9 gang member. He then suggested that The K-9 gang member join our table. He went to the counter to purchase more beers; one could see the relief felt by Rhulani by the way he danced to the counter. Here we see how the K-9 gang member use their authority to get money from people or how Rhulani used money to protect himself from the K-9 gang members.

Everyone at our table was enjoying the music and alcohol until the K-9 gang members spotted a young man whom they accused of being part of the community members who were beating up the K-9 gang members at the community mob justice. One of the K-9 gang members said that:

"You see that young man we should teach him a lesson, he was there when the community came to my house."

I did not know what to do but surely I did not want to be associated with what was about to happen, as I was processing my thoughts one of the members of the K-9 gang grabbed me by the hand and pulled me towards the young man. The K-9 gang members were shouting at the top of their voices and pointing their fingers at the young man. Suddenly the DJ reduced the volume of the music and most of the people were surrounding us. Without thinking, maybe the alcohol was thinking for me, I jumped in between the young man and the K-9 gang members to try and resolve the conflict. In a way I managed to prevent any action but one of the K-9 gang members told the young man that it is not yet over. I think I was able to protect the young man from the K-9 gang members because I had been spending time with them also because I was buying them alcohol and working on their story.

We went back to our table and all I was thinking was what did I get myself into. My thoughts were distracted by one of the K-9 gang members when they said that:

"Musa did you see how everyone fears us? Even the DJ stopped the music because of us; the bouncers did not even come near us. If you associate with us no one will touch you in Giyani."

Most of their encounters happen in public spaces, in the spectacle of everyone, there is need for an audience and to been seen. This is how people come to know about them, and tell

stories they have seen about them. Which in turn reinforces how people perceive them, and respect them. So visibility becomes a necessity in driving their narrative.

I just laughed and continued drinking wondering what would happen after they closed. As we were drinking Akani a well-known member of the community called me aside and asked me:

"Why are you associating yourself with these people? They will bring nothing but trouble into your life. You have a bright future ahead of you."

Since I had been spending a lot of time with the K-9 gang, and because they believed that my research would result in them being well known it drew me into being part of the performance. I was part of the performance because as a researcher I was seen as their publicist and everything which happens with me around would be documented in my research report.

I did not want to turn our conversation into a sermon so I replied that first thing in the morning I would visit him. He further told me that:

"Do not do anything that you will regret."

We said our goodbyes, as I walked back to our table, my first thought was to take Rhulani and leave before anything bad happens. But my researcher state of mind kicked in and all I could think about was all the rich data I would get by staying until the end. I also think the alcohol played a part feeling invincible with alcohol – also part of the K-9 performance of grandeur. The DJ announced that he will be playing the last track; his announcement was met with booing and whistling. Indeed it was the last track; all of a sudden one could hear the moving of chairs, the cleaning up of bottles and different voices from all corners of Quick café. All of that did not concern me but Akani's words that I should not do anything I would regret and those of the K-9 gang members that when they close something would happen. We

finished our beers and as we were walking out the K-9 gang members spotted the young man entering a car, they ran towards the car but to their surprise inside the car was a muscular man by the name of Vutivi. As he stepped out of the car the K-9 gang members also stopped running towards the car, they stood near the car as Vutivi approached them confidently. Vutivi asked the K-9 gang members what was going on as if he did not know what was happening.

One of the K-9 gang members approached Vutivi cautiously and said that:

"Grootman! We did not know that ntwana (young man) is one of yours, If we did we would not have planned to do anything to him we would have just spoken to you directly."

Vutivi then called the young man to step out of the car so that they could speak to the K-9 gang members. Vutivi hugged the young man with great confidence as if he was assuring him that nothing will happen to him. Vutivi and the K-9 gang members continued to speak. Suddenly the K-9 gang members walked away, they did not even say goodbye to neither me nor Rhulani. The car drove off with the young man. The encounter between Vutivi and the K-9 gang members show that the authority the K-9 gang members have has limitations especially when they encounter muscular people they fear. What we see happening here is that the K-9 gang members were at one moment the masters of the place and the next moment none of that remained visible. The prowess of the K-9 gang was deflated clearly by being intimidated by the physic of Vutivi.

Rhulani told me that he was going to the toilet which gave a few minutes with Vutivi. I have a good relationship with Vutivi because we played soccer together hence it was easy for me to ask him a few questions. I asked him where he knew the K-9 gang members from, he said that:

"We met at the Giyani police holding cells, the police arrested me at night and when I entered the cell I took off my shirt and started working out. I did not speak to any of them until the leader sent one of them to come ask me why I was arrested. At first I did not answer I just continued working out, until the leader came to ask why I was arrested. I stopped working-out and told him that I just murdered three guys whom tried to break into my house. Till this day they still believe that I am a murderer. But I was only arrested for assault; hence I was released on bail.

I further asked him what happened to him after telling them why he was arrested. He replied proudly that:

"What could they do? They just let me be."

I then asked him about his relationship with the young man. Replied cautiously that:

"I do not have a relationship with the young man, he paid me so that I can protect him."

Rhulani came back from the toilet and interrupted our conversation but I think it was done anyway. We said our goodbyes to Vutivi after that Rhulani dropped me off at home. I was still thinking of what could have happened if Vutivi did not intervene or if I did not jump in to stop the fight or if the K-9 gang member did not intervene when one of his friends wanted to fight Rhulani.

There we see how one made up story beat another made up story. Respect in the case of Vutivi and the K-9 gang members seems to rest on who has committed the worst crime. One performance of prowess beat the other one – but made of the same wood – it is part of their own self-belief. Because Vutivi told them he murdered three people who tried to rob his house, they feared him and did not treat him like their other victims. Because their existence is founded on a false story, another false story which they believe to be true intimidates them,

and questions their power. Also, because a lot of them are young boys, physical appearance intimidates them. Vutivi being muscular also became an obstacle for them to approach and attack the young man they were planning to gang up on. Physical force is thus also a core ingredient to respect. His muscles and strength was seen as superior given the K-9 gang members physical attributes. One can thus argue that for the K-9 gang members, power and respect lies in the name itself and the narratives associated with it, not ones physical attribute. This was also evident in Rhulani's interaction with one member before finding out he was a K-9 gang member. Nothing really special or precautionary about how they look and dress. Their power and authority lies in the gang which they belong to.

I woke up with a terrible hang over the following morning and I promised Akani that I would see him the following morning but I forgot to inform him that I had to travel to Johannesburg. I contacted Rhulani on my way to the bus station to inform him that I will see him when I return.

Indeed I returned after a few months; the first person I thought about was Akani. I arranged that we meet at Manombe Butchery so that I could braai meat for him after disappointing him. He was surprised that I was braaiing for him, but that did not stop him from demanding a few beers. Like stated above Akani is a well-known young man among the community of Giyani. Akani is well known in the community because he braai's meat for people at Manombe Butchery for R50- R100 hence a lot of people know him.

As we were braaiing Akani asked what was my relationship with the K-9 gang and why am I associating myself with them? I replied that:

"I am conducting research on how *people use their experiences in awaiting trial prison to negotiate and recreate the existing structures of authority and power. Members of the K-9 gang are my participants."*

At once one could see that Akani was relieved. He then suggested that he also wanted to participate. I then asked him what he had to share with me because I did not come here to have an interview nor did I come to conduct fieldwork. Akani then suggested that we drive to the stadium so that we eat there so that we could speak in privacy. Indeed we drove to the stadium and parked outside under a tree since it was hot. We both appreciated the shade, as we were eating Akani told me that a lot happened when you were away. I then asked him what happened during my absence. Before he replied he took a long sip from his can of beer and said that:

"A man was murdered not so long ago at 'Ma-Two Room' (Ma-Two Room is a squatter camp next to the Giyani Clinic in Section A) but the murder was accidental."

I interrupted him to ask him why he suggests that the murder was accidental. He took a few sips before he replied and said that:

"I was there. We were drinking peacefully and enjoying ourselves before the person who was murdered approached the person that stabbed him and said that do you remember that you once stabbed me? The guy replied yes I do and I can do it again."

Before Akani could finish I asked him if he knew what transpired before this encounter and he replied that:

"I was not there when they fought but I heard that they fought at the "Lap" (which has been closed for months now) the fight was territorial and the K-9 gang member was in his territory hence he won. But it happened a long time ago."

I then Asked Akani to further explain what occurred at Ma-Two Room. He continued and said that:

"When the K-9 gang member informed the other guy that he will stab him again, he informed him that he would shoot him. The K-9 gang member panicked and he reacted by stabbing the other guy. The guy ran towards the direction of the clinic since it was not far. Unfortunately he did not reach the clinic as he collapsed due to a loss of blood. The following morning the K-9 gang member turned himself in after he was informed that the person he stabbed died on his way to the clinic."

The encounter that occurred at MA-Two Room shows that not all performances by the K-9 gang goes well. To show that the K-9 gang member did not intend on killing the other person, he handed himself over to the police.

After eating we decided to drive back to Manombe, as we were driving back Akani, reiterated the K-9 gang members intention was not to kill but to protect himself from the other guy. I then decided to stop asking Akani questions and thanked him for his participation. When we got to Manombe we played cards and continued drinking. This could mean that murder might not really be on the cards for the K-9 gang members. It is more about robbery, money and being feared. This then shows the provincial character of the gang. The murderer will probably turn this incident into a story of being inside of prison, and what they did to end up in prison.

What this chapter clearly shows is that the K-9 gang members authority is a performance at drinking places, but what we also see is that their authority has limitations, such as when they perform in front of people who do not know them. Another limitation the authority of the K-9 gang face is when they encounter muscular people. In this chapter we also notice how the K-9 gangs performance can also end up in accidental murders.

The K-9 gang try to mirror urban gangs however their mirroring is somewhat shaky and this could be because unlike urban gangs, their existence is founded on a fabrication and if one looks at it clearly, one realizes that the K-9 gang members do not commit serious crimes like murder but they commit petty crimes. One could then say that their authority is not based on the crime in which they commit but on spending time in prison and getting that credibility. Also, an important feature of the numbers gang and Nongoloza's ideologies that they try to mirror is a well-known nationwide brotherhood that is predominant in every prison in every prison in South Africa. It is also well known that the numbers control every prison in South Africa but as it was shown in the previous chapter the K-9 gang to not solely have the reigns in prison, but the are other prison leaders who call the shots, meaning that their brotherhood is not as wide a community as they would want people to believe.

Most prison gangs have a strict code of conduct which they must abide by, and failure to do so has consequences, which is not the case for the K-9 since everyone do as they please. They also have a language that the gang must use for secret missions and communication, which I found to also not be the case for the K-9 gang. There is also no spilled blood in the dealings of the K-9. With the K-9 gang, they took the idea of gangsterism and loyalty to a gang and used it to their advantage. They are feared in the community, they carry knives, and they do stab people but not so as to cause death. The main idea behind their operation is to be known and to be feared and these come not as a result of murder but as a result of a performance that must be seen. From the discussions that I had with the members and other inmates, it becomes clear that in prison there is nothing "significant" that they do or learn to come out with the power that they boast, but the power lies in actually be arrested and spending sometime in that cell. That is their initiation. The gang is not really associated to any of the notorious gangs in South Africa, it is not associated to any of the well-known urban gangs

however the K-9 have used this phenomena of a gang in order to be feared. They mimicked to a less extent what urban prison gangs do and how they operate to cement their authority in Giyani prison, and becoming one of the most known gang in a rural setting such as Giyani. It is thus the influence of the urban that gave the K-9 gang it's functioning.

Throughout the chapter we also see acts of masculinity – hegemonic masculinity – which becomes the dominant form of masculinity that is idealized by the K-9 gang, and views other masculinities as subordinate because they do not live to the standards of this dominant masculinity. There are other competing alternative masculinities, for example in schooling or in politics but these are silenced and regarded inadequate by the gang. Put simply there are real men, which in this case are the K-9 gang members, and there are other men. It is through this masculinity that the group tries to silence other men and claim their authority in drinking places. They use this masculinity to intimidate their subjects, and demand respect that otherwise would not have been achievable through other avenues. The same masculinity is also exercised in prison to assert authority, and set themselves apart from other inmates. To demand a different level of respect and dignity (Jensen, 2008). What this masculinity further reveals is authority as Weber theorises – when power is accepted as legitimate by those subjected to it (Weber, 1978 [1922]). So basically one could argue that what they exercise in these local drinking places is traditional authority – authority that is passed down to certain elites or patriarchal figures due to their association to the gang which encompasses a mythical past, tradition or custom, and forms the foundation for the legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

The study area for this research was Giyani, a town in Limpopo Province of South Africa. The purpose of this study was to investigate and analyse practices of criminal justice in South Africa. Specifically, the study tried to understand how people use their experiences in awaiting trial prison to negotiate and recreate the existing structures of authority and power.

Chapter one gave a brief introduction to the research topic and what prompted my interest in popular understanding of the South African justice system, particularly the police holding cells in Giyani and the awaiting trial prison in which I stated that my interest was prompted by the arrest of Hlulani. He was arrested for robbing someone of their cell phone and went to the police holding cells before being released again after a short while. The whole idea of being incarcerated is rehabilitation, however for Hlulani his arrest was a form of initiation into the gang. The study thus tried to understand how people use their experiences in awaiting trial prison to negotiate and recreate the structures of authority and power.

From the literature collected, identified and reviewed for this research I found out that most of the literature focusing on authority in former homelands looks at authority asserted by the chiefs, religions leaders, traditional heals, business people etc. But it does not look into the authority asserted by gangs. Literature on gangs and prisons focuses on city prisons and gangs, but my research looks at rural gangs, thus offering a fresh and unique perspective.

Qualitative ethnographic research method, consisting of participant observations and interviews were used. Extended case study research method was also used to collect data, I spent time with members of the K-9 gang at drinking place such as Bus Rank Bottle Store and Filani. People who were interviewed were members of the K-9 gang, community members who had encountered the K-9 gang members in prison and outside prison. Also

police officials were interviewed. Ethical considerations which were accounted for included verbal consent which was treated as a fundamental requirement before conducting my interviews. The participants were briefed about the research project before interviews commenced. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw from participating at any time. Issues of anonymity and confidentiality regarding any information that the participants show were also emphasised.

In chapter 2 ‘myth making and building a reputation through narratives’ looked at the history of the K-9 gang and how their reputation has been built on a fabricated narrative by the founding father. I discussed and analysed how the K-9 gang members use narratives to build their reputation. Their illegality is not built on secrecy and doing things clandestinely – but on visibility and being talked about. They rely on people to talk about them so that their reputation can spread throughout the community of Giyani and beyond, thus producing fear and cementing their authority. What this then meant was that as a researcher I was also given another task during interviews, and that was to let the world know about them. Which was not part of my research and as a result ethical dilemmas came into play. I had to remain true to the purpose of my research, and let that be known, even if t hindered certain elements of our interaction. What became particularly interesting about this chapter was how entry into the group was through initiation and certain rituals. It was revealed that in order to join the group one must have prison experience, which led a lot of the members to commit petty crimes.

In chapter 3 ‘ in prison’, the study showed how the K-9 gang members turn the trauma and violence they encounter in prison into a feared image when they come out. I also found out that gift exchange made a huge part of the everyday performance of the gang members. The gang also claims to work with police officers, and thus influence who they share cells with, and what goes on in those cells without fear of the resulting consequence. Discussions that

focused on what goes on in prison also revealed what an important element gift giving plays in prison survival. Protection and survival also become about social relations. This made me wonder how then justice is served if prison is such an exciting and learning part of being a K-9 gang member. It means that rehabilitation is thrown out of the window since a "family unit" exists inside prison. Being in prison for them is not about being isolated to think and reflect on the bad things one has done, but instead they come out far worse. This got me thinking if the justice system is really fair, and made me wonder if anything should be done about prison gangs because in the case of the K-9 gang it seems as if prison functions to manufacture criminals, which is not a good thing for the community in which they are released to. I had all these thoughts as a concerned human being and member of the same community in which they operate but at the same time I had to remain a researcher, an outsider, and distance myself from my thoughts, remain unjudgmental and tell their story as it was narrated to me.

In chapter 4 'after prison' the paper discussed how the K-9 gang perform their authority after they are released from prison. Throughout the chapter we also see acts of masculinity – hegemonic masculinity – which becomes the dominant form of masculinity that is idealized by the K-9 gang, and views other masculinities as subordinate because they do not live to the standards of this dominant masculinity. We also discover the limits to their authority, in that the authority is limited to drinking areas, also the authority is limited to people who know them and their narrative. Another limitation to their authority is that they get intimidated by other people with a reputation.

All in all what the research reveals is that gangsterism is not a clear cut choice of living as many people would assume. For one to join a gang there are a lot of factors which may be at play. the social structures which are not accommodating to ex-prisoners could also be attributed blame to why people remain in prison and join gangs. Failure for one to establish themselves after having gone to prison, and having the prisoner identity always hanging

around them limits them to the outside world opportunities such as jobs, thus making gangsterism desirable. There is also the influence of the urban that that demands recognition - for example, rural settings copying the urban gangsterism styles of operation. All in all in order to understand gang life one must take all these factors into consideration, otherwise the theorization remains simple and partial. What is at the backdrop of these practices is gaining respect, dignity, and authority that seems difficult to manoeuvre through other avenues for young men.

The research further reveals the many forms authority can take place in the presence of competing authorities. It is possible to have multiple layers of authority in a setting. Each with its distinct function and operation

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