



University of Cape Town

School for Advanced Legal Studies

Faculty of Law

Department of Public Law - M.Phil. Criminology, Law, and Society

The Numbers Gang in South African Correctional Facilities:

Reflections on Structures, Functions and Culture

by

Heinrich Velloen

VLNHEI003

Supervised by Emeritus Professor Elrena van der Spuy

Word count: 48706

Research dissertation presented for the approval of the Senate in fulfilment of part of the requirements for the M.Phil. degree in approved courses and a minor dissertation. The other part of the requirement for this qualification was the completion of a programme of courses. I hereby declare that I have read and understood the regulations governing the submission of M.Phil. dissertations, including those relating to length and plagiarism, as contained in the rules of this University, and that this dissertation conforms to those regulations.

Signed

Signed by candidate

 at the University of Cape Town, 14 February 2022

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

Plagiarism declaration

I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own.

I have used the Harvard convention for citation and referencing. Each contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work(s) of other people has been attributed and has been cited and referenced.

This dissertation is my own work.

I have not allowed, and will not allow anyone, to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

Signature _____

Signed by candidate

Date _____

14 February 2022

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank GOD Almighty for giving me the opportunity and guidance to achieving my goal.

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor van der Spuy for her continued support of my research, her patience, motivation, and knowledge. Her guidance helped me throughout.

I owe a deep sense of gratitude to Annie Kok from the Centre of Criminology for her keen interest in my studies at every stage of my research. Her kindness, inspiration and timely suggestions assisted me greatly.

It is my privilege to thank my wife Mrs Joelene, my children Lindsey-Jo, Leighton-Ray, and Daniel-Ray for their consistent encouragement.

Lastly, this dissertation is to acknowledge my father Mr. Daniel Velen who brought me up to believe in myself and taught me the art of determination, as well as my late mother and sister, Maria and Senobia Velen.

Abstract

Prison gangs stand in a complex relationship to carceral institutions. At one level gangs on the inside of prison walls constitute a reactive and adaptive response to prisons as ‘total institutions’. But in turn, prison gangs have a formative influence on life inside the ‘total institution’ – both for inmates and for prison authorities.

The presence of an elaborate network of members of the so-called Numbers Gang is a well-known phenomenon in South African correctional facilities or prisons in short. The existence of the Numbers is widely associated with ongoing patterns of conflict and violence in South African prisons – between inmates and warders, between inmates, as well as between rival prison gangs. Whilst engaging the ‘problems’ associated with the Numbers gang is central, rather than peripheral, to managing South African prisons according to constitutional guidelines, the Department of Correctional Services is yet to rise to the policy challenges. Substantive engagement with that policy challenge is in turn dependent on good research. This dissertation hopes to make a small contribution to that larger quest for understanding the social logic of prison gangs.

This research sets out to investigate key facets of the Numbers gang in South African prisons. Drawing on my own experience of 26 years as a warden in Pollsmoor Prison in Tokai, Cape Town and on the relatively abundant academic literature on these gangs, and finally on face-to-face interviews with twenty former Pollsmoor inmates, I attempt to present an up-to-date account of the legends, the structure and operation of these gangs. This account explores the evolution of the Numbers gang; key initiation practices through which arrivals are integrated; the quasi-military command and rank structures of the three Numbers’ divisions; the role and function of *Sabela* as a medium of communication, and the meaning of tattoos as a source of gang identification and cohesion. This account yields insights into the form, content, and impact of gangs in South African prisons. This dissertation confirms the major findings of the available literature while supplementing it with reference to contemporary developments. In particular, the dissertation draws on interviews with former Pollsmoor inmates to analyse the relationships between the Numbers Gang as a prison phenomenon, and the growing link with street gangs on the outside. Finally, the dissertation emphasises the urgency for the Department of Correctional Services to develop, refine and implement a national gang combat strategy duly informed by substantive research evidence.

Table of contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	8
1.1. Contextual information: A brief overview of South African prisons	8
1.2. Challenges confronting South African correctional facilities	10
1.3. Significant aspect of this study	11
1.4. Research aims.....	12
1.5 . Dissertation structure.....	12
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	13
2.1. Introduction	13
2.2. Prisons as total institutions.....	13
2.3. The Numbers Gang in historical perspective	15
2.4. Key cultural features of the Numbers gang.....	17
2.5. Internal processes of ordering	18
2.5.1. The subcultures of prison gangs: factors that influence and sustain prison gangs	19
2.5.2. The functioning and cultural life of the Numbers Gang	20
2.5.3. Language.....	21
2.5.4. Tattoos.....	22
2.5.5. From Street Gangs to Numbers Gang: an inevitable progression.....	23
2.6. Conclusion.....	24
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	25
3.1. Research Questions	26
3.2. Methodological Framework	26
3.2.1. Negotiating access and selecting interviewees	27
3.2.2. Semi-structured interviews	28
3.2.3. Interview Schedule.....	29
3.2.4. Informed Consent.....	30
3.2.5. Data Collection	31
3.3. Interview settings	32
3.4. Ethical Clearance.....	32
3.5. Data analysis	33
3.6. Conclusion.....	33
CHAPTER 4: GANG LANGUAGE	35
4.1. Reviewing the literature: The history of anti-language and Fanagalo	35
4.2. The origin of Sesfanakaloku/Fanagalo.....	37

4.3.	Communication in Sabela	39
4.3.1.	Why is the language called Sabela?.....	41
4.3.2.	The importance of Sabela	41
4.3.3.	How to learn Sabela	41
4.3.4.	What is the meaning of Sabela.....	42
4.3.5.	Sabela beyond prison walls.....	42
4.3.6.	Signs as a form of communication.....	44
4.4.	Conclusion.....	44
CHAPTER 5: TATTOOS, IDENTIFICATION, SELF-EXPRESSION, ORNAMENTATION		46
5.1.	Literature Review on Tattoos	46
5.2.	Meaning of some Gang tattoos.....	47
5.3.	Numbers Gang Tattoos.....	48
5.4.	The research participants' views on tattoos	49
5.5.	Reasons behind tattoos	50
5.6.	Meaning of Numbers Gang tattoos	52
5.7.	Conclusion.....	53
CHAPTER 6: THE THREE DIVISIONS AND HIERARCHICAL COMMAND STRUCTURE OF THE NUMBERS GANG.....		54
6.1.	Historical background	54
6.2.	The 28 Numbers Gang	59
6.2.1.	The Silver Line	59
6.2.2.	The golden line/bloodline/Kaperdien	62
6.3.	The structure of the 27-gang	66
6.3.1.	Junior structure of the 27 Numbers Gang, known as the number twos.	66
6.3.2.	The top structures of the 27-gang also known as the number one's.....	70
6.4.	The structure of the 26 Numbers Gang	72
6.4.1.	The number two's of the 26-gang.....	72
6.4.2.	The top structure of the 26-gangs, also known as the number ones	76
6.5.	Conclusion.....	79
CHAPTER 7: THE INTERNAL STRUCTURES OF THE NUMBERS GANG		81
7.1.	Literature on Numbers Gang's internal structures: Origin and development of the three divisions	81
7.2.	Codes of conduct and organisation	82
7.2.1.	Recruitment processes	84
7.3.	The top structures of the gang: Parliament and the Twelve points	87
7.3.1.	Trial and punishment	88

7.3.2.	The Juries	90
7.3.3.	Punishment and Disciplinary procedures.....	91
7.3.4.	Seeko (Gang Meetings).....	92
7.3.5.	Managing Conflict	93
7.4.	Conclusion.....	95
CHAPTER 8: LINKS BETWEEN NUMBERS GANG AND STREET GANGS		96
8.1.	Literature review on street and prison gangs	96
8.2.	Transformation of gangs	98
8.3.	Transitional changes.....	99
8.4.	Present dynamics between Street and Numbers Gang	99
8.5.	Recruitment: Street gangs into the Numbers Gang	101
8.6.	Influence of Numbers Gangs on the Street Gangs	102
8.7.	Exploring the relationships between the Numbers Gang and Street Gangs.....	106
8.8.	The weakening of old traditions.....	107
8.9.	Conclusion.....	107
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION		109
9.1.	Research implications and recommendations	111
9.1.1.	Suggestions for DCS to manage gangs	112
APPENDIX 1: SABELA DICTIONARY		114
APPENDIX 2: NUMBERS GANG TATTOOS.....		142
APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE.....		168
APPENDIX 4: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM.....		169
APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW GUIDE		173
REFERENCES		176

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to provide an up-to-date account of the structures, operation, and oral legends of the three Numbers Gang (Numbers 26, 27 and 28) within Pollsmoor Correctional Facility. For the past 26 years as an official, I have experienced correctional facilities as unique environments where the interplay of different forces determines social structure. In the context of South African correctional facilities, the Numbers Gang compete for scarce resources, including the recruitment of other inmates. Numbers Gang leaders use a combination of persuasion and force to enforce their dominance over gang members and to exert control over the prison environment. Such behaviour is rule-bound and regulated by intricate sets of social customs and procedures. As the sub-title of the dissertation indicates, this dissertation is principally concerned with the structures, functions and cultural life of the Numbers Gang. As such this inquiry is of both theoretical and practical importance. Prison gangs constitute social responses to conditions of incarceration within the larger structural context of society. Stated differently, gangs are context-specific institutions both at the micro and macro level. Understanding the interplay between social environment and prison gangs is important. So too is recognition of the fact that prison gangs are institutions that yield power. Compared to non-gang members, gang members commit a disproportionate number of infractions and crimes whilst in custody. Gangs and gang involvement result in short-and long-term negative outcomes for the Department of Correctional Services. A substantive research engagement with the Numbers gang is a prerequisite for designing policies aimed at addressing the appeal and power of gangs inside South African prisons. This dissertation hopes to make some contribution to the body of existing research.

This chapter is organised as follows: First, this chapter will provide some broad contextual information about South African prisons. Thereafter the significance of this study will be outlined, with a description of the research aims and specification of key research questions to be pursued.

1.1. Contextual information: A brief overview of South African prisons

The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) is the South African government department responsible for running South African prisons. The Department employs about 34000 staff nationally and administers 240 correctional facilities nationally within six regions. According to the Corrections Report 2020, the prison population total, including pre-trial detainees, stood at 189 748. The Correctional System also includes two privately-run prisons: the first is Kutama Sinthumule Correctional Centre which is run by the American private corrections company known as GEO group. Second there is the Mangaung Correctional Centre which is operated by the British security company G4S. These facilities house about 3 000 inmates each and were fully operational in 2002. This public-

private partnership was the first of its kind in South Africa. A case study by African Governance and Diplomacy (2005) suggested that these facilities provided significantly higher quality facilities than the public prisons. The operating costs per inmate per day were comparable with those of the public sector prisons.

The legislative mandate for the Department is derived from the Correctional Services Act, 1998 (Act 111 of 1998), the Criminal Procedure Act (Act 51 of 1977), the 2005 White Paper on Corrections in South Africa and the 2014 White Paper on Remand Detention Management in South Africa. The 2005 White Paper on Corrections in South Africa proposed the establishment of a programme of comprehensive rehabilitation. Many factors have made this aim challenging to reach.

As stated in the 2015 Annual Report of the Department of Correctional Services, the Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services (JICS) is tasked with overseeing South Africa's Correctional Services and inspecting and reporting on how inmates are treated. The Judicial Inspectorate of Correctional Services was established in 1998 with the statutory objective of the inspection of correctional centres. The 2015/2016 Annual Report emphasised the problem of overcrowded centres and high rates of gangsterism. It recommended that the Department deploy its own gang experts and educate all staff on dealing with the situation effectively.

The Judicial Inspectorate of Correctional Service (JICS) Annual Report of 2018/2019 found that the Western Cape Province had the most overcrowded facilities. Of particular concern was Pollsmoor medium B facility with over 200% overcrowding.

Pollsmoor Correctional facility is in the Cape Town suburb of Tokai and comprises five facilities. It was established in 1964 and has been systematically expanded over the years. The first facility is the admission centre which serves several courts in the Cape Peninsula, with 2 460 inmates. Most of its inmates are unsentenced awaiting-trial inmates and sentenced offenders facing further charges. The second facility is medium A with 1 336 inmates, which houses both awaiting trial for adults and sentenced juveniles. Third, medium B facility houses sentenced adult males with 1 110 inmates. In the fourth facility, medium C houses sentenced adult males with sentences of up to one year, day parole, or soon to be released with a total of 392. Finally, the female facility houses juvenile and adult women, both awaiting trial and sentenced, with a total of 557 inmates. There are also several infants under the age of two living in the Albertina Sisulu facility or baby mother unit. All the figures mentioned above refer to the actual numbers of inmates for November 2021.

JICS, under the leadership of Judge Edwin Cameron, visited the Pollsmoor admission centre in 2015 and published a report regarding the extent of overcrowding and the unsanitary living conditions.

Further findings included: that the admission centre was extremely overcrowded at over 300% capacity with 4 198 inmates. With regards to bedspace the report noted 60 inmates had to do with 24 beds.

Since the report's publication, DCS has been working on increasing bedspace to relieve pressure on overcrowded facilities. However, the 2019/2020 DCS report (DCS, 2021) stated that the country's correctional centres were still overcrowded at 37%. At the time, there were 162 875 inmates against an accommodation capacity of 118 572 bed spaces. Overcrowding is exacerbated by a range of factors such as high crime levels, the reluctance by the judiciary to grant bail for serious crimes and the effects associated with minimum sentencing. The DCS has appointed overcrowding task teams on national, regional and area levels, but it seems that their success in reducing overcrowding has been limited. JICS became aware during the past years of a sharp increase in incidents of gang related violence. The 2018/2019 Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services report (JICS, 2020) stated that:

- ≡ Inmates are not adequately assessed during admission.
- ≡ Gangsterism is rife and DCS officials claim that on average up to 70% of inmates have some form of gang affiliation.
- ≡ Sexual assaults seem to be a method frequently used to stamp gang authority on non-gang members.
- ≡ Officials are understandably fearful of working in a violent environment, as they can also be targeted.
- ≡ The risky situation prevailing in prisons is exacerbated because of overcrowding.

JICS recommended that DCS consider the assessment and orientation of inmates immediately upon admission. It was also stated that all relevant state departments in the justice cluster and other stakeholders must collaborate to address these issues. In doing so, the Inspectorate reiterated the necessity for a wider sectoral approach. The Inspectorate again emphasised the need for an effective anti-gang strategy with an implementation plan. Similar recommendations were recorded in the Annual Report of the following year.

1.2. Challenges confronting South African correctional facilities

As mentioned earlier, overcrowding and gangsterism are some of the biggest challenges for correctional services. According to Muntingh (2012), overcrowding at South African centres dates to 1965 and is thus not a new phenomenon. He stated that the policy initiatives should also be seen against the backdrop of chronic overcrowding experienced by the prison system, particularly after 1994. Furthermore, the growing gap between policies and their implementation – so characteristic a feature of many governmental departments – has undermined efforts to overcome challenges.

To provide some context to the problems experienced by DCS allow me to comment on some work-related experiences. In 2019 I became part of the Gang Combat Strategy task team. We spent a lot of time drafting an anti-gang strategy. As a team, we agreed that research confirmed that the existence of gangs and gang-related incidents had been a severe challenge in correctional facilities for many years. Such activities impede rehabilitation, cause instability and compromise safety and security. Gangs thrive on violence and intimidation. Overcrowding creates a fertile ground for gang activity. Vulnerable officials are manipulated and drawn into gangs and become part of the smuggling of contraband into the centres.

The Gang Combat Strategy (2019) articulated a number of aims:

- ≡ To create a secure and safe environment conducive to the rehabilitation of inmates and the attendance of remand detainees in the court process.
- ≡ To reduce and prevent the impact of disruptive groups (e.g., gangs) on the management of correctional centres.
- ≡ To enable inter-sectoral co-operation (e.g., government and civil society) to promote correctional centres and community safety.
- ≡ To develop and build knowledge about gangs and effective responses in gang-combatting and to inform, review and monitor these strategies.
- ≡ To combat gang activities of parolees and probationers in community-based corrections.

The Gang Combat Strategy was signed off by the National Commissioner of DCS (2020) and handed over to the different regional commissioners. However, the strategy is still to be implemented in DCS. It remains to be seen whether implementation will, in fact, get off the ground. Establishing a gang combat strategy for correctional service is a step in the right direction, but the actual implementation will reflect its true value.

This brief overview has described some key features of the South African prison estate and has drawn our attention to a number of challenges confronting the management of prisons in the contemporary era.

1.3. Significant aspect of this study

The next chapter will offer an overview of South African literature on prison gangs within which the contribution of this dissertation has to be situated. For *this* research project, twenty (20) ex-offenders were interviewed. Systematic study of ex-offenders comprises a gap in the prison literature. This set of interviews brought further details to bear on the cultural practices of the Numbers gang and

revealed the extent to which the Numbers Gangs were now also operating outside the prison system. Key findings relating to such cultural practices will be discussed in some detail in Chapters 4 to 7.

1.4. Research aims

The dissertation aims specifically at providing an up-to-date account of key aspects of the organisational features and cultural aspects of the Numbers Gang in Pollsmoor. Prison violence is closely associated with the existence and functioning of the Numbers Gang. Violence in prison, however, cannot solely be blamed on gangs. The very conditions prevailing inside correctional service centres also create conditions within which violence thrive. Furthermore, turf battles on the streets between gangs competing for shares of the illicit economy now more readily spill over into prisons and, in doing so, fuel gang conflicts on the inside. From this it follows that the problem of prison violence is multifaceted and stand in a complex relationship to violence outside the walls of prisons.

1.5. Dissertation structure

The structure of this dissertation is as follows: In chapter 2, I present a review of the literature that underpins this study. It presents the work of various South African authors such as van Onselen (1984); Steinberg (2004), Pinnock (2016), Parker Lewis (2006), Schurink (1989) and others. Based on the contributions of the above-mentioned authoritative sources, this chapter aims to increase the understanding of why gangs continue to find traction in South African correctional facilities. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodology employed in this qualitative study and describes the research aims, the key research questions, and the process of data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 contains a detailed discussion of the secretive language spoken by the members of the Numbers gang. A concise dictionary, which is a significant contribution of this research, defines and explains *Sabela* words and phrases. This resource is attached as Appendix 1. Chapter 5 describes the different tattoos used by the Numbers gang as identification marks. Appendix 2 contains a photo gallery of a range of Numbers gang tattoos with explanatory notes regarding the symbols and their meanings. Chapter 6 focuses on the internal structures of the Numbers Gang, explaining the norms and cultures that are important in the gang's operation. Chapter 7 explicates the gang's hierarchical command structure, which demands strict protocol in gang organisation. It explains the different ranks from junior to senior level and describes the imaginary uniforms used by gangs. The link between the Numbers Gang and street gangs is explored in chapter 8. In the concluding chapter, I discuss the implications and findings of the research and offer some recommendations to the Department of Correctional Services.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a critical overview of existing research on prison gangs drawing on international and local research. It will compare and contrast each source with other relevant literature on the topic. It will also indicate how each source contributes to the body of knowledge about the topic. The topic on the Numbers Gang in South African facilities, is about prison as an institution for the confinement of persons who have been remanded in custody by a judicial authority or who have been deprived of their freedom following the conviction for a crime. The discussion now turns to a consideration of the contribution of Erving Goffman, to our understanding of prisons as ‘total institutions’.

2.2. Prisons as total institutions

The Canadian sociologist, Erving Goffman (1961), contributed much to our understanding of prisons as a kind of ‘total institution’. As he explained:

“The total institution, then, is a ‘living space’ in which people who share a similar social situation are cut off from society for a considerable time. In civil society we work, play and sleep in different places with different persons under different authorities. In total institutions these three activity spheres of life lose their separate boundaries in various ways.” (Goffman, 1961: 1)

Goffman outlined four types of ‘total institutions’: prisons, asylums, military barracks, and certain religious orders (convents and monasteries). He furthermore pointed out that these institutions are characterised by the rigid bureaucratic control of the human needs of a group of people. Such institutions operate through the mechanism of the ‘mortification of self’ whereby individuals, upon entry into the ‘total institution, are stripped of self-identity and of the freedom to make decisions over the everyday routines of life. Correctional facilities serve as a clear example of closed ‘total institutions’. Further Goffman (1961) distinguished two levels of analysis of life within the ‘total institution’, namely, the social-psychological (the individual as a focus point) and social-structural (environment as a focus point). As to the social functions served by ‘total institutions’ the author opined as follows:

“A total institution is organized to protect the community against what are felt to be a problem to it, with the welfare of the persons thus sequestered not the immediate issue: jails and concentrations camps. The inmate’s total character is symbolized by the barrier to social intercourse with the outside and to departure that is often built right into the physical plant, such as locked doors, high walls and barbed wire” (Goffman, 1961: 15-16).

One could argue that depriving criminals of their freedom is a way of making them pay a 'debt' to society.

"In total institutions.... membership automatically disrupts normal activities since the inmate's separation from the wider world lasts around the clock and may continue for years. This complete isolation helps to produce a unified group of violent actors, rather than a heterogeneous collection of persons of high and low status. Role dispossession therefore occurs. Because a total institution deals with so many aspects of its inmates' lives, with the consequent complex squaring away at admission, there is a special need to obtain initial cooperativeness from the recruit" (Goffman, 1961: 26).

In this scenario, the recruit can be a first offender who finds himself vulnerable in the new environment. Goffman further explains that once the inmate is stripped of his possessions, at least some replacements must be made, but these take the form of standard issue like uniforms. The inmate will be strip-searched during the admission process to ensure prison safety and prevent contraband; his civilian clothes will be replaced by a prison uniform, indicating the "new life" that lies ahead. At admission, loss of identity equipment such as clothes can prevent the individual from presenting his usual image of himself to others, making it more challenging to maintain self-identity. He will come across the prison gang culture, which can either provide a place of safety or expose the inmate to violence and abuse. As Goffman (1961) articulates:

"The inmate, then, finds certain roles are lost to him by virtue of the barrier that separates him from the outside world. Admission processes and obedience tests maybe elaborated into a form of initiation that has been called 'the welcome', where other inmates or staff, or both go out their way to give the recruit a clear notion of his plight" (Goffman, 1961: 27).

Research participants interviewed alluded to the process of mortification that newcomers into prison experience. New admissions will be interviewed by two hang-ranking 27s gang members. If a non-gang member, the newcomer will go through various character tests by gang members of all three camps. The new inmates are verbally abused and called terms such as "new one", frans (non-gang member), bird, mpata (vnon-gang member), mooi laitie (attractive young boy).

The newcomer will soon learn the need to report to an individual in charge of the cell, as in Goffman's explanation about the role of the Abbot. Based on the author's theory of the Abbot, the role of the 'huisbaas' (landlord/cell leader) is to take charge.

Inside the South African correctional facilities, any new admission will come face to face with the Numbers Gang, which has a history of more than a hundred years within the walls of these facilities.

Schurink (1989) opines that one of the most fundamental ways in which the survival of The Numbers Gang is ensured, is by recruitment. According to Pinnock and Douglas-Hamilton (1997):

“The Numbers Gang with its fearless recruiting style, and the scrutinizing of potential members who can join the gang, are ever present in these facilities and contribute largely to the inevitable ‘permanent career’ in crime. Once the knowledge of a gang member becomes too extensive, whether it is knowledge of the dynamics of organised criminal activity they are bound to the gang by terrible necessity” (Pinnock and Douglas-Hamilton, 1997: 53).

Therefore, prison as a total institution constitutes as a place of residence that bars individuals from the rest of the society. Prisons are closed social systems cut off from the outside world. Life on the inside is structured by a complex system of norms, rules, and routines. The prison subculture is the product of socialization that occurs inside prison. That subculture also constitutes a means of adapting to the circumstances within prison.

2.3. The Numbers Gang in historical perspective

The Numbers Gang have a history in South African correctional facilities of more than a hundred years. In the detailed account of the gangs’ rise and subsequent history, there is agreement that the founder of the Numbers was a young Zulu man who took the name Nongoloza. His lieutenant (and rival) was named Nkilikijan. After a dispute with his employer over a lost horse, Nongoloza decided to leave and go to the newly discovered goldfields of Johannesburg. Here Nongoloza’s criminal career and his creation of a formidable following began (van Onselen 1982, p. 173).

According to Steinberg (2004), it can be said that there were two Nongolozas. First, the real-life Nongoloza was meticulously documented by the historian Charles van Onselen. Second, is also the Nongoloza of the intricate myth of his life assembled by his followers and later generations of gang members. What had begun as the Regiment of the Hill or Ninevites transmuted over the years into the Numbers Gang, with its three divisions, the 26s, 27s and 28s.

“The result was that thousands of working-class men lived their urban lives being shepherd from prison to compound, compound to prison. In the compounds, the Ninevites would infiltrate and recruit among the ranks of the goldmine workers” (Steinberg, 2004:40).

At a farm called Leyland they continued to be exposed to violence and abuse. There they were exposed to a “ceremony” attended by mine owners who witnessed attacks on the mineworkers by a bull called Rooiland (red earth). This type of ceremony was announced by a trumpet sound and attended

by dignitaries only. Steinberg (2004) writes that Pou instructed Nongoloza and Nkiliki-jaan to go to the farm called Leyland, find the bull and herd it back to the cave to be slaughtered.

Because of the different nationalities, the mine workers did not understand each other's languages but were taught to speak one language, to understand each other. This was an attempt to break the silence between workers and to unite. Enter a wise old man, Paul Mabazo or Po, who began instructing Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan in Sesfanakaloku, the lingua franca of mining instructions. As Steinberg (2004) states:

“Po spent the first week weeks in his retreat inventing a secret language, for he knows that if the young men are to be safe, the whites must not understand the talk between the men who are to become his followers. In response, some individuals took to the preying on these migrant labourers of which one criminal gang, the “Ninevites”, became notorious. I reorganised my gang of robbers, ‘Nongoloza recalled,’ I laid them under what has become known as Nineveh law” (Steinberg, 2004: 38).

“The Ninevites were led by a charismatic young Zulu immigrant, Nongoloza Mathebula”. (Stein-berg 2004: 35).

The research conducted for this dissertation explored the narrative of the mythical Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan. The views of interviewees about the Numbers Gang and its operation style, is described by most of them as “imaginative”. Technically speaking, myth refers to beliefs that are firmly held and convenient to believe but are not based on factual information. Numbers Gang members hang on to the symbolic narrative of the origin of Nongoloza, Nkilikijaan and relate to events more than 100 years ago. According to Pinnock (2016), the memory of Nongoloza is a myth built from scraps of fact but is more remarkable than merely a myth. As Steinberg points out, it is not only a story one tells but a set of practices.

The work of prominent researchers, such as Charles van Onselen (1984), Nicholas Haysom (1981), Willem Schurink (1989), Don Pinnock (2016), Parker-Lewis (2006), supports Steinberg's (2004a: 4) account of the origins of “the 26s, 27s and 28s all originate from bands of outlaws that plagued late 19th and early 20th-century Johannesburg. The most memorable of these gangs was called The Ninevites; its rank-and-file were lumpenproletariat – young black men who had left their ancestral land in the countryside but had refused to take up wage employment for white bosses in the early mining town.” According to van Onselen (1984), a young Zulu farmworker named Mzuzepi Mathebula, after escaping to Johannesburg, worked as a groom for highway robbers. Mzuzepi Mathebula changed his name to Jan Note, then to Nongolo-za.

Parker Lewis (2006) stated that in 1887 - when Mzozwephi was almost twenty and at the point of leaving home to take on the persona of Jan Note - Zululand was declared British territory. In 1897, Mzuzepi, now known as Nongoloza, was only thirty years old and heading towards his first prison sentence. In raising this point, Numbers Gang members argue that Nongoloza's father, named Zondani, was mandated to investigate what transpired in the mines. His son Paul Mabazo (Pou) recruited Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan, and thirteen others to form the gang. Pinnock states (2016:110):

“The mythology includes a shamanistic arch-criminal figure called Pomabaza or Po. It was he who initiated Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan into a life of plunder”.

By the early 1930s, gang derivatives of the Ninevites were present in almost every prison across the country.

2.4. Key cultural features of the Numbers gang

The literature sheds a great deal of light on the Numbers Gang in South African correctional facilities. The Numbers Gang are a striking feature of South African correctional facilities due to their ongoing operations. They have a nationwide organisational structure. Each gang has a distinctive role that it strives to fulfil within the prison system. The 26s control contraband and all economic activity; the 27's engage in acts of aggression and act as mediators and communicators between the 26's and the 28's; while the 28's are in control of war within the prison as the henchmen, soldiers, and regulators of sex (Parker Lewis, 2010). The 28s cannot speak directly to the 26s; they communicate through the 27s. Gang members argue that the 28s and the 27s originated outside prison and the establishment of the 26-gang was an agreement between the leaders (Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan) as a third camp inside Port Durban Natal prison, with the 27s as their 'father figure' (van Onselen, 1982: 368).

These gangs use a language called *Sabela*, first employed in the mines, to unite mineworkers. It was initially entitled Sesfanakaloku or Fanagalo, but is currently known as Sabela, which is a mixture of different languages. Studies by Parker Lewis (2006) and Newby-Rose (2013) provide information about the language of the Numbers gang. As new words and phrases are developed, the language continues to evolve. In the hands of prison inmates, the history of the Numbers Gang has become a code of conduct, a dress code echoing that of the late 19th century British army, a secret language and an unwritten 'book' that must be memorised (Pinnock, 2016). They are dressed in imaginary military uniforms and guided by a gang rule book, known as the 'makhulu book' with sets of rules. The gang's military rank system differentiates between junior and senior members, defining dominance, authority, and responsibility. The hierarchy demonstrating seniority is tattooed as epaulettes on the shoulders of gang members.

Gang tattoos record the wearer's gang affiliation. They also demonstrate the gang member's seniority level and explain that tattoos demonstrate different meanings. The meanings of the tattoos can be quite complex, and because of the nature of what they encode, the designs of criminal tattoos are not widely recognised by outsiders. As prison changed over the years, inmates also changed their tattoos: 26 changed to XXVI to confuse correctional officials.

The Numbers Gang is central to the correctional environment and is known for its brotherhood operating under a hierarchical command structure with its internal processes (Schurink, 1989). The Gang, previously renowned for its clandestine practices and active only within the prison realm, evolved into an organisation that operates outside the ambit of prison (Steinberg, 2004). The Numbers Gang over the years developed an inextricable link with the street gangs, who adopted the Numbers Gang hierarchical structure.

In this context, I attempt to understand how non-gang members are introduced to gangs and their methods and performances to gain a share of power. According to Becker (1963), labelling an inmate increases the opportunity of assigning him to the 'master statuses' of criminality. Studies by Steinberg (2004), Pinnock (2016), van Onselen (1984), and Parker Lewis (2006) explain how the Numbers Gang organise itself around specific themes. For example, the 26, 27 and 28-gangs organise themselves around theft, robbery, blood, and a system of coerced sexual partners or wives/wyflies, respectively. Albertse (2007) explained that the leader is responsible for leadership, while the hard-core members enforce gang rules and monitor activities.

2.5. Internal processes of ordering

When a gang member has clashed with other gangs, the gang's 'inspector and wireless' will intervene. The inspector is to investigate the 'wireless' to convey the message. Gang members look up to the leaders of the Numbers Gang for guidance. It is a standard rule that nobody could become a member of the Numbers Gang, you had to prove yourself and go through initiation. The Numbers Gang ensures that gang members treat each other respectfully and follow the rules. Each gang has its own set of rules, and each member must obey the rules or risk severe punishment from the gang. As described by Parker Lewis (2006):

"Now there are rules for about just everything and God help those who step out of line. And if they get beaten as a gang punishment, its gang stuff and if prisoners want to be involved, they must take what goes with it" (Parker Lewis 2006: 22).

Disciplinary hearings for perpetrators are discussed in an 'internal court' that also receives complaints. This 'court' determines the appropriate punishment or action that typically requires violence.

Leaving the Numbers Gang is not an option, as they require lifetime membership. Life-time membership in these gangs is almost ironic. However, as Sasha Gear (2005) explains, society is tempted to conceive of prison as a black hole of nothingness into which criminals disappear forever amidst high levels of violence and fear.

Gang members have a particular cult based on special rules for the 26s, 27s, and the 28s that derive from the legends of Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan. Gangs claim their otherness in both symbolic and tangible ways, which they communicate with each other. They embrace the use of force in “education” for recruits and employ weapons such as bayonets and 303 rifles to deliver punishment. They use a unique fighting system with any sharp object for executions.

2.5.1. The subcultures of prison gangs: factors that influence and sustain prison gangs

The uniqueness of the prison culture comes into play when new inmates adapt to a new way of life, which can be called “prisonization”. In other words, it is through the process of prisonization that inmates learn the prison culture.

The culture of prisons has long been a long-standing topic of inquiry (Hunt et al.,1993). A key issue of debate has focused on whether inmate culture is either a product of the prison environment or an extension of external subcultures.

Clemmer (1940) argued that isolation, identified as a structural constraint, strips inmates of their identity, and this loss of identity creates a void in which new identities are formed. Pyrooz et al. (2011:15) put it as follows:

“As an adaptive response to prison conditions, prison cultures endogenous to the institution emerge. Gangs are one of the adaptive responses. Once created, new inmates are then socialized gradually into various prison subcultures” (Pyrooz et al., 2011: 15).

These subcultures are based on various factors, including where people lived and their shared interests, etc. In the case of the Numbers Gang, it can be argued that the subculture consists of a secret language, a set of beliefs, particular values and norms, and an imaginary uniform,

Inmates entering a correctional facility are exposed to the organisation's history, going back to the 1800s. Recruits join the gangs for safety, as it is almost impossible to serve a sentence without becoming a member of the Numbers Gang. Recruits must go through a strict orientation where they learn the secret codes of the gang and are led to believe the gang is there for personal protection. The inmate must decide whether to join or not. Parker Lewis (2006) states that:

“Yes, a man can be tricked without thinking, perhaps by accepting some luxury which he cannot afford, or allowing someone else to stand up for him. This will indicate a weakness and he will be allocated a subsidiary role, a role that declares he will perform favours for protection because he does not have the guts to fight” (Parker Lewis, 2010: 20).

The power of the Numbers Gang is anchored in members' actions. The Numbers Gang adheres to a strict code of conduct, and members are identifiable by their unique uniforms, tattoos, and language. Each gang is subjected to an overarching code detailing the complex arrangements for inter-gang cooperation, communication, and declarations of hostilities.

2.5.2. The functioning and cultural life of the Numbers Gang

The following discussion will focus on the correctional environment's impact on inmates, particularly on gang members. The role and identities within the Numbers Gang are diverse. Members of the Numbers Gang have different perceptions of their roles because it consists of three divisions or camps, each with its unique activities and beliefs. The three divisions consist of the 26; 27, and 28 Numbers Gangs, of which the latter have two further divisions the bloodline and the silver line. The gold line refers to those who work with blood. The silver line refers to those regarded as “wyfies”/females and exposed to sexual practices, while the 26s focus on money and the 27s focus on blood.

“Wyfies” refer to those involved in sexual intercourse in the gang. There has been much discussion on the topic of same-sex practices in prisons. It is important to note that the 26 and 27-gangs are not supposed to have ‘sexual relations’ with other offenders. The 28-gang members explained that only they could engage in these sexual activities. The reason is historical: they argue that only they have experiences in the mines.

Same-sex practices can also form part of the initiation process of the 28-gang’s silver line or wyfies. All gang members, irrespective of their role in the gang, will be exposed to violence or abuse if they fail to obey the rules as stated in the gang rule book – the “makhulu book”.

The “introduction to the new life” gets underway when the new admission walks into prison, where he will be exposed to specific procedures. As Parker Lewis (2006) puts it:

“A new inmate, a stimela (someone transferred from another prison or a new admission), arrived and it’s normal for a 27 to go to the stimela and ask what gang he belongs to and then the 27 re-ports back, first to the 28s and then to the 26s. Because Nongoloza (28), he never approaches dan-ger first. The stimela follows protocol and stands at the toilet, which is a

neutral territory, and the 28s watch while the 26s and 27s spin The Number” (Parker Lewis, 2010: 25).

The Numbers Gang developed a clear corporate-style structure in a typical pyramid shape. At the bottom are the soldiers, topped by a hierarchy that is capped by leadership and, finally, a Lord for the 28s and a Makwesi for the 26s and 27s. Pinnock (2016:119) writes that “any new prisoner who claims to be a member must recite the gang history and “dress” himself equal to his rank. This must be “sabelad” in the language of the gang-shalombom for the 26s and 27s and ndyaza for the 28s. ... They have their own parliament, legal system, punishments, territories, and economy. The 26s, for example, have a Makwesi (president), generals, captains, sergeant majors, lawyers, doctors, inspectors, teachers, and soldiers.” A new member in prison must have a secret phrase called “the uvugu”, which serves as his hidden identity. In explaining the “stimela”, it is a process of self-identification through prison rituals for the newcomer. The top structure or parliament of the gang will oversee this process.

The complex codes of the Numbers Gang specify how the gangs should approach each other so that formalities are observed; protocol states that the 26 and 27 rule the day and the 28s the night. Within the internal structure of each gang men are promoted depending on their performance and knowledge. The gangs meet every morning before unlocking and in the afternoon after lock up, this meeting is called the “seeko”. The morning “seeko serves as a platform from the 28 to tell the 27s what transpired during the night. During the afternoon seeko, the 27s who also represent the 26s, will inform the 28s what transpired during the day.

2.5.3. Language

From the beginning of my time working in correctional facilities, I became aware that the language spoken by the inmates was both commanding and powerful. I found the variations and energy of the language very fascinating. The Numbers Gang use secret language and an ‘unwritten book’ that must be memorised. This unwritten book is what they called the makhulu book and directs Numbers Gang members on how to behave and act as gang members.

Prison language can complicate communication between staff and inmates as staff members do not understand the language. Indeed, it is the objective of the Numbers Gangs to communicate in a language only understood by them. Prison language in South Africa has its roots in codes and secret communication that allowed criminals to communicate in privacy. The reason for this way of communication is for correctional officials not to understand when they communicate with each other.

Being a gang member and speaking this language proves to other members that you are one of them. For the newcomer, the solution is to fully accept the rules of prison life, including mastering the gang language. It is unmistakable that prison language has various purposes. It can be used as a means of resistance against authority, but it can also be a way for some inmates to deal with the inevitable long stretch ahead. The *Sabela* is a communication system across gangs that is very useful. As Pinnock (2016) explains:

“If I negotiate with gangs, I give them power to say hello and to know who I am. Then I ask them the same with *Sabela* and they must tell me. I make myself known to them and they make themselves known to me then we will know we are ndotas, you, see? Now we know each other. If I go to a leader of a gang and can’t *Sabela*, how can he talk to me? But he throws me a Number and I throw a Number back in a certain way, then they know” (Pinnock, 2016: 116).

Gang communication is not limited to a spoken language. The gang greeting sign is another way of communication, and it is called the salute. The 28 will salute (greet) with the thumb and first two digits; the 27 with the thumb and index finger, and the 26 with the raised thumb also serve as identification. The flash of a gang hand sign is so significant to gang members that it may be all that is needed to ignite violence.

2.5.4. Tattoos

Several previous studies have investigated the relationship between tattoos and crime, with most documenting evidence of an association. Specifically, prior research often suggests that individuals with tattoos commit crimes and are disproportionately concentrated in offender and institutionalised populations. Jennings et al. (2014) commented on the implications of tattoos and suggested that tattooing may be regarded as an externalisation of inner feelings and a self-identification mechanism.

Since tattooing in prison is illegal, inmates must find creative ways to continue the practice. They create and improvise tattooing equipment with ordinary materials. In South African correctional facilities, the Numbers Gang calls their identification tattoo a “brandmerk”, which refers to the history of the gang. On this topic Pinnock (2016) writes as follows:

“There’s a tattoo master in each gang, they use a needle and Indian ink or a zombie (the black rubber seal in food jars) they burn it down and mix it with water. Then they get called in, but before their badge they must remember the laws-they will be asked. Afterwards when they’re initiated, they’re like brothers-here’s a law amongst them. And they won’t be treated

as laities, it's no more "get this; do that. They can sit and smoke together" (Pinnock, 2016: 90).

Receiving the "brandmark" is akin to a welcoming ceremony that signifies lifelong brotherhood. Each of these gangs has its own tattoos that indicate which camp they belong to. For example, the 26-gang has tattoos of a dollar sign and a bag of money; their ranks are marked with six-point stars. The 27s gang tattoo has two swords, and their rank structure is also six-point stars. The 28-gang have an open book with a cross tattoo; their ranks are marked with eight-point stars. From junior to senior levels, the military structure is tattooed on their shoulders as military epaulettes. More descriptive and explanatory details on tattoos can be found in Appendix 2.

2.5.5. From Street Gangs to Numbers Gang: an inevitable progression

Recruitment from street gangs into Numbers Gang has become inevitable, based on the links between these gangs over the past years. Kinnes (2017) explained that they essentially started to control the meagre resources in South African prisons. The recruitment drive of the Numbers Gang is left to existing senior members, who are considered savvy enough to identify and recruit dedicated members. The prized characteristics of recruits are being street smart and loyal.

"Until the late 1980's it was understood that the walls between prison and street were total, but they suddenly began to crumble" (Pinnock, 2016: 112). The Numbers Gang has evolved into an organisation that operates outside the streets. Pinnock (2016) explains this phenomenon:

"However, on the streets of Cape Town, something strange was happening. Prisoners began arriving in cells claiming to be ndotas, able to Sabela and after a fashion, answer correctly to their rank, but had never been in jail before" (Pinnock, 2016: 112).

There was a noteworthy difference in the street and the Numbers Gang's structure, style, code, and operations more than two decades ago. Street gangs were regarded as "the fourth camp" and not allowed to be active in prisons. Some factors forced the acknowledgement of street gangs or the "fourth camp" due to the drug trade. Street gang members started to enter prisons as Numbers Gang members, while the Numbers Gang members joined street gangs after release from prison. These two gang groups work closely together, for example, in smuggling contraband into prisons.

In the context of the Numbers Gang, the newcomer must prove his loyalty through activities, often with the spilling of blood and violence. As Steinberg describes (2004):

“For recruiting, you are meant to begin by committing an act of violence, you must spill blood, and when the warders beat you for your transgression, you must not cry out in pain” (Steinberg, 2004: 23).

Instead of being exposed to the Numbers Gang initiation rituals, street gangs use their financial status and power to be known. He will go through the process of being tattooed, which explain his Numbers Gang status, and an experienced gang member will be tasked to assist him in decision-making processes. For the Numbers Gang members, it is essential to have the date of the gang establishment tattooed. They believe that the 28-gang was established in 1812, the 27s in 1824 and the 26s in 1836.

2.6. Conclusion

This review has identified key research contributions to our understanding of the size, shape and impact of prison gangs in South Africa. It is against this research background, that the discussion now turns to a consideration of the research focus areas of this dissertation and the research methods to be utilised.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Prison research has long tried to capture a view of ‘prison inmate life’. Such representations have had to contend with researchers' lack of first-hand experience and exposure to prison life. Correctional facilities are complex sites for research, and access to prison facilities and inmates is often restricted. If access is granted, as Campbell (2015) has pointed out building trust and rapport between researcher and interviewees remains challenging.

For this research, the primary sources of information were the following:

1. The writer’s experience as a warden at Pollsmoor Correctional Facility for the past 26 years.
2. A review of the relevant academic and other literature on the Numbers Gang.
3. Face-to-face interviews with twenty former inmates of Pollsmoor who were also, for the most part, members of one of the various Numbers Gangs. For this research ex-offenders were selected as research participants. This approach has obvious advantages (Abbott et al., 2018). In the first instance there was no need to seek formal approval from the Department of Correctional Services as it is a lengthy process. A good deal of data about prison life can be gathered from ex-offenders. This research engaged ex-offenders to explore gang dynamics within the South African correctional system.

The qualitative approach involving face-to-face interviews using an interview schedule allowed the researcher to capture a more informed understanding of the Numbers Gang members' social world. Qualitative methods provide flexible means for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data. It gives a “voice” to the research by informing how the research is presented. Interviews started with careful planning regarding the focus and scope of the research question. According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2005), the importance of accurate preparation on behalf of the interviewer should not be underestimated. It includes conceptual and practical preparation. The methods aim to deal with the multi-layered prison narrative and bring together the subjects' stories regarding their membership in the different Numbers Gangs. As McGrath (2019) states:

“Qualitative interviews aim to accurately capture and understand the interviewee’s subjective perspective of a phenomenon, rather than generating generalizable understandings” (McGrath, 2019: 2).

To this De Vos et al. (2002) add

“In addition to factual evidence, qualitative researchers tend to give subtle descriptions and multiple perspectives to help the reader gain a feel for the subjective world of the respondents- thus transporting the reader directly into the world of the study” (De Vos et al., 2002: 351).

3.1. Research Questions

To obtain an up-to-date picture of the everyday interactions that members of the Numbers Gang are involved in, the following issues were explored:

1. The nature of the narrative in the contemporary context which legitimates the structures, roles, and activities in the eyes of those who are members of the Gang.
2. The structures, roles, and activities of the Numbers Gang.
3. Rules and practices associated with recruitment, initiation and discipline of members of the Numbers gang.
4. Links and relations between Numbers Gang and street gangs.
5. Differences and similarities between the three divisions of the Numbers Gang and street gangs.

3.2. Methodological Framework

This study is best described as an exploratory one in which qualitative tools were utilised to collect the views of 20 respondents on the key research themes as outlined above. Phellas & Bloch (2011) emphasise that the qualitative approach is a standard method of collecting data. The most applied qualitative methods include both individual interviews with respondents as well as behavioural observations of individuals or groups. As De Franzo (2011) stated, qualitative research is an inductive, subjective process of inquiry undertaken in natural settings to build a holistic picture in which the informants' views are reported in informal language.

The qualitative method is well suited to sociological research because it allows for the sampling of natural interactional units. As Biernacki & Waldorf (1981) stated:

“The use of gatekeepers in snowball sampling is akin to the use of significant informants in field studies. Their use assumes that knowledge is differently distributed and that certain persons as a result of their past or present situations have greater accessibility and knowledge about a specific area of life than others” (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981: 152)

Face-to-face interviews provide opportunities for interactive engagement. According to Dorneyi (2007) the interviewer's presence facilitate mutual understanding between the researcher and respondent. The interviewer may rephrase or simplify questions that the participant did not understand.

As a result, more appropriate answers and, subsequently, more accurate data can be obtained. As Seidman (2006) explains:

“Interviewing then is a basic mode of inquiry. Recounting stories of experience has been the major way throughout recorded history that humans have made sense of their experience” (Seidman, 2006: 08).

3.2.1. Negotiating access and selecting interviewees

During 2017 I had worked directly with hundreds of former prisoners during a movie shoot for ‘The Forgiven’ in 2017. During the filming, many ex-offenders were deployed as extras. Their participation in the movie gave those with a criminal record a chance at employment -although it was for a short period only. Working with former inmates on the set provided me with an opportunity to re-establish contact with a group of former inmates and over the next few years I made some effort to keep in touch with some. Many of the contact ended up on the streets of Cape Town. They referred to themselves as “drifters”. I used these contacts as a ‘client’ base to identify potential interviewees for the research project. In addition, I also consulted with a potential research participant who agreed to participate in the study and act as a “gatekeeper” between the interviewer and potential respondents. This high-ranking member of the 28-gang greatly assisted with the process of accessing respondents of particular ranks. The method for selecting research participants involved both targeted sampling of a core group using my own contacts as well as snowball sampling, where referrals were made among gang members who knew of others who had experience and knowledge about the research topic.

The research participants were selected so that the sample was sufficiently diverse in terms of age, Numbers gang affiliation and rank. An overview of the sample of respondents is provided in Table 1. The majority (55%) of the respondents were between the ages of 31 and 50, and 30% were older than 51 years of age. The sample contained 16 Coloured, three Xhosa and one white male. The overwhelming majority were involved in street gangs before they entered prison. Within the group the sentences they served in prison ranged between 7 and 22 years. The sample contained an almost equal spread of members from the 26, 27 and 28 Numbers gang. The sample also contained individuals from many different ranks, ranging from the lowest (soldier) to the most senior (General). On average all have been out of prison and drifting on the streets for the last two to three years. Most of the research participants were relatively easy to locate because they were mainly in Cape Town and Wynberg area. Some research participants were contacted on their cellular phones, while a few depended on a landline. Prior arrangements were made with the participants before the interview. Some adhered to our arrangements while others did not. In a typical snowball approach, I relied on some

of these contacts to locate others to increase the sample diversity. This method was advantageous to locate interviewees of a particular rank.

Table 1: Profile of research participants in terms of age, gang affiliation and rank

Partici- pants	Age	Rank	Numbers Gang	Street Gang Affiliation	Still active in gangs	Previous sen- tences	Years on streets
C1	64	Madagenie	27	Americans	No	Sentenced 4 times	2-3 years
C2	31	Soldier	26	Americans	yes	8 years	3 years
C3	52	Captain 1	28	Mongrels	yes	15 years	
C4	26	Soldier	26	Junky Funky	yes	Awaiting trial	3 years
C5	35	Sergeant Major	26	Hard Livings	yes	Sentenced twice	3-4 years
C6	33	Soldier	27	Boko Haram	no	8 years	
C7	59	Inspector 1	28	Mongrels	no	14 years	4 years
C8	39	Mabalang	28	Not affiliated	yes	12 years	3 years
C9	60	General	27	Not affiliated	no	21 years	
C10	49	General	28	Mongrels	yes	17 years	
C11	47	Colonel	28	Not affiliated	yes	15 years	3 years
C12	39	Judge 1	28	Americans	yes	12 years	2-3 years
C13	47	Inspector 2	26	Fast Guns	yes	7 years	3 years
C14	39	Soldier	28	Mongrels	yes	8 years	3 years
C15	32	Sergeant 1	26	Fancy Boy	yes	15 years	2-3 years
C16	29	Soldier	27	Not affiliated	no	9 years	2-3 years
C17	42	Nyanga	27	Dixie boys	yes	15 years	3 years
C 18	52	Makwesi	26	Not affiliated	no	22 years	
C19	30	Soldier	28	Boko Haram	yes	Awaiting trial	2-3 years
C20	57	General	27	Not affiliated	no	21 years	2-3 years

3.2.2. Semi-structured interviews

Many researchers have recommended using semi-structured interviews as an effective tool for conducting qualitative research. The semi-structured interviews were created based on Jovchelovitch and Bauer's (2000) design consisting of different stages, including initiation, the main narrative

question and closure of the interview. This approach emphasises personal accounts within a setting that encourages participants to draw on their own experiences and recollections. The questioning stage also allowed the researcher to engage the research participants in specific aspects of their experiences. The conversational style built rapport with the research participant.

My own experience provided a helpful background to build trust with the participants. According to Robberts and Indemaur (2007), developing a trusting relationship between researcher and research participants is crucial to ensure the validity of the findings. Similarly, honesty in the interview process can be to the benefit of the parties involved.

The use of semi-structured interviews allowed me the flexibility to ask questions and follow up on points that needed clarity. This procedure also structured the interviewing process by focusing on themes. Each interview took about 50-60 minutes per participant. All participants were asked a series of standard questions to obtain key information. The questionnaires consisted of six sections. (See interview schedule attached). By way of introduction interviewees were asked to talk more generally about themselves and their background. The discussion about gang membership probed for participants' involvement in gang activities. A third theme focused on the rules and practices related to the initiation into gangs. A further theme for discussion related to gang language, its origin and function and the processes involved in instructing members of the Numbers gang in its vocabulary and rules. The most detailed part of the interview concerned the ranks, roles, and responsibilities of gang members from the point of view of the research participant. Finally, the interview also allowed space for a discussion on the inter-relationships and interactions between the Numbers Gang and street gangs.

At the start of the interviews, the research participants were provided with the following information:

- ≡ An information sheet outlining the project, its main objectives, and the participants' role in the research.
- ≡ Clear and easily understood consent forms.
- ≡ A numerical pseudonym (a fictional name was assigned to give anonymity to a person).

3.2.3. Interview Schedule

The interview schedule contained structured questions that were organised into different sections. By way of introduction, I spoke more generally about the research, my personal interest in pursuing the research and the reasons why I thought the research could benefit from interviewing them. Each research participant was asked if they were comfortable being interviewed, to which they all agreed. All notes taken were written down, and I tried hard to capture non-verbal forms of communication. I anticipated reluctance from those interviewed to be recorded, so I settled for handwritten notes.

The interview guide consisted of six sections outlining the topics for research. (See Appendix 5 for the Interview Schedule).

Section 1: Here I posed some general introductory questions about their name and surname, age, where they grew up, and exposure to crime, violence and gangs.

Section 2: Gang membership. Here the focus was to find out if he grew up in an area where gangs were, when he became interested in joining a gang and how gang membership shifted from the streets to prison and back onto the streets.

Section 3: Gang initiation. I inquired about his first day in prison and how he became a Numbers Gang member. I probed for details relating to the process of initiation and the actors involved in that process.

Section 4: Gang language. Here we explored the processes whether Sabela was learnt and its functions. To get the conversation going I shared a short video clip of Sabela being spoken and then explored their views and experiences.

Section 5: Tattoos and meaning. The participants were shown prison gangs tattoos which allowed us to discuss a wide range of tattoos and I also asked whether the respondent had a tattoo and what it meant to him.

Section 6: Ranks, roles, and responsibilities. The critical question was to find out about the ranks in the Gangs and whether the informant was a senior or junior member. Secondly, I asked about the different roles of each gang member and the internal processes of regulation.

3.2.4. Informed Consent

The interview also adhered to several guidelines designed to protect the research participants. Informed consent comprises an essential part of an ethically acceptable research study. Before the interview, each research participant was given an information sheet briefly outlining the project and the purpose of the interviews. The main goal of the document was to provide the research participant with information in a language that was easily understood. Each research participant was presented with a letter of informed consent stating the study purpose, procedures, confidentiality, possible risks regarding voluntary participation. Research participants were also given consent forms that included the details of the researcher and the details of the Law Faculty Research Ethics Committee. The primary purpose of the consent form was to provide evidence that the research participant gave consent to the procedure in question. The protection of the research participants was always paramount during interviews; therefore, care was taken when compiling the written consent forms.

The consent forms were administered in the following way:

1. The research participants were provided with a written overview of the research in clear terms.
2. The research participants were provided with an opportunity individually to discuss the proposed research with the researcher.
3. The consent forms highlighted the processes in place to maintain the anonymity of the data, how they would be used to generate research findings, and how the primary data would be kept.
4. The consent forms also explained the data collection methods and highlighted the anonymity of the research.

Most of the research participants had a low level of education and were unfamiliar with their signatures on the consent forms. Most of the sample were Afrikaans-language speaker. Having anticipated problems relating to language proficiency, I had to spend some time working through the consent forms and background document. As a result, all had a clear understanding of what was expected from them.

Interviewees were informed that it was a study conducted in fulfilment of a Master's degree at the Centre of Criminology at the University of Cape Town. Care was taken to state that the study was in no way aligned with the Department of Correctional Services.

The questions put to the ex-offenders, required carefully worded interview questions. I avoided questions about their motivations for committing crime, which reduces the risk of self-implication or direct admission of guilt. It was of utmost importance to treat the respondents with respect and professionalism. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the respondents; therefore, their information, including their names, were anonymised. Although the research participants signed consent forms, their names were never recorded. Research participants signatures were required on the consent forms, but no name and were only identified by numerical pseudonyms.

3.2.5. Data Collection

Data were collected over four months, from August to October 2019. The use of the interviewing technique allowed research participants to share experiences that occurred throughout their life and not only those relevant to prison experiences. This was important to know and understand the person's background and experiences that shaped their entry into criminal activities and prison life. The methods were used to collect the most comprehensive data possible. According to Mack, Woodsong & McQueen:

“The interviews reward both to the participant and the interviewer, the participants have the opportunity to express themselves, tell their own stories in ways that “regular life” seldom calls for and

deems relevant. In turn the interviewer has the privilege of having a conversation with people and entrusts them with some insight into their personal lives” (Mack, Woodsong & McQueen, 2005:29).

The questions put to the former inmates, required clearly worded interview questions. I also avoided questions about their criminal histories and motivations for committing crime to reduce the risk of self-implication or direct admission of guilt. It was of utmost importance to treat the respondents with respect and professionalism. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the respondents therefore, their information, including their names, were anonymised. Although the research participants signed consent forms, their names were never recorded. Research participants signatures were required on the consent forms, but no name and were only identified by numerical pseudonym.

The interviews were conducted in both English and Afrikaans, but research participants were encouraged to speak in their chosen language freely and contribute to the study. Much of the gang communication is embedded in the prison language called Sabela, and I anticipated that some of the interviewees would resort here and there to the use of Sabela. My experience working with gangs in prison, and long-standing interest in the lexicon of Sabela, allowed me to interpret responses. Furthermore, the interview setting also allowed me to provide clarification of questions on the one hand, as well as provided space to make sure that I in turn understood the responses.

3.3. Interview settings

The interview setting is the physical place where interaction occurs. Interviews were arranged in a way that minimised effort and costs on the part of the respondents. When approached, I contributed to the travel costs respondents incurred to travel to the locality where the interview took place. Interviews were conducted in natural settings, in Wynberg Park and the Gardens in Cape Town. We would meet at a designated meeting place and then proceed to find a quiet spot for our discussions. The interviews were conducted sitting on benches or on the grass. Overall these public settings proved conducive to the process of interviewing. None of the respondents indicated that they felt uncomfortable in those spaces. I anticipated that as ‘drifters’ they would be more amenable to interaction in public, as opposed to private spaces such as coffee shops.

3.4. Ethical Clearance

The Faculty Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Law approved the proposed research. Ethics reference number: L0069-2018, see appendix 3. The study had to adhere to the ethical requirements for academic research. Interviewees had to sign consent forms to participate in the project. The consent forms provided the contact details of the Research ethics committee administrator at UCT, should

interviewees have any concerns about the research. The researcher had to minimise potential risks to respondents' safety and general well-being. Participants were assured that they would remain anonymous and that specific quotes would not be linked to identifiable individuals. The interviews were anonymised to not implicate or endanger them, either formally in terms of legal matters or informally in terms of gang rules and prescripts.

3.5. Data analysis

After each interview, I took some time to order my notes and to further elaborate on these notes. Here I relied on memory and the cryptic notes on gestures and facial expressions I noted during the interview. My approach to systemising the data was categorising responses into three major themes. "Major topics" included data that was of direct significance to the research questions. "Unique topics" included information about other issues that arose that I did not anticipate prior to the interviews. Finally, "further topics" included information I received that required further research. Each transcript was organised accordingly. Colour-coded highlighters served to indicate the three major categories.

Once all the interview notes were collated, I noted, compared, and contrasted the responses to specific research themes. Afterwards, the most crucial information was summarised in tabular formats, which assisted with capturing the responses, identifying general patterns and recording differences in views on any one theme. As I read and re-read the interview notes, I also identified quotes to use in the writing up of this qualitative inquiry.

3.6. Conclusion

From conception to completion of this research, the researcher intended to use the data collated through a three-pronged strategy. A desktop review of a body of relevant literature; years of observation of gangs inside Pollsmoor in my capacity as a prison warder; and face-to-face interviews with a sample of former inmates cum members of the Numbers gang to supplement, corroborate (or not) and update what is known about the organisational structure, function and cultural life of the Numbers gang in South African prisons. At the outset of the research I thought that my occupational experience as a warder would come in good stead, and so too the fact that I have, over the years, managed to maintain contact with numerous former inmates. I found the interviews to be rewarding and informative. Most of the respondents were willing to engage with the topics and share their views and experiences. They were all streetwise and intimately familiar with the codes and ways of the Numbers gang. Notwithstanding their social marginality as 'drifters', they had much to contribute to the topic

of research. It is my wish that their experiences, as retold here, will make a modest contribution to our understanding of gangs inside the walls of correctional centres in this country.

CHAPTER 4: GANG LANGUAGE

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of a language called Sabela that is spoken by members of the Numbers Gang in South African correctional facilities. The study adds to the existing literature on Sabela as it compiles a dictionary of words and phrases (attached as an Appendix) with explanations of their meanings. The discussion on Sabela as a means of communication can assist in the understanding of gang organisation and cultures as the language is crucial in gang life.

4.1. Reviewing the literature: The history of anti-language and Fanagalo

South African and global literature on prison dialect complements each other in such a way to contribute and provide a better explanation of Sabela. Halliday's (1978) research uses "anti-language" to describe the outcast lexicon. The concept of "anti-language" is useful in descriptions of Tsotsitaal and Sabela as it incorporates a consideration of "subculture". Halliday (1978) argues that in these "subcultures" special forms of language are generated by "anti-society". Zarzycki (2015) explains that an anti-society is a separate community intentionally created within another society as an alternative to it. In extreme cases, this anti-society creates unique languages to exclude or mislead outsiders deliberately. Zarzycki (2015) notes that ostracised or defiant social groups such as prisoners, criminals, and teenagers use anti-language in their communication, which differs from jargon or slang that are part of our everyday vernacular. Although the use of anti-language establishes a subculture that offers an alternative social structure, the primary purpose of anti-languages is to prevent outsiders from understanding their communication.

Like all other languages, an anti-language serves to create and maintain social structure through conversation, but a social structure of a particular kind. Nordquist (2018) explains:

"Anti-language is a minority dialect or method of communicating within a minority speech community that excludes the main speech community members" (Nordquist, 2018: 1).

The Numbers Gang in South African correctional facilities has its own unique language that has evolved over many decades. This language is called Sabela. Its speakers use special codes that allow gang members to communicate in secret. Such codes involve translations for ordinary words, such as "*batiza*" for food, cannabis or dagga translates as "*user 1*", while tobacco is known as "*user 2*". A sharp object is referred to as a "*bayonet or an yster*", sugar translates as "*sand*", and a correctional officer is "*mapuza or die gal*", etc.

Hurst (2008) argues that, generally, gang language enjoyed a high social status whereby higher positions control or influence others.

“Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the gang subculture was its own language, *Tsotsitaal*. The language was an urban hybrid based largely on Afrikaans but with large Xhosa/Zulu and English inputs” (Hurst, 2008: 20).

Hurst (2009: 245) describes *Tsotsitaal* (Tsotsi language) as ‘township slang’ with links to stylistic markers such as clothing and body language. Calteaux (1996) in her study of standard and non-standard African languages, argue that *Tsotsitaal* is the language that was heavily influenced by prison language. Her research for example, found identical hand signals being used in prison and townships. Based on her findings, she argued that once prison language is taken to townships, it develops apace and forms distinctive dialects exclusive to discrete street gangs. Calteaux’s (1996) research highlights two common assertions about gang language lexicon: firstly, those words are developed to obscure criminal activities. In the second instance, gang language on the inside may enter street gang groups. Once the language has been adopted into *Tsotsitaal*, it is further influenced by other languages and dialects. Calteaux refers to the latter as the language contact phenomena. As she explains:

“It is known that certain geographical areas feature a conglomeration of various languages providing a fertile breeding ground for the language contact phenomena” (Calteaux: 1996: 33).

Valdemar (2008) argued that like all professionals, professional career criminals and gang members also develop a specific technical vocabulary. What is noteworthy, however, is the extent and complexity of Sabela. It is more than a technical vocabulary. Valdemar (2008) states:

“Gang languages are designed to prevent law enforcement and rival gangs from intercepting and deciphering their communications. Newly recruited gang members are taught that they are soldiers representing their culture, part of this cultural brainwashing often includes the gang members’ ancestral language and symbolism” (Valdemar, 2008: 2).

Research by Slabbert and Myers-Scotton (1997) suggests that *Tsotsitaal* lacks a predictable structure. The speakers of the language have no fear of ridicule because there are no language rules that they must conform to. This implies that *Tsotsitaal* is associated with gang members and can have a similar explanation about Sabela that Numbers Gang members in correctional facilities use. It is challenging to study *Tsotsitaal* for several reasons, including negotiating access to gang members who use *Tsotsitaal*. The link between Sabela and *Tsotsitaal* remains unexplored in this dissertation. It is recommended that future researchers explore this relationship in more detail, and it is nonetheless clear that a relationship exists.

A speaker who has an incomplete understanding of Sabela will find it exceptionally difficult to communicate with members of the Numbers gang. To understand the communication process in a prison

environment, a review of the different elements of Sabela is thus helpful. As Wittenberg (1996) explains, due to the distinctiveness of its vocabulary and patterns, prison language manages to bring cohesiveness into a prisoner's life as well as provides protection despite intense surveillance. A prison language might define a prisoner's relative status and rights much like that of corporation employees. Paterson (2003) agrees with Wittenberg (1996), stating that the vocabulary that gang members use can be seen as a social marker because it identifies them as belonging to a particular group. The Numbers Gang members use a chain of words unique to their language: "*My broe, ek sal jou stem kry, met die kavuga van die eerste strale*". This translates as "My brother, I will talk to you tomorrow morning".

4.2. The origin of Sesfanakaloku/Fanagalo

To explain the origin of the language, authors and researchers have examined Fanagalo as a social system. In recognition of the different perspectives about Fanagalo, this chapter focuses on tracking the evolution of Fanagalo since its migration from the mines to prisons. There is a growing consensus that Fanagalo or Fanakalo originated in the mines of South Africa. During interviews for this study, research participants explained that the only difference between Fanakalo, Fanagalo and Sesfanakaloku is the variant spelling. All three variants refer to the same language. Sesfanakaloku, as Numbers Gang members know, is better known as Sabela, and it plays a crucial role in prisons. The research participants explained that the language is a mixture of IsiXhosa, IsiZulu and Afrikaans, illustrating Calteaux's language contact description. Language contact of this nature often results in adopting certain features from the different languages. It also requires introducing new elements, which account for the creators' culture and experience.

By adopting words from other languages, the adopting language meets a different culture that introduces new concepts. At this stage of understanding, Sesfanakaloku was a bridging language of communication in multilingual settings. It functioned as a shared means of communication between a work community speaking different languages.

Calteaux (1996) explains that adopting words from English and Afrikaans into IsiZulu or Isixhosa forms part of a process involving several languages. This supports Cole's (2007) statement that the Zulu, English, and Afrikaans hybrid language originated in the mines in the 1800s and has spread since. Fanakalo is known as a South African mine language. It originated in specific circumstances between groups of people with different mother tongues to communicate in grammatically simplified terms (Hurst, 2018).

Cornips and Muysken (2019) explain that the language underground was not that of the owners of the mines, but a lingua franca spoken by a large chunk of the workforce. It can be argued that Sesfanakaloku

shaped unity amongst miners and contributed to developing a shared work identity. Adendorff (2002) defines Fanakalo as a contact language serving a specific purpose in a limited social setting and argues that predominantly English missionaries during the mid-nineteenth century in Natal were central to the origin of Fanakalo and the roots of so-called “mine Fanakalo”. He affirms that this pidgin language is not confined to the mines. He sees it as an interactional resource employed for various purposes and in a range of settings, including prisons.

The history of Fanagalo shows how new workers in the mining industry started to learn the lingua franca. New workers in the mines were introduced to the language spoken daily in the workplace. A similar finding was reached by Mwareya (2014), explaining that undocumented migrant workers from different nationalities worked in South African mines, most of which were in Johannesburg. According to the history of the Numbers Gang, since the different nationalities in the mines came into contact, it necessitated creating a makeshift language for communication purposes.

The Numbers Gang originated from the mines supposedly to protect mineworkers. According to the interviewees Sesfanakaloku was spoken on the mines to confuse authorities and ensure they did not understand communication between mine workers. The research participants then went on to explain the migration of the language into prisons. According to them, Sabela was first known as Sesfanakaloku, a language spoken by workers in the mining industry. It is interesting to note that researchers refer to Fanakalo or Fanagalo, whilst the research participants call it Sesfanakaloku. All the research participants in this study were well versed in the history of their language. Participant C 11 confirmed the view shared by many authors who wrote on the subject:

“One of the father figures of the Numbers Gang namely Nongoloza and others escaped from the mines because of the oppression and slave culture they have experienced. They were arrested and were incarcerated in Port Durban Natal prison, where they continued with Sesfanakaloku and renamed it to Sabela as communication to mislead wardens in the same way as they did at the mines”.

According to the logic of Apartheid the spatial mobility of Africans had to be curtailed in ‘white’ South Africa. The Pass Laws Act of 1952 required black South Africans over the age of 16 to carry a *dompas*. Violation of the pass laws was a criminal offence, and those who disregarded these laws risked being arrested. Africans were arrested daily for breaches of the pass laws. The influx into prison and the high turnover rates of pass law offenders created favourable conditions for the migration of language from the mines to prisons. Participant C13 explains that the current Numbers Gang symbology is still entrenched in the origins of the language in the mines, which shows the level of influence their heritage plays.

Participant C 13 stated:

“We still regard prison as the mines because it is where everything started. Some of our tattoos demonstrate the tools used by mineworkers in the form of a “*pik en graaf*” (pick and spade) which signify hard labour. Everything about the number is linked to the mines, even the name of the kitchen which we still today call the “*Carlton*” originated from the mines. Inmates who are about to join the gang, are known to be in the “*deep level*” (mining) and must work their way up in the Number”.

Participant C 16 also explained that:

“(t)he 28 Numbers gang have a gold line and a silver line, this explain the gold and silver that was taken, during an escape from the mines. The people from the different nationalities who worked in the mines, we called “*mense van vele nasies*”(people of different ethnic groups).

Participant C13’s commentary shows the depth to which Sabela, and the narratives of slavery are employed to make sense initially, of the conditions of the mines and, then later of imprisonment. Sabela speakers created a subculture, which is intimately linked to the language. They maintain their secret spoken language by immersing it in a rich heritage.

Farghal (1995) argues that the development of a secret language might have psychological roots as the users of that language suffered from racism, discrimination, or unfairness. This point resonates with Sabela speakers. Given their continued marginalised status, Sabela speakers maintain their isolation symbolically and physically. They reinforce this status by protecting their way of communication by taking ownership of Sabela’s legacy.

Similarly, Schurink (1989) explains that in prison settings, some functional problems or prerequisites exist when a newcomer arrives, namely: adaptation (adapting to the environment) and integration (encouragement of group cohesion). This means that newcomers inmates in prison are first obliged to adapt to the prison environment, in which they will be surrounded by people who speak in Sabela. Once the newcomer joins the gang, the initiate is expected to go through certain processes, of which the most important is to learn to communicate with and understand Sabela. Becoming conversant in Sabela is a prerequisite for integration into the world of the Numbers gang.

The discussion thus far has tracked how Sabela evolved and migrated from the mines on the Witwatersrand to South African prisons. Sabela, it would seem, symbolises more than a spoken language. It is both a cultural heritage and an adaptation strategy to survive incarceration.

4.3. Communication in Sabela

This chapter further explains how gang members interact and influence each other through the words they exchange. Based on participants’ responses, Sabela refers to the process of giving meaning to inmates.

For instance, when an individual speaks a word in a secretive language, it conveys a special meaning when heard and interpreted by a second person who understands the code of the language.

The gangs have further developed Sabela into a dialect called '*stellenbom*' to protect gang activity (Skywalker, 2014:41). Research participants explained that the correct interpretation is "*stel 'n bom*" (set a bomb), which means that somebody who does not understand Sabela would not know what the conversation is about. As research participant C19 explains: "You can sit with us while we are planning to kill you, and you will not know because you do not understand Sabela". Skywalker (2014) explains that prison authorities are tasked with the difficult responsibility of restricting prisoner communication to limit contraband traffic while keeping it "open" enough to permit a degree of communication between the prisoner population. Prisoner communication channels are an essential feature of the dominance of the Numbers Gang. It facilitates the execution of its various operations despite the effort by prison authorities to control their communication channels.

Steinberg (2004) explains that the Numbers Gang employ ritualised structures. Each day of the week is reserved for a carefully circumscribed set of functions. They certainly operate in their underworld with their own signs, signals, and terminology. Their elaborate rituals and symbology provide meaning. The terminology used by the Numbers Gang is diverse and varied. For example, 26 and 27-gangs speak about *kavuga van die eerste strale*, which means sunrise, while the 28-gang speaks about *die laaste strale*, which means sundown, which refers to their operation times.

Whilst there is only one Sabela, each gang improvises and makes use of some unique words and phrases in their operations. However, the dialect of anyone Sabela speaker is likely to be intelligible across South African correctional facilities.

As made clear by Steinberg (2004), the Numbers Gang historically represented a mode of adaption and empowerment for inmates coerced by the oppressive structure of imprisonment. This appears to be a case where the hierarchical command structure controls the environment through various gang protocols, of which the Sabela is pivotal. Being able to Sabela means that a gang member understands internal control and gang protocol.

Sabela is crucial for Numbers Gang members in their structures because you cannot claim to be a gang member if you cannot speak Sabela. Sabela serves as identification as each gang member must undergo a self-identification process. Learning to speak or to Sabela is a crucial step in realising self-identification. Parker Lewis (2006) explains:

“In South Africa the prison gangs have created their own reality, a system that exists within the prisons which has an idiosyncratic history, a coded language referred to as *sabela* or *saliza* – a blend of Afrikaans and African Nguni languages-roles, rules and rituals” (Parker Lewis, 2006: 24).

In the interviews with research participants, I explored several issues relating to Sabela. To get a better understanding, I asked research participants the following questions.

- Where do you think Sabela originated from?
- Why is it called Sabela?
- Why is it important?
- Who taught you to speak the language?
- What does Sabela mean to you?
- Is Sabela only used by Numbers Gang members?

4.3.1. Why is the language called Sabela?

Research participant C 12 stated that:

“Sabela was first used by our founder leaders (Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan) after they were arrested in Port Durban Natal prison to communicate with each other. Today still Sabela exists in prison because the prison conditions at the time were like conditions on the mines”.

The participants were well versed in the lore, but none precisely knew why it was renamed Sabela or what the term Sabela signified.

4.3.2. The importance of Sabela

The Numbers Gang members use Sabela primarily to denote belonging to a particular group. The words of Sabela lie in their connotations because their ambiguities and adaptability make them even more interesting Sabela speakers. Participant C3 stated: “The language was renamed from Sesfanakaloku to Sabela since it migrated to prison from the mines to confuse prison warders”. He used the words “*sabela is om mapuza van n spoor af te gooi*” (meaning to mislead correctional officers). This concept is not accessible to ordinary language users and may sound incomprehensible to staff members or police officials without further investigation. Participant C4 explained: “When you enter the prison, and you can Sabela, other gang members can hear that you were in prison before, we call it ‘*a klak*’ (meaning the slang)”. While some research participants argue that Sabela can be only taught in prison, participant C6 believed he learned Sabela before he came to prison, as street gang members also use the language to communicate.

4.3.3. How to learn Sabela

How would a recruit learn Sabela? Participant C18 explains that recruits need to go through orientation processes to learn Sabela, which are initiated by their teacher (*blackboard*). As explained by Participant C1: “Each gang has teachers, who teach us the language. In the 26 and 27-gangs there are *Nongidela or Mountain* and in the 28-gang is *Temba and Mgobi*”.

According to one respondent (C18) the language could only be learned inside prisons. Younger gang members however had a different view. According to the younger generation of interviewees they learnt Sabela on the streets when they joined street gangs. As participant C6 put it: “I learn to Sabela while I was still a member of the Americans gang, and it was not difficult. We did not have teachers like the prison gang, but as a group, we engaged in sharing different words with each other”. The different views are indicative of deeper changes in the relationships between prison and street gangs – a topic to which we return in Chapter 8.

4.3.4. What is the meaning of Sabela

Sabela can also serve as a way of identification, as explained by participant C16:

“If you come to prison, you must identify yourself through words; we called it the ‘*uvugu*’. If the 27-gang come to you and ask you who you are, you must explain in Sabela, for him to understand what gang you are and what rank you have”.

Participant C6 commented on the social capital of being able to Sabela:

“It also serves as a second language besides my home language as it is used more than regularly, because it changes our mentality, and our presence in the gang makes us feel appreciated and other gang members pay attention and respect us”.

This contribution explains that their behaviour ultimately determines their gang status. Numbers Gang members typically project an arrogant attitude to intimidate non-gang members. Speaking in Sabela can explain gang membership, and they are obliged to help each other in the commission of crime and to protect each other.

4.3.5. Sabela beyond prison walls

Much of the relevant literature has emphasised that Sabela guides the beliefs and interactions of incarcerated Numbers Gang members. But what about Sabela beyond prisons? Large number of people enter and

exit correctional facilities annually. This in- and out-migration must create favourable conditions for Sabela to travel back and forth between the streets and prisons. Participant C 8 alluded to this process of migration and osmosis: “These days the Sabela is also used outside on the streets and lost its true meaning”. The older and more experienced Numbers Gang members interviewed, complained that the younger generation of gang members no longer adheres to the complexity of the communicative structures that used to be embedded in Sabela in its pure(r) form.

As Wittenberg (1996) has found gang language constantly evolves when persons outside the criminal group learn the meaning and significance of a word. The criminal group may then change the word’s meaning or replace the word with a new one. According to some of the respondents in this study, Sabela is ‘out on the streets of Cape Town’ and has become part of everyday interactions among street gang members. As Participant C14 put it: “[t]he number is not the same anymore, all its secrets, including Sabela, is on the streets”. More research is required to investigate the extent and impact of Sabela’s migration onto the streets.

However, the data collected through interviews confirm that Sabela was and is still used to communicate and maintain the chain of command between Numbers Gang members. As Steinberg (2004:22) points out, “everything about the metaphors of prison language is expansive. An overcrowded cell becomes a *vast plain*; a day becomes a *year*.” Sabela, much like other prison languages elsewhere, is ever-expanding and evolving, with new words being added constantly (Little, 1985). For example, illegal cellular phones are now standard in prison facilities and were already renamed to confuse officials. As explained by participant C13 a cellular phone became a *dondo*, the battery became a “*wheel*”, the charger became a “*pump*”, the sim card known as a “*currency*” and the cellular number known as “*numberplate*”. The drug methamphetamine known as tik also became “*penne*”.

As stated, Sabela is more than just a spoken language; it allows its speakers to communicate in a specific way. Sabela unites gang members in their operations, but it also provides gang members with opportunities to demonstrate their skills. Sabela is a critical tool in problem-solving, especially senior gang members, who must negotiate peace. As Pinnock (2016) correctly pointed out:

“Nobody can negotiate peace if there are no Numbers gang people involved. The *ndotas* needs to talk (Pinnock, 2016:116).

In a gang situation, where junior gang members cannot solve a problem, they channel it to the senior gang members. The effective use of the upward communication channels in gang life depends on the following conditions: One, the information should follow up to its intended destination; and two, the information

should be part of an exchange process. This statement explains the importance of the skills instilled through Sabela and used by experienced Numbers Gang members to influence other gang members.

4.3.6. Signs as a form of communication

Symbols, gestures, signs, and tattoos are also of linguistic meaning. The gang members in the facility also influence each other through non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, gestures, and posture, which can all be considered as forms of communication.

As explained by research participant C9: “We also communicate through hand signs or codes, for example, if I show my hands sign, everybody knows that I’m a member of the 27-gang”. Showing a gang sign with hands is one of the most known and obvious forms of “claiming” or stating the gang one is affiliated with. In the context of the Numbers Gang, the signs are made by forming the fingers on one or both hands to form a symbol.



Each division of the Numbers Gang has its own salute. The 28 will salute with his thumb and first two digits; the 27 with the thumb and index finger, the 26 with the raised thumb. This serves as a greeting sign, a source of identification, and a form of communication. Participant C18 explains: “The important thing to know is that when I *salute* (greet) another gang member, I first greet him with his gang sign, followed by my gang sign. Meaning I first recognise him, then identify myself to him”. This gesture shows the Numbers Gang members respect each other. It can also serve to relay more specific information.

Research participant C 6 was adamant in his explanation that the same applies in street gang culture. He argued that gang signs are consistent across prison gangs and street gangs. Many of these hand signals are quite close to other common hand signs, and this may be confusing to correctional officials and non-gang members.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter examined key aspects of the language used by Numbers Gang members and provided explanations thereof. Sabela forms an essential link with the gang’s organisational structure; it is a non-standard “way of speaking” associated with Numbers Gang members. Sabela, as we have noted, signified

resistance, builds group cohesion and camaraderie, and is a source of identity and a status symbol. Sabela, as an organisational cultural element, aligns much more closely to the mining industry and prison than the South African national culture. Prison language sprang into being almost since the establishment of the penal system. Today, Sabela is still regarded as essential in the prison environment among Numbers Gang members. Changes however are in the offing as there is some evidence to suggest that a diluted form of Sabela is now also being spoken on the streets. The consequences of this for sub-cultural practices associated with the Numbers Gang remain to be seen and investigated.

CHAPTER 5: TATTOOS, IDENTIFICATION, SELF-EXPRESSION, ORNAMENTATION

This chapter provides an overview of a highly visible aspect of Numbers Gang members in South African correctional facilities: the intricate collection of body tattoos that the various Numbers Gang expect their members to adopt. Of course, these markings on the body are not exclusive to prison environments. This study adds to the existing literature on gang tattoos by providing a tattoo album containing pictures and explanations of the significance of each tattoo. These tattoos were collected by the researcher over the years, and some images are from online sources, such as Getty Images (See Appendix 2).

5.1. Literature Review on Tattoos

Tattoos are created by a colouring material under the skin in such a manner as to be indelible and are a form of body modification. The design is made by inserting ink, dyes, or pigments, either indelible or temporary, into the dermis layer of the skin. Slabbert and Van Rooyen (1978) and Ross (2019) both suggest that the word “tattoo” was derived from the Tahitian word “tattau” which means to “mark”.

There is a considerable body of international and South African literature on tattoos in general and specifically on gang tattoos. Global literature from Banerjee (1992), Case (2006), and Phelan & Hunt (1998) indicate that the process of tattooing has a long history as a worldwide phenomenon across cultures and social classes. In general, tattoos provide a medium for self-expression, artistic freedom, or a visual display of a personal narrative.

Banerjee (1992) writes about an interesting case where prisoners transported from Britain to Australia after 1787 were tattooed with marks intended to signify disgrace. Prisoners, however, modified their tattoos to express rebellious messages. Similarly, Numbers Gang tattoos are often meant to express a form of rebellion against their incarceration. In choosing a tattoo, gang members will pick an image that appeals to them and is eye-catching to the public.

The tattoo motifs offer a rare glimpse into the inner workings of the Numbers Gang to those that understand their deeper meaning. They proclaim a commitment to Gang life and indicate the inmate’s attachment to a criminal lifestyle with an irrational perception of entitlements or a sense of power. Slabbert and Van Rooyen’s contribution of forty-two years ago (1978) indicates that tattoos were then already a very visible expression of gang identification. She found, furthermore, that some tattoos, rather than

identifying the self, symbolised a specific personal problem such as marginal group origin, anti-social behaviour, childhood adversity, among other syndromes.

Numbers Gang tattoos comprise one of the rituals when members join a gang (Schurink 1989). It can be argued that Numbers Gang members tattoos are virtually a rite of passage, and the designs, where they are placed and what they signify often have more meaning than just self-expressive body ink.

Steinberg (2004) outlined the importance of a gang tattoo to identify gang membership and explained how tattooed gang members must comply with gang rules. The Numbers Gang operates under a hierarchical command structure, ranging from *soldiers to Generals and Lords*. Each of these members wears a unique tattoo that signifies their seniority in the gang. For example, three stars on the shoulder indicate a gang *captain*. Such gang tattoos are like military epaulettes on the shoulders of inmates and indicate levels of seniority. These tattoos are known as '*gunjas*'. These '*gunjas*' make an individual's self-definition more complete by visually communicating gang membership, status, rank and personal accomplishments (Parker Lewis, 2006:63).

Tattoos are still of pivotal importance for gang members in South African Correctional facilities. However, the prison has changed in terms of its acceptance of tattoos and other forms of modifications. Tattoos may tell a personal story, for example: "*I broke my mother's heart to please my friends*". It will indicate the specific division of the Numbers Gang: 26, 27 or 28. It also distinguishes between senior and junior level: two stars on each shoulder indicate a *landros* of the 28-gang. Six stars on each shoulder indicate an *inspector* of the gang.

5.2. Meaning of some Gang tattoos

Prison gangs' tattoos convey information about affiliation, status, and skills to other members of the prison population. Various studies link tattoos with deviance, personality disorders, risk-taking behaviour and criminality. Some Numbers Gang tattoos signify risk-taking: *born to die* or *I dig my grave*. Tattoos which signify criminality can be *once a killer always a killer* or *get rich or die*.

The Numbers Gang tattoos have a history stretching back into the late 1800s are regarded as a *brandmerk* or a permanent mark. They also refer to their tattoos as *tjappies* which have a similar meaning as a stamp, which serves as a physical image tattooed on the body. This type of tattoo is of pivotal importance for gang membership and sentimental value. As explained by participant C14:

“Once jy jou tjap gekry het, is jy in die gang, and no way out. You are not allowed to change the tattoo; you can be killed for that. The tattoo is for you to be a member of the Numbers Gang, we don’t look back”. If you regret having one, we see you as someone with horings en ‘n stert (a symbol of a devil)”.



A Numbers Gang tattoo is often accompanied by a reference to the story of the mythologised version of Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan. For example, the tattoo on the left is of sentimental value to the 28 Numbers Gang, signifying the tools used for mining. This picture also illustrates sundown, a popular sign of the 28s.

5.3. Numbers Gang Tattoos

The term Numbers Gang tattoos can refer to one done in prison, done to mark gang membership, done in the style of a prison tattoo, or in more general terms, done to signify that a person commits to a particular gang group. Of the 20 respondents interviewed, 15 received their tattoos inside correctional facilities, and the remaining five were outside prison. They explained that their fellow gang members inside the facilities used needles and zombie (rubber) to do the tattoo; the remaining five received their tattoos on the outside during their involvement in street gangs.

Numbers Gang tattoos consist of a design of recognised coded meanings. The code systems can be quite complex and because of the nature of what they encode, the designs of criminal tattoos are not widely recognised as such by outsiders. The Numbers Gang members are extremely strict regarding gang membership for recruitment, and they have a specific person who checks for gang tattoos of other gangs. As explained by Steinberg (2004):



“The *Glas* (a colloquial and idiosyncratic word for ‘binoculars’) circled the recruit slowly scrutinising his skin for *vuil papier* (contaminated papers- the tattoos of other gangs)” (Steinberg, 2004:150).

From Steinberg’s (2004) statement, one can argue that this overseeing ‘authority’ from the Numbers Gang, contributes to the gang’s “success” in gang protocol. A gang member must have a number, 26, 27 or 28, which signifies gang affiliation. This picture is an example of a 27 Numbers Gang member tattoo.



Gang tattoos may record the wearer's personal history, such as skills, specialities, accomplishments, and incarceration. For example, the tattoo opposite *thug life* reflects pride describing someone who started out with nothing and built themselves up, for instance, through smuggling of contraband etc. The word *slavilanga* is just another name for the 27-gang.

5.4. The research participants' views on tattoos

When asked whether the participants' received their prison tattoos in prison or outside, most respondents answered that they received their gang membership tattoos inside correctional facilities. Participant C 0 stated:

"If you are a street gang member, you received your tattoo on the outside for example (JFK), means that you are a Junky Funky Kid. If you are a member of the Numbers Gang, you can only get a tattoo inside prison".

Participant C18 said that his tattoo was done "[i]nside prison. They used a stapler to cut the skin and ash for colour, some also used pen ink", while Participant C6 stated that while he was part of the street gang, they used a needle and ash from a burned zombie. He also added that nowadays, street gang members use the original tattoo needle.

Do the three divisions of the gang have different tattoos? An experienced Numbers Gang member C19 explained:

"The Numbers Gang have three camps, each camp is having its own tattoos for example the 26 will have a sunrise tattoo, the 27 have swords and the 28 having a sundown tattoo. Those three are the most important, because it shows which gang you belong to".

What is the general feeling of gang members about their tattoos?

Participant C15 stated that:

"All gang members must be proud of his tattoo because we are proud to be part of the gang. It was your own decision because you came to the gang with your own feet and your own heart".

The following tattoos are examples of a senior Numbers Gang member. Important to note is the stars on their shoulders, with six points refers to the 26 and 27-gangs, and the eight-point stars to the 28s.



The Numbers Gang demands tattoos from their members to reflect the membership, and tattoos can be anywhere on the body. Discussions with respondents explain that gang members with facial tattoos have significantly higher levels of verbal aggression and are more rebellious than other gang members.



Research participant C11 explains the meaning of a spiderweb on his left cheek: “I can trap those who want to infiltrate the gang because I am the investigation officer of the 27-gang”. Research participant C18 explains the crown tattoo at the back of his neck: “This proves our involvement with money (*kroon*) and that the crown and the number 26 or 1836, which explain the gang membership and when

the gang was formed”. Research participant C2 explained that the words *the end* on his eyelids meant that he would commit crime until he finally closed his eyes.

If a gang member fulfils an instruction by stabbing an official or a non- gang member, a tattoo can also explain his fearlessness, like “*I dig my grave*”, which serves as a warning that he was doing something extremely dangerous. The erected penis tattoo used by the 28-gangs is primarily used to intimidate new admissions as they are known as the gang who engage in sexual activities. Other images which reflect prison life include death row, knives, teardrops, and words like: ‘*most wanted, once a killer always a killer*’. These tattoos describe the wearer’s involvement in all kinds of criminal activities, coupled with the tattoo which identifies them as members of a particular gang.

The following tattoos were on members of the 26, 27 and a 28 Numbers Gang.



The 26-gang tattoo depicts the rising sun, a money bag, or an American dollar sign. The 27-gang are known for the two crossed swords tattoo, whilst the 28-gang is known for their tattoos of an open book, a cross and a sundown sign.

5.5. Reasons behind tattoos

Where you put the tattoo, how many tattoos you have, what the tattoos are, and the size of the tattoo all help shape the viewer's response. There are several reasons to become tattooed. Lozano et al. (2010) explain:

“There are four validation processes: anger/ rebellion, power/control, pleasure and greed. These processes drive behaviour and can explain the motives behind criminal acts in addition to explaining the obvious reasons for committing an act (e.g., need of money or recognition). Perhaps the main thrust of the theory is criminal thinking styles” (Lozano et al., 2010: 2).

Gangs socialise individuals into violent norms and practices. Longhurst and Smith (1999) described this process as ‘socialisation’ whereby through contact with other human beings, the recruit becomes self-aware, knowledgeable, and skilled in the ways of the culture he is introduced to.

When asking them how long it takes to do a tattoo, research participants said that the smaller design of tattoos took from 20 to 30 minutes and the larger designs from 60-90 minutes. They also explained that tattoos indicated an inmate’s previous conviction record. Research participants argued that tattooed individuals exhibited significantly higher risk factors regarding crime and other deviant acts.

These Numbers Gangs members have unique identification signs. The aim here is to analyse the symbolism behind the permanent “engraving” and its history and future in an ever-changing correctional environment. Through tattoos, the Numbers Gang system remains powerful in correctional facilities as the gang’s scuffle to retain solidarity and order. It is essential to understand the context of these markings because the bodies of these gang members tell a story of the history of the gangs, gang membership, and violence. Therefore, those with prison gang tattoos should be of most significant concern to correctional staff regarding management problems.

As discussed earlier, the unique art of the Numbers Gang tattoos is roughly inked, using any available instrument that can serve as a tattooing needle and ink, including staples, guitar strings, needles, wire, rubber zombies, pen ink etc. The image may also be sliced onto the skin with a razor, and the cut daubed with inedible ink. Research participants had tattoos done mostly inside correctional facilities, police cells, and reformatories such as Boys Town. The pain of getting tattooed with inferior implements does not deter even the most macho convict from covering his body with meaningful pictures. Therefore, most prison tattoos look rougher than professional ones. Steinberg remarks in this connection:

“We lived the lives of animals in prison. And so, we became animals. We tattooed each other until there was no more space on our bodies” (Steinberg, 2004:218).

It can be argued that these cultures are sometimes said to have jobs to do, in the sense that culture patterns provide valuable models for people to do what needs to be done or what they believe needs to be done. This study makes it clear that a more significant percentage of repeat offenders have tattoos than those in public, and the research participants corroborate this statement. Prison tattoos included inmates who had tattoos with prison images, e.g., 26, 27 and 28.

5.6. Meaning of Numbers Gang tattoos

The Numbers Gang's history stretches back into the early 1800s and is one of the oldest gangs around. Each gang member must have the date when the gang was formed tattooed, for example, the 28-gang in 1812; the 27-gang in 1824; and the 26-gang 1836. The different types of tattoos serve to illustrate the history of the gang.

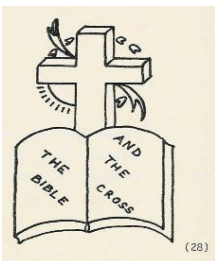
The following tattoo is an example of a General of the Numbers Gang.



Between the image itself and the placement on the gang member's body, the tattoo tells a distinctive story and imparts essential information to other inmates inside correctional facilities. Interview participants mentioned that the possibility of the ever-present pressure of recruits to have their gang-affiliated tattooed.

Wearing a false or unearned tattoo is punishable and will be judged during a '*parliament sitting*' of the Gang. The typical punishment is removing the tattoo in the most painful way, such as scratching it out with a piece of wire or a hot object. Such members will be brutally punished, raped, or even murdered. Interview participants explained that tattoos of gang members not only carry meaning, but the area of the body on which they are placed are meaningful too. For example, the initiation tattoo of a new gang member is usually placed on the hands or on the front part of the shoulders to show off.

Gang members' tattoos became intricate works of art that detailed not only an inmate's crimes but a good portion of their lives. It is interesting to look at the past and see what inmates used to ink on their skin to have a foundation of information to build on. Special attention is paid to the function of tattoos, especially in identification and communication. These tattoos reflect a person's past career accomplishment and possible future career objectives. In the gang it is about "my tattoo and our rules" where the senior gang members have the final say.

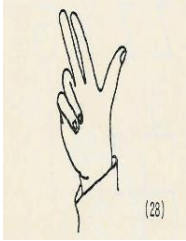


Each Numbers Gang tattoo has a deeper meaning, and the following explains these meanings.

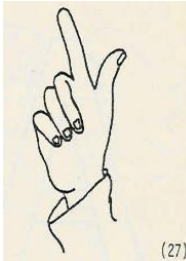
This tattoo looks like a Christian cross and a Bible, but the above-presented tattoo illustrates the road which leads to the mines, and the directions where Nongoloza and

Nkilikijaan came from. The south represents Pietermaritzburg, the north represents the mines of Delagoa Bay, the west represents Zululand from where Nongolaza originated, and the east represents Pondoland

from where Nkilikijaan came from. The image of the book has Bible written on it, which serves to protect their secrets, but it represents the gang rule book (*Makhulu book*).



This is the gang sign of the 28 Numbers Gang; the three fingers represent the founders of the Numbers Gang, the Pou (Nkulukud), Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan.



This sign represents the 27 Numbers Gang. Drawing on the myth of origin, when Nkiliki-jaan caught Nongoloza having sex with Makubane he decided to break away from Non-goloza, take one finger away from the sign, and form a new division, the 27s.



This hand signal is used by 26 Numbers Gang. After Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan agreed inside Point Durban Natal prison that the 26 should form a third camp (gang), they removed one finger from the 27-gang sign to accommodate them as a third camp, and the 27 as their 'father figure'.

Figure 1: Centre of Criminology Archive

One of the most mysterious tattoos of the Numbers Gang is the *MUM and DAD* tattoo. This tattoo means Men use Men Day after Day for the 28-gang, while the meaning for the 26 and 27-gangs is Men use Money Day after Day.

5.7. Conclusion

Most former inmates are tattooed. Some are proud of their tattoos. Those with facial tattoos can suffer from the stigma attached to such markings. Many of the respondents interviewed for this study were unemployed and experienced difficulties in re-integration back into their communities. On the other hand, those with tattoos also gain respect from street gang groups. For some Numbers Gang members, their layers of tattoos reflect their personal experience, social history, and the status gained in the prison environment. Tattoos are imbued with meaning and provide a sense of something powerful in prison life.

The next chapter turns to a much more descriptive and detailed explication of the three divisions and hierarchical command structure of the Numbers gang. Understanding the organisational structure, the chain of command, and the rules that guide interaction within this hierarchically organised system is necessary for any policy that aims to engage gangs.

CHAPTER 6: THE THREE DIVISIONS AND HIERARCHICAL COMMAND STRUCTURE OF THE NUMBERS GANG

6.1. Historical background

The researcher compiled the three divisions of the Numbers Gang and its internal structures. In doing so I developed a detailed description of the structures based on a review of the existing research literature, the data collected through interviews with the research participants, and my own observations as a correctional official. Various online sources about the Numbers Gang structure guided the quest for a detailed description and comparison of the command structure of the three divisions of the Numbers Gang.

According to van Onselen (1984), Steinberg (2004), Kynoch (2005), and Pinnock (2016) the Numbers Gang take their inspiration from the real historical figure who founded them, Nongoloza Mathebula, an early Johannesburg bandit who built a quasi-military band of outlaws, welding his small army together. Van Onselen (1984) goes on to say:

“Jan Note the leader of the gang reshaped the human resources at his disposal into a formidable band of robbers which he named *Umkhosi Weintaba*. The system he introduced was Note himself as the king, then he had an *Induna Inkulu*. Then Note had a lord called *Nomsala*; he had a fighting general or a *Boer vecht general*, a chief doctor or *Inyanga*. Further Note had colonels, captains, sergeant major and sergeants in charge of the rank and file, and the *Amasoja* or *Shosi*- soldiers (Van Onselen, 1984:3-12).

Research participants explained that while Jan Note is unknown to them, they believed the Numbers Gang had only three important founding figures in Paul Mabazo (Pou), Skoloza (Nongoloza) and Nxaki (Nkilikijaan). The gang was known as the Ninevites after Jan Note and his followers had read about Ninevah in the Bible. (Steinberg 2004). Their hierarchical military structure was like that of the British Army, responsible for the security at the mines. Similarly, Parker Lewis stated:

“The Numbers Gangs dress code mirrors the uniform of the British soldiers during the Boer War” (Parker Lewis, 2016: 83).

According to Steinberg (2004), it is quite remarkable how much attention Nongoloza still enjoys in the prison gangs of today. The uniforms copied from the early Boer Republic are still there, imaginary of course, worn only in prisoners' heads. “So are the 303 rifles and bayonets that the Boer commandos took into battle with the British in 1899. Nongoloza's original rank structure, dividing members between soldiers and judicial officers, and dividing the judicial officers themselves between an upper and a lower court, is still extant” (Steinberg 2004:5). Research participants explained that during Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan's time awaiting trial in Point Durban Natal prison, they were introduced to the structure of

the judiciary (magistrates, judges, advocates, clerks etc) and ‘stole’ those ideas to build their camps and gang structures.

According to the research participants, in the history of the Numbers Gang, one of Nongoloza’s men killed a mountain ranger and his uniform, revolver and rifle (303), with the bayonet were taken. It was disassembled to be used by the gang and plays an integral part in the tradition and wears distinctive imaginary uniforms, tattoos, flags, and other military paraphernalia. The Numbers Gang hold onto Nongoloza’s original ideology, with all three camps organised around a largely mythical narrative of the great bandit’s career. They believe they are an association of peers, united by mutual interests and with established leadership and internal organisation.

Drawing on the prison gang literature (Haysom, 1981; Schurink, 1989; Steinberg, 2004; Parker Lewis, 2006), my own observations inside Pollsmoor as well as on the research data collected through the interviews, it is clear that the Numbers Gang operates under a strict hierarchical system. These structures have a list of advantages for the Numbers Gang in that it provides a clearly defined system of authority with designated ranks and responsibilities; a chain of command from senior to junior; established lines of communication up and down the chain of command, and a disciplinary system that maintains order.

The Numbers Gang system provides training to equip members with the skills to execute their jobs properly. As mentioned by research participant C15:

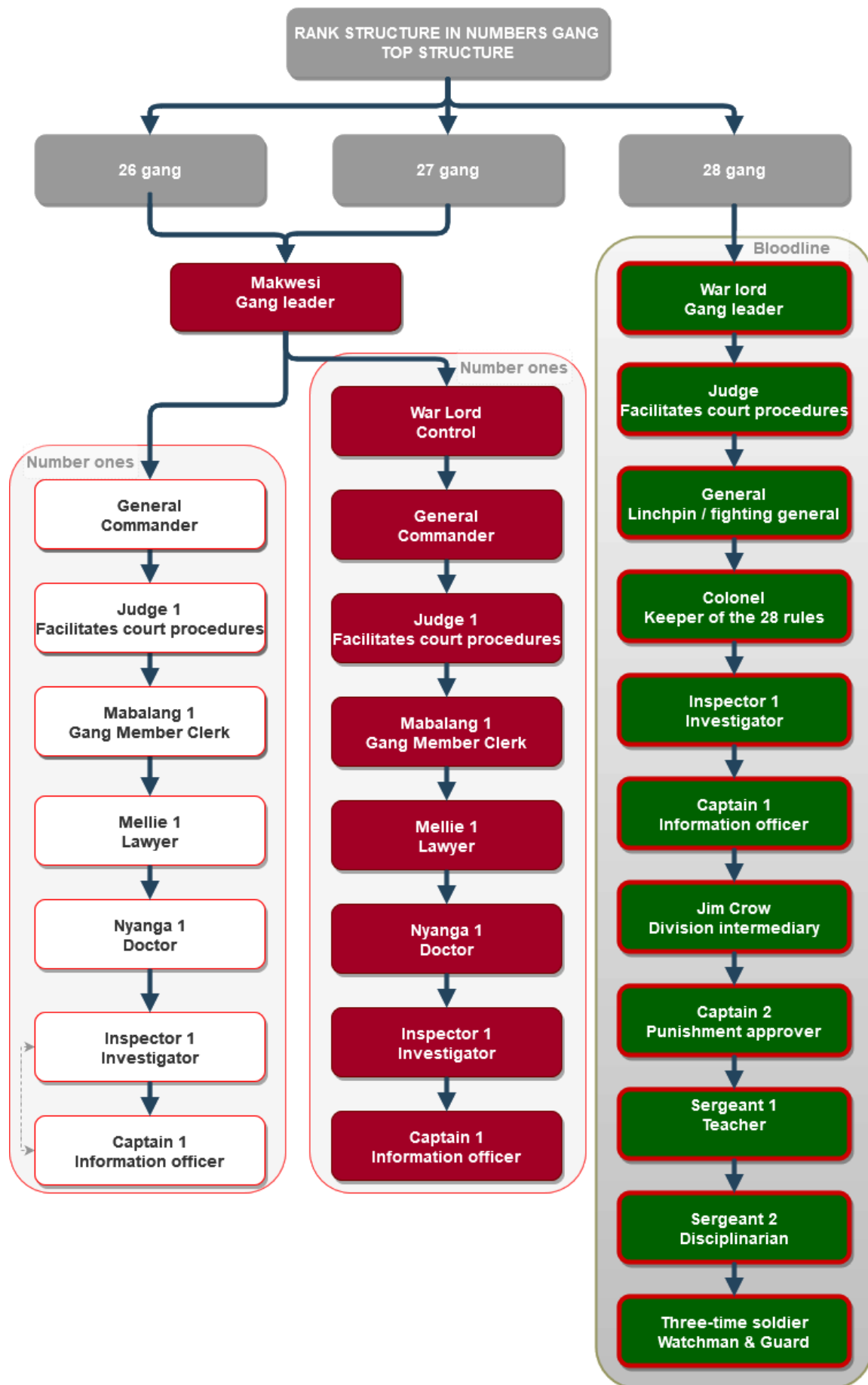
“The most important part of the gang was to learn and understand the gang structures, because as a soldier, you must report to the Nongidela. The Nongidela report to the Madagenie. If you skipped your next inline, you will be severely punished”.

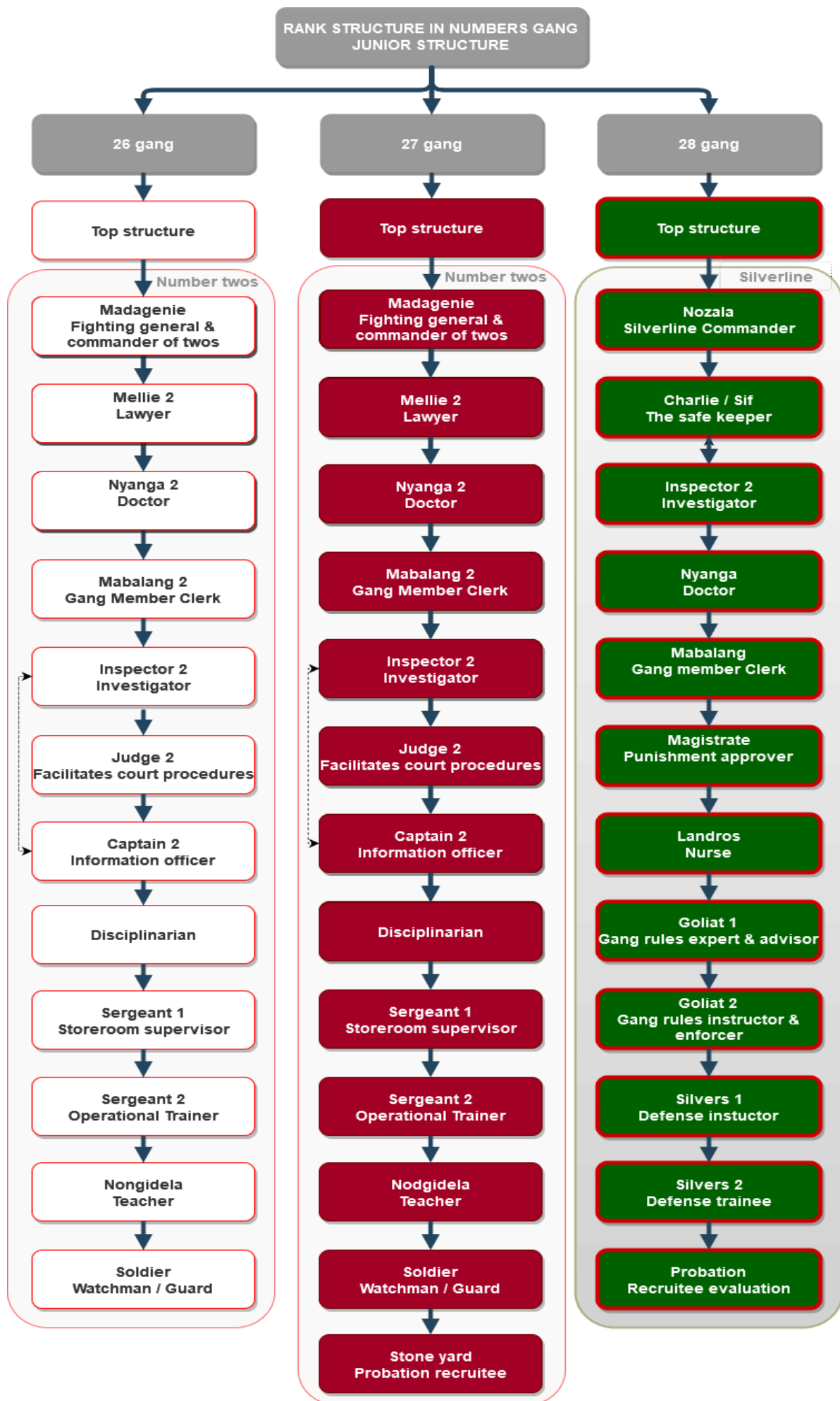
Research participant C11 emphasised that the structures of the Numbers Gang are for gang members inside prison. The structure in his view gave clarity about rules and what happens when rules are violated. The structure assigned responsibilities and within that system one had to respect both the rules and the functionaries.

Participant C3 however, was of the view that the hierarchical system once solely associated with prison gangs now also has purchase on the streets. As he put it:

“The structures of the Numbers Gang is about discipline, you cannot do as you want. These days street gangs are using the same structure, for discipline in the organization, and to report according to the structure. Street gangs doesn’t (sic) have a general, but the in charge is called the “neck”, which means a person in charge”.

The discussion now turns to a detailed description of the command structures of each of the Numbers Gang. For ease of reference, the different ranks pertaining to each of the Numbers gang are also set out in Table 2. Participants C11, C18 and C20 explained that the different positions in the command structure were never “vacant”. In the absence of certain occupants in the structure, the second in command must act in a (vacant) position to ensure the gang functions effectively. For example, if there are no Generals in the three gangs, the inspectors can act as Generals. In gang terms, it would be announced that “Inspector1 *staan in die boots van General vir die minute*” this means that inspector 1 is temporarily acting as the General.





6.2. The 28 Numbers Gang

The 28 Numbers Gang has two divisions or lines: the silver/private line (light work) and the gold/blood-line. The gold and silver lines refer to the mythical gold and silver, which was stolen from the mines. To explain the gangs' hierarchical structure, I will start with the silver line of 28.

6.2.1. The Silver Line

Probation/privates

This is the lowest rank in the private line and is known as small *boys/wyflies*. They are not expected to take blood (be involved in stabbings) but can be instructed to do so. They usually are attractive and well built. They must stay at the *deep level* of the number two's (meaning they can only be instructed to engage in gang fights). *Jim Crow/lieutenant/Germiston* is their protector.

Their imaginary uniform is primarily white, which indicates cleanliness. In imagination, they wear white tekkies, white socks with a stamp of 28, white shorts, white shirt, and white jacket with two silver buttons. The shirt's top button is always open, indicating the search for the number day and night. The head is covered with a white cloth (*doek*). There is a white *doek* for cleaning after sexual intercourse on the right hand.

Silvers 2

His responsibilities are to clean the office of *Jim Crow*, meaning he has sex with him and is trained by him in gang activities. He gets further training in gang activities from silvers. His imaginary uniform is almost the same as the probation, but with green stripes on his trousers and sleeves. He has a white briefcase with white chalk to count the total of probations and is in possession of a silver key to control the movement of the probations.

Silvers 1

He is the child of *draad (wire)/captain 1*. He is dressed in imaginary white clothes with green stripes and has a silver key to control the movement of silvers 2.

Goliath 2

The wife of the *colonel /oemkhoni*. He must see that he moves up the gang hierarchy. He gives the rules to all the privates and represents the colonel in the *4 points/points of the four's* (Meaning he is in charge of the probations, silver two's, silvers one). He wears an imaginary white uniform with green stripes.

Goliath 1/Makubani

He oversees all the privates/private lines and is potentially a dangerous man. The *general* of the 28 is his "*baba*" (meaning his man). His job is to '*cool down*' the *general* with his "*oxtail*" when he becomes aggressive (*bloed drunk*), To become aggressive means he is about to stab or instructions to stab. He also strengthens the legs of the *general* (*having sex with him*) before he hands out instructions and judgements. He can go wherever he wants in the camp and is a troublemaker. He has the capacity to turn the prison upside down, or cool it down. He is an instigator of violence and is the most important person in the 28-gang.

His imaginary dress is a white handkerchief on his left arm (pulse area), a red star on his front head and the *oxtail* in his right hand. (The red star represents the blood of the fight between Nongoloza and Nkiliki-jaan.)

Landros

As a *Goliath 1*, he stabbed someone to be promoted to this office, he is known as the *maspaal* (in charge) of the privates. He instructs the lower ranks to go and look for work (gang activities). He also trains them in sexual activities and punishes the private line for disobeying gang rules. In case of misconduct of a serious nature, he must report it to a higher authority. He is known as the nurse of the privates and must consult with the sick or injured. He must ensure that intruders to the camp must not have sex with the privates. He oversees the 4 points of the number two's (in charge of the 4 points means that he is in charge of *probation; silvers 2; silvers1; goliath2*).

In his imagination, he is dressed in a white uniform with green stripes. On his shoulders are two eight-point stars on each shoulder, representing the 4 points.

Magistrate/Stamp

He is called the man with the *stamps*, a red *stamp* for blood if someone is doing wrong; a green *stamp* if there are no cases and for benefits for the camp, a black *stamp* for a death sentence. He has opened his office with blood (meaning he stabbed somebody to have the position). He does not have a *child/young boy or wyfie* but can demand one if he wants.

In his imagination, he wears a green uniform with three silver eight-point stars on his left shoulder and three golden eight-point stars on his right shoulder.

Mabalang/Mabalane

He is the clerk or secretary of the gang and takes the minutes of the court sitting/12 points. He is also responsible for all the “*files*” of the gang members in the camp. He can draw a *file* to check for outstanding cases (imaginary) and ensure that the accused can be sentenced according to his previous convictions.

He has 4 silver eight-point stars on each shoulder, 4 pens in his pocket and feeds the twelve points with information about the transgressor. He uses a white pen to record positive things, a green pen for approvals, a red pen for blood and a black pen for death.

Nyanga 1

If a gang member is sick, he must first report to the *Nyanga 1*, before going to a correctional official. The *Nyanga 1* is the special doctor of the ‘government’ who makes sure that every gang member is fit for duties. He inspects their bodies, looks for poison in food and deals with hospital matters. He must see that all recruits are physically strong and without disabilities. *He is known as the man with the pipes* (*pipes refer to a stethoscope*), with which he checks the recruits’ heart and pulse rates.

His imaginary uniform is also green with a white coat; he has four eight-point stars on his shoulders. He carries a green briefcase with a red cross to identify him as a medical officer.

Inspector /Glas

The camp inspector is regarded as a very sly person. He is the ‘detective’ of the gang and investigates cases. He uses binoculars/glasses to see what is going on in the camp. He can go and fetch the *mphatas* (non-gang members) in the bush and bring them to the camp (non-gang members are known to sleep in the “*bush*” in prison, meaning they are not part of the gangs). He can negotiate with other gang members and officials and has the right to know when and why other gang members speak to officials. He works outside the camp of 28, making sure that each camp has a 28 *stamp* (tattoo). He is also responsible for inspecting the private line to see that they comply with all orders.

In imagination he wears three types of uniform, one for inspection in the private line, two when he goes to the bush and three if he is in discussion with the 27-gang. He has a mirror and glasses (referring to the binoculars) to see what is happening in prison. He uses an *axe and a spade* to clean the bush when looking for non-gang members. He has a pair of *handcuffs* to “*arrest*” those who transgress in the camp.

Charlie/Sif

Also pronounced as '*Umcharlie*' this person has the law book of the gang, is in charge of the storeroom (*GI*), and is responsible for all the benefits of the camp of 28. In the gang he is known to be on the *stairs* (meaning high ranking/top structure) of the gang, but not part of the 12 points. The *sif* is the title of the individual that acts as a "*safe*", where weapons, drugs, etc are kept in safe storage.

He wears an imaginary green uniform with seven silver stars on each shoulder. He must take blood (stabbed someone) to earn this position.

Nozala/Mamzala

This position is for anyone in the private line that has been disobedient, i.e. someone who is continuously breaking gang rules and punished for doing so on numerous occasions. He is a person who can demonstrate "*brandstraf*" (meaning he can take blood to correct his wrongs to fix his mistakes).

In imagination he is dressed in white clothes with green stripes and no ranks (*gunjas*) on his shoulders; all of it is being distributed in the camp, because of ill-discipline.

6.2.2. The golden line/bloodline/Kaperdien

The gang members from the bloodline must greet by showing their gang sign with the right hand only, the thumb straight up and the second and third finger erected and closed.

Soldier

He is always on the post, day and night, looking for any danger or threat to the camp, and must comply with instructions for gang fights. He must assist the *privates* and ensure that they are doing what is expected of them, but he is not allowed to have sexual intercourse with them, as his main job is to guard the camp of 28.

He is dressed in an imaginary uniform, wearing a pair of brown boots, *kaperdien* uniform and the three top buttons of his jacket open, indicating he is searching for the number (to be promoted). On his right side, he has a *bayonet* and a long gun (rifle) 303 with 8 golden bullets, 7 in the magazine, 1 in the chamber, 8 according to the number.

Sergeant 2

He stands at the *crossroads* (waiting on recruits to join), and assigns jobs to those interested in joining the gang. *Soldiers* who overstep rules must explain to him, after which he escorts them to court (12 points). He also instructs *soldiers* during an inspection and instructs them how to stand to attention or at ease.

His imaginary uniform is a pair of brown boots, a khaki uniform. On his right side he carries a *bayonet*, and has a *303 rifle* with 8 golden bullets; 7 in the magazine 1 in the chamber.

Sergeant 1

He fulfils a teaching role and inducts recruits in the rituals and rules of the Number. He also works at the gate of the camp to check for any suspicious movement. He must be informed about anything going on in the camp.

His imaginary uniform is brown boots with a khaki uniform. On his right side is a *bayonet* and *long gun* 303, with 7 bullets in the magazine, 1 in the chamber, 8 according to the Number, with three military stripes on his upper right arm.

Captain 2

He defends the rules of the 28s and ensures that everybody obeys. He oversees the *soldiers*, *sergeant 2's*, *sergeant 1's*. His imaginary uniform is a khaki uniform with 2 golden eight-point stars on each shoulder. He gets his instructions from *Jim Crow/Germiston/lieutenant* and exchanges information in the camp. He will not hesitate to stab. He is also known as the “*warm kop*” (meaning a person capable of stabbing at any given time).

His imaginary uniform is brown boots, with a mining helmet and a star on the front, shining bright. He has a bayonet with a long gun, 8 golden bullets, 7 in the magazine, 1 in the chamber, 8 according to the Number.

Jim Crow/Lieutenant/Germiston

He is the man that stands at the centre, and controls all the channels of the camp. All information must pass via him. After training, he tests the recruits and is an expert in gang language and codes. In his imagination, he works with a red glove in his right hand and a white glove in his left hand. With the red glove, he does heavy work (bloodline) and can also use the red glove as a sign to stop. With the white glove, he works with the privates and can also use the white glove to signal a go-ahead sign. He stands guard when the *12 Points* (highest authority) are meeting.

His imaginary uniform is *kaperdien* (khaki military uniform with red insignia/ranks). He wears a pair of brown boots, with 2 golden eight-point stars on each shoulder. He has a white glove on his left hand and on his right hand a red glove. With the white glove, he gives the go-ahead, and with the red glove, he can stop any activity in the Gang.

Captain 1/wireless/Draad 1

He is known as the man who catches thugs or sly people and cuffs them. He also investigates other gangs, non-gangs, and officials. He must know everything and must report directly to *colonel/oemkhoni*. He is also known as the man who must blow the *bugle* when there is trouble; the *bugle* refers to the horn of the bull. (Bugle is an instrument like a small trumpet, used for military signals). He also handles complaints about the camp. He is also known as the “*warm kop*” of 28 (“*warm kop*” means that he will not hesitate to stab).

His imaginary uniform is *kaperdien* with 3 eight-point stars on each shoulder and has 3 golden and 3 silver *wires/aerials*, using the silver to catch the information and the golden ones to report.

Inspector 1/Glas 1

Inspector 1 is like *captain 2*, but the imaginary uniform is different.

His rank is six golden stars on each shoulder, and he can stand in as a *general*. In his imagination, he has a mirror and glasses (this refers to the binoculars) to see what is going on in prison. He uses an *axe and a spade* to clean the bush when looking for non-gang members. He also has a pair of *handcuffs* to “arrest” those who transgress in the camp.

Colonel/oemkhoni

The man who has the skin/vel of rooiland, on which the rules of the 28s is written, opens the skin/vel in the *12 Points* (parliament). He oversees the camp and can utilise an office for seniors in the gang. He keeps the total of the 28-gang members (*manskappe*) and records them on his *blackboard*. The gang members will get instructions from him, and they must obey his instructions. He must assist the 12-points if they experience difficulties in decision-making. He is the law of the junior and senior levels of the gang. His imaginary uniform is a *kaperdien* uniform, with 4 silver eight-point stars on his left shoulder and 4 golden eight-point stars on his right shoulder.

General/oemsasa (blacksmith)

This man works at the *oven (oonde)*, where he organises and manufactures weapons and forms part of the twelve points, using the skin of the *colonel* to see which wrongs need to be corrected. He is known as the person with the devil's fork in his hand, and the one who gives the instruction during gang fights, the one who called the "*up*" (an instruction to start the fight). He wears red safety boots to control the flames. His face is always full of blood, and he believes that only the rain can clean his face. His main job is to take blood or see that it happens, and he is known as the man who spits fire (*spuug vuur*) and was promoted from the rank of colonel.

His imaginary uniform comprises of two types of uniform. When he works at the *oven (oonde)*, he wears a khaki uniform with red safety boots and six golden eight-point stars on his shoulders. In his left hand, he has an assegai and in his right hand, a devil's fork always wrapped in his *spigaan* (traditional blanket). When he represents the 12 points, he wears a khaki uniform, and his ranks (*gunjas*) changes to 6 silver eight-point stars on his left shoulder and six golden eight-point stars on his right shoulder to represent both the silver line and gold lines of the camp.

Judge

He is known as the man without mercy or the man without a heart. He does not form part of the *12 points*, but they can invite him. If somebody must get the death sentence, he will use his black pen to order the death penalty.

He wears an imaginary *kaperdien* uniform and a black cloak (*toga*) and when he hands down the sentence, he wears eight golden eight-point stars on each shoulder. After the sentence, he changed from eight golden eight-point stars on his shoulders to seven eight-point golden stars on each shoulder.

Lord

As *sergeant 2*, he was a troublemaker. To get rid of him, they promoted him upwards in the ranks. In imagination he is constantly stirring the blood pot, he speaks blood, and his hat is covered in blood. The camp will say he is "*bloed dronk*". In case of a gang fight, they will say the lord kicked the blood pot over. (*Lord het die bloedpot omgeskop*).

The flag of the 28-gang

The flag of 28 is green with a thick red line. The red line represents the bloodline if the gang is on the battlefield with other gangs.

6.3. The structure of the 27-gang

According to the research participants the 28 and 27-gangs are equally brutal. Since the establishment of the gang they got the same “*schooling*” (training) from the founder member of the gang. Both the 27s and 28s have a *Lord* in their camps, which in imagination, controls the blood (meaning stabbings). There is no ritual sex in the 26 and 27 Camps. Traditionally, the gang who works as sunrise (ouens van son-op) carry out their work between sunrise and sunset, while the camp of 28 operates after sunset. The 27-gang is known as the men of blood and is the most violent gang. They can be described as career criminals specialising in violence. They monitor and enforce the laws and codes of the Numbers Gang. They can negotiate problems and serve as a communication channel between the 28 and the 26-gangs. This is because when the 27 and the 28-gangs were in prison, they agreed to build the 26 as a third camp on the instruction of the 27-gang leader Nkilikijaan. The 27-gang also disallows same-sex practices, as it was the reason for the initial split between Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan. They are also a secretive gang and do not want others to know what they are up to. Their military structures are almost the same as the 26-gang, as they are known as the ‘father figure’ of the 26-gang.

6.3.1. Junior structure of the 27 Numbers Gang, known as the number twos.

Stone yard

He is known as a person in front of the gates of the camp meaning that he is interested in joining the gang, and during this time, he has no tattoo of the camp yet. He must work for the gang and show commitment by stabbing during gang fights. At this stage, he has no imaginary uniform or rank.

Soldier/soldaat

Someone in the *stone yard* can enter the gates of the camp after seven days (7 years) at which point he becomes a *soldier* of the camp of the 27. His job is to be on the lookout for any danger or possible threats to the camp, and he reports directly to his “teacher” (*Nongidela/blackboard*). He can stab (take blood) during gang fights.

His imaginary uniform is *kaperdien* uniform with brown boots. He has a bayonet with a red grip stamp 27, a long gun (303) with six bullets in the magazine, 1 in the chamber, seven according to the number. He has a small red book, using a red pen and a black pen, black for wrong and red for blood.

Nongidela/teacher (the first blackboard)

He is the first blackboard of the gang. He always has the total number of the soldiers on his blackboard and teaches the soldiers gang history, structure, language, , and how to work with blood. When the soldiers disobey gang rules, he punishes them according to his rank (1 stripe), giving them one smack across the face.

His imaginary uniform is khaki (*kaperdien*) with a revolver, six bullets in the magazine, and one in the chamber, seven according to the number. He is in possession of 26 keys, and one master key, making it 27 to enter the offices. He also has a red and a black pen, to record his wrongdoings, and when to use blood.

Sergeant 2

He works at the drilling ground (*parade ground*) and drills the soldiers (meaning he ensures they work for the number). He trains the soldiers early in the mornings before wake-up time. He punishes them for breaking gang rules and keeps their files in his office.

His imaginary uniform is khaki with two stripes on the upper sleeve, possessing two keys, one to access the parade ground and one for his office. He uses a red rattan to punish the soldiers for wrongdoing.

Sergeant 1

He works in the storeroom (which they called *GI*), where he keeps the imaginary uniform of the camp, as well as other benefits like tobacco. He works with the ration to ensure he issues the correct number of things when needed.

His imaginary uniform is khaki with three stripes on his upper sleeve, a handgun (revolver) with six bullets in the magazine one in the chamber, seven according to the number and a *bayonet*. He has two keys, one for his storeroom and one for his office.

Sergeant major

His responsibility is to keep the gang members who break the gang's rules in “custody” (locked up) and ensure they will be punished. He is also known as the discipline officer and sees that the junior ranks are always neat in their appearance.

His imaginary uniform is a khaki uniform with a rank with three stripes and one star. He carries a handgun with six bullets, one bullet in the chamber, seven according to the number and a red and a black pen. He

is in possession of two keys, one to his office and one to the “awaiting trials” (meaning those who transgressed the gang's rules).

Captain 2/wireless 2

His responsibilities are to search anyone who enters or leaves the camp to ensure that nothing happens without his consent. He checks for any tattoos of other gangs. His imaginary uniform is a *khaki* uniform with two red six-point stars on each shoulder and brown boots. He carries a radio with four *aerials*, which he uses to catch up on any information in prison. He carries a red book, with a red and a black pen, to record. He carries a revolver with six bullets in the magazine and one in the magazine, seven according to the number and a *bayonet* with a red grip, stamped 27.

Inspector2/glas 2

His job is to ensure that the gang members do not have tattoos of another gang; he must observe what is happening in the camp and is very active in the courtyard (*spanga*). He uses his binoculars /glasses/mirrors to see what is going on and is the investigation officer of the camp.

His imaginary uniform is a *khaki* uniform with four red six-point stars on each shoulder and brown boots and he is the first to see if something is wrong. He carries a red briefcase with a red and a black pen, to record what he observed. He is armed with a revolver, with 6 bullets in the magazine and one in the chamber, seven according to the number and a bayonet with a red grip stamped 27.

Nyanga2

He is regarded as the medical officer for the number twos of the gang and makes sure that the gang members are healthy and checks for any disabilities of those who join the gang. He uses his stethoscope (which they refer to as the *pipes* or *pype*) to check the heartbeat and the pulse rate for anything suspicious (an act to test them if they are committed). He ensures that all recruits are healthy and fit for the camp.

His imaginary uniform is a white coat, but it can change to red if he goes for blood on the *battlefield* (stabblings), one each shoulder is four red six-point stars. He has a nameplate (*borsspelt*) stating *nyanga 2* of 27.

Judge 2

They will refer to him as the *jits* (which means judge) in the gang. He is responsible for punishing the number two's who misbehave and breaks gang rules. He is responsible for the court hearings of the

number two's and can punish the accused with blood, meaning he must stab an official or a rival gang member.

His imaginary uniform is a red cloak (*toga*), with four six-point red stars on each shoulder. He can also change to *kaperdien* uniform during gang fights, or stabbings.

Melly 2/Agent 2

He is the attorney/lawyer of the gang and ensures that the sentence is fair. In other words, he represents the accused in the court hearings. His imaginary khaki uniform consists of six red buttons, brown boots, and a red nameplate (*borsspelt*) stating agent 2 of 27.

Mabalang 2/Mabalane 2

He is the clerk of the camp of 27 and can draw the files to check for outstanding cases and reports to the 12 points to ensure that the accused are punished according to previous convictions.

His imaginary uniform is a *khaki* uniform with four red six-point stars on each shoulder and in the pocket of his uniform he has four pens. He has a book with information about every gang member, and the gang also refers to him as the "*book*". He carries a revolver with six bullets in the magazine and one in the chamber, seven according to the number, a *bayonet* with a red grip, stamped 27.

Madaganie/fighting general

He oversees all the number two's, from the soldiers to *Mabalang 2*. He teaches them about the number and is the second blackboard (teacher) of the 27-gang. He can ask for a heavy sentence if one of his members oversteps the rules. *Captain 2* and *inspector 2* reports directly to him, and *madaganie* can order them to check if everything is in order in the camp of the number twos. He can take charge of the camp but cannot make decisions without *glas 2*; *nyanga 2*; *judge 2*; *melly 2*; *mabalang 2* and *captain 2*.

His imaginary uniform is a khaki uniform, brown boots and four red six-point stars on his shoulders. There is a red band stating *FFF (full force fighting)* on his right upper arm. He works day and night at the *blacksmith*, where he manufactures weapons (a *blacksmith* is a metalsmith who creates objects from iron/steel by forging the metal). He has a book with two pens, a white pen for the salute and a red pen for wrong. On his head is a *kaperdien* cap, and a revolver with 6 bullets in the magazine, one in the chamber, 7 according to the number.

6.3.2. The top structures of the 27-gang also known as the number one's

Captain 1

His job is the same as *captain 2*; they are each other's witnesses. Their job is to gather information to share with the camp. He is also known as *draad* (refers to the wire to catch up and share information). *Captain 1* is known as a man with no mercy and will not hesitate to stab if he is instructed to do so. His imaginary uniform is a *khaki* uniform with three red six-point stars on each shoulder and brown boots. He has a revolver, six bullets in the magazine, and one in the chamber, seven according to the number, and a bayonet with a red grip stamped 27.

Inspector 1/glas 1

He uses his binoculars/glasses/mirrors to see what is going on outside the camp of 27. He focuses on the new admissions to the facility and checks their gang affiliation. He will escort a gang member who must do a stabbing to witness the act. When fellow gang members misbehave, he opens a docket for them to be investigated and reports any danger to the *general*. In the absence of a *general*, he can stand in temporarily as a *general* (which they refer to as he stands for *die minute*).

He wears a *khaki* uniform with six red stars on each shoulder and a pair of brown boots. He has 27 files and a pair of cuffs to arrest those who transgress. He carries a revolver with six bullets in the magazine and 1 in the chamber, seven according to the number.

Nyanga 1

He is the medical officer for the gang's top structure (number ones) and works day and night in the 'hospital'. He checks on those who are sick and can diagnose illness. The sick person must first report to him before he can report to the correctional officials; he must also determine if an accused person is fit to stand trial for gang punishment. He uses his stethoscope (*pype/pipes*) to check the gang member's heartbeat and pulse (meaning his commitment). He also checks for anything suspicious from recruits (which involves intensive questioning) and checks for poison in food.

His imaginary uniform is a white coat, which can change to red (*kaperdien*) if he must go for blood during gang fights/*battlefields*. There are four red six-point stars on his shoulders, and he has a red nameplate (*borsspelt*) on his uniform, stating *nyanga 1* of 27.

Judge 1

He is responsible for punishing the number one's for ill-discipline or overstepping the gang's rules. He can sentence an accused to a death sentence. He also represents the gang in the 12 points. His imaginary uniform is a red cloak/toga with four red six-point stars on each shoulder. He also can change his uniform if he must go to the battlefield.

Melly 1/Agent 1

He defends the law book of the 27 and defends the accused of the number one's during court sittings (12 points/parliament) to make sure that the judgment is fair.

His imaginary uniform is also a *khaki/kaperdien* uniform, with six red buttons, brown boots, and a red nameplate (*borsspelt*), which reads agent 1 of 27.

Mabalang 1/Mabalane 1

He is the head clerk of the gang (number one's) and responsible for each gang member's information. He is an important individual in the gang and features 12 points/court hearings. He studies the files of the new admissions to check for any outstanding cases, and if any, he will report and make sure the accused will be punished according to his previous convictions.

His imaginary uniform has four six-pointed red stars on each shoulder; he carries a book with four pens, a white pen to record good things (*salute*), a red pen for blood, a green pen for approvals, and a black pen for wrong/death sentence. He is armed with a revolver with six bullets in the magazine, one in the chamber – seven according to the number – and a bayonet with a red grip stamped 27.

General

He oversees the 27-gang and is known as the *maspaal* of the camp (*maspaal* means an electricity pylon/ a transmission tower or power tower, used to support an overhead powerline). He gives the laws to the camp, which he receives from the *Makwezi*. *General* is the most critical person in the 12 points. He teaches the top structure of the 27s and is their blackboard/teacher. He is the instigator and is responsible for the manufacturing of the weapons. He gives the call “*up, up*” when a stabbing should happen.

His imaginary uniform is *kaperdien* with a pair of red safety boots, and six red six-point stars on his shoulder. On his right side is a revolver with six bullets in the magazine with one bullet in the chamber – 7 according to the number. On his left side is a bayonet with a red grip stamped 27.

Lord

He is the president of the 27-gang and is responsible for all 27-gang members. In imagination he has the rule book of 27 and only the *generals* can get the book from him, he is always in contact with the *general* for approvals or disapprovals. He is the safe/”sif”/” *brandkluis*” where they keep the *gunjas* (ranks) of the camp, and the money they use for the camp, to buy dagga, tobacco etc. He is always in contact with the high rankings of 27 and controls the blood pot of the 27-gang

His imaginary uniform is 8 stars on each shoulder; he has the keys to the safe and binoculars/mirrors to see what is happening in the camps.

The flag of the 27-gang

The flag of the 27-gang is pure red (bloedrooi), with two red swords, facing upwards (sunrise), with seven red stars. The red symbolises blood. The two swords include one from Nkilikijaan (27) and the other one from Nongoloza (28), which was taken by Nkilikijaan. The seven red stars represent Nkilikijaan and his six men (7) who broke away from Nongoloza.

6.4. The structure of the 26 Numbers Gang

The research participants explained that the gang/camp of the twenty-six is divided into two sections, the number ones (top structures) and the privates known as number twos. The camp is further described as sectioned off with privates in both 26 and 27 camps but with certain officers from the camp of 26 also serving in the camp of 27. At any stage, a twenty-six may convert to the status of a twenty-seven to communicate with the camp of twenty-eight *vir die minute* or for the moment. If the 26 wants to retain his 27 status, he must take blood (Parker- Lewis 2006). The 26 Numbers Gang has historically been considered an inferior gang and lives in the shadow of the 27-gang as their father figure. Research participants who belong(ed) to the 26 Numbers Gang explained that they are *manskappe* of ‘Grey’, and their main objective is to rob with a clear mind. In other words, they used cunning ways to rob and are highly skilful. They keep the prison alive, meaning that they are always active in their daily operations. In the absence of a 27-gang member, they can ‘act’ as one temporarily, which they refer to as: *standing in the boots of the 27-gang for the minute (minutes)*.

6.4.1. The number two’s of the 26-gang

Soldier/soldaat

His job is to be on the lookout day and night and report any danger or threats to the camp. He must submit himself to be taught gang culture and rules and consistently demonstrate good behaviour. He is always on the lookout for money, tobacco, or any benefits for the camp and as a soldier, he must be trained according to the *kroon/crown/money*. He cannot take blood (be involved in stabbings) unless instructed to do so by a higher authority.

His imaginary uniform is a pair of brown boots with the stamped 26, *khaki* trousers, a shirt, and a jacket with six white buttons. He wears a *khaki* helmet with a white band with a thin red line and the number 26. He has a small white book with a red stripe with two pens, a white pen for salute (good things) and a black pen for wrong things. He carries a long gun (303) on his right shoulder with five bullets in the magazine and one in the chamber – six according to the number.

Mountain/Nongidela

He is known as the blackboard/teacher of the *soldiers* and is responsible for teaching the soldiers. He always has the total of the *soldiers* on his blackboard and teaches them about gang structure, culture and discipline. He can punish them with one smack to the face according to his rank (1 stripe). Although it is not part of his main job, he can also assist the recruits. He is the guard at the gates of the camp (*gateman*) and ensures that nobody enters the gate without a tattoo of 26. He must ensure that the recruits wait for six days (*jare/years*) before entering the gates for recruitment. He gives direct instruction to the soldiers when to *shoot* (stab) and can call them to halt.

His imaginary uniform is *khaki* with one military stripe on the upper arm. He does not have a long gun, but a revolver on his right side with five bullets in the magazine and one in the chamber, six according to the number. He has a key, which he uses to open the gate for the soldiers and have two pens, a white pen for the salute and a black pen for wrong.

Sergeant 2

He works on the *parade ground/drilling ground*. He makes sure that they are doing physical exercises every six days and is responsible for seeing that *soldiers* are fit for work, which involves *drilling ground*. This means that he tests their understanding of their job and checks on their physical abilities. He can punish the soldiers for wrongdoing, by smacking them twice according to his rank (2 stripes), and he keeps the *soldier's* files in his office.

His imaginary uniform is a *khaki* uniform with two military stripes on his upper sleeve and two keys, which he uses for the *drilling grounds* and to access his office. He has a white rattan to punish the soldiers

on the drilling ground. He also has a revolver with six rounds, five in the magazine and one in the chamber, six according to the number.

Sergeant 1

He works in the storeroom, which they call the *GI* and is responsible for issuing the imaginary uniform of the camp. He also keeps the tobacco, money, and other benefits for the camp, and works with the ration (how to issue).

His imaginary uniform is also khaki with three military stripes on his upper sleeve, with a *bayonet* on his right side. He carries a revolver with five rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber, six according to the number. He has two keys to access the storeroom and to his office.

Sergeant Major

He works at the “*awaiting trial*”, known as the *stokkies*. He keeps those who transgressed and disobeyed the gang rules in “custody” and ensures they are punished. His main job in the gang is to check on the discipline of the junior gang members, and he is known as the discipline officer.

His imaginary uniform is *khaki* with a *khaki* hat, and his rank sign is a crown on his right shoulder with a tattoo of 26. He carries a revolver, five rounds in the magazine, 1 in the chamber, six according to the number and a *bayonet*. He also has a book and two pens, a black pen for the wrongs, a white pen for salute (good things), and two keys, one for the awaiting trial and one for his office.

Captain 2/wireless 2

His responsibility is to gather information for the camp and use his aerials to get information. He must continually update himself with things inside the gang and those under his control. He “searches” anyone who enters or leaves the camp to ensure that nothing illegal comes to the camp and nothing illegal goes out of the camp.

In his imagination, he has a *khaki* uniform, with three six-point stars on each shoulder, a *kaperdien* hat with a white band and a thin red line. He has a revolver with five rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber, six according to the number. He carries a wireless with three aerials to catch information and “broadcast” to the camp.

Judge 2

In the gang, he is known as the *Jits* meaning judge. He is the person responsible for court hearings and trial of the accused, which are typically the lower rankings of the number two's and is also active when *judge 1* is not available (for example, when he is in solitary confinement). He can stand *in his boots* (meaning he can act in his post). He hands out sentences and can send the accused to blood, or he can punish him with smacks in the face.

His imaginary uniform is private clothes with a black *cloak/toga*, white shirt, and a black bow tie. He has a golden nameplate (*bosspelt*) on his uniform that reads judge 2 and has six six-pointed stars on his shoulders.

Inspector 2/glass 2

He is known as the man with the binoculars/mirrors and can see (observe) what is happening in the camp; his focus is on the number twos of the camp. He is the investigation officer of the *fighting general (madanganie)* and reports directly to him. He works directly with *captain 2/ draad 2/wireless 2*, and they are each other's witnesses.

His imaginary uniform is private clothes, carries a white briefcase and a black and white pen. He uses his white pen to record good things for the camp and his black pen to record wrong things. His rank is symbolised with four six-pointed stars on each shoulder, with a revolver with five bullets in the magazine, one in the chamber – six according to the number.

Mabalang 2/Mabalane 2

He is responsible for the minutes of the meetings, records all the accused previous convictions, and influences their punishment. He is the head clerk of the gang

He wears private clothes with four six-point stars on each shoulder in his imagination. He works with four pens, a black pen for wrong things, a green pen for approvals, a white pen for good things and a red pen for blood.

Nyanga 2

He is known as the medical officer and works day and night in the 'hospital' to check on sick patients. Gang members who are sick must get permission from him before reporting to authorities. He consults with the recruits to check if they are healthy and uses his *pipes (pype)* "stethoscope" to test their heartbeat and pulse rate to check for anything suspicious (this involves intensive questioning). He is also involved in the recruitment process of the recruits to check if they are fit for work.

In imagination, he wears private clothes with a briefcase and a white coat with a nameplate (*borsspelt*) stated *nyanga* 2 of 26. He can change his hospital uniform to battlefield dress in case of a gang fight.

Mellie 2

He represents the accused in the court sitting and ensure that the punishment is fair and according to the number and plays the role of an advocate/lawyer who defends the book of the 26.

His imaginary uniform is private clothes. His jacket has a thin red line with 6 white buttons. He has a nameplate (*borsspelt*) which states *mellie* 2 of 26.

Madaganie/Fighting General

He oversees the number two's and is known as the *junior general* of the camp and gives instructions to all the number twos. He is the second blackboard/teacher of the camp, after *Nongidela*, and he works day and night as a *blacksmith*, manufacturing weapons in the workshop of 26. He gets his instructions from the general. In the gang, they refer to him as the *maspaal*.

His imaginary uniform consists of a pair of brown boots stamped 26, with *kaperdien* uniform with six white buttons, four six-point stars on each shoulder, and a small notebook with one white pen for good things and one black pen for wrong things. He has a handgun (revolver) on his left side, with five bullets in the magazine, one in the chamber, six according to the number. He wears a *kaperdien* hat with a thin red line. On his right upper arm is a red band stamped *FFF* of 26. (*FFF* stands for *full-force fighting*), as he is the *fighting general* of the camp.

6.4.2. The top structure of the 26-gangs, also known as the number ones

Captain1, wireless 1

The man who broadcasts day and night, almost the same as captain 2, focuses on things outside the camp. He can assault other gang members just to end up in solitary confinement/ *at the back of the mountains* to catch up on information. With all the information he collected, he must inform the general. He works directly with *inspector 1* and will also get information from him and is the person who gives verbal signs if a stabbing should happen. He can accompany *inspector 1*, if a stabbing must happen, as a witness.

He wears *kaperdien* uniform with three 6-pointed stars on each shoulder in his imagination. He carries a handgun and a wireless with six aerals, which he uses to catch information and broadcast it to the camp. The six *aerals* are two white *aerals* to catch good information, two black *aerals* to catch up on wrong information and two red *aerals* to catch up on some danger. He is also known as the “*warm kop*” of the gang (meaning he does not hesitate).

Inspector 1

The man with the binoculars/mirrors, which he uses to see what is happening outside of the camp of 26. He is the investigation officer of the camp and reports directly to the *general*. He works with *captain 1* to check on the new admissions (*stemela*) to determine which gang he belongs to. *Captain 1* and *inspector 1* must escort a gang member who must do a stabbing, and their job is to make the sharp object/ disappear and to be witnesses of the stabbing.

His imaginary uniform is a *khaki* uniform with six 6-pointed stars on each shoulder; he has binoculars, 26 files of gang members and a pair of cuffs for those who break the gang's rules.

Nyanga 1

He is the medical officer who works in the ‘hospital’ of 26 and tests the recruits to check if they are fit for work (gang activities). If a stabbing occurs, he can decide how deep the must penetrate the body (*hy stel die mes*). Sick people from the camp first report to him before he reports to the correctional officials. He uses his *pipes* “stethoscope” to check gang members’ heartbeat and pulse rate, for anything suspicious, any disabilities in the camp, and poison in their food.

In his imagination, he wears private clothes with a white coat but can change to a *battlefield* dress. He has 4 six-point stars on each shoulder and is always in possession of his stethoscope and a white medical briefcase with a red cross. On his uniform, he has a golden nameplate (*borsspelt*) stating *nyanga 1* of 26.

Mellie 1

The same as *Mellie 2*, he upholds the gang's rulebook and represents the accused during court hearings in the 12 points, to ensure a fair trial according to the number. He can be regarded as the lawyer/advocate of the camp.

His imaginary uniform is private clothes, a private jacket with 6 red buttons, and a nameplate (*bors spelt*) stated agent 1 of 26.

Mabalang 1/Mabalane 1

He is the head clerk of the gang and opens files for all recruits. He is an expert in gang culture, court procedures and is responsible for taking minutes during meetings in the 12 points. He can *draw your file* to check for outstanding cases and see that an accused will be punished accordingly.

His imaginary uniform is private clothes with four pens, a black pen for wrong things, a green pen for approval, a white pen for good things and a red pen if the number asked for blood. On his shoulder is four six-point stars.

Judge 1

In the gang, he is also known as *jits* (meaning judge) and is responsible for court hearings and the handing out of sentences. He can sentence an accused to blood (meaning to stab to correct the wrong) or death.

In his imagination, he wears private clothes with a red cloak, the cloak change to black if he orders the death sentence /death penalty.

General

He oversees the gang and is known as the “*maspaal*” of the gang (*maspaal* means an electricity pylon/ a transmission tower or a power tower, used to support an overhead powerline). He gives the laws to the camp, which he receives from the highest of 26 and 27, the *Makwezi*. *General* is the most important in the 12 points, he teaches the number ones and is their blackboard/teacher. He makes *fire* for the number ones meaning he is an instigator. He also manufactures weapons, keeps them safe until needed, organises the stabbings and will give the command when the fight should start.

His imaginary uniform comprises brown boots and a khaki uniform with six red buttons, a *kaperdien* hat, a small book with a white and a black pen, and six six-point stars on each shoulder. On his right side, he has a revolver with five bullets in the magazine and one in the chamber, six according to the number. On his left side, he has a bayonet with a red grip, stamped 26.

Makwezi

He is the president of the 26 and 27-gangs and is responsible for everyone who belongs to the camps and will take responsibility for all of them. He has the rule book of 26 and 27 and only the *generals* can get the book from him. He is always in contact with the *generals* for approvals or disapprovals. He is the

safe/”sif”/” *brandkluis*” where they keep the *gunjas* (ranks) of the camp, and the money they use for the camp, to buy dagga, tobacco etc. He is always in contact with the high rankings of 27.

His imaginary uniform is eight stars on each shoulder; he has the keys to the safe, and binoculars/mirrors to see what is happening in the camps. The gang members refer to *Makwesi* as the morning star; in their explanation, the morning star appears before sunrise and, as the role of the *Makwezi*, gives the gang their daily instructions.

The flag of the 26-gang

The flag of 26 is pure white with a thin red line. The white symbolises that they rob and steal with a clear mind. The thin red line symbolises their bloodline, with minimal involvement with blood, but if involved in a gang fight, the thin red line changed to a thick red line, symbolising their readiness to take blood.

6.5. Conclusion

The chapter offered a detailed description of the hierarchical command structures within each of the Numbers. The command structures are elaborate with clearly defined ranks with each rank assigned a carefully circumscribed set of responsibilities. Three layers can be discerned: at the top are the Generals, Lords and Makwesi's. They are responsible for key decisions and orders. The middle ranks provide a link between the leadership and the footsoldiers. It is their responsibility to translate decisions downward and see to the execution of the instructions received from the top. The junior ranks located at the bottom of the feeding chain are executed, and the junior ranks are the foot soldiers. As Table 1 reflects, there is considerable overlap between the command structures operative within the three divisions of the Numbers gang.

This command structure allows for upward mobility within the system based on ‘performance’ according to the rules of the gang organisation. Status, influence and power are linked to rank or place in the system. Until recently it would seem an elaborate system of rituals regulated movement up the ranking system. An aspirant gang member had to ‘prove’ his ‘worth’ as a soldier. As respondents reflected the system of regulation - based on tradition – seems to be giving way to new pressures emanating from the streets.

The command structures are critical to the pursuit of both the economic and political interests of the Numbers gang. These structures monitor the activities of members and regulate their behaviour. In the

next chapter the discussion turns to a consideration of the internal structures of the Numbers Gang and the rules that regulate recruitment, initiation, discipline and conflict.

CHAPTER 7: THE INTERNAL STRUCTURES OF THE NUMBERS GANG

7.1. Literature on Numbers Gang's internal structures: Origin and development of the three divisions

The literature in the previous chapter complements the discussion in this chapter. Again, research participants and my knowledge and understanding of the Numbers Gang, assisted me to offer a detailed description of the internal structures of the gang. The work of authors such as Van Onselen (1984), Steinberg (2004), Pinnock and Douglas-Hamilton (1997), Pinnock (2016), Parker Lewis (2006), Skywalker (2014), Schurink et al. (1986), Haysom (1981) and Gear (2005) are all relevant here. This chapter will focus on the different internal structures of the Numbers Gang.

The Numbers Gang consists of three divisions or camps: the 28, 27 and 26. According to the origin myth of the Numbers Gang, the first two numbers refer to the respective journeys the two Gang founders, Nonogoloza and Kilikijaan, took with their respective followers. Nongoloza's band consisted of eight men, Kliklikjaan's of seven. Hence the eight and seven. The twos also refer to the two founders, Nonogoloza and Nkilikijaan. That is not so clear but, as Steinberg suggested (2004:63), may reflect the fact that there were two leaders. The 26s came later because of a much more complicated story.

The establishment of the secret language and the highly ritualised codes of conduct of the Numbers Gang involve a wise old man known variously as Paul Mobasa, Pomobasa or just Po. (Steinberg: 54). Po observes the young black men journeying to Delagoa Bay. There are gold mines there where the young men work in terrible conditions. Po returns and finds a cave outside the town of Pietermaritzburg. One day, he sees a young black from his cave and greets him. This man is Nongaloza (known in real life as Muzuzephi Mathebula and later as Jan Note). The following day Po sees another young man and hails him. His name is Kilikijan, and he says he is a Pondo.

Po continues to collect young men until there are fifteen. Po instructs them in the secret Language he has devised and how to undertake highway robbery and lets them loose. They perform very well. Po is once again faced with the need to decide the future of these young men and their two leaders. He turns to the diary on a rock which he had from his early days told the two leaders to keep about their life as outlaws, their history, codes of conduct and so on. He then tells Nongaloza and Kilikijan to go to the farm of a Mr Rabie and take a bull from him called Rooiland. The two do so by force when they stab Rabie with a *bayonet* and take the bull back to Po, who tells them to slaughter it to eat it. He says to them to take the two horns, fill them with the blood and the bull's gall, and drink it. Kilikijan spits his out, but Nongaloza

drinks his. The latter's followers draw the obvious conclusion that Nongaloza is stronger than his counterpart.

Po then instructs the two men to take the hide and press it against the diary rock so both men have a copy of the diary. This Po tells them is their guide in future, their code of conduct which they must consult to know what to do. The rock diary, however, falls and splits into two. Henceforth Kilikijan and the 27s only have half the laws.

The two decide to go out together on an expedition, and Nongoloza begs off. Kilikijaan comes later to find Nongoloza engaged in sex with the young man, Makubane. Kilikijan is enraged, but Nongaloza tells him the laws on his hide allows this activity. This remains a bone of contention between the two groups to this day.

By now, Po is dead. The two men decide to separate. The two meet again in Durban Point Prison. Here they meet Gray with franse. Six in all. Thus formed the 26s. This is the story of the allocation of tasks to the three divisions. The 26s are responsible for gambling, smuggling, and accruing wealth. The 28s are fighting on behalf of all three divisions. The 27s are responsible for the gang keeping the peace (Steinberg 2004: 60-63).

7.2. Codes of conduct and organisation

The members of the Numbers Gang are rigidly organised and disciplined. No prisoner has not seen the consequence for those who do not follow the Gang code of conduct. Skywalker (2014) is of the opinion that the Numbers Gang has shown resilience by evolving its decision-making and management structures. They have evolved their security features, negotiation criteria, war agenda, covert activity, general discipline, and code enforcement.

The Numbers Gang history predates the formation of the South African prisons department. They have a command structure, ranking and disciplinary code that mimic the militaristic structures of the British army that Nongoloza and his followers came to know.

The Numbers Gang's induction rituals are driven using violence. New inmates to correctional facilities are exposed to different types of 'codes', also known as the convict code, and sets of norms offered by gangs for initiation. Correctional facilities are contested spaces that affect cultures by creating sub-cultural responses to address or manage structural issues.

These facilities are contested spaces because inmates enter the captive society inferior to those in power. The Numbers Gang create glorified myths about the gang that are attractive to young recruits. For example, ranks are associated with status and power. However, the most powerful attraction is the promise of money, glamour, and power. The symbols of the gang (hand signs, Sabela, tattoos, etc.) create a visual attraction for young people; they realise that they form part of something powerful with these symbols. It provides them with a sense of belonging.

Inmates are forced to make decisions about their time in prison under constant fear and abuse; joining the gangs can offer the new inmate protection from the group. An inmate who does not belong to the Numbers Gang is called *frans* or a *mphata*. According to Steinberg (2004), the *frans* is someone who has been stripped of self-identity. He explains that:

When he (*frans*) received a parcel from a visitor, he must hand it over to the *ndotas* in his cell; they will decide how it will be distributed. When the *ndotas* in a cell hold a meeting to discuss Number business, each *frans* must sit with his face to the wall and remain absolutely silent (Steinberg, 2004: 154).

Research participant C19 shared the same view as Steinberg (2004) in his explanation:

“A *frans* for us, means that the gang can be in competition to recruit him, especially if he is of any benefit for the gang, for example money. If he doesn’t want to join us, he will live with the consequences of being robbed of everything. He must show to us that he wants to join the gang, by doing work for the gang”.

When asking the meaning of a *frans*, research participants explained that the *ndotas* were working in the mines of Delagoa Bay (*dalakoebaai* as they know it) and incarcerated at Durban Natal Prison. The *franse* refers to the French Huguenots, who worked on wine farms. They do not have any idea what the gang fought for. Therefore, when they enter prison, they will be called *franse* and must sleep in the *bush* (the open space between the beds in the middle of the cell).

The Gang follows strict gang protocol during the initiation process by informing the other recruitment divisions. The new admission will be allocated to a cell, *glas* (inspector) and *draad* (wireless) will determine gang alliances through *stemela*. *Stemela* is a process of questioning, and the recruit must respond in Sabela as proof of identity. Research participants explained that if they came across a non-gang member, he must identify himself as either one of the following: he is clean (*skoon*) *frans* – or rather not affiliated with any gangs – or he is a *frans* of 26, a *frans* of 27, or a *frans* of 28, which means they are interested in joining that gang. Those interested in joining will regard themselves as *franse of ouens*, meaning they are willing to join and must work for the camp.

Research participants further outline these processes and explain that during initiation, the hierarchical command structure of the gangs is of pivotal importance. Two senior gang members known as the *glas*

(inspector) and *draad* (wireless) are mandated to search for potential recruits. Prior to the recruitment process, the ‘candidate’ will be screened to check if he is loyal (*sterk bene*) to the gang, and this he can prove by doing some work for the number, for example, find money, toiletries, drugs, tobacco, or any benefit for the camp. After positively identifying those for recruitment, they will start the recruitment process; the inspector (*glas*) and captain (*wireless*) are instrumental in this process. The 26-gang will start their recruiting process after 6 days (*6 years*) after admission, the 27-gang after 7 days (*7 years*) and the 28-gang after 8 days (*8 years*). They refer to days as *jare* (years) to confuse those who do not Sabela. Recruits that will join the 26 or 28-gang will be tattooed with “2S”; the S will eventually become a 6 or an 8, while those joining the 27, will have a tattoo, 2/, which becomes a 7 after the initiation process.

7.2.1. Recruitment processes

During my research, it was found that there are two recruitment models: the traditional method within the correctional environment and second is the recruitment of Numbers Gang from outside correctional facilities. This mainly occurs to strengthen the gangs inside. My focus was on the traditional recruitment model to explain the structures of these gangs. Schurink (1989) briefly explains that recruitment is one of the most critical ways in which the Numbers Gang's survival is ensured. New recruits are taught that they came to the gang *with their own feet, their whole heart and full mind*. According to Steinberg (2004: 22) the recruitment process can be explained as: ‘*Die man se pols klop twee keer per jaar*’- This man’s pulse beats twice a year, which means he is being recruited into the silver line of 28. If he had said three times a year, it would have meant the gold line of the 28s (Steinberg 2004).

Research participants C9, C3, C8 and C11 explained that the process of setting foot in correctional facilities exists only in imagination. The *glas* and *draad* approach the “office” of the camp's *general*; they will approach him in the following manner: “*Hom General, kom vol soos nou, dit is die jaar dat ons sal dorp toe gaan op n nompangela van n nood nommer*”. (This means that they need permission from the general for recruitment). The *general* will give his permission by giving the one-time salute (stamp with one foot on the ground, a salute sign, similar as a military command). Before they leave his “office” they will also give the *one-time salute* (meaning they acknowledge his approval). The *inspector* and the *captain* (*glas* and *draad*) will take their *spade and pick* (imaginary) to clean the bush, meaning to go and fetch the recruits. They approach the *Madaganie/fighting general* (also known as the junior general and in charge of the number two’s) by following strict protocol. They use the same approach: ‘*hom mada-ganie, kom vol soos nou uit die gunja van die general, ons fondela die hekke*’ (meaning they got

permission from the *general* and requested him to open the gates/permission for recruitment). *Madaganie* will then give them the two-time salute (stamping his feet twice on the ground, in approval).

After they receive permission through the gates, the next in line is *Sergeant-Major* (in charge of the parade/drilling ground). They approach again, saying “*hom sergeant major, uit die gunja van jou fighting ons oppad dorp toe op nompangela van n nood nommer*” (your fighting general permitted the recruitment). He will then open “his gate” and the last person to approach is *Nongidela/Blackboard* the first teacher of the camp. They will approach him in the same manner, and he will permit *glas* and *draad* to go and look for the recruit in the “*bush*”.

After they locate the recruit, he will be scrutinised. He will be handed over to the *Nyanga* (doctor) to check for other gangs' tattoos and determine his commitment through intensive questioning as a background check. The recruits will then be handed over to the *Nongidela* (teacher), of 26 and 27 and on the 28 side, *Sergeant 1* (Temba) takes over the training process. The training process, also known as *drilling* instils knowledge about the gang, skills and equipment used during gang fights (*battlefield*), how to respect a brother and senior gang members and the testing of progress regarding the gang rules. They are taught how to stand to attention and at ease during ceremonies. They will teach them in Sabela. The recruit must also understand the use of the colloquial and idiosyncratic words used by the gang, for example, “*glas*” is an inspector, the “*nyanga*” is a doctor. Exercising these skills will enable them to adapt to their prescribed roles and move upwards in the ranks, thus making a ‘*career*’ for him.

As part of the recruit’s new identity, the teachers of the gang must ensure that recruits understand the ‘*uvugu*’ (a form of identity by speaking in a secret language, which determines the rank and gang affiliation). This phrase is most important as it constitutes the gang member’s identity. The important part is to be able to speak and appear to signal their specific gang identity.

Parker Lewis (2006) explains that the Numbers Gang continue to employ an efficient and sophisticated organisational structure based on a military and legal hierarchy and bolstered using secret initiation ceremonies, coded language, symbols, and rituals. Steinberg (2004) explains when a gang member arrives at a strange prison, it is a crucial time for the *ndota*. They walk up to him and ask the question: ‘who are you?’ and your answer will determine your fate. If he is a 28, he must Sabela a reply that he is Nongoloza; if the questioner is a 27, he will respond by declaring he is Nkilikijaan, that he works by day, the 26 will respond by declaring he is Marubaan. This statement of Steinberg (2004) concurs with the explanation from research participants about the meaning of the ‘*uvugu*’.

Some research participants explain that joining a gang is a hasty decision, only to realise later the consequences of strictly abiding by rules or being severely punished at a later stage. Participant C9 explain:

“When you join the gang, you join for protection, but later you will see that it is much more. Especially the rules that bind you, even the wrongdoing is right, you just belong to somebody, you can’t just live your own life. The organisation comes first”.

The need or purpose of a gang and the situation determine the techniques that will be used in the initiation process. According to Pinnock (2016), in the absence of written records, the system of identifying gang members and their rank is purely imaginative. Any new member who claims to be a member must recite the gang history and ‘address’ himself equal in rank. Through participants, it can be explained that the men will run through a well-rehearsed exchange of words describing the early history of the gangs; in gang terms, this is called the *uvugu*. The *uvugu* can be explained by what Pinnock (2016) mentioned about how the gang member must ‘address’ himself equal in rank. Therefore, my investigation incorporates data collection and explanation to answer specific questions. In this instance, I asked participants to explain the secret identification of gang members, which determine gang. To survive, any organisation must provide means whereby goals can be fulfilled. According to Pinnock (2016) the memory of Non-goloza is a myth but is more significant than merely a myth. This statement supports Steinberg (2004) in pointing out that it is not only a story one tells but a set of practices one enacts. Research Participants C1; C9 and C13 explain the process as follows:

The *uvugu* from 26-gang will read as follows: “Salute fondela geloof pumalanga maak nog vol bo op my matambos (legs) soos die son opgekom het, dit het op gekom met salute van nommer, dies van buitekant (not written in the makulu book) het ek nie gechaise nie, as ek chaise gwala punt 303 sal my wys hoe om te dala, ek is nog sterk bene om te foenda wet en werke van Marubaan en om te march onder daai Spierwit vlag, dun bloedrooi lyn, kroon en die nommer gestamp 26. Op daai nompangela ek maak toe Stupa”.

The *uvugu* of the 27-gang will read as follows: *Salute slavilanga fondela siko umpondo maak nog vol bo op my matambos (legs), sterk bene om te foenda met werke, dies van buitekant (not written in the makulu book) het ek nie gechaise nie, as ek chaise gwala die kapsabel sal my wys hoe om te dala, sterk bene nog om te march onder daai bloedrooi vlag, twee kapsabels oorkruis, punte wat op wys, sewe ses punt sterre, bloedrooi bees horing en die nommer gestamp 27. Op daai nompangela ek maak toe Skombizo*. According to research participant C9, this translates as “ I am still strong to do the work of 27. Street gangs (fourth camp) will not be recognised, and if they will be recognised by others, my kne shall show me what to do. I am still strong under my red flag, two crossed swords showing upwards, seven-point stars, a red horn of the bull and the number 27, I am a *Skombizo* ” (27-gang member).

The uvugu of the 28-gang differentiate between the silver and gold lines. First, he outlines the silver line of 28, and read as follows: *Gwala nangampela ek march spring spring deur die omkalo rivier, op die anderkant ek blink soos silver. Manskappe wat my pepetta, skool nie met wrong nie, but met salute van die inchailo. My stalaza maak toe met Landuni (probation/private)*. Research participant C11 explained that “(t)his is for the 28 silver line and it is very secretive because of their sexual statuses, but it explains that men who teach them didn’t give them the wrong schooling, but in the correct way, you will recognise me as *Landuni*, a member of the private line of 28.”

The gold line of the 28-gang: *Gwala nangampela ek jiba met hulle wat jiba, suleka met hulle wat suleka, dies van n buitekant ek sal nie chaizana nie, as hy my chaizana ek vat my.³⁰³ en skiet jou tussen die horings. Nangampela ek vat bloed, skep met die hand, gooi by die mond, ytblaas by die mond, donda met n stonga, beta umsunukanyoko, jy het nie salute nie. My stalaza maak toe met Nxai Bana*. According to C11 this letter translates as “I am heart and soul with my brothers of 28. Street gangs (fourth camp) will not be recognised by me, and if someone recognised them, my knife wil tell me what to do. It is for this reason I take blood, throw in my mouth, spit it out, saying it tastes bitter. I am a soldier of the 28 gold line.”

Research participants explained further that the top structures of the Numbers Gang must be informed regarding the progress of the recruits. It is important for them for future reference as they are the decision-making authority of the gang.

7.3. The top structures of the gang: Parliament and the Twelve points

I asked research participants to explain the top structure of the Gangs worked. The structure has evolved to enable the Numbers to function effectively in prison, and in order that the needs of members can be met. Schurink (1989) explained that:

“There are, for example, management bodies such as *sjoemanambienie* or *twelve points* which, among other things, determine policy, analyse problems, judge conduct, swear in recruits and acts as courts in order to sentence gang members who have transgressed codes of conduct (Schurink, 1989:64).

Drawing on the interviews, the Numbers Gang based their hierarchy on criminal association with strict membership and specialisation. The twelve points of the gang refer to the top structure of the gang and most commonly refer to *the number one’s of the gang or the twelve points parliament*. They are the decision-makers to keep order and discipline. They can also hand out punishment or sentences, including death sentences to those who transgress in the camp. Each gang has its own parliament:

The twelve points of the 26-gang: Inspector 1; Nyanga 1; Melly 1; Judge 1; Mabalang 1; General

The twelve points of the 27-gang: Inspector 1; Nyanga 1; Judge 1; melly1, Mabalang 1; General,

twelve points of the 28-gang: Inspector 1, Mabalang 1, Colonel, Nyanga 1, General
Judge1

It was explained that the twelve points of the different gangs are the decision-making authority of the gang and known as the parliament, having its own “judiciary” which sentences gang members in cases of misconduct. They can also decide what will happen to an official who violates their rights. They will sit in a circle in a kneeling position (with the right knee on the ground, similar position in a starting position of a sprint race); crouch down with both hands on the ground and with their fingers showing the gang sign. During these crucial meetings, they will have one of their members, armed, who will make sure that nobody disturbs them. When 26 and 27 meet, *captain 1* will be the one who guards them, and when 28 meets, the *lieutenant* will guard them. They will sit down in a kneeling position and only stand up after a decision is taken on which everybody agrees, a system they call ‘*they down with a wrong and stand up with a salute*’. Participant C4 explain:

“When the *punte* down, then all gang members know that there is something serious to happen. Everybody is quiet and no movement in the cell and the *franse* must either sit in the toilet area or they must face the walls of the cell”.

If a gang member should stab someone, it is common to say, “*he must pick up his blood*”. The 27 and 28-gangs have a *lord* in their camps that control the *blood pot*. Typically, when gang members engage in a gang fight, they refer to: “the *lord* kicked the blood pot” (*die lord het die bloed pot omgeskop*). During promotion to a senior position in the gang, the top structure of the gang meets with the potential leader, who uses a knife, and makes a small cut on the left side of the upper body, close to the heart. When the blood is spilt, he will be informed that his blood is added to the blood pot of the *Lord*, which binds him to the gang.

7.3.1. Trial and punishment

Discipline is an important pillar for the Numbers Gang; it teaches the gang member to be responsible and respectful. Undermining the Numbers Gang structure will have severe consequence. Elaborate procedures are followed to assess the behaviour of the culprit. There is a dual legal system: a lower court

that disciplines minor breaches of regulations and a high court of justice that hands down death sentences and disciplines and punishes without the benefit of an advocate. Participant C 17 explained:

“In the Number you don’t do as you wish, we stand for discipline and respect our rules. If you are out of line, we bring you back inline, but with a *vadala* (to hurt you). After that you will know that we stand together. The 12 points is our seniors we respect them, and they respect us”.

According to Steinberg (2004), the world of the Numbers Gang is one of brutality. Its self-styled judiciaries sentence inmates to gang rape, beatings with prison mugs, padlocks, and bars of soap. Among the prerequisites of joining the “*soldier lines*” of the gang is to take a non-gangster’s blood. Talking to a warder or a non-gang member or overstepping gang rules are all punishable offences.

The death penalty can be orchestrated by the gang, for example, it will be discussed by the gang (12 points) regarding a fellow gang member found to be a sell-out by misleading others or cooperating with rival gangs, which will be called a “*skietbaan*” (shooting range). This means anyone can stab him to “correct a wrong in the gang”. They can decide that he must be stabbed while leaving the camp, walking backwards, meaning that the front of his body is open and exposed for any gang to stab him.

If an accused gang member is sentenced to the death penalty by the 12 points of the gang, another option would be to stab an official to show his commitment because such an assault would be followed by brutal retaliation by officials instead of using merely necessary force as stated in the Correctional Services Act. The result can be injuries, disability or even death. In this way the death penalty is administered by officials rather than by gang structures. An expression of relevance here is the following: “He worked himself dead for the Number” (*Hy het hom self dood gewerk vir die nommer*).

As Participant C11 put it:

“If you get an instruction to stab an official or a rival gang member, you will find out later what it was about. The gang won’t give you the real reasons, because at the one hand is your chance for promotion and on the other hand it is about being brave in front of other gang members”.

If a gang member is found guilty of misconduct, for example, stealing from the gang, or lying, they can decide on a “*scumbaan*” (a sock with a block of green soap inside). The transgressor must sit in a kneeling position, with knees and hands touching the ground, an expression of reverence and submission. Depending on the gang he belongs to, he will be punished. For example, a member from the 28-gang will be hit the transgressor 28 times, a member from the 27-gang will be hit 27 times, and a gang member of the 26-gang will be hit 26 times. He will be hit by the object on his back and both sides of his spine to discipline him. In gang terms, they will say: *ons wil jou net terug bring* (meaning: just to remind you).

These top structures of the gang have another system for upholding the beliefs of the Numbers Gang, which are called the *juries*.

7.3.2. The Juries

For gangs to be successful operationally, they are organised along “components” called “juries”. The twelve points or top structures of the gangs oversee these processes. Parker Lewis (2006) describes these “components” as a series of *juries* made up of the seniors from the twelve points, and these *juries* deal with exceptional circumstances. She further explains that:

“A jury is defined in the dictionary as a body of persons (usually twelve) sworn in to render a verdict or selected to award prizes or to try final issues of fact in civil or criminal cases and pronounce a verdict ” (Parker Lewis, 2016: 95).

The research participants explained the different *juries* of the gangs. These details are discussed below.

Juries of frontline

This means the young recruits of the gangs must defend the “organisation” and must be ready to stab.

Juries of schools/skole

This component is where they undergo training in the Number, how to be united, disciplined, and how and when to use violence.

Juries of offices/juriese van volle kantore

This position is for promotion in the gang. An ‘office’ is allocated to the incumbent until the fully trained member is ready to take up a senior position in the gang.

Juries of condemns

In this component are those who were severely injured during gang fights or stabbings of officials. As a result, they are disabled, may have amputated limbs or lose eyesight. They are regarded as unfit for gang activities, but the gang can still utilise their knowledge if needed.

Juries of farms/juriese van plase

They are the gang members that are old and unfit. If they reach the age of 50, they must go to the *farm* and rest (like retirement). They will not be active anymore but can give verbal assistance in need by using their gang experience.

Juries of stemela

If a person is transferred from one correctional centre to another, he must identify himself through his position in the Number on his arrival.

Juries of cases/sake

It refers to those who have outstanding cases and will be “locked up” in a “secret place” (in the gang they will say they *baita/bytela* his docket. Which means that the docket is being locked in an imaginary safe and will be dealt with at a later stage). The case will be handled by the higher authority, the Twelve Points.

These *juries* denote a system of status stratification with a division of responsibilities aimed at enhancing and protecting the interests of the Numbers gang. The system also offers a ‘relief programme’ for disability and retirement. Through these juries, the gang provides considerable psychological support to their members for the effective functioning of the Numbers Gang. The Numbers Gang's internal structures have histories of several generations and still exist; therefore, understanding the structure goes some way towards developing strategies that are most effective in dealing with them. (Densley, 2014: 527).

7.3.3. Punishment and Disciplinary procedures

Research participants explained that punishment follows an offence that violates the gang's rules. Gang members who break the rules will be punished differently depending on the violation. Punishment is rule-bound. The offender will appear before a ‘court’ where he is given an opportunity to give his version *about the charge*, assisted by the *melly* (lawyer). Participants explained that the 28-gang do not have a *melly*; you will face the consequences without a legal representative if you do wrong. The 28-gang can also find a gang member guilty of breaking gang rules, and the perpetrator can be punished with a sexual act (usually rape) or by stabbing an official to correct his wrongdoing. According to Parker Lewis (2006), they practice *one-time shotgun* during the gang ceremonies, which gives the inspector the power to do his work and opens the session at the twelve points. The *two-time shotgun* allows the *nyanga* (doctor) to proceed with the initiation. The *shotgun* ritual is also used to close meetings.

Participant C4 explains:

“The *one-time shotgun* is also a military command action by opening the meeting at the Twelve Points. In cases where inmates disobey the rules of the gangs, it will be discussed in an “internal court” who will handle the case. In most cases the top structure or parliament will determine punishment usually involving violence”.

Misconduct of gang members and the disciplinary procedures followed are like police arrests. The investigating officer (*inspector*) will investigate the transgressor, who will report the misconduct to the rest of the gang during the morning *seeko* (meeting). *Captain 2 (wireless)* will put handcuffs around his wrist (imaginary) and hand him over to the *sergeant major*, who will hand him over to *sergeant 2* who oversees the ‘awaiting trials’. *Sergeant major* will address *sergeant 2* in the following manner during the handover as explained by research participants C16 and C10:

“*Salute sergeant 2, nompangela ek is skangaga met n manskap, bytela in bloedrooi boeie, ek sal pakamisa sy stem by die twaalf punte*”. (I greet you sergeant 2, I have one of your men cuffed, and I would like him to appear before the twelve points /parliament.) Captain 2 will approach Madaganie (in charge of the number two’s: “*Hom Madaganie op die pasellie van die gronde van die twee’s, nompangela ek chaise jou stem, daai nompangela skombizo*” (On your grounds of the number two’s, I need to talk to you, for that reason skombizo (27)). Madagenie approaches sergeant 2: “*Salute sergeant 2 vir die werke wat jy gedala het, ek sal pakamisa jy staan sewe tree terug op jou bloedrooi pos*”. (Salute sergeant 2 for the work you have done, I command you to stand seven steps back on your red post). Madagenie will ask the transgressor: “*Is jy vol waar jy staan?*” (Do you know why you are here?) He will answer: “*Salute*”. (Yes).

During this process Melly (“lawyer”) will be present to defend the transgressor, he can ask for a lenient punishment for example, smacks through the face. He will be instructed to kneel down with both hands and knees on the ground. Then Madagenie will announce: “*Die bloedrooi boeie wat rus in jou manhla, sal ons guytela met n bloedrooi masjilon/masjilo*”. (The blood red cuffs on your wrist, will be removed with a masjilon (a bar of green soap in a sock). The rest of the twelve points/ parliament will get turns to hit him on his back, both sides of his spine.

7.3.4. Seeko (Gang Meetings)

I had conversations with research participants, especially to get a better understanding of the the ‘*seeko*’ process. According to research participants, the *Seeko* can be explained as a meeting between the *inspectors (glas)* and *captains (draad/wireless)* of the 28, 27 and 26. These meetings are meant to ensure order and discipline in the camps and typically occur early mornings before unlocking and in the afternoon after locking up. According to Steinberg (2004: 23), “every night the *glas* and *draad* of the 28s meet with the *glas* and *draad* of the 27s, and the *glas* and *draad* of the 26s, in a forum called the *Valcross*. Only the *glas* is allowed to speak at the *Valcross*. The *draad (wire)* must remain silent; he is the one who will report back to the 28s what happened at the *Valcross*. The two 28s are not allowed to speak directly to the 26s. They communicate through the 27s” who are the upholders of the law, and mediate between the

other two gangs (Steinberg 2004: 23). This meeting also ensures a handover process, from the 26 and 27 who are active during the day to the 28s, active during the night.

This ritual takes place every day. Sunrise means it is time for the 27 and 26-gangs to work (gang activities). The 28-gang will explain what happened during the night (their time is sundown). The 27-gang representing the 26-gang will inform the 28-gang about their day ahead. If they are busy with recruitment processes or promotions, they need to inform each other. If the gang needs to take blood, for example, by stabbing an official, they must inform each other. This process of information sharing is called “*baliza*”. After the correctional officials lock up the inmates at the end of the day, the same process will be repeated, only now the 27/26 hand over to the 28’s (Sundown). If the 27/26 want to engage in gang activity after lock-up, they need to buy time (get permission) from the 28-gang. The same applies if the 28-gang want to engage in gang activities during the day. According to Steinberg (2004), at the meeting after lock-up, the *glas* ‘*bugles*’ (announces) the recruitment to the 27s, who, in turn, pass on the information to the 26s. (Steinberg, 2004:22)

The ‘*seeko*’ is a well-known tradition of the gangs in prison and is highly respected by all gang members. Everyone must be silent, while the *glas* and *draad* of 27 and 28 provide feedback to each other. This process demands respect from the rest of the gangs, and non-gang members will be excluded from the proceedings. After the process the gang will gather in their respective groups, show the gang sign, and agree by announcing ‘*salute*’. It is the responsibility of the 27-gang to inform the 26-gang of what was discussed at the ‘*Valcross*’. ‘*Valcross*’, as explained by participants, is the form in which the gangs must position themselves because they have different ‘*grounds*’ (territory) in the cell.

Research participants explained that these *grounds* are called *gesnyde grond* (meaning that each camp has its own territory in the room), the 26 and 27-gang are on the right side of the cell, and the 28-gang is on the left side. When a new cellmate enters the cell, the 28-gang who sleeps on the left, will announce *Hom Nkilikijaan stofwolk het gelandela ek sal gwala by jou, as jy kamka by my* (The 28 are telling the 27’s that the new arrivals are here, go and find out who they are and report back to me). This explains when Pou saw the dust cloud of Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan when they were on their way to the mines. The 28s are the first to see new inmates entering as their territory is on the left side of the cell.

7.3.5. Managing Conflict

This sub-section discusses how prison life in South African Correctional Facilities is characterised by an elaborate system of gang activity, through which inmate-on-inmate violence is mediated. This can be

described as a procedure in which the Gang discusses disputes with the assistance of the senior members to reach a settlement. The courtyard for exercise purposes is the ideal place for discussing disputes and equally crucial for gang fights. If the gangs cannot reach an agreement, the only option left is to take up their weapons. Conflict in correctional facilities is a daily occurrence. There are three different types of attacks, inmate on inmate, inmate on official, and self-inflicted attacks. These attacks can either be impulsive and spontaneous or well-planned and premeditated. Muntingh (2009) stated that:

“How the prison is organised and how individuals interact with one another shape a dynamic environment and the role of specific situational factors in mediating violence have emerged as crucial to understanding prison violence” (Muntingh, 2009: 10).

Factors such as gang rivalries, disputes over money or drugs, or gang related incidents contribute to violent attacks.

Steinberg (2004) provides insight into the dynamics of prison violence, specifically within the context of ritualised gang activity. Involvement in gangs can be more closely linked to a choice restricted by the highly coercive structures of the prison. Gang involvement requires a certain familiarity with the use of violence, particularly if an inmate has ambitions to influence gang activities. Butler et al. (2008) states that:

“In the prison environment, aggressive responses may thus be an important mechanism to demonstrate “toughness” and “manliness”, to protect self-identity and for social status” (Butler et al., 2008: 867).

In prison, set-up gang fights usually happen when something serious occurs in the gang. It is a severe transgression if, for example, a 27 or a 26-gang member have sexual intercourse with a member of the 28 silver lines, or a 28-gang member robbed a 27 or a 26-gang member of their money or drugs. Prior to gang fights, the soldiers of the camps will engage in minor skirmishes. This is seen as activating the soldiers for the “*battlefield*”.

The courtyard is a common space for gang fights. What I observed in the facilities corroborates the information provided by the research participants. The members of the 27 and 26-gangs will always be on the east side (sunrise) of the courtyard, and members of the 28-gang will be on the west side (where the sun sets). The *glas* and *draad* of the 27-gang will be standing in the middle (*Valcros*) and will act as mediators. The 26-gang are not allowed to talk to the 28s in this setup, because 26 was “*born*” in prison, while the 27 and the 28-gangs are more prominent figures in the historical gang lore. The 27-gang took ownership of the 26-gang, and they are communicating via the 27s.

To resolve the problem, the 26 *glas* and *draad* will approach the *Valcross* (where the glass and wire of 27 are standing). They will make their statement to the two 27-gang members and stand a few steps away. Thereafter, the 28 *glas* and *draad* will approach the same *Valcross* and will hear from the two 27's what the 26-gang have to say. After that the *glas* and *draad* of the two camps will provide feedback to others in their camp. Leaders will inform them about what to say during the follow-up discussion. This can go on for days until they reach an agreement. They will "pick up" their knives (*bayonets/kapsabels*) and fight if they cannot agree.

Research participants were clear in their explanation that, according to the history of Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan they promised each other not to fight again and after their first fight they proceeded to bury the '*kapsabels*' (swords) "under the *Valcross*" (crossroads). Research participant C 16 explain that they must approach the *Valcross* (crossroads) if they wish to fight again. The 26-gang is not discussed here since they were not present during this time. The *kapsabels* (swords), two dockets from the mines, and *gunjas* (ranks) are illustrated under the cross. This also explains that they must also approach the crossroads should they wish to be promoted within the gang structure. Research participant C7 stated that if they cannot resolve the matter, the number will ask for blood, and in this case 27 and 26 will join forces against the 28-gang. Research participant C 8 explained that all gang members from highest to lowest ranks will British (*the Sabela term for wear the battlefield dress*) armed with knives, sharp objects, padlocks, or anything which can cause harm. The gang, who will start the fight, will wait for their *generals* to give the call "UP". This call means '*Pick up your bayonet.*' Research participant C11 stated that before the fights start, the non-gang members will move further away or closer to the wardens and dog handlers. Usually, this indicates to correctional officers that a gang fight is about to happen.

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter described the rules guiding the behaviour of the Numbers gang with specific emphasis on recruitment, initiation, conflict management and the sanctioning of transgressions of such rules. From this discussion, it follows that prison gangs are, in fact, rule-bound institutions and that the use of violence is regulated by systems and procedures. This view of the 'orderly' nature of interactions both within and between prison gangs stands in contrast to popular perceptions of gangs as disorderly and chaotic.

CHAPTER 8: LINKS BETWEEN NUMBERS GANG AND STREET GANGS

The Numbers Gang is a prison organisation contained and active within the walls of South African correctional facilities. More recently, however there has been talk about a more fluid relationship between prison and street gangs. This chapter explores the interlinkages between the Numbers gang and street gangs. But before doing so the discussion focuses on critical differences between the “free societies” (outside the prison context) where street gangs emerge and the “captive societies” where prison gangs operate as well how these gang groups link with each other.

The interviews conducted as part of this inquiry support the view that prison gangs are no longer as insular as they used to be in the past. Many interviewees confirmed that Numbers gang secrets have spilt onto the streets of Cape Town’s townships. In addition, they talked about how street gang culture has become imported into Numbers gang culture. Whilst some researchers (Pinnock 1987, 1997; Steinberg 2004; Shaw 1976) have commented on a new emerging relationship between street and prison gangs, the interviews conducted for this study bring detail to bear on the processes that have contributed to the forging of new relationships.

In the section to follow, the discussion focuses on critical differences between street and prison gang cultures.

8.1. Literature review on street and prison gangs

Many South African researchers (Steinberg (2004), Pinnock and Douglas-Hamilton (1997; 2016), Parker Lewis (2006), Kynoch (1999), Glaser (2000) and Kinnes (2000) have emphasised that the Numbers Gang were entirely a prison-based organisation with a secretive style of operation. It is only in more recent years that changes have become visible with closer links between street and prison gangs.

The question about prison-based criminal groups spreading to the outside world has also been receiving attention in international literature. Skarbek (2014), Lessing (2014), Sykes (2007), Etter (1999), Morales and Waldorf (1993), and Concha and Vigil (2010) have been investigating the processes that facilitate this migration from the total institution to the outside world.

Although the difference between prison and street gangs may seem evident at the outset, it is important to differentiate between the two types of organisations. According to Concha and Vigil (2010) street

gangs are made up of male adolescents who have grown up together, usually as cohorts in low-income neighbourhoods. They are bonded together by a sub-cultural ethos that maintains an anti-social stance and embraces unconventional values and norms. Etter (1999) emphasises that street gangs claim territory, are self-supporting, have a secret language and establish their own rules and codes of conduct. Their customs are passed to new members by rites of passage from one generation to the next. For Ortiz (2015) gang membership and leadership structures in prison are rigid and not susceptible to the changes common among street gangs. Prison gangs, however, are more organised with their chain of command.

As has already been stated, the Numbers Gang in South African correctional facilities consist of three divisions or camps, which represent their founder members, the 26 (Marubaan), 27 (Nkilikijaan) and the 28 (Nongoloza). Research participants explained that these three camps have strong links to street gangs and that both prison and street gangs have an organisational structure.

The literature suggests that prison gangs are different from other gangs. Lyman (1989) defined prison gangs as an organisation that operates within the prison system, consisting of a restricted group of inmates who have established an organised chain of command and are governed by an established code of conduct. Morales and Waldorf (1993) identified two dominant subcultures within the prison, the thief and the convict. Both had their origins in the outside world. Neser (1993) too made a distinction between two types of prison subculture. According to him the thief subculture is maintained by professional criminals who are not interested in leadership positions in prison and a bandit subculture whose members manipulate their companions in search of power and status in prison.

Arguably, the prison subculture developed primarily to adapt to the circumstances within the total institution. Inmates within the prison environment create value systems and engage in behaviours designed to cope with their constrained existence. Inmates make the most of the limited resources available inside correctional facilities. They establish daily routines that give meaning to, and purpose in, their lives. They thus engage in forms of adaptation in response to the exigencies of the external environment.

Both Pinnock (2016) and Steinberg (2004) have brought forward evidence that point to increasing alliances between street gangs and prisons gangs. The wall that used to separate prison gangs from street gangs seemed to have become more permeable (Pinnock, 2016:112). According to Steinberg (2004) street gangs are increasingly adopting cultural elements associated with prison gangs. This has raised the question as to what facilitated new linkages and alliances between gangs on the inside and those on the outside.

Drawing on the interviews it has become clear that the structures of the Numbers Gang continue their operations outside the confines of the correctional system. Typically, these gangs consist of a select group of inmates who have an organised hierarchy and the street gangs have evolved so that today they operate under the Numbers Gang hierarchy.

8.2. Transformation of gangs

In 1994 the country experienced a severe outbreak of prison violence. A weakened Numbers Gang was the outcome of protracted conflict on the inside. The damage was compounded when Lonte, the leader of the Americans street gang, returned to prison in 1996 as a 26-gang member and declared war on the 28s. Turf wars that were being fought between gangs on the streets now spilled over into prison.

According to Pinnock (2016:113) by the late 1990s, two of the significant street gangs, the Americans and members of the Firm, were using Numbers Gang rituals. New inmates who had never been to prison arrived in cells claiming to be Numbers Gang members. They were able to Sabella and report on their ranks. Realities on the ground continue to bear out Pinnock's findings particularly at remand detainee centres. According to research participants interviewed for this study, the older and more experienced Numbers Gang members were unhappy about these developments as the drugs lords on the streets seemed to be stealing the Numbers tradition (Pinnock, 2016: 113).

Research participants explained that these developments go back to 1994/1995 of the gang wars between the Americans gang, affiliated with the 27s and 26s, and the Firm gang affiliated with the 28s. Both leaders of these two gangs were in prison, and they decided to continue the fight that originated on the streets within the walls of the Pollsmoor Correctional facility. Both leaders commenced by hoisting their Gang flags. From the information received from informants, hoisting gang flags inside prison is an imaginary act that can take on many forms, including slogans, hand signs and colour coded clothing. This happened at Pollsmoor Maximum Facility on D1 and D2 units, respectively.

Further results collected from the interviews with participants were broadly in line with Pinnock (2016) who argued that the reason for this change had to do with turf wars fought between gangs on the streets that now embraced Number's allegiances. Leaders of street gangs appointed themselves as generals and in turn appointed captains, inspectors etc. As research participant C9 explained:

"Today anybody can become a member of the Numbers Gang, as street gang members become Numbers Gang members before entering prison. Those who are family of gang bosses will have senior positions in the gang. We called it, *stongas sonder fojiso or jou nommer haal nie asem nie*. This means that you don't have any proof of being initiated into the gang".

From the short review above, it became clear from Pinnock's exposition that by the second decade after the end of apartheid, some elements of the cultural life spawned by Nongoloza had been absorbed into most street gangs. As research participant C1 confirmed:

"All street gangs have adopted the Numbers Gang structures, the Sabela and the *gunjas*, they are being promoted on the outside to *a major or a lieutenant* which never happened before".

8.3. Transitional changes

Street gangs had long been local affairs, defending a specific neighbourhood or township turf to sell cannabis, liquor or mandrax. The growth of organised crime networks however would change the way in which criminal businesses operate. Street gangs are now immersed in global drug-trafficking networks. With the opening of borders to the world after 1994, foreign syndicates arrived and began to muscle in on the various illegal markets. With the influx of drugs and huge profits derived from the introduction of heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine (tik), the structures and practices of the Numbers Gang adapted to the new illicit economy. According to Pinnock (2016), by 2000, intelligence officials estimated that local gangs were in control of about 90% of the mandrax, cocaine and dagga markets working with Nigerians, Moroccans, Chinese and other syndicates.

8.4. Present dynamics between Street and Numbers Gang

The Department of Correctional Services has been slow to respond to the shift in the dynamics between the Street and Numbers Gangs. In the light of the changes referred to above, the absence of a gang combat strategy for Correctional Services is glaring.

Major street gangs are aligned with the 28 prison gang. Such gangs include the Terrible Josters, Mongrels, G-units, the Firm, Mobsters and Junior Mafias. The street gangs which are mainly aligned with the 26 and 27 Prison gangs, are the Junky Funky Kids, Americans, Sexy Boys, Fast Guns, Clever Kids and Junior Cisco Yakees. Currently, one street gang, which operates in the Mitchell Plain and Strand areas, is known as the 27's or *Skombizo boys*, and consists of predominantly 27-gang members who operate under the Numbers Gang hierarchy. On admission to prison, they will undoubtedly be accepted as members of the 27 Numbers Gang. Furthermore, research participants informed me that, like in the Eastern Cape, a gang called "*malightas van sonop*" is a prison term used on the streets to refer to a young gang member who is affiliated with the 26 Numbers Gang. When they come to prison, they will join the 26-gang.

According to the interviewees, the leadership of the Numbers gang and street gangs seem willing to defend the new alliances between the gang structures inside and outside prison. Research participants argued that senior Numbers Gang members who benefitted from street gangs had a point when they argued that the Numbers Gang, with specific reference to the 28 and the 27-gang, was established outside the prison walls in the late 1800s by Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan. The 26 numbers gang was established inside the walls of Point Durban Natal prison. Because the 27 and 28-gangs were established outside the prison walls, some senior members of the Numbers gang believe they are entitled to recruit members from gangs outside. But to embark on such recruitment, protocol requires permission from the top structure of the Numbers Gang.

The link between these two gang groupings is further facilitated by Sabela as language of communication. The Numbers Gang now seem to influence what happens outside their immediate environment. On the other hand, the street gangs can offer the Numbers Gang money and drugs. In this context, the formerly secretive organisation, the Numbers gang, have had to adjust. As Steinberg (2004) explains:

“It was obvious that all had changed in recent years, and dramatically so, certainly in the Western Cape at any rate. The street gangs, which had transmogrified into massive criminal empires in the later apartheid years had taken Number lore and spread it all over Cape Town’s ghettos” (Steinberg, 2004: xviii).

The Numbers Gang's hierarchical command structure and secret language (Sabela) seemed to be useful tools for adapting to the changing dynamics of the illicit market. The hierarchical command structure of the Numbers Gang, for example, played a pivotal role in the organisation of the expanding illicit drug markets. Research participants interviewed for this study, argued that the rank structure of the Numbers Gang contributed to the success of illicit business, as each rank had its own function and played a specific role. In turn, street gangs use the Numbers Gang structures to build and strengthen their position within the drug economy. To this end, they aspire to make the prison landscape resemble the streets as much as possible. This implied compromising aspects of the institutional culture of the Numbers Gangs (Skywalker, 2016:8).

The evolution of new alliances between gang structures inside and outside prison are not unique to South Africa. Developments elsewhere in the world confirm the expanding power of prison gangs within the illicit drug economy. As Lessing (2014) puts it:

“From Los Angeles and El Paso to El Salvador and Brazil, prison gangs have established authority over local drug traffickers and street gangs, organising them into extensive and lucrative prison-based criminal networks” (Lessing 2014: 1).

Whereas in the past the Numbers Gang were entirely prison businesses with secret signs, imaginary dress codes and a secretive language, shifts in organised crime would require adaptations. By the late 1990s the presence of syndicate bosses in prison cells projected street rivalries into the prison milieu in a much more forceful way. Isolation and secrecy gave way to new forms of exchange between those on the inside and those on the streets. As Pinnock (2016) has argued, the gang rituals formerly practised in correctional services have become part of street gang culture too. The interviewees also indicated that senior Numbers Gang members are tasked to lead street gang members' recruiting process and play a vital role in demonstrating their knowledge and skills. Upon release, as argued by some interviewees, knowledge acquired within the Numbers Gang is being transmitted into street gang processes. According to them the *glas* and *draad* of the Numbers Gang are skilful negotiators. Back on the streets their skills and experience are of pivotal importance in negotiating peace between warring gangs. Doing time in prison and carrying the mark of the "Number" constitutes political capital in the gang underworld. Parker Lewis (2006) explains that:

"The Numbers Gang are accommodating and, with some 90% of prisoners being released, it is inevitable that The Number through its released members should see the value of making a play for power and control of the drug market and illegal abalone market once back in society" (Parker-Lewis 2006: 11).

The Numbers, according to the views of the research respondents, have made the street gangs more organised. Furthermore, street gang members look up to the Numbers Gang members for guidance. It is not uncommon that those in leadership positions of street gangs are Numbers. According to those interviewed, increasingly the hierarchical structure of street gangs resembles that of the Numbers Gang. The roles of some ranks however differ. For example, *soldiers* in street gangs are responsible for protecting the territory, and the *madagenie* oversee all operations and the *general* controls the territory. The *glas* and *draad* have similar roles as in correctional facilities, by investigating and reporting. When they are incarcerated, they will report to Numbers Gang leaders, followed by street gang bosses who offer money to keep their ranks. These findings are directly in line with previous findings, as explained by Pinnock (2016:115) that high-ranking street gang bosses entered prison and bought their way into the upper ranks of the Number. After being discharged, they possess new powers and have developed new networks (Pinnock, 2016:115). But does that mean that street gangs are eroding the power of the Numbers gang? According to some of the interviewees, the Numbers Gang is being weakened by street gangs – particularly in remand detention facilities. In correctional centres for sentenced offenders, however, the Numbers gang continue to dominate.

8.5. Recruitment: Street gangs into the Numbers Gang

Technology has always been instrumental to gang operations in correctional facilities. Data collected through the interviews indicate that criminal gangs across the Western Cape are using new technologies in their criminal activity. Recruitment from street gangs to the Numbers Gang comes with costs, and money must be paid to the Numbers Gang through a voucher system and through cellular phones. Gangs are deploying and adapting technology with ever greater skill and to greater effect. For example, a money market voucher is a preferable method to fund drug dealings and recruitment in prison. Research participants explained that the voucher system is convenient to use as simply present your original green ID and cell phone number to the teller with the amount you wish to transfer. You then select a 4-digit PIN number of your choice, and the cashier will give you the cash slip containing your 10-digit withdrawal number. You then send the receiver the 10-digit withdrawal number and the 4-digit PIN and tell him/her how much money you have sent. The money can then be collected at any Shoprite Checkers store. Once the gang member in prison receives this information, he provides it to someone outside who collects the money.

According to the research participants, street gang members obey prison gang orders and adopt the rituals of the Numbers Gang. As noted earlier, the use of Sabela has now extended to street gangs and are pivotal to gang operations and the recruitment of new members. As the research participants indicated, the recruitment of Numbers Gang members on the outside strengthens the Numbers Gang with what they call *manskappe*. Any further promotion will take place at centres for sentenced offenders. Awaiting trial centres are breeding grounds for the recruitment of street gang members into senior positions in the gangs. The stage of recruitment is mandatory for all newcomers to ensure a proper introduction to the rituals and rules of the gang. It would appear – on the strength of the evidence – that the Number now operates beyond the prison walls and that new forms of alliances between prison and street gangs have been forged in response to the demands of evolving crime and drugs markets.

8.6. Influence of Numbers Gangs on the Street Gangs

Drawing on the interviews, the discussion now turns to consider how members of street gangs are being prepared for being part of the Numbers Gang. According to interviewees the Numbers Gang in the Western Cape closed their ‘bloodlines’ and in doing so they no longer required stabbing as a requirement for membership. It was no longer necessary to take blood by stabbing either wardens or non-gang members to qualify for membership. Recruitment into the Numbers gang has thus become easier. As they pointed out, inmates would arrive in prison claiming to be Numbers Gang members. On the face of it, fluency in Sabela supported their claims. Pinnock (2016) confirmed such developments:

“Prison gangs will continue to flourish because they’re a response to the system of incarceration. But their members are now cooped-up custodians of a useable tradition for purposes beyond the reach. Instead of an association to create tough men annealed in the flames of violence, their closely guarded traditions are now increasingly badging of honour for new recruits passing through the system on the way to higher things” (Pinnock, 2016: 117).

The status of powerful street gang leaders allowed them to negotiate their rank in the Numbers Gang. Once incarcerated, the street gangs bought their way into the Numbers Gang to bypass the taxing rites of passage that were once required to join. In the line of duty at Pollsmoor Correctional Facility, I found several letters in the facility during search operations. These letters accounted for how some members of street gangs were granted instant membership of the Numbers gang without being initiated according to the traditional rules.

Historically, training in gang rules and codes of Numbers Gang took place under experienced gang members. During interviews, I asked the research participants to explain the meaning of short prison words and phrases that I had collected in Correctional Facilities. All the research participants explained that these short phrases were indicative of processes that ‘corrupted the Number’. By this phrase they referred to street gang members who did not follow the traditional recruitment processes but still became senior members of the Numbers Gang. When asking participants why they use the phrase “corrupting the Number”, they explained that such forms of recruitment were ‘dishonest’ and eroded the traditions and power of the Numbers Gang; Research participants explained that those who corrupt or betray the Number are referred to as a biblical devil possessing a tail and horns. As stated by research participant C 11:

“We are not supposed to accept street gangs in the Numbers Gang structures, they must first join to be part of us. Any street gang member must go through the initiation processes to become a Numbers Gang member”.

The following section explains how a member can “dress himself in equal rank” in a process called the “*Uvugu*” – a phrase that determines one’s gang affiliation and identity. To explain the content of these letters, I asked participants C7, C9 and C14 to translate these letters written in Sabela. They explained that the words used in these letters reveal gang membership. These gang members must learn the complicated unwritten codes, including symbols and words with hidden meanings, and non-written language, consisting primarily of verbal calls, slang words and hand gestures.

salute fondela gloof pumalanga maak neg 26 o bo op my
matambas 303 die son opskem het mee salute
van Nember dees van luitenant het ek nie gemaak
nie kan dit is ek chaise gwala put 303 sal my wys
het om te dala ek is tag stek bene om te faenda
et wet en wille van maubaan en om te moek gte die
spierst vlag in bloedrotte lye koon en die nomme gang
26 of nat rompagela stupas

My respondents translated the above letter as follows:

Salute the belief of pumalanga (26), my legs/bones are still strong as the son arose, it rises with salute. Those on the outside (not written in the gang rule book), I will not recognise them, if I must come across with such, my 303 rifles, will show me what to do. I am still strong to do the work of pumalanga and to march under the pure white flag with a thin red line, a crown and the number 26 explaining a member of the 26-gang.

This letter to follow indicates a member of the 27-gang and translates as follows: Salute slavilanga, my belief the 27-gang, is we work with blood. My legs are still strong to do the work of 27. Those on the outside (not written in the gang rule book), I will not recognise them, and if I must come across such, my kapsabel (knife) will show me what to do. My legs are still strong to march under the blood-red flag, two swords showing sunrise, seven six-point stars, the horn of the bull, and the number 27, for that reason I say skombizo (27-gang).

Salute slavingalanga fondela siko unapondo maak
neg 27 of my matambas stek bene om te
faenda met wike dees van luitenant het ek
nie gemaak nie gwala die kapsabel sal
my wys hoe om te dala dork bene neg om
te march onder daa bloed rooi vlag twee kapsabel
orkruis fute wat op wys sewe ses punt sterre
vlaetwot beeshona en die nomme kutamp is
drei rompagela ek maak bene skombizo.

The rule of the Numbers Gang, and the “uvugu” which refers to the inmate’s identity, is pivotal to the admission process for any person who enters the facility. Nowadays some Numbers Gang members send this important gang information to the outside to prepare their fellow street gang members for prison. The Numbers Gang members I interviewed referred to this as ‘corrupting the number’.

The following letter explains the British Army uniform, which is an imaginary uniform used by the Numbers Gang members as identity.

Dit my sel ja voldel as "Full Force member"
 sojdt in die Camp 27.
 Blood red boots binnor en biter stamp 27
 14 Blood red buckles 7 on each cart stamp 27
 Blood red jumpers. Buckle in khaki met
 4 Blood red buttons stamp 27. Bigest op
 my link met Blood red hand vates stamp
 27. 303 op my right met 26 in die magazine
 en 1 in die loop full number 27.
 My blood red special book met 27 blood
 red special biter. Khaki helmet met blood
 red band en blood red best stamped
 27. Swart pen en rooi pen.

It translates as follows:

You will see me as a full force member in the camp of 27 with blood-red boots, inside and outside stamped 27, with 14 red buckles, 7 on each side with a stamp of 27. I wear khaki trousers and a jacket (army uniform), with 7 blood red buttons and the stamp 27, a khaki helmet with a red band stamped 27. I have a bayonet on my left side with a blood-red handle with a stamp of 27, a .303 rifle on my right with 6 bullets in the magazine, 1 in the chamber, according to the Number. I have a red special book, with 27 pages, with a red pen (to record blood issues) and a black pen (to kill).

Research participants further explained that above mentioned letters had to reach the outside through the post or cellular phones or via visitation areas. As Lessing (2014) explains:

"Prison-gang's coercive power is sufficiently 'targeted' at precisely those outside actors who obey prison-gang demands. This limit has shifted, due to both an accumulation of technologies of coordination, including cell phones and gang constitutions creating countless potential recruits" (Lessing 2014: 5).

These letters highlight the relationship between the Street and Numbers Gangs. It is not implausible to consider that street gangs will knowingly join the Numbers Gang to partake in its activities, providing insight into the observation of dual membership between these gangs.

The content of the letters mentioned above is what they called in gang terms "*the uvugu*" as explained earlier, which will assist newcomers in identifying themselves as Numbers Gang members. On admission, the gang will ask who you are and where you are coming from. *Gwalaganjaan oemfethu?* Street gang leaders project power by answering this question, underlining the importance of the letters. The power street gangs receive from the Numbers Gang have returns for inmates once they are released into society. As members of the Numbers gang, they receive recognition and respect on the streets. The use of cell phones in correctional facilities further strengthens the relationships between these gang groups as they regularly contact each other.

Experienced Numbers Gang members argue that a man (*Ndota*) in prison earns his manhood with violence and nothing else. Another finding explains that the Numbers Gang honours honest promotion and follows the *skrif op die klip, die vel en die plank*, which translates to their different gang rules of the camps. The gang rules demand the need to have that information, as it was written by Paul Mabazo (*Pou*), and the only way to get such information is to be a member of the Numbers Gang. As Pinnock (1995) explains:

“The code amongst them is not actually a piece of paper that you carry, you have to remember *Die Boek, Die Wet, Die Plank*” (Pinnock 2016: 108)

According to research participants, in understanding this code *Die Boek* refers to the gang’s rule book, *Die wet* refers to the laws of the gang, while *Die Plank* refers to the laws of the 27-gang.

8.7. Exploring the relationships between the Numbers Gang and Street Gangs

Informants explained that street gangs operate from houses known as *poste* (posts). Their focus is on drug smuggling and defending territory. The Numbers Gang structures are highly valued in these street gangs as they provide them with a sense of accountability to the gang leader. Research participants explained that people must guard the territory (checking on who enters and exits their territory); *soldiers* need to protect the post and report any threats. They also appoint an accountant called a *sif* (safe). The gang also has an inspector for investigations, and those in charge will be called the *maspaal, band* or *nek*. Killings are carried out by “hitmen” - a role comparable to *Captain 1* in the Numbers Gang (the person who must execute stabbings).

Research participant C3 emphasised that the Numbers Gang are not the same anymore. He stated:

“These days prison is about drugs. If you come from a well-off family, who is dealing in drugs on the outside, you will be promoted by the gangs as in the following day. The drug trade and street gangs are taking over”.

According to other research participants nowadays some street gang members who enter prison are already trained in Sabela and are familiar with most of the Numbers Gang secrets. As explained earlier, cellular phones strengthen the ties between these groups. In the case where they had contact with the gang leaders of outside gangs, they will say:” *ek het die nek se stem gekry*” (I spoke to the boss). These are mainly used as a means of security to ensure a prison inmate’s survival. They continue: “*Die dondo praat* (cell phones are playing a huge role) and make anything possible”.

When a Numbers Gang member is released from prison, the street gang will organise a welcome-home party where discussions on new gang activities take place. Part of his welcome home will be as they call it, “*sterk bene/strong bones*” or *sterk maak*, which means the gang will assist him by providing him with

drugs (*gebruik 1*) to sell and a firearm (*yster*) for self-protection. These rituals also strengthen the ties between the street gangs and the Numbers Gang. Salo (2016) similarly described how ex-prisoners commanded considerable respect in the townships. It is essential to highlight those ex-offenders are returning to the same communities and social networks where they reconnect with the street gangs. In return, the former inmates assist street gangs in creating a society of its own by those who live according to the gang's code.

8.8. The weakening of old traditions

As said before, for many decades the Numbers Gang was entirely prison-based and only operated within the walls of correctional facilities. As structures they adhered to strict procedures and elaborate sets of rules. The Numbers gang had a well-defined stratification system accompanied by a detailed ranking order with clearly defined responsibilities. In recent years old traditions have been giving way as changes in illicit markets occurred. Today the relationships between street gangs and the Numbers gang respond to new pressures. At one level, the street gangs are closing in on the Numbers Gang operations. On another level, the Numbers now have a new presence on the streets. Old traditions have had to adjust. As Steinberg (2016) explains, “half-baked” 26s and 28s now roam the streets. They had not been initiated on the inside but rather on the streets. When such initiates enter the prisons they claim to be *ndotas* even though they were never initiated as per the traditional methods of stabbing, being beaten in front of fellow inmates, or having spent time “*agter die berge*”. (The meaning of *agter die berge* is when a gang member is in solitary confinement for gang-related stabbings).

Steinberg (2004) describes inmates who entered the facility but were not exposed to the recruitment process, as ‘half baked’ members. These ‘half-baked’ members featured dominantly in the conversations I conducted with participants. Significantly, research participant C13 noted that the number is no longer true to its roots because newcomers to prison enter as Numbers Gang members. A similar point was made by participants C6, C7 and C9. To that they added that many experienced members of the Numbers gang are unsatisfied with the ‘half-baked’ members.

8.9. Conclusion

This chapter has considered the evolving relationship between street and prison gangs. The two types of organisations stand in relation to one another. The nature of that inter-relationship has been responsive to changes in the broader crime markets within which gangs operate. Prominent street gangs have come

to borrow from the organisational structures and cultural habits of the Numbers gang. Such borrowing seemed to have been driven by the search for more effective market-related strategies in highly competitive illicit markets. Sabela, a once secretive tool of the Numbers gang, now has traction on the streets. Newcomers into prison arrive with 'ranks' earned and/or assigned on the street. Others seem to buy their way into a rank system that used to be subject to performance-based rules according to the cultural logic of the Numbers tradition. The data collected through the interviews with former inmates confirms that in terms of structure, operation and culture the Numbers gang of today is subject to forces of change.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

The research set out to describe key features of the Numbers Gang in a large South African prison. By and large, this study confirmed the findings of numerous studies on the Numbers Gang over the years. It also extended our knowledge regarding the functioning of the Numbers Gang in certain detailed respects, especially regarding tattooing and the arcane language known as Sabela. The study confirmed that the Numbers Gang is still pervasive in Pollsmoor prison and other South African correctional facilities, going by the reports of gang members. Violence, or the threat of it, is still a prominent feature of rivalry between the gangs. Finally, the narrative of the origin of the Number through the exploits of Nongoloza and his followers remains a potent story which gang members are required to learn on induction to the 28, 27 and 26 divisions of the Numbers Gang.

The initiation process for gang membership involves elaborate induction rituals based on the age-old founding myth of Nongoloza and Kilikijaan. The recruit must not only recount the history of these legendary figures but must also begin to master the gang language of Sabela. The recruitment process is primarily to strengthen the gangs for their survival. The research also highlighted some significant events that acted as ‘motivational hooks’, supporting the process of entering gangs. During the recruitment processes, the imaginary processes such as the award of uniforms and weapons are of great interest to new gang members.

According to Skywalker (2014) members of the Numbers gang are responsible for approximately one-quarter to one-half of all management problems in correctional facilities. They are more likely than non-gang members to be involved in gang violence, even after controlling for history of violence and other background factors. An important factor that motivates the inmates to join gangs in correctional facilities is their friends who are already gang members inside these facilities. They join the gangs for friendship and recognition. Others join for protection against other gangs when they are ill-treated by members of different gangs. Newcomers join the gangs for a myriad of reasons: for protection, safety, respect and access to power. All the respondents were convinced that improvements with regards to status, material benefits and safety could only be affected in a group situation.

Throughout the study of Sabela, it was clear that Sabela was still regarded as essential in the prison environment among Numbers Gang members. While Sabela could be relegated to ‘slang’ status, in fact the linguistic identity of Sabela hinges around non-linguistic features, such as body language, hand signs, etc., which lend stability to the code since its origin in the mining industry in the late 1800s.

Another feature of gang membership is the presence of tattoos. Most gang members are tattooed, of which they are proud. Tattooing is important for gang membership and demands loyalty and adherence from the gang member, as it signifies status and rank. On the streets tattooing is often associated with gangsterism, and respondents reflected that tattoos as visible markers were instrumental in bestowing respect on former inmates from other street gang groups. Correctional facilities and police holding cells appear to be a contributory factor to an increase in tattooing. Specific tattoo designs are for specific gang groups and are determined by gang affiliation and monitored by senior gang members. The tattoo of the Numbers Gang serves as a tool for identification, gang affiliation and level of authority. Once released from prison, however, visible tattoos may also become a serious hindrance to reintegration into their community and to employment.

A significant trend in recent years is the disappearance of the sharp division between those members of the 28s, 27s, and 26s inside prison and members of the gangs on the streets of the Cape Flats and elsewhere. The appearance and expansion of Numbers Gang members have been described earlier in this dissertation. The bigger street gangs find it important to strengthen their organisations and their markets. Important for this change in market related strategies was the hierarchical command structure, the secret language and internal discipline structures of the Numbers Gang. Thus, street gangs will also display well established hierarchies consisting of ‘middle ranks,’ shot callers, leaders. Their titles resemble those of the Numbers Gang. Given current developments it seems fair to conclude that street gangs and the Numbers Gang have inextricable links and share the powerful socialisation processes of the Numbers Gang. The Numbers Gang and street gangs may differ in their rhetorical ideologies but not in their practised ideologies.

Gangs are a problem across correctional facilities in South Africa and in the present circumstances, new inmates are often already a gang member. Those who enter the facilities who are not gang members, quickly become one for protection. Gang members enter correctional facilities with high levels of criminal activity in their background, immersion within sub-cultural codes and an established appetite for using violence. Such features facilitate the integration into the Numbers gang.

Overcrowding, so characteristic a feature of life on the inside of South African prisons, serve to increase the attraction of signing up for Numbers gang membership. To reduce overcrowding in correctional centres, the South African Criminal Justice System can limit unwarranted incarceration, ensuring prison is reserved for serious, persistent, and violent offenders for whom no alternative sanction is appropriate. However, additional efforts are needed to provide measures that enable minor and non-violent offenders to make amends for their wrongdoing and better address the root causes of offending.

The findings of this dissertation support those from other studies on this specific topic: gang involvement makes inmates vulnerable to committing violence as a part of adhering to the rules of the gang. Most gang-affiliated offenders will eventually re-enter society, which will become a concern for community safety. It is essential to reduce gang violence inside correctional centres and in the community. The research found considerable variation between different participants' experiences and sense of gang affiliation.

Because of the risks associated with gang-related behaviours and processes, gang members are at the highest risk of returning to correctional facilities. While considerable effort has been expended on the prevention of gang formation, little has been done to encourage disengagement from gangs, particularly on re-entry after serving a sentence. The other matter of great concern is the tendency of convicted criminals to re-offend. Recidivism is one of the most recurring issues facing the criminal justice system and many factors conspire to increase rates of recidivism.

We are often left with secondary information about the Numbers Gang, which is filtered through the lens of correctional officials or of prison records, each of which carries its own biases. The validity of prison record data is often difficult to establish due to the employment of different definitions across institutions and differences in disciplinary policies. Accumulating data from gang members is always challenging. Gang members who divulge gang secrets are subjected to severe disciplinary control by fellow members. In gang terms, they refer to the information they can offer as a "splint," which can be explained as a strip or a small piece of the original information.

There is however one mediating position, one standpoint that can, if cultivated correctly, stand both within and outside of these dynamics, namely that of the correctional officer. Over the course of 26 years, I have gathered a body of first-hand evidence and has gained safe and immediate access to ex-offenders who are still Numbers Gang members. As a function of this, the dissertation also compares the information collected with that which has previously been reported in the literature. The research thus brings to light the concerns through long-term yet trusting semi-structured interviews, something which has not been done before, nor can be done without the type of relationships that can only be developed over many years.

9.1. Research implications and recommendations

The study has implications for future gang research. For example, prison and street gangs serve similar functions (e.g., financial support) for their members, but the origins of the organisational types must be assessed separately. Some key questions that fall outside the scope of this research have been raised,

which may be interesting topics of investigation for future researchers. Gang researchers should return to the ethnographic study of correctional facilities with their culture as this will provide a fuller portrait of changes over time. In conjunction with the return of ethnographic studies, researchers must reintroduce context into the study of gangs. Both prison and street gangs are affected by social and institutional changes. Researchers cannot ignore how structural contexts and shifts in such contexts over time, affect both prison and street gangs.

Gang violence in South Africa has become more widespread and reports on gang violence have increased over the years. More robust research into the patterns of such gang violence and more detail on actual incidences of gang violence – both on the streets and inside prisons – are required so as design interventions with appropriate evidence in hand.

9.1.1. Suggestions for DCS to manage gangs

Few or any gang prevention programmes have been rigorously evaluated. Here the writer attempts to propose how Correctional Services can begin to assess their gang problems and provide the necessary enhancements to their intervention activities.

Correctional Services announced its plan to develop a gang management strategy (the “anti-gang strategy,”) several years ago but active work on the plan has been slow. The DCS should take up the challenges which the Judicial Inspectorate outlined in its Reports of some years ago.

Several questions can be posed:

1. What is the size and shape of gangs inside South African prisons at present and how can more precise estimates be made?
2. What is the status of the national gang combat strategy that the Department of Correctional Services released in 2020? What are the prospects for implementation of such a strategy in a context where the criminal justice system more widely, the Department of Correctional Services more specifically, confront a variety of challenges? This leads us to ask what a realistic national gang combat strategy could look like?
3. Rehabilitation is central to any initiative that wishes to reduce the appeal of the Numbers gang. Rehabilitation puts a substantial responsibility on the shoulders of the Department of Correctional Services and is widely criticized for its failure. And yet, the Department of Correctional Services needs effective treatment programmes designed to create hope and alternative pathways. These programmes can take different forms: Prevention/treatment

programmes; Intervention/intersession programmes; Suppression/discipline programmes; Assessment/evaluation programmes and Relapse prevention programmes. But again, treatment programmes should not just be paper-based exercises.

It can be further recommended that correctional services develop reporting relationships through the above-mentioned programmes by introducing a chain of responsibility that can enhance and monitor the programmes. Armed with this information, the Department would be better equipped to deal with problems associated with Numbers Gang members as they are released into the community.

Findings of this study suggest that practical gang prevention efforts may result in reductions in gang behaviour and functioning across multiple domains. It is my hope that the results of this study will motivate the prevention, development, implementation, and evaluation of effective programmes to prevent people from joining gangs and re-offending.

Overall, the research suggests that appropriate correctional treatment can reduce gang violence in correctional facilities and the community. Effective correctional treatment programmes should be considered one of the primary approaches to managing and rehabilitating incarcerated gang members. Further research is not only extremely valuable but will provide insights and data that are urgently required by several governmental agencies, ranging from policing units to social development and correctional services in more fruitfully engaging with gangsterism from the perspective of management.

The areas that remain a challenge for the effective implementation of a gang combat strategy are linked to the generic challenges of the Department of Correctional Services. There are notably human resources constraints in the context of considerable overcrowding among inmates. These constraints constitute formidable obstacles to penal reform. In principle, resources must be directed away from the security and custodial functions toward rehabilitation, development and care. Suppression or gang crime enforcement encompasses a broad range of criminal justice activities in which law enforcement, prosecution, probation, and parole focus their resources on limiting the criminal activities of gang members. As it stands, by all accounts, interventions and programmes aimed at mitigating the phenomenon of gangs in correctional facilities have been nothing short of failure. Indeed, the fact that the Numbers Gang has existed for over a century brings into question the effectiveness of such interventions.

APPENDIX 1: SABELA DICTIONARY

Sabela is primarily spoken by gang members in South African correctional facilities; it was originally known as “Sesfanakaloku”, the lingua franca of South African mineworkers during the 19th century. It has since evolved inside South African correctional facilities where it is spoken by Numbers Gang members. Released offenders have introduced the language to the general populace of South Africa but in particular to the street gangs. This appendix provides a dictionary of words, idioms, and expressions used by Numbers Gang members. The researcher has collated this dictionary over a period of 26 years and asked the study participants to clarify and verify the definition of the words and phrases contained herein. The words the gangs communicate with are a hybrid of the Afrikaans language combined with other African languages, such as IsiZulu and IsiXhosa. Sabela is a living, evolving language; therefore, this dictionary should not be viewed as complete but as a selection of the current Sabela vocabulary. The researcher compiled this dictionary with the assistance of experienced Numbers Gang members over many years and conversations with research participants.

A

Aanhitser	reference to someone who instigates others
Aarde in twee geskeur	reference to the split between Nongoloza (28) and Nkilikijaan (27)
Afhaal	the way of addressing someone
Afkoel	relax
Afslaan	to take something from someone
Agge	refers to the 28's
Agter ryer	an inmate who is always with the officials
Agterkant	not telling the truth
Anker	stop
Aweh	agree

B

Baba	senior 28-gang member
Bait	a potential victim

Baita	close or to be locked up
Baita jou Sabela	keep quiet
Baiza	to be confused
Bak vang	to eat
Bala	to write something
Baleka	to run
Balie	toilet
Balieraad	toilet paper
Baliza	to communicate
Bampers bere	keep him in mind
Banana	penis
Band	Madagenie/junior general of 26 and 27
Bateeza	food
Batiza	food
Battlefield	a place where gang fights take place
Bayonet	sharp object
Bed maak	to initiate a sexual relationship
Bedmaak	in a sexual relationship
Beespiel/donkey piel	batons
Beka and funda	think and learn
Berge	single cells/solitary confinement/segregation
Berge sak	to be admitted in single cells/solitary confinement
Berge van Preto- ria	the death sentence unit in Pretoria prison
Bheka	to pretend
Bind	wait
Binoculars	to see
Bitter en swaar	an explanation about the early difficult years in prison
Biza	confused
Blackboard	the teacher in the gang
Blacksmith	the one responsible for manufacturing weapons.

Blinkding	money
Bloed dronk	someone who won't hesitate to stab
Bloed en vleis	meaning when you stabbed someone to earn his rank
Bloed kyk	involved in violent acts
Bloed moet val	a stabbing should happen
Bloed vat	assault with the deliberate action of use of violence/spill the blood
Bloedrooi boeie	if a senior gang member is being charged by the authority
Blok is warm	the situation is tense
Blokke gooi	to defend
Blom tuin	a place in the cell, where "wyfies" are sleeping
Blood brothers/Broers	we are part of one brotherhood.
Blood line	synonymous with gold line of 28
Boeie moet val	a stabbing should happen
Boek 30	food
Boek special	to apply your mind in decision making
Boek special	the brain or memory
Boek/Book	the oral history of the gang
Boek/Book	secretary of the gang
Boere	correctional officials
Bombai	not the original
Boots is gestamp	member of the gang
Bore/Born	recruiting a new gang member.
Borsspelt	a senior gang member who occupies an office.
Bos	the space where non-gang members are sleeping, normally in the middle of the cell on the ground.
Bos los	divulge information
Bovana	blood
Bovana slash-luka	when a gang member is stabbed
Brandmerk	tattoo of the gang
Brandstraf	sodomy for punishment

British	prepared for the battlefield / ready to engage in gang fights.
Bruin pakkies	correctional officials
Bugle	a call to discuss issues
Bugle van Don-dolo	the announcement from the 27 immediately after an official was stabbed.
Buitekant	not written in the makhulu (imaginary) book/ not applicable on prison gang rules.
Byonet	or sharpened object
Byonet lig	prepared to stab
Byonet up; Byonet down	a ritual as part of the drill (practice) of gang members before a gang fight

C

Capitec gunja	a person who bought his rank
Carlton	kitchen
Cave/grot	a reference place in the 28-gang where sex takes place.
Ceekeo	meeting for gang members prior to unlocking in the morning.
Centre post	the in charge of meetings.
Chaise noma-ganjaan	talk the way you want to
Chaizana	consult/discuss
Chappies	tattoos
Chemist	drugs
Chico boys	members of the 26-gang
Chosen one	a person who is always ready for anything
Cleaner	working in the offices of officials
Clever	a cunning person
Correct a wrong	to correct a mistake or to solve a problem
Crossroads	the place where the gang meet before gang fights.
Currency	a sim card

D

Daai movie speel nie	it's not going to happen
Dala	do/perform
Dalakala van shlashluka wat die driekamp ruk met stand up	this means something that happened concerning the 26, 27 and the 28 camps. This happened when both camps were assaulted by officials (wardens). They also called it a three camp vadala and might stand together to fight against authority.
Daleka	something that happened
Deep level	someone who is about to join the gang
Detox	sleep
Die bos	the place where the non-gangsters are sleeping, normally in the middle of the cell.
Die bos van nya-kati	dagga (cannabis)
Die ding kyk	do as you wish
Die hond van madala gongiqokile	A saying in 28 which means, see you tomorrow.
Die jaar	today
Die meester val	when the officials master(lockup) the correctional centre
Die nek	leader of a street gang
Die nommer is by jou	the decision is yours
Die nommer maak vol	to agree
Die nommer sal duidelik kom	you will understand
Die nommer sal nie duidelik kom nie	you will not understand
Die Point	prison
Die skoot het geval	When drugs were smuggled into the prison
Die tyd is weg	the time is up
Diet	food/meal
Digging crime	to join the gang.
Dik nek	a strong person

Dingena	what do you want
Discipline	cleanliness
Dit is nie geskryf nie	not a prison gang rule
Docket	the history of a gang member
Dondo	cellular phone
Dood werk	when a gang member must stab a senior Correctional officer.
Doring pad	escorted with a police truck for court attendance
Down	an instruction when the top structure of the gang have a meeting
Down met n wrong, stand up with salute	the gang members down (kneeling) to discuss the problem, and will only stand up after they reached an agreement.
Draad	person in the gang responsible for gathering information
Drade breek	escape
Draft	a group of inmates transferred to other centres
Dril	training new gang members in gang rituals
Drilbaan	a place for training gang members in gang rituals
Dronk/bloed dronk	someone who does not think, he just does (in the case of a stabbing)
Dronkie	someone who is confused about gang rules
Duidelik	clear/understandable
Duime druk	to borrow from someone.
Duime skoonmaak	to pay back
Duiwel stert	/sharp object
Duty	issued with an instruction

E

Eerste bak	breakfast
Eerste nommer	firstly
Eerste strale	tomorrow morning

Eerste wet	first rule of the gang
Ek dala flat	I will do as the Number instructed me
Ek fondela	I will do that
Ek fondela nie	I won't do that
Ek kry daai	I do understand
Ek kry nie	I don't understand
Ek mameza jou	I am looking for you
Ek sal nie wetloos kapoeaka nie	I won't talk about things that are not written in the book (imaginary book/makulu book).

F

Faka faka	smuggling of contraband
Fighting	refer to the rank of madaganie
Fikile	a captain 2 in the gang
Fojizo	proof
Follies	cigarettes
Fondela	agree/ understand
Fotcha	to see
Fourteen	refers to an offender serving a short sentence or newly appointed official.
Fourth camp	street gangs
Frans	non-gang member
Frans van ouens	non gang member who are willing to join the gang
Frans van Slavi-langa	non-gang member who are about to join the 27-gang
Frans van son af	a non-gang member who is about to join the 28-gang
Frans van son op	a non-gang member who is about to join the 26-gang
Full force	powerful

Funda	refers to an agreement within and between gang members
G	
Gal	correctional officials
Gat kruiper	gang members who are talking to officials.
Gatta	correctional official/SAPS member
Gavuka van die eerste strale	tomorrow morning after the sunrise
Gazilaam	blood brother
Gcina	recognise
Gcwalisela	Maak vol die nommer/ do
Gebaita	a gang member who is been taken away from his responsibilities
Gebomde nommer	a false statement
Geboorte van die skrif	the origin of the history of the gang
Geboorte/gebore	to recruit a new member
Gebruik 1	dagga
Gebruik 2	cigarettes/tobacco
Gedala	to fulfil an instruction
Gedaleka	what happened
Gee krag weg	you are not strong
Gekamandela met bloed rooi boeie	when a senior gang member is being charged by officials for misconduct etc.
General	In charge of the gang/the commander
General salute	greeting the general of the camp
Gepenzula	to take something from someone
Geplant op die grond	to put someone in the territory

Germiston	a member of the 28-gang, responsible for controlling information in and between the camps of 28-gangs
Geskaal	did not get his correct portion
Geskiet	rob or stab somebody
Gesnyde grond	each camp has their own territory
Geval	when somebody died
Ghaitela	go separate ways
Ghazi	blood brother
Giemba	a greedy person, who can't get enough food
Gif/poison	sex in prison
Glase	to investigate something through the imaginary binoculars.
Glase change	see things differently
Glase gooi	to investigate
Glass	refers to a rank in the gang, a person who can see what is going on in prison
Goba	work
Goliat	a member of the 28-gang responsible for important decisions
Gomo	the truck escorting offenders
Graveyard	a place where regular stabbings or shootings occur
Grey	the 26-gang
Grond sny	to share a territory
Grond/Ground	the territory of the gang
Grot	refers to a place where the 28-gang stays
Gunjas	the stars on the shoulders of hang-ranking gang members
Gwala	acknowledge me/respect what I say
Gwala my	you will hear from me
Gwalanganjaan	who are you and what are you looking for?

Gwalisile	to make you understand
Gyta die point	released from prison

H

Haal nie asem nie	a non-gang member
Haas se vel	a prison letter
Hallelujah baba	Penis
Hangpaal	death sentence
Hawersak	refers to the “rucksack” carried by Pou when he went off to the mines
Headlights is on	when you are furious
Hekke	entrance to the camp
Hlatini	the metaphorical bush that members live prior to initiation
Holborsel	Informer
Hold	stop or stand back
Holland	refers to the 27-gang
Hollander	a member of the 27-gang
Holy water/heilige water	sex/sexual activity
Hom! Hom!	greeting sign of the 27-gang. It refers to the sound made by the bull (rooiland) when it was slaughtered
Hondjie	a rolled piece of toilet paper, which serves as a lighter, that can burn for long period, to light up a tobacco or dagga zoll
Horings and stert kry	betrayal refers to a devil
Hosh!	take note of me
Hou vas	Wait
Hout	the truth
Houte	Matches

Huis toe kom	a recitation that a man learns when he is accepted into the camp of the gang.
Hulle kry mekaar	they understand each other
Hulle kry nie mekaar nie	they don't understand each other
Hulle lewe nie so nie	It is not the truth
Hy het geval	he is dead
Hy het nie salute nie	a person who does wrong in the camp
Hy het nie skrif nie	he does not understand the gang rules and rituals.
Hy het salute	he is the right person
Hy het skrif	he understands the gang rules and rituals
Hy hou vas	he is in charge
Hy is die nek	he oversees a street gang
Hy is geklap	he has been shot
Hy is n voorreg	he is part of the top structure of the gang.
Hy is om	he is dead
Hy is op die narrow	he escaped
Hy is op my telly	someone counted in, on the gang total
Hy is sat	he died
Hy maak staan	he is in charge
Hy stry die nommer	he is disobedient towards the gang
Hy was by die voorreg	he was at the visitation area

I

In die stof	he is serving a sentence
In die wind skiet	did not fulfil instruction to stab someone
In gaan	to have sex with someone
In sy boots klim	to act in a gang members position

Inchailo	understand gang language
Indota	a man
Inkosi	the great chief, it also refers to the top structure of the gang
Inspection	to see if the new recruits are making progress.
Inspector	investigation officer
Intjiswa	gang member
Is ek wat jou mameza	it's me who is looking for you.
Is middel deur vir jou	a threat of getting hurt by the gangs
Isithupa	a reference to the 26-gang
It's his birth-day/hy verjaar	he is dead (more commonly used by street gangs)

J

Jaag geluk weg	not good company
Jamang	toilet
Jare	years
Jare gesny	years went by
Jare terug	long time ago
Java	coffee or tea
Jiba	let's go
Jim Crow	synonymous for Germiston; (see Germiston)
Joembaan/jumbana	anything that can harm like a padlock, prison cup, or block of soap.
Jood	the prison shop
Judge	the person who hands out the judgement
Juries	different departments of the gang
Jy gaan vlamvat	going to stab someone (a threat)
Jy het fokkol waarheid	you are a liar

Jy moet bona	you must watch
Jy moet jou Sa-bela kyk	be careful what you are saying
Jy moet vaskyk	you must do it
Jy sal gwala	you will see (a threat)
Tjikijela	go and see/ on the outlook

K

3 Kamp	26, 27 and 28-gang
4de kamp	refer to community gangs/street gangs
Kala	complain
Kamandela	arrested
Kammaflas	confuse someone
Kamp	the camp/divisions of the gang
Kanna kanna	weapon used for 28 initiations
Kantoor	imaginary office of a senior gang member
Kantoor afskiet	to get a senior position in the gang, through a violent act
Kap hulle sterte	privileges removed
Kap sy stert	take his responsibilities away
Kaperdien	Fighters
Kapsabels	Knife
Katkop	a half loaf of bread
Kavuga	going forward
Kavuga van die eerste strale	after sunrise tomorrow morning
Keep the prison alive	the 26's, to get provisions for the number
Key bou	to find a way to get out of the cell

Khamka	come here
Kit	bread
Klaar maak	to kill someone
Klak	slang (patois)
Klap my special met salute	makes me feel better
Klip	buttocks
Klip geskryf	the stone on which the laws were written
Klip kap	a request for sex between the legs
Klip slaan	sodomy
Knyp	stabbing
Koeel	contraband covered in plastic, to hide in the rectum.
Koekblik	a gay inmate
Koeloekoets (nkulukud)	solitary confinement
Kom so vol	listen to what I say
Kom vol soos nou	listen to me
Komba	pimp (divulge information)
Kongani	because
Kop stukkend slaan	violent act during the initiation process, to witness the flow of blood.
Kop vreet	to be worried
Koppel	being involved
Koppel	support
Koppel nie	not involved
Krag weg gee	weak
Krale	home
Krale bou	going home after completing the sentence
Kring sit	when the top structures of the gang meet

Krom gekom	I don't have
Kroon	money
Kroon gedagte	obsessed with money
Kroon kyk	the work of the 26-gang (money-making)
Kruispad	crossroads
Kry daai	Understand
Kry jy	do you understand?
Kry nie daai nie	don't understand
L	
Laaste strale	sunset
Laaste wet	everybody fights together (the three-camp stand together)
Land skoffel	prepare to stab
Landela	arrived
Landuni	soldier of 28 silver line
Lange gooi	going home or being released
Langpad	long sentence
Lanie	correctional official/white person
Latjies	if someone must get a hiding
Law	policemen
Le op die glas	under investigation
Lees	study somebody's behaviour
Lewendig bring	to establish something new
Lewendig vooreg	still alive
Lewendig werk	active gang member
Leyland	the farm of Rabie (Simon de Villiers)
Linker Kant	reference to the silver line of 28

Lungile	everything is all right
M	
Ma se kind	brother/ blood brother
Maak en doen	did not follow the gang rules
Mabalang	the clerk of the gang
Mabazo	the in charge of the soldiers of the gold line 28's
Mabobas	the pipes (stereoscope) of the nyanga/doctor
Mabona	the inspector of the 28-gang
Madala 1	the old one with seniority
Magalies	issuing tobacco to offenders
Makulu book	the imaginary rule book of the gang
Malitas	clever youngsters
Malitas van sonop	young boys about to join the 26-gang
Mameza	to listen to what he wants to say
Manje	to know
Manskap berre	funeral of a gang member
Manskappe	gang members
Manskappe bou	recruit gang members
Manskappe van Grey	26-gang members
Manskappe van Slavilanga	27-gang members
Manskappe van Tjonalanga	28-gang members
Mapanslas	the top structure of the 28-gang
Mapienda/mapinda	common criminal/ used to be in prison
Mapuza	correctional official
March	let's move

Mashulumbini /mashunambini	top structure of the gangs
Maspaal	somebody in charge
Matambos	bones (legs)
Matambos het toegemaak	he died
Minute	just a moment
Mis	wrong information
Mizuzu	just a moment
Mlungu	a white man
Moeg raak	tired or reluctant to fulfil an instruction
Moegoe	useless person
Moenie kom speel nie	don't make jokes
Moliva	female/wyfie
Mooi laitie	potential member for the silver line of 28
Mpata and fondela	listen and understand
Mphata	non-gang member
Myne	synonym for a prison

N

Nasie	the gangs
Ndabeni	solitary confinement
Ndota	gang member
New ones	new admissions
Ngunjas	stars tattooed on the shoulders of gang members
Nikanjani	identify yourself
Njana	wyfie/wife
Nomakanjani	follow orders without question, no matter what

Nommer	member of the gang
Nommer dala	to fulfil an instruction
Nommer het toegemaak op sy matambos	he died
Nommer soek	looking for something to be fixed within the gang
Nommer volmaak	to get the information
Nompangela	the reason
Nompangela van wat	for what reason
Nongidela	teacher of the 26 and 27-gang
Ntolombom	an arrow of blood, also a synonym for a 27-gang member
Ntshonalanga	refers to the 28-gang
Number ones	member of the top structure
Number twos	those who report to the senior gang members
Nwata baliza/nwatas praat	talk rubbish/lies
Nxai	soldier of 28 in the bloodline
Nyanga stamp 1	a place where stabbings happen
Nyanga stamp 2	a location where gang members are promoted
Nyanga/nyangi	doctor of the gang
Nzulu	deeply involved in gang activity

O

4de oog	someone who helps to look for something/ or a witness
Oemfaan	wyfie/wife
Oemkhosi	the camps of 26, 27, and 28
Old ones	those who went to court and who returned to prison
Omkalo	the moliva river

Onder my glase	I'm watching you
One Times	the top structure of the gang
Oog oopmaak	to be vigilant
Op die krag	not active in the gang
Op n pos	on guard
Op rede van wat	for what reason
Op sy spoor	looking for someone
Oplig	to support someone
Optel	greet
Ou	gang member
Ouens	fellow gang members
Ouens van af	28-gang members
Ouens van bloed	27-gang members
Ouens van kantore	gang member with a senior position
Ouens van op	26-gang members

P

12 Points/12 punte	the decision-makers of the gang
Ou pikilele	an old gang member
Paga time	time to eat
Pakamiesa	Agree, and also a form of greeting another gang member
Pakamiesa phezulu	raise up
Panthle	the 28's
Papetta	to learn
Parliament	the top structure of the gang
Pazama	weakened

Pella, Pella!!	greeting your fellow gang member
Pen	the clerk of the gang (Mabalang)
Penzula	to take it away
Perd	a corrupt official
Pet gebars	shot dead
Phata and fondela	listen and understand
Piemp/pimp	betrayal
Pietermaritzburg	medium correctional centre
Pikanien	young boy
Pikilele	gang member
Pil	zol (tobacco or dagga)
Pitch	the space in the middle of the cell.
Plank	has reference to the 27-gang
Plant	hide something
Point	prison
Poison	wyfies/wifes
Poke	an object in the rectum
Pomp	rectal inspection
Pomp	charger for a cellular phone
Pop	a stupid person
Pos	on the lookout
Pos nommer	to be on the lookout
Position	to be ready
Pumalanga	26-gang members
Pyp	the doctor of the camp
Pype gooi	medical check

Q

Qamka	come here
Qina	just do it
Qina matambo	sterk bene/ I am strong
Queen	female official
Queen's bed/ tent	the corner of the cell closed off with sheets
Qusha nyama	a saying that means you stabbed for your rank

R

Raak so wys ouens	listen to what I have to say
Rabie	a white male correctional officer
Rantsoen jaar	means ration days use for a Friday when the orders are rationed out amongst the gang.
Regter Kant	refers to the bloodline of the 28s
Respek en Disci- pline	one of the most respected laws of the gang
Ring kop	a dominant person
Roker of ou roker	a sly person, with vast experience of the gang
Rooi	refers to blood
Rooi land	refers to the bull, which was slaughtered on Rabies farm
Rooi land	refers to the beef which are prepared in the prison kitchen

S

Saam kyk	to share
Saam vedala	to assist in killing or a stabbing
Sabela	prison language

Sagte kol	a quiet place
Salute	greeting sign, everything is well
Sand	sugar
Scumba	meeting
Seeko/Siko	meetings of gang members prior and after the day's activities.
Sfogiso	proof of something
Shalom	greeting sign for 27's
Shlahluku	something that happened
Shumbaan	a sock with a block of soap in, for punishments
Sif	a safe/ imaginary safe for money
Sikhosi	the chiefs in the gang
Sit aan die reg- terkant van die pou	he died
Sitha	sit/seated/stay
Six nine (69)	toilet area
Skalaza/skalazo	complaints
Skangaga	I'm here/ I'm around
Skarrel	to run around/ be all over the place
Skatties	time
Skebenga	betrayer
Sketsha	something happened
Skiet	stab with a
Skiet yster	knife
Skietbaan	a betrayer of the gang who can be stabbed by anyone.
Skijimas	another name for the glas and draad of the gangs
Skool gee	teach gang procedures
Skoon frans	does not belong to a gang
Skoon person	a person who are in good books of the gang
Slambaza	betrayer
Slavilanga	27-gang

Slice	mistake
Smeer goed	refers to butter, peanut butter, and jam
Snuif	tobacco
Sofwolk	new admission
Soldaat	low rank (soldier) in the gang
Son of Maru- baan	refers to a 26-gang member
Son of Nkiliki- jaan	refers to a member of the 27-gang
Son of Non- goloza	refers to a 28-gang member
Son op	refers to the 26-gang, operation time
Son Sak	when the 28's are active
Spanga	the unit where they are housed, and also the courtyard
Spangeni	to work outside prison
Spat	running away
Special	use your mind
Speen	a rope to pass on contraband through windows after lock up
Spieels	eyes
Spierwit	refers to the 26-gang's flag
Spohlongo	the oath of the 28-gang
Springs	top structure of the 26 and the 27-gangs
Spyker	money for the 28's
Staan in sy boots vir die minute	to act in someone's position
Staan maak	to prove something
Stairs	top structure of the 28-gang
Stalala	name
Stalaza	name
Stalle	place where the soldiers are kept
Stamp	tattoo
Stamp	also refers to the magistrate of the 28-gang

Stamp sit	to have the gang tattoo after initiation
Stamp slaan	new tattoo for a new gang member
Stand up	to protect yourself
Starter pack	beginning stage of your sentence
Steek uit	come over
Stel ‘n bom	to mislead someone
Stel n bom	to discuss something in secret
Stem kry	listen to what one has to say
Stem lig	to say something
Sterk bene	I am with you/ I am strong
Sterk frans	non-gang member who is not afraid of the gang
Sterk maak	to get something
Stert en horings kry	betrayed/ devil
Stimela	to identify a gang member on admission
Stofwolk	new admissions to the centre
Stokkies	awaiting trial
Stone Yard	a place of “work” before joining the 27-gang.
Stongas	to declare that you are a gang member
Stongas sonder fojiso	gang members who are gang members but cannot proof it
Stongas sonder fojiso haal nie asem nie	if you don’t have proof of being a number, you can’t talk about the gang
Straight maak	to understand
Strip	steal
Suleka	arrive
Swak	don’t have
Swart	indicates doing wrong things
Swipe	refers to the way a hungry person is eating
Sy docket hang	he is a target while awaiting trial by the gang for breaking the gang rules

Sy docket is toegemaak	he is dead
Sy headlights is aan	he is furious
Sy is my hemp- sak	my wife/girlfriend
Sy wiel hang	being raped

T

Tak veertig	dagga/ cannabis
Tamboela	to initiate the gang members
Tambula/tam- boela	to promote new gang members
Telly	total of gang members
Tennis	gambling
Terug al met sa- lute	no worries
Terug bring	to reflect
Terug val	relax
Three times	refers to the golden line 28-gang members
Tight corner	where gang members are in isolation
Toe kamp	a maximum-security prison
Toe kap	to be locked up
Toe maak	to lie to someone
Tollenbom	another name for the 27-gang
Tollomshlope	dead
Tou	death sentence
Train	overcrowded communal cell
Tsjonna langa	the 28-gang
Tsjonnas	members of the 28-gang
Tussen die hor- ings skiet	to stab somebody
Twaalf punte	top structures of the gang

Twee soorte (two types)	a gay person
Tweede bak	lunch
Two times	the 28 silver line division

U

Ubhekile	a gang member
Udakiwe	confused
Udakwe yijele	institutionalized
Uitbors	a person who is full of himself/ arrogant person
Uitklim	not to be involved
Uitstaan	identified to stab someone
Ukhubekhelwa	promotion
Ukhushuka is-khumba	to have a meeting
Ukugwayisa	intimidate
Umaphuza	correctional official
Umduyandiya	sodomy/enclose around the bed
Umfundisi	the prison chaplain
Umkhonto	weapon
Undelevane	official
Unombotshane	female
Up! Up!	call sign for a stabbing in gang fights
Uvugu	hidden identity

V

Vadala	finished
Vadala	to kill/cut powers
Vadala saam	die/suffer together
Van ‘n pos af	not on the lookout
Van ‘n spoor af	to mislead someone

Vang die gril	refuse to be transferred
Vang minute	wait a little
Vas brand	when you stabbed someone to earn your rank
Vas kyk	to concentrate or stand for what you believe.
Vasbrand	to stay
Vat en gaan	go and stab somebody
Versterk	support
Vier hoeke	prison
Visinteer	search
Vlag afskiet	To target a specific gang
Vlag plant	to mark your territory
Vlag wapper	a sign of winning the battle
Vlam vat	to get hurt
Voetspore doodmaak	cover tracks
Vol maak	to give information
Voorreg	a visit from someone from outside
Voorreg	in line for promotion
Vuil hond	inmates who work with officials
Vuil werke	working against the laws
Vuurmaak	instigate

W

Warm kol	tight corner
Warm kop	somebody who don't think, he just does
Wat getuig jy/ wat wys jy	what are you saying
Werk	gang activities
Werk onder die skelm	to hide gang activities
Whey!	greeting of the 28's

White house	refers to the top structure of the 28-gang
Wiel	cell phone battery
Wind	Airtime
Wipe	to clean your mind
Witbene	dead
Woelabamba	inspector of the gang
Wrong	misbehave
Wyfie	woman in the gang
Wys raak	to make you understand

Y

Yard	the yard for exercise
Yster	knives
Ytpak	to talk

Z

Zulus	refers to the 28-gang
--------------	-----------------------

APPENDIX 2: NUMBERS GANG TATTOOS

Prison tattooing is the practice of “getting inked” while imprisoned. A prison tattoo serves many purposes, including affirming and conveying gang membership; indicating rank in the gang; displaying their ability to be aggressive; or symbolizing their time inside correctional facilities. A tattoo is as a sign or code displaying their crimes for all to see. Since tattooing is prohibited in correctional facilities, inmates don’t have access to proper equipment or supplies, thereby encouraging innovative methods of tattooing as explained in Chapter 5. Most gang members have identifying characteristics unique to their specific clique or gang. The 26s, 27s, and the 28s Numbers Gang have different tattoos, allowing these gangs to demonstrate their affiliation. Research participants explained that tattoos increase a gang members prestige within their group and mark them as lifetime members. Some of the Numbers Gang tattoos also represent a level of authority, displaying certain tattoos shows one to be a more accomplished member – these tattoos are earned, often with a dangerous act that shows loyalty to the gang. The images in the appendix have been collected by the researcher over a number of years, and pictures from online sources such as Gettyimages. By introducing the tattoo album to research participants, the researcher engaged in one-on-one discussion about the different tattoos to understand the meanings of the tattoos of the different camps/divisions. First the tattoos of the 28 Numbers Gang will be explained, followed by the 26 and the 27 Numbers Gang.

Tattoos of the 28 Numbers Gang

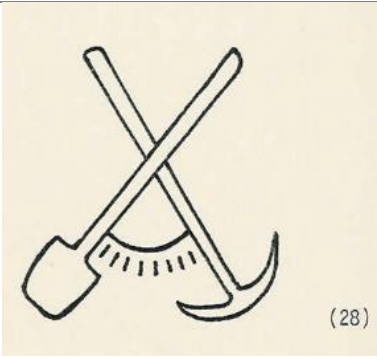


Figure 2: Centre of Criminology Archive

This tattoo represents the tools that were used in the mines, and also a symbol of the same tools used when gang members are looking for new recruits to the gang, to clean the “bush”. The “bush” is a place named where the non-gang members (franse) stay. The sunset sign indicates the 28-gang.



The cross on the left upper arm has nothing to do with religion but refer to the crossroads where Nkulukud recruited Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan, on their way to the mines.



This also represent crossroads of the gang, where Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan met. It was explained to me that the South represents Zulu land; the North represents the mines of Delagoa Bay (dalakoebaai as it is known to them), the West where Nongoloza came (Zulu land) from and the East where Nkilikijaan came from (Pondo land).



This tattoo shows the gang rule book, with two swords, meaning that they must consult the gang rule book, before a gang fight.



This is the greeting sign of the private/number two's/wy-fies of the 28-gang. They always greet with the left hand and their tattoos on the left side of the body.



The cross which represent the crossroads of the gang. Note that the rest in peace abbreviation (RIP), is to confuse correctional officials



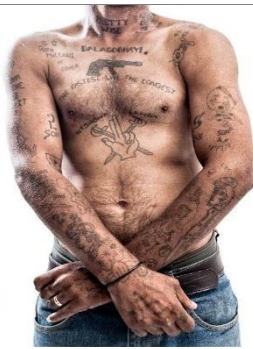
In front of the chest you find the Roman numerals explaining a member of the 28-gang.



On this picture again you will find the Roman numerals explaining the number 28, on the right side of his shoulder the tattoo marked 28 is on the right side of the body, telling us, that he is a kaperdien (blood line) of the 28-gang.



Zulu refers to the 28-gang



This 28-gang member is having two stars on each shoulder, explaining he is a landros of 28. Infront of his chest is the name 'Dalagobhayi', which refers to the mines and slaves of Delagoa Bay, the way they pronounced it as "dala-koebaai". The two swords (kap sabels) of nongoloza and nkilikijaan, with the greeting sign of the 28-gang also visible.

Source: Luke Daniel



Once again the Roman numerals explaining the number 28. In the middle the words Thug Life, wich means a violent criminal, struggling to make something in life. On the right side of his right shoulder the sign of the death row is noticeable, which indicates his commitment to the gang. It was explained to me that joining the gang and to keep its secrets, you put the robe around your neck.



This tattoo of a 28-gang member shows his African shield with his two assegais or spears, ready for the battlefield.



Once again the cross, which represent the crossroads.



The tattoos of a 28-gang member, the three eight-point stars, explain he is a umgobi (stamp)/magistrate or a wireless(draad)



MOB means Money over Bitches, usually a tattoo of the 28-gang



The tattoos of a captain 1 in the camp of 28, note the eight point stars.



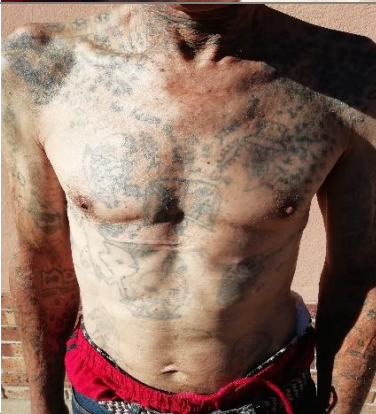
The crossroads in the form of playing cards with the number



The greeting sign of a 28-gang member, in the bloodline (kaperdien), shows his sign always with the right hand.



The greeting sign of the 28-gang, with a dollar sign, most of the 28-gang believes that they make it possible for bringing money into prison(*hulle se hulle het die spyker lewendig gebring*). On the picture on the left are the ranks of the gang member of 28 called the *lig* (the light of the camp).



Tattoos on the right chest, shows the (*bayonet*) which shows sundown, indicating a 28-gang member.



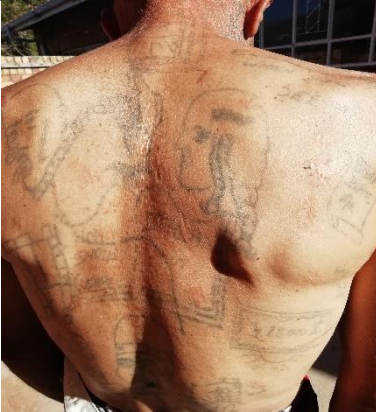
This tattoo shows two swords, one tip down and the other one tip upwards, which is a reference the fight between Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan, it was explained that Nongoloza threw his sword (kapsabel) tip downwards, and it was picked up by Nkilikijaan and shown upwards.



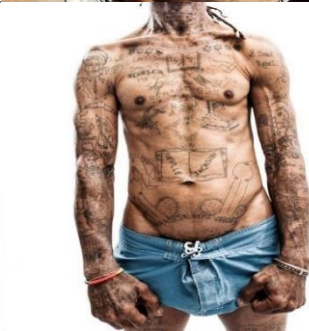
This tattoo shows a face at the back of his head, which indicates he can see everything that happened in the camp of 28.



This participant tattooed his face, head and body, a high-ranking 28-gang member. Tattoos particularly facial are a gesture of defiance to the prison authorities and to show status.



The sundown sign behind his neck, explains that he is 28-gang member



Source: Luke Daniels

This is also a member of the 28-gang. The four stars both sides of his body, tells us that he is a mabalang or a nyanga of the camp. On his chest he is having the makhulu book of the gang. The tattoos also illustrate the two swords, used by nklikijaan and nongoloza. The two erected penis can also indicate that he can punish junior gang members for breaking the gang rules or to intimidate non gang members. The death row sign explains that he was serving a lengthy sentence. The bow tie explains he is a high-ranking gang member.



The is a combat mechanism and the sunset indicates it is sundown, meaning the 28-gang.



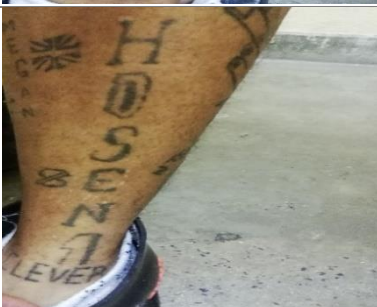
On the right you see the (bayonet) showing sundown.



Most people understand this tattoo as a meaning of the gang member's parents, which is not the case. It is an abbreviation, for 26 and 27-gangs it means: "Men Use Money Day after Day", and in the 28-gang it means: "Men Use Men, Day after Day".



The greeting sign of the 28-gang, with the words "ntshonalanga" refers to the 28-gang.



The tattoo of the chosen one, means a person who is always ready for anything which might come his way.



The crossroads or the vaalcross, indicates where gang members meet to discuss serious issues.



The tattoo of a firearm indicates a senior gang member, and also a member of a street gang. Imaginary junior members carry imaginary 303 rifles, and the senior members' revolvers which also refer to the weapons taken from the mountain rangers of the British army.



A 28-gang member shows his tattoo's with their greeting sign: "whey Zulu" and Evil in Mind, which means he is having an evil disposition or evil thoughts.



The British flag indicates his street gang affiliation, while the showing sundown shows that he is a 28-gang member.



This tattoo means that this person is so dedicated to the goal of making money that he will never stop trying until they succeed, even if it means death.



The greeting sign of the 28-gang.



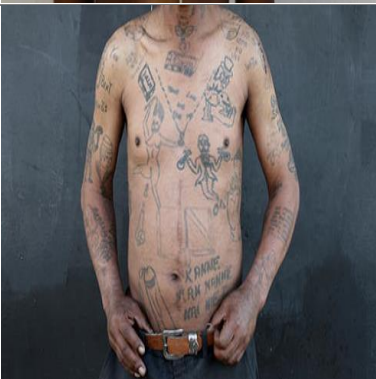
The revolver indicates it is a senior gang member, corroborated with the crossroads tattoo on the right arm.



A 28-gang member and also a member of the Hard Living street gang.



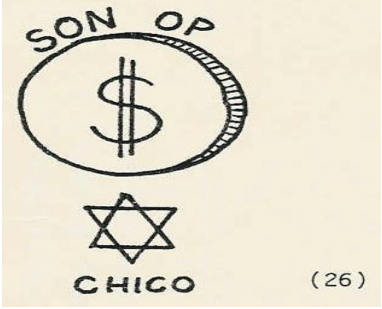
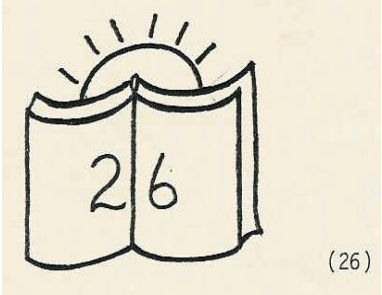



The tattoo on the left side of the body tells us that he is a member of the silver line of the 28-gang.



The cross (crossroads) is noticeable in his neck area. It also shows tattoos of the erected penis, which are commonly used to intimidate non gang members. It is also a sign of punishment, for those who break gang rules.

Source: Kaviani, F., 2018.

Tattoos of the 26 Numbers Gang

	<p>Sunrise, with the dollar sign, and the six-point star, indicates 26-gang members. Chico is just another name for the 26-gang.</p>
<p>Source: Google</p>	
	<p>This is the imaginary rule book (Makhulu book), of the 26-gang, with the sunrise sign.</p>
<p>Source: Google</p>	
	<p>The crown is one of the popular tattoos of the 26-gang, which refers to money.</p>
	<p>The rolling dice, which fall on 26.</p>
	<p>Chico boys, refers to the 26-gang and the three six point stars on his shoulders explain his rank as a wireless (draad) of the camp.</p>



Participants explained that “Get rich or die poor”, means the 26-gang are constantly trying to make money.



This is also a very famous 26-gang tattoo, the bag of money, which they refers to as ‘chico boys’.



The crown tattoo which means money.



On he right arm, the imaginary book of the 26-gang, with the 26 dollar sign on the right shoulder.



The year 1836 refers the year of establishment of the 26-gang, the crown and the number 26.



Son Op means sun rise, the time of day when the 26-gang are active.



The gang rule book and the number 26, the bayonet () which shows upwards (son op).



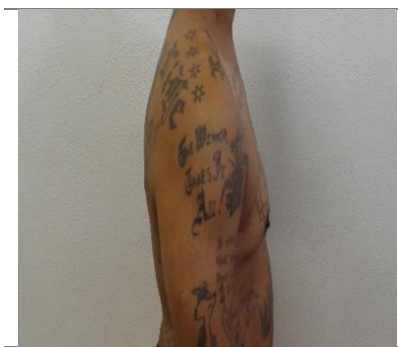
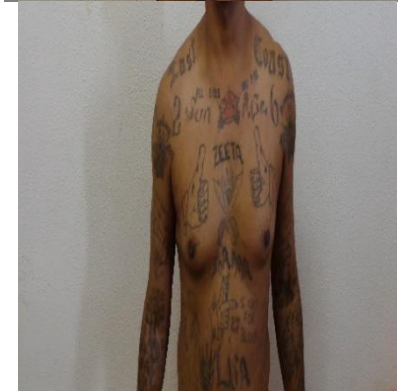



This tattoo of an inspector 1 of 26, once again the thug life sign, the firearm refers to a senior gang member, and his “stamp” of 26 behind his neck



The kinfe shows tip up, shows sunrise (son op), it refers to the fight between Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan, when he shows his sword upwards.



Once again the two swords sun rise (upwards), indicating a 27-gang member, refers to the fight between Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan.

	<p>The four six point stars on his shoulders represent his rank of nyanga1/doctor or a Madagenie of the 26-gang.</p>
	<p>The 2 and the 6, with the words sunrise and the two thumbs up, is all signs of the 26-gang. According to research participants, the four six point stars on each shoulder, indicates that he is the madaganie of 26, the Full Force Fighting of the camp. He is the junior general and in charge of the number two's of the 26-gang.</p>
	<p>According to research participants he is a mabalang 1 of the 26-gang, as the four six point stars on his shoulders explain. The cartoon of richie rich, a well known fictional character in the Harvey Comics, the only son of a fantastically wealthy parents and the world's richest kid. He is so rich, his middle name is a dollar sign.</p>
	<p>The 26 tattoo with the dollar sign, explain their love for money.</p>
	<p>Research participants explained the skull, symbolize overcoming difficult challenges even overcoming death. It also symbolize strength and power, and offer the wearer protection. The skull tattoo can also symbolize the death of an old life, a past that has been defeated and a change for the better has occurred.</p>



The money bag of 26, and the 26-gang sign with a thumb straight up, and on his right front arm the gang rule book of the 26-gang.



The four six point stars on the shoulder explain that he is Nyanga(doctor) of the 26-gang.



Most wanted is a sign of a criminal who is always on the run. YDB means Young Dixi Boy, his street gang affiliation and the MOB sign. There are many acronyms that are used for this tattoo which can mean a variety of things from "Money Organization and Business" for the 26-gang and for the 28-gang it means "Money Over Bitches".



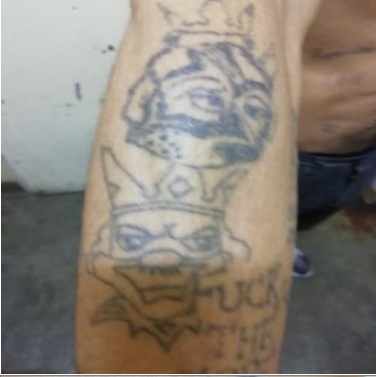
Mum and Dad, means "Men Use Men Day After Day in the 28-gang, and "Men use Money Day After Day" in the 26 and 27-gang and the roman numerals of the 26-gang.



The year 1836 refers to the year when the 26-gang was established, and the four six point stars on his shoulders explain that he is Madaganie of the 26-gang.



The roman numerals explain the number 26.



Fuck the cops, is a popular tattoo used by all gang members. The skull with a crown tattoo are popular all over the world as they present power, authority, and luck- a man who is the king of his life. It also reminds the wearer to use his power wisely or to beware of becoming power hungry.



This tattoo used by the 26-gang, mostly known as chico boys, with the bag of money with the dollar sign and the coins.



The word Exodus in the cross, look like a quote from the Bible, but the cross only represent the crossroads, meeting point of the gang. With 1836 the year when the gang was established. The word Exodus in the cross can also mean that he is a follower of Tupac Shakur the American rapper.



According to research participants, this tattoo might explain that the wearer was deeply hurt by a woman.



The research participant explained to me, that this crown explain the money /minerals which was stolen by the British. In the 26-gang crown refers to money.



The six, six point stars of Inspector 1 of 26, he explained that with his rank, he can act as a general, if there is not one available (he can stand as a general for the minutes/minute, meaning temporally)



Out Law refers to a person who has broken the law, especially one who remains at large or is a fugitive.



Blood in and Blood out, is explained to me, that there is one way in and no way out. This tattoo also refers to the initiation ritual of having stabbed someone to enter the gang and on the reverse end, not being able to leave the gang unless killed. This is a common initiation in many gangs, including prison gangs. the spider web means that the wearer spent time in prison, and that he can also catch those who want to infiltrate the gang.



It was explained that this tattoo represent the crown of Elizabeth and the British towers which refers to the money and gold which was stolen in South Africa during the mineral revolution.



The general of the 26-gang with his six, six point stars on his shoulders. The twelve stars represents the twelve points/parliament (decision makers) of the gang

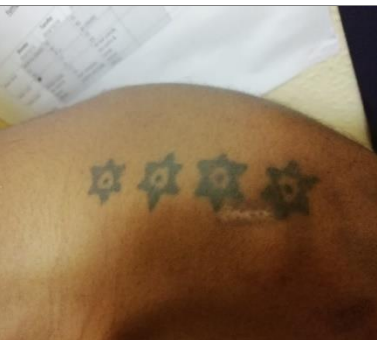


The nyangi, the special doctor of the 26, gang.



This is a facebook picture of 26-gang members in Prison in St Albans Correctional Centre, showing their gang affiliation to the world.

Source: Facebook



This is also a tattoo sign of a Mabalang 1 of the 26-gang.



This is a Madaganie of the 26-gang, also known as the junior general or the maspaal of the gang. He is incharge of the number two's of the 26-gang.



The greeting sign of the 26-gang.



The convict tattoo explain that the person is guilty of a criminal offence by the verdict of a jury or the decision of a judge in a court of law. The crown a famous tattoo from the 26 and 27-gang, which refers to money, and the Crown of Elizabeth, which is having the juwell of Africa, as they call it.



Freshly tattooed twenty six tattoo.



Ghetto Kid is a popular street gang.



The Roman numerals for 27.



The six point star, indicates that he is a 26-gang member.



STB stands for “stuppa/stoepa boys”, referring to the 26-gang. According to the participant the diamond also explain the wealth and power that money can bring.



The crown of Queen Elizabeth, the rolling dice and the words :” chico boys” refers all to the 26-gang. The “Buggs Bunny or Looney Tunes” tattoo mean that they are not afraid to toe the line between the sensible and absurd.



Diamond Crook, also refers to their love for money and a dishonest person.



RBN stand for Rubana, which means they focus on robbery. On each side of his body he have three six point stars. It explained that he is a six”gunja” of the 26-gang, a draad/wireless 1.



STB stands for Stuppa Boy which is just another name for 26-gang and also a street gang.



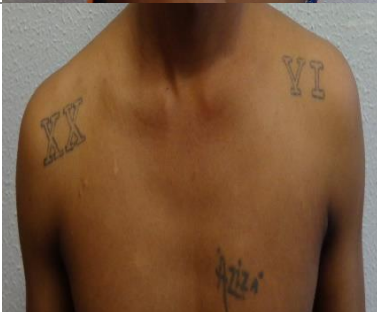
MG stands for Mongrel and the B 13 is their “Head quarters” which is Banglo 13. The 26 tattoo with the year 1836, when the 26-gang was established.



The swords and a sunrise sign mean that he is a 26 or 27-gang member. The euros tattoo also indicates their love for money.



The British flag and the HL sign explain his street gang affiliation as a member of the Hard Living Gang and the tattoo of the 26-gang on his right chest.



The Roman numerals of 26-gang.



Money and the tattoo 26, chosen one, means that he is the sole person chosen for a duty and ready to carry out any instruction.

Tattoos of the 27 Numbers Gang



The greeting sign of the 27-gang.

Source: Facebook



The tattoo of the 27-gang.



Slavilanga is just another name for the 27-gang. Thug life means that he started his life with nothing and built himself up to be something.



The crown tattoo is common in the 26 and the 27-gang.



Research participants explain that Pay or Die means that if someone owes him money and can't pay him back, he will certainly kill that person.



This is the most popular tattoo of the 27-gang. After the fight between Nongoloza and Nkilikijaan, Nongoloza threw his sword down, and it was picked up by Nkilikijaan and shows both upwards (sunrise).



A tattoo of the 27-gang at the back of his head.



The greeting sign of the 27-gang, a revolver indicating his seniority in the rank, and the tattoo of 26, which means he can also stand in as a 27-gang member.



The two crowns signifying the 26/27-gang.



This picture represents types of tattoos associated with the 27 Numbers Gang. It also records personal history and skills such as skills for using firearms; specialities that he works with money; thug life that he struggled through his life. It also captures accomplishments during incarceration.

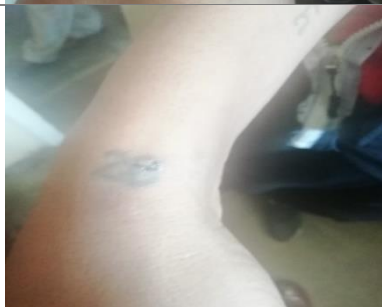


These are drawings for potential tattoos.

The following two tattoos explain how some gang members are threatened to change gang affiliation



This is a tattoo of a 26-gang member, who was forced to change his tattoo from 26 to 28. This ex-offender was forced to change his gang affiliation at gunpoint. He had an ultimatum, either to change his tattoo or be raped or killed.



Another ex-offender was forced to take the tattoo of the 28 or being raped or killed. The 6 has been changed to an 8.



This tattoo explains a disabled offender which the gang refers to as a condemn. This gang member has only the use of one arm. In such cases the 12 points (top structure) of the gang will meet, and a decision will be made that he must join the 'juries of condemns', meaning he cannot be active in gang activities, because of his disability, but his knowledge of the gang will be used when needed.

Source: Google

The following information was sent from prison to street gangs in order to update them about the progress of new ranks by the gang.

SHANE - PYP - LIVE	SHANE - PYP - LIVE
LASTING - GINGS - LIVE	KIKIC - GINGS - LIVE
DUT - PYP - LIVE	STIKS - MAJOR - LIVE
CHELLO - Judge - LIVE	BOKA - Judge - LIVE
SMIRA - Major - LIVE	INICOMAN - MAJOR - LIVE
AKI - MABALANG - LIVE	JACKSON - MABALANG - LIVE
JOHN - KT2 - LIVE	KRIBO - KT2 - LIVE
Golden MAJOR - LIVE	DeRBO - MAJOR - LIVE
FACES - SAGENS - LIVE	BELLO - SAGENS - LIVE
KEENAN - SAGENS - LIVE	HL - SAGENS - LIVE
WALLS - SOLDAT - LIVE	LUCKY - SOLDAT - LIVE
CRIGAT - SOLDAT - LIVE	JUSI - SOLDAT - LIVE
TABIES - SOLDAT - LIVE	NISIKAY - GINGS - I skool
PAGO - SOLDAT - LIVE	MILEY - Judge - I skool
RELI - SOLDAT - LIVE	GRANT - MAJOR - I skool
MAKA - SOLDAT - LIVE	KALIC - Judge - I skool
LING - SOLDAT - LIVE	SANGOMA - PYP - I skool
CHIBISI - SOLDAT - LIVE	JAOLOK - KT2 - I skool
MABING - SOLDAT - LIVE	SERBIO - MAJOR - I skool
DUEKIC - MABALANG - I skool	JONATAN - MAJOR - I skool
DESMON - MAJOR - I skool	KAKIES - SAGENS - I skool
CHU - PYP - I skool	ELLO - INTABA - I skool
MABEGA - MABALANG - I skool	VIEYA - MAJOR - KRAQ
JUNAT - MAJORANT - I skool	
CAMMIE - KT2 - I skool	
MARCO - INTABA - I skool	
MABRA - INTABA - MAJOR I skool	
LURZI - PYP - STOKIES	
CORSON - KT2 - SAGENS - MAJOR KT2	
RONAL - MABALANG - KRAQ	
LINSON - INTABA - KRAQ	
CHORA - INTABA - KRAQ	

The latest development in the correctional facilities is that the street gangs and prison gangs are working closely together. After recruitment the Numbers Gang is obliged to inform their street gang counterparts of the promotion processes. This letter was sent to the outside, it identifies the offenders by name, and the new ranks to be assigned, and their status (active or not active).

APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Faculty of Law: **Research Ethics Committee**

Private Bag X3 ■ Rondebosch ■ 7701 ■ South Africa
Room 6.29 ■ Kramer Building ■ Middle Campus
Tel: +27 021 650 3080 Fax: +27 021 650 5660
E-mail: lamize.viljoen@uct.ac.za Internet: www.law.uct.ac.za

Certificate of Ethical Clearance Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/SUPERVISOR: ELRENA VAN DER SPUY	ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBER: L0069-2018
RESEARCHER: HEINRICH VELOEN	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 05-August-2019
FACULTY: LAW	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 04-August-2020
DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC	

PROJECT TITLE: The Numbers gang: A comparative analysis of gangsterism in a South-Africa

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH: This study aims to further understand and explore the structure, role, and meaning of the Numbers Gang in South African prisons.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.

Modifications
To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a formal "Request for a Modification" to the REC Administrative Office. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.

Renewals
Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You are responsible for submitting this by at least 2 months prior to the expiry date of clearance date issued.

Project Closures
When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please formally notify the REC: Law as well as your supervisor where applicable.

Certification

This certifies that the University of Cape Town Law Faculty's Research Ethics Committee has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Cape Town Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.

Associate Professor Kelley Moulton
LAW REC: CHAIR

APPENDIX 4: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORM FOR EX-OFFENDERS

THE NUMBERS GANGS IN SOUTH AFRICAN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Good day, my name is Heinrich Velloen, and I am conducting research towards a Master's degree. I am researching the Numbers Gangs in South African Correctional Facilities and would like to invite you to participate in the project.

The focus of the project is to find out more about the gang tattoos, the military structure and the 'sabela' used by the gang.

I am interested in finding out more about what the different gang tattoos mean, how the military structure operates, and how gang members learn the jargon (sabela) as a way of communication. I would like to interview former offenders who have experience of the Number Gangs.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the right to refuse participation. The choice to participate is yours alone. If you choose not to participate, there will be no negative consequences. If you choose to participate, but wish to withdraw at any time, you will be free to do so without negative consequences. However, I would be grateful if you would assist me by allowing me to interview you.

If you agree to participate, I will ask you a number of questions. All in all the interview should not take much longer than an hour. You can decide if you will be comfortable if I use a tape recorder to record our conversation. Such recording will assist in making sure that I have a good record of the information and views you will provide. Having such a record will be of great help in writing up the research. It will be my responsibility to make sure that the information you provide and that is audio recorded will be treated with care to ensure confidentiality. However, should you not feel comfortable with me audio recording the interview, I will simply make notes of our conversation.

An incentive for participation will only be in the form of providing a meal and to compensate for traveling expenses. This compensation will serve as a token of appreciation for your willingness and ability to assist.

If you experience any form of discomfort during the interview, please inform me, and the interview will be stopped immediately.

Your participation will be kept private and your name will remain anonymous. On the consent form you will be required to provide a signature to indicate that your participation is voluntary and that I undertake to safeguard any personal details and perspectives shared.

In terms of confidentiality, your participation will be safeguarded as far as possible, since you will remain anonymous, and no quotes will be attributed to specific identifiable persons.

The data will be stored for one year in a secure location at the Centre of Criminology at UCT, as it will be used in the production of academic publications, while still safeguarding the anonymity and confidentiality of participants in all research outputs. The research will be used for the purpose of the Master's research dissertation. If the research is used outside of the parameters of the project, the permission will be obtained from the researcher to make use of the data.

If you have concerns about the research, its risks and benefits or about your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Law Faculty Research Ethics Committee Administrator, Ms Lamize Viljoen at +27 (0) 21 650 3080 or at lamize.viljoen@uct.ac.za. Alternatively, you may write to the Law Faculty Research Ethics Committee Administrator, Room 6.29, Kramer Law Building, Law Faculty, UCT, Private bag, Rondebosch 7701.

Date of interview

06:08:2019

Place of interview

Mynburg Park

Number of respondent

1

Signed:

Glen

(Interviewee)

Signed

.....

Heinrich Velocri

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**THE NUMBER GANGS IN SOUTH AFRICAN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES: UNDERSTANDING THE
HIDDEN IDENTITIES**

CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH

- I Glen Voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any questions, without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that participation involves the hidden identities of The Number Gangs in South African Correctional Centres.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in the research.
- I agree to my interview being transcribed.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation.
- I understand that I will inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original transcripts will be retained at the Law Faculty, Department of Criminology, UCT, as it will be used in the production of academic publications.
- I understand that a transcript or video recording of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed, will be retained for the period initiated by the University.
- I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of research participant.

Glen
.....
Signature of participant

2019.08.06
.....
Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.



Signature of researcher

2019.08.06

Date

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW GUIDE

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR INTERVIEWS FOR EX-OFFENDERS

The interviews will be scheduled as follows:

The research sought to investigate the hidden identities of The Number Gangs in South African Correctional Facilities; therefore the questionnaires will consist of six sections, to outline the topics of research.

Section 1 – introductory questions

Section 2 - gang membership

Section 3 – Gang initiation

Section 4 - Gang language

Section 5 - Tattoos and meaning

Section 6 - Ranks, roles and responsibilities

All different questions and answers will be highlighted.

The formation sheet, participant consent forms and research questionnaires was administered to respondents.

Section. 1

- What is your name and where are you from?
- Where were you born?
- Where did you grow up?
- Did you grow up with your parents?
- What was/is your home language?
- Did you grow up in an area where a lot of crime and violence happened?
- What kind of crime?
- What kind of violence?
- How did the crime/violence affect you and your family?

Section 2

- Did you grow up in an area of gangs?
- Which gangs were operating in your neighbourhood?
- Were you interested in joining the local gangs?
- Did any of your family belong to gangs?
- Were you in prison before?
- When were you in prison? And for what offence?
- Did you join the gangs in prison?
- Were you a member of the number gangs then and are you now?
- The number gangs are having three divisions or camps. What are the key differences between the gangs?
- In your opinion, who do you think is the most prominent gang in the prison and why are you saying so?

Section 3

- Can you tell me more about your very first day in prison?
- Can you still remember the dates?
- Were you invited to join the gang?
- After admission you were exposed to certain rituals by the gang, can you still remember?
- What makes you decide to join the number gangs?
- As a member of the gang, is there a particular job you need to do in the gang?
- What are the benefits for you being a member of the gang?
- How can a gang member be identified in the gang?
- Can you tell me more about the identification process?
- How is the gang structured?
- What are the differences between the junior and senior levels of the gang?

Section 4

- The researcher will ask the participant to engage in the studying of video footage and documents about gang language?
- How do gang members communicate with each other?
- Is there a special language?
- What will be the reason for the gang to speak the language, which only they understand?
- Is there somebody who teaches you how to speak the language?
- How difficult or how easy was it for you to speak and understand the language?
- What does this language mean to you?
- The researcher goes back to the video footage to ask the participant to explain some of the words used by the gang.

Section 5

- The researcher and the participant collectively look at pictures about gang tattoos, before asking questions.
- Do you also have a gang tattoo?
- When did you get the tattoo?
- Why did you get the tattoo?
- How did you do it in prison and what does it mean to you?
- Why do gang members have tattoos?
- Does each tattoo have its own meaning?
- Does the three camps of the gang have different tattoos?
- If you could, would you like to have your tattoos removed? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- Would you say that the number gang members are proud of their tattoos? Why?
- The tattoos will be studied one by one in an attempt to explain and understand the meaning.

Section 6

- In your explanations of the tattoos, you speak about ranks. What are these ranks and where does it comes from?
- Why do they use military ranks? And what does it mean?
- How do you understand the meaning of the junior and senior ranks?
- Does every gang member have a rank or only certain individuals?
- Does every rank have a different meaning and responsibility? Can you tell me more please?
- Do you have a rank in the gang? and if so, can you tell me more about your rank and responsibilities?
- Do the military ranks also come with a certain uniform? Can you explain to me please?
- Can you tell me more about the uniform, ranks and each gang members responsibilities?
- How does discipline work in the ggangs?
- Who gets disciplined/punished and for what?
- Who is responsible for disciplining others?
- What forms/types of discipline are used?
- Who decides what the punishment will be for any particular offence?
- Can one appeal one's punishment?
- What are the relationships between the number gangs inside prison?
- Do the leaders of the Number Gangs cooperate?
- When does conflict arise and about what?
- How is conflict settled between the gangs?

REFERENCES

- Abbott, P., DiGiacomo, M., Magin, P. & Hu, W., 2018. A scoping review of qualitative research methods used with people in prison. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17(1): pp.1-15.
- Adendorff, R., 2002. *Fanakalo a pidgin language. Language in South Africa*. Cambridge University Press.
- Albertse, L., 2007. *Gang members experience of victimization and perpetration of rape in prison*. Masters Dissertation. University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Community and Health Science.
- Barbora, V., 2018. Nonverbal communication of prison subculture through criminal tattoo symbols. *AARMS–Academic and Applied Research in Military and Public Management Science*, 17(3), pp.179-186.
- Barnard, S. 2016., *Convict tattoos. Marked men and women of Australia*. University of South Australia.
- Bales, W.D., Blomberg, T.G & Waters K., (2013). Inmates' tattoos and in-prison and post-prison violent behaviour. *International journal of criminology and sociology* (2), pp. 20-31.
- Biernacki, P. & Waldorf, D., 1981. Snowball sampling: Problems and techniques of chain referral sampling. *Sociological methods & research*. 10 (2): pp.141-163.
- Bowers du Toit. N.F., 2014. Gangsterism on the Cape Flats: A challenge to “engage powers”. *Theological studies*. 70 (3): pp.1-7.
- Brinkmann, S. and Kvale, S., 2005. Confronting the ethics of qualitative research. *Journal of constructivist psychology*, 18(2), pp.157-181.
- Butler, M., Slade, G. & Dias, C.N., 2018. Self-governing prisons: Prison gangs in an international perspective. *Trends in Organized Crime*, pp.1-16.
- Calteaux, K.V., 1994. *A sociolinguistic analysis of a multilingual community*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Rand Afrikaans University: Johannesburg.
- Calteaux, K.V., 1996. *Standard and non-standard African language varieties in the urban areas of South Africa: main report for the STANTON Research Programme*. HSRC Publishers: Pretoria.
- Concha, G.Q & Vigil, J.D., 2010. Multiple marginality and urban education. Community and school socialization among low-income Mexican-decent youth. *Journal of Education and Students placed at Risk*. 15(1-2): pp.51-65.

- Cole, A. (2007). *Review of tattoos: Bodies: Art and Exchange in the Pacific and the West*. University of Hawai'i Press.
- Correctional Services Act., 1998. Republic of South Africa (Act 111 of 1998).
- Cornips, L. & Muysken, P.C., 2019. Introduction: Language in the mines. *International journal of the sociology of language*. 258: pp.1-12.
- De Franzo, S.E., 2011. *What is the difference between qualitative and quantitative research?* [online]. Available: <https://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/qualitative-vs-quantitative-research/>
- Decker, S., Decker, S.H. & Van Winkle, B., 1996. *Life in the gang: Family, friends, and violence*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Densley, J.A., 2014. It's gang life, but not as we know it: The evolution of gang business. *Crime & Delinquency*, 60(4), pp.517-546.
- Department of Correctional Services. Annual Report. 2018/2019. Available: <https://www.gov.za/documents/departement-correctional-services-annual-report-200182019-23-sep-2019-0000>
- Department of Correctional Services. Annual Report. 2019/2020. Available: http://www.dcs.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/DCS-Annual-Report-_web-version.pdf
- De Vos, A.S. & Strydom, H., 2002. Research at Grass Roots. *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions*. Van Schaik: Pretoria
- Etter, G.W., 1999. Skinheads: Manifestations of the warrior culture of the new urban tribes. *Journal of Gang Research*, 6(3), pp.9-21.
- Farghal, M., 1995. Euphemism in Arabic: A gricean interpretation. *Anthropological Linguistics*, pp.366-378.
- Fleisher, M.S., & Decker, S.H., 2001. An overview of the challenge of prison gangs. *Corrections Management Quarterly*. 5 (1): pp.1-11.
- Gear, S. and Ngubeni, K., 2002. *Daai ding: Sex, sexual violence and coercion in men's prisons*. Braamfontein: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.
- Gear, S. & Ngubeni, K., 2003. Your brother, my wife: sex and gender behind bars. *SA Crime Quarterly*. pp.411-16.
- Gear, S., 2005. Rules of engagement: Structuring Sex Damage in Men's Prison and beyond. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. 7 (3): pp.195-208.

- Gear, S., 2007. Behind the bars of Masculinity: Male rape and Homophobia in and about South-African Prisons. *Sexualities*. 10 (2): pp.209-227.
- Gear, S., 2010. Imprisoning men in violence. Masculinity and sexual abuse: A view from South African prisons. *SA Crime quarterly*. 33, pp.25-33.
- Glaser, C., 2000. *Bo-tsotsi: the youth gangs of Soweto. 1935-1976*. Heinemann: Oxford, Cape Town.
- Goffman, E., 1961. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situations of Mental Patients and other inmates*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.
- Hagerdorn, J.M., 2005. The global impact of gangs. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*. 21 (2): pp.153-169.
- Halliday, M.A.K., 1964. *Comparison and Translation*. In *the linguistics Sciences and Language Teaching*, eds. M. Wetherell, S. Taylor & S. Yates, Sage: London: pp.72-81.
- Halliday, M.A.K., 1978. *Language as social semiotic: the social interpretation of language and meaning*. Edward Arnold: London.
- Haysom, N., 1981. *Towards understanding Prison Gangs*. Institute of Criminology, University of Cape Town.
- Howell, S., 2015. *X marks the spot: community response to tik and gangsterism on the Cape Flats*. Safety and Violence Initiative. Available: www.savi.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/image168/Simon%20Howell_x%20Marks%20the%20Spot_2015.pdf [2016, March 8]
- Human Rights Commission, 24 February 1997. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*. Available: <http://2001-2009.state.gov>.
- Hunt, G., Riegel, S., Morales, T. & Waldorf, D., 1993. Changes in prison culture: Prison gangs and the case of the "Pepsi generation". *Social Problems*. 40 (3): pp.398-409.
- Hurst, E., 2007. Urban Discourses and Identity in a South African Township: An analysis of Youth Culture in Cape Town. *Unpublished conference paper presented at the African Studies Association 50th Annual Meeting: New York*.
- Hurst, E., 2008. *Style, Structure and Function in Cape Town Tsotsitaal*. Department of Linguistics University of Cape Town: Cape Town.
- Hurst, E., 2009. Tsotsitaal, global culture and local style: Identity and recontextualisation in twenty-first century South African townships. *Social Dynamics*, 35(2), pp.244-257.

- Hurst, E., 2018. *The social and political history of South Africa's language*. An Encyclopaedia of the Social and political history of Southern Africa's languages.
- Irwin, J., 1980. *Prisons in Turmoil*. Boston, MA: Little Brown.
- Jefferson, A. & Jensen, S., 2005. Reviewed Works: The Number: One Man's Search for Identity in the Cape Underworld and Prison Gangs by Johnny Steinberg. *Kronos Southern African Histories*. (31): pp.275-279.
- Jennings, W.G., Fox, B.H. and Farrington, D.P., 2014. Inked into crime? An examination of the causal relationship between tattoos and life-course offending among males from the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 42(1), pp.77-84.
- Jensen, S., 2008. *Gangs, politics & dignity in Cape Town*. James Currey.
- Jensen, S., 2010. The security and development nexus in Cape Town: War on gangs, counterinsurgency, and citizenship. *Security Dialogue*. 41 (77): pp.77-97. England: Sage.
- Jovchelovitch, S. & Bauer, W.B., 2000. Narrative interviewing: *Qualitative researching with text, image, and sound*. pp. 57-74.
- Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services (JICS), Annual Reports 2017 – 2018. <http://jics.dcs.gov.za>.
- Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services (JICS), Annual Reports 2019 – 2020. <http://jics.dcs.gov.za>.
- Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services (JICS), Annual Reports 2020 – 2021. <http://jics.dcs.gov.za>.
- Kaviani, F., 2018. *Portraits of South Africa's Bloodiest Prison Gang: The Number*. [online] Vice.com. Available at: <<https://www.vice.com/en/article/8xpnqb/portraits-of-south-africas-bloodiest-prison-gang-the-number>> [Accessed 1 March 2022].
- Kinnes, I., 2000. *From Urban Street Gangs to Criminal Empires: the changing face of gangs in the Western Cape*. Available: <http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No48/Contents.html> [2007,11/27]
- Kinnes, I., 2017. Contested governance: police and gang interactions. University of Cape Town: Cape Town.
- Kynoch, G., 1999. From the Ninevites to the Hard Living gang: Township gangsters and urban violence in twentieth-century South-Africa. *African Studies*. 58 (1): pp55-85.

- Lessing, B., 2014. *How to build a Criminal Empire from Behind Bars: Prison Gangs and Projection of Power*. Available: http://www.iza.org/conference_files/riskonomics2014/lessing_b9pdf [10 August 2014].
- Liebling, A., 1999. Doing research in prison: Breaking the silence. - *Theoretical Criminology*. 3 (2): pp.147-173.
- Lindergaard, M.R. & Gear, S., 2014. Violence makes safe in South African prisons: prison gangs, violent acts, and victimization among inmates. *Focaal-Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology*. 68: pp.35-54.
- Lotter, J.M., 1998. Prison Gangs in South Africa: A Description. *South African Journal of Sociology*. 19(2).
- Lozano, A.T.R., Morgan, R.D., Murray D.D & Varghese, F., 2010. Prison tattoos as a reflection of criminal lifestyle. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. 55 (4): pp.509-529.
- Mack, N., Woodsong, C., & McQueen, K. (2005). Qualitative research methods.
- McGrath, C., 2019. Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical Teacher*. 41(9): pp.1002-1006.
- MacMaster, L.L.M., 2010. *In search of a family: The challenge of gangsterism to faith communities on the Cape Flats*. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of the Western Cape.
- Mathew, D., 2013. Prison language: A psychoanalytic approach to the language of British young offenders in the twenty-first century. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*. 22(2): pp. 95-107.
- Mdletye, A.M., Coetzee, J. & Ukpere, W.I., 2012. The impact of transformational change in the Department of Correctional Services of South Africa. *African Journal of Business Management*. (6): p.50.
- Meltzer, D., 2008. *The claustrum*. London: Karnac Books.
- Mesthrie, R., 1989. The Origins of Fanagalo. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Studies*. 4: pp.211-240.
- Mesthrie, R., 2008. Towards a unified account of tsotsitaals in South Africa. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*. 28 (1): pp.103-130.
- Muntingh, L.M., 2006. *Corruption in the prison context*. Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative.

- Muntingh, L.M., 2007. *Prisons in South Africa's Constitutional Democracy*. Centre for the study of violence and reconciliation. Criminal Justice Program.
- Mouton, J. & Babbie, E., 2001. *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Muller, C.F.J., 1968. *Vyfhonderd jaar Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis*. Academica.
- Newby-Rose, H., 2011. *Fanakalo as a trade language in KwaZulu-Natal*. Doctoral dissertation. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University.
- Newman, D.J., 1958. Research interviewing in prison. *J. Crim. L. Criminology & Police Sci.*, 49: p.127.
- Ngulube, P., Mokwatlo, K. & Ndandwe, S., 2008. *Utilization and prevalence of mixed methods research in library and information research in South Africa*.
- Ortiz, J.M., 2015. *The power of place: A comparative analysis of prison and street gangs*. City University of New York.
- Parker-Lewis, H., 2003. *The Prison Speaks. Men's Voices: South African Jails*. Ihlihili Press.
- Parker-Lewis, H., 2006. *Gods Gangsters. The Number Gangs in South African Prisons*. Cape Town. Ihlihili Press.
- Parker, N., 2010. *An explorative study of grade 7, Hanover Park learners' awareness of, and participation in, after-school programmes and activities* (Master's thesis, University of Cape Town).
- Parry, A., 2006. *Tattoo: secrets of a strange art as practised among the natives of the United States*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Paterson, M.C., 2003. *The linguistic markers of the language variety spoken by gang members on the Cape Flats, according to the film Dollars and White Pipes*. Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University.
- Peterson, D., Taylor, T.J. & Esbensen, F.A., 2004. Gang membership and violent victimization. *Justice Quarterly*, 21(4): pp.793-815.
- Phelan, M.P. & Hunt, S.A., 1998. Prison gang members' tattoos as identity work: The visual communication of moral careers. *Symbolic Interaction*, 21(3): pp.277-298.
- Phellas, C.N. & Bloch, A., 2011. Structured methods: interviews, questionnaires, and observation. *Research society and culture*. 3 (1): pp.23-32.

- Pinnock, D., 1984. *The Brotherhoods: Street gangs and state control in Cape Town*. Cape Town: David Phillip.
- Pinnock, D. & Douglas-Hamilton, D., 1997. *Gangs, rituals & rites of passage*. Cape Town: African Sun Press with the Institute of Criminology, University of Cape Town.
- Pinnock, D. & Douglas-Hamilton, D., 1998. *Rituals, rights, and tradition: Rethinking youth programmes in South-Africa*. In K.H. ed, *Gangs and Youth Subcultures: international Explorations*, New Brunswick: Transaction.
- Pinnock, D., 2016. Cape Town gangs: the other side of paradise. In *Global Perspectives on Youth Gang Behavior, Violence, and Weapons Use*. IGI Global: pp. 262-293.
- Pinnock, D., 2016. *Gang Town*. Tafelberg, an imprint of NB Publishers: Cape Town.
- Pinnock, D., 1982. *State control and street gangs in Cape Town: towards an understanding of social and spatial development*. Master's thesis, University of Cape Town.
- Pont, J. 2008. Ethics in research involving prisoners. *International Journal of Prisoner Health*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp.184-197.
- Pyrooz, D., Decker, S. & Fleisher, M., 2011. From the street to the prison, from the prison to the street: Understanding and responding to prison gangs. *Journal of aggression, conflict and peace research*. pp.12-24.
- Rademeyer, A., 2014. 47% quit school at grade 10. *Beeld* (Johannesburg). [10 January 2016].
- Reid, G., 2004. Sex and now: exploring South Africa's sexual histories and secrecy. *South African Historical Journal*. 50 (1): pp.77-83.
- Rivlin, A., Marzano, L., Hawton, K. & Fazel, S., 2012. Impact on prisoners of participating in research interviews related to near-lethal suicide attempts. *Journal of affective disorders*. 136 (1-2): pp.54-62.
- Robberts, L & Inderaur, D., 2018. The ethics of research with prisoners. *Current issues in Criminal Justice*. 19 (3): pp.309-326.
- Rodgers, D., 2006. Living in the shadow of death: gangs, violence and social order in urban Nicaragua, 1996–2002. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 38(2): pp.267-292.
- Rodgers, D., 2019. Gangsterism is prevalent globally and historically. *Cape Argus* (Cape Town) Available: <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/cape-argus/20190409/281702616090361> [9 April 2019].
- Salo, E., 2006. *Mans is ma soe: Ganging practices in Manenberg, South-Africa and the ideologies of masculinity, gender, and generational relations*. [online]. Available: <http://www.csvr.org.za/wits/confpaps/salo.htm> [2008,25/01].

- Sankar, P., 2004. Communication and miscommunication in informed consent to research. *Medical anthropology quarterly*. 18 (4): pp.429-446.
- Sargeant, J., 2011. Qualitative Research Part 2: Participants, Analysis, and Quality Assurance. *Journal of graduate medical education*. (4): pp.449-452.
- Schärf, W., 2001. Community Justice and Community Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa. *IDS Bulletin*, 32(1), pp.74-82.
- Schurink, W.J., 1989. The world of the Wetslaners: an analysis of some organizational features in South African prisons. *Acta Criminologica*. 2, pp.60-70.
- Schurink, W.J., Schurink, E., & Lotter, J.M., 1986. *Deviance and crime: Numbers Gang in South African prisons: An organizational perspective*. University of Natal: Association for Sociology in South Africa.
- Scott, C & Fonseca, L., 2010. Overstepping the mark: Ethics procedure. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*. 33(3): pp.287-300.
- Seidman, I., 2006. *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers' college press.
- Seidman, I., 2013. *Interviewing as qualitative research*. New York, NY: Columbia University Teaching College.
- Schaverien, J., 1963. The psychological effects boarding schools can have on your life later. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*. 50(2): pp.127-153.
- Shaw, M., 1976. *Introduction to language and Methodology*. Carnegie-Mellon University.
- Shoemaker, D.J., 1990. *Theories of Delinquency. An examination of Explanations of Delinquent Behaviour*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Skarbek, D., 2012. Prison gangs, norms, and organizations. *Journal of Economic behaviour & Organizations*. 82 (1): pp.702-716.
- Skarbek, D., 2014. *The social order of the underworld: How prison gangs govern the American penal system*. Oxford University Press.
- Skywalker, L.L., 2014. *Politics of the number: an account of predominant South African prison gang influences* (Master's thesis, University of Cape Town).
- Slabbert, M. & Van Rooyen, 1978. *Some implications of tattooing in and outside of prison*. Institute of Criminology, University of Cape Town: Cape Town.

- Slabbert, S. & Myers-Scotton, C., 1997. The structure of tsotsitaal and Iscamtho: Code switching and in-group identity in South African townships. *Linguistics*. (35): pp.317-342.
- Standing, A., 2003. The social contradictions of organised crime on the Cape Flats. *Institute for Security Studies Papers*, 2003(74): p.16.
- Standing, A., 2005. The threat of gangs and anti-gangs' policy: Policy discussion paper. *Institute for Security Studies Papers*, 2005(116): p.32.
- Standing, A., 2006. *Organized crime: A study from the Cape Flats*. Pretoria: Tandym Print.
- Steinberg, J., 2004 (a). *Nongoloza's children: Western Cape Prison Gangs During and After Apartheid*. Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.
- Steinberg, J., 2004 (b). *The Number: One Man's search for Identity in the Cape Underworld and Prison Gangs*. Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball Publishers.
- Sykes, G.M., 1958. *Society of captives*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sykes, T., 2008. *Gang deterrence and community protection Act of 2007*. The possibility of inconsistent jurisprudence.
- Swartz, C. Harding, H.J & De Lannoy, A., 2012. *Ikasi style and the quiet violence of dreams: a critique of youth belonging in post-apartheid South-Africa*. Comparative Education. 48 (1): pp.27-40.
- Swartz, C., 2007. *The moral ecology of South-Africa's township youth*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of Cambridge.
- Swingler, S., 2014, *The Cape Youth Gangs: Bigger, Deeper, More Dangerous*. [Available]: <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-05-26-the-cape-youth-gangs-bigger-deeper-more-dangerous/v9Bouzveyu5>.
- Tadevosyan, G. & Schoenhuth, M.N.D., 1997. *Participatory research approach: principles, challenges, and perspectives*.
- Taylor, J., 2011. The intimate insider: Negotiating the ethics of friendship when doing insider research. *Qualitative research*, 11(1): pp.3-22.
- Tesch, R. 1990., *Qualitative research: analysis types and software tools*, New York: Falmer.
- The South African Correctional Services. 2003. White Paper on Corrections. Available: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202001/whitepaperoncorrectionsinsouth-africa.pdf

- The Weekend Argus., 2015. *New plan to smash prison gangs. Initiative to clamp down on crime in jail.* [6 June 2015]. Available: <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/weekend-argus-saturday-edition/20150606/281492159931069>
- Thompson, A.C., 2003. *Navigating the Hidden Obstacles to ex-offender Re-entry.* Boston College Law Review, 45: p.255
- Thrasher, F.M., 1927. *The Gang: A Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago.* Chicago University of Chicago Press.
- Tolich, M., 2004. Internal confidentiality: When confidentiality assurances fail relational informants. *Qualitative sociology*, 27(1): pp.101-106.
- Turner, F.J., 1986. *Social work treatment: Interlocking theoretical approaches.* 3rd edition.
- Ungar, M., 2011. The social ecology of resilience: Addressing contextual and cultural ambiguity of a nascent construct. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. 81(1): pp.1-17.
- Valdemar, R., 2008. *Learning how to speak "Gang". Police Magazine [Blog].* Available at: <https://www.policemag.com/373194/learning-how-to-speak-gang>
- Van der Merwe, M., 2016. Book Review: Don Pinnock's Gang Town wakes you up to a cold reality. [Daily Maverick]. Available: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2016-03-28-book-review-don-pinnocks-gang-town-wakes-you-up-to-a-cold-reality/>
- Van Onselen, C., 1984. *The small matter of a horse: The life of "Nongloza" Mathebula, 1867-1948.* Ravan Press: Johannesburg.
- Venkatesh, S., 2008. *Gang leader for a day.* New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Vetten, L., 2000. Invisible girls and violent boys: Gender and gangs in South Africa. *Development Update*, 3(2): pp.40-53.
- Wakai, S., Shelton, D., Trestman, R.L. & Kesten, K., 2009. Conducting research in corrections: Challenges and solutions. *Behavioural sciences & the law*, 27(5): pp.743-752.
- Walsh, S. & Mitchell, C., 2006. 'I'm too young to die': HIV, masculinity, danger and desire in urban South Africa. *Gender & Development*, 14(1), pp.57-68.
- Ward, C.L. & Bakhuis, K., 2010. Intervening in children's involvement in gangs: Views of Cape Town's young people. *Children & Society*, 24(1): pp.50-62.
- Wenger, E., 1998. *Communities of practice learning, meaning, and identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University.

- Whiteman, G., 1998. Management of studies that break your heart: *Journal of Management inquiry*. 19 (4): pp.328-337.
- Wittenberg, P.M., 1996. Language and communication in prison. *Federal probation*. 60 (4): pp.45 -55.
- Zarzycki, L., 2015. Socio-lingual phenomenon of the Anti-language of Polish and American prison inmates. *A Journal of English Studies*, University of Nizwa.