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***ILLEGAL USE AND IN PARTICULAR TIK AND CRIMINAL GROUPS IN THE
WESTERN CAPE***

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Research dissertation presented for the approval of Senate in fulfilment of part of the requirements for the Masters degree in approved courses and a minor dissertation. The other part of the requirement for this qualification was the completion of a programme of courses.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the regulations governing the submission of degree dissertations, including those relating to length and plagiarism, as contained in the rules of this University, and that this dissertation conforms to those regulations.

Signed: RJ Scholes

February 2007

1. Introduction

This document is not the one that I intended to write at the outset of the course. That piece of writing was to have been a direct comparison between the gangs (as used in the broadest sense of the word throughout the dissertation) in the Western Cape, and four separate gangs in South Manchester, who had a close involvement with illegal drugs in the city.

I first went to Mitchells Plain in mid-March 2006, intending to do research on the street gangs there, which were selling drugs. As soon as I started to talk to the people to who I had been introduced, it was immediately apparent that all that they wanted to talk about was the drug, crystal methamphetamine, colloquially known as 'tik'. It was ravaging the whole community, and parents were totally at a loss as to what to do about the behaviour of their children under the influence of this new drug.

I realised that if my research was to be of maximum use, then tik had to be the major topic considered. The quintessential theme running throughout is the major and devastating impact that tik has had already, is having, and will continue to have on communities in the Western Cape and elsewhere.

Tik has only been mentioned to a very limited extent in academic writings on illegal activities and drugs on the Cape. That is not a criticism of the writers. Until quite recently what has occurred, and is continuing to occur at an alarming rate, could not have been predicted without clairvoyant insight.

Tik has hit the whole of the Western Cape like a tsunami, and is threatening to destroy much of the established social fabric in the Western Cape. As a drug it does not differentiate between race, gender, or age. It is classless, and does not distinguish on economic grounds. Even the poor can afford it. Schoolchildren not yet in their teens can become addicted to it. Young females are almost as likely to use and abuse it as males. Their parents can, and do, succumb to it. Tik is devastating in its consequences. It initially causes euphoria and excitement by acting directly on the brain's reward mechanism, thus making it highly addictive. It rapidly enters the brain causing a release of norepinephrine and dopamine (and to a lesser extent serotonin.) In a society where so many have so little cause for happiness and a feeling of well-being, it brings a sense of being in control of one's own destiny, however far from the truth this illusion is. Other less desirable sensations and behaviour, however, soon kick in - obsessive behaviour, an inability to sleep, twitching and anxiety. Tik is associated with uncontrollable rage and violence, which can be extreme and sadistic. Users are sexually promiscuous and irresponsible to an extreme degree. Addiction comes quickly after a very limited number of uses of the drug. It is proving very difficult to treat those addicted to it. Habitual users are a menace to themselves and the whole of the society in which they live. (On 14th June 2006 a paper, '*The tik pandemic*' was submitted as part of this course. It is annexed hereto, as Appendix 1, with the research evidence that identified sources omitted.)

Already it has become out of date in parts in the six months that have elapsed, but many of the general observations would still be made unabridged.

Having realised the way in which tik was sweeping over the whole Cape, as further research was done in wider areas, the next obvious step was to consider from where the tik was emanating, and how it was being distributed. Partly as a result of tik, but also as a consequence of events pre-dating the tik pandemic, the structure of the criminal groups, organisations or gangs dealing with drugs in the Western Cape appears to have changed significantly.

Research into these aspects immediately caused certain pre-conception to be abandoned. The focus has to start with the importers and manufacturers of tik. It was realised that the drug trade is made up of three interlocking levels: importers and manufacturers are at the top; distributors or wholesalers in the middle; and street level or market-place dealers at the bottom. Trading equates neatly to the capitalist economic system of manufacturers/importers, wholesalers and retailers, though the lines are not rigid and often become blurred. There is, in the Western Cape, a degree of interaction between the different layers. The Chinese, for the present, are firmly at the top of the pyramid of tik importation and manufacture, whilst the Nigerians remain important for cocaine and crack cocaine. A limited number of Coloured pseudo-businessmen are in control of the second level. The so-called Number gangs and the Street gangs form the broad base of the pyramid, though they can, for reasons other than pure business, threaten the stability of the whole pyramid from time to time. The Street gangs are kept in check by the second level businessmen, who in the main are closely connected with these gangs.

The Chinese are the crux to understanding the Cape drugs market in 2006 and 2007. As a result of the speed with which tik has overtaken all other drugs in sales potential, none of the criminological writing in South Africa in the past had suggested that the Chinese were in such an outstanding position in relation to the Cape drugs trade. Steinberg¹ had made the connection between the trade in abalone and mandrax, and had hinted at a connection with tik, but nobody could have predicted that the Chinese would become the key to the whole trade. Efforts to look world-wide for assistance were of no use, since the abalone in the sea off the Cape for which the ephedrine, used to make tik, is bartered is a unique feature.

Moving down the pyramid to the dominant Coloured men, who herein are referred to as 'Almost Mr. Bigs', (see section 5 below) there had been more research, particularly by Standing,² but again matters appeared to require some modification because of the need for the 'Almost Mr. Bigs' to obtain the tik from the Chinese. Whilst some of the 'Almost

¹ Steinberg, J. (2005a). *The illicit abalone trade in South Africa*. ISS Occasional Paper No.116. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies.

² Standing, A. (2002). *The social contradictions of organised crime on the Cape Flats*. ISS Occasional Paper No. 74. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies; Standing, A. (2004). "Out of the mainstream: critical reflections on organised crime." in Dixon, B. and E. van der Spuy (eds.) *Justice Gained? Crime and Crime Control in South Africa's Transition*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press; Standing, A. (2005). *The threat of gangs and anti-gang policy*. ISS Occasional Paper No.116. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies.

Mr. Bigs' could still obtain other types of drugs without the involvement of the Chinese, the drug that was now the major product on the Cape drugs market meant that links with the Chinese had become essential in order to prosper.

By this stage the other major theme that underpins the logic of this dissertation had emerged – all dealings in illegal drugs are a business. Whatever else happens, the business must continue uninterruptedly as much as possible. Some of the players, notably the Number- and Street gangs, have other motivating factors for their continuing operation and existence, but the major players will try not to allow such factors to interfere with their sole purpose – the making of vast profits. 'Business is business' was a phrase used by a number of those interviewed, and any distractions and interruptions to business will be ruthlessly eliminated.

This led inevitably to the final part of the field work: how the Street gangs were adapting to the requirement of become drugs gangs as opposed to the emphasis by earlier criminological writing on the social, economic and cultural reasons for the youth of the Cape Flats joining street gangs. It was realised by me that, to a large extent, a literature search into illegal drugs, organised criminal groups, and street gangs was only of partial assistance. Everything was in the melting pot, and changes are occurring rapidly to the extent that even as this dissertation is written some of the research might already be out of date. Guidance can be gained from past writing, but modifications are required.

What has been attempted is to take a panoramic view of the drugs scene in the Western Cape. A panorama only consists of a number of different scenes viewed together, and it has been apparent that change is constantly occurring in the individual snap shots and in the overall view. As a regular gazer at the vista of Table Mountain across the ocean, it was realised that observation of the drugs scene was a similar exercise. The basic structure was always there, but at each second, each minute, each hour of every day changes can be observed. The shadings, gradation, subtleties, distinction are there to be observed, but are not always obvious, nor are the modification that are occurring. What has been particularly challenging, as a result of the tik pandemic, is that, unlike Table Mountain where the basic structure of Devil's Peak, The Table and Lion's Head are always in place, some of the basic structures of the drugs trade appear to be changing dramatically. Some of the established wisdom about the drugs market and the drugs trade, re-examined, are true; other aspects need re-evaluation and constant re-assessment to take into account the explosion in the use of tik.

As has been the situation in the past in relation to mandrax and the use of what is locally called the 'witpyp' (white pipe), the Western Cape has proved to be a total oddity in the way in which tik use has exploded, and looking for guidance in other parts of the world is a somewhat futile exercise.

2. Research Methodology

The limit of Hotel Criminology is “characterised by too much stale comfort, void of the subtle shadows of everyday life.” We invite the residents of Hotel Criminology to leave the hotel for a while. Go into the streets, into living rooms and corporate boardrooms, into juvenile lockups. Situate yourself as close as you can to the perpetrators of crime and deviance, to the victims, to agents of legal control, put yourselves, as best you can and for as long as you can, inside their lives, inside the lived moments of deviance and crime. You won’t experience it nicely, and if the anger and hurt become too much, be glad of it. Because as near as you will ever get, you have found your way inside the humanity of crime and deviance.³

This quotation was brought to my attention before the course had been started, and made a firm and lasting impression. At that stage a certain amount of background reading⁴ had been carried out into anything that could be found, and which was accessible, about illegal drugs and gangs in the Western Cape.

My almost total lack of knowledge about Cape Town and its environs was palpable. After my initial arrival in the Cape in November 2004 and after some three weeks, I asked an acquaintance where the high-rise buildings or skyscrapers which I assumed constituted the ‘Cape Flats’ were situated, since although some travelling had been carried out they had not been seen. The realisation that the description referred to an imprecisely defined area of flat land came as a shock, as did many other realisations in the future. ‘Innocent abroad’ was a very accurate description of my condition.

With this knowledge, a decision was still made to try to follow the admonition of Ferrell and Ham.⁵ The research work carried out on the streets⁶ appeared very limited. My decision to undertake primary research was met with derision by many. A number of people told me that a violent and unpleasant death would be the outcome for me. Less dramatically it was pointed out to me that my inability to speak either Afrikaans or Xhosa would be fatal to my good intentions.

Unwilling to be deterred by such details, it was decided that even if good intentions led to no discernible result, an effort should be made. “Fear, fumbling and frustration”⁷ were

³ Ferrell, J. and M.S. Hamm M.S. (1998). *Ethnography on the Edge – Crime, Deviance and Field Research*. North Eastern University: UNW Press of New England.

⁴ Leggett, T. (2001). *Rainbow Vice*. Cape Town: David Philip; Pinnock, D. (1997). *Gang Rituals and Rites of Passage*. Cape Town: African Sun Press; Standing, A. (2004). “Out of the mainstream: critical reflections on organised crime.” in Dixon, B. and E. van der Spuy (eds.) *Justice Gained? Crime and Crime Control in South Africa’s Transition*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press; and Steinberg, J. (2004a). *The Number*. Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers; Steinberg, J. (2004b). *Nongolozza’s children – Western Cape prison gangs during and after apartheid*. Johannesburg: Centre for the study of Violence and Reconciliation.

⁵ Ferrell and Hamm, op.cit., note 3.

⁶ Since Kinnes had published in June 2000; see Kinnes, I. (2000b). *From urban street gangs to criminal empires: The changing face of gangs in the Western Cape*. ISS Monograph Series No. 48. Cape Town: Institute of Security Studies.

⁷ Goldsmith, A. (2003). *Fear, Fumbling and Frustration: Reflections on Doing Criminological Fieldwork in Colombia*. Flinders University, Australia: Sage Publications.

going to have to be accepted. As it has turned out there was only to be one moment of genuine fear, though apprehension was present some of the time, but there was to be a greater degree of fumbling and frustration.

At the outset good fortune led me to meet one person who had an entrée to many circles, which were to prove invaluable to me. There was an immediate ‘mushrooming effect’ thereafter. A fair amount of time has been spent on the streets of the Cape Flats.

Much of the research has been carried out in Mitchell’s Plain, Helderberg, Belhar, Elsies River and Table View, as well as in areas closer to the centre of Cape Town. Meetings – some formal but mainly totally informal – have taken place in my car, in houses, in offices, in restaurants and on beaches.

The street-level research was conducted from March 2006 to early January 2007. It commenced on 15 March 2006 in Mitchell’s Plain. With this person – as with all other major sources – the person knew in advance of meeting me who I was, and why I wanted to see him. Throughout I have been totally open and honest about the reason for wanting to meet those who have spoken to me. There has been no covert research carried out. Nobody has requested payment as a requirement before talking to me.

Confidentiality has been an obvious requirement in relation to many people, who were potentially placing themselves in danger by speaking to me. All have been told when we have met that their identity will under no circumstances be revealed. The subject matters we have talked about obviously impinge on the financial interests of dangerous criminals, and a degree of risk has been involved. Many of the meetings have involved my going into areas where I have felt a degree of apprehension, even whilst driving to meet the contacts.

There has been no need to adopt any negotiating position to gain access to the people to whom I have talked. They have known that I pose no danger to them, and only wish to ascertain what the true factual position is in relation to the drugs trade in the areas with which they are familiar. Those seen have been almost from the outset willing to talk freely and openly to me. They have been intrigued by what I have been doing, and why I have been doing it. I have found that my Englishness has been a positive advantage, and have frequently been told that they would tell me about matters which they would not discuss with a white South African. Apart from one person, all of the key people spoken to have been members of the Coloured community. One person, who eventually, became one of two major sources relied upon in the latter stages of the research was clearly initially somewhat distrusting of me, and told me that he was checking that what I had told him about myself was correct. After that he completely accepted me.

Some of the conversations were tape-recorded when conditions allowed. Tape recording was attempted in restaurants, but usually background noise has rendered the tapes fairly useless. Contemporaneous notes were taken when tape recording was not feasible. On some occasions it was difficult to take full contemporaneous notes as, for example, when

walking along a beach, but on these occasions a full note was made as soon as possible afterwards.

People who have spoken to me in some cases, now have a relationship with me to the extent that I shall be seeing them again even though the research has ended. Only once have I thought that attempts were being made to abuse the relationship with me subsequently. In the majority of cases, I trust the people spoken to, and I think that they trust me.

Since the themes being considered were constantly evolving throughout the research, no formulas have been used. No questionnaires were possible. Meetings were conversations rather than interviews. On a number of occasions, particularly in the initial stages of the research, I simply listened to what I was being told rather than ask questions. Towards the end of the research when I had fully realised the importance of the Chinese and the 'Almost Mr. Bigs', I was particularly interested in gaining information concerning them. The events taking place in Hanover Park also involved some close questioning by me, since I did not understand some of the information that I was being given, particularly in relation to the Junior Mafias.

Everything told to me has been approached with a considerable amount of scepticism at the outset, and efforts have been made to check from more than one source before reaching any conclusion with a degree of certainty.

In the latter stages of the research, considerable reliance has been placed on two separate sources. They both have direct contacts with those who know a great deal of what is happening with the illegal drugs trade in the Cape, and what is happening on daily basis in relation to the gangs. The two sources live in different areas of the Cape, and do not know each other. As a result, information given by one has been capable of being cross-checked with the other. There has been a remarkable degree of consistency in the information coming from the two sources. The only significant discrepancy relates to an evaluation of the continuing role of the Hard Livings, and Rashied Staggie, and this will be referred to at the appropriate point (see section 5.7 below).

As examples of one-off interviews, at one end of the spectrum, was a tape-recorded and lengthy interview with a man who is a fighting general in the 26 gang, and has been so since the mid 1970s. He has served over 27 years in prisons all over South Africa. At the other end of the spectrum were informal conversations with a number of schoolboys, and in two cases school girls, tik addicts, who were just in their teens.

My methods have therefore involved no pre-conceptions. It has been driven by the information being received at any particular point.

History relating to the gangs has been given in great detail on occasions, and has been listened to with interest, but my major concern has been to try to evaluate what is occurring now.

Gang members were spoken to, some of whom had recently been in Pollsmoor Prison, and fairly regular telephone conversations have taken place with an inmate of Pollsmoor.

A particularly sensitive area has been the fact that, on an almost daily basis throughout the period of the research, I have had contacts with drug addicts. Many are regarded as very good acquaintances and in some cases friends. It has been with these contacts that the greatest care has had to be taken with ethics. Many of them are aware of the research that has been done. This information has been disseminated as widely as possible by me. My relationship with this group is regarded by me as a fiduciary one, and every effort has been made not to abuse the position. Their main influence on this research had been in relation to drugs that are commonly being used in the Cape at present, and they have given me a greater insight into why certain drugs are popular. Without my realising it at first, the advice ‘... the aim of most qualitative researchers is to blend in and become ‘participant’ observers in the events they investigate...’⁸ was being put into practice at this level. Qualitative research has been the aim throughout this research.

Every effort has been made to abide by the Faculty of Law Guidelines: *Research ethics relating to research on human subjects* as approved on 21 May 2004, and the social science research ethics relating to research with vulnerable groups.⁹

In addition to this original research, invaluable background information has been gained from reading the four daily newspapers published in English and the weekend newspapers, and the filing of relevant clippings from these publications. The *Daily Voice* has frequently contained articles that have led to particular lines of enquiry being pursued by me on the streets, and Norman Joseph’s articles in the *Cape Argus* have often contained information not available elsewhere. In more recent times, the English version of the *Son* has provided insight into what has been occurring in the more rural areas of the Cape, where personal research has been limited. Local newspapers, such as the *Plainsman* and the *Table View Talk* have also been useful as to issues in the localities that their reporters cover.

It is important to specifically state what has not been done. Although, with a little effort, representatives of South African Police Service and others concerned with the criminal justice system could have been interviewed, a deliberate decision was made not to pursue such lines. Some interviewees directly asked the question of whether those in authority were being spoken to by me, and made it clear that this could be regarded as causing a conflict of interest. On occasions, criticisms of law enforcement agencies and government may be made – usually implicitly – and it must be borne in mind that no attempt has been made to give a ‘right of reply.’

Although every effort has been made to read all available literature on the relevant subjects covered, no attempt has been made to speak to the authors. There is of course a considerable amount of South African criminological literature on drugs and gangs, although the field has been dominated by a relatively few writers – Pinnock, Scharf,

⁸ Babbie, E. and J. Mouton. (2004). *The Practice of Social Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁹ Drafted by Lilian Artz of the Institute of Criminology, University of Cape Town.

Gastrow, Kinnes, Leggett, Steinberg and Standing. All of the writings by them over the years are referred to in some detail herein. In recent times a significant amount of the literature available has been analytical rather than empirical, and having completed primary field work my aim has been to compare the evidence given to me with the previously written work in order to ascertain where there is agreement or disagreement. The views expressed herein are very much, in the oft used phrase, those solely of the author.

3. The Drugs

“what drugs, what charms”.¹⁰

To a large extent the various illegal drugs have their own markets and market mechanisms, though, of course, there are overlaps. Large scale use of dagga is traditionally associated with the Africans; cocaine and crack cocaine (‘rocks’) with Nigerian importers and sellers; methaqualone (mandrax, commonly known as ‘buttons’) with use by the Coloured communities, and large scale importation and manufacture by different groupings; heroin for use by White, and increasingly, the Coloured communities, as well as some members of the African communities; and tik importation and manufacture by the Chinese and increasingly for use by all racial groupings, although initially associated with the coloured areas.

3.1 Dagga (cannabis)

Until my arrival in South Africa cannabis had been known to me by numerous names, the more polite of which were marijuana, weed, grass, ganja, dope and hash, amongst others. Dagga was a new term, and the extensive use of it, particularly among the African population, who had come to the Western Cape from the Eastern Cape (formerly Transkei and Ciskei), was surprising.

Only a little research was needed to show the reason for this. The climate of the Eastern Cape is very favourable for the growth of dagga, and there are dagga plantations running roughly from Port Elizabeth up to Swaziland and including Lesotho. It is derived from the soil, and as a natural product has long been thought to have medicinal qualities by its users. Many long-term users are able to function in their daily lives with little or no ill effects, and consume it socially for its relaxing effects. Although it is a light depressant it is mood altering, and is felt by its users to increase sensuality and remove inhibitions. Its adherents regard it a much less damaging, overall, than the legal drug of alcohol, and its adherents have, with disciple-like fervour, urged that it should be freely available.¹¹ Its opponents argue, on the basis of scientific surveys, that, on the contrary, it is a dangerous drug, being highly addictive, causing memory impairment, killing brain cells and resulting in the ‘drop out’ syndrome in its long-term users. In extreme cases it has been associated with schizoid behaviour.

What is abundantly clear is that dagga is freely available in the Western Cape, is extremely cheap (being usually cheaper than alcohol), and is still the most widely used drug in the Western Cape.

¹⁰ Shakespeare, W. *Othello*. London: Spring Books. Act III.

¹¹ Marks, H. (1998.) *Mr Nice*. Majorca: Vintage.

Little was heard during my research about the control of this market, but it seems that what Leggett¹² wrote in March 2002 remains true:

The wholesalers are mostly black men with connections to both the rural and urban worlds, who gather the large bags in a wide range of transport vehicles, including minibus taxis. They break the bags into smaller, but still sizeable, units, generally called 'arms'. These are distributed to retailers at out of the way locations... .

He continues to describe how the dagga is broken down into wraps of paper, bank change envelopes or matchboxes before being sold on the streets.

Large and bulky quantities have to be dealt in to make significant profits. The producer and the street dealer make little profit.

Leggett¹³ and Steinberg¹⁴ both appear to be correct when they point out that the major profit from South African dagga derives from the export market. That having been said, its importance in the Western Cape is not to be underestimated. Its usage seems to be largely ignored by the police, as it is now in, for example, South Manchester and Brixton in the UK, and the question has to be posed whether a law that criminalises the possession of dagga,¹⁵ which is usually unenforced, and appears unenforceable, should remain a criminal offence.

The mention of minibus taxis by Leggett¹⁶ will be returned to later (see section 7 below), where the whole puzzling role of the minibus taxis in the distribution and retailing of drugs will be examined very briefly.

3.2 Methaqualone – mandrax/'buttons' and the 'witpyp'

If the term 'dagga' was unknown to me before coming to live in Cape Town, the use of mandrax and the use of the white pipe as preferred illegal drugs were a total mystery. Mandrax, or more precisely, methaqualone had been vaguely known to me as a sedative commonly used as a sleeping pill in the UK, mainly by middle-aged women, who were suffering from symptoms of menopause. It was therefore mysterious to discover that it has been the drug of choice of the Coloured community of the Western Cape for decades, and remains so.

¹² Leggett, T. (2002a). *Drugs and Crime in South Africa. A Study in Three Cities*. ISS Monograph Series No. 69. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Steinberg, J. (2005b). *Drug Smuggling and Control at Johannesburg International Airport and Durban Harbour*. ISS Occasional Paper No. 104. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies.

¹⁵ Leggett, op. cit, note 4.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Methaqualone was discovered by an Indian researcher, Gujral in 1955 whilst researching for an anti-malaria drug. In the initial stages of its use, its highly addictive qualities were not recognised, but by 1971 it was regulated in the UK under the Misuse of Drugs Act of that year and similarly made illegal in the USA from 1973. It is listed in Part III of Schedule 2 of the South African Drugs and Drug Trafficking Act, 1992 (Act No 140 of 1992).

What is certain beyond any doubt is that buttons and the white pipe have always been, and still are, inextricably linked with the gang culture of the Western Cape. The white pipe is not known anywhere in the world apart from South Africa, but the supply of mandrax is the bread and butter of the drug supply market of the Western Cape, and underpins the Street gang structure.

In 2002 Leggett¹⁷ wrote:

Today Mandrax is still manufactured in India, but supplies also originate in the Middle-East, perhaps China, and in other parts of Southern Africa. Underground domestic manufacture makes up about half the supply, but while precursors are monitored, the drug is quite easy to synthesise once the components are available.

An assessment, which closely accords with my research in connection with this dissertation, was given by Steinberg:¹⁸

In recent years, Chinese-sourced methaqualone appears to have entered and captured the market in a very short space of time. Why is a matter of speculation, but it is in all likelihood a combination of two factors. First, Chinese importers have achieved extraordinary economies of scales. Seizures of Chinese-sourced methaqualone and its chemical precursors have mostly been enormous – as much as 6 tons in a single shipment. Moreover, retail prices do not appear to rise in the aftermath of large seizures, suggesting very high volumes of supply. Indeed according to a biannual survey conducted by a large drug treatment centre in Cape Town, retail prices remained remarkably stable between 2000 and 2004. Nor did they appear to rise temporarily in the wake of multi-ton seizures. Second there is a great deal of evidence that Chinese organisations importing methaqualone en masse are also exporting abalone en masse, and it appears that one is being bartered for the other. Mandrax wholesalers on the Cape Flats are thus paying Chinese Mandrax importers in high value abalone, rather than low-value rands. Chinese Mandrax importers, in other words, are far more attractive than their erstwhile sub continental rivals to Cape Town wholesalers.

One of the peculiarities of Mandrax is that the market is only for tablets, although the tablets are often crushed for use. Tablets are branded and marked with symbols such as the swastika, the Star of David and golf clubs. These are thought to bring some quality control, but of course are easily forged by others offering an inferior product. This use of symbols to give a market status, and therefore presumably a higher price, to products is a feature of the market for Ecstasy tablets ('E') in Europe, with the majority emanating from the Netherlands.

¹⁷ Leggett, op.cit., note 12.

¹⁸ Steinberg, op.cit., note 14.

Leggett¹⁹ states 'No white pipe is complete without majat.' Majat is the lowest grade of dagga, which is dried with a volatile solvent. White pipe smokers interviewed by me invariably used ordinary dagga, and professed to have no interest in using low-grade cannabis soaked in paraffin.

There is no doubt that there is still a very large market for mandrax, and the white pipe is often smoked on the Cape Flats by those who having been smoking it for years. Amongst the younger people talked to by me in the course of research in 2005 and 2006, mandrax seemed to be losing popularity. There appeared to be two main reasons for this. Complaints were made that the mandrax tablets were of a poor quality, and did not give the necessary sensation. Quality control problems were an issue among the consumers. The other was that 'rocks' (crack cocaine) were being used more and more frequently by those who could afford them. Subsequently the tik explosion has occurred, changing the whole market place even more significantly.

Ironically the use of rocks and tik has led to something of a re-vitalisation of the white pipe and mandrax use amongst the more sophisticated users. In order to 'come down' from the effects of rocks, and now tik, the white pipe is smoked. The sedative effect counteracts the 'high' of the rocks and the tik, and allows the user of the stimulant drug to sleep, and then to function relatively normally after a period of time. Having seen a white pipe prepared on one occasion, one of the strangest features to a non-user was the time and trouble involved in preparing the basic pipe by breaking the neck of a bottle, smoothing the jagged edges, fitting the filter of cigarette paper foil, and then getting the pipe ignited. However, younger tik users are unlikely to have either the financial resources or the inclination to use the white pipe and mandrax as an antidote to the high given by tik.

Drug users are innovative by nature, and an unusual combination, at first in use in Pollsmoor Prison, was reported to me. The prisoners were making their own tablets by mixing tik and mandrax. This of course meant that the glass 'lolly', normally used to inhale the tik, was not necessary, and resulted in the tik 'high' being followed by the user going to sleep and waking up later in a condition similar to a very drunken man.²⁰ This combination has, as recently as January 2007, been reported as being sold on the Cape Flats for the first time, and it remains to be seen whether it is widely marketed.

3.3 Cocaine and crack cocaine or 'rocks'

Cocaine is derived from the coca plant, which grows prodigiously in South America. It mainly is cultivated and exported by the crime syndicates in Colombia, and to a lesser extent Peru and Bolivia. Sao Paulo, Brazil, is well known as a major transshipment port.

¹⁹ Leggett op.cit note 4.

²⁰ See section 6.1 below for an expansion.

Since 1994 South Africa has experienced a drastic increase in importations of cocaine. This can largely be attributed to the influx of immigrants from West Africa together with the need for additional markets as the United States market became saturated, and the USA put the Colombian drug cartels under immense pressure.

Cocaine is an expensive drug. At street level it has usually been 'cut'. Substances such as Vidol, tooth powder and sugar and other starches are commonly used. It is sometimes cut with very harmful substances such as drain cleaner. Pure cocaine is mainly used by the relatively wealthy and is usually associated with the 'club scene' and is found particularly in the central business district of Cape Town.

A well-known method of injecting is known as the 'speed ball', when cocaine and heroin are mixed and injected. The nervous system is simultaneously stimulated and suppressed, and it is presumably on similar lines of thought that the mandrax and tik are being mixed.

Crack cocaine is found to be used much more commonly in the Western Cape. Leggett²¹ has pointed out that "The first arrest for crack cocaine occurred in 1995, a full decade after crack's peak in the United States." Since then the use of crack cocaine has grown enormously to the extent that, in 2005, Steinberg²² could record: "By the early 2000s crack appeared to have become the third most widely used illicit drug in South Africa behind mandrax and cannabis."

The International Narcotics Control Board (part of the United Nations) in its annual report released in Pretoria on 28th February 2006 described Africa - as a whole - as having the fastest growing transit route for cocaine, blaming lack of integrity within the continent's law enforcement agencies. It describes the situation as "dire".²³

Rocks are commonly used by habitual drug users in the Western Cape. It is a popular product with dealers, since the profits are high compared with other drugs, and as Leggett²⁴ notes:

On the demand side, crack is a drug of unlimited potential. Unlike other addictive drugs, like heroin and mandrax, crack has no natural saturation point. A heroin addict is happy with a maintenance dose of his drug, and excess. Mandrax use simply renders the user unconscious. Crack users have no ceiling on their use, and tend to consume the drug until there are no more resources with which to purchase it. One respondent in the present study claimed to have spent R3000 on crack in the last seven days.

²¹ Leggett, op.cit , note 12.

²² Steinberg op.cit., note 13.

²³ Reported in the Cape Argus of 1 March 2006.

²⁴ Leggett, op.cit., note 12.

Many would quibble with some of this, particularly in relation to heroin addiction, but many users of rocks spoken to would be delighted to have spent only R3000 on rocks in the last seven days.

Rocks and sex are inextricably linked. 'Crack houses' occupied by sex workers are commonly used by male crack cocaine users. Such crack houses are found all over the Cape Flats and in the centre of Cape Town. There are crack houses on one of the main thoroughfares of central Cape Town, Long Street. There was a notorious one on Main Road, Sea Point, which was eventually closed. The crack houses on the Cape Flats are well policed by the drug dealers, and an unwary stranger approaching such an establishment is likely to suffer attack, including gun fire. Crack is often stated to be the drug of choice amongst prostitutes. This statement, in many ways, puts the cart before the horse. Many of the prostitutes, particularly those brought up in more affluent areas by caring adults, become prostitutes because of their crack or other drug addiction. Unable to pay for drugs bought on credit, they are forced into prostitution to pay their debts, sometimes after having been gang raped by members of the Street gangs to whom the money is owed.

The cocaine and crack cocaine markets in Cape Town are largely run by Nigerians (see section 4.2 below), though they often operate with the co-operation of the local Coloured gangs, and on the Cape Flats the Coloured gangs run crack houses.

The using life of a crack addict is intense and short-lived in most cases, simply because the money runs out very quickly. Many crack addicts of all ages have been financially as well as physically ruined within months rather than years, because of the intensity of their addiction and the all consuming need for further supplies of rocks.

Some younger consumers who were hooked on rocks are turning to tik as an acceptable substitute, which is vastly less costly, but there will always be a lucrative market for the sale of rocks to those who cannot get the intense sensation and pleasure obtained from any other substance.

3.4 Heroin

Heroin is ten times stronger than morphine and morphine is ten times stronger than opium.²⁵ That simple sentence makes clear the dangers to any society in which heroin is a major problem, and heroin is a major problem in the Western Cape.

Heroin is used in one of four ways; i) by injecting it; ii) by smoking it; iii) by snorting it through the nose; and iv) by inhaling it – 'chasing the dragon'. Chasing the dragon appears to be popular amongst teenagers, but those more advanced in their dependency favour injection with the consequent physical problems of finding veins into which to inject.

²⁵ www.drugaware.co.za/heroin.html

Essentially it is a depressant substance and a user finds a very high level of relaxation, quickly appearing to have gone into a deep trance or coma. It causes serious physical deterioration fairly rapidly, and there is usually only one end to long term use – early death.

Until 1994 heroin appears to have been unknown in South Africa. When it was introduced, it was expensive and was mainly used by white youth. In the late 1990s and early 21st century it went down dramatically in price and became much more widely used, but with the upsurge in the use of crack cocaine there appeared to be a decline in heroin use.

That decline has certainly been arrested in recent years, as a number of quotations in Bienne Hutsman's²⁶ piece of reporting shows:

Use of the drug – which gives an intense and potentially lethal high – has doubled and, in some parts of the country increased sevenfold in just three years.

“Heroin has shown, on a national level, probably the worst increase we’ve seen of all drugs in the last three years” said Andreas Pluddeman of the Alcohol and Drug Research Unit at the Medical Research Council. “It used to be a white middle-class drug, but it has moved into areas not previously affected.”

“This is a massive problem and it’s on the rise” said psychiatrist Lize Welch [head of the heroin detoxification unit at Stikland Hospital, Cape Town opened in July 2006]. “Heroin is now used in anything from smart mansions to shacks.”

Heroin is controlled in importation and manufacturing terms by the Chinese, and to a lesser extent, the Nigerians, in the Western Cape. The Chinese are manufacturing heroin in the same facilities or ‘factories’ used for the manufacture of tik, and the heroin obtained from the Chinese is always pure, and is therefore in demand. As the heroin passes down the line, it is again ‘cut’, and by the time that the ‘wraps’ are sold to the consumer, many substances – some dangerous - can be found mixed with the pure heroin.

The price of a wrap of heroin on the streets of Cape Town has plummeted in the past year. It can be obtained for less than half of the price it was selling for a year ago. This undoubtedly is one of the consequences of the US invasion of Afghanistan. Poppy cultivation in Afghanistan hit record levels of over 6000 tons of opium in 2006. Afghanistan produces more than 90 per cent of the world’s heroin supply. Having gone into Afghanistan on the promise to destroy poppy fields, US authorities are permitting more than ever to be produced.²⁷ The European Community governments have limited the smuggling of heroin through Pakistan and overland into their member countries. There seems no doubt that with the contrivance of the major powers of the world, heroin is being dumped into Africa, and South Africa and the Western Cape are the recipients of this malign policy.

²⁶ *Sunday Times*, 15th October 2006.

²⁷ Statement by Michael Hulley (USA State Department’s Office of Counterterrorism) at ISS Seminar of 8th November 2006.

Many of the street level dealers in tik also sell heroin, since it emanates from the same sources in so far as the supply to street level dealers. These dealers quickly realise that, although the profits on neither are great and depend on bulk and repeat selling, the profit to be made on a heroin wrap is in general greater than that to be made on a tik straw. It is therefore in the interests of the street dealer to persuade the tik consumer to try heroin.

It is indeed a frightening thought that one of the few ways in which the tik pandemic may be halted is by an increased use of heroin. A classic example of a 'catch 22'.²⁸

3.5 'Club drugs'

This section will be short for the simple reason that the research carried out for the purposes of preparation of this paper have revealed almost nothing about the so-called 'club drugs'.

Ecstasy, or 'E', or MDMA (methylene-dioxy-meth-amphetamine) is the classic peace, love and touchy-feely drug. It is summarised amongst its adherents as PLUR (peace, love, unity and respect). If the drug world had had a master plan it ought to have been the drug of choice of the hippy generation of the late 60s and early 70s, but it was not. Its fashionable period came later.

Statistics from rehabilitation centres in Cape Town, gathered by SACENDU, gave the following figures for use by attendees at the centres: 34.4% used dagga; 27.8% used ecstasy; 19.9% used mandrax; 14.5% used cocaine; 12% used alcohol; and 5.8% used heroin along with tik.²⁹

Leggett³⁰ devotes 30 pages to 'Ravers and the Club Drugs.' The Leggett chapter and the enumerated statistics led me initially to expect that a considerable number of those spoken to by me would be talking about 'E'. None did. After a while ecstasy was deliberately mentioned, but even then very few said that they had ever used it. By then the lesson had been learnt that statistics from rehabilitation centres have to be approached with considerable care, since for various reason - the most important of which is cost - those receiving treatment at such centres give a very slanted perspective of what is happening across the whole of the Western Cape where most addicts, alcoholics and those with severe dependency problems cannot hope to afford any such help.

²⁸ Heller, J. (1961). *Catch 22*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

²⁹ Parry, C., A. Pluddemann and B. Myers. (2004). *Metamphetamine (tik) use in Cape Town*. SACENDU Proceedings. At 29-30.

³⁰ Leggett T. op.cit., note 12. See Chapter 5 "Ravers and Club Drugs".

Those who said that they had used 'E' indicated that it had been some time ago, and they were not aware of it being used to any extent at present. It may well be that my own random sampling was also atypical since very few of those spoken to attend or have ever attended the nightclubs of the Cape Town central business district, although many do visit the Coloured (and increasingly White) clubs such as @mospheer and the Galaxy.

The only reason that can be advanced for the absence of the mention of ecstasy to me is that it does not appear to be manufactured locally, since it requires more ingredients and more manufacturing expertise than tik. The Chinese and the Nigerians have obviously not found it worth-while. Tablets would therefore have to be imported from the Netherlands, which would make them expensive at street level. There is no way in which the tablet can be 'cut', and therefore the price would have to go up each time it was passed down from importer, through wholesalers to the eventual street dealer.

At least a few people were willing to talk about ecstasy, but in all the conversations overheard and people talked to about drugs, LSD ((lysergic acid diethylamide) was only mentioned by one person who had used it.

3.6 Crystal methamphetamine - 'tik'³¹

Whilst it was difficult to find anybody to talk to about ecstasy and LSD, the opposite was true about tik. From the outset, carrying out research on the Cape Flats, and in particular in Mitchells Plain, in the early days of the research, tik was the only drug people want to talk about.

The rate at which the tik pandemic has spread has obviously surprised all of those who have to deal with its effects: government agencies, non-governmental agencies, the police and justice system, and health professionals. Some of these agencies are reacting with commendable endeavour, but it is clear that there is still considerable ignorance and some misinformation about tik. Newspapers are now on an almost daily basis warning about tik in the most lurid terms.³² Occasionally the information is simply ludicrous as with the suggestion that a brand of headache powders were being smoked as a substitute for tik.³³

All agencies are struggling to come to terms with what is occurring, since what is happening with tik in the Western Cape is unprecedented in the world. It is incumbent on the part of all that reactions should be accurate and measured. The *Cape Times* of 22 January 2007³⁴ reported:

³¹ Appendix I hereto. *The tik pandemic*. Paper submitted on 14th June 2006, which gives general background on tik at that time when the dangers of tik did not appear to be generally recognised.

³² Amongst many examples are *Weekend Argus* of 29 November 2006 and *The Son* of 22 January 2007.

³³ *Daily Voice* of 29 November 2006.

³⁴ *Cape Times* of 22 January 2007.

Provincial community safety spokesman Makhaya Mani said the amount of tik confiscated in recent raids indicated police had managed to stem the supply of Mandrax and that peddlers had resorted to less sophisticated drugs.

As a piece of misinformation this statement is somewhat surprising, but it becomes less so when put in the context of a previously reported statement from the same spokesperson of 7 December 2006:³⁵

According to Community Safety spokesman Makhaya Mani, police efforts to curb the influx of drugs such as cocaine have steered drug dealers to the growing tik market. “Tik is readily available and cheap because it is locally manufactured. And it is made from chemicals that can be easily purchased from chemists”, Mani said.

Crack cocaine and cocaine are just as available as ever, but it is the suggestion that tik is being manufactured in shacks all over the Cape Flats and in rural communities, which warrants further urgent clarification. The impression is given by a number of very reputable sources that tik production is rather like a cottage industry, similar to the romantic ideas of poteen being produced by every farmer in the hills of Wicklow, and moonshine in Kentucky.

In a paragraph headed “*Available in a kitchen near you*” Health 24³⁶ stated:

The ingredients are easily accessible and many manufacturers need nothing more than their kitchens to concoct large quantities. Recipes are plenty and easily available, and you don’t have to be a rocket scientist to make it... “Because crystal meth can be manufactured at home, the problem is not only availability but that many people don’t see it as illegal and don’t regard it as a drug” says Prof. Parry [Professor Charles Parry of the Medical Research Council].

Similar statements are regularly made by those with considerable expertise in their field. Under the heading “*Tik fills city’s mental wards*”³⁷ was the following:

SA National Council of Alcoholism and Drug Dependence social worker Cheryl van der Berg said tik was easily available, cheap and could be produced using freely available household substances.

If these statements are true the consequences are truly potentially horrendous. Synthesising the drugs to make tik in fact requires some chemical training, and hazardous phosphine gas is produced, which explodes as a result of auto-ignition. There were such occurrences in the USA in the 1990s when the main drug, ephedrine, was easily obtainable, prior to the passing of the Combat Meth Act in March 2006.

³⁵ *Cape Argus* of 7 December 2006.

³⁶ www.health24.com

³⁷ *Weekend Argus* of 21 January 2007.

Nobody has produced any evidence that has been seen by me that home production is taking place on a large scale or indeed on any scale. If those making such statements have any evidence whatsoever to back up this suggestion of a large scale 'kitchen' industry then it is imperative that it be made known in order that, at the very least and as a matter of urgency, laws can be passed and implemented governing the sale of the precursor chemicals for tik, namely ephedrine, pseudo ephedrine, anhydrous ammonia and red phosphorous.

All of the evidence which is available to me is that home manufacture is not taking place. The basic ingredients cannot be bought freely – the Chinese have a virtual monopoly on ephedrine, which in this context may not be a bad situation. Young people do not have the expertise even if they could get the ingredients. If it is happening it would not be unreasonable to expect that by now there would have been at least one explosion in a shack, probably involving extensive injury or loss of life.

This matter has concerned me so much in view of the repute of those making these statements, that in recent times every person interviewed, including some who see tens of tik addicts each day, has been asked whether they know of anybody who has made, or attempted to make tik at home, or whether they have attempted it themselves. Without exception the answer has been negative. Random questioning in the research for this dissertation obviously has weaknesses, but it would be amazing if this home manufacturing is taking place and nobody seen by me in Belhar, Elsie's River, Mitchell's Plain, and other similar localities, is aware of it.

As a matter of fairness it should be noted that on 19 January 2007, when the UK legislature made crystal meth a Class A drug in all cases, thereby resolving a strange anomaly in the Misuse of Drugs Act, Sky News stated that all the ingredients for the production of the drug could be bought in supermarkets. Thus, if as suggested herein, home production is a myth, it is one that is gathering momentum in the United Kingdom as well as in South Africa.

4. The Foreigners

Everything is masterminded by the foreigners who are running the show. The top South Africans work for the Chinese, the Nigerians, the Russians.³⁸

4.1 The Chinese

“I don’t know any Triads.” “All Chinese are Triad.”³⁹

Whenever the word ‘Chinese’ is mentioned it seems automatically to be linked with the word ‘Triad’ by anybody with connections with illegal drugs in the Cape.

Whilst clearly not all Chinese living in the Cape are Triad members, the link between the Chinese in the Cape and Triad societies in Hong Kong is crucial to understanding the pre-eminent role that the Chinese have been able to assume in relation to the control of the market for tik.

Varese states that “An OCG (Organised Crime Group) aspires to obtain a monopoly over the production and distribution of a certain commodity in the underworld.”⁴⁰ Whilst the Chinese may not have a total monopoly on the supply of tik, they are at present in a near-monopoly position in relation to the importation of the ephedrine and pseudo ephedrine, which are used for the manufacture of tik, and also in relation to the production of the tik for distribution on the streets.

Gastrow⁴¹ in 2001 pointed out certain basics, which would seem still to be applicable. The organised Chinese group in the Cape were at that time known as the ‘Table Mountain Gang.’ They had close links with Hong Kong and Taiwan. Many of the criminals operating in the Cape were members of the Hong Kong based 14K triad and the Wo Shing Wo triad. Kinnes⁴² gives some further detail, suggesting that the Table Mountain gang was in fact Taiwanese, and that the present Triad leadership came to power by murdering some of the Taiwanese.

³⁸ Source material of 12 December 2006.

³⁹ Marks, op. cit., note 11.

⁴⁰ Varese, F. (2001). *The Russian Mafia – Private Protection in a New Market Economy*. Cambridge and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁴¹ Gastrow, P. (2001). *Triad Societies and Chinese Organised Crime in South Africa*. ISS Occasional Paper No. 48. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies.

⁴² Kinnes, I. (2000a). *Structural Changes and Growth in Gang Activities*. ISS Monograph Series No. 48. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies. At p. 7.

The Chinese drug barons live in the more affluent suburbs of the Western Cape. There is a large contingent living in the greater Strand area, and the luxurious homes of some were pointed out to me. Many more, in recent times, have moved into the Table View area. They are involved in legitimate business, such as textile factories, restaurants and other places of entertainment, retail outlets in areas such as clothing and electronics, and import/export agencies. Although these may be legitimate businesses they are also linked with another major criminal activity – the provision of counterfeit branded goods, such as the clothing that all successful street gang members have to wear.

Another factor which Gastrow⁴³ points out is that the Chinese have always been willing to use ruthless violence to enforce their position. Competitors have been eliminated, and a constant and repeated piece of information to me has been that the Chinese have been known to bring in assassins from Hong Kong for the purpose of carrying out a single killing.

An important connection is made by Gastrow, which appears to be the key to the position of the Chinese in the drug trade – the link between the Chinese and the fruits of the sea, such as shark fins and abalone. A good deal of research has been done into the illegal poaching of abalone (perlemon) and subsequent exportation to the Far-East, and in particular Hong Kong.⁴⁴ The South African government has obviously now realised the scale of the illegal activity in abalone, and the loss caused by this. The tendency appears to have been to regard abalone poaching more from the ecological point of view than to link it with organised crime, but an article by Steinberg⁴⁵ in April 2005 made the connection. In view of what has subsequently occurred it is worthwhile paraphrasing and quoting directly from this article, which, whilst still mainly concentrating on the abalone aspect, makes important historical points that clarify the links between abalone and illegal drugs. Steinberg starts out by explaining: ‘Bartering has played a central role in the international criminal economy for as long as there has been global trade.’ The bartering by the Chinese of the dried abalone, exported mainly to Hong Kong for the illegal drugs of, originally, methaqualone (Mandrax) and more recently heroin and the basic constituent of tik, ephedrine, means that the Chinese have established and reliable trade routes. Paper work which may result in detection and arrest can be kept to a minimum. Banks and money laundering precautions increasingly taken by all Governments world wide become of little significance. Steinberg amplifies as follows:

In the mid-1990s, some of the major traders in the Western Cape’s gang based drug market descended on abalone-rich fishing villages such as Hawston and Kleinmond and took control of sizeable portions of the abalone market. At the same time, security agencies became aware that vast quantities of the chemical precursors of methaqualone, the drug of choice in the ghettos of the Cape Flats, were being smuggled into South Africa from East Asia. By the late 1990s it was clear

⁴³ Gastrow, op.cit., note 41.

⁴⁴ Hauck, M. (1997). *Crime, conservation and community development: ecological criminology and the case study of abalone poaching*. Master’s thesis: University of Cape Town.

⁴⁵ Steinberg, J. (2005a). *The illicit abalone trade in South Africa*. ISS Occasional Paper No.116. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies.

that methaqualone had been bartered for abalone for quite some time. Nobody knows for certain quite what proportion of the illicit abalone catch is bartered for methaqualone but anecdotal evidence suggests that it is quite considerable. On several occasions over the past six years, multi-ton methaqualone seizures have been linked to business men and women at the centre of the abalone trade. At the time of writing [January 2005] it appears that Chinese organised crime remains keenly interested in supplying the Cape Flats drug market. For the first time in two-and-a half decades methaqualone's market dominance on the Cape Flats is being threatened by a rival synthetic drug – crystal methamphetamine (its colloquial name is tik)... Abalone was thus quick to take its place at the centre of the Western Cape's illicit economy. Chinese businesses bartered cheaply acquiring chemical precursors for high value abalone whilst Western Cape drug lords bartered cheaply acquiring abalone for high value drugs. Those drug lords who gained control of significant volumes of abalone captured a monopoly over low priced methaqualone. The result is that every serious player in the drug industry had to get his hands on abalone in order to stay in business.

This passage has been quoted in some detail because it is contended that a number of separate issues arise from it. Steinberg was ahead of his time in mentioning tik, although this is the only time the word is used in the 14-page article. In August 2005 another expert in the field of drugs and gangs, Standing⁴⁶ was only to mention the word tik once in a detailed and extensive article. As matters have evolved, the Chinese connection has become even more important. The emphasis by Steinberg on certain matters requires some modification in certain aspects.

All of my research is to the effect that the Chinese have shown no desire whatsoever to become directly involved in supplying the Cape Flats drug market. They have in the main kept well away from the day-to-day activities of supply to the market. The Chinese have no wish to be retailers. They are importers, manufacturers and suppliers. The Chinese regard the named Street gangs on the Cape Flats, including the largest - the Americans - with intense suspicion and some considerable disdain. The violence and need for respect and prestige exhibited by the named gangs including their leaders evokes disgust and displeasure with the Chinese. The Street gangs as distributors and street sellers do not understand the basic premise of the Chinese – business is done to make a profit with the least possible danger.

The Chinese do not do business with the street gangs. What they do is to deal with a small number of individuals – the 'Almost Mr. Bigs' (see section 5 below). The statement by Steinberg that 'Every serious player in the drug industry had to get his hands on abalone in order to stay in business...' also requires some qualification.

Every large scale wholesaler or 'Mr. Almost Big' has to have a relationship with the Chinese to get the tik in order to supply the street gangs. A 'Mr. Almost Big' with no relationship with the Chinese is likely in the future to move to being a 'Mr. Quite Small' and this seems to be realised by the major individuals who supply the street gangs. The Chinese are dependent on the 'Almost Mr. Bigs' to organise the fishing or poaching of

⁴⁶ Standing, A. (2005). *The threat of gangs and anti- gangs policy*. ISS Occasional Paper No. 116. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies.

the abalone. 'Lastig' is a name known in this connection as being ever present over a considerable number of years, and who is still a major influence (see section 5.2).

However, the Chinese connection goes far beyond the abalone/ephedrine and methaqualone international trading link.

The Chinese by reason of their, at least semi-monopoly, position in the importation of ephedrine have managed to make their pre-eminent position at present impregnable. Contrary to what some seem to believe, ephedrine in any quantity is no longer an easy substance to acquire. Ephedrine and pseudo-ephedrine are banned - or at least significantly monitored - substances in most developed countries. Without ephedrine there is no tik.

The Chinese pre-eminence in the control of ephedrine, and therefore tik, at present may well explain the arrest of Nazier Kapdi at Kenilworth Centre in a Cape Town suburb on 14th October 2006. From what is known of the events surrounding the arrest it appears that Kapdi allowed himself to be trapped in a classic 'sting operation' by the police. That a man so experienced in the drugs world allowed himself to be compromised in this way would seem to suggest a certain desperation amongst even the 'Almost Mr. Bigs' to get some ephedrine from a source independent of the Chinese (see section 5.5 below).

It is not only in the importation of the ephedrine that the Chinese totally control the market at present, but they are by far and away the major manufacturers. They set up manufacturing facilities or 'factories' usually in areas that are not under the control of any street gang. 'Factory' in the usual meaning of the word implies quite substantial premises, but the tik and heroin manufacturing facilities are often quite small. A garage attached to a substantial suburban house can serve as a factory. The premises are only used for a limited period of time before re-locating. This makes it difficult for the police to trace the factory and make seizures. Over the period of the research for the dissertation there were reports of a significant number of tik factories being established in Parklands and other areas of Table View. Earlier (May 2006) information was provided in general terms about factories in Bellville and Kraafontein. The latest suggestion is that at present a relatively large factory is in operation in Observatory, and that this is working 24 hours a day in order to keep up with the demands of the ever increasing market.

The heroin production is not being neglected, and the information provided was that the Observatory factory is producing two-thirds tik to one-third heroin. The continuing significant production of heroin confirms the street information that heroin is becoming ever more available by the day and continues to decrease in price. No doubt the Chinese will ensure that they remain the major suppliers of both tik and heroin, whilst also keeping their continued hold on the supply of mandrax tablets.

The vastly increased size of the market to be supplied - with the continuing explosion in the demand for tik - will bring interesting strategic decisions for the Chinese. They have close relationships with many, if not all of the businessman, who will be considered in section 5, and who are commonly called the 'High Flyers' by the authorities. The

Chinese will have to make the strategic decision as to how far they are willing to attempt to influence and interfere with the retailing level that is run by the named Street gangs. So far they have been unwilling to get too close because of their scorn for what they regard as the unnecessary violence and lack of business professionalism of the Street gangs. Earlier, whilst the retailing side could be run on a level akin to supplying chains of Seven/Eleven shops, the Chinese could afford to take this attitude. But the expanded market for tik is now going to demand the retailing levels of Pick n' Pay or Checkers/Shoprite dimensions, and there are indications that the Chinese will no longer be able to take the aloof attitude of the past.

The Chinese appear to have formed close relations with Mujahid Daniels, who is invariably described as a man of the future (see section 5. 9 below). Mujahid is closely involved with the Ghetto Boys in the war in Hanover Park and there are clear suggestions that the Chinese have sided with the Ghetto Boys in this particular conflict, and are supplying them with guns that are more sophisticated and of a better quality than have been found in such conflicts in the past (see sections 5 and 6).

4.2 The Nigerians

The Nigerians are visible and important in the drugs trade. Visible, because of their distinctive appearance. They are often to be seen wearing their traditional clothing whilst quite openly selling drugs in the areas close to the centre of Cape Town and in the better off suburbs. They are quite blatant in their drug dealing at street level, and appear to have very little fear of being arrested. A recent visit to Greenmarket Square in the centre of Cape Town with a friend resulted in the friend being approached by four separate street dealers offering drugs for sale to him in a period of less than 15 minutes. Three of these dealers were Nigerian. There was no question of clandestine approaches. These were open offers of deals to be done in an area crowded by tourists, who no doubt would be approached in a similar way if they looked as though they might be at all interested.

Any assessment of the overall role of the Nigerians is somewhat difficult in that they do not fit into the overall useful, if crude, delineation of the three separate levels: importers/manufacturers; wholesalers and distributors; and retailers and direct sellers to the public. The Nigerians cover all three levels.

It is in the cocaine, and in particular crack cocaine market that the influence of the Nigerians has been greatest over the years. Gastrow⁴⁷ makes the important point, which still appears to be of significant, that the Nigerians in part have flourished because of contacts beyond the Western Cape. Of importance are the contacts that they have with Nigerians in South America, thereby allowing the importation of cocaine. There are also

⁴⁷ Gastrow, P. (1999). "Main Trends in the development of South Africa's organised crime". *African Security Review* 8(6).

numerous Nigerians in important positions in the drugs trade in Europe, and in particular in the UK and the Netherlands. Leggett⁴⁸ states:

Prior to the democratic elections in 1994, cocaine and crack cocaine were not commonly available in South Africa... This market vacuum was filled when Nigerian nationals arrived in central Johannesburg just as democracy was dawning. They settled in the residential hotels of Hillbrow, where they found themselves next door to sex workers, who were largely addicted to Mandrax at the time. This connection became the basis for a crack market that would grow exponentially in the coming years. Nigerian dealers have proliferated in every corner of the country. In this sample alone, Nigerians were arrested in Hillbrow, Mitchells Plain, Khayelitsha and Sea Point.

Leggett continues to make a number of points, which have been confirmed to be still applicable. Sex work is intimately connected with the sale of drugs with the Nigerians. They turn female addicts, who owe money for drugs to them, into prostitutes. Men who visit the prostitutes are encouraged to try crack cocaine themselves and are required to buy crack rocks for their female companions. The men become not only clients for sex, but also clients for drugs.

The Nigerians are successful at street-selling level because they do not consume their own drug, (which is a discipline that the coloured gangs seem to have been slow to enforce, but which appears to be becoming more accepted), and on the whole they are not as prone to violence as the local street gangs.

Unlike the local Coloured street gangs, they use women to sell drugs on the streets on occasions.

Their methods of organisation are difficult to understand, and therefore difficult for law enforcement agencies to penetrate. Leggett⁴⁹ states:

Nigerian syndicates are not organised along gang lines or even immutable syndicates. While individual loyalties exist between wholesalers and retailers, most Nigerian dealers operate as free agents, ultimately responsible to themselves. They are, however, protected in a general way by the entire local Nigerian community.

He continues to describe a committee system whereby premises, (which are often used as crack houses) are organised and regulated, and how legal funds are organised to pay bribes or legal fees.

My efforts to understand a number of puzzling questions about the Nigerians were stymied by an inability to get any direct contact with an active Nigerian drug trader at any level, but certain matters did become reasonably clear.

⁴⁸ Leggett T. (2002b) *Perspectives on Supply; the Drugs Trade in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town* ISS Mono 69: Institute of Security Studies.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

“The Nigerians operate in the better areas”. “They do not operate in the ghettos.” “They have moved into the nice areas.”⁵⁰

In my early days in Cape Town it was suggested that a visit should be made to see the Nigerians in Muizenberg, and there were clearly a number of Nigerians operating in that area early in 2005. How long that will remain with the re-gentrification of that suburb remains to be seen. Where they are best established is in the Sea Point area, and they are to be seen selling to the locals and the tourists along the Main Street, though there was a major police crack down in the festive season of 2006/07. Large numbers of Nigerians have been seen operating in the central business district, in shopping malls and in Wynberg. Probably the largest growth in residential property for sale in recent times has taken place in the greater Table View area, and in particular Parklands and Big Bay. Having described Parklands as a ‘dealers’ paradise, the local newspaper – the *Tabletalk*⁵¹ - carried a feature that states “...Table View, now known as ‘the capital of Nigeria’.”

Personal observation over a period of time has shown that that these drug dealers are in the main Nigerians, many of who appear to live in the locality. They wander up and down the Main Road, and cruise in cars, openly selling.

A mystery to me was why the local coloured gangs allowed such lucrative areas as Sea Point, and the rapidly expanding area of Parklands, where money is available to buy drugs – and not just tik straws or a few buttons – to be dominated by the foreign Nigerians. The answer appears at present to be twofold. The local gangs have been reluctant in the past to move from areas where they have a residential presence. The named local Street gangs are essentially turf-and-territory based, and therefore an area such as Parklands is alien. The other reason is that in Parklands, as in a much more long-established way in Sea Point, the Nigerians have come to accommodations with some of the larger local gangs, such as the local grouping of the Americans, to be ‘taxed’. This means that they are willing to hand over a portion of the profits to the Coloured gangs for protection and the ability to sell unhindered. How this is enforced was not clear to me as a practical proposition, but it was reported by a number of interviewees.

“The Nigerians operate with the Hard Livings in Manenberg”; “The Nigerians operate with the Americans in Hanover Park”; “The Nigerians had a deal with Staggie in Sea Point.”⁵²

The explosion in the tik market is going to cause a degree of re-thinking and re-organising for the Nigerians. It is unthinkable that they will not seek a major share in this market, particularly in the areas where they are well established at street level. Parklands, and to a lesser extent Sea Point, offers enormous potential for future dealing. The information that has been given to me is that this has been realised by the Nigerians

⁵⁰ Comments April 2006 and 3 November 2006.

⁵¹ *Tabletalk* of 19 November 2006

⁵² Comment April and 12 December 2006

some time ago, and they are attempting to reach accommodations at various level with the Chinese. These arrangements will obviously be necessary, unless the Nigerians can find an overseas supplier of ephedrine or pseudo-ephedrine, which will allow them to bypass the Chinese. There have been suggestions that the Nigerians and the Chinese have been operating some 'factories' jointly and merging their expertise, but how reliable this information is cannot be gauged accurately at present.

An informal alliance between the Chinese and the Nigerians to expand the tik market in areas where the Nigerians are already established street sellers would make business sense, particularly if the Chinese remain determined to keep an, as far as possible, distance from the street selling and the retail part of the market.

One final point which should be made is that, whilst most of the Nigerians still operate as free agents, there have been a limited number of mentions of a Nigerian leader, A.K., in recent times, and he seems to be playing a role of significance in the continuing war in Hanover Park.

4.3 The Russians

There is undoubtedly a significant presence of wealthy Russians living in the Western Cape. A number of obviously expensive houses said to be occupied by rich people of Russian origin were pointed out to me in the Helderberg area. It is also clear that the presence of Russian criminal groups in South Africa has been recognised for some time. Gastrow⁵³ wrote in 1999:

Russian organised crime does therefore constitute a threat to South Africa. More intelligence will be required before a clearer assessment can be made of the impact and the scope of their activities.

The research completed in connection with this paper is not a great help in clarifying the assessment. It seems that the Russians are not *directly involved* in the drugs trade on the Western Cape. They cannot be said to operate as the Russian Mafia, as considered by Varese.⁵⁴ What they do is to act as financiers in legitimate and illegitimate businesses. They, not surprisingly, are linked with the trade in young women coming to Cape Town to work as high class prostitutes and in the clubs. There have been suggestions that from time to time they are involved in deals to export illegal abalone, and as financiers of one-off drug deals. The only person who gave significant information linking the Russians with the drug trade was overlooked by me for a long time.⁵⁵ This was so because the person interviewed referred throughout to the 'Jewish Mafia'. It was some time later that it was realised that this referred to Russians who are Jewish. The importance of the Jewish Mafia is that they are able to access the banking system. They can get financial

⁵³ Gastrow, *op.cit.* note 47.

⁵⁴ Varese, *op.cit.* note 40.

⁵⁵ Interview of 3rd May 2006.

information on anybody, and from time to time this is sold to the senior Coloured drug traders. They can also facilitate the laundering of large quantities of money. The final words of the interview with this person were: “They never kill, they sell information to anybody, they have no morality.”

4.4 The Italians

From time to time in conversation the ‘Italian Mafia’ and the ‘Sicilian Mafia’ were mentioned. On investigation it seems that any such connections are historical rather than of contemporary relevance. Kinnes⁵⁶ states:

The Italian/Sicilian Mafia has also been another layer in the Cape Town area. They have allegedly been able, through the links set up by Vito Palazollo, to set up legitimate businesses, although the police and Interpol are investigating member of this group for money laundering. Information on the type of business dealing undertaken by the Italian Mafia has been sketchy, but it is believed by police intelligence that it would include extortion or established business in the formal market sector and in the inner city. Vito Palazollo was reported by the police to have met with Hard Livings leader, Rashid Staggie, but the exact nature of the meeting was not disclosed. It remains unclear what the precise nature is of the business of the Italian Mafia in Cape Town.

If there is a business connection between the Italian/Sicilian Mafia with the 2007 drugs trade in Cape Town it has eluded me. Reading Gambetta⁵⁷ and *Time Life*⁵⁸ has been of academic interest rather than shedding any meaningful light on the criminal drug organisation of the Western Cape. The only Italian who crossed my path during the research was an Italian youth who was said to be ‘mafia’ and who had just resorted to stealing R1, 000 from a friend.

⁵⁶ Kinnes, op.cit., note 42.

⁵⁷ Gambetta, D. (1993). *The Sicilian Mafia- The Business of Private Protection*. Palermo: Harvard University Press.

⁵⁸ Times Life (eds.) (2003). *True Crimes Mafia*. London: Caxton Publishing Group.

5. The ‘Almost Mr. Bigs’

“The drugs lords do not have to be gang leaders: they just call in the gangs.”

“They’re not now gangsters as such: they know the gangsters.”

“They’re business people: the Chinese deal with business people.”

“They become business people, but they do not sever their links with the gangs.”⁵⁹

Heading this section ‘The Almost Mr. Bigs’ is not an attempt in any way to impugn the status of the important men in the drugs trade, who are considered in this section. It is to make the point absolutely clear that there is no one single ‘Mr. Big’ within this group. They are all important in their own areas. They have different fields of activity, and operate in different territories. In the terminology of the Casa Nostra or the Mafia they are ‘dons’ or ‘capos’ in the original Sicilian meaning of that term. There is, however, no Godfather who exerts overall control over the others of similar status. Each of these men is an independent contractor with his own trusted organisation, which acts as the supplier to the street gangs with whom the particular Mr. Almost Big has connections.

The ‘Almost Mr. Big’ will rarely be found anywhere near the drugs in which his organisation deals. To do so would of course make him much more susceptible to arrest. Each ‘Almost Mr. Big’ will have working for him a ‘project manager’ or managers. This is the term used by my interviewees. These are the men who still have daily contact with the street gangs, and are responsible for getting the drugs to the street gangs and collecting the payment. Such a position enables the project manager to make their own substantial fortune. Below the project managers are a number of ‘mules’ who have the most regular connection with the Street gang leaders. Obviously the term ‘mule’ is used in a somewhat different sense to its usual one, which relates to unfortunates who have the tasks of transferring drugs across borders with all the attendant risks of being caught by customs officers. The drugs for transfer to the Street gangs are eventually taken to an ‘oasis’ or ‘safe house’ from where they are collected. It is during the transfer of the drugs to the gangs that the ‘Almost Mr. Big’ is vulnerable to the seizure of the drugs by the police, and as Scharf⁶⁰ has consistently pointed out over a long period of time, the ‘Almost Mr. Bigs’ and their employees are only able to survive as a result of corrupt links to the police. Examples of this were frequently given to me during the research.

Most of the ‘Almost Mr. Bigs’ have close connections with the prison Number gangs, and some hold high rank in the particular prison Number gang into which they were initiated. This is less likely to be a pre-requisite to becoming an ‘Almost Mr. Big’ in the future.

⁵⁹ Interviews of 3 and 27 November 2006.

⁶⁰ Scharf, W. (1998). *Recommendation relating to the investigation of organised crime*. Unpublished Report: Institute of Criminology, University of Cape Town.

They run legitimate businesses and other illegitimate businesses in addition to their involvement in the drugs trade. Some have been involved in the importation of drugs over a considerable length of time – others have not.

Their importance is that they are the undisputed main wholesalers or intermediaries in the structure of the drugs trade.

Standing⁶¹ refers to these men as “the criminal elite”. He states that there are roughly ten or 20 such men who “...lay claim to being in control of significant areas of the Cape Flats and who share the characteristics of the criminal elite”, although he concedes that the number of what he rather grandly designated as “criminal domains” is difficult to establish and changes over different periods of time.

The present research into this ‘criminal elite’ suggests a number closer to ten than 20 (see below).

Some matters clearly set out by Standing⁶² the following year, re-iterating and amplifying the earlier article, are true and are worthy of restatement.

The careers of these men tend to follow a similar pattern. All originate from poor coloured communities and remain attached to the areas where they grew up. They are therefore ‘local’ men. Though most subsequently moved away from the Cape Flats, buying property and living in some of the more affluent areas of Cape Town, they remain firmly attached to the regions of the Flats where they have power and are well known to locals in these areas. Typically they own one or several houses on the Flats, which are used as informal community centres from which alcohol and drugs are sold and consumed... These houses are known locally as ‘shebeens’.

The popular narratives of how these men rose to power stress acts of excessive violence, often including assaulting police as well as other rival criminals. Yet they are frequently seen as men with a special intellect, although few, if any, have been educated beyond the minimum age for leaving school. All, without exception, have spent time in prison and are members of the country’s infamous prison gangs, although many do not hold high ranking position in these gangs – wealth and power on the outside does not always translate to power on the inside.

Their considerable personal fortunes are achieved by assuming a critical position in the local criminal economy. Most importantly they control the distribution and sale of alcohol and drugs in their areas, in addition some control the local sex industry, export stolen cars, sell stolen firearms and also arrange the theft of goods from factories and warehouses to be resold in their domains. However, rarely is illicit trade their only economic interest and each has a broad business portfolio, incorporating hotels, night clubs, public transport, garages, shops and commercial fishing boats.

The relationship between the criminal elite and the street gangs is ambiguous and often misunderstood. Many people outside the Flats assume that all drug merchants are gang leaders. Indeed, many of the criminal elite have risen thorough the ranks of street gangs and are leaders of some of the larger gang structures. However, not all leaders of criminal domains are still gang members, and many will employ a large number of specialist personnel who fall outside street gang affiliations.

⁶¹ Standing, A. (2002). *The social contradictions of organised crime on the Cape Flats*. ISS Occasional Paper No. 74. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies. At pg. 2.

⁶² Standing, op.cit., note 4.

The relationships among those who form the criminal elite are also ambiguous and highly changeable. There are clear rivalries and attempted assassinations between leaders are not unheard of. However, various factors reduce the potential for expanding criminal domains. The sheer number of armed gang members on the Cape Flats means a bid to significantly expand areas of influence will result in much bloodshed and potentially damaging publicity. Moreover, as all the criminal elite are members of the closely related prison gangs, murders on the outside may conflict with prison politics on the inside – criminal leaders are reluctant to betray gang loyalties as they know it is almost guaranteed that they will ‘do time’ in the future. Thus despite underlying tension the various domains are kept relatively in check and each subsequently operates with a degree of autonomy.

Accepting the broad sweep of what Standing states in these five paragraphs, some of the detail has already been questioned, and further qualifications or re-interpretation will be made as the present situation is considered.

The ‘Almost Mr. Bigs’ considered individually below do not give the impression that “...they know it is almost guaranteed that they will ‘do time’ in the future”. They give the impression that they feel that they are impregnable, and although some of them are presently facing criminal charges – and some have for a number of years – they clearly feel that they will never be convicted. So far the evidence would appear to support this belief, though this may change in the future.

These men are the ‘High Flyers’, who have for long period of time been identified by the police as requiring special attention. Standing⁶³ was sceptical about the ‘High Flyers’ project, whilst aiming the majority of his ammunition at s. 9 of the 1998 Prevention of Organised Crime Act (POCA) with its concept of criminalising gang membership as an offence in itself.

Not surprisingly the Western Cape Provincial Police Commissioner, Mzwandile Petros⁶⁴ responded. In relation to the High Flyers programme his response in part reads as follows:

This programme does not focus on gangs and gang leaders per se. Rather it wishes to ensure a more effective criminal justice response to the activities of the main generators of crime. It is critical to note a crime high flyer is not equal to a gang leader, but equal to a main generator of criminal activity. All levels of SAPS structures are responsible for the identification and neutralisation of individuals responsible for the generation of crime in various police precincts. It is the declared policy of the government to reduce levels of serious crime. To achieve this, it is imperative to focus on the main generators of crime. Whether they are gangsters or not. ... I remain of the opinion that the removal of the main crime generator is the only way in which crime levels will be reduced in a sustainable fashion.

It is the thrust of this dissertation that the men considered in this section are “main generators of criminal activity”, and that their relationship with the Chinese is

⁶³ Standing, op.cit. note 46. At pg. 6.

⁶⁴ *Cape Times* of 24 August 2006.

fundamental in understanding how the drug trade in the Western Cape is flourishing, and how the spread of the tik pandemic is unstoppable at present.

It is factually correct to point out that at this time the ‘Almost Mr. Bigs’ or High Flyers have remained immune from conviction on gang or drug related charges. Going back in time, Colin Stansfield was convicted of tax evasion and Rashied Staggie for crimes essentially unrelated to his drug and gang activities. Although some of the ‘Almost Mr. Bigs’ have been charged, some have been tried, and some await trial, to date there have been no convictions. Although assets have been forfeited pending the trials, these men continue to accumulate vast fortunes, which will become even greater as they adapt - as they seem to be doing - to the new challenge of bringing tik to the whole of the Western Cape.

A brief consideration of some of the matters raised so far in this section in relation to a number of individuals will assist. The men considered have all been named in the press and other publications, as well as in the research carried out. One omission relates to an important up-and-coming Mr. Almost Big who appears to have escaped the publication of his name in relation to criminal matters in the press.

5.1 Quinton Marinus

Quinton Marinus⁶⁵ seems an appropriate starting point since he is always referred to as *the* Mr. Big. He was arrested in October 2004, seemingly after handing himself over to the police following the arrest of 14 of his team. His arrest was greeted in this way by Premier Rasool:⁶⁶

I would be surprised if gangs nationally and internationally were not rocked by last week’s arrest of [Marinus} and specifically the thoroughness and comprehensive nature of the investigations. We will continue to put criminals behind bars.

At the time of writing the trial of Marinus has not commenced. He is on bail, and has been so throughout. At his last Court appearance on 10 April 2006 he and his co-accused were facing 105 charges. It was reported that Judge Nathan Erasmus was left with little choice but to postpone the trial. “We have 15 people in the dock and most don’t have a lawyer.”⁶⁷ Charges against the accused include murders, money laundering, abalone smuggling, robbery, and drug smuggling amongst others. Assets worth almost 10 million Rand have been seized, pending the outcome of the trial, including 15 properties and 35 vehicles.

⁶⁵ For examples see *Daily Voice* of 11 April ;19 and 20 September; and 27 November 2006.

⁶⁶ Front page *Cape Argus* of 30 October 2004.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

The not unreasonable questions these facts pose are whether the High Flyers programme can succeed in these circumstances. The ‘Pizza Connection trial’⁶⁸ in the USA clearly raised the issues of such unmanageable trials, and lessons have been learnt all over the world. Is the South African justice system capable of dealing with such cases without reforms taking place? How many of the expected 204 witnesses will be alive and willing to testify if the case ever gets to trial after such a length of time?

A separate issue that has arisen in relation to Marinus is that, on 14 December 2006, he was shot whilst visiting an establishment on Voortrekker Road, Parow.⁶⁹ Standing⁷⁰ raised the issue by saying: “...attempted assassinations are not unheard of... .” It appears that this incident is unusual in that it does not appear to be the case that Almost Mr Bigs are targeted.

Gavin Myburgh (Adkins) was murdered in Access Park on 6 April 2006, but although he might have been a would-be ‘Almost Mr. Big’ he was at the time of his death an old-fashioned leader of his local grouping of the Americans gang. The same can be said of Igdshaan Davids (Saanie American) who, on 1 November 2006, was shot on a street in Maitland. Although, again, an important man in the Americans and seemingly in total control of the Kensington area, he does not appear to fit the profile of the ‘Almost Mr. Bigs’ described in this section.

The last line of the report of 15 December 2006⁷¹ reads: “Sources told the Cape Argus that several gang bosses met at the hospital last night.”

This would appear to confirm two factors that emerged during my research. Although the Mr. Almost Bigs operate separately, if business is threatened – as it undoubtedly would be if one of their number was killed – they do co-operate and collaborate. The second factor is that the tik explosion, and the Chinese monopoly in its supply, is going to involve re-thinking and re-alliances among the Almost Mr Bigs. Some of them may be threatened in a way that has not been the case for many years, and some ‘Almost Mr. Bigs’ with connections already established with the Chinese may be emerging. Violence, however, will not be tolerated if it leads to disruption of business.

5.2 Ernie ‘Lastig’ Solomons

Ernie ‘Lastig’ Solomons⁷² is one of the great survivors of the ‘Almost Mr. Bigs’. He has had close bonds with the top operators in the drugs trade since the days of ‘The Firm’,

⁶⁸ Alexander, S. (1988). *The Pizza Connection – Lawyers, drugs and the Mafia*. New York: W.H.Allen.

⁶⁹ *Daily Voice* of 15 December; and Dianne Hawker in *Cape Argus* of 15 December 2006.

⁷⁰ Standing, op. cit. note 46.

⁷¹ Hawker, op.cit. note 69.

when he was close to Colin Stansfield. In an interview he was described to me as a leader of the Firm. In more recent times he has assiduously developed and expanded his affiliations with the Chinese in that he has been the major organiser of the trade in abalone caught off the South East coast of the Western Cape by young Coloured men.

‘Lastig’ has clearly tried to develop an avuncular reputation in the press, and in his ‘constituency’ on the Cape Flats. The attempt to be seen as a modern day Robin Hood is one well known to the successful illegal businessmen operating within the Coloured community, and the Staggie brothers and Colin Stansfield’s acts of ostentatious distribution of bank notes among the poor are the stuff of legends.

A good example of the favourable press that ‘Lastig’ has attracted over the years reads as follows:⁷³

...old time gangster Ernie ‘Lastig’ Solomons, who has been putting something back into the community. In the absence of leadership on the Cape Flats, gang bosses step in.

Solomons is a survivor. He ranks among the most senior of the ‘28s’ bosses, closely linked to drug cartel The Firm and the perlemoen and crayfish poaching just outside Hermanus. He was a founder member of the Community Outreach (Core), the 1996 initiative by gangsters who claimed they were reformed.

Quietly spoken, Solomons has a to-the-point take on the dynamics of the Cape Flats. “People tell these kids at street corners begging for money voetsek. But it is these kids who will kill their own. When there’s no money at home and I bring money, my mommie will not ask where it comes from. She says ‘Dankie!’”.

He wants the government to help solve problems; no one is looking after what he called die bruin mense (brown people). “The people in the informal settlement get water for nothing, electricity for nothing. They are not even from here. We, who have suffered through the years, are not being helped”.

These words illustrate important features about how the ‘Almost Mr. Bigs’ have continued to be able to thrive amongst the Coloured communities whilst bringing drugs to these communities. There is at the very least a grudging admiration for the local boys, who have been able to beat the system. Amongst the Coloured communities an almost universally expressed view can be summarised in the maxim; ‘not white enough under the old regime; not black enough now’.

As will be seen when the Street gangs are considered (section 6.2 below), this feeling is the perfect recruiting slogan for the recruitment of the Coloured youth into the Street gangs. One of the interesting *sequela* of the tik pandemic ravaging the Coloured communities of the Cape Flats is how long the ‘Almost Mr. Bigs’ such as ‘Lastig’ will be able to portray themselves as benefactors. There already appears to be some backlash occurring among the communities against anybody dealing in tik and heroin - drugs of destruction for the Coloured youth. PAGAD is not dead.

⁷² Example, the *Son* of 15 December 2006.

⁷³ Merton, M. “The brotherhood in blood” in the *Mail and Guardian* of 2 August 2002.

A report⁷⁴ shows that ‘Lastig’ remains a target as a High Flyer:

They came to assassinate him.

That is what Ernie ‘Lastig’ Solomons, leader of the feared 28s gang believes after a midnight raid on his house in Belhar.

The cops on the other hand said they went there to search for a hit list, drugs and illegal firearms.

The raid was executed by a special task unit and members of the Provincial Organised Crime Unit.

... According to the warrant the police received information that proof of conspiracy to murder, the illegal possession of firearms and the possession of drugs would be found inside.

An apology had to be published in the *Son* at a later stage, making it clear that no evidence to support the terms of the warrant was discovered during the raid.

This raid, of course, came within hours of the shooting of Marinus in Parow.

‘Lastig’ is still of considerable importance now. His links with the Chinese through the abalone trade make him a figure of enormous power. With re-arrangements inevitably being necessitated by the spread of the tik and heroin market, he will be a critical potential king maker of the future ‘Almost Mr. Bigs’.

5.3 Kiyaam Rinqest

Kiyaam Rinqest⁷⁵ is another Almost Mr Big, who has important affiliations in the linked abalone/drugs trade. He is facing trial in the Cape Town Regional Court, and has been so since mid-2003. The earlier comments on the time lapse in relation to Marinus are applicable again. Between 30 January 2003 and 20 May 2003 it is alleged that abalone with a value of Rand 7 million was seized from premises connected to Rinqest. On 25 June 2003 a car in which he was travelling in Beaufort West was discovered to have 51,301 Mandrax pills and 995 grams of compressed dagga in the boot. This find pales into insignificance with the 563,297 Mandrax pills found the following day in the garage of a Table View flat owned by him. The drugs had an estimated street value of Rand 22 million.

Although the police in October 2003 were granted a preservation order for Rinqest’s entire estate, there is no doubt that he remains operative, and will continue to be important by reason of his abalone connections and his consequent ability to access tik.

⁷⁴ The *Son* of 15 December 2006.

⁷⁵ For example see Daily Voice 23 May 2006.

5.4 Mogamat Sadeeka Madatt

Mogamat Sadeeka Madatt⁷⁶ is unusual in this context in that his trial on charges relating to crack cocaine, cocaine and dealing illegally in uncut diamonds commenced in May 2006. The police suggest that he is a leading member of the Americans in the areas with which he is connected, which appear to include Mitchell's Plain, Parow, Belleville, Delft and Woodstock, and this is confirmed by those interviewed. In Woodstock, Madatt ran a car dealership. He states that the American flag tattooed across his chest is only proof of his youthful exuberances, and at aged 38, he is now an 'oupa' only involved in legal business.

The arrest and trial of Madatt followed an organised 'sting' operation in which it is alleged that Madatt sold crack cocaine and offered to buy uncut diamonds from undercover policemen.

A 'sting' operation has also been used by the police in relation to Nazier Kapdi (see 5.5 below).

It seems that, because of their inability to get proof against High Flyers by other means, the police have resorted to tactics, which may in law allow the defences of entrapment and the unlawful use of *agent provocateurs*. The point has already been raised in the defence of Madatt, and seems also likely to be a prime plank in any defence advanced by Kapdi.

'Sting operations' have proved in other jurisdictions to lead to problems for prosecuting authorities in drugs cases, and there is no reason to believe that the principles set out in the authorities of *R. v. Looseley*; *A.G. Reference No 2 of 2000*⁷⁷ and *Teixera de Castro v. Portugal*,⁷⁸ which are based on Human Rights law - essentially the same as the rights given in the South African Constitution - will not be followed by the courts of the Western Cape.

The reports of the Madatt case, so far, illustrate how easy it is for the police to render their evidence useless and inadmissible by crossing the line into unlawful entrapment. If such tactics are to be used regularly it seems that much closer co-operation will be needed between the police officers involved in the 'sting' operation and prosecuting lawyers, who will need to advise the police at each stage during the course of the operation.

⁷⁶ For examples see *Daily Voice* of 4, 5, 10, and 16 May 2006.

⁷⁷ [2002] 1 Cr.App.R.29.

⁷⁸ 28 E.H.R.R. 101 ECtHR.

5.5 Nazier Kapdi

Nazier Kapdi⁷⁹ is now aged 55. He was first arrested in 1977 for trying to smuggle 20,000 mandrax tablets into the country from India. In the early 1980s he was convicted of murder, and attained Number gang status in prison. He was one of the organisers of The Firm, which Scharf and Vale⁸⁰ always regarded as being a sham used by the gangsters to re-organise and solidify criminal activities in the 1994 to 1996 period. The scepticism by Scharf and Vale of ‘The Firm’ and ‘CORE’ has been amply justified by subsequent events.

In August 1996 PAGAD marched on Kapdi’s home in Walmer Estate to stop his alleged drug dealing.

Some 30 years after his first arrest, Kapdi and four others were arrested on 12 October 2006 in the Kenilworth Shopping Centre. He and the others are alleged to have been involved with deals involving ephedrine and tik there, and earlier at the N1 Shopping Centre. Although some newspaper reports are somewhat confusing, it seems that the police were offering to sell ephedrine to Kapdi and the others. Kapdi has always been known as a mandrax supplier with excellent connections to India. It appears that his need to get ephedrine to establish his credentials in the burgeoning tik market led to his carelessness, though it remains to be seen whether there are “flaws in the investigation” as Kapdi is alleged to have said to Captain Hein Cockrill at the time of his arrest.⁸¹

One flaw in the investigation, which has emerged already, is that half of the ephedrine used as the bait in the ‘sting’ operation by the police went missing. As a result a very large quantity of ephedrine is on the streets of the Cape Flats as a result of this operation, and on the information given to me it is proving an important factor in the continuing ‘war’ in Hanover Park, which has been on-going since the death of Gavin Myburgh on 5 April 2006.

Kapdi is at present in Pollsmoor Prison awaiting trial.

This incident contradicts the information given to me that the Mr. Almost Bigs now distance themselves from possession of drugs, and when challenged on this point those enlightening me attributed it to the fact that Kapdi is of the old school and suffers from a personality defect, which allows him to trust nobody. This is not a mistake that the newer businessmen, Almost Mr. Bigs of the future, will make.

⁷⁹ For examples *Daily Voice* at 18, 19, 20, 23, and 24 October 2006.

⁸⁰ Scharf, W. and C. Vale. (December 1996). “The Firm – Organised Crime Comes of Age During the Transition to Democracy”. *Social Dynamics* 22:2.

⁸¹ *Daily Voice* of 24 November 2006.

His continued detention means that one of the High Flyers is out of circulation at present, and to that extent there is a void to be filled, but it has been indicated to me that any member of the “criminal elite” eyeing Kapdi’s extensive “domain” will be cautious in the extreme in attempting to annex it until matters become a great deal clearer.

5.6 Richard ‘Pot’ Stemmet

Richard ‘Pot’ Stemmet⁸² was arrested in August 2006, and charged with illegal possession of drugs and firearms. He is awaiting trial.

According to the *Daily Voice* “...cop sources say Pot from his headquarters in Hanover Park runs a massive smuggling ring spanning the Cape Flats...”

He also was a target of PAGAD in 1996.

The main features, which are drawn for present purposes, are that he illustrates two factors which have influenced, and will continue to do so in the future, the High Flyers. Firstly he tries to portray himself as a benefactor of the Cape Flats’ communities. He is the Chairman of the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival Association, which help organise the Klopse festivities in the period around the New Year. Part of this involves organising grants from the Provincial Government, which appears to involve virtual extortion each year by threats to cancel the carnival if further funds are not granted at the last minute. The second point is that Stemmet, through his role, is able to represent himself as having political influence and by use of a connection, which no doubt Premier Rasool would adamantly wish was unnecessary, Stemmet is able to suggest that he is in a position to control and influence politicians and the police.

5.7 Rashied Staggie

Rashied Staggie⁸³, aged 50, was convicted of kidnapping and rape in 2003, and in 2004 was convicted of a separate offence of theft of weapons from a police base. He was sentenced to 13 years’ imprisonment, and is appealing his convictions and sentence.

Until these convictions, nobody would have hesitated about placing Rashied Staggie in the category of the “criminal elite”. With his brother Rashaad, until the killing of Rashaad on 4 August 1996 in Salt River, and subsequently with Rashied as the sole undisputed leader, they had made the Hard Livings one of the two largest gangs in the Western Cape, and it held sway over large areas. From their base in Manenberg, and also

⁸² *Daily Voice* of 22 August and 27 December 2006.

⁸³ *Daily Voice* of 8 May and 4, 9, and 10 October 2006.

in particular in Sea Point and Green Point, the Hard Livings were central to the drugs trade. Staggie had political influence, and had corrupted large numbers of the police.

The authorities and the police obviously regard him as a significant future threat if he is released from Pollsmoor Prison, and are making every effort to have him tried on a murder charge when the son of a PAGAD member, Faizal Ryklief, who was involved in the killing of Rashied Staggie, was shot dead. Rashied Staggie is also charged with being involved with possession of illegal weapons together with a co-accused, Johannes Moses, an army colonel. The authorities clearly hope for convictions, which result in further imprisonment, meaning that Staggie will remain incarcerated until he is an old man.

The present significance of Rashied Staggie was one of the few areas where differing assessments were made to me, and it is an area in which it has proved impossible to evaluate which assessment is correct. All were agreed that he is, and will remain, important in the Number gang in Pollsmoor Prison. This is not in doubt. The disagreement is as to his importance outside prison and the significance of the Hard Livings gang now. Again there was no dispute about the continued influence of the Hard Livings in their power base of Manenberg. Outside Manenberg, the majority view was that the Hard Livings operate in small areas, but unless Staggie is released the significance of the gang is very much diminished from the days of the major conflict between the Americans and the Hard Livings. "The Hard Livings are on their way out unless Staggie is released."⁸⁴ The contrary views were that the Hard Livings and Staggie still have significant influence. "Staggie is still super-powerful."⁸⁵ The person who stated this indicated that Brooklyn and Sea Point in particular are still important areas of power for the Hard Livings.

Kinnes⁸⁶ has been the undisputed expert on the Hard Livings since at least 1999, but it may be that the differing evaluations will not be resolved adequately unless Staggie is released into the community. The longer his incarceration lasts the more inevitable that his power will diminish.

5.8 Cyril Beeka

His name is placed in this list, since without doubt he is a man who has wielded enormous power in Cape Town in the past.

At an early stage in my research, without my realising the significance of the name for many months, he was stated to have had enormous gang and political influence in the late

⁸⁴ Interview in Mitchell's Plain dated 22 November 2006.

⁸⁵ Interview of 27 November 2006.

⁸⁶ Kinnes, I. (1999.) *The Hard Livings; the impact of the political and social transition to democracy on the gang in Manenberg 1992-1998*. Unpublished M.Sc dissertation. L.S.E.

1990s and early 2000s in the Cape Town area. This has been confirmed by accessing a *Dispatch* online article⁸⁷ where his name was linked to Vito Palazolo, Rashied Staggie, Eugene de Kock, the present chief of the Metro Police in Ekurhuleni, Robert McBride, and “well placed ANC contacts” in a report of an alleged assault on a woman in an escort agency.

Beeka then re-located to Johannesburg. A number of those spoken to regularly in the course of my research in 2006 quite separately told me, in awed terms, that Cyril Beeka was back living in Cape Town. It may well be that he wants a retirement at the sea-side, but the clear suggestion being made was that his return was somehow related to changes occurring in the Cape Town ‘criminal empires’, as a re-structuring is taking place as a result of the tik explosion and the vast profits to be made. However, the information of substance given to me had indicated that, before moving to Johannesburg, Beeka’s speciality was in security and protection rather than directly in the drug trade.

5.9 Mujahied ‘Mujait’ Daniels

Mujahied “Mujait” Daniels,⁸⁸ aged 34.

There was no dispute or disagreement amongst those speaking to me regularly about ‘Mujait’. He is at the forefront of those men who are likely to be the new breed of the “criminal elite”; businessmen whose sole interest is to make vast profits with as little risk as possible. He has already been targeted as being a ‘crime kingpin’. On 22 March 2006 he was acquitted on 11 charges, including four of murder and five of attempted murder, after being in custody for two years six months. It was stated after the trial⁸⁹ that the acquittals “stunned police and prosecutors”. The prosecution had relied upon what are called s. 204 witnesses – accomplice evidence. Accomplice evidence and the use of ‘super-grassers’ is no doubt an area under careful consideration by the police High Flyers Unit since if such operations can be properly co-ordinated they can be effective. It has proved to be crucial in getting convictions against men who seemed untouchable in the USA in the trial of the Mafia leader Gotti⁹⁰ and, in Manchester, in securing the conviction of all of the leaders of the Pitt Bull Crew.⁹¹

⁸⁷ *Mail and Guardian* online www.mg.co.za (downloaded 23 January 2007).

⁸⁸ Joseph, N. in *The Cape Argus* of 23 March 2006; and the *Daily Voice* 16 May 2006.

⁸⁹ Joseph, supra.

⁹⁰ Times Life (eds.) (2003). *True Crime Mafia*. London: Caxton Publishing Group.

⁹¹ For the trial of the leaders of the Pitt Bull Crew, see Walsh, P. (2003). *Gang War – the Inside Story of the Manchester Gangs*. Manchester: Milo Books Ltd.

Mujait has managed to establish very close connections with the Chinese, and his future importance in the tik and heroin trade in the future was constantly emphasised.

An initial problem for me, when Mujait and certain others were discussed, was that the 'Junior Mafias' were habitually mentioned. The Junior Mafias only significance to me was as a Street gang in the reading that had been done at that stage. It eventually became clear that membership of the Junior Mafia is now regarded as something like doing an M.B.A in Criminal Business Management.

In Cape Town the feared Junior Mafia have ditched gangster dress and tattoos for designer outfits, gelled hair and the latest model BMWs.⁹²

These Junior Mafia members, although coming from the streets of the Cape Flats, were described as "middle class, sending their children to smart schools, having legal firearms and driving large expensive cars".⁹³

Mujait is said to have family connections with a haulage business. There was a suggestion that he had been given a marble factory by the Chinese. He lives in that most respectable and conservative of suburbs, Pinelands.

Perhaps the most cogent descriptions were that he is the "top gun for the Chinese" and "the Junior Mafia are in a league of their own with the Chinese connection".

The 'war' in Hanover Park started with the death of Gavin Myburgh on 5 April 2006. It continues unabated, and is significant at a number of levels in the battle for control of the tik market in the future. Essentially it is a fight between the Ghetto Boys and the Americans. The Ghetto Boys were thought to have been a relatively small group, who should have been crushed. That has not proved to be the case because of the Junior Mafia connections with the Ghetto Boys, and Chinese connection with the Junior Mafias. Unusually it appears that the Chinese are involving themselves in a street war, by arranging for - what are sophisticated weapons by Cape Flats' standards - to be provided to the Ghetto Boys.

Apart from Mujait there are two other important Junior Mafia members involved with the Ghetto Boys. Both have been frequently named to me as potential future "elite criminals". There is no doubt about their importance, but as yet their names do not seem to have been published, and it would seem to be imprudent to identify them. Similar considerations arise in respect of a seemingly legitimate businessman involved in the entertainment industry, jewellery and various off-shore investments and to whom constant reference has been made in connection with the drugs trade.

⁹² Desai, A. (2004). *The Cape of Good Dope? The post-apartheid story of gangs and vigilantes*. Unpublished study. School of Development Studies, University of Kwazulu-Natal, Durban.

⁹³ Interview of 22 November 2006 .

These are the men with the necessary family and other connections with the gangs, but who will move further and further away from day-to-day relationships with the gangs. “Family is important”.⁹⁴ This will be returned to when the gangs are considered in section following.

⁹⁴ Interview of 27 November 2006.

6. The Gangs

6.1 The Number Gangs

It is crucially important at the outset to make the distinction between the prison Number gangs and the degraded and corrupted versions, which identify themselves with the Number outside the walls of the prisons.

“The whole culture has changed. It is getting out of control.”

“The leaders of gangs outside prison are using the Number gang generals, but they do not have respect for them.”

“Money is the crucial thing now. The prison gangs’ discipline cannot compete with the street gang leaders.”⁹⁵

To an outsider, learning about the legacy of Nongoloza and the Ninevites has been one of the most fascinating part of this research. An oral tradition traced back to Pomabaza leaving Pondoland for a coal mine in Natal in 1824 with the only written record being the statement of Nongoloza, also known as Jan Note, to the Director of Prisons in 1912 when Nongoloza equated “...the great state of Nineveh which rebelled against the Lord” with the mission of the Number gangs as “rebels against the Government’s laws”. At a relatively early stage in my research a copy of part of an unpublished book by Vearey⁹⁶ was given to me. The first 70 pages deal in detail with the intricate ceremonials, military ranks, formal ritualistic questions and answers to be learnt and the whole tradition of what became the 28s, the 27s and the 26s in the continuing struggle against the Mapuza.

The tradition of the Number was, and to some extent still is, liturgical and traditional, but based essentially on discipline. Departure from the discipline of the Number gang to which a prisoner had been initiated – usually forcibly by an act of sodomy in the case of the 28s – brought severe disciplinary action against the malefactor, and in many cases the consequence was death. Extreme violence was central to the power of the Number gangs over the prison inmates.

The prison gang system remains intrinsic to prison life in South Africa to the extent that peace in the prisons of the Western Cape is dependent upon the rivalry, but also the co-existence between the 26s, 27s and 28s. Social ordering in prisons is dependent upon an unstated, mutually inter-dependent form of social contract between the employees of Correctional Services and the prison gangs.

⁹⁵ Remarks made to me on 2 April 2006 in Mitchells Plain.

⁹⁶ Vearey, J. A. (n.d). *Nongoloza’s legacy – from popular revolt to prison and street gangs in the Western Cape*. Unpublished Report. Institute of Criminology, University of Cape Town.

A former inmate of Pollsmoor Prison,⁹⁷ who had managed to avoid becoming a member of any Number gang by, in part, learning the ritual greetings of all three Number gangs, insisted at the end of a lengthy tape-recorded interview:

Gangs play an important part in the smooth running of the prisons: without the gangs there would be more violence: more murders, more stabbings. The Number is based on respect, discipline – it keeps the peace. The warders would stand no chance without the gangs.

Until the publication of Steinberg's *The Number*⁹⁸ it appears that the majority of the population knew little of this remarkable and unique phenomenon. Without exception everybody interviewed by me about the Number gangs was anxious to inform me – sometimes at considerable length – that Magien Wentzel, the central figure of the book around whose life the book is based, was a 'man of no importance', 'a cheat', 'a bum' and even stronger words. Whether that is correct is irrelevant, in that in *The Number*, and the more academic *Nongolza's Children*⁹⁹ Steinberg paints a remarkable picture of what to many was an unknown world. Steinberg's scholarship was later to be augmented by Heather Parker Lewis.¹⁰⁰

To many on the Cape Flats, however, the contents of these writings would not have been so surprising.

As Steinberg¹⁰¹ points out, that although to the old style Number gang the idea of the Number outside the walls of the prison was absurd

All this began to change in the late 1980s. The imagery and ritual of the prison arrived on the street – bastardised, in scraps and pieces – and spread like wildfire. By the later 1990s two of the major street gangs of the time – the Americans and the Firm – had adopted Number-gang ritual wholesale (the Americans adopted 26 ritual, while the Firm adopted 28 ritual). Indeed in the early 2000s the Firm began calling itself the 28s. Its leaders had designated themselves generals and had appointed captains, sergeants and judges. The street gangs took the world of the prison – its metaphors, its nomenclatures, its logic – and imprinted it on the ghettos.

This change of course coincided with the new drugs coming onto the market in the Western Cape. Dagga, and later mandrax, had been there for some time, but now cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin and some 'club drugs' were being sold extensively. Drug use was expanding into new areas with new markets. The old Street gangs had to react and change.

⁹⁷ Interview of 3 April 2006.

⁹⁸ Steinberg, J. (2004a). *The Number*. Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers.

⁹⁹ Steinberg, J. (2004b). *Nongolza's children – Western Cape prison gangs during and after apartheid*. Johannesburg: Centre for the study of Violence and Reconciliation.

¹⁰⁰ Lewis, H. P. (2006). *God's gangsters – The history, language, rituals, secrets and myths of South Africa's prison gang*. Cape Town: ihilihili press.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

In many ways the situation then is again today reflected in the dilemmas being created by the need to change to cater for the vastly increased market for tik.

An additional factor then was the uncertainty created by the emerging politics of the transformation.

Two men in particular – Colin Stansfield with the 28s prison gang and Jackie ‘Jackass’ Lonte (Neville Heroldt) with the 26s - together with others, appear to have made a deliberate and visionary move. Using the Firm and CORE as devices to act as smoke-screens, the decision was made to bring the prison Number gangs out of the prisons and onto the streets. It was visionary, since if it had succeeded it would have brought discipline to the relatively disorganised rabbles of the Street gangs. Street gangs, as will be discussed subsequently, have many reasons for existence, and people join street gangs for many reasons other than committing crime for profit.

Stansfield and Lonte were multi-millionaires. They flaunted their wealth in acts of seeming philanthropy in the Cape Flats areas they knew so well. As Steinberg¹⁰² put it : “They became heroes, indeed gods, to scores of young men of the Western Cape underclass...” What Stansfield and Lonte did not want, however, was to bring the power of the old styled generals and others of high rank in the orthodox prison Number gangs into positions of supreme control in the Street gangs. That would defeat the objectives, in that these old styled officers of the prison Number gangs were not businessmen, and in particular did not understand the new world of marketing illegal drugs for vast profits.

It appears that this was the reasoning behind the decision to deliberately defile and devalue the traditions built up over decades. In effect a decision was made to commit profanities against the liturgy and sanctity of the prison Number gangs. Novice supplicants who wished to join the Number gangs – young willing men on the Cape Flats – would be inducted into some of the rituals of the prison Number gangs *outside* the prison walls. This would involve teaching to the young men some of the basic rituals, and the use of some of the initiation procedures previously confined to behind the prison walls. Sodomy – albeit usually consensual – was used so that the member of the gang could say that he had become a 28. The Street gangs could continue to exist, but ultimately the members of the Street gangs would owe allegiance to the Number gangs rather than, for example, the Junky Funky Kids or the Born Free Kids.

Unfortunately for this overall aim, Colin Stansfield was arrested for tax evasion, imprisoned on 17 March 2001 and subsequently died of cancer. Jackie Lonte was assassinated in 2000. Without their leadership what was left was the hybrid, which remains at present.

The street gangs are still wholly fragmented. The Number gangs are on the streets, but the discipline and managed control of the prison Gangs are still missing.

¹⁰² Ibid. At pg. 58.

This it seems will have to change if the ‘barons of tik’ are to expand the market even more, and reap the profits that they desire.

Before turning in detail to the Street gangs of today, it is important to consider where the prison Number gangs have been left by the havoc created by Stansfield and Lonte through their deliberate degradation of the basics of the prison Number gangs.

Most of my limited experience relates to Pollsmoor Prison, but there is no reason to think that other prisons are completely different, though Pollsmoor perhaps stands in a unique category in the Western Cape by reason of its size and chronic over-crowding. The veterans of the prison Number gangs still hold sway in prison. They still expect that eventually when they leave prison they will immediately move into senior positions in the Street gangs, but as Steinberg¹⁰³ remarks “the gangs of today are disfigured wreckages of their former selves.”

Efforts are still made by the old style prison Number gang leaders to retain some discipline. Initiation into gangs outside prison is, to the surprise of some entering Pollsmoor Prison, not recognised, and the prisoner has to go through an initiation ceremony. He may have thought that he had been made a 26 outside prison, but finds himself being forcibly initiated into the 28s inside and thereafter has to remain in the 28s until he leaves prison.

The view of one old-time general was expressed to me succinctly in these words “... discipline has gone in the prisons.... The street [number] gangs will take over in prison”.¹⁰⁴

Drugs are still of crucial importance inside prison. Whether the system of old gang members (indotas) organising ‘pokes’ (cylinders) full of drugs, to be inserted anally into young men in police cells and at court prior to the prisoner being taken to Pollsmoor Prison, takes place was not revealed whilst talking to recent inmates of Pollsmoor Prison.¹⁰⁵

What was revealed is that the prison is awash with all types of illegal drugs and alcohol. It is just as easy to get drugs in Pollsmoor Prison as on the streets of the Cape Flats. To a large extent the process of getting the drugs into Pollsmoor Prison is organised by the prison staff, who are members of the prison Number gangs or who operate closely in conjunction with the gangs. Money to buy the drugs is easy to get into the prison, and personal observation of money being passed to prisoners at visiting times made clear that

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Interview of 2 April 2006.

¹⁰⁵ Interview at Office of Judicial Inspectorate of Prisons of March 2006.

this is done with the overt consent of the prison staff. The sale of drugs in the prison is under the control of the prison Number gangs.

In the past, the main drugs were mandrax tablets and dagga. Tik brings a wholly new dimension. Tik is now the drug most frequently used. It has the advantage over all other drugs in price, and it is easily to transport. Its danger is obvious. Mandrax and dagga in a sense eased matters along, and helped prisoners to spend the many hours in intolerable overcrowded cells in a soporific state. Tik after the initial euphoria has the opposite effect. The 'stay awake' drug which causes irrational violence is clearly a menace in the conditions prevailing in Pollsmoor Prison. Although evidence is not easy to obtain, there have been reports to me of a vastly increased number of fights between prisons and stabbings of prisoners. The mixture of tik and buttons into tablet form also has undesirable effects, since it appears that although the user goes to sleep, when he awakens his behaviour is as if he is very drunk, which means that he is staggering and falling over bodies who have nowhere else to move. In cells where 28 gang members guard their 'land' on half of the cell facing the sunset and the 26s guard their 'land' facing the sunrise assiduously, the scope for conflict is not difficult to envisage.

The emergency situations in the prisons are beginning to be reported:¹⁰⁶ "War has broken out in Western Cape prisons. And two warders have already lost their lives." It does not take a vivid imagination to contemplate the nightmare scenario which continuing use of tik in prisons may induce.

6.2 The Street Gangs

The members of the Street gangs are the foot-soldiers of the criminal army involved in the business of selling illegal drugs. They take the obvious risks, they often get killed or maimed, and yet their financial rewards are usually very small. They may live with the hope of making the enormous fortunes which they see a very small number of men from the Cape Flats making, but in the overwhelming majority of cases it will remain a slender hope.

Youths do not in the Western Cape join gangs for the sole purpose of making money. Their motives for joining gangs are complex and labyrinthine.

The seminal starting point for study of the Street gangs of the Cape Flats remains Pinnock¹⁰⁷ of 1984. His emphasis was on what he describes as two important questions: one about culture (what distinguishes gangs?) and two about resistance (what is their socio-political potency?). His answers, as quoted, remain valid today:

¹⁰⁶ The *Son* of 19 January 2007.

¹⁰⁷ Pinnock, D. (1982). *The Brotherhoods: Street Gangs and State Control in Cape Town*. Cape Town: David Philip. See particularly pgs. 99-101.

...a central reason for gang formation is not lack of motivation, laziness or poor education among the street youth. It is stark poverty in an equally impoverished environment. Ganging is primarily a survival technique, and it is obvious that as long as the city is part of a socio-economic system which reproduces this poverty, no amount of policing will stop the ghetto brotherhoods.

The only small amendment required is to substitute 'Cape Flats' for 'city'. He continues:

The formation of the brotherhoods [however] is much more than a response to poverty or the search for wealth ... Gangs are not only bound together by collective behaviour or need, but more particularly by territoriality...

Pinnock¹⁰⁸ returned to the culture of the Street gangs some 13 years later. In the Preface of this later publication he states that, instead of looking at external factors his concentration is on the question: "What is it about adolescence that makes gangs so attractive?" The answer, in substance, is presented in pages 28 to 55 under the chapter heading "*Ganging as rite of passage*"; The sub-headings within this chapter give a cogent picture of many of the reasons why youth join gangs: "Separation, disposition, language, posturing on the street corner, ritual symbols, identity, territoriality, liminality, performance in battle, body mutilations, first kill, confusion between reality and fantasy".

The gangs become a substitute family, and in many cases become the first real family the youth has ever known. They give a sense of belonging in a society where they feel they have no place. They provide some sort of cocoon from the harsh reality of life.

Some cultural aspects have of course changed in the 20 plus years since *The Brotherhoods* was written. The influence of the Crips Gang and the Blood Gang in Los Angeles is now universally known as a result of films and television. A gang member from South Manchester could easily communicate with a gang member on the Cape Flats in the language of rap. The aspirations, on a superficial level, are similar: to wear designer clothes – initially Nike and Reebok trainers, Billabong and O'Neill shirts, Diesel and Levi jeans rather than Mr. Price; to get some nice 'bling' (jewellery) and a flashy watch. The dreams are of the Gucci shoes, the Armani and Hugo Boss clothes, the Rolex watches and BMW cars. A life style as enjoyed by the 'elite gangsters'.

The socio-political aspect has also changed since 1984. Transformation has taken place. As Desai¹⁰⁹ remarks in a slightly bitter sentence, which does seem to encapsulate much thinking on the Cape Flats:

Leading members of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL), all dressed up in designer clothes and wielding attaché cases, have linked with white mining magnates in a 'get rich' scam.

The Coloured population appear disillusioned by the Western Cape that has evolved in the years since 1994. The gangs remain a focus for this disillusionment. If legitimate

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Desai, op.cit. note 92.

means cannot lead to a dramatic change in life-style, illegitimate ones can - sometimes. Aspirations can only meet hopes by the use of illegal means. Without crime and the gangs there is a lethal absence of hope.

The bringing of the prison Number gangs onto the streets by Colin Stansfield and Jackie Lonte has brought an added attraction to the gangs with the mystique of feeling a part of 'The Number'. Although in major part this is more illusory than real, it is a powerful motive for youths to join gangs.

One of the conversations in the course of the research was with a youth just aged 16. My description of him for the purposes of remembering him was: only child, slightly built, weedy and softly spoken. After describing with obvious pride that he was a 'Sexy Boy' and showing me the tattoos to prove it, he explained that the name 'Sexy Boys' was in fact an acronym, and explained the words for each letter. Asked whether he was a member of the Number, he said that he was a 26, but that he wanted to be a 27. This immature, callow youth obviously believed that he would soon be part of the blood line of Kilikijan without having any real knowledge of the significance or dangers of this. It was to him a very real reason for being part of the gang.

The Street gang members use their gang names as well as saying that they are 26s. Many who regard themselves as 28s have dispensed with Street gang names and simply describe themselves as, for example, Belhar 28s or Elsie's River 28s. Trying to understand the maze of the named street gangs would take a regiment of researchers working around the clock every day. Pinnock¹¹⁰ reported:

A count in 30 areas on the Cape Flats during 1982 found in daily existence 280 groups, who identified themselves as gangs. Nearly 80 per cent of the gang members interviewed said their group was more than 100 strong, half put the figure at 200, and several at 2,000.

Vearey,¹¹¹ in 1997, recorded:

Of the total of approximately 128 street gangs, 9 gangs can be described as 'super gangs' with infra structures extending to most Cape Flats townships and operations extending into primary central business districts. These gangs included the following:

- the 26 orientated Americans gang and their affiliates;
- the 28 gang and their affiliates eg The Firm;
- the Junky Funky Kids;
- the Hard Livings gang;
- the Junior Mafia;
- the Sexy Boys;
- the Dixie Boys;
- the Cisko Yakkies.

In June 2000 Kinnes¹¹² stated:

¹¹⁰ Pinnock, op.cit., note 107. At pg. 3.

¹¹¹ Vearey, op.cit note 96. At pg. 70.

The SAPS Gang Unit has provided the following figures: approximately 137 gangs are operating on the Cape Flats with membership running between 80,000 and 100,000.

Standing,¹¹³ under the heading “*The base*”, deals with how he perceived the position in 2003:

As is to be expected with such a high number of gangs there is a great deal of variety in their structures and characteristics. Of the numerous Cape Flats gangs, a small number have become much larger than the rest – becoming what many refer to as primary gangs. The largest at the moment is the Americans gang closely rivalled by the Hard Livings Kids (often referred to as the Hard Livings). Both have a membership of several thousand, have outlived their original leadership core and now operate in pockets thorough the region...

A plethora of small gangs form and die out on a regular basis. Most of these short-lived groups last as long as their initial members and some consist of no more than 10 individuals. Unlike the primary gangs, they approximate to the classic notion of a gang as much as they are egalitarian, move together as a group and share a common territory.

Some of “the base” as described by Standing was understandable in terms of what was emerging in my research: some was not. The fundamentals had been explained at the outset. The named gangs are 26s: the 28s do not have names. As with the 26s and the 28s in prisons they feel hostility towards each other, and if they step on each others ‘turf’ or fields of activities, fighting break out. That was relatively clear until the Mongrels and the Cisco Yakkies were linked to the 28s, even though, obviously, they are named gangs. A further complication on being told that the Mongrels, who are regarded as being very tough fighters in the tradition of the prison gangs, had in fact started in prisons, although a named Street gang that is scattered all over the Cape Flats.

My aim was not to discover all of the intricacies of how all the street gangs operate at all levels, but to try to get an overall view of how the illegal drugs were being sold. There is a tik pandemic. The tik is being sold at street level. Who is doing the selling? From where do they get the tik to sell? Simple issues to state, but, as became more and more apparent, difficult to disentangle.

In an endeavour to get to some basics a study was attempted of the Sexy Boys – a large and established named Street gang. Documentation¹¹⁴ was available on the police investigations, which eventually lead to the conviction of Michael Booyesen in 2003.

¹¹² Kinnes I. (2000b) *From urban street gangs to criminal empires: The changing face of gangs in the Western Cape – National and local trends*. ISS. Monograph No 48. Cape Town: Institute of Security Studies. At pg. 5.

¹¹³ Standing A. (2002) *The Social contradictions of organised crime on the Cape Flats* ISS Occasional Paper 74. Cape Town: Institute of Security Studies. At pg. 3.

¹¹⁴ South African Police Service. (1999). *Unpublished Report on the Criminal Activities of the Sexy Boys*. Cape Town: SAPS.

The Belhar Sexy Boys, also known as the 9 to 11s because of their habit of firing 9 to 11 shots to kill rivals, were 26s, and in conflict with 28s-aligned gangs in Belhar and Elsie's River. The gang was surprisingly small – 17 in number. The main reason for the gang's activities was to avenge the death of Percy Booysen, who had been killed by the 28s.¹¹⁵ Michael Booysen had a long-time personal feud with Quinton Marinus (see section 5.1) going back to school days. They were involved in a number of illegal activities, but they were trying to control the expanding drugs trade in Belhar. Their base was the Belhar Rugby Club of which they were members, which is an interesting concept for those pinning their hopes on breaking street gangs through the application of s. 9 of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act, No 121 of 1998. Surprising information was that, although small in number, they had links with a drug dealer in Durban, and they also had links to Gauteng, where cars which the Sexy Boys had stolen were exchanged for drugs and firearms. This may be of some importance, if it is an indication that, in the long run, ephedrine and tik may be obtained by street gangs from sources in other parts of South Africa other than the Chinese. What was also clear was that other groups of Sexy Boys co-operated with the Belhar Sexy Boys. These operated separately and were in the rural towns of the Boland – Stellenbosch, Ceres, Wolseley, Vredenburg and Saldanha. Sexy Boys gangs now seem to operate in at least Manenberg, Heldevld, Mitchells Plain and probably other areas.

This loose grouping of gangs with the same name, but who essentially stick to their own 'turf' and territory made some sense, as did the fact that the sale of drugs was, although of importance, only one reason for the existence of the Belhar Sexy Boys and probably not the most important. This is where it seems that the changes will have to occur if gangs like the Sexy Boys are to be of importance in what, for the successful gangs, amounts to making significant amounts of money by increasingly marketing one product – illegal drugs, and in particular tik.

Having attempted this analysis, my attention turned to the Americans.

Everybody was in agreement that, since the imprisonment of Rashied Staggie (see section 5.7) the Americans are the dominant named gang in the Western Cape. The membership of gangs using the American brand name is often estimated at 50,000 plus.

Difficult questions then arose in trying to define what exactly the term 'American gang' represents.

Essentially it appears to be an umbrella term embracing many separate gangs. There is no one single unified American gang.

One constant theme has been that, since the death of Jackie Lonte, there is nobody who has overall control in relation to the Americans. This is their weakness. There are a

¹¹⁵ The Longsight Crew and the Pitt Bull crew, two of four major drugs gangs in South Manchester, were formed as a result of the brothers of their founders being killed.

number of powerful American leaders in specific areas, but nobody capable of bringing all of the American gangs together.

Throughout the period of this research, the tabloid press has been full of a 'war' in and around Kensington and Maitland between Igshaad Daniels (Sanie American) and Christopher 'Ougat' Patterson, who is associated with a gang called the Wonder Kids. Details of that struggle, in the course of which both Sanie and Ougat have been shot, are not important for present purposes. What are important are certain issues, which the conflict raises.

Sanie American is undoubtedly a very important gang leader. He is always described in the press as *the leader* of the Americans. In the Kensington, Facreton, Maitland area he is supreme, in particular through his connection with corrupt police. Significantly, however, other American gangs from other areas have not come to his aid. A term used frequently to me was that he is 'ugly' American. 'Ugly' is used to explain that he is an old-fashioned, traditional Cape Flats gang leader, as is 'Ougat'. They are fighting a prolonged personal war, when the opportunity in the new market for selling tik should be being exploited. Sanie is the sort of old-style gang leader the businessmen in the drugs trade want to eliminate.

An interesting side-line to this is that other gang leaders and the criminal elite seem happy for this conflict to continue, since it draws the attention of the public and the police to this personal confrontation, and allows others of the criminal elite to get on with business of making profits in other areas of the Cape Flats. To them the events in Kensington are a side-show, whilst the main events continue elsewhere.

The other 'war' being fought since April 2006, when Gavin Myburgh was killed, continues unabated in Hanover Park. It may be that when this conflict between the Americans of Hanover Park and the Ghetto Boys subsides, some long term conclusions can be drawn as to what will occur in the drugs market, and in particular in the trade of tik and heroin, in the foreseeable future. Gavin Myburgh – the leader of the local Americans – was deliberately assassinated. There can be little doubt that he was targeted by the Ghetto Boys, who deliberately precipitated what they knew would be a significant conflict.

One of the features that the Ghetto Boys and their supporters appear to have gambled on was that the Americans would not easily produce a successor to Gavin Myburgh. They were correct. The Americans are rudderless. There appears to be a realisation that the Americans, as an umbrella gang, are weaker than they have been for many years. They badly need another leader of the stature of Jackie Lonte.

In this respect a feature, which has emerged on a number of occasions, is material. In all of the gangs, family tradition is a significant feature. Generation after generation go into the named Street gangs. The son of Jackie Lonte, Walid, although relatively young, is spoken on the streets as being the man to fill the shoes of his father. Similarly, in the 28s, the name Stansfield is obviously revered, and they seem to be looking to Ralph, the

nephew of Colin. Ralph Stansfield denies any gang involvement, but if he is correct, he appears to have been unfortunate, in that at the age of 27 he has been charged and acquitted of committing five murders and arson when a mother and three children were killed, and on 16th January 2007 he was shot at and injured at his petrol station in Bishop Lavis.¹¹⁶

In Hanover Park the Chinese, through the Junior Mafias, have aligned themselves to the Ghetto Boys. This is an unusual event. The Chinese, in arming the Ghetto Boys and providing tik to them, have shown their colours for the future. The street gangs must become organised in the sale of tik. This conflict is likely to show how the sale of tik by the street gangs will be formulated.

Standing¹¹⁷ in the course of discussing the concept that 'gangs cause crime' uses the words "...gangs may be bad for (illegal) business". That is true in relation to unregulated and uncontrolled street gang members, but in the drugs trade, gang members or merchants acting as street salesmen are a necessary evil for the businessmen. The businessmen, who are increasingly controlling the illegal drugs trade, are tired of what they regard as futile contests over status, respect, and past history. The street gangs and their leaders, who are not willing to change, will not get tik and heroin. They will become unimportant in the street drugs trade, however important they regard themselves as Street gangs. The Street gangs are going to have to learn that they need to exercise discipline. There can be no killing and no fighting simply on the basis of personal animosity. No petty rivalries simply because somebody has been 'dissed' (disrespected). These will be hard lessons for the up-and-coming young elite of the Junior Mafia to teach to the street leaders and the members of the gangs. Old dogs (in particular the prison Number gang ranking officers) in the Street gangs will have to learn new tricks.

The incentive is of course that the tik pandemic gives the opportunity for enormous profits. It requires new organisation, since the cheap price of a tik straw means that very large quantities have to be sold. New markets- and in particular the white communities in what are called the 'leafy suburbs' - will have to be infiltrated, and school children in those areas supplied. This is already happening. If the Chinese and their chosen 'Almost Mr. Bigs' retain their present market position as suppliers of tik and heroin, this is likely to be achieved. There are likely to be conflicts as this happens, but the businessmen gangsters in control seem likely to be able to persuade many of those who organise the street sellers and merchants to put profit before personality. The successful ones will become solely drugs gangs with a membership who know that they can make money by concentrating on selling tik and heroin. If the tik pandemic continues at the present rate there will be enough money to make the criminals at all levels involved content, and many will become very rich men. Many events can interfere with this scenario, but on the evidence available it seems a realistic outline.

¹¹⁶ *Daily Voice* of 18 January 2007.

¹¹⁷ Standing, op.cit. note 46. At 15-16.

7 African Townships and Informal Settlements

Information about Guguletu, Nyanga, New Crossroads, Philippi, Langa, Khayelisha, and the informal settlements, such as Imizamo Yethu (Hout Bay) and Du Noon (Milnerton) has proved elusive, although certain efforts have been made. Earlier written works and gangs and drugs have perhaps not surprisingly concentrated on the coloured areas where the problems have been more transparent.

Efforts to gain reliable evidence concerning these areas where so much of the population of the Cape lives in deprivation have been stymied by the secretive and closed nature of the communities as much as by an inability to speak Xhosa. However, some information has been ascertained, and it is clear that with the tik revolution reaching these areas, as is undoubtedly happening, something is preferable to simply ignoring the issue.

The limited available documentation as background comes in the main from Redpath.¹¹⁸ In her (undated) article she states:

Gangs are not the exclusive preserve of the Coloured communities along the Cape flats, nor are they based solely in this area. Gangs reminiscent of the notorious Msomi gang, which operated in the townships around Johannesburg, are present in urban townships and rural squatter camps in the Western Cape. Township gangs became prominent during 1998. They have features which are quite different from those emanating from the Coloured community.

She identifies a number of gangs- Dogg Pound, KZN, Muscovites, Thoza and Kakyard. These gangs were not directly related to drug dealing, although she reports that Guguletu was well known as a drop-off point for dagga coming from the Eastern Cape. The criminal activities of these gangs were mainly related to property crime, and were often committed in more affluent areas such as Camps Bay. The gang membership was young, with more than 80 per cent being of school going age. Violence was a significant feature, with youth being intimidated into joining the gangs. This appears to have resulted in vigilante action by communities against the gangs resulting in gang members being stripped and paraded in the streets, and in some cases killed.

The gangs, however, have survived, and, it appears, are flourishing judging by a piece written by Sibongile Somdaka (Chairman of the Anzanian Youth Organisation in the Western Cape).¹¹⁹

In the Country's black townships gangsterism is the order of the day. Women are being abused and children are being gang raped almost daily. Gangsters are holding our communities to ransom.

¹¹⁸ Redpath J. (2001) *The Hydra Phenomenon, Rural Sitting Ducks, and Other Recent Trends Around Organised Crime in the Western Cape*. Durban: Institute for Human Rights & Criminal Justice Studies
Redpath J. (n.d) "The Bigger Picture. The Gang Landscape in the Western Cape." *Indicator SA*. 18(1): 38.

¹¹⁹ Somdaka, S. *Cape Argus* of 8 September 2006.

The much talked about feud between the two gangs in Cape Town's black townships – the Palestinians and the Soldiers – is a direct indication of that, especially in Nyanga, New Crossroads, Philippi and Langa. The abuse of drugs and other substances has reached alarming proportions and is out of control in many instances.

A limited amount of independent research was possible through somebody who knows members of the black gangs. It was hoped to speak to a black gang leader, but it was indicated that he would require payment in advance of seeing me, and the offer was declined.

Information was to the effect that, although little is known about the gang groupings in the African areas, they are large-scale and well ordered. They are long established and based on families. There are close links with the ANC, which go back to the 'struggle' period and continue. The leaders are well known and influential in the communities. Anybody allowed to do business with the gang leaders is regarded as privileged. The gang members have a reputation for extreme violence, operating mainly during the hours of darkness. He stated that the inclination of these gangs was to kill first, and then rob, if that was the motive for the attack. Named gangs, stated by him, to be of significance were the Czars, the Soldiers, the Naughty Boys and the Palestinians.

There are some contacts between the Black gangs and the Coloured gangs, and the Coloured gangs will buy dagga, in particular, from the black gangs, who have a major share in this market through continuing connections, established over generations with family members in what were known as the Transkei and the Ciskei. Almost without exception the black and coloured gangs do not fight each other and keep at a wary arm's length. Redpath¹²⁰ mentions a possible connection between the KZN gang and the Hard Livings in the early 1990s.

Until very recently the drugs used in the African areas were almost exclusively the legal drug of alcohol, dagga, mandrax and the 'white pipe.' There is some evidence of a dealer in heroin, but he appears to be a one-off. Obviously the type of drug chosen for consumption is determined by financial resources as well as cultural traditions. The choice appears to be changing dramatically as a result of tik. On a price/ effect ratio tik is affordable even in these very poor areas, and the evidence is that much of the youth in the earlier mentioned areas of the Cape Flats now use tik on a regular basis

When the rural areas are considered there is even clearer evidence, already, of the use of tik in the informal settlements. The evidence that is available indicated that the use of tik in the African areas of the Cape Flats is growing at an incredible rate. Anecdotal evidence and newspaper reports suggest that this is already having horrendous social effects. Murders and rapes of babies, mutilation and torture of animals and rapes of women of all ages are reported on a daily basis, and appear to have increased in number and brutality in recent months. It is thought that these are attributable to the uncontrollable violence associated with the secondary effects of tik use.

¹²⁰ Op cit Redpath, op.cit. note 118.

This appears to have been recognised by the communities at large, and there have been numerous reports of murders of and attacks upon suspected tik dealers and youths who have used tik before committing criminal attacks.

Capital punishment may have been formally abolished in South Africa,¹²¹ but is thriving as a punishment in these areas where all that is happening is that the middle-men of the criminal justice system have been removed.

If tik continues to spread, like fire does at certain times of the year through the informal settlements, the consequence in relation to drug dealing and criminal gangs will be potent. Unlike the Coloured areas where the existing well-established structures may be able to cope with a degree of innovation, the Black areas may require a wholly revised gang infrastructure to purchase the drugs, to wholesale the drugs and then to retail on a massive scale.

On the present evidence the top Black drug merchants who emerge will have to go to the Chinese for the pure tik. This will involve new and interesting alliances. It is at the street-selling level that the greatest changes will have to be made, and made quickly. It is inconceivable that the Coloured gangs will be allowed to move into the Black areas without opposition. The already established Black gangs will turn from the property related crimes, which have sustained them over the years, to street drug dealing on a major scale. This is likely to cause major problems, and it is probably not being over-pessimistic to envisage major turf wars occurring, whilst some order is established in short-term chaos.

Vigilantism is likely to increase as the communities become more and more affected by youths committing property-related crimes to get the funds to pay for tik straws. Often these property crimes will be out of all proportion in consequences to the value of the profit realised from the crimes, and examples which are already prevalent are the stealing of copper wire causing some train breakdowns and electricity cuts, and car headlights being broken simply to get the bulbs to create the 'lollies' needed for the use of tik.

Alcohol, dagga, button and the white pipe may continue to be the chosen substances of the older generations, but tik is likely to be used by male and female youths in ever increasing numbers, and all the evidence is that a considerable number of the older inhabitants of these areas will also turn to tik use.

The taxi business may play an important role in the distribution of tik. Instinct says it must, having regard for the vast numbers on the roads. Many are owned by the 'Almost Mr. Bigs'. The taxis are perfect for the distribution of illegal drugs in all areas, but, apart from seeing deals taking place amongst the hundreds of taxis each day gathered at Wynberg station, evidence to support this theory has been sparse.

¹²¹ *S v. Makwanyane* 1995 (2) SACR 1 (CC).

8 Conclusion

When people learnt of my intention of carrying out research on the Cape Flats, the inevitable questions were: 'what do you intend to do with the results? : what do you hope to achieve?' The reply then was: 'To try to find out more about the subject matters, provide some information to other, and to raise some of the relevant questions. It is not to provide answers'.

That remains the situation

Answers are for those in positions of authority with much greater experience and knowledge.

The message is that the menace of tik remains unabated. Whether the term 'pandemic', 'tsunami', 'hurricane', 'forest-fire', or some other is used, tik is raging out of control in the Western Cape. There are organised criminals who intend to ensure that this continues unless they are stopped.

Far from the spread of tik slowing down, in the period from March 2006 to January 2007 when the research was carried out, it appears that tik is being used more and more widely. The other noticeable change towards the end of the research was that, because heroin had significantly been reduced in price, the sellers of tik were also attempting to increase the market, in particular amongst teenagers, for heroin.

The Chinese through their pre-eminent position in the supply of tik and heroin, both as importers and manufacturers, are in a position to dominate the market. They can choose to whom they sell. The Almost Mr Bigs are aware of this, and realise that they need the Chinese at present. The cheap selling price of tik and heroin at street level means that the numbers to whom these drugs are sold has to be constantly expanded. Not many years ago it would have been rare for a teenager on the Cape Flats to have a cellular telephone. It is now a necessity. The 'Almost Mr. Bigs' will attempt to expand the market for the sale of tik with the same rapidity as the market for cellular telephones expanded. This will involve not only making more and more sales in the Coloured areas, but also expanding into areas that are predominantly occupied by the White population. These areas are obvious target markets to aim at for those who make vast profits from the sale of tik and heroin.

To enable the expansion to continue, the street gangs are adapting to deal with an expanded and unfamiliar market. New 'Almost Mr. Bigs' have emerged, and will continue to do so, since they are businessmen rather than gang leaders and realise that the Street gangs have to be persuaded to be more disciplined in the business of selling drugs than in the past. Street gangs, whose leaders to not accept that they are required to be drug sellers predominately will become more and more marginalised in the drugs trade.

Although the authorities at all levels have to an extent woken up to the devastation that tik is bringing to the Western Cape, there are enormous challenges ahead. The drugs trade is already adapting to the new drugs market conditions. It will be difficult for those in authority to react with similar expedition.

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