THE EFFECT OF THE EXPERIENCE OF INCARCERATION ON PRISON INMATES

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submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for

the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

in the subject

SOCIAL WORK

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF W F VAN DELFT

NOVEMBER 2005

Summary

This research was undertaken to establish the effect incarceration of individuals in the total institution called prison has on the incarcerated individuals. A literature study along with an empirical study, with 17 ex-inmates, was completed to explore the environment and circumstances of the institution called prison and the effect it has on the prisoners it incarcerates. Issues discussed include the prison environment, the prisonisation process, the inmate code and the process of incarceration. Also discussed are the presence, activities and influence of the gangs within the prison environment. It would appear that prison has a lasting effect on most prisoners and limited rehabilitative value, although there does appear to be some deterrence value. The subject begs further investigation, especially among a wider mix of inmate type, in order to deliver further recommendations to the South African Department of Correctional Services.

Key terms: corrections, incarceration, prison, effects of imprisonment, imprisonment experience, prisonisation, induction.

Opsomming

Die doel van hierdie navorsing was om die effek van gevangenskap op gevangenes
te bepaal. 'n Literatuurstudie tesame met 'n proefondervindelike studie van
sewentien gewese gevangenes is onderneem om die invloed van die omgewing en
omstandigheid op die gevangenes na te vors. Faktore soos die gevangenis
omgewing, die gevangene kode en die gang van gevangenskap is in oënskou
geneem. Daar is ook gekyk na die voorkoms, bedrywighede en inwerking van die
gevangenes bendes. Dit blyk dat die gevangenis 'n blywende uitwerking op
aangehoudenes het en dat rehabilitasie beperkte waarde het en dat alhoewel
aanhouding tog 'n mate van afskrik waarde het. Dit is duidelik dat verdere
ondersoek aangewese is, dat 'n wyer spektrum van gevangenes betrek moet word,
ten einde verdere aanbevelings aan die Suid Afrikaanse Departement van
Korrektiewe Dienste te kan voorlê.

Sleutel terme: korreksies, aanhouding, tronk, effekte van aanhouding, ondervinding
van aanhouding, gevangene persoonlikheid, induksie.

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CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

Introduction

In this first chapter of the dissertation, an overview is provided of the subject under discussion; the incarceration in institutions of those human beings who have transgressed the law, been found guilty and been sentenced to imprisonment. Furthermore, this chapter also offers insight to the researcher's reasons for the selection of the topic and the goals and aims of the research and explores the relevance of this research to social work. The following sections of this chapter outline the nature of the subject under research, the social worker's interest in prison life, the selection of the research topic, the goal and aims of the research, the demarcation of the study and the research methodology which includes the research design, the sampling technique, the interview process. The definitions of the key concepts then are explained and this is followed by a discussion of the limitations and problems experienced with the research.

1.1 THE NATURE OF THE SUBJECT UNDER RESEARCH

According to Rusche in Matthews (1999:34) the history of punishment can be described as three epochs succeeding one another, characterised by the prevalence of quite different methods of punishment. Penance and monetary fines were practically the only form of punishment available in the early Middle Ages, replaced in the late

Middle Ages by a system of cruel corporal punishment and death sentences and followed finally in the 17th century by prison sentences.

According to Flanagan, Marquart & Adams (1998:13) there is evidence to support the fact that in the middle of the seventeenth century workhouses for the poor in America were receiving inmates who had been convicted of serious crimes. It would appear therefore that the evolution of the institute of incarceration from the workhouse to the penitentiary, where hard labour was part of the sentence, began as early as the middle of the sixteenth century. Prisons were originally established to be a more humane alternative to the inevitable death sentence imposed so easily in that era. The main focus was to remove the inmate from all opportunities for the perpetration of corruption, both inside the institution, and outside in the community. This made the case for isolation and solitary confinement. Clearly prisons have evolved a great deal since these objectives were set. Today there are divided views on the emergence of imprisonment as an alternative form of punishment. On the one hand there is the view that the emergence of prison is a by-product of humanity's transition from a state of barbarism or primitive behaviour to one of civilisation. On the other hand there is the thought that imprisonment is not so much an improvement in the means of punishment as a change of form (Matthews: xii). Foucault in Matthews (1999: xii) says the aim of imprisonment "was not to punish less, but to punish better". The whole prison system is geared towards two distinct subsystems: one concerned with the management of its employees and the other focused on delivering a service to the inmates (the users of the system) (Peak 1995:241).

In South Africa both the extent and cost of imprisonment is increasing at an alarming rate with more and more governmental and privately owned and managed institutions needed to incarcerate transgressors of the law. More than 180 000 people are currently incarcerated in South African prisons around the country (www-dcs.pwv.gov.za/RestorativeJustice/inter_trends.htm: 12/4/2004). This rising need to build more prisons to meet the increasing need for inmate accommodation is not peculiar to South Africa, but is being noticed and recorded in many Western countries. Americans are being incarcerated at a higher rate than ever before and the cost to society not only in financial terms but also social terms is enormous. Some states in the United States of America are spending more on imprisoning their citizens than on educating them. Gillespie (2003:8) says both college and imprisonment offer an "education" of a sort, but the context differs and it is the context and the effect of imprisonment in which social scientists are interested.

1.2 SOCIAL WORK'S INTEREST IN PRISON LIFE

Prisons, inmates and the culture and environment of penitentiaries have fascinated the public, criminology and social work students for the most part of the twentieth century and this interest continues into the twenty first century. Gillespie (2003:32) says initial interest was initially focused more on the structural functionalism, which emphasises the relationship of the social structure to individual behaviour. It was more the social order and control that was of interest in early studies.

According to Rusche (Matthews 1999:34), a comparison of the phases in the history of penology with changes in social history show surprising interconnections. In Europe the system of fines and penance corresponded to the needs of the thinly populated, peasant economy where the possibility of settling on free land hindered any strong social pressure on the lower classes and led to a relatively even distribution of society's wealth. Few crimes against property took place since it made little sense for an individual to steal what he could produce for himself with a lesser cost in psychic expenditure. Rusche continues by saying that it was in the later Middle Ages when the increase in population on settled land created a class structure of rich and poor and propertyless workers drove down wages. With the emergence of a quasi-capitalistic mode of production the picture of crime changed as beggars, social unrest and revolts, which culminated in the peasant wars, increased. Gradually traditional methods of punishment evolved into whippings, mutilations and killings. (Matthews 1999: 34).

Rusche says the 1600s again brought changes in the labour market with the expansion of trade and new markets and as the labour supply became scarcer, the wages rose and the social structure of Europe changed. It became economically "senseless" to eradicate the work force. It made more sense to incarcerate them and so confinement in workhouses became more profitable than hanging. However, this system lost its efficacy when the industrial reserve army (a group of trained workers who could fill work posts at short notice) came into effect and workers lost their scarcity in the 18th century. Institutions of forced labour became institutions of torture (Matthews 1999: 35).

In the United States of America (USA) social society looked different and punishment developed differently partially because there was a greater demand for workers and the free land and industrial development created a vacuum that immigration could not fill. The lowest social classes were the immigrants and coloured workers and according to Rusche, prisons became profitable places of production until World War I after which the picture of society changed again and along with it the penal policies and methods (Matthews 1999: 36). With each change in punishment, the general treatment of prisoners changed and so too the resultant effect of imprisonment on the inmate.

This particular study is interested in the prison culture or subculture and the effect of the various aspects of incarceration on the inmate's motivation, behaviour and emotions in a present day South African correctional facility.

1.3 THE SELECTION OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC

It is important for a researcher to select a topic and have a clear design plan for the research. The researcher has been influenced by the following considerations:

- As a religious worker/Christian counsellor at the Leeuwkop Correctional facility, north of Johannesburg, South Africa for the past four years, the researcher has had numerous discussions and input from inmates over the years with regards their entry into prison.

- As a Christian counsellor, the researcher has noted that many of the psychological problems and anger that the inmates deal with are related to their experience of their entry into prison and their experience of imprisonment.

- Prisons in other parts of the world e.g. the United Kingdom and the United States have implemented well developed induction programmes with some success.

- Exploratory research into the inmate's prison experience could shed light on further areas of study for more effective social work interaction with inmates in order to facilitate a more productive sentence and more effective, post incarceration, societal integration.

The chosen topic is therefore an area of interest to the researcher and one in which the researcher has made contacts and established relationships with members of the subgroup. As a social work professional, the interest of the researcher is also on improving social work service delivery in the area of imprisonment.

1.4 THE GOAL AND AIMS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The focus of the study is on the experience of individuals who were incarcerated in South African prisons and holding cells. For the purposes of this study the prison experience is considered to begin at the time of detention in a holding cell, which is usually the precursor to being held in a prison awaiting trial and following a guilty verdict imprisonment in sentenced prison. More specifically the study is interested

in what the experience of incarceration has been for the individual inmates and what effect incarceration has had on their behaviour. Of interest too are the strategies inmates employed to deal with the difficulties the prison environment presented. The study included both a study of available literature on the subject as well as collection of empirical data by interviewing individuals in this subgroup of ex inmates who were imprisoned in South African prisons. The objectives of the study are therefore:

- To establish how incarcerated people experience incarceration i.e. emotions, physical experiences, psychological experiences.

- To establish what effect the experience has on the behaviour of the inmate.

- To establish what the inmates believe could be done to improve the rehabilitative aspect of incarceration. One of the core questions is whether the presence or absence of an induction programme has an effect on the choices inmates make with regards the way they spend their time inside prison.

1.5 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

The interviews for the research were conducted between 1 April and December 8, 2004. The individuals who were interviewed were all members of the subgroup of the population who have been incarcerated in various South African prisons and subsequently released. All respondents were adult males (21 years or older at the time of release) who were released no earlier than 3 years (36 months) prior to the interviews being conducted. Ex-prisoners were targeted for a number of reasons including the fact that publication of collected data would be vetted and possibly

restricted by the Department of Correctional Services. This is in accordance with the Department of Correctional Services agreement (required to be signed by all researchers) regarding conditions applicable to research done in institutions, which are under the authority of the Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services (www-dcs.pwv.gov.za/Research/Default.htm: 09/03/2004). This agreement states "research findings may not be published or made known in any other manner without the written permission of the Commissioner of Correctional Services". In addition the same agreement document indicates that "research instruments/interviews must be used/done within view and hearing distance of a member (s) of the South African Correctional Services, otherwise only within view of a member (s) of the Department". In view of the nature of the research, the researcher felt that this was too restrictive and could inhibit interviewees in terms of their responses with regards their own feelings about their treatment in prison (in particular questions relating to overcrowding and violence). Furthermore, permission for research to commence could be delayed for a number of months since the Department of Correctional Services Research Ethics Committee (REC) meets infrequently, and at the time of enquiry in early March 2004, the next REC meeting would have been held in late May 2004 with a reply expected at an undetermined date after the meeting. In addition, the researcher felt that the ex-inmates would be more open since they were no longer restricted by their incarceration and could therefore take a reflective role.

The interviews were conducted both telephonically (where distance or time constraints prevented a face-to-face interview) and in person by the researcher.

Interviews were sometimes recorded with audio equipment and sometimes where face-to-face interviews were not possible due to distance or time constraints, responses were recorded by the interviewer in writing. At all times, where recording equipment was utilised it was done so with the permission of the interviewee. All interviews were conducted in English.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.6.1   METHODOLOGY

According to Rubin & Babbie (1993:30) research methods which place emphasis on depth of understanding and tap into the deeper meaning of human experience and that are aimed at generating theoretically richer observations that are not easily able to be reduced to numbers, are termed qualitative. In order to delve into the experiences of ex-inmates an approach was required that would allow for proper explanation and expansive reflection from the individuals about their experiences. The approach also required flexibility for the many different responses that needed to be explored; hence, the methodology employed was a qualitative approach. The strategy and methodology employed therefore provided an avenue for deeper and more insightful enquiry into the experience and behaviour of inmates while incarcerated. This methodology was employed in order to collect detailed data from a number of ex-inmates about how they experienced their life in prison, by interviewing ex-prisoners. Of importance for the data

collection process was a record of the emotions that came to the fore for them once the incarceration period started (first night) and the choices they made with regards their behaviour while in prison. This methodology provided a rich, in-depth study on each subject in the sample under focus and yielded a more significant understanding of this subject in order to be able to draw conclusions about the behaviour of the inmates under study. Qualitative research is more suitable due to the fact that in order to be able to understand this topic in its initial, exploratory stage, a method that focuses on collecting rich, detailed descriptions of the subject under discussion is more appropriate. Furthermore, this method allows for an inductive approach, meaning that the researcher can begin with a broader exploration, which increases its focus and clarity through the interview process. According to Neuman (2000:185), qualitative research employs a non-linear approach, which means the interviewer can move in between abstract and concrete concepts. Perhaps the most important motivator for the use of the qualitative method is the fact that this approach allows for description and clarification from a member of the subgroup who has experienced the phenomenon being researched.

1.6.2   SAMPLING

In cases where the respondents may be members of a subgroup who have a "shame-based" commonality (in this case their history of incarceration in prison), normal methods of sampling may be inappropriate, due to the difficulty with identification of the subgroup. McCall & Simmons in Rubin &

Babbie (1993:367) mention snowball sampling. This methodology entails the researcher asking respondents for the names of others who fit the profile (in this case other ex-inmates). Since this subgroup often meets at parole offices, and frequently have friends in the same subgroup this sampling methodology was adopted to obtain the sample required (20 ex-inmates). Criteria was limited to firstly, having been an inmate in a South African prison, secondly being an adult male (with an ability to communicate in English or Afrikaans – the only two languages in which the researcher is proficient enough to conduct interviews) and lastly having been released no earlier than three years previously.

1.6.3   <u>INTERVIEW PROCESS</u>

Qualitative research methods include direct observation, participant observation and intensive or unstructured interviewing. Qualitative inquiry involves attempting to understand the selected subjects from their own perspective, their feelings, their views of reality and their special meanings (Rubin & Babbie 1993: 302). Although interviews are the most suitable method of data collection for this study, the method has limitations, for example demand characteristics (Feldman 1995: 34). This means the interviewee responds in a way he thinks the interviewer expects him to. Another problem that can be experienced is interviewer bias. Information can be distorted due to the questions asked or the manner in which they are asked.

1.6.4   <u>RESEARCH INSTRUMENT</u>

All qualitative interviewing is essentially open-ended and provides an opportunity for respondents to express their own views and perspectives in their own words. Interviewing strategies can vary in the extent to which sequencing and wording of the open-ended questions are predetermined (Rubin & Babbie 1993:374). When interviewer bias and effect needs to be minimised and when respondents' answers need to be compared to one another, a more structured interview is required, which still allows for flexibility and open-ended questions. Hence, the *standardised open-ended interview* was selected for this research methodology. Questions are written out in advance exactly the way they are to be asked in the interview (Rubin & Babbie 1993:378).

1.7   DEFINITION OF THE KEY CONCEPTS

1.7.1   <u>FEAR</u>

Fear is defined by the Oxford dictionary (1996: 316) as "panic or distress caused by a sense of impending danger, pain etc. or a state of alarm". It is this researcher's supposition that this "state of alarm" is a contributory factor in the motivation for inmates to join gangs or other subgroups within the larger subgroup in search of protection from fear and that this same state is a causative factor in the perpetration of violence on other inmates.

1.7.2 TRAUMA

Kalsched (1996: 1) describes trauma as any experience that causes the individual unbearable psychic pain or anxiety. Furthermore, Kalsched explains that for an experience to be unbearable it means that the experience has overwhelmed the usual defensive measures. Kleber, Figley & Gersons (1995:1) write as follows, "Trauma goes beyond the individual. It has a far wider context. We interpret war, loss, violence, and disasters in ways shaped by our culture, by our society, and by its values and norms. We cope with serious life events in ways provided and approved by our surroundings".

1.7.3 PRISONISATION

This term was first coined by Donald Clemmer, a staff sociologist at Menard Penitentiary in Chester, Illinois in the United States of America and is based on his research on the male prison subculture during the 1930s. It refers to the process that an inmate enters once he is incarcerated. Prisonisation is described by Inciardi (1993:568) as "the process by which the inmate learns the rules and regulations of the institution and the informal rules, values, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary".

1.7.4   INMATE CODE

According to Inciardi (1993:570) inmate code refers to the unwritten rules of the prison subculture, which, if violated can result in sanctions ranging from ostracism to death.

1.7.5   TOTAL INSTITUTIONS

A total institution is one which is characterised by the fact that all aspects of life of the individuals who live there take place under one roof and all their needs are essentially served by the bureaucracy that runs it. According to Goffman in Gillespie (2003: 38) "all aspects of life are conducted under the same roof and the same single authority". In addition, each individual's daily activity is carried on in the immediate company or under the observance of a group of other people, and all phases of daily activity are tightly scheduled and completed under the auspices of fulfilling the ruling authority's overall plan.

1.7.6   STIGMATISATION

According to Bondeson (1989:177) the word 'stigmatisation' derives from the Greek word "stigma" which referred to the bodily mark showing that a person was a criminal, traitor or slave. Today it is used more for ascribing shame without a bodily or visible mark.

1.8   LIMITATIONS AND PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED WITH THE RESEARCH

One of the major limitations of the literature review is that the majority of information and statistics available on imprisonment, prison and gang violence, induction programmes and inmate behaviour originates from the United Kingdom and the United States, which makes researching this topic cumbersome and sometimes not accurately applicable to the South African context. This inaccuracy would be due to the differences in demographics and multiculturalism between the United States and South Africa. For example in the United States of America, although the population is majority Caucasian, a disproportionate number of prisoners are of African American or Hispanic origin. According to Matthews (1999:xvii) the proportion of African Americans sent to state and federal prisons in the USA increased to just over 50 per cent of the prison population in 1995 although they comprised 12 per cent of the general population. In South Africa the population composition is different (majority black) and so too the composition of the prison population. According to a research project undertaken by the CB Powell Bible Centre (UNISA) in 2003 there were 188 320 prisoners in South African correctional centres at the time and according to their research results the "correctional centres population reflects the broader South African population" (Religious care needs assessment executive summary: 4). This limitation is far more inherent in quantitative research and would affect the ability to generalise findings. This study is qualitative and will not attempt to generalise its findings to the broader population.

Another limitation is the fact that samples for research conducted with inmates or ex-inmates is seldom randomly selected as studies rely on volunteers that are willing to share their experiences and so it is uncertain how this selection bias could affect the findings. Ex-inmates are also keen to put as much distance between themselves and the prison experience and therefore many subjects were unwilling to spend a great deal of time on the interviews.

Summary

In this chapter an overview was provided of the nature of the subject under research, which included brief discussions on the evolution of incarceration as a method of punishment and of incarceration in South Africa. This was followed by a brief introduction to the methodology employed in the research project including the research design, the sampling technique, the interviewing technique and the research instrument, being the questionnaire, used during interviewing the subjects. This chapter leads us now into the first section of the literature review.

CHAPTER 2

INCARCERATING HUMANITY: AN OVERVIEW OF IMPRISONMENT

Introduction

This, the first chapter of the literature review will begin with the context of the literature review. The chapter then moves on to a brief overview of the theories of punishment, which have bearing on incarceration. A brief overview follows on the South African prison system after which the phenomenon of incarceration in South Africa is discussed in some depth. Despite the theoretical and empirical limitations mentioned under 1.9, considerable information on the problems facing prison management in South Africa especially the problems of prison violence and overcrowding is available from professional journals, the mass media and the website of the South African Correctional Services Department. Hence this chapter also discussed these two issues relating to incarceration in South Africa.

2.1   THE CONTEXT OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

In 2003 there were 188 320 (Religious care needs assessment executive summary: 4) people incarcerated in South African prisons. It is therefore a significant number of the population who are affected by incarceration, whether directly, or through the incarceration of a family member or loved one. The prison, the army camp, the monastery and the mental hospital all function as total institutions and have certain common elements.

This section of the literature review focuses on the total institution of prison and its effect on the prisoners who have been incarcerated within their walls.

2.2   THEORIES OF INCARCERATION

Incarceration has become the defacto form of punishment worldwide and it appears that other forms of punishment when imposed are subject to questioning. It is necessary for judges to explain during sentencing any sentence which is imposed other than a prison sentence, which leads to the conclusion that prison is the expected punishment in society today. Zehr says, "The presumption of prison is why our [American] incarceration rates are so high." He continues, "By international standards, we are very harsh. American incarceration rates are much higher per capita than those of any other industrialised nation, with the exception of Russia and South Africa". The reasons why prison is thought to be the best or indeed only form of punishment available can be traced back to early criminological theory. Muntingh (2001:11) summarises these theories of punishment as follows:

2.2.1   DETERRENCE

The concept of deterrence, based on the theories of criminologists Jeremy Bentham and Cesare Beccaria (Brown, Esbensen & Geis 1998: 189) asserts that the purpose of punishment is to prevent the individual or group from committing crime by punishing those found guilty of

committing crime. It assumes that a person who has experienced the pain associated with punishment for their crimes are unlikely to commit crime again. It also assumes that the general pubic is observant of what happens to people who transgress the law and therefore avoid committing crimes in order to avoid punishment. They are thought to perceive punishment as pain and the theory assumes that people avoid pain and instead pursue pleasure. Deterrence theory is reliant on the assumption that people are rational and in control of their emotions and therefore their lives and capable of clear decision-making. Empirical evidence would appear to prove that deterrence does not work since the prisons remain full and not only full of new offenders but full of recidivists (Muntingh 2001:11).

2.2.2.   <u>INCAPACITATION</u>

This theory contends that offenders should be removed from society in order to render them incapable of offending against society again. In the United States of America, the 'three strikes' rule, which incarcerates third time felony offenders for life, is an example of incapacitation theory. "Of all the incapacitation strategies, the death penalty has no equal, and if permanent incapacitation is to be achieved, the death penalty would be the logical punishment for every offender" (Muntingh 2001:12).

2.2.3   <u>RETRIBUTION AND RESTORATION</u>

This theory underpins the previous two theories discussed above and states that an offender must receive punishment in proportion to the crime committed. In this case proportion means that the punishment (or pain) must be greater than benefits (or pleasure) derived from the crime. Society takes revenge on the offender and the punishment is aimed at individual offenders who suffer the consequences of their actions. The offender pays with the only commodity available to all – freedom. Restorative justice, a process of finding judicial satisfaction for the victim and in an environment of reconciliation and forgiveness (http://home.wanadoo.nl/hittjo/engels/reports/Coyle.htm: 2/4/2004), evolved from this theory when criminologists realised that this retributive process does not help the criminal to take responsibility for his actions. The failures noted in retributive justice are evident in that it assumes that criminals are rational, logical and analytical thinkers and that it is focused only on the offender and ignores the victim (Muntingh 2001:12).

2.2.4   <u>REINTEGRATION</u>

This theory, suggested by Reitan (Muntingh 2001:12), assumes that criminal behaviour represents a breach or absence of community, meaning that the purpose of punishment is to restore the community

where the breach occurred or where there exists an absence of community.

This theory is based in two moral beliefs; firstly, that it is better for people to live in community with each other and secondly, that a community should be formed where one does not exist. Punishment by means of imprisonment is therefore aimed at bringing the offender back into the community as a good citizen (Muntingh 2001: 14).

2.3 AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRISON SYSTEM

The website of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) (www-dcs.pwv.gov.za/AboutDCS/History.htm: 12/4/04) provides an insight into the current positioning of the Department of Correctional Services with an overview of its past. Significant changes have taken place in the direction of the South African prison system in the latter part of the past century. In the early part of the century the prison system was regulated mainly by the Provincial Ordinances, but a major reorganisation took place after the British occupation of the Transvaal and Orange Free State in 1900. In those early days, the pass laws and the use of inmates by the mining companies led to a very high rate of imprisonment. After Unionisation in 1910, the Prisons and Reformatories Act, Act 13 of 1911, led to an increased role for the prison system as the prison services also took control of reformatories and courts and

played a role in developing prison law. It became unlawful for prisoners, who were awaiting trial, to be detained in solitary confinement, and any prisoner who felt they had been mistreated, was given the right to recourse.

Prisoners who were 'well behaved' could be released early on a work programme or even directly into the community. Although talk of rehabilitation abounded, very little of it actually took place, and punishment in prison for transgressions against the system were severe and included whippings, solitary confinement, dietary punishment and additional labour.

Although the Lansdowne Commission on Penal and Prison Reform held promising developmental talks in 1945, and new prison legislation was promulgated in 1959 in the form of the Prison's Act, Act 8 of 1959, very little changed in terms of prison life. Prisoners were exploited even further as a parole system was implemented that required prisoners to either sign employment contracts with farmers at ridiculously low rates or remain in prison. Corporal punishment continued although this was in contravention of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (www.-dcs.pwv.gov.za/AboutDCS/History.htm: 12/4/04). After the 1960s, prisons were used to detain large numbers of prisoners in order to control political conflict by removing them from areas where they were able to influence mass actions or political activities and the incarceration of political detainees and sentenced political prisoners became a reality. Increasingly, the legitimacy of the prison system was called into conflict, but the government

responded by giving even more power to the prison authorities. In 1984 the Judicial Inquiry into the structure and functioning of the Courts reported that individuals imprisoned due to influx control was causing major overcrowding in prisons.

After 1984 changes slowly started to take place with regards the hiring of work teams from prisons for agricultural work purposes and paroling prisoners under paid contracts, but prisons remained overcrowded (www.-dcs.pwv.gov.za/AboutDCS/History.htm: 12/4/04). On 21 July 1985, a State of Emergency was declared and it remained in force until 1990. During this time, the detention of political prisoners on a large scale further overcrowded the facilities. The year 1988 brought amendments to prison legislation and in 1990, extensive reforms to the prison system were announced. One of the most important changes was that some individuals were dealt with in the community rather than inside prison – this was referred to as correctional supervision. The 1993 Interim Constitution, and the post election Constitution of 1996 highlighted the importance of human rights, which included the rights of prisoners. The demilitarisation of the prison system was finalised on 1 April 1996. In 1998 the Correctional Services Act, Act 111 of 1998 represented a move to a more modern, internationally accepted prison system (www.-dcs.pwv.gov.za/AboutDCS/History.htm: 12/4/04). The following features in the Act are notable:

- o The entrenchment of the fundamental rights of prisoners.
- o Special emphasis on the rights of women and children.

o Various safeguards regarding the use of segregation and force.

o A framework for treatment and development as well as support services for inmates.

o A more refined community-involved release policy.

o Extensive external monitoring mechanisms.

o Provision for public and private sector partnerships in terms of the building and operating of prisons.

2.4   INCARCERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the context of South African correctional management, there are 133 management areas with each area housing a number of correctional facilities, in total 230 prisons and 177 community corrections offices countrywide. On 31 December 1999, the Department of Correctional Services was in charge of the management of 236 prisons. This number was made up of eight female prisons, 12 youth correctional facilities, 115 prisons for males only, 89 prisons which accommodate both male and female inmates and a total of 12 prisons were closed down for renovations at the time (Neser 2001:165). As at 2003 there were 188 320 (Religious care needs assessment: 4) prisoners in South Africa and statistics show a growth in the prison population of over 50 percent in recent years. With crime and poverty on the rise, the prison population is expected to continue increasing. Both the extent and cost of imprisonment in South Africa is increasing rapidly. According to Muntingh (2001:45) there were 1.5 million (or 615 per 100 000 of the population)

prisoners incarcerated in the United States while in South Africa the number in 1990 was at 390 per 100 000 of the population. The cost of imprisonment per inmate in South African prisons was around R86 per day or R31 390 per annum in 2001.

According to the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) website (www.dcs.org.za: 12/4/2004) South African prisons are committed to transformation and undertake under the new Constitution of South Africa with its focus on humanitarian rights and the new Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998 to provide a high level of services to the inmates. Chapter three of the Act is made up of three parts referring to the conditions of humanity and dignity for inmates. Of special interest is the first part (Part A) which sets out the general requirements of custody such as accommodation, nutrition, health care, exercise, contact with the community, access to legal advice, complaints and requests (Jacobs 1999:74). In line with the fundamentals of the Act, Neser (2001:171) says the DCS offers inmates a number of development and support services and summarises these services as follows:

2.4.1   RELIGIOUS CARE

Religious care is available to all prisoners throughout the spectrum of faiths and beliefs and religious services are available to inmates on a weekly basis.

2.4.2   <u>SOCIAL WORK SERVICES</u>

According to the DCS website (www-dcs.pwv.gov.za/ OffenderManagement/SocialWork.htm: 12/4/2004) all social work services are offered by qualified social workers who are registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions in terms of The Social Service Professions Act, 1978 (Act no. 110 of 1978).

The aims of the social work services are expressed on the website as being to help prisoners with their social problems with the view to enhance and promote their social functioning and promote their reintegration into society. This, the site says, is done through: strengthening the inmate's support system, the linking of offenders with systems that provide resources, enhancing the problem solving and coping capacities of the inmates, addressing offending behaviour and influencing behaviour change and enhancing the offender's capacity to deal with the demands of the environment. Practically this means: orientation of prisoners on social work services, weekly presentations on issues such as life skills, which include education on family and social relationships, sexual offender programmes, HIV/AIDS education, aggressive offender programmes, substance abuse programmes (alcohol and drug), trauma counselling and release preparation programmes are available to prisoners.

2.4.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

DCS endeavours to place psychologists within reach of all sentenced prisoners and parolees. The service is prioritised for:

o Suicide risk management

o Psychological intervention in cases requested by the courts

o Mentally ill prisoners in need of counselling and who may have been under previous psychiatric care

o Risk management of persons under community supervision and who pose a danger to society.

The Department of Correctional Services website (www-dcs.pwv.gov.za/AboutDCS/Servicelevel.htm: 12/4/2004) makes it clear that the psychological services offered have dual responsibility. Primarily, they are to provide psychological services to prisoners, probationers and personnel and their secondary responsibility is to provide crisis intervention to personnel.

2.4.4 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This service concentrates on empowering inmates for economically sustainable and meaningful life after imprisonment. The following programs are offered to inmates;

o Literacy and ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) education to address the needs of the 37 per cent illiterate population and 45 per cent functional illiterate prison population.

o Vocational and basic occupational skills training as well as entrepreneurial skills training in line with the Skills Development Bill. Opportunities are focused to involve 80 per cent of all juveniles and 45 per cent of all adults with a sentence of two years or less in at least one skills training course.

o Mainstream education in line with NQF (National Qualifications Framework) levels two to four to allow individuals to study correspondence courses of their choice.

o Schooling in recreation, which includes the establishment of at least one library at every management area and instruction in the recreation for inmates.

2.4.5   <u>LABOUR SUPPLY</u>

This is aimed at ensuring that prisoners are occupied with some or other form of work. Work is however not always available but the DCS endeavours to find work for at least 70 percent of the inmates. It is expected that 50 per cent of all prisoners should be occupied with some or other form of work while inside while the aim is to create work opportunities for 70 per cent of the prison population. Where practical and possible the experience gained from doing this work should

promote their chances of obtaining similar employment after release from prison.

2.4.6   <u>INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES</u>

The main purpose for the provision of these services is to support departmental mission to uplift the offender. Industrial products and services include the production of food for consumption by the inmates, the manufacture of workshop items being used by the Department of Correctional Services and other government departments and the maintenance of departmental equipment and buildings.

2.5   ISSUES FACING CORRECTIONAL SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Some of the main issues pertaining to direct caring and management of prisoners facing correctional services in South Africa and other countries today are:

2.5.1   <u>OVERCROWDING</u>

The Draft White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2003:27) says that the Department of Correctional Services regards overcrowding as its most important challenge as it has significant negative implications on the ability of the Department of Correctional Services to deliver on its stated objectives and lists some of the causes of overcrowding as:

- Inefficient functioning of the criminal justice system – in particular the high rate of incarceration.

- Introduction in 1997 of minimum sentences for particular categories of serious crime resulting in an increase in the number of long term offenders.

- Crime trends in South Africa, particularly with relation to violent crime and serious economic offences.

- High number of awaiting-trial detainees held in awaiting trial facilities.

- Inadequate needs-driven facility planning in the Integrated Justice System.

The issue of overcrowding in both local and foreign prisons is a serious one and prison violence is often blamed on this phenomenon. Eric Allison, a journalist writing for the British newspaper, The Guardian (Monday 22 December 2003: 1) reports, "Britain's prisons will explode into violence unless urgent action is taken to ease overcrowding". Furthermore, the report states, "prison numbers are endangering the life and limbs of both prisoners and prison officers". In South Africa too, prison overcrowding has been discussed and debated in the media and in parliament, leading to mass releases of prisoners sometimes with disasterous results. According to Jacobs (1999:72), on 3 December 1997 South African prisons were 43 percent overcrowded with some prison occupation figures being far higher than the national average.

Pollsmoor Maximum Prison in Cape Town was in 1996 as high as 200,4 percent overcrowded. It is evident that the high number of awaiting-trial prisoners (one quarter of the incarcerated prisoners are awaiting trial) and the high level of serious and violent crime which leads to long term prison sentences are contributors to the overcrowding problems in this country's prisons. In a 14 April 2004 article entitled, "The Constitutional rights of prisoners within South Africa", written by Lebogang Morodi and posted on the UNISA website (www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=1393&P_ForPrint=1: 14/4/2004), he says, "From personal observation conditions of South African prisons remain overcrowded and unhygienic for human development".

More recent media reports focus on bizarre and inhuman conditions. Under the headline, "Roaches now rule Pretoria prison", The Citizen (25 May 2004:1) journalist Ilse de Lange writes about the appalling conditions in Pretoria Local Prison as follows, "There are probably more cockroaches per square centimetre in the Pretoria Local Prison than sardines in a shoal running up the KwaZulu-Natal coast, and the prison's foundations are suffused with sewage water". de Lange says these and other equally shocking facts are part of a report commissioned by Judge Essop Patel after complaints were received from prisoners. The same article in the Citizen (25 May 2004:1) states that the inspecting advocates made the following statement, "We were

astounded by the fact that the applicants, and other inmates living in vastly overcrowded cells, did not have continuously available running water, that the cells did not have sufficient ablution facilities and that the prisoners are forced to eat, live and sleep in the same limited space with insufficient ventilation. Furthermore, the report in the Citizen stated that the prisoners were detained in the cells without exercise for at least 22 out of every 24 hours, and the only means of relaxation for the inmates was to sleep continuously. The advocates admitted that the conditions were probably the result of the high crime rate and failure by the courts to finalise trials, which led to overcrowding "(Citizen 25 May 2004:1). Journalist Sonja Carstens in the Afrikaans newspaper Rapport (13 February 2005:23) writes that if the Animal Anti Cruelty League had to keep animals in the same way as prisoners are kept in South African prisons, they would be sued for cruelty to animals. In the article judge Eberhart Bertelsmann and presiding judge Ophrus Makobe are quoted as saying that the crisis in our prisons has huge constitutional implications for the whole judicial system and that urgent steps need to be taken in respect of sentencing and the conditions in prisons (translated from Afrikaans). The judges contend in the same article that prisoners are stuffed into cells designed years ago to house half the number of prisoners currently incarcerated. Furthermore the judges say in the current situation, rehabilitation is practically impossible and most first time prisoners sentenced to short term incarceration are exposed to hardened criminals who present

them with the temptation to stay on the criminal road (Rapport 13 February 2005: 23 – translated from Afrikaans).

In contrast to this, journalist Chris Karsten reports in the same newspaper (13 February 2005: 2) on the highly successful rehabilitation and transformation of an inmate incarcerated for fraud. The judge in the appeal for leniency, who granted inmate Mr Andre Keller a twenty-eight year remission in his sentence due to his transformation, said it was heartening to see, for the first time in his thirty years as magistrate, that prison had a positive effect on an offender. It was also the first time in his career that he had heard an offender thank the Department of Correctional Services (Rapport 13 February 2005:2 – translated from Afrikaans).

Ellison & Buckhout (1981:250) says, "Increasingly as prisons become more and more overcrowded, the total institution breeds a subculture that is made up of the inmates who may run the prison for all practical day-to-day purposes". The social psychological effects of overcrowding are traceable to stress in the inmate and results in anger, hostility, anxiety, depression and violence.

2.5.2   <u>PRISON VIOLENCE</u>

Elie Godsi, in his book Violence in Society (1999:38), writes that violence is a part of all our lives, whether it affects us directly when we become victims or whether we know people who have been victims of violence or simply because we live in a world in which violence occurs. Esquivel (2002: 3) quotes Duncan & Rock as follows "Current research indicates that South Africa is rated as one of the most violent countries globally, and present evidence suggests that if no systematic interventions take place this violence will not only continue but also escalate". There are many contributors to this violence, which include the past apartheid legislation, political violence, counter-violence, intra-community violence, and repression in far broader terms such as continuous race, class and gender inequalities and discrimination. The result of this violence has been losses in terms of life, property, and material goods. Furthermore disintegration of family units, loss of caregivers and financial hardships, have also resulted and have in turn impacted severely on the majority of South Africa's society. The impact is evident in the lack of resources such as jobs, housing and education which have subsequently contributed to a high percentage of criminal activity ranging from fraud, assault, armed robbery, housebreaking, hijacking and murder, which, in turn cause widespread trauma and loss on a daily basis (Esquivel 2002:3). "Moreover," says Esquivel, "this

high rate of criminal activity is reflected in South African prisons, where the perpetrators of this criminal activity reside".

Mahan in Parisi (1982:66) says studies show that violence is more likely in a setting of chronic, long term crowding and inactivity or idleness with frequent rule and personnel changes. In addition to this, tighter and repressive security also contributes to higher levels of violence. Research, says Parisi, has also shown that violence is more likely to be perpetrated by younger inmates who have very long sentences and therefore have nothing to lose.

In Changing Lenses (1990: 35), Howard Zehr tells the story of a man sentenced to prison and poses the rhetorical question of what the man will learn. His answer is that the man will most likely become the victim of violence himself and that he will learn that one must be violent in order to survive, that one responds to frustration with violence. Says Zehr, "That is after all normal in the distorted world of prison". He goes on to describe a possible scenario, "…it is likely that he will become the victim of homosexual rape", and asserts that this type of violence is a vehicle for expressing contempt or for degrading others. "The judge" says Zehr, "has ordered this offender to live for at least twenty years in an atmosphere which nourishes and teaches violence" (Zehr 1990:35).

Summary

This chapter provided an overall picture of the development of the Department of Correctional Services and the system of incarceration in South Africa. A brief overview of the theories of punishment clearly showed that incarceration processes worldwide are mainly focused on deterrence, incapacitation and retribution. The issues facing the South African prison system namely overcrowding and violence, are pressing indeed and appear to be problems that are not peculiar to South Africa, but are faced by correctional systems around the world.

CHAPTER 3

INCARCERATION – THE ENVIRONMENT INSIDE THE PRISON

Introduction

This chapter of the literature review focuses on the environment in which the inmate find himself once incarcerated as a sentenced prisoner. Firstly, the chapter looks at the community of the prisoners known as the inmate social system. Next the phenomenon which encompasses the inmates' adjustment to the prison system, described as 'prisonisation' is discussed in some depth. The arrival and entry of a prisoner into, what is described by most as a frightening experience, is then discussed briefly and is supplemented by a section on the prisoner subculture and the inmate code. Gang activity, seemingly so rife in prisons across the world, is addressed in detail in the last section of this chapter and includes a description of the most prominent gangs currently active in South African prisons.

3.1   THE INMATE SOCIAL SYSTEM

Zehr (1990:37) says offenders may have landed in trouble because of a poor sense of self-worth and because of a perceived lack of personal power. Their offences may have been a distorted attempt to say that they are someone and to assert some control over their own and perhaps the lives of others. He goes

on to say that the prison system will strip away the inmates' sense of power and worth as "the entire prison setting is structured to dehumanise".

Prisoners are given numbers, standardised clothing, and little or no personal space. They are denied almost all possibilities for personal decision and power". Zehr goes on to say that the focus of the entire prison system is focused on obedience and learning to take orders. Zehr's comments regarding the expectation of incarceration, although based on the American prison system, appear also to be locally applicable.

A prison is a community, and in the same way that people are shaped by their communities or environments outside of prison, so the prison environment influences people's growth and behaviour. The two main influencers on the process of prisonisation are firstly the characteristics the individuals bring with them into the prison from outside and secondly the deprivations and experiences of the inmate once inside. In other words, individuals may experience interpersonal problems inside prison that lead to the process of prisonisation or pressure from the prison administration. Structure could also contribute to this process (Gillespie 2003: 1). Despite all the arguments to the contrary, prison is primarily a place of custody and the order is maintained in the prison institution by means of strict control of every aspect of the inmate's life (Inciardi 1993:568). Inmates are disparaged by society, deprived of their individuality and autonomy and deprived of their identity. Although prison stories and motion pictures abound (The Last Castle, The Shawshank

Redemption, Oz), the experience of incarceration is not thought to be one for which an individual can prepare.

3.2   PRISONISATION

Gillespie (2003:2) describes prisonisation as "the basic learning theory involving antisocial or maladaptive changes in normative and behavioural patterns". This can be associated with physical or social hardships encountered during incarceration. Inciardi (1993:568) says, "Exposure to the social system of the prison community is almost immediate, for all new inmates become quickly aware of the norms and values that are shared by their fellow captives". This internalisation is called prisonisation. It is Inciardi's opinion that every person who enters prison experiences prisonisation to some extent. The first step of prisonisation involves the individual's status because he becomes an anonymous entity in a societal subgroup. He suddenly has a number and an orange jumpsuit, which means the playing field, is levelled. Whether he was a stockbroker or a street sweeper on the outside, he is now inside and in a group in which his individuality has no meaning. He learns the pecking order of the officials and soon understands that any authority he may have had outside is no longer applicable and that a new order of power now exists over which he is powerless.

Donald Clemmer's study on the behaviour of male prison subculture in the 1930s, as reported in Inciardi (1993:569), maintains that the close proximity in which inmates must live, destroys their privacy while the rules pushes them to conformity and as a result their isolation limits their range of experience. He asserts furthermore that the institutional life fosters a "monotonous equalitarianism" amongst inmates. Prisoners wear the same clothes, live in similar cells, eat the same food at the same time and are subject to the same rules and regulations. Clemmer says prison values are taken on to a greater or lesser degree, but once inmates take these values on and internalise them, they become immune to the influences of conventional value systems. Clemmer (Inciardi 1993:569) expands on this statement with a negative view of rehabilitation by saying the following; "This suggests that the process of prisonisation transforms the noviate inmate into a fully accredited convict; it is a criminalisation process that militates against any reform or rehabilitation".

It is widely accepted that prisons have a subculture of their own. Each prison has a system of norms of informal rules that influence prisoners' behaviour to a greater degree than the official or formal systems set up to regulate and structure an inmate's behaviour. Violation of these informal rules and norms can lead to ostracism or death by fellow inmates (Inciardi 1993:570).

Adaptation to the subculture is unique as are the circumstances in which the adaptation must take place. An individual's normal coping strategies and

methods may not be applicable since the confinement to prison removes the individual from his usual resources, confidence and security and places him in an unknown environment with unknown rules. The social system of a prison is formed because of the various unique environmental factors in play in a prison e.g. the deprivation, loss and enforced communal living. Ekstedt & Griffiths in Hlongwane (1994:27) assert, "the greater the extent to which the inmates accept the goals and norms of the inmate culture, the lower the chances are that correctional treatment programmes will be successful".

In contrast to the negative view above, Frankl (2004:74) questions whether human liberty and spiritual freedom are totally influenced by environment and whether man is an accidental product of conditional and environmental factors. He challenges this on the grounds of his own experience in the death camps of Nazi Germany in the 1940s, saying the last of human freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances. Frankl contends that there are always choices to make. He says, "Every day, every hour, offered the opportunity to make a decision, a decision which determined whether you would or would not submit to those powers which threatened to rob you of your very self, your inner freedom; which determined whether or not you would become the plaything of circumstance, renouncing freedom and dignity to become moulded into the form of a typical inmate" (Frankl 2004:75). Clemmer in Gillespie (2003:45) says prisonisation specifies seven universal features: "Acceptance of an inferior role, accumulation of facts concerning the organisation of the prison, the development of somewhat new

habits of eating, dressing, working, sleeping, the adoption of local language, the recognition that nothing is owed to the environment for the supplying of needs, and the eventual desire for a good job are aspects of prisonisation which are operative for all inmates".

Prisoners invariably experience rejection from the community from which they came, whether from their families, work environment or friends, hence acceptance in the new environment becomes even more important. Similar to conscription into the army, inmates are mixed in their cells with individuals from a variety of social strata; perhaps even from diverse cultural groups they have never interacted with before. Now they are forced to live in close contact with these people in acceptance of their sometimes vast differences. Hlongwane (1994:31) says acceptance by other prisoners can be seen as a security measure against physical aggression or as an escape from the humiliation that incarceration brings.

The process of prisonisation is thought to be twofold in that it not only strips away the prisoners' previous identities but also encultures them into the inmate subculture. It is also this process that makes his return into the society from which he came, more difficult, the degree of difficulty being dependent on the length of the prison stay and the depth of enculturation. The process begins when the individual arrives in the prison and has to adapt to the prisoner subculture.

3.3   THE PRISONER SUBCULTURE

The prisoner subculture forms the normative system of the inmate and refers to the social order of power and interaction in prison. In his study of the behaviour of male prisoners, Clemmer as reported in Gillespie (2003:38), included the following as forming a part of prison subculture:

> *"habits, behaviour, systems, traditions, history, customs, folkways, codes, the laws and rules which guide the inmates and their ideas, opinions and attitudes towards or against homos, family, education, work, recreations, government, prisons, police, judges, other inmates, wardens, ministers, doctors, guards, ballplayers, clubs, guns, cells, buckets, gravy, beans, walls, lamps, rain, clouds, clothes, machinery, hammers, rocks, caps, bibles, books, radios, monies, stealing, murder, rape, sex, love, honesty, martyrdom, and so on".*

3.4 THE INMATE CODE

The general informal norms and rules observed by inmates are referred to as the inmate code. According to Ohlin in Gillespie (2003:40) the inmate code is the normative system and forms the basis of the inmate subculture. It is a system that represents the organisation of criminal values, which are in opposition to the values of conventional society. In the main, this code forbids prisoners any interaction or relationship with the prison official that is not based on exploiting them. Fellow prisoners therefore honour those who stand in opposition to the prison system. It forms the basis for the value and belief

system of the inmate subculture. While not all prisoners take part in the inmate subculture, the majority are aware of the code and respect it.

Inciardi (1993:570) suggests that the rules of the inmate code will include at a minimum the following points:

- Inmates should not interfere in each other's interests – this includes strict rules about loyalty and betrayal towards fellow inmates against the common 'enemy' – the officials.

- Do not fight or quarrel with other inmates.

- Do not exploit other inmates.

- Do not weaken. Inmates are discouraged from complaining about threats or frustrations but are encouraged to take these like 'men'.

- Do not give respect to the warders or officials.

There appears to be much speculation and little agreement about how the inmate subculture develops in prison. Two explanations offered by Inciardi (1993:571) are the deprivation and the importation models.

3.4.1   DEPRIVATION MODEL

According to Parisi (1982:9) the deprivation model focuses primarily on the prison environment as producing pressures on and responses by the inmates. This model supposes that when inmates enter prison they are faced with major social and psychological problems that result from the loss of freedom,

status, dignity, possessions, autonomy, security and personal relationships. The prison subculture develops as a result of the inmates' attempts to adapt. Sykes in Gillespie (2003:41) quoted the term 'pains of imprisonment' and explains the term as follows, "the deprivations or frustrations of prison life…viewed as punishments which the free community deliberately inflicts on the offender for violating the law…that can be just as painful as physical maltreatment…[and] appear as a serious attack on the personality, as threat to the life goals of the individual, to his defensive system, to the self-esteem, or to his feelings of security". Further to these deprivations are the loss of freedom to have a heterosexual relationship, and the loss of material possessions as well as the loss of autonomy amongst others. In the 1970s, a researcher called Bondeson attempted to measure the aspects of institutional life that prisoners found most distasteful. Bondeson (1989:157) asked the question; "Are there certain things that you dislike here at the institution?" and this was supplemented by eighteen sub questions. At the top of the list of responses (96 percent) was the deprivation of liberty. The second highest (94 percent) response was related to the deprivation of opportunities to meet with the opposite sex. Bondeson also found that lost autonomy weighed higher than lost possessions. Inmates sometimes try to neutralise the effect of incarceration and loss of liberty by fleeing into the inmate society (Bondeson 1989:164). This shows how strongly deprivation features in the life of the inmate. The very deprivation of freedom, and the pain of incarceration, leads to a mutual understanding between inmates and the formulation of a collective response, for which a subculture must be formed. Once the

subculture develops, the inmate society begins to form. Gillespie (2003:42) is of the opinion that the entire "machinery" of the inmate subculture is aimed at alleviating the deprivation inmates experience in the total institution.

3.4.2   IMPORTATION MODEL

The importation model emphasises the character of inmates that precedes their institutionalisation and external conditions (Parisi 1982:9). This model, also known as 'cultural drift theory' assumes that the inmates do more than simply respond to the immediate prison problems, but rather that cultural elements are imported from outside. Prisoners bring with them their attitudes, norms, values and attributes and these become a part of the inmate subculture (Inciardi 1993:570). Various gangs that have influence over their 'members' also further influence these subcultures. In the view of Irwin & Cressy (Gillespie 2003:43), the inmate subculture came into the prison from outside where it was already established in part as a code of criminals and a part of the criminal subculture. They differed from Sykes (mentioned in the deprivation model above in 3.4.1) and maintained that the inmates did not learn to react to problems inside the prison, but rather that they relied on norms and skills obtained as part of their criminal lifestyle on the outside.

3.5   BULLYING IN PRISON

Connell and Farrington in Ireland (2002:20) define bullying as follows: "We say that a resident is being bullied when he/she is pressured, threatened, intimidated (for example for money, food or cigarettes), or made to do things against his/her will, including sexual acts. It is bullying if a resident is beaten up, hit, pushed, kicked or restrained, and if no one ever talks to the resident, or when someone tries to bother him/her by saying mean or unpleasant things. These things happen to the resident often, usually by the same people or groups of people, and it is hard for the resident to defend him/herself. It is not bullying when two residents of about the same strength sometimes have a fight". This quite clearly describes a systematic wearing down or breaking down of a person on a physical or mental level that might entail something as simple as 'silent treatment'.

Levenson in Ireland (2002:1) says many prisoners are "assaulted, regularly threatened or harassed. The physical safety of some prisoners, especially sex offenders, can only be achieved by segregating them for their own protection. Violence and bullying are endemic in most prisons and young offender institutions". Bullying in prisons varies from prison to prison and country to country and the severity varies greatly depending on the discipline level of the authorities and other factors. Bullying can include physical attacks such as slaps, punches and deliberate burning of victims with cigarettes, to batteries being placed in socks and used as weapons to beat someone, but can also be more insidious and appear as water being poured on bedding or excrement on or in beds (Ireland 2002:2). Perhaps the most violent or systematic form of

bullying takes place through the gang network that is so well developed throughout the prisons.

3.6   SEXUAL VICTIMISATION IN PRISON

Sexual activity, harassment and the procurement of sexual partners, are the focus of numerous groups within the subculture that is prison. Lockwood writes in Parisi (1982:47) that there exist different explanations for the sexual aggression and bullying that takes place inside prison walls. One theory that is postulated is that the behaviour validates masculinity in an environment in which men are emasculated, theorising that it is not about sex, but about power. Another theory suggests (and this appears to fit with the importation model mentioned above) that the behaviour of sexual aggression is merely a continuation of the exploitative violence in which the inmates were engaged before their incarceration. The consequences of continued homosexual attack, or rape on an inmate vary, but according to Weis & Friar (Parisi 1982:48), "Repeated homosexual rape causes the inmate to develop a new sexual identity. They now harbour a raped female in their male bodies". Unwanted homosexual advances cause extreme stress and anxiety in inmates, and can lead to a submissive attitude in cases where inmates have become the boy wife of another. The fear of rape has now been supplemented by the fear of the rape or sexual harassment resulting in an HIV positive status and eventual death from full-blown AIDS.

Lockwood in Parisi (1982:49) says, "In short the impact of severe sexual victimisation is understood as an identity transformation". He goes on to say that those at the bottom of the exploitation matrix are susceptible to withdrawal, isolation, medication, mental breakdown, runaway or suicide. Hopelessness results because the problem, which is unmanageable, is also one that is almost impossible to share with others due to its sensitivity. Rape and sexual harassment carries with it a shame based fear of discovery, which in turn helps to perpetuate the crime since it remains hidden. According to Parisi (1982:50), the concept of homosexual panic describes a type of anxiety thought to stem from a simultaneous attraction to homosexuality, as well as an aversion or abhorrence to it.

Lockwood (Parisi 1982:60) lists the reactions of the inmates to sexual harassment as, amongst others, one of the following:

- Becoming violent (self inflicted or directed towards others)

- Joining a clique (gang affiliation)

- Staying in one's cell (isolation)

- Changing jobs, cell blocks, or transferring to another prison (moving)

- By moving to 'protection' or 'weak company' (seeking out weaker people to surround oneself with so that they may be targeted instead).

Reactions vary from individual to individual, but it would appear as if the perpetration of violence on others is thought to be a means of warding off future attacks, as a reputation for violence serves to "scare" off potential perpetrators.

3.7   GANGS

Over the decades, organisation of the social structure inside prisons, have changed. Rather than being characterised by a single culture – the inmate culture – the social organisation now involves many smaller social units which may have at their core issues such as culture, shared pre-prison experiences, shared prison interests (such as education), race, criminal orientation or forced proximity. As Irwin observes in Gillespie (2003:63), "loyalty to other prisoners has shrunk to loyalty to one's clique or gang". Gangs have been a phenomenon that has been at the forefront of criminological and sociological study for most of the 20th century. Gangs are defined as social groups, distinguished from other social groups by three characteristics; anti social behaviour, engagement in conflict and informal structure (Hlongwane 1994:8). Research has shown that most gang members are predominantly male. Hlongwane (1994:9) says prison gangs are characterised by milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict and planning, and that the result of their collective behaviour is "the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, esprit de corps, solidarity, morale, group awareness and attachment to local territory". According to Knox (1994:296), the group dynamics provided by a gang are different from the criminal who acts alone because a crime committed by a gang member may

contribute to a higher status for a gang member. There is an incentive to commit crime. Ironically, many of the crimes of gang members are never reported, especially those committed against their own members, and in particular for crimes committed inside prison on fellow inmates. If gang members are highly integrated the threat of prison is no longer the deterrent it was, as criminals do not necessarily have to interrupt their gang careers when going to prison, they merely slot into the hierarchy inside. For some criminals it can be seen as a "homecoming" (Knox 1994:551). Often their esteemed gang leaders are in prison and they get to meet them for the first time. Says Knox, "Our prisons today are little more than gladiator schools".

In South African prisons, there are a number of active gangs, amongst them the 28s, the 26s, Airforce 3 and Airforce 4 and the Big 5. Each gang has its own unique focus and unwritten code of behaviour and in order to understand individual inmate intimidation and behaviour a brief exposition of gang behaviour as researched by Hlongwane (1994:125 – 197) will follow:

3.7.1   THE 28 GANG

The focus of the 28 gang, according to Hlongwane (1994:183) centres on food, boy-wives (homosexual sex with younger prisoners) and the 'correction' of the wrongs inflicted on the inmates by correctional services. Inmates who are members of other gangs may not join the 28s. Importantly, the 28s are concerned with the quality and quantity

of food that comes out of the correctional service kitchens. Should their complaints bear no fruit, the members of the 28s call an 'up' or assault against the cooks. All other gangs except the Big 5 gang are informed of the intended uprising. The Big 5 gang is excluded due to their reputation as informers for Correctional Services.

Members of the 28s may not leave the gang other than those that are permitted to resign for reasons of ill health, age and physical handicap. If a member of the gang exposes the secrets of the gang or transgresses against another gang member, the 'captains' of the gang carry out a penalty of death. Other inmates are in fear of reprisals from this gang (Hlongwane 1994:184). Intimidation and violence are the currencies with which they operate.

3.7.2   THE 26 GANG

Hlongwane (1994: 148) explains that the 26 gang developed from seven members of the 27 gang, which is now no longer in existence. Their focus is robbery of other inmates and blood fights or shows of aggression and violence. He goes on to say that the 26 gang does not accept into their membership anyone from another gang and new applicants (purported to be voluntary) are checked for other gang insignia and observed for a period of six days before admission is approved. Recruitment occurs when there are new admissions into

prison and the gang orders an 'up' or fight to demonstrate their power to new inmates and thereby attract applicants. It is clear from this behaviour how intimidating and fear invoking this can be for new inmates. Hlongwane continues, "The 26 gang is very selective in their choice of members". They prefer inmates who are aggressive and unafraid of being sent to isolation cells as their 'work' entails drawing blood – meaning they are involved in stabbings. "The 26 gang members call an 'up' during the day, especially early in the morning. That is why they are sometimes called the boys from the east" (Hlongwane 1994:149).

The 26 gang is also sometimes known as the 'Chico Boys'. They are not concerned with prison breaks and consider a member who has attempted an escape as having contravened the unwritten rules; a transgression deserving of punishment. 26s defend their members with blood fights against anyone who is not a member. Members of the 26 gang who are found guilty of transgressing are usually issued with an order to kill a member of staff or an inmate, not belonging to any group, in order to redeem himself. The implied threat to non-members is severe.

3.7.3   <u>AIRFORCE 3 & 4</u>

According to Hlongwane (1994:129), the origin of the Airforce 4 gang stems from the 28s gang, but the origin of Airforce 3 is unclear. The Airforce gangs are concerned with the business of escaping from prison and its members are disinterested in conditions in prisons. Members of this gang are marked for their daring escapes from prisons. Members are not recruited, but rather join of their own volition by approaching the gang and asking for a 'job'. The selection of gang members for this gang has only two criteria namely age and physical fitness. This fits with their primary objective of escaping from prison to be with their belongings outside. According to members of the Airforce 3 & 4 interviewed by Hlongwane (1994:130) the penalty for disclosing information about the gang is death. Gang insignia (tattoos) are the letters RAF or Royal or a picture of a person running.

3.7.4   BIG 5 GANG

An inmate called Masondo founded the Big 5, formerly called The Torch Commando in 1951 at the Cinderella Prison with the primary objective to aid escapes. Following his death during an escape attempt, the gang aligned itself with correctional services, and began to work with prison staff (Hlongwane 1994:186). The Big 5 gang then became involved in reigning in the prisons with terror campaigns aided by the prison staff. Big 5 members approach the gang on a voluntary basis usually for protection from other inmates. No infirm or aged

individuals are allowed to join the gang and physical strength is highly valued. Homosexuality is allowed and whilst the rules are more or less the same as the other gangs, the Big 5 is excluded from being informed of an 'up' called by other gangs because of their history of collaboration with the prison staff. Their code says that they are encouraged to work with correctional services to disarm other inmates and to report misdeeds and they are reputed to be spies for correctional services. Over time, the Big 5 has moved away from collaborating as closely with Correctional Services as in the past and many subgroups have developed within the gang (Hlongwane 1994:188).

Summary

In this chapter the focus was predominantly in describing the environment of the total institution called prison. Discussions included the inmate social system, and the inmate code, which are phenomena the inmates accept for themselves to varying degrees, once inside. Evidence from the literature suggests that two models influence prisoners; the deprivation model and the importation model, and these two models were discussed in detail. This section of the literature review also took a closer look at the process of prisonisation and the role of the gangs in creating the atmosphere of fear and intimidation in the prison environment and an overview of the major gangs currently active in South African prisons were discussed.

CHAPTER 4

THE INNER WORLD OF THE INMATE

Introduction

This chapter of the literature review focuses on the inner world of the inmate. It starts with a description of the prisoner's experience of the process leading to incarceration, followed by an exploration of what happens to the inner world of the inmate during the prison term starting with the entry shock and the associated trauma and the effects of trauma on the individual in the context of being an inmate. This leads to a discussion of the psychological effects of incarceration on the inmate such as neuroticism, defeatism and stigmatism. An overview of some of the physiological and psychological reactions of the inmate such as disintegration, disorientation, degradation and feelings of powerlessness ends the chapter.

4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF PRISON INMATES

Attempting to describe a typical incarcerated person would be an almost impossible task since the prison population is a microcosm of the population outside prison. Just as persons on the outside are unique and distinct, so each individual inmate is distinct. Approximately 10 years ago, Roberts (1994:11)

identified and discussed the five most prevalent characteristics of prison inmates: (a) character disorders: and antisocial defects, resulting from under-socialisation, and acting out inappropriate responses to day-to-day stressful situations; (b) unemployability; lack of motivation to find work as well as marketable skills; (c) relationship hang-ups: lack of close interpersonal ties with family and friends; (d) social stigma: being labelled a criminal; (e) immaturity: incapability to take responsibility for own actions and a general lack of capability to make socially acceptable decisions. While there are generalities, each individual inmate is described by Roberts (1994:1) as an "original", meaning that although there are characteristics that are shared by inmates, each person should be seen as in individual with his own unique characteristics and interpretation of the prison experience. In her book "Living inside prison walls", Derosia (1998:11) concurs with this statement by Roberts about the individuality of inmates saying that no matter how generalised descriptions of typical inmate behaviour may be, it should never be forgotten that any experience described belongs to a human being, who is unique and distinct from the next person. Although we describe typical behaviour patterns and construct profiles of inmates, there is no prototype prisoner. Each inmate has a different background, different education and different hopes, aspirations and dreams. Derosia (1998:11) says, "Just as college students vary in their capacity to survive and thrive (or not) in college, so too do prisoners in how they adjust (or fail to) to the imprisonment experience. Some will make it through incarceration relatively unscathed and

move on to a better life as rehabilitated (or habilitated) citizens, while others will repeatedly fail at life outside prison".

The way offenders adjust to the prison experience can depend on who they were, or are before incarceration, what they choose to do while in prison, and who they decide to be once they leave. However, one fact is exceedingly clear; imprisonment is responsible for some degree of stress in almost all inmates. The level of this stress varies from individual to individual. It is therefore possible that the environment in itself is not stressful but rather is interpreted by some individuals as stressful.

Earlier in this dissertation in Chapter 3 (3.4.1) reference was made to the five deprivations identified by Sykes, but in addition to these losses or deprivations, a further seven environmental concerns were cited by Toch in Parisi (1982:10) which produce different level of stress in inmates. These include privacy, safety, structure, support, emotional feedback, activity and freedom. But the elements of imprisonment do not exist in isolation, they coexist with factors such as the inmate's own personal background and his coping strategies, and these are combined with the institutions own flexibility, and ability to reduce stress and tension amongst the inmates.

Evidently, numerous stressors act upon the inmate inside the facility. These include; uncertainty surrounding the length of time to be served (parole uncertainties), sentence disparity and the helplessness associated with these

issues, inactivity and pre and post-release stressors. External issues also cause stress in the inmate especially issues surrounding their families and their families' financial coping abilities, while they themselves remain inside and unable to fulfil the duties of caring for them.

4.2 THE EXPERIENCE OF IMPRISONMENT FOR THE INMATE

According to Zehr (1990:33) the offender who has been apprehended goes through an elaborate and usually lengthy process in which two professionals – the prosecutor and the defence attorney – are pitted against each other to present the interests of the offender and the state. This process is guided by a legal process, which is usually, but not always, unknown to the offender, rendering him helpless or feeling helpless. Through this process, says Zehr (1990:33), the offender is "almost a bystander" and he has become "preoccupied by the various obstacles, decisions and stages that need to be faced. Nevertheless most of the decisions have been made for him by others". Once sentenced, the imprisoned person arrives in a unique environment, which is unknown (to those not previously imprisoned).

4.2.1   ENTRY SHOCK

According to Parisi (1982:32), the initial period of confinement, described as the transitional phase, is the most stressful and delivers more inmates who injure themselves than any other period of the

incarceration term. Parisi (1982:34) continues, "the early period of confinement, like death, may be reacted to with shock and disbelief when it does arrive". The United Kingdom's Prison Service Order (PSO) (http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/filestore/206_203.pdf:11) states that ten percent of suicides occur within the first twenty four hours of incarceration. Few appear to anticipate arrest although, when engaged in illegal activities, it is a part of the risk they take. Parisi (1982:32) surmises that this fact is rather like death, one is aware that it can happen at any time, but it is not your reality.

One group of prisoners who experience entry shock with particular difficulty is that group of people who suffer chemical or other addictions because they find themselves unable, for a time, to satisfy their craving and may experience "cold turkey" withdrawal, until they lock into the smuggling system inside. Another group of people that struggles with the shock of incarceration are people with psychological problems such as schizophrenics or psychotics (Parisi 1982:33). What is certain is that no matter whether a person has a mental illness, a physical dependency or is considered "normal" incarceration is a shock for most, even those who have been incarcerated before.

The humbling process, referred to as the process of self-mortification by Goffman (Gillespie 2003: 45), begins with the degradation ceremonies that inmates undergo when they first enter the prison

system. It involves the stripping away of the prisoner's name (which is exchanged for a prison number), usual appearance (civilian clothes are exchanged for prison clothes), possessions, identity, and sense of personal safety. When inmates enter prison as sentenced prisoners they are stripped of their clothing and issued with prison clothing, which makes them look like all other inmates. In South Africa, prison clothing is bright orange and is imprinted in a black step-and-repeat pattern with the word 'prisoner' in circles all over the garments. The numbers of personal possessions inmates are permitted to have on their person or in their cell are limited. They are inspected and searched – usually strip searched – and then 'processed'. This processing may include being called names to make the realisation sink in that no matter who they were before they entered prison they are now "just one of the numbers". The self-mortification process extends even to their personal ablutions as everything is under observation by guards or other inmates and privacy is non-existent.

There may or may not be a system of formal induction presented by staff members of the total institution. Inciardi (1984: 569) says that although the new inmate may wish and even succeed to remain aloof from other prisoners initially, he soon recovers from the 'swallowing up' process and assigns new meaning to the conditions he previously took for granted in his life. The reality of queuing for prison food and

wearing standardised clothing begin to sink in. Following the shock of entry into the institution the struggle for adjustment continues.

4.1.2   <u>TRAUMA</u>

In 1989 South African magazine, de Kat (1989:56) reported on the trauma of prison in an article entitled "Die trauma van aanhouding". The article details the stress and trauma of imprisonment and describes some of the symptoms of this trauma as sleeplessness, constant thoughts about those who were responsible for your imprisonment, nightmares, appetite disturbances (not eating or overeating), dissatisfaction with relationships and a loss of interest in relationships. Other symptoms that affect the prisoner according to this article include psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches and pain in the neck or shoulders. Restlessness, a lack of concentration and memory loss are also reported in trauma victims.

According to the United Kingdom's Prison Service Order (PSO) (http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/filestore/206_203.pdf:11), which discusses the induction process into prison, "many prisoners new to custody will be traumatised". Furthermore the PSO document states that staff must be alert to the "elevated risk of self harm or suicide at this stage", indicating extreme trauma.

Trauma has become a very popular concept in psychology and the social sciences and it continues to grow in popularity as a phenomenon to be discussed as a cause for psychological disturbance. Trauma is essentially a human response (either psychological or physical) to a traumatic or trauma-eliciting event. Kleber, Figley & Gersons (1995:1) maintain that we interpret war, loss, violence, and disasters in ways shaped by our culture, by our society, and by its values and norms. We cope with serious life events in ways provided and approved by our surroundings. These authors define trauma as a phenomenon that goes beyond the individual, as something with a far wider context. Traumatic stress, they say does not occur in a vacuum, but rather that victims of traumatic stress live in particular situations within particular societies, in which they attempt to cope with their stressors. The characteristics of these situations and circumstances control the severity and intensity of consequences of acute life events such as violence, human rights violations, sudden bereavement, disaster and combat, and often even determine the development of the events themselves. Situations as diverse as political repression, combat, abuse and technological disasters are human-made and confront the individual with feelings of despair, helplessness, powerlessness and disruption.

An individual's identity entails a complex interaction between multiple spheres and systems including the physical and intrapsychic; the

interpersonal–familial, social, communal; educational–professional-occupational; and the material–economic, political, national and international. The dynamic coexistence are necessary for the individual to create a continuous conception of life from past through present to the future. The individual should ideally have simultaneous access and movement within these dimensions of identity. It is when an individual is victimised or traumatised that a rupture and possible regression occurs and a state of being stuck results in which the individual becomes vulnerable, particularly to further traumatic events (Kleber, Figley & Gersons 1995: ix).

According to Kalsched (1996:5), two very important yet disturbing discoveries have been made about trauma. Firstly, the traumatised psyche is self-traumatising; trauma does not end when the outer violation stops but continues unabated internally. Secondly and quite bizarre is the finding that the traumatised person seems to continually find himself in situations where he or she is retraumatised, possibly as a result of not having dealt with previous trauma, meaning normal events are not assimilated in a normal way because of an unresolved issue in the individual's history.

Many of the physical effects of trauma have been well documented in diverse publications and trauma counselling training courses and include symptoms such as hyper vigilance, anxiety and agitation,

insomnia, tension headaches, and gastrointestinal disturbances. Other reactions to trauma include nausea, a lack of self-care, and loss of appetite, sleep disturbances, and insomnia, as well as emotional symptoms such as irritation, frustration, anger, agitation, and even feelings of aggression (Esquivel 2002:10). The psychological results of traumatic experiences on the individual include fear, helplessness and horror.

4.2.2.1   Fear

The 'Penguin Dictionary of Psychology' (Reber 1995: 282) defines fear as "an emotional state in the presence or anticipation of a dangerous or noxious stimulus, usually characterized by an internal, subjective experience of extreme agitation, a desire to flee or to attack and by a variety of sympathetic reactions". Fear is thought to be the most common response to trauma and goes hand in hand with helplessness. In view of the description in Chapter 3 (page 55) regarding the role and activities of the gangs, it is safe to make the assumption that fear is their stock in trade and that this is visited upon the inmates in large measure.

4.2.2.2   Horror and helplessness

The term 'horror' is defined by the Oxford Dictionary (Thompson 1996:424) as a "painful feeling of loathing and fear".

Traumatic events create a feeling of helplessness and horror and the resultant basket of behavioural and emotional reactions have become known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Helplessness is one of the feelings that often follows horror due to the disruption in the individuals feeling and expectation of safety and trust in his environment. Cumulative and sustained traumatic events compounded by fear are also contributors to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Kleber, Figley, and Gersons (1995:56) assert that traumatic events are often viewed in terms of the individual's cognitive schemata, which contains information about his past experience and assumptions and expectations regarding future events. Trauma causes a crumbling of this psychological setup and horror results.

4.3   PSYCHOLOGICAL STABILITY DURING IMPRISONMENT

According to Parisi (1982:34) two environmental qualities are associated with psychological stability throughout an inmate's incarceration period namely predictability and activity.

4.3.1   <u>PREDICTABILITY</u>

According to Irwin in Parisi (1982:35) an individual's identity, his personality system and coherent thinking about himself depend largely

on a relatively familiar, continuous and predictable stream of events. Irwin (Parisi 1982:35) says, "In the Kafkaesque world of the booking room, the jail cell, the interrogation room, and the visiting room, the boundaries of the self collapse".

The world of the prison is full of uncertainty. Uncertainty surrounds the inmate; parole dates or indeed even the parole hearing dates are uncertain; unpredictable lockdowns can remove the possibility of expected visits at the last minute. According to Parisi (1982:38), "the world of detention is filled with doubt and disorganisation", meaning the inmate loses his ability to safely predict even small and seemingly insignificant events considered "normal" outside prison. For example outside prison one can predict with reasonable certainty that lunch will be at a particular hour, however in prison this is not possible, as the inmate is completely reliant on schedules kept by the prison, which may be disrupted for reasons unknown to the inmate, rendering his world entirely unpredictable. The unpredictability results in feelings of helplessness and confusion for the inmate, as they have no control over what happens to them on a day-to-day basis. They have to surrender their decision-making ability (Parisi 1982:39).

4.3.2   ACTIVITY

The inability to satisfy essential or primary needs (such as hunger, cold, decision making), can become a primary need in itself and results in tension, frustration and anxiety (Parisi 1982:39). Simply, although the institution supplies the basic needs needed for human survival (food, warmth, shelter) an inmate who may feel exceptionally cold at night, cannot go to a closet and take another blanket as he may do when he is at home (assuming he has more blankets at home). The resulting frustration produces more stress and tension. Parisi (1982:40) says irrespective of the source of the anxiety, it can be reduced by engaging in activity, as boredom is considered the most common problem faced by inmates. While an inmate has something to do, the level of frustration and tension that builds up in him because of his inability to satisfy essential needs is reduced.

Any activity will help with frustration and sometimes a number of different activities will do, it is irrelevant whether the activity relates to the source of the anxiety, or whether it is unrelated. Thus, whether the activity is related to the fulfilment of the essential need (that need which is causing the initial frustration) or not, is irrelevant. The relevance of activity lies in the activity itself. In jails, the chances of finding anxiety reducing activities are limited and boredom is considered a major problem. When they are barred for the most part from activities that could assist in coping (e.g. taking a walk, talking to

a family member) the inmate must make do – sometimes by washing socks (Parisi 1982:41).

4.4   PSYCHOLOGICAL DAMAGE

Irwin in Parisi (1982:35) describes this lack of predictability saying the disjointed experience of being extracted from a relatively orderly and familiar routine and thrown into a completely unfamiliar and seemingly chaotic one where the ordering of life is completely out of his control has a shattering impact on his personality structure.

Although the suffering that total institutions generate has been studied by Sykes (Gillespie 2003:41) in the context of the inmate social system, the effects of imprisonment on the inmate's self is yet largely unexplored. Bondeson (1989:155) says that suffering in itself can be presumed to create psychological damage. Some inmates become prisonised in order to accept the values of the prisoner sub-culture and inmate code and ultimately their prison environment, however, some inmates 'over adjust' to their circumstances in an effort to win favour and this condition has been referred to by physicians as prison psychosis or institutional neurosis. Bondeson (1989:155) refers to this psychological damage as institutionalisation, infantilisation and mortification, and adds a further form of damage – neuroticism.

Bondeson says other processes such as stigmatisation, defeatism, and alienation can result in psychologically detrimental states and may lead to renewed criminality.

4.4.1   NEUROTICISM

In Bondeson's (1989:174) 1970 study, the harm that most inmates identified is of a psychological nature, and could most accurately be described as a process, which leads to neuroses. Bondeson says this degree of neuroses is difficult to measure since it is subjective, but it is evident that inmates experience becoming neurotic as seriously harmful.

4.4.2   DEFEATISM

A symptom of defeatism can be described as a loss of confidence in one's own ability to succeed in life to a level satisfactory to the individual himself. The labels that society and the institutions attach to the inmates are eventually integrated into the individual's own self-image and he thus identifies more strongly with being a failure or a persona non-grata (Bondeson 1989:181).

The individual begins to identify more strongly with other criminals and the high rate of recidivism reconfirms their assumption that they no longer fit into society, which heightens the sense of defeatism.

4.4.3   <u>STIGMATISATION</u>

Prisoners studied by Bondeson (1989:177) self reported that when they were released they felt as though they were marked. One prisoner said, "I feel as if I had a mark on my forehead". There are a number of different factors that contribute to an individual inmate's level of stigmatisation or feeling of being stigmatised. These include the individual's general personality factor (or how sensitive he is to pressure from the surroundings), and even this is influenced by the individual's historical background, and the public's attitude towards deviants (Bondeson 1989: 177).

4.5   ADJUSTMENT PATTERNS

As already stated, each individual inmate has his own way of adjusting (or not) to his incarceration. Goffman in Bondeson (1989:165) delineates the different adjustment patterns of inmates as one or more of the following: "'situational withdrawal' (a withdrawal from interaction, which has also been called regression or prison psychosis); 'the intransigent line' (an inmate totally refuses to have anything to do with the staff, which can produce a severe

power struggle, usually in the initial reaction phase); 'colonisation' (the inmates use all available means to achieve a satisfying world inside, which will later be seen as better than the existence outside); 'conversion' (inmates adopt the official view of themselves and try to live up to the role of 'model prisoner'); 'play it cool' (an opportunistic combination of secondary adjustment, conversion, and colonising, so that the inmate has an optimal chance of being undamaged physically and mentally upon release".

According to Irwin (1985:66), people who are arrested and thrown into jail experience "a sudden blow that hurls them outside of society". An individual experiences a number of physiological and psychological reactions such as disintegration, disorientation, degradation, feelings of powerlessness and traumatic symptoms such as nausea, crying and sleeplessness.

4.5.1   <u>DISINTEGRATION</u>

As a result of being detained, people immediately lose their connection to those they value as near and dear and start to feel the effects of social disintegration. Contact with family and friends is limited and isolation begins. "Moreover", says Albert Roberts in his book 'Critical issues in crime and justice' (1994: 262), being detained prevents one from 'taking care of business' such as calling one's employer or paying bills".

Gibbs in Parisi (1982:37) says the importance of family can reach metaphysical proportions in the eyes of the confined and that distortions of reality and regression might take place in the prisoner to the point where Parisi says "symbolic mother's milk creates a secure and predictable niche in the threatening world of jail".

In explanation Parisi cites Toch's theory of self-linking as follows, "A person's protest against intolerable separation from significant others, against perceived abandonment by them, or against his inability to function as a constructive member of a group". Eventually the person rejects the possibility of an independent and satisfactory life and subsequently feels that his well-being is not possible without certain relationships continuing.

4.5.2   <u>DISORIENTATION</u>

One of the effects of being arrested and detained is a profound sense of internal disorganisation and demoralisation. The institution's routine becomes the individual's routine since the right to decide when to eat and when to sleep is replaced by the institution's schedule (Roberts 1994:262). Inmates have no privacy since even the most basic of bodily functions such as eating, defecating, washing, urinating and changing of clothes happens in the company of others.

Irwin (1985: 66) says the result of being thrown outside of society not only "unravels their social ties, but also stuns them and reduces their capacity to make the journey back into society".

4.5.3   DEGRADATION

The incarceration experience is one that constantly strips individuals of their dignity; from having their cells "tossed" (meaning cells are searched by warders), to wearing bright orange jump suits emblazoned with the word "prisoner", degradation takes place at all levels. Often inmates are met with hostile police or prison guards and are demeaned from the moment they are strip-searched or body cavity searched. Their humanity and dignity is challenged. Roberts (1994:263) says inmates are constantly exposed to a barrage of insults to their person and called names such as dirt balls, pukes, scum, kronks or slime balls. "Additional aspects of the degradation process are the loss of privacy and being forced to live in an environment where the human density is intolerable; indeed inmates are literally warehoused", says Roberts (1994: 263).

Ironically, the issue over which they have level of choice (whether to grow their hair or beard) is often compromised. Over months and years of incarceration, many inmates lose their interest in personal hygiene, mostly because overcrowding makes access to showers and

basins tedious and difficult, and often their hair grows long and they stop shaving. With this lack of hygiene comes a loss of self-respect and a downward spiral begins.

Summary

This chapter of the literature review reviewed the inner world of the inmate and looked at the inmate as an individual and the characteristics of an inmate. The shock of entry into prison was discussed and then an in depth exploration of trauma and its effects namely fear, horror and helplessness followed. The psychological stability of prisoners was explored by taking a more focused look at predictability and activity. Psychological damage was explored in terms of neuroticism, defeatism and stigmatisation. Finally, adjustment patterns commonly found in the imprisoned were discussed under the headings of disintegration, disorientation and degradation.

CHAPTER 5

INDUCTION PROGRAMMES IN THE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM

Introduction

Social workers are a necessity for the correctional system to deal with the ever-increasing number of prisoners' requests, complaints and social adjustment problems. This has been and is recognised by the South African Department of Correctional Services and social workers are present in every prison throughout the country. This chapter delves into a specific area of interest to social workers namely; the induction programme, in some cases the start of the interaction between the

social workers and the inmates. An introductory discussion of the nature of induction programmes is presented before a brief overview of the efficacy of induction programmes around the world.

5.1   THE NATURE OF PRISON INDUCTION PROGRAMMES

In a highly comprehensive explanatory document entitled, 'Prison Induction' (http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/filestore/206_203.pdf: 30/03/2004), issued by Her Majesty's prison service in the United Kingdom, an outline of an ideal prison induction programme, according to the prison service, is provided. The document discusses the aims of induction as a procedure which helps prisoners deal with immediate needs, serve to support and maximise the ability of prisoners to cope inside, provide information, begin the assessment process and help to integrate the prisoner into prison life. It is from this document that the following description is drawn. Induction is a process, not an event and the purpose is to inform prisoners about prison regime as well as their responsibilities and privileges. The process of induction enables prisoners to approach their time in custody constructively in order to gain the maximum benefit from the sentence and begins to prepare them for a law-abiding life after the completion of their sentence. It also affords prison staff an opportunity to explain the standards and expectations of the prison management. Induction is required for all prisoners who are new to custody, who have changed their status (unconvicted to convicted) or who are new to a prison. According to the PSO document

(http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/filestore/206_203.pdf: 30/03/2004), reception of the prisoner and induction are considered to be two merging activities and the reception must include the following activities:

- Confirm the legal status of the detention (meaning the identification and sentence of the prisoner is checked with court documentation).

- Establish effective control over the prisoner.

- Ensure the immediate well-being (staff must also be alert to a prisoner showing known signs of self-harm) of the prisoner, including the healthcare screening, so that if there is an immediate health need, it can be identified and met e.g. medication for a known illness such as diabetes.

- Record and provide essential information such as family contact details, allergies, special dietary requirements (diabetic) or disabilities.

- Complete various formal processes such as searching, opening prisoner records, dealing with prisoner's property, and ensuring that a health assessment has taken place.

- Contribute to ensuring provision and safety for the first night including the provision of information on how to contact a warden and information the prisoner needs to know for the first 24 hours.

- Provide a smooth transition to induction. Communication between reception and induction staff is critical to the success of the process and liaison between reception staff and induction staff must assist in the transition from reception to induction.

A suitable system of communication is one that avoids duplication of the processes already handled in reception and one that avoids missing processes. This means reception staff should alert induction staff to any problems picked up in reception or anything the induction team should be aware of. Once the reception procedures have been completed, the prisoner is to be regarded as 'on induction' even though no formal programme has been started yet (http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/filestore/206_203.pdf: 30/03/2004).

In the United Kingdom the return rate to prisons is exceptionally high with 85 – 90 percent of youth offenders returning within two years of being released and 55 – 60 percent of adults in the same period, this is according to Tim Newell, retired governor of the Grendon and Springhill prisons and now with the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP). In his speech at the third international conference of the IIRP, Newell notes, "Establishing norms through staff and peer tuition and example, through setting standards and developing expectations of taking responsibility during the sentence can be very effective at the start of the sentence when prisoners are often at their most sensitive and receptive" (www.iirp.org/library/newell.html).

Furthermore, a report on privatisation of prisons in the UK (Prison Privatisation Report International No 53) in which the director general of the prison service, Martin Narey explains his findings during an inspection of the

appalling conditions in Ashfield prison in the UK, writes, "First night and induction processes, critical to ensuring safety in the early days of custody, were not properly carried out and vulnerability assessments were meaningless or inaccurate". This highlights the importance of induction into the system and the availability of alternatives to gang membership.

5.2   THE INDUCTION PROCESS

According to the process of induction described in considerable detail by the Prison Service Order (PSO) of the United Kingdom's Prison Service (http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/filestore/206_203.pdf 30/03/2004: 10) induction is the period from completion of formal reception procedures until the prisoner is integrated into the normal prison routine. Formal induction is to be started as soon as possible after the reception, preferably the next day. Induction length may vary according to the status of the prisoner – whether he is a new prisoner or has been transferred from another facility. Induction builds on the reception process and must be flexible enough to provide for the individual needs of inmates.

During the induction process, relevant information must be explained to the individuals, including arrangements to preserve housing or accommodation for the inmate (if the inmate's house is bank bonded, or he has free government housing, a means to retain this until his return to society must be investigated), employment preservation where possible (liaison with the

employer of the inmate may be necessary to retain his job until his return), maintenance of contact with family and other relationships outside (what is the status of the inmate's contact with his family and how can this be maintained or improved if the inmate so requires), financial advice, help with personal problems, healthcare appropriate to needs and opportunities for religious care, exercise and where possible training. An induction process that is both adaptable and flexible is important as each induction process occurs in different geographical and prison situations and need to be adapted to the environment and set up of the prison.

The following comprehensive description of the process of induction is taken from the United Kingdom's Prison Service Order document (http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/filestore/206_203.pdf 30/03/2004:19).

5.2.1   AIMS OF INDUCTION

Induction must be a flexible process that responds to the different needs presented by those prisoners who are undergoing induction. It is a process that aims to:

- Deal with the immediate needs of the prisoners.

- Helps to support and maximise the ability of prisoners to cope in the circumstances.

- Provide information to the prisoners.

- Begin the assessment process.

- Help to integrate the prisoner into prison life.

- Aid the transfer from induction into the cells.

5.2.1.1   Deal with immediate needs

The British Prison Service Order says "induction must provide opportunities to deal with any still pressing needs of the prisoner (urgent needs are addressed in reception) (http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/filestore/206_203.pdf 30/03/2004:19). Induction staff must be informed of any outstanding needs of prisoners requiring immediate action. Induction staff must identify and prioritise any further concerns/needs and ensure they are dealt with effectively and efficiently". These needs could include the prisoner's career issues, family and their accommodation or employment, disability or language needs, the individual's response to custody, such as anxiety or stress. This includes providing an opportunity for prisoners to talk about their anxiety and fears confidentially.

Observation during this period is critical to assess the prisoner's potential to harm himself or others. Prisoners should be encouraged to write letters to family and make calls to maintain contact.

5.2.1.2   Support and maximise the ability of prisoners to cope in custody

The PSO states that it is important for the induction process to be structured and organised in a way, which supports and maximises the ability of prisoners to cope with prison life (http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/filestore/206_203.pdf 30/03/2004:21). Induction provides a valuable opportunity to promote physical and mental health and issues that could be covered include:

- What prisoners can do if they are feeling depressed or suffering from anxiety.

- The benefits of contact with family.

- The importance of maintaining some sort of activity or fitness plan.

- The role of participating in activities can play in defeating boredom and relieving frustration.

During these discussions, prison staff may notice indications of illness, which need to be brought to the attention of healthcare staff.

5.2.1.3   Provide information

The PSO (http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/filestore/206_203.pdf 30/03/2004:20) describes the provision of information as central to the

induction process and states that the prisoners should be provided with the information they require to function within the prison environment and to make full use of the facilities and support systems available within the prison. The PSO recommends that information be given in manageable volumes and written in an easily absorbed style. Key information must be repeated throughout the induction programme and staff should answer questions relating to any aspect of information given. Furthermore each prison may use a core of relevant information common countrywide, but may add relevant local information such as displaying photographs of the heads of prison and other key staff to familiarise the inmate. The PSO recommends that information be provided on topics such as the prison rules, prison life, facilities and local information, sources of assistance, formal procedures and opportunities in prison including preparing for release.

Information about prison rules includes instructions on processing of applications, requests and complaints procedure, clothing, property, searching, cash, facilities list, the Prison Ombudsman and visitors. The United Kingdom's information includes the provision of prison books such as information books for life-sentenced prisoners, youth, female prisoners and an information book about keeping in touch with families and friends. Other information relevant to prison life that needs to be imparted during induction is the race relations policy and strategy with regards bullying and gangs. Prisoners must be told about

provisions for religious observance, dress and diet. Basic first aid and HIV/AIDS information, as well as other health information with regards the hospital and doctors available and other mental health resources should be introduced. Hygiene training may be necessary and prisoners should be told about shower/washing facilities and hours of availability. Mealtimes and food hygiene, especially information about keeping food in cells should be discussed. Lock up times and different midweek and weekend schedules should be made clear to the inmates during induction. Expected standards of behaviour, including advice on how prisoners should treat staff, and vice versa, is also important.

In terms of facilities and resources, issues that need to be addressed include safety (for example fire procedures), laundry, canteen or shop and legal matters. Introductions to individuals responsible for various areas of importance, may include the chaplaincy team, healthcare team (including where to obtain assistance for substance abuse problems), the section heads, prison heads or prisoners' rights organisations, the education department, the social work and mental health departments and in some prisons a prison buddy or big brother. Prisoners need to understand the opportunities for work or education as well as life skills and other voluntary programmes available (e.g. anger management). Induction provides an opportunity for the management of a prison to encourage prisoners to have a positive attitude to the custody

experience and to make the most of opportunities available during this time.

5.3   INDUCTION PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, the issue of imprisoning people with little or no induction into the system of imprisonment has not gone unnoticed. On 12 June 2001, in a discussion by the Correctional Services Portfolio Committee, following a briefing to the Parliamentary Monitoring Group by the Centre for Conflict Resolution on gangsterism in prisons (www.pmg.org.za: 30/4/2004), Mr Bloem of the African National Congress (ANC) "decried the practice of indiscriminately cramming prisoners together, which creates an atmosphere conducive for them to develop, and maintain, violent structures". At the same meeting Mr Moeketse (ANC) (www.pmg.org.za: 30/4/2004), urged the committee to consider an intensive induction course for prison personnel to equip them with the necessary skills on how to handle prisoners. He also called for the introduction of courses related to prison issues in the school curricular to acquaint students with the reality in prisons. This has more relevance to the prison staff than the inmate; however, according to Holtzhausen (2005: personal communication) an induction programme is in place and is "supposed to be conducted within 21 days of admission to a correctional centre". Holtzhausen further says that the induction programme is inclusive of an offender orientation booklet with all relevant services

available in the Department of Correctional Services and what to expect during the period of incarceration. The researcher was not able to obtain further information on the contents of the booklet or what the induction programme contains.

Although an induction programme is not mentioned as such, chapter 11 of the White Paper on Corrections (2003:72) states that during the assessment of risk of inmates it is necessary to take into account the impact of incarceration on a human being, the threat that an inmate may pose to himself or to others. This appears to be in line with the stated objective of the Department of Corrections which is "first and foremost to correct offending behaviour in a secure, safe and humane environment, in order to facilitate the achievement of rehabilitation and avoidance of recidivism" (White paper 2003:32). Further to this the White Paper (2003:74) states that all inmates should know in advance what the rules and regulations of the correctional centre are.

The White Paper (2003:75) acknowledges that incarceration can have a damaging effect on both the physical and mental well-being of inmates and also acknowledges the presence of gangs and their effect. In addition, the need for health programmes to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS and other diseases is mentioned as an area of focus. The White Paper also states that offenders sentenced for the first time, particularly those that are in prison for less serious crimes should be incarcerated separately from repeat offenders as

they have the best opportunities for rehabilitation. This separation should begin during awaiting trial and become an integral part of the way in which the justice system treats first offenders (White Paper 2003:80).

Summary

This final chapter of the literature review provided a discussion of the nature of induction programmes as a tool to provide prison management with an opportunity to prepare incoming prisoners for their sentences and inform them of prison rules as well as of their rights as prisoners. A full exposition of the process of induction followed and finally an overview of the approach to induction in South Africa ended off the chapter, which is also the final chapter of the literature review.

SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review started with an overview of imprisonment in which it became evident that imprisonment has become the worldwide defacto standard of punishment. A brief look into the theories of incarceration such as deterrence, incapacitation, retribution and reintegration highlighted the lack of rehabilitative purpose in imprisonment today. The process of evolution, in which the Department of Correctional Services finds itself, is ongoing. Issues that face the prison management today are increasing overcrowding and rising incidents of violence. While services are provided by Correctional Services to prisoners in the areas of psychological support and social work it would appear that the total institution, that

is the prison, has an enormous effect on the psyche of the prisoner, especially that of the new prisoner. The literature review reveals a process of 'prisonisation', described by Inciardi as, "the process by which the inmate learns the rules and regulations of the institution and the informal rules, values, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary". These informal rules are known as the inmate code and belong to a system called the inmate social system.

Furthermore, the literature has shown that various patterns of adjustment exist which includes disintegration, disorientation and degradation. Fear, horror and helplessness would appear to play a major role in the life of the inmate and a proportion of this fear stems from the high levels of intimidatory gang activity in prisons. In South African prisons, there are a number of active gangs, amongst them the 28s, the 26s, Airforce 3 and Airforce 4 and the Big 5, each with its own unique focus and unwritten code of behaviour. The inner world of the inmate has been shown by the Bondeson study to be affected negatively in many different ways, including the development of neuroticism, defeatism and stigmatisation.

The last part of the literature review dealt with the role of social scientists in prisons and in particular with the implementation of a planned and sustained induction programme. The literature review has provided a discussion of limited scope of various elements of the prison system and its effect on the inmates it deals with on a daily basis.

CHAPTER 6

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Introduction

The design of the research process is of paramount importance in gaining accurate and reliable information. Information gathered, whether through the literature review, or through the empirical data collection process must be valid. To be valid and of interest to social scientists, the research must be based in sound scientific data collection methodology. This chapter explains the process followed by the researcher to gather the data in this research project including the research design, the research instrument, the sample, its characteristics and identifying details and the methods of data collection.

6.1   THE RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Bless & Higson-Smith (1995: 42), the research design is selected on the basis of the object of the research, the aim of the research and the nature of the data to be collected. In this particular research the researcher assumes that the experience of imprisonment for the inmates of a prison will be perceived, experienced and managed differently to that of the general population due to the differing circumstances, environment, regulations, structure and resources available to them. The goal of this study is thus to explore these differences by examining the experiences of the individual inmates. Thus the nature of this research is exploratory. Bless & Higson-Smith (1995: 42) describe exploratory research as research which aims to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person and often arises out of a lack of basic information on a new area of interest. Exploratory research serves as an initial step and relies on data collection by means of observation, questionnaires and interviews (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995: 43). Neuman (2000: 22) mentions the aims of exploratory research as becoming familiar with the basic facts, creating a general mental picture of conditions, formulating focus questions for future research, generating new ideas, conjectures and hypotheses and developing techniques for measuring and locating future data.

This study aims to explore the phenomenon of the individual experience of the prison incarceration as an exploratory research project with a view to presenting a base for future researchers. Neuman (2000:21) says exploratory research rarely yields definitive answers rather that addresses the "what" question – what is this social phenomenon all about? A further aim of this exploratory research is to contribute to more research material for future projects, specifically because the scope of this social phenomena is so vast and has so many variables, thus making it a good forerunner for post-graduate studies, either to be undertaken by colleagues or by the present researcher. There is also very little contemporary South African research available regarding experiences in South African prisons, thus this study is of a unique nature. Finally, as a social worker conducting this research, there is a belief that this is an extremely interesting project as it examines completely different human perspectives and raises questions to be followed up in future research either by this or other researchers. In this research design the individual is the unit of analysis. People in the study have been selected due to the fact that they belong to a certain group or subgroup – that of people who have been incarcerated in a South African prison for a length of time and released.

6.2   RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Rubin & Babbie (1993:376) suggest that in order to ensure that all interviews are conducted in a consistent, thorough way and to minimise interviewer bias and effect, the most appropriate strategy is to conduct standardised open

ended interviews. All qualitative interviewing is essentially open-ended and provides an opportunity for respondents to express their own views and perspectives in their own words. Interviewing strategies can vary in the extent to which sequencing and wording of the open-ended questions are predetermined (Rubin & Babbie 1993:376). Hence, the *standardised open-ended interview* was selected for this research methodology. Questions are written out in advance exactly the way they are to be asked in the interview (Rubin & Babbie 1993:376) and although probes are limited, where a skilled interviewer familiar with the subject is used more flexibility can be allowed. Due to the fact that the researcher in this case was familiar with the prison environment and some of the prison language and signs, flexibility in probes was possible and utilised where appropriate, to extract more information.

6.3   THE SAMPLE

Flick in Neuman (2000: 196) says "it is their relevance to the research topic rather than their representativeness which determines the way in which the people to be studied are selected". Explorative qualitative researchers therefore tend to use nonprobability or non-random samples which means they have limited knowledge about the larger group or population from which the sample is taken. In qualitative research, According to Rubin & Babbie (1993:257) snowball sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique and is also called accidental sampling. This method is most appropriate when members of a special population are difficult to locate. Snowball sampling, as

described by McCall & Simmons in Rubin & Babbie (1993:367) is the method of sampling selected for this research since the researcher had the opportunity to ask each respondent or interviewee for names of friends/co-accused or members of the cohort who may have been released at or about the same time. The first interviewee was known to the researcher and had requested a meeting with the researcher prior to the researcher conducting the interview for the purposes of counselling and information. This interviewee then provided the names of two other ex-inmates and the snowball process commenced from there. Most interviewees were willing and able to provide cellphone numbers for people they knew, who had been released. In this way, the researcher built up a list of names to contact for the research. The criteria could only be checked once contact had been made since most interviewees were uncertain of their cohort's exact dates of release or whereabouts.

The sample grew to 20 names through this method; however, only seventeen were contactable (or responded to the researcher's telephone calls) and therefore the final number interviewed by the researcher was seventeen individuals. Of the three people who were unable to be interviewed, one did not respond to the researcher's telephone calls and one did not wish to answer any questions regarding his prison experience while another was not available on numerous occasions although the researcher called the number he had given her for the interview at the agreed time.

6.3.1   SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

In this study the characteristics or criteria of the sample included the following: the individual had to be a male who had reached the age of 21 at the time of the interview, he had to have been incarcerated in a South African prison and released from prison (whether conditionally, on parole, under house arrest, or unconditionally) not more than a period of three years (36 months) prior to the date of his interview with the researcher. The crime they were imprisoned for and the period of imprisonment was not part of the criteria and neither was the race nor the home language of the individual relevant, however, language proficiency in either English or Afrikaans was a criteria due to the fact that the interviewer is proficient in only English and Afrikaans and therefore the sample could only be interviewed in either one of these two languages. All interviewees were proficient in English and were able to express themselves clearly in this language and the interviews were therefore conducted in English.

6.3.1.1   Sample identifying details

The researcher interviewed a total of seventeen men, who had been incarcerated in South African prisons based in Gauteng, and released from these prisons no earlier than three years before the date of the interview. This sample represents 0,03% of the prison population of 48 331 in Gauteng, (according to statistics presented by the University of South Africa's

Directorate Religious Care – CB Powell Bible Centre in a research document on the religious care needs assessment of prisoners conducted in 2003). Since this study is of an exploratory nature and the sample very small, it is not the intention of the study to generalise the findings of this study.

All interviewees were over the age of 21, the youngest being 29 and the oldest 67 at the time of the interviews, which took place between 1 April 2004 and 3 March 2005. Three interviewees were White and the balance was Black South Africans. Although interviewees were representative of many different language groups, all interviews were conducted in English. Not all language/cultural groups were represented in the sample. The sample was inclusive of individuals sentenced on a wide range of offences ranging from theft to murder with sentences ranging from six years to 74 years.

6.3.1.2   Language groups

Language groups, which can often be indicative of cultural differences amongst the various groups in South Africa, represented in the study included English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa, Sesotho and Tswana, although all interviews were conducted in English.

Table 1 – *Language representation*

Language	Afrikaans	English	Xhosa	Zulu	Sesotho	Tswana	TOTAL
No of individuals	1	3	3	7	3	1	17

6.3.1.3   Age

One of the sampling criteria was that all respondents be over the age of 21 as the researcher's intention was to research the adult prison experience, not the juvenile prison experience. Juveniles are transferred to adult prison at the age of 21. Age groups represented in the study ranged from 29 to 67. The majority of the interviewees were in the age group 40 – 49 followed by the younger group, consisting of individuals in their 20s, however, the interviewees in the younger group were all over 25 years of age.

Table 2 – *Age groups*

Age	21 – 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69	70 +	TOTAL
No of respondents	3	4	6	2	2		17

6.3.1.4   Sentence length and time served

The sentences imposed on the inmates in the survey were all over six years, with the maximum sentence being 74 years. Almost all (82%) inmates served 50 percent or more of their sentences.

In Table 3 below, two figures influence the rest of the averages. The individual who served only 15 percent of his sentence received two separate amnesties under the general governmental amnesties, which led to massive remissions in his sentences on separate crimes, resulting in his total sentence being reduced from 74 years to 25 years, a sentence of which he eventually served half.

NOTE: The individual who served only nineteen percent of his sentence is a white-collar criminal, who had access and funds to secure the services of a private attorney, a luxury many inmates cannot afford. He had his sentence reduced from 16 years to three years and he too served half of that time.

Table 3 – *Sentence length and time served*

Sentence length yrs	25	10	16	16	6	22	20	8	11	11	20	15	8	74	6	20	13
Time served (Years)	11	7	3	11	3	11	15	6	6	8	10	9	6	11	3	13	9
% Time served	44	70	19	69	50	50	75	75	54	73	50	60	75	15	50	65	69

- *The above indicates in the top row the length of the sentence handed down to the offender. The second row is an indication of the actual time served by the offender and the third row is the percentage of actual time served.*

6.3.1.5 Offence type

The respondents appeared to be largely in the categories of armed robbery, theft and robbery. Note that the table below represents the interviewees in <u>all</u>

their crimes (many are sentenced for more than one crime). Approximately seven inmates were sentenced for more than one offence and at least two individuals were sentenced for more than six crimes.

Table 4: *Offence types*

Offence Type	No of respondents sentenced
Armed robbery	8
Armed housebreaking	1
Fraud	2
*Theft	3
Murder	4
Attempted murder	2
Housebreaking	1
*Robbery	1
Rape	2
Attempted rape	1
Car theft	1
Possession of an unlicensed firearm	5
Possession of stolen goods	2
Possession of illegal substances	2
Assault	1

- *Robbery is the felonious taking of the money or possessions of another, from his person or presence and against his will, through the use of threat of force and violence (Inciardi 1984:74). Theft is the unlawful taking, possession or use of another's property, without the use or threat of force, and with the intent to deprive permanently (Inciardi 1984:78).*

6.3.1.6   Number of times incarcerated

Most (76 %) of the interviewees in the survey were in prison for the first time.

Table 5: *Number of times incarcerated*

No. of times in prison	Once	Twice	Three times	Four times	Five times
Sample	13	1	1	1	1

6.3.1.7   Year of first incarceration

The date of first incarceration of the interviewees ranged from as early as 1987 to as late as 2000. Responses varied considerably in terms of some of the questions dependent on when inmates were incarcerated as governmental and policy changes came into effect after 1994.

<u>Table 6</u>: *Year of first incarceration*

Year of incarceration	No of prisoners incarcerated in this year
1987	1
1989	1
1990	2
1992	1
1994	2
1995	1
1996	1
1997	1
1998	3
1999	1

2000	1

6.4   METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The method of data collection was a process of face-to-face and telephonic interviews, which the researcher conducted personally. The researcher had knowledge of a number of ex-inmates who were contacted by the researcher after formulation of the research instrument. The researcher then asked each respondent for an opportunity to meet for a face-to-face interview. In fifteen (15) cases, the individuals chose not to be interviewed face to face but preferred telephonic interviews. Only one face-to-face interview was conducted at the selected "safe" venue – the Bryanston Methodist counselling house. The reasons for the telephonic preference appeared to be transport problems, time problems (taxis can take well in excess of an hour to get to Sandton from Soweto) and financial problems although the researcher did offer to pay for taxi fares and did so in the case of the individual who presented at the counselling house for the interview. Another face-to-face interview was conducted in the researcher's car at the respondent's place of work in Alexandria during the respondent's lunch break. All face-to-face interviews were taped with a hand held tape recorder and a lapel microphone, after obtaining the interviewee's permission. After the interviews were conducted, the recordings were transcribed in full by the researcher. A number of procedures to ensure good quality interviewing had to be followed which included using good quality sound recording

equipment, in a setting, which was both safe and conducive to uninterrupted recording and interviewing time.

The telephonic interviews were conducted by the researcher from the researcher's home and were simultaneously transcribed onto computer. Face-to-face interviews and telephonic interviews took approximately one hour and thirty minutes each to complete. All interviewees answered all questions except where questions led on from a 'yes' or 'no' response in a previous question, thereby rendering either the following yes or no response related question irrelevant. Two interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis and the balance of fifteen was conducted telephonically.

The researcher, having experienced over four years of working with prisoners had to set aside any bias or emotion in order to be objective. The researcher achieved this by refraining from asking questions in an emotional, opinionated or subjective manner. Interviews followed a format with questions pertaining to their research question (Annexure A). Thorough preparation was needed in advance of interviews to ensure the researcher understood the topic being researched as Rubin & Babbie warn against ill-prepared researchers, saying; "If an interviewer is unfamiliar with the questionnaire, the study suffers and an unfair burden is placed on the respondent" (Rubin & Babbie 1993:345).

All interviewees were informed of the researcher's purpose, that the researcher was an individual registered with UNISA and was conducting the interview as part of the data collection process for a Master's dissertation. The researcher assured all interviewees of confidentiality and anonymity prior to commencement of the interview in order to gain trust and establish an open pattern of communication between the two parties. Most of the interviewees had prior knowledge of the researcher and had observed her at Leeuwkop correctional facility during her religious work there. Trust was therefore already established and the interviewees were willing and open participants. At all times the interviewee was shown respect and thanked for his participation. Assistance with free counselling was provided, for interviewees who requested this, through the Bryanston Methodist Church counselling department. The interviewer established rapport by chatting with the interviewees both before and after the interviews. All interviews were conducted between 1 April 2004 and 8 December 2004.

Summary

This chapter explained the details of the process followed by the researcher to gather data in this research process and provided the motivation for the selection of the exploratory research design and the selection of the qualitative research instrument. In addition, the chapter provided a detailed discussion of the sample and the sample characteristics. An explanation of the methods of data collection followed, which included a discussion on where and how the interviews took place and which methods of recording information the researcher employed.

CHAPTER 7

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

Firstly, this chapter provides an overview of how the information from the interviews was collated and grouped. This is followed by an exposition of the results of the interviews as related to the goals of the research, which were to establish how incarcerated people experience incarceration i.e. their emotional and physical

experiences, to establish what effect the experience has on the inmate and his behaviour. In addition, feedback on the perception of inmates on what they believe could be done to improve the rehabilitative aspect of incarceration. One of the questions here was whether the presence or absence of an induction programme has an effect on the choices inmates make with regards the way they spend their time inside prison and the resultant effect on their experience. The information gained from the interviews is also integrated and compared with the information gained from the literature review.

The chapter consists of feedback regarding the conceptual questions that had bearing on the individual's understanding of certain terms since their understanding would have an influence on how they responded to the questions that contained those terms. Also included are excerpts from their responses to their experiences, where these excerpts are descriptive or provide clarity of their experiences.

7.1 ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

In analysing the data a process of content analysis was used. Following the completion of all the interviews, all face-to-face interviews were transcribed from the tapes, and all telephonic interviews were entered on a computer in the same or similar format. The researcher then printed copies of all the transcribed interviews with the various individuals within the subgroup and set about reading the interviews over in a first read, referred to as open coding by Neuman (2000:186). Then the researcher embarked on a process of

comparing and analysing each response, question-by-question, respondent-by-respondent to find similar or like responses, or differences, which were then highlighted. A second read of all data then commenced and responses were categorised into perceptual (such as the meaning of trauma), experiential (such as the inmates' experience of overcrowding) and behavioural (such as reaction to being threatened).

In the exposition that follows, the perceptual, experiential and behavioural section (termed Section B in the research instrument) is explained and includes quotes from the individual responses to questions. The brief discussion around each theme is either in support of the literature or points out the differences between the literature review and the research findings. This part of the presentation, which contains the findings of the research interviews, will be presented in a thematic and integrated way, meaning that relevant questions may be grouped together and dealt with as part of a theme of questions rather than as individual questions. They have been grouped together in terms of perception of terms, experiences in prison and/or holding cells, and the inmates' perception of their experiences' effect on their behaviour.

It is important to note here that the research is inclusive of the experiences of inmates from the time of detention in a holding cell. Although there is a difference between the experience of awaiting trial and sentenced prison mainly evident in the sense of denial awaiting trial prisoners express, the

imprisonment experience appears to start when a prisoner is first detained, whether in a holding cell or in the awaiting trial section of prison. Respondents reported a strong sense of denial, uncertainty and sense of wasting of time while in awaiting trial, a feeling that ceases immediately upon sentencing. Many inmates spoke of the sense of relief they experienced once they were sentenced, as it removed the uncertainty and the continued hope of release. It would appear, from the responses of the ex-inmates, that the South African justice system does not take into account the time spent in awaiting trial and therefore the inmates refer to this as *"dead time"* since it is not credited to their sentence. Many respondents referred to the feeling of *"one foot in, one foot out",* when in awaiting trial. It would appear from their responses that even a sentence of prolonged misery was preferable to the uncertainty which many said created enormous stress and tension; *"Well awaiting trial it's horrible especially if you don't have bail, you don't know if you will be sentenced or acquitted, that causes a lot of stress. Waiting without knowing, the uncertainty plays havoc with your mind. You don't know what will happen – you have no idea of when or if you will go outside again".*

"In awaiting trial the more you are there, your time is being a lot [meaning your time served ends up being longer since the time in awaiting trial is not considered as part of time served]. *If you spend two to three years in awaiting trial then they don't count that time and then when you are sentenced you start pushing your time, but it is a relief because now you know you are working on your time, every day counts, not like in awaiting trial where it doesn't count".*

7.2 FINDINGS

7.2.1 <u>TRAUMA</u>

Two issues were researched here; the inmates' understanding of the meaning of the word trauma and their own perception and experience of their own traumatisation.

7.2.1.1 Understanding the term 'trauma'.

The literature review (Chapter 4) established that there is a presumption of trauma. It is mentioned in the United Kingdom's Prison Service Order (PSO) document (http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/filestore/206_203.pdf 30/4/2004:11), which discusses the induction process into prison, "many prisoners new to custody will be traumatised". Furthermore the PSO document states that staff must be alert to the "elevated risk of self harm or suicide at this stage", indicating extreme trauma. South African literature too backed up this presumption in 1989 South African magazine, de Kat (1989:56) reported on the trauma of prison in an article entitled "Die trauma van aanhouding".

In order to establish the validity of these presumptions the researcher needed to compare them with the experiences of the inmates interviewed. Prior to questioning inmates on their experience of trauma it was important to question the inmates' perception of the word 'trauma' in order to establish an understanding of whether their answers to the questions which relate to the experience of trauma would be relevant to their understanding of the meaning of the word 'trauma'. The question was therefore asked what their understanding of the word 'trauma' was.

The results show that all interviewees knew in essence what the term 'trauma' meant and could impart to the researcher their own understanding. Most individuals related the meaning of the word to their own prison experience immediately in order to explain its broader meaning as can clearly be seen in one interviewee's answer; "It means what I went through; well it's complete helplessness, complete not being in control of one's self or one's environment, totally out of control". Clearly the individual experience influences the meaning of the word to the individual, as can be seen from their responses, *"Briefly trauma is when you are in a state of shock and you become helpless and…very helpless, I must say. Yes and uh an intense state of trauma, I think it's explicit"*. Another inmate explained it as follows: *"Emotional,*

psychological and physical injury as a consequence of events outside of what we expect that shatter our previous understanding of our world".

7.2.1.2   The experience of traumatisation

The literature review (Chapter 4) explained some of the symptoms of trauma as; sleeplessness, constant thoughts about those who were responsible for your imprisonment, nightmares, appetite disturbances (not eating or overeating), dissatisfaction with relationships and a loss of interest in relationships. Other symptoms of trauma that affect the prisoner according to the literature review include psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches and pain in the neck or shoulders. Restlessness, lack of concentration and memory loss are also reported in trauma victims. Thus it was important to question respondents on their experiences.

All interviewees, but one, answered in the positive when asked whether they felt they had been traumatised as a result of being in prison. The interviewee who differed said that he was shocked but not traumatised because he knew he had done wrong; "No, I see the necessity of going to prison, but I was shocked, I was not happy of this thing I did and I was not happy I was in prison, but I was not traumatised". [Note: this

respondent had been in prison four times previous to this term which could possibly contribute to the lack of traumatisation].

In the main, though, their responses spoke of feelings of being overwhelmed of great fear and of helplessness. A large number of respondents associated their trauma with the fact that they were unable to care for the families they had left behind outside [many used crime to support their families]. *"Yes exactly mama, I felt I was very overtraumatised. Okay when you are outside it is easy to take things very lightly, but when you are on the inside it is very, very painful and very different. There are two phases that are very, very difficult in prison. The first one is your very first day in prison. That is a very, very difficult one because when you are still in awaiting trial you know there is always a chance that you will be acquitted. You may be sentenced or acquitted. The second phase is when you are about to be released from prison it is also very, very difficult, you don't know whether you are going to be rejected by your family… you are thinking about job wise where am I going to find work, will I get a job? There are so many things that worry you that makes you to panic. The first thing when I went in that I was just thinking about and that I was very sad about was the crime that I had committed and secondly about my family. I've got family, now who is going to look after them and at the same time I was worried about the length of the sentence and thirdly the life of the prison inside is very, very difficult because if you*

don't belong to any gang actually, you live with being threatened with death and so on…"

Another inmate said that he felt he had recovered from the trauma saying: *"I strongly believe so although I also feel that I have overcome it. I did not really anticipate being in prison – it was a shock for me and again my whole reputation was at stake and all that and the family situation that I was leaving behind – I was engaged and I had two children"*.

NOTE: It is important to note that this respondent considers himself to have been a political criminal and his jail time is therefore considered by him to be illegitimate – this affects his whole perception of guilt and ultimately his acceptance of responsibility and hence the reference to his reputation.

More than one respondent felt that the trauma had lasting effects and especially one individual, who complained of posttraumatic stress symptoms (PTSD), namely flashbacks, hypersensitivity and physical symptoms, and asked for counselling. Herewith his response; *"Even today while I am talking to you I am feeling so sore and I want to cry.* [He becomes a bit choked up and stays silent for a while.] *You look at the eyes of those hurting on the TV and you scream in your crying.* [He is referring here to violent or dramatic TV productions]. *You know the eyes – I always look at the eyes* [of the actors], *you can see the fear*

and pain in the eyes. I feel fear all over again when I see that. I sweat profusely and my whole body is wet and I even thought the other day I must go for blood tests because maybe there is something else wrong when I sweat like that and then I realised it is when I see violence – only when I see violence. I saw a fight the other day and when the young prisoners tell me what happens to them even today I start crying. Some lady said I must go and off-load and I must get help because it's not good when the prisoners see me crying because I am trying to help them. [He is a volunteer, now working with a team helping to rehabilitate prisoners still inside prison]. *Do you know where I can get help, because I have no money, you know these people* [referring to psychologists or counsellors] *are expensive".*

Questioned on their physiological response to incarceration, responses varied greatly. For example loss of appetite affected eleven (65%) of the sample while others said they ate normally. One respondent described his reaction as follows; *"I suffered a lot of loss of appetite, I didn't feel like eating, the quality of the food wasn't great and that was added to the depression. I started eating properly when you could buy food from the cafeteria. I think it had something to do with it coming from outside and the fact that I could make a choice about what I wanted to eat. I hated being treated like a child, being told*

when to sleep, when to eat, what to eat… you know it was so frustrating".

Some inmates reported eating as normal, but still losing weight, *"…I ate but I still lost weight"*. One inmate attributes his weight loss to his HIV positive status and not to stress or trauma.

Sleep patterns too varied greatly. Three (18%) said they slept excessively as a way of avoiding the reality of prison life, while six (35%) said they could not sleep and spent many nights lying awake, the rest said their sleep patterns were normal. Five (29% reported another symptom of trauma – nightmares.

All respondents said that crying was seen by the gangs and other inmates as a sign of weakness and if observed would *"make you vulnerable"*, so the seven (41%) that said they did cry said they cried at night under their blankets in order to avoid observation, however, one said that he only cried in the beginning and that you learn to hide your feelings. *"I'm telling you that I was highly depressed, very depressed and that's exactly where I learn't to cry where I learned to relieve stressful conditions by crying. I cried at night, you couldn't let the guys see you are crying because they attack you if you are vulnerable. You cry alone".*

Eleven (65%) of the interviewees reported feelings of depression with two (12%) mentioning thoughts of suicide.

It would appear therefore that both the findings of the interviews with this particular sample of ex-inmates and the information gleaned from the literature review would support the experience of imprisonment as having a traumatic effect on the inmates, however the experience differs from individual to individual as the symptoms were experienced in various ways.

7.2.2   <u>FEAR</u>

In Chapter 4 of the literature review, fear is described by The 'Penguin Dictionary of Psychology' (Reber 1995: 282) as "an emotional state in the presence or anticipation of a dangerous or noxious stimulus, usually characterized by an internal, subjective experience of extreme agitation, a desire to flee or to attack and by a variety of sympathetic reactions". Fear is thought to be the most common response to trauma and goes hand in hand with helplessness and since traumatisation has been established to be present in prison inmates in the 7.2.1 above, it follows that there would be a fear aspect to traumatisation, which needed to be explored further.

The feeling of fear was the most prominent response in the interviews that consistently came to the fore in each respondent's experience. The level of fear hardly varied, was extremely high and the source of fear was identified mainly as the gangs. One respondent describes his physical reaction to the fear saying, "…*Someone came to me and they wanted me to join the gang, I shrink, I shake, I was so young and I was very, very scared*". All interviewees except one, notably the same respondent who said he experienced no trauma, experienced fear. Fear clearly played a major role in the interviewees' experience of the incarceration process, beginning at arrest and then moving through the holding cell (police station) experience to the awaiting trial term and then sentenced prison. It would appear that some police stations (e.g. John Vorster Square), notorious for their ill treatment of prisoners during the apartheid years were the reason behind great fear for a number of the interviewees. Four spoke of torture (mainly in the holding cells of the former John Vorster Square police station) and their fear of threatened torture at the hands of the police.

One inmate described this fear as follows; "*The biggest fear is at night – the police take prisoners out at night and they have to show them accomplices and investigations* [he refers to the police investigations in which detainees were frequently taken out to assist] – *sometimes they never come back. Sometimes they put you in a sack and they throw in a cat and its*

terrible because it scratches you. At sunset they [the investigating detectives] *came, that was the worst time".*

Another interviewee's response confirmed this police behaviour and it is clear that he does not separate the holding cell experience from the rest of his prison experience. The fear is evident in his response; *"That was my worst experience of the whole time that I served in prison. The policemen who were the investigating officers would come during the night – that was their favourite time - and would want information from me and when I could not give them what they wanted, they would make serious threats against me and sometimes they would carry them out. I remember once a gun was shoved through my mouth and this guy wanted to kill me. He wanted to pull the trigger – I could see in his eyes he wanted to kill me. Once also, they took me out of the cells at half past one at night to some spot, I didn't know where it was, but it was around Krugersdorp somewhere. I was blindfolded with like the tube of a bicycle – rubber something - and pushed into a dam almost to suffocation then when I was about to pass out they would take me out until I came round and then do it again. I became determined to die and stubborn. I didn't co-operate and told them they could kill me. I didn't care anymore".*

Although some fears diminish over time, other fears show themselves as more powerful, especially shortly before release. One respondent summarised his prison fears as follows; *"Yes* [I had] *fear of the*

consequences that my incarceration would have on the significant relationships in my life (wife, children, family, friends), physical fear of being attacked, raped, getting ill, fear of being "sucked in to the prison culture" and permanently alienating myself from society as I knew it, fear of having a mental breakdown, confusion and sense of disorientation – physically not knowing where I was in the building (Diepkloof), not understanding the prison slang, not understanding a black language, not knowing who could be trusted and who was just looking to take advantage of me, fear of being assaulted".

According to the literature review, the gangs play a very important role in creating a fearful environment in prison and it would appear from the interviews that this is the main source of fear for the prisoners. Fifteen (88%) interviewees mentioned gangs as their primary source of fear while only two said they were not afraid of the gangs at all and stood up to them by repaying aggression with aggression.

Warders were another source of fear in particular for 2 (11%) of the interviewees. They had witnessed extreme violence against other inmates and feared they would fall victim in the same way.

One interviewee said, *"Warders used to kill people. Maximum prison was hell. When I came out* [of maximum prison] *I thanked my God and I felt so happy like I was leaving prison but I still had four years. Fights would break out like that and the warders will just decide we are going to take these guys*

are going to teach us a lesson. They wanted to make us go naked, and they tear-gassed us in the cell. So the warders wanted to search us every day and we didn't want to and then they tear-gassed us. They come in at night and you don't know what they want and they come in and they must think they have information then you just hear the door slam up. They get us outside and they would strip and body cavity search us. They used to break peoples limbs, hands and feet – there were warders that were notorious". Other fears mentioned in the interviews include sickness, mentioned by two (11%), and rape mentioned by four (24%).

Response to fear sometimes resulted in inmates joining the gangs and four interviewees (24%) admitted that they had done so, while three mentioned seeking gang protection, although they did not join them. This was achieved by means of monetary payments or payments in cigarettes or other goods to the gangs.

In accordance with the information found in the literature review in relation to fear, the findings of the research accumulated during the interviews show that fear plays a major role in the life of an inmate in South African prisons and is largely related to fear of the gangs and their power.

7.2.3   OVERCROWDING

According to the literature review (Chapter 2), overcrowding in prisons has reached disastrous proportions and threatens the life and limb of the inmates incarcerated under this condition (Citizen May 25, 2004:1). The data collected in the interviews concurs with this statement and underlines the constant threat of violence that is associated with overcrowding. All interviewees (100%) said they had experienced the prisons as seriously overcrowded. One inmate described the effect of overcrowding as follows; *"Worst was the 'intake cells' where you literally had to sleep on your side on the floor against the person next to you as they were so crowded – made worse by the fact that approximately 20 of the 100 (at worst) who were 'old hands' in the cell used 50 percent of the floor space with their bed area - they had beds, new intake had mats only. Generally it impacts in all areas – for instance when I was first admitted I was supposed to receive a 40-minute non-contact (through glass) visit each week. Normally you received only a 10-minute and at best a 20-minute visit because of overcrowding and inadequate visit facilities. No blankets or eating utensils available supposedly because of overcrowding".*

Another inmate described the overcrowding as follows: *"Horrendous. Well they did a cell count in our cell once right at the early days of my sentence. We had 102 people in a cell meant for 26. There were bed bugs, body lice, and a multitude of cockroaches everywhere. You had one toilet, one urinal and one shower for all those people. If you wanted to maintain any form of hygiene you had to get up at 2 am in the morning to shower in cold water.*

They have double bunk beds, when you have beds, and you push them together and sleep three or more together on 2 beds. I slept in the toilet area for the first 5 days. Leeuwkop was not as bad. Conditions at Sun City [Diepkloof Prison in Johannesburg] *are horrendous and I wouldn't keep a dog that way, no I wouldn't even keep a pig that way".*

It would appear from both the literature review and the data collected from all respondents in the sample that overcrowding is a fact of prison life and that it contributes to a negative prison experience. Overcrowding has a negative effect due to the fact that the overcrowding affects both the capability of the inmate to maintain personally acceptable personal hygiene standards, maintain a comfortable sense of personal space and adequately maintain personal and group safety.

7.2.4   <u>VIOLENCE</u>

The literature review (Chapter 2) highlights the fact that for various reasons including overcrowding, prison is a cauldron of violence where gang fights and flare-ups are an every day occurrence and inmates are constantly at risk. The effect of the violence is manifold but evidence from the respondents' data shows the greatest effect of violence is fear and this was experienced by all inmates in the sample.

All (100%) of the interviewees mentioned incidents of violence which they witnessed; especially gang related violence where inmates who happened to be bystanders were frequently at risk and often were maimed or killed. According to all responses from the sample assistance for protection from the violence was not forthcoming from the authorities and it would appear from the respondents' answers to the question of where they could obtain security that the greatest source of violence – the gangs – is also the only place to find a safety of sorts. This safety comes at a price. One respondent said the violence *"both frightened and revolted me"*. This respondent said that his experience of the violence was that the inmate-on-inmate violence was mainly in the form of stabbings and the warder on inmate violence mainly in the form of extreme beatings usually in response to an inmate-on-inmate or gang fight. Violence would appear to breed more violent incidents, both warden-on-inmate and inmate-on-inmate.

One respondent describes an incident of violence in which he was the object of attack; *"I once got psychological help because the wardens assaulted me and shocked me with the shock shields because I told them that they had promoted the gangs by making me go there to that section. I was injured in my pelvic area* [he indicates that he was kicked an punched in the groin] *and I was hospitalised and taken to a urology guy and he took tests and gave me medication. He said I need more hospital and treatment and operation but I said no, no, no you don't touch me and I had to sign that I refused medical treatment. I went to the psychologist after that"*.

Many interviewees speak of their anger and helplessness at their own inability to help those who are being beaten up whether by the warders, by the individual inmates or by the gangs. One commented as follows; "*It* [the violence] *made me so angry - some guys arrived and were sent straight into the place of safety (single cells) because they were gang raped in awaiting trial and had stitches in their backside. They* [gangs] *see how vulnerable you are. They* [the gangs] *do something horrible like assault each other in front of you, but they are acting, or they do something else that shocks you, and they watch you and check your reaction as newcomers to see who is vulnerable, who is scared, so you must not show fear*".

Another interviewee describes the culture of violence in his statement as follows; "*Violence in more subtle forms like intimidation, language, and withholding of food and privileges permeates the prison culture totally both between prisoners and between warders and prisoners. It often carries over into interaction with spouses at visits or on the telephone. You later become used to the underlying level of violence and are not shocked even when extreme violence occurs*".

From the research findings it is evident that gangs and prison warders are the greatest sources of violent behaviour in prison. All respondents spoke of their fear of being caught up in the gang violence or of becoming a victim of gang attacks or being attacked by the warders. As

one interviewee put it; "*Several times we would find ourselves running all over the place not knowing who is fighting who and I remember once I was coming from class and all of a sudden and they were all coming towards me into the hall and I saw a fight. The guys had garden forks, you know the spikes of the forks that were sharpened, and there was a big fight and the cops did intervene and as I watched from my cell the guys who did this were standing against the cell wall after the fight and the warder shot him point blank after the fact he was already disarmed. I was very fearful, I thought I would die inside*".

Fear and helplessness are two feelings that emerge from the experience of violence in prison. The group of inmates in this study confirms the results of the literature review, which highlights violence both inmate-on-inmate and warder-on-inmate as a constant source of fear.

7.2.5   <u>EXPERIENCE OF SUBCULTURE DEVELOPMENT</u>

Development of the subculture, according to the literature review occurs by two methods, the deprivation model of Sykes (Gillespie 2003:41) and the importation model or cultural drift theory of Inciardi (1993:570). Frankl's (2004:74) questions on whether human liberty and spiritual freedom are totally influenced by environment and whether man is an accidental product of conditional and environmental factors appear to support the importation model.

The findings from the sample support both the theory of deprivation and importation, although the majority (76%) appears to bring their belief and value system from the outside and adjust it to the environment, in line with the importation model.

Four (24%) of the inmates describe behaviour that would suggest the deprivation model was appropriate. They expressed this either in their discussion of their general experience of prison or in response to their admission to prison. One interviewee said, *"Mostly I stood back and observed the proceedings and how things were done and then followed suit"*, while another said, *"I am somebody who can easily express. I became like this, before I was not like that"* (meaning he took on values he did not previously possess as a result of his experience). Another individual said, *"I was brought up to know that you always help people and it's strange to watch and to not do anything about it. You feel so helpless and you can't do anything. It makes you angry because if you help they will kill you. Even now I just turn away – I don't get involved in anything anymore."* Yet another said, *"When I go in I was robbed, so I do the same, everybody that came in must give me something – I had joined the club, I played the game"*.

The importation model, which suggests that inmates do more than simply respond to the immediate prison problems, but rather that cultural elements are imported from outside, is supported in the

comments of the majority (76%) of the interviewees. One inmate clearly brought with him a culture and belief system from outside. He describes this as follows; *"The experience was terrifying for the first few days but rapidly became bearable as I became orientated to my situation and acquired the basics needed for survival in prison such as eating and drinking utensils. The biggest help was identifying another prisoner who had just been sentenced and was in the same situation and came from a similar background to myself – we were able to connect our wives which also helped them immensely, I then made a decision to trust another long term prisoner and accept guidance from him – this was not misplaced and he was very helpful to me in these three weeks. As I got to know the slang and began to understand the prison culture and "code of conduct" I was able to adapt more easily. As time went on I based my prison experience on three key foundations. I determined that I would lead a 100% scrupulously honest existence in prison and would fight for any rights through strictly correct and legal channels, this was to reinforce my view that what I had done was because I had lost touch with the "real" me and that I would never again allow that to happen. Any kind of compromise would be the top of a slippery slope. Secondly, I was determined to get to know and understand myself and grow and develop myself as fully as possible.*

It is difficult from this limited research to understand the reasons behind the differing experiences of prisonisation or subculture

development but clearly this is experienced in different ways by individual inmates and has varying effects on individuals.

Some inmates appear to take definite decisions with regards their adaptation to the culture, while other seem to merely "go with the flow" and avoid taking decisions, but rather follow the majority practice.

7.2.6   ADJUSTMENT PATTERNS

The literature review (Chapter 4) described three adjustment patterns in the context of imprisonment as disintegration, disorientation and degradation. The following is a discussion of these patterns in relation to the experience of the sample.

7.2.6.1   Disintegration

According to the literature the experience of disintegration is characterised by the loss of a connection to those the individual values as near and dear, due to the fact that contact with friends and family is limited resulting in isolation. In the interviews 65% mentioned their fear of losing contact, respect or the love of their families and saw this as the cause of fear. One interviewee said,

"After one year they [meaning families of inmates in general] *stop to come once a month anymore and after three years sometimes they never come anymore."* One inmate said, *"My biggest fear was of losing my family"*. Isolation results and in the interviews four (24%) said they had isolated themselves (meaning they did not interact with other inmates and spent a lot of their time not communicating with others except when necessary).

This would appear to indicate the presence of at least one of the symptoms of disintegration although it cannot be definitely pinpointed as the only cause of isolation as fear also plays a role.

7.2.6.2   Disorientation

As discussed in the literature (Chapter 4) one of the effects of being arrested and detained is a profound sense of internal disorganisation and demoralisation. The institution's routine becomes the individual's routine since the right to decide when to eat and when to sleep is replaced by the institution's schedule (Roberts 1994:262). Inmates have no privacy since even the most basic of bodily functions such as eating, defecating, washing, urinating and changing of clothes happens in the company of others. This unravels their social ties, and stuns them.

Three (18%) of the interviewees admitted to feelings of numbness or shock, especially during the early days of their incarceration, and an overall feeling of disorientation. One described his experience as follows; "…*fear of having a mental breakdown, confusion and sense of disorientation – physically not knowing where I was in the building (Diepkloof), not understanding the prison slang, not understanding a black language, not knowing who could be trusted and who was just looking to take advantage of me, fear of being assaulted*".

7.2.6.3   Degradation

The literature review described degradation in the incarceration experience as one that constantly strips individuals of their dignity; from having their cells "tossed" (meaning cells are searched by warders), to wearing bright orange jump suits emblazoned with the word "prisoner", degradation takes place at all levels. All respondents mentioned various aspects of this degradation. One mentioned the humiliating aspect of having to wear the prison overalls; another said he felt like a child because he was told, when to eat, when to sleep and what to do all the time. Another aspect of the degradation, which was mentioned, was the lack of privacy and human dignity. One inmate described this as follows in response to the question of

overcrowding; "*…when I went into maximum I see someone sitting in the toilet and some are eating in the same space*". Strip searches and overly aggressive body cavity searches were also specifically mentioned as being particularly degrading.

From the above, it is clear that in the struggle for adaptation to the prison environment elements of all three known patterns; disintegration, disorientation and degradation, are present in varying degrees in all the interviewees in the sample.

7.2.7   <u>EFFECTIVENESS OF PRISON AS A DETERRENT</u>

The respondents' perception of effectiveness of incarceration as a deterrent was probed. In this regard fourteen (82%) interviewees said they felt prison was not a deterrent, but during the interviews it became clear that their meaning was more relative to prison's rehabilitative value than its value as a deterrent. Two of the interviewees spoke of their determination never to transgress the law again for fear of having to return to the horror of the circumstances they experienced inside. One individual said, "*Personally, I would not even miss paying a traffic fine from now on…*" while the other said, "*Its certainly a deterrent in my case, I never want to go back there*". One individual while negative about DCS had a positive comment about his prison experience. "*Let me say the experience yes although a lots of negative*

things came out of it I also benefited because I also grew quite a lot mentally, spiritually". He qualified this by saying that he had gained benefit from the outside assistance of religious groups – not through any effort of DCS.

It is interesting to note that although most interviewees said they felt prison served no purpose as a rehabilitative tool – it did work as a deterrent in two since they were unwilling to repeat the experience. Three interviewees also said that if they had not gone to prison when they had, they would probably have ended up in worse trouble or dead. Even to these three, who insisted that their lives had changed as a result of the halt unexpectedly called to their lives and the opportunity for introspection and learning offered by the experience, rehabilitation is not something they credit the prison with. They feel it is as a result of external courses, learning and religion that they changed, not the rehabilitative efforts of Correctional Services. One commented as follows; "*For me it was a blessing in disguise. It was a turning point in my life and I thank God because I met Him* [referring to God] *inside.*

7.2.8   <u>INDUCTION PROGRAMMES</u>

The question of whether inmates had received an induction course and the question related to its efficacy both relied heavily on the

interviewees' understanding or perception of the term 'induction'. Hence it was necessary to first ask the interviewees about their understanding of the meaning of the word 'induction programme'. It became evident that this term was not well understood and in most cases the researcher had to explain the term to the interviewees (the same standard explanation was used for each interviewee). Once explained, the interviewees understood, but frequently referred to the programme as 'orientation' rather than 'induction'.

Although the Department of Correctional Services, through the input of Dr Holtzhausen (referred to in Chapter 5), says that induction is supposed to take place within 21 days of an inmate' incarceration, it is evident from the findings of the research that orientation occurs in a haphazard fashion. Asked whether an induction programme had been offered, 50 percent said they had received induction and 50 percent said no induction opportunity had been presented to them. All interviewees felt that a "properly designed and run" induction programme would be helpful for inmates and that isolation from general population in the first few days or weeks (some said up to six months) would assist in keeping inmates safe and assisting their integration into prison. Asked what they believed this programme should include, twelve (71%) responded that information regarding prison rules (what was expected from the inmates by the Department of Correctional Services), and facilities (such as social workers and

psychologists) available to the prisoners were important. Six (35%) said that the information regarding schooling and the school programmes was important and three (18%) said procedures as to how to deal with gang approaches would help a newcomer. Other items mentioned were information on activities within the prison community such as sports activities and religious programmes or activities. Another person mentioned the need to include the whereabouts and availability of social workers, psychologists and also some information on the line of authority in prison in order to know whom you are addressing and in what format greetings are required.

When interviewees were asked whether inmates should be isolated from the general prison population during the early days of incarceration all but one said yes. They felt that inmates who were coming into prison for the first time were easy targets and were uninitiated and therefore prime targets for the gangs. The person who said they should not be separated qualified his statement by saying that it would only serve to make them targets later on when they were integrated with the general population.

7.2.9   OTHER COMMENTS

It is a general perception of the interviewees that the prison staff is under-trained, corrupt and interested only in collecting a cheque.

Although there were exceptions to this, overwhelmingly this was the perception of the interviewees. Clearly respect for the warders is low; *"Ay! That is one of the things that gave me sleepless nights especially the violence was not only created by inmates alone – some was created by the POPCRU members – they were another gang – we said they were another gang in prison - we made our own research I was a victim of the POPCRU members – they didn't want people to learn and they wanted to further their objectives in a sense of using inmates to fight each other – so they can claim incentives for working in a violent situation – they claimed compensation. Management would feel these guys were working well and then they can be transferred to another section".*

Another interviewee responded as follows; *"In my personal case I believe that imprisonment versus a non-incarceration sentence was a positive feature in that it truly hammered home, a lesson which I may not fully have taken on board, or worked through, if I had for example received a suspended sentence. On the other hand the length of sentence has, I believe an inverse effect, the longer the sentence the greater the likelihood of relapse for a first time offender. Both of these refer to the sentencing. The actual prison experience itself worked to ensure a relapse rather than act as a deterrent. The absolute lack of structure and discipline, corruption and inefficiency all lead to a sense of hopelessness and uncertainty in which more corruption thrives".*

7.3   DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It would appear therefore that both the findings of the interviews with this particular sample and the information gleaned from the literature review would support the experience of imprisonment as having a traumatic effect on the inmates.

From the literature review, a picture of incarceration emerged that spoke of an experience of helplessness, intimidation through gang violence, overcrowding, and a negative effect on individuals with lasting effects even after incarceration. However, the perception of the effectiveness of incarceration as a deterrent was ambivalent both in the literature and in the data collection parts of the research. On the one hand, both the literature and the data collection appear to deny the existence of any value for society in incarcerating people citing reasons such as costs and institutionalisation and the failure of efforts of the prison system to rehabilitate. On the other hand, many interviewees in the study admitted that it had served as a deterrent to them since they never wanted to return to such horrific living conditions, but they admitted that the rehabilitative value was minimal if not valueless.

The findings of the data collection appear to support the authenticity of the environment of a total institution described in the literature. Interviewees, almost without exception, related stories of horror, helplessness and intense fear as well as gang intimidation and violence, and this is also described in the literature. The data collected from the respondents would appear to

support the literature review in that the literature portrayed the prison system as one into which inmates are 'encultured' over time. It is also a system, which is characterised by extreme violence and ruled by a system, which perpetuates violence in its effort to control it. Also supportive of the literature review is the notion that each individual inmate, although there appear to be similarities, are individuals who respond in different behavioural ways to violence, overcrowding, threats of violence, the process of adapting to prison and the experience of incarceration in general. Since the individuals adjust by becoming part of the inmate social system through both the models of deprivation and importation and this would also appear to support the literature review.

As a result of conducting the interviews and studying the literature I came to the conclusion that the total institution, according to literature and according to the interviewees interviewed, is an environment that is violent and has the effect on the individual of engendering extreme fear, trauma, horror and helplessness resulting in emotional damage and feelings of anger. Despite this, or perhaps because of this, and although prison appears to have little rehabilitative value, it does appear to have a deterrent value.

Summary

Firstly, this chapter provided an overview of the method used to analyse and collate the responses collected during the interviews. An exposition of the research findings

was then presented and focused on trauma, fear, the issue of overcrowding, the experience of prison violence and the experience of subculture development. In addition, the findings on adjustment patterns, divided into disintegration, disorientation and degradation was presented. A section on the effectiveness of prison was then followed by a discussion on induction programmes, both inmates' perception of their meaning and effectiveness and a discussion of the findings as a whole.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Although the concept of prison has a relatively short history in South Africa, the total institution of prison has evolved a great deal since its early beginnings in Europe in the mid sixteenth century, and the change continues today. In the South African correctional services context, it is the fulfilment of one of its stated objectives namely; the focused delivery of service to inmates, which was selected for closer

exploration. In particular, of interest was the effect of the service delivery of the Department of Correctional Services on those it delivers service to – the inmate. With approximately 182 000 prisoners under its care, the South African Department of Correctional Services has an onerous task to deliver quality service.

In exploring the effect of incarceration on the incarcerated individual – the stated title of this research – the researcher conducted interviews with people who had experienced incarceration in South African prisons to explore their individual experiences. Prior to this it was necessary for the researcher to firstly conduct a literature review, which looked at imprisonment in South Africa, the issues facing correctional services today and the evolution of incarceration as a method of punishment and of incarceration in South Africa. The issues highlighted as important to this research were those that could potentially affect the experience of the inmate and therefore included the problem of overcrowding and prison violence. The researcher needed an understanding of the prison environment and the social system, in which the inmate finds himself, once incarcerated in the total institution of prison. In Chapter 3 of this document, a discussion of the environment of the prison provided a view of the phenomenon of prisonisation (a term which means the prisoner gives up some of his own values and norms and takes on certain common group values), the prisoner subculture, and the inmate code, which all forms part and parcel of the social system in the total environment of prison. In addition methods of coping with the environment in prison were explored and two models emerged from the literature namely; the importation model and the deprivation

model. In terms of sources of fear, bullying, gang activity and homosexual sex were explored.

In addition to the above, the inner world of the inmate needed exploration since this would be the basis of the part of the research that dealt with the experiences of the inmate, which was another stated aim of the research. Hence Chapter 4 of the literature review focused on issues such as the shock of entry into prison and the qualities associated with psychological stability in prison such as predictability and activity. The chapter furthermore looked at the psychological effects of incarceration on the inmate including neuroticism, defeatism and stigmatisation and at adjustment patterns such as disintegration, disorientation and degradation. The literature review highlighted trauma with all its associated symptoms such as horror, helplessness and fear as major factors in the life of an inmate.

Lastly, the literature review explored induction programmes in the prison environment and their role in the life and experience of an inmate. In particular, Chapter 5 focused on the use of induction programmes in the correctional system as a tool to lessen the shock of entry and ease the transition from life outside to adjustment to the life inside the total institution of prison.

Following the research conducted with available literature, the researcher was able to draw up a questionnaire to be used during the interviews with individuals who had been incarcerated in South African prisons and released at some point no more than three years prior to the date that their interview was conducted. From these

interviews, the researcher was able to compare information collected in this manner with that which was gleaned from the literature review.

In the main, the findings of the interviews, described in Chapter 7 above, concur with the literature review in as far as prison appears to be an experience which, despite their earlier stressful lifestyle (one of crime), appears to create enormous stress and trauma for the inmates, with numerous resultant effects on the inmate. In particular, their entry into the total institution of prison caused initial trauma. A lack of information and direction at this early stage of imprisonment appeared to compound the effects of trauma, which resulted in both psychological and physical symptoms manifesting in the individual. The result of the traumatisation and of the state of imprisonment also led to various coping strategies, some more effective than others.

The findings furthermore showed that induction programmes, although officially a part of the service offering of the Department of correctional Services was, according to the sample, inconsistently presented, if presented at all. Inmates interviewed in the sample felt that effective induction into prison may have resulted in a better approach to imprisonment by the incarcerated individual which may have resulted in better coping strategies. Overall, the findings of the research collected during the interviews concurred with the literature review.

Finally, at the outset of this document the aims of undertaking the research were highlighted as establishing how incarcerated people experience incarceration i.e.

emotions, physical experiences, psychological experiences, establishing what effect the experience has on the behaviour of the inmate and establishing what the inmates believe could be done to improve the rehabilitative aspect of incarceration. One of the core questions here was whether the presence or absence of an induction programme has an effect on the choices inmates make with regards the way they spend their time inside prison.

The researcher's motivations for the selection of the topic which were influenced by the fact that the researcher through prior interaction with inmates in her capacity as a religious worker noted that many of the psychological problems and anger that the inmates deal with are related to their experience of their entry into prison and their experience of imprisonment. In addition, prisons in other parts of the world e.g. the United Kingdom and the United States have implemented well developed induction programmes with some success.

Another motivator for this exploratory research into the inmate's prison experience was the researcher's opinion that it could shed light on further areas of study for more effective social work interaction with inmates in order to facilitate a more productive sentence and more effective, post incarceration, societal integration. The topic was therefore an area of interest to the researcher and one in which the researcher has made contacts and established relationships with members of the subgroup. As a social work professional, the interest of the researcher is also on improving social work service delivery in the area of imprisonment. It is the researcher's opinion that the objectives of the research project were met.

CHAPTER 9

RECOMMENDATIONS

In exploratory research, one of the researcher's goals is to formulate more precise questions about the subject that future research can be focused on. Furthermore, exploratory research rarely delivers definitive answers and can often discover new issues. Although this research had certain goals and objectives, one of the aims was

to be open to new issues, which may be presented in the course of undertaking the project. Hence, based on the findings of the research presented in chapter 7 and the conclusion in chapter 8 above, the researcher recommends the following as issues to be pursued in future research:

1. The effectiveness of the induction programme offered in South African prisons. The Department of Correctional Services could run research on "what works in induction" by comparing the South African induction system with systems in other countries that have proved to be successful such as the United Kingdom.

2. The role social workers currently play in South African induction programmes in prisons as compared to the role social workers play in the induction programmes prisons of more developed countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States.

3. The reasons the gangs are as powerful as they are and what can be done to better protect prisoners from the influence and power of the gangs.

4. An in depth study into the patterns of adaptation and how inmates can be assisted to better adapt to prison life in order to make it an experience which supports personal growth and rehabilitation.

5. Researching the results of the voluntary programmes being offered in prisons and exploring the possibility of adopting the successful ones on a broader base throughout prisons in South Africa.

Furthermore, the Department of Correctional Services could pursue the following angles for service delivery improvement to the inmates:

1. Launch an investigation into why induction is not offered consistently as it should be according to the Department of Correctional Services' own information.

2. A system should be designed for effective reception of inmates, which includes first night procedures and safe separation of new inmates from existing inmates. This may include the separate housing of prisoners incarcerated for the first time (to be applied consistently) for a limited period of time.

3. A telephone contact where potential prisoners could receive information about what to take into prison and counselling (this would be applicable to people on bail standing trial) to minimise the shock of entry and to better equip inmates for their experience.

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<u>Annexure A</u>

<u>INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MASTER'S DISSERTATION ON THE EFFECT OF THE EXPERIENCE OF INCARCERATION ON A PRISON INMATE</u>

<u>SECTION A: SAMPLE IDENTIFYING QUESTIONS</u>

Identifier:

Date of interview:

Your language/cultural group:

Your age:

Sentence length:

Length of time served in prison:

First incarceration date:

No of times in prison:

Release date:

Crime imprisoned for:

SECTION B: OPEN QUESTIONS

1. How do you understand the word trauma?

2. Do you feel you were in any way traumatised when you entered prison as a result of being incarcerated, not as a result of what happened prior to coming to prison?

3. Did you experience fear when you first entered prison? Please explain.

4. Before you were sentenced, were you out on bail or were you held in awaiting trial?

5. Were you held in a holding cell?

6. If yes, where and how was that experience for you?

7. While you were on trial or awaiting trial did you speak to people in order to try to understand what prison was like and what to expect?

8. If yes, how did this help you, if no, do you believe it could have helped you and why do you say so?

9. If yes, how did awaiting trial compare to sentenced jail?

10. If no, and you were incarcerated after sentencing – how did you experience this?

11. Did you receive an orientation from Correctional Services/prison management upon your admission to prison?

12. If yes, did this assist you in adapting to the prison environment?

13. If no, do you believe this would have helped you and if yes why?

14. Do you find it difficult to express emotions?

15. Were you afraid in prison, and how did the fear manifest itself?

16. If yes, what were you afraid about/of?

17. Do you ever feel the need for protection and if so, what do you need protection from?

18. How could you obtain protection and did you make use of these mechanisms?

19. Did you ever join a gang for protection?

20. Did you subsequently break away from the gang and was this difficult to do?

21. How do you respond to <u>feeling</u> threatened? (Whether by an inmate, a member of staff or by the prison system in any way?)

22. Please describe your emotional response e.g. crying, depression etc.

23. Describe your physical response e.g. loss of appetite, nausea, nightmares.

24. Describe your behavioural response e.g. anger (fighting), sleeping a lot or not at all, isolating yourself.

25. Did you have anyone (another inmate or a staff member) showing you what to avoid and what to do when you came inside?

26. If yes, who was this and did it help you to avoid trouble?

27. If no, do you believe this could have helped you?

28. Do you understand what an induction programme is? Please explain your understanding.

29. Do you believe an induction programme would contribute to improved safety in prison? Explain why or why not.

30. What do you believe could be included in such a programme?

31. Do you believe new prisoners should be isolated from general population during an orientation period?

32. If yes, why

33. If no, why not?

34. Do you believe it would contribute to prison safety if prison rules were explained to new inmates?

35. Do you think it would be helpful for new inmates to receive an orientation in terms of facilities available to them?

36. What do you believe could contribute to an easier transition into the prison system?

37. Did you experience overcrowding in prison and if so, how was this for you?

38. Did you see or experience violence in prison and if so, how was this for you?

39. What would you like to add with regards your general prison experience and its effectiveness as a deterrent for crime.

40. Any further comments?

Demonstration of how an interview proceeded to completion with an ex-prisoner

SECTION A: IDENTIFYING QUESTIONS

Identifier: JM (69882432)

Date of interview: 24 May 2004 at 12h00 – 13h50

Your race (this is merely to check that all races are represented in the study):

South Sotho Black

Your age: 37

Sentence length: 22 years (different types of offences in Free State and Northwest and Gauteng). 5 years, plus 3 years, plus 3 years, plus 5, plus 5 years with 3 years suspended)

Length of time served in prison: 11 years and four months

First incarceration date: Friday very early in April 1990, I can't remember the day.

No of times in prison: I've been in prison 4 times before this time. I served in Free State and Orkney.

Release date: 9 April 2002

Crime/s imprisoned for: Murder, attempted murder, rape, car theft, possession of stolen goods and possession of an unlicensed firearm and ammunition. I always say it's easier to make a list of things I haven't been in jail for cause its shorter. (Laughs).

SECTION B: OPEN QUESTIONS

1. How do you understand the word trauma?

   It is a condition that puts me back to where I was or what I did or what happened to me. It is like returning to something that was very bad for me.

2. Do you feel you were in any way traumatised when you entered prison as a result of being incarcerated (put into prison), not as a result of what happened prior to coming to prison?

In a way if I can elaborate. I had bad dreams; I think it was from what happened to me before though. I felt when I arrived there I was a bit out of society but I felt that I belonged there because of what I had done. All this pattern of mine, this crime, I was not happy to do it in some ways but in some ways I wanted to do it. Still it was something that stayed with me – I thought to myself this must one day get out of me. My family needed me because the money wasn't there and I should have looked after them, but I was relieved, not happy, but relieved that I was caught, so this thing can come to an end. It is quite something to say but I knew I deserved the punishment. The first one [trauma] was I was exposed to gangs and I was having been embraced into that lifestyle. I did enjoy being in the gang but I didn't want to be in it – but I enjoyed it along the way – I enjoyed the benefits. You see, if I can explain, I was in Sun City [Johannesburg prison – maximum] and we were going to Leeuwkop but our transfer from Johannesburg prison was delayed a couple of times, so we get loaded in the transport then we go back to the cells then we get loaded, then we go back to the cells. Then the very self same day I came to Leeuwkop there was a big gang fight at Leeuwkop and I was shocked, it was while we were eating. This guy beat the other guy on the head with a drinking cup and there was blood everywhere, and they were kicking this guy in the pelvic area and hitting him – lots of them. I was only in Sun City for about two weeks before Leeuwkop but I wanted to go because at Leeuwkop you can work and leave your cell – in Sun City you don't work you just sit in the cell all day, 23 hours a day you are locked inside and you just smoke dagga all day and Mandrax, you just sit day after day.

3. <u>Did you experience fear when you first entered prison? Please explain.</u>

The very first time I was in and this time also. You get shocked even if you have been inside before. If something comes and faces me like one guy wants a fight, I must fight

him no problem, but now if a gang comes to you, you don't even know the guys that attack. A group attack that is what you are afraid of.

4. <u>Before you were sentenced were you out on bail or were you held in awaiting trial</u>?

   I was awaiting trial – they didn't grant bail, I had too many charges and I had skipped bail before. They put me on bail before and I ran away and didn't appear – so there was no chance for bail and if they were going to give me bail I was going to run.

5. <u>Were you held in a holding cell before awaiting trial?</u>

   Yes – you start at the police cells; I was at Wynberg.

6. <u>If yes, where and how was that experience for you?</u>

   That was but nothing my head was still hot, I was 22 and my head was hot. When I go in I was robbed, so I do the same, everybody that came in must give me something – I had joined the club, I played the game.

7. <u>While you were on trial or awaiting trial did you speak to people in order to try to understand what prison was like and what to expect?</u>

   I didn't speak to anybody except when we were smoking dagga and we spoke about our crimes, we tell each other stories. You sit inside all day, the whole day there is nothing to do, nothing, they don't let you out. The dagga came in via the cops and the wardens and they sell it to you, you can get anything you want, anything, anything, no problem.

8. <u>If yes, how did this help you, if no, do you believe it could have helped you and why do you say so?</u>

   [Answer above renders this question invalid]

9. <u>How did awaiting trial compare to sentenced jail?</u>

Well you know in awaiting trial you are very stressed up because you are uncertain and you just wait and wait and wait, and on a certain date you will go to court – it was so irritating – you wait for your date. I sat in awaiting trial for nearly two years and you just do nothing. Very frustrating but we overcame it with dagga, mandrax and cocaine. You buy anything there. You could buy a warden for about R10 000 and the warden will take you out to your girlfriend for the day and lots of the guys will have kids while they are in awaiting trial. You see the guy comes inside and he's got no children and his girlfriend is not pregnant, then after 18 month in awaiting trial he can have kids because he goes out to be with his girlfriend. The warders take them. I didn't have money but if I went I would not have come back, I would have skipped.

10. <u>If you were incarcerated straight after sentencing – how did you experience this?</u>

    [Question not asked since answer above renders this invalid]

11. <u>Do you find it difficult to express emotions?</u>

    No, not at all. I talk everywhere and I will talk to anyone and tell them what is what. These people at community corrections I was to have been with Radio Pulpit but they said no, they had to make it formal for me to speak, so I said no because then they tell you what to say. But I speak at every church that asks me and then I always don't have enough time and the congregation wants to hear more, they don't want me to go. This weekend I was at Vereeniging Catholic Church - I can talk (laughs).

12. <u>Were you afraid in prison, and how did the fear manifest itself?</u>

    Well at first at Maximum but then I was initiated into the gang the fear goes away. That was the only fear. Lengthy sentence didn't scare me, but the gangs I don't like the gangs.

13. <u>If yes, what were you afraid about/of?</u>

The gangs were my only fear.

14. <u>Did you ever feel the need for protection and if so, what do you need protection from.</u>

It was only when I arrived in the prison I felt the pain of what I had been doing. The need was not for protection, but I would need a social worker like to go to my father and help my family. I felt bad for my family – that is pain and I was afraid. But the gangs, I was forced that I join the gang – the Big 5. The fight that delayed our transfer that I was telling you about, it was the Big 5 was fighting another gang and I think they ran short of guys because they took punishment that day. So when we came to Leeuwkop the wardens lined us up – all the guys who were transferred and then they said to us okay you 28s you go that side and 26s you go that side and Big 5 you go that side and Airforce you go that side then they said all the non-members must go one side and they took us to a room and left us there. Then the gangs came and terrorised us and started tattooing the different guys and 6 will hold us down and tattoo us. On that day I was lucky they didn't see me and they didn't tattoo me that day, then the wardens came and these guys all ran away. Then they took us to our sections and the guys got us in the sections – and they said to me you will be Big 5 and they held me down and put the Big 5 tattoo on me, and its like a swastika on my left hand and 3 times they tattooed me, also on my shoulder and another place. My initiation the first thing they wanted me in the blankets with someone [sex with another Big 5 member] and I said no. So they said then if I don't do that then you are a man, you must act like a man, so they gave me a weapon and said I must protect the gang and they said I must stab this other old guy from the 28s who was in my self same cell. They gave me a sharpened handle of a cup. The when they gave me the

weapon, I stabbed one of the members of the Big 5 the guy who gave me the instruction and the weapon, I stabbed him. I was thrown on the ground and attacked and kicked and hit and there was a big noise and the warden took me to the single cells. So there was an internal case made against me by the guy who I stabbed from the Big 5 and the wardens they said no you were wrong. I said how can I get out? I don't want to be a gang member, I didn't choose this tattoo, they force me, how can I get out? And then after two months the guys from the Big 5 didn't want the case to go ahead, then I was released into population and communal cell after some time and the charge was dropped. When I got back to the section I had to go before the disciplinary section of the gang and I said I am not a member they forced me, I didn't choose this thing. From that day things were terrible and I fought them every day. Every day, every day they attacked me and I fought all the time – but I said if I must die then so be it, I didn't choose this thing. I have seen horrific scenes for people just like me and some guys go from 8 years to 18 years to 58 years because of all the fights and killings. They say you must scratch a guy not stab him about 5mm, then just because that guy who has the order is so scared he doesn't do it right he attacks and makes a big hole in the target. It was bad – every day they wanted to attack me because I resisted.

15. <u>How could you obtain protection and did you make use of these mechanisms?</u>

I was a gang member who rebelled against the gangs. The whole thing with me was I had to get to the single cells because sometimes you can only sleep for an hour in a week because I had to keep watch day and night because they were always looking for opportunities to attack me. I made holes in my blankets to keep watch, and then if I see

a movement I can see what is going on through the holes. I remained in the communal

cell then I moved to the single cells. It was much better. I had to keep fighting. I made

my own weapons.

16. <u>Did you ever join a gang for protection?</u>

    [The question was answered in the reply above]

17. <u>Did you subsequently break away from the gang and was this difficult to do?</u>

    You know what has happened – From maximum at Leeuwkop, I went to Medium C at
    Leeuwkop and then in Medium C I found guys that were not as brutal as the guys
    doing life. In Medium C they have a date to go out so they are not so vicious. When I
    got there I was brave I saw how they were and I went to the guys and told them I have
    rank – I have the rank of a Roman – I do whatever they do, but they don't tell me what
    to do. Of course, I was lying. It's a very tough story. Your course [referring to the
    interviewer's recovery programme] brought me my other Jacob back when you came
    to the prison and many things in my life became sorted out. I wanted to be the Jacob
    who was within me. You shined a light for me and for others who were in the
    darkness. Then I began to be the Jacob I was supposed to be.

18. <u>How did you respond to feeling threatened? (Whether by an inmate, a</u>
    <u>member of staff or by the prison system in any way?)</u>

    I used to fight a lot. The wardens who I know me here where I visit the prisoners, they
    say, I don't know this guy, you are someone different you used to fight so much. I
    used to give them such a hard time. One day I go to all the gang leaders and we went
    on the rampage because the wardens were not good and they were boycotting and
    broke keys in the locks and we had to stay in the cells for days before they fixed the

keys and locks and we didn't eat for that time. We remained without wardens for weeks there because we chased them away. We helped Gomba (Head Of Prison) to select guys to do jobs outside then come back after the job, so prisoners were taking prisoners out when there were no wardens and everything worked okay. I was a fighter.

19. <u>Please describe your emotional response e.g. crying, depression etc.</u>

I'm telling you that I was highly depressed, very depressed and that's exactly where I learn't to cry where I learned to relieve stressful conditions by crying. I cried at night, you can't let the guys see you are crying because they attack you if you are vulnerable. You cry alone.

20. <u>Describe your physical response e.g. loss of appetite, nausea, nightmares</u>.

I had very bad nightmares and loss of appetite. It was one weapon I could use, I once went on hunger strike for 21 days – just drinking water. They were refusing me to go to the school section and then they were forcing me into the gang world, so they sent me out the single cells because they said I am a gang member, but I said no I did not choose this. The nightmares were terrible about fighting, I also dreamt I was chased by dogs, I am afraid of dogs; they bring in dogs during the gang fights and they make those dogs bite you and its bad. I was known by the warders, even when I went from Maximum to Medium C they read on my file – he is a troublemaker. I once got psychological help because the wardens assaulted me and shocked me with the shock shields because I told them that they had promoted the gangs by making me go there to that section. I was injured in my pelvic area [he indicates that he was kicked an punched in the groin] and I was hospitalised and taken to a urology guy [urologist] and he took tests and gave me medication. He said I need more hospital and treatment and operation but I said no, no, no you don't touch me and I had to sign that I refused

medical treatment. I went to the psychologist after that. The first one I saw was very good. I saw some others after and social workers. Some were good some were not.

21. Describe your behavioural response e.g. anger (fighting), sleeping a lot or not at all, isolating yourself.

    Anger and fighting always. I never isolated I will go out and talk to the guys and I mix and smoke [dagga and mandrax] with them.

22. Did you receive an orientation from Correctional Services/prison management upon your admission to prison?

    No. Especially not in those years. They didn't tell you anything.

23. If yes, did this assist you in adapting to the prison environment?

    [This question was not asked since an answer in the negative above renders the question invalid]

24. If no, do you believe this would have helped you and if yes why?

    Definitely, for sure because I could see the guys whom I was helping out when they arrived. It made me so angry some guys arrived and were straight into the place of safety (single cells) because they were gang raped in awaiting trial and had stitches in their backside. They [gangs] see how vulnerable you are. They [the gangs] do something horrible like assault each other in front of you, but they are acting or they do something else that shocks you and they watch you and check our reaction as newcomers to see who is vulnerable, who is scared, so must not show fear.

25. Did you have anyone (another inmate or a staff member) showing you what to avoid and what to do when you came inside?

    Not even a single person or one single day did anyone help me.

26. If yes, who was this and did it help you to avoid trouble?

[Negative answer above renders this question invalid]

27. <u>If no, do you believe this could have helped you?</u>

I don't think that would have helped you – what could have helped you is if they [the wardens] said all these people are scared – they must put all the people that are new and scared together in a cell till they are acclimatised, then when they are okay they can let them go join the rest.

28. <u>Do you understand what an induction programme is? Please explain your understanding.</u>

No I don't know this thing. [At this point the interviewer explains what an induction programme is – An induction programme is like a orientation session which may last a few days or a week and is a programme where the authorities introduce the inmate to the surroundings and tell him where the social workers are, where the psychologist is, how to get help if they need it, what happens, what the routines and expectations are from the inmate].

29. <u>Do you believe an induction programme would contribute to improved safety in prison? Explain why or why not.</u>

Definitely sure of that because anything …That would have been something very helpful because he comes there being scared but now you give some time to adjust.

30. <u>What do you believe could be included in such a programme?</u>

A guy should be given time to listen – a social worker, psychiatrist, psychologist, give him time to speak about stuff even problems at home. I once met a guy, and we were chatting about rebellious children and he said nothing and then I asked him to talk and he said he had never had a chance to talk; nobody ever listened to anything he had

to say before. People need a chance to talk, and they must take compulsory majors [he

refers here to life skills courses and/or schooling]. If a guy is illiterate – schooling, but

if he is there for rape or something like that he must do life skills, because maybe he is

angry with women. I know I have heard about human rights and the constitution, but

if they are giving him a place to sleep and food then they can make him compulsory for

school.

31. <u>Do you believe new prisoners should be isolated from general population</u>

<u>during an orientation period?</u>

Yes definitely.

32. <u>If yes, why?</u>

To give them a chance to adjust

33. <u>If no, why not?</u>

[Positive answer above renders this question invalid]

34. <u>Do you believe it would contribute to prison safety if prison rules were</u>

<u>explained to new inmates</u>?

Yes, it will contribute majorly because he would feel a sense of appreciation and feel

like a human being, because someone is taking time to talk to him to explain to him,

but now you must learn from your mistakes. You choose but you must not play

around.

35. <u>Do you think it would be helpful for new inmates to receive an orientation in</u>

<u>terms of facilities available to them</u>?

Yes

36. Did you experience overcrowding in prison – and if yes how did you experience this?

Yes I was once locked up in a cell where we were 75 where we should have been 42; in Maximum our beds were three on top of one another. There is one big cell and the other was a storeroom and we were in that like a cell. The experience is not good. One thing is for sure in the communal cell, the heat is bad, you know the temperature goes up with so many people and you know the stench, and the violence. Violence over beds shifting and fighting over space. Once I was in Maximum and the one guy went to the toilet and when he came back he attacked this other guy because he said I made a mark where my bed space is and you moved my bed and I can see where my mark is. You know the fights over small things like space.

37. Did you experience or witness prison violence in any form and how was this for you?

You know I will specifically tell you about this incidence about the assault from the wardens, when they attacked me, it was so bad when I went to hospital, it was bad, it was brutal. This issue remained in my mind so long. Up until now I see violence on TV, like I see violence in Iraq and I will start sobbing, because I feel hurt for all the unnecessary violence. Even today while I am talking to you I am feeling so sore and I want to cry. [He becomes a bit choked up and stays silent for a while.] You look at the eyes of those hurting on the TV and you scream in your crying. You know the eyes – I always look at the eyes, you can see the fear and pain in the eyes. I feel fear all over again when I see that. I sweat profusely and my whole body is wet and I even thought the other day I must go for blood test because maybe there is something else wrong

when I sweat like that and then I realised it is when I see violence – only when I see violence. I saw a fight the other day and when the young prisoners tell me what happens to them even today I start crying. Some lady said I must go and off load and I must get help because its not good when the prisoners see me crying because I am trying to help them.

38. <u>What do you believe could contribute to an easier transition into the prison system</u>?

The only thing that would contribute is a compulsory major as I've mentioned. Lets say they are there for rape they are classed as antisocial – they must be given life skills and he must attend and give feedback. Like me I had so many ladies I used and abused and if one didn't want to see me I will get another one and then I went back to my girlfriend and she slept with me and then she charged me because she said she will get me because I cheated her and she charged me with rape and I thought of all the charges I am innocent of this one, but then I realised I was guilty because I used and abused these people and was an adulterer – so these courses have helped me.

39. <u>What would you like to add with regards your general prison experience and its effectiveness as a deterrent for crime?</u>

Where would I be if I did not have this exposure to help and religion in prison and the education I got because I had only standard 2 before I went to prison, then I realised how much I needed wisdom and learning and then the church gave me a bursary and I have studied architectural design and am now busy with a big project here in Boipatong.

40. <u>Any further comments?</u>

Yes, please invite me to speak in church so I can tell them about how it is there and what God has done for me.

[The interviewer thanks J for his time and for his willingness to share his painful experiences. He makes a bit of small talk and thanks the interviewer for allowing him to share his experiences and wishes her well and a blessed day. J asks the interviewer if she can counsel him for his stress about the violence, but she refers him to another counsellor at the Bryanston Methodist Counselling House. He is satisfied with this and they depart].