

Power and Performativity in Prison:
Exploring Male Sex Workers' Experiences and Performances of
Gender and Sexuality Pre/During/Post-Incarceration

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Abstract

Power and Performativity in Prison: Exploring Male Sex Workers' Experiences and Performances of Gender and Sexuality Pre/During/Post-Incarceration

This study explores the narratives of men who become male sex workers after being in prison. This study looks at prison as a fluid space for sexual expression and gender performativity, which is ironic given the view of prison as punitive and repressive. Sex within the South African prison system is silenced and taboo particularly within the Number prison gang where sex is heavily regulated, ritualized and fiercely guarded. The research question asks how do men who are or become male sex workers construct and perform their gendered and sexual identities in prison and on the street? This qualitative study employs the organizing metaphor of dramaturgy to explore how prison as a social setting (stage) impacts on the gendered and sexual performances of men (actors) who have been incarcerated. Drawing on Foucault's theories of the repressive hypothesis and peripheral sexualities (1990), Butler's theory of performativity (1990) and Gagnon and Simon's scripting theory (1973) this study illustrates theoretically how prison sex culture and male sex work can be theorized from a feminist standpoint perspective. This feminist study is located in the social constructionist paradigm. It is underpinned by grounded theory and narrative methodology to explore the narratives of men who have been incarcerated and continue into sex work post-release. Biographical interviews were conducted with 15 men who were participants in a male sex work support group. Findings revealed two overarching themes in the narratives that explain how men construct and perform their gendered and sexual identities in prison. Renegotiation was the process where the subject engaged in an internalized monologue with self, constantly exploring and (re)constructing the gendered and sexual self in response to the shifting contexts of prison and the streets. Negotiation was the process where the subject engaged in an external dialogue with others. Through interactions with others, they were able to perform gender and sexuality publicly. By framing it within the discourse of dramaturgy, this study shows an alternative view of prison sex culture. (Re)imagining prison as the 'stage', prisoners as the 'actors', prison rituals as the 'script' and identity performances as the 'act', we can begin to envision an alternative script and narrative of prison unfolding.

Jan-Louise Victoria Lewin

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A sociologist of sex occupies the same status position in sociology as a sex worker in the larger society: a reminder of the seamy unpleasantness of the bodies to which our minds happen to be connected
[Michael Kimmel]

The mystical world of prison and the Number gangs invites us into a world where power and performance are acts staged on a daily basis. Surrounding the stage in which this play is set are grey walls, steel bars, loud banging gates and endless hours to rehearse a performance that plays on an almost endless loop. This setting is where the central characters of this research study delivered their performances.

Men's prisons represent an extremely hierarchical, male dominated space where hegemonic masculinity flourishes through its control and command over other, subordinate masculinities. The rigidity of the physical and symbolic boundaries operating within this male dominated space – while favouring a dominant type of masculinity – also serves to constrain less dominant types of masculinity. The constraint in question here is one that is informed and stylized after extreme heteropatriarchal and heterosexist traditional masculinities that originate outside its walls. The prison setting emulates homosocial and hierarchical relations among men that contribute to the presentation and reproduction of hegemonic masculinities (Sabo, Kupers & London, 2001). The gendered nature of the prison space – as one that is dominantly masculine – is one where hegemonic masculinity and the Number gangs reigns.

The Number is a complex and intricate organization that has survived for over 150 years (Steinberg, 2004a, 2004b; Parker Lewis, 2010). In it, they hold a wealth of knowledge, bound in rich mysticism and indigenous folklore. The Number gangs is a uniquely South African prison gang system based on an imitation of the colonial British military system (Steinberg, 2004a). The Number, as it is commonly referred, is made up of the following structures: the twenty-sixes gang (26's), the twenty-sevens (27's) and the twenty-eights (28's) (Parker Lewis, 2010). Each gang has a unique role that they fulfill within the prison system. The 26's control contraband and all economic activity within the prison; the 27's engage in acts of aggression, and they are also the mediators and communicators between the 26's and 28's (these latter two gangs are not allowed to communicate directly) (Parker Lewis, 2010); and the 28's are in control of war within the prison as the henchmen, soldiers, and regulators of sex (Parker Lewis, 2010). Another group referred to as the 'Franse' are non-gang members. These inmates have no protection from or against The Number. Their

'numberless' status renders them invisible within the prison gang system and open to various forms of exploitation (Steinberg, 2004a; Parker Lewis, 2010).

The Number offers a language and moral code that all inmates abide by, whether they are members of gangs or not (Parker Lewis, 2010). They offer a history rooted in African folklore and indigenous mythology that appeals to inmates' sense of belonging, brotherhood and need for elevated status within the confines of the prison walls. Thus, The Number provides respectability, honour and a code of brotherhood bound in blood (Steinberg, 2004b). The Number is central to informal and underground prison management and to the prison economy. This prison economy is tied into gendered and sexualized rituals and processes that occur within The Number structures. They are the regulating force behind sex in prison (Steinberg, 2004a). Prison naturally lends itself to the punitive, this is how power functions and operates in this space. Everyone, from guards to inmates fight for power and recognition; for inmates, the Number exists at the top of this hierarchy.

It is in this context that I attempt to understand where marginal identities fit into the hierarchy, what methods and performances they engage in to gain a share of this power. Using the concept of the theatrical metaphor, I explore how the prison as stage, the prisoners as actors and their gender and sexuality as acts are constructed and performed within the prison sex culture and how the latter, in turn, informs their performances post-incarceration as male sex workers on the streets.

In a review of the literature on prison sex culture, there is a considerable amount of research on male rape and coercive sex in prisons (Tewksbury, 1989; Dumond, 1992; Kupers, 2001; Ricciardelli, 2014; Michalski, 2015), a feature that is particularly prevalent in domestic literature with prison studies conducted in South Africa (Gear, 2001, 2003, 2010; Booyens, Hesselink-Louw & Mashabela, 2004; Booyens, 2008; Booyens & Bezuidenhout, 2014); homosexuality comes in at a close second when researching prison sexualities and sexual expressions of identity (Hensley, 2000; Kunzel, 2002; Einat, 2012). As Sit and Ricciardelli (2013) argue, there has been considerably less research that has gone into understanding from the prisoners' perspectives what their experiences of sex and sexuality are in prison, with only a small number of studies looking into personal narratives (Alarid, 2000; Gibson & Hensley, 2013). Very few studies pitch questions to men that ask them to explain in their own words the effects of prison sex culture and how it impacts on their sense of self and self-identification. This study locates itself within this void, addressing men's own narratives and, therefore, contributing further to a more nuanced understanding of prison sex culture.

The central aim of the study is to examine the narratives of male sex workers to understand how they construct and perform gender and sexuality during and after prison. This study seeks to understand male sex workers' experience of gender and sexuality in prison by exploring prison sex culture and how it shapes alternative

expressions of gender and sexuality. Dominant social discourse portrays sex in prison in a negative light, as coercive and violent. Focus on prison sex and sexualities is often only foregrounded when cases in the media are part of current affairs – e.g. Oscar Pistorius, Jub Jub (hip hop artist), and other media representations (Rossouw, n.d.). The rest of the time prison sex culture is relegated to the shadows. This research study attempts to address the silence and to understand what this means for the people living these realities in prison.

In chapter one I present a review of the literature that underpins this study. The literature has been divided into two sections, in the first part, the theoretical framework presents the work of Foucault's (1990) history of sexuality, his refutation of the repressive hypothesis, his thoughts on discourse and power/knowledge and peripheral sexualities. Butler's (1990) theory of performativity addresses the social construction of gender, ideologies of heterosexuality, gender performativity and subversion. Gagnon and Simon's (1973) scripting theory presents a discussion on the social construction of sexuality, gender and sexual scripts, which is categorized into three levels: intrapsychic scripts, interpersonal scripts and cultural scenarios. This is followed by a review of South African and international empirical research into prison studies, with a focus on prison sex and sexualities. The literature is organized into four categories: sexuality, masculinities, prison sex culture and sex work.

In the second chapter, I provide a detailed overview of the methodology employed in this qualitative research study. This feminist research project is located within the social constructionist model. Detailed discussions of the methodological framework, feminist theories, research questions, data collection and data analysis follow.

In the third chapter, I present the findings of analysis. The evidence is presented in four themes: 'performing masculinity' looks at gender construction; 'getting into character' looks at performances of sexuality; 'fragile love' this looks at early relationships, older male influences and sexual relationships in prison; and, lastly, 'it's all staged' looks at experiences of sex work.

In the final chapter, I present a discussion of the findings in collaboration with the research questions and literature. The main findings of this study are divided into two sections. The first is called renegotiation and is the internalized monologue with self. The second is called negotiation and refers to the external dialogues between actors. The final chapter also concludes with the limitations and significance of the study, recommendations and future directions for research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Part I: Theoretical Framework

Foucault: History of Sexuality

Introduction

To understand sex discourse and contemporary sex culture in this modern period I will briefly outline a history of sexuality dating from the 17th century through to the 20th century from a Foucauldian analytical perspective of sexuality. Foucault (1990a) refutes the ‘repressive hypothesis’ that sex has been repressed throughout history. Foucault questions whether the ultimate objective of the repressive hypothesis was for economic or political gains and rather espouses the view that “our epoch has initiated sexual heterogeneities” (Foucault, 1990a:37), a period that sees the multiplication of divergent sexualities as a “multiple implantation of perversions” (Foucault, 1990a:37). The repressive hypothesis is not so much about silence or ignoring sex, but rather about control and regulation (Foucault, 1990a). Our identities are not fixed and natural, nor tied to our gender, sexual preferences or expressions. Rather, our concept of selves as sexual beings is fluid and deeply impacted by history (Foucault, 1990a). The repressive hypothesis is challenged because it sparked a sexual development that prompted new forms of sexualities into the spotlight. The focus on these new sexualities originates in what he terms “peripheral sexualities” (Foucault, 1990a:39).

The Repressive Hypothesis

The repressive hypothesis claims that the history of sexuality over the past three centuries is one of repression, which has informed our thinking about sex and sexuality from a moralistic standpoint. With the rise of the bourgeoisie class, power has repressed, silenced and tabooed sex (Foucault, 1990a), relegating it to a discussion of reproduction and confined to the institution of marriage. Foucault (1990a) identifies this shift taking place from the Middle Ages and Renaissance period, where sex was spoken about more freely and publicly. By contrast, the start of the 17th century saw both a rising view of sex as shameful and stronger political and moral enforcement to control sex (Foucault, 1990a). With the proliferation of a moralistic discourse on sex, attention now moved from marriage and sex for reproduction to the sexual perversions and deviations of children, the mentally ill, criminals and homosexuals (Foucault, 1990a).

The repressive hypothesis placed focus on the relationship between power and sex: power is exerted to control and regulate sex, ensuring ensure it is not spoken about and, therefore, thought of (Foucault, 1990a). According to the repressive hypothesis,

sexual liberation is achieved by talking freely and openly about sex and enjoying sex for pleasure; we will also attain political liberation through such sexual freedom (Foucault, 1990a). Foucault's (1990a) critique of the repressive hypothesis is that sex has, in fact, increasingly been brought into discourse. He calls for an analysis, rather, into how power has operated historically to suppress sexuality.

Foucault uses the notion of 'repression' to outline the relation between sex and power, where power is a dominating force keeping sexual desires and expression at bay. Foucault (1990a) maps the progress of the repressive hypothesis from the 17th century through the 20th century, linking it to the rise of the bourgeoisie ruling class. During this period, sex shifted from the public sphere and was relegated to the private domain, confining it to the marital bedroom between a husband and wife. Discourse on sexuality was thus confined to marriage. At the dawn of this repression, the Christian confessional became the permissible outlet where 'improper' thoughts and feelings could be divulged (Foucault, 1990a). He also identifies psychiatry as an outlet where later on the regulation and control of sex became a medicalized project (Foucault, 1990a)

For Foucault (1990a), power is intricately tied to knowledge and discourse, recognizing the flawed repressive hypothesis itself is a form of discourse on sex. The silencing of the 17th century propelled a "will to knowledge" that led to an intensification of the discourse about sex since the 18th century (Foucault, 1990a). Foucault's refutation of the repressive hypothesis and insistence that discourse functions as a will to power/knowledge ultimately tasks us to learn more about sexuality. This project falls within that category, in learning and questioning more about peripheral sexualities as it takes place within the marginalized space of prison, we gain knowledge on this subject. Through the experiences of the participants we gain insight into a world often relegated to the margins of conscious.

Discourse and Power/Knowledge

Foucault (1990a) refutes the hold of the repressive hypothesis on society and in fact questions the paradox of sex discourse: we proclaim that we are repressed when, in fact, we talk so much about how we cannot talk about sex. Foucault (1990a) links discourse to language and knowledge, locating it at the core of power. He regards the power/knowledge nexus as operating to infer power to those who control knowledge production: regulating what is talked about determines what is known, ultimately affecting how we think about who we are. Hence, it is in this period that Foucault maps how the introduction of sex repression coincides with the rise of the bourgeoisie ruling class. The repressive hypothesis is part of a broader historical class struggle: the bourgeoisie ruling class viewed sex for pleasure as a waste of time and productivity, standing in opposition to their industrious work ethic. The bourgeoisie managed to restrict the discussion and, therefore, knowledge of sex to reproduction. Their desire to control discourse and knowledge about sex was fundamentally linked

to a maintenance of power. However, Foucault points out that the class struggle evolved later, since at first the bourgeoisie were only concerned with their own relations to sex. It was only later, with the rise of the regulation of “perverse” sexualities, that the policing of the proletariat class became a focal point (Foucault, 1990a:122). This “moralization of the poorer classes” (Foucault, 1990a:122) occurred at the end of the 19th century to control the sexual freedom and reproduction of the working classes.

Foucault (1990a) maps the progression of sex discourse from the 17th century where the treatment of transforming sexual desire into discourse was handled within the realm of the church, particularly through religious confession. In the 18th century, with the advancement of demography studies, sex increasingly became a matter of public interest and study. The movement of sex discourse from the private to the public realm marked an important shift: knowledge of sexual perversions and deviations became a key interest of the ruling class to further regulate sex and the sexualities of the masses (Foucault, 1990a). Contrary to popular belief, the prohibition of sex discourse since the 17th century is a fallacy; rather, discourse on sex has only increased, resulting in a “multiplication of discourses” (Foucault, 1990a:18). The importance of this shift is not that people stopped talking about sex, but rather the *way* they talked about sex changed, resulting in changes to the relationship between sex and power.

Peripheral Sexualities

Discourse on sex had previously dealt with marriage, but as discourse progressed, focus on those who were placed on the margins increased. A distinction arose between the violations of marriage bonds, seen as a violation of the church and law, and violations of what was considered natural practice such as homosexuality and mental illness (Foucault, 1990a). From the 18th century leading into the 19th century, there was a concerted undertaking to classify and differentiate non-marital sexual practices and desires. At the turn of the century, as this classification heightened, the concept of sexual degeneracy was introduced as the belief that sexual perversions could be passed down through generations (Foucault, 1990a). Sex was increasingly seen as dangerous: perverse pleasures could be a threat, not just to one person, but to society as a whole. The clampdown on sexual perversions rigorously attempted to regulate the population’s sexual behaviour.

Once again Foucault (1990a) highlights this regulation as a matter of a power struggle. Foucault (1990a) identifies four operations aimed at intensifying a focus on the proliferation of sexual perversions. Firstly, Foucault (1990a) argues the scrutiny placed on sexualities of children, the mentally ill and criminals was more than exclusion and simple repression of discourse, but instead served to problematize and expand the examination of sexuality into a number of different domains, whilst at the same time placing rigid boundaries on acceptable and unacceptable sex discourses

and practices (Foucault, 1990a). Secondly, Foucault (1990a) regards the growing discourse around the concept of homosexuality as arising from a need to view sexuality as intrinsically tied to one's identity. The focus shifted from homosexual acts toward both a deviation from normal 'healthy' sexuality (i.e. between a man and a woman) and, thereby, the corruption of identity and the soul. Third, Foucault sees the increased examination of diverse sexual behaviours as the prelude to the "medicalization of sexuality" (Foucault, 1990a:30). Lastly, the intense scrutiny placed on sex discourse led to sex as the locus of societal life – everything is now seen through the lens of sex.

Foucault (1990a) concludes that in contrast to the claim laid by the repressive hypothesis, this era has witnessed a proliferation of discourses on sex and sexuality. In fact, interest in sexual perversions and deviations outside the confines of marriage has increased over time, which has led to defining and multiplying the very perversities that this period claims to denounce (Foucault, 1990a).

Butler: Performativity

The Social Construction of Gender

For Butler (1990), gender is nothing more than an act, an illusion scripted and performed by an actor. As gender is created internally so too can it be re-created. Butler asserts that gender is constructed and over time it becomes a performance that the actor and audience come to believe and attest to, thus giving it a sense of permanence (Butler, 1990).

A central concept of Butler's performative theory is that "gender is a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler, 1988:519), constructed by the subject¹ through constant, repetitive performance. These performance routines are intrinsically linked to language and discourse. Performativity is the theory that reality is not a given or constant, but rather an illusory creation embodied through language, signs and symbols (Butler, 1990). Gender is a creation by the self, a constructed identity over time and under the social context the subject inhabits. The prisoners' gender and sexuality is influenced by the prison space and their attitude toward prison sex culture is shaped as a result of their social upbringing but also challenged by the prison space. Therefore crossing over from the realities of outside (normative) society into the prison space, exemplifies a confrontation of what outsiders consider 'other', but prisoners would consider as 'normal'. Reality in prison ceases to be the same as the reality on the outside.

¹ I use subject interchangeably with actor throughout

The Gendered Self

Gender is central and encompasses a large part of who we are and our being. Butler (1988) argues that there is no self outside of a gender, that gender is the core of the self. For Butler, one cannot conceive of the self without thinking of the self as gendered. Butler distinguishes between gender as performance and gender as identity: gender is an ‘act’, not a ‘role’.

The supposition of gender as being outside the self is a “social fiction of its own psychological interiority” (1988:528). Gender is neither true nor false; it is not given and stable but, rather, there is no fixed identity by which gender can be measured. As a performance, there are no real or false gender acts. The acts, which are performative, produce cultural signifiers of how that body is gendered:

performing one’s gender wrong initiates a set of punishments both obvious and indirect, and performing it well provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity after all. (Butler, 1988:528)

Butler believes that the naturalization of heterosexuality and the view of a true gender identity are forms of social regulation.

The Ideology of Heterosexuality

Butler asserts that heterosexuality is an “imitation” (Butler, 1990:187). She argues that the claim of heterosexuality’s naturalization is itself an imitation, an ideal that cannot be realized because gender (and sexuality) is a social construct imbued with social meaning. Gender is an act that can be readjusted and traversed; thus, heterosexuality is also a performance – it is not the standard for sexuality, it merely claims to be (Butler, 1990). She states; “imitation is at the heart of the heterosexual project and its gender binarism” (1993:85).

For Butler, it is proof that the exclusion of alternate sexualities is an effort to secure the dominance of heterosexuality, and furthermore, alternate sexualities are pathologized in order to normalize heterosexuality:

hegemonic heterosexuality is itself a constant and repeated effort to imitate its own idealizations [...] it is constantly haunted by that domain of sexual possibility that must be excluded for heterosexualized gender to produce itself. (Butler, 1993:125)

The Repetition of Gender Performativity

Butler (1990) problematizes our thinking of gender through her analysis of gender as nothing more than an invention, an illusion that has very real consequences, particularly for those who deviate from the protracted norm:

the gendered body is rooted in historical acts that have preceded the subject – we are merely copying and imitating what has come before. (Butler, 1988:523)

Gender is an act that has been performed over time, as actors we come to repeat an act that we have seen played out many times before, modeling gender from others. Just as a classical play is staged and re-worked, each time with a new cast, props and stage; the story stays the same. It is only elements of the play that change. So too is gender re-worked and performed – a rehearsal of sorts – only with each actor lending their personality to the character.

Butler (1990) cautions us not to oversimplify the concept of gender performativity as something that can be altered at whim. She refers to those who are placed on the margins because their gender and sexualities are regarded as deviant performances – subversive and transgressive of the social norm (Butler, 1990). Performativity is not a radical choice, even though gender itself is an illusive act (Butler, 1990). Very often the subject faces violent repercussions for their repetition of subversive acts, which have very real and painful consequences. Butler stresses that subversion is not easy, but a necessary act for subjects to embody in order to be written into the social script:

As a corporeal field of cultural play, gender is a basically innovative affair, although it is quite clear that there are strict punishments for contesting the script by performing out of turn or through unwarranted improvisations. Gender is not passively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy. Gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure, but if this continuous act is mistaken for a natural or linguistic given, power is relinquished to expand the cultural field bodily through subversive performances of various kinds. (Butler, 1988:531)

Subversion through Performance

Butler (1990) introduces the concept of gender drag, a subversive act that reflects the imitative and illusory nature of hegemonic gender, itself a production that is not natural as we are led to believe. Butler (1990) proposes the use of drag as bricolage² to subvert the notion of ‘true’ gender. This drag act invokes the use of gender performativity to playfully demonstrate how gender is an elaborate production – scripted, repeated and performed – and that gender is not stable, given and essential, or something that fits into neat, rigid boundaries (Butler, 1990).

Butler also shows us how power operates in the production of gender, which is why she proposes that drag performance is a way of challenging dominant gender norms (Butler, 1990). She argues that gender is created through continuous performances, which contests notions of essential sex categories of male and female. With regard to this study presented, we come to see male sex work as a performance that subverts notions of traditional masculinity. However, Butler (1990) also notes two important distinctions with regard to performativity and the limitations of corporeal space.

² Bricolage is the skill of using whatever is at hand and recombining it to create something new.

Space is imbued with power. It is crucial to consider the restrictions of contested spaces and the effect these spaces have on the gendered body, the performance and embodied experiences of the subject:

actors are always already on stage, within the terms of the performance. Just as a script may be enacted in various ways, and just as the play requires both text and interpretation, so the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space. (Butler, 1988:526)

Butler (1990) points out the links to gender and power, and for us to consider how pathologized sexualities resist or succumb to oppression in certain spaces. When the act is performed on stage, it can be considered a safe space compared to when the act is performed in 'real' everyday settings and spaces. In the latter, the act can become potentially dangerous, especially for the marginalized subject:

gender performances in non-theatrical contexts are governed by more clearly punitive and regulatory social conventions. [...] In the theatre, one can say, 'this is just an act', and de-realize the act, make acting into something quite distinct from what is real. [...] On the street or in the bus, the act becomes dangerous, if it does, precisely because there are no theatrical conventions to delimit the purely imaginary character of the act. (Butler, 1988:527)

Butler (1988) argues here that context not only shapes performance but also the experience of the performance for both actor and audiences. For instance, the movement from the prison to the street (inside vs. outside) can be a potentially dangerous context for the performance of alternative sexualities. In a sense the prison, as stage, provides shelter from the outside world, where alternate sexuality can be explored, whereas the street as the 'outside' world can be potentially hostile. Therefore the actor has to work so much harder to disguise his transgressive sexual persona. Butler (1988) asks us to reimagine a world where gender is not prescriptive and instead to acknowledge the complexities of gender without constraints or punitive consequences, particularly for those who fall outside of the normative gender and sexuality binaries or performances.

Gagnon and Simon: Scripting Theory

Introduction to Scripting Theory

Scripting theory, first developed by Gagnon and Simon (1973) uses the dramaturgical metaphor to depict how individuals experience and perform their sexuality. Sexual scripting is a conceptual framework to understand the social construction of human sexuality; it is the study of human sexual relations and sexual behaviours (Gagnon & Simon, 1973). Sexuality and sexual activity are theorized as a sequence of events – much like a script in a play that actors perform – where the subject responds and reacts

to a situation that is sexual (Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Simon & Gagnon, 1986; Wiederman, 2005). Whittier & Melendez explain it as such:

Elements of the theatre, such as the stage, scene, props, script, audience response, and the actors' performances are important to the vibrant construction of sexual activity. Actors are constantly involved in producing society and sexuality. Even the script is interpreted and enacted differently by actors depending upon their unique life histories, experiences, and backgrounds. (Whittier and Melendez, 2007:191)

The interplay between actors and the script is dynamic. The lived experiences of actors inform the script in very particular ways, thus making the script real within the context in which it is enacted. Simon and Gagnon (1986) explain that instead of viewing sex as an inherent part of human behaviour, to instead view it as significant when defined through individual and collective experience.

This theory is rooted in the social constructionist perspective, which emphasizes the interplay between cultural and interpersonal interactions as informing constructions of identity (Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Simon & Gagnon, 1986). This viewpoint enables us to see sex and sexuality as influenced by social and cultural forces (Gagnon & Simon, 1973).

The Social Construction of Sexuality

Gagnon and Simon reject Kinsey's³ ideas of sexuality as something that is simply and purely biological and natural. In the period preceding Gagnon and Simon's (1973) work, sexuality was considered peripheral to the self⁴, located in the sociology of deviance rather than identity formation⁵. Gagnon and Simon (1973) see sexuality and identity closely and intimately interrelated. Their theory propounds the centrality of sexuality in the construction of the self; they offer an alternative to the historical and biological understanding of the construction of sexuality;

sexual conduct is learned in the same way and through the same processes: it is acquired and assembled in human interaction judged and performed in specific cultural and historical worlds. (Gagnon, 1977:2, as cited in Kimmel, 2007)

Sex as it relates to sexual behavior is social; sex as it relates to sexual identity is an awareness of self, in that identity is constructed in and through sex (Kimmel, 2007:xi). Through self-exploration in the form of 'writing and producing' our own sexual scripts, we are both the 'director and producer' before being the actors or

³ See The Kinsey Reports on human sexual behaviour: 1) Kinsey, A.C.; Pomeroy, W.B. and Martin, C.E. 1948. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. 2) Kinsey, A.C.; Pomeroy, W.B.; Martin, C.E. and Gebhard, P.H. 1953. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*.

⁴ See Gagnon, J.H. and Parker, R.G. 1995. *Conceiving Sexuality*. For a brief history of sex research during the "sexological" period dating from the 19th century into the 20th century.

⁵ Refer to Foucault's *History of Sexuality, Volume 1: an Introduction* ([1978] 1990) for an understanding of Victorian era treatment of sex and sexuality.

audience. Audience comprises of the society watching performances of sexual scripts enacted. Actors make up this audience. Thus, a symbiosis operates between the two.

A sexual script is when people interpret, improvise, change and identify whether something is sexual or not: “scripts are essentially a metaphor for conceptualizing the production of behavior within social life” (Gagnon & Simon, 1986:98). Similar to a play, people act according to a script to make sense of whether or not what they are doing is sexual (Gagnon & Simon, 1973). Sexual scripts are unconventional, whether deviant or non-deviant. People have preset ideas of the actions, roles and scripts that are used in the enactment of sexual-social interactions (Gagnon & Simon, 1986).

Five themes guide the formation of sexual scripts: (1) who, as it relates to identities (who does one have sex with?); (2) where, as it relates to location and social context (where do people have sex?); (3) how, as it relates to actions and distractions (how do people have sex?); (4) why, as it relates to meaning (why do people have sex?); and (5) what, as it relates to interactions and methods employed (what do people do when having sex?). These thematic questions allow insight into the details and meanings people attach to sex and the sexual scripts preceding sexual acts.

Simon and Gagnon (1986) explain three levels of sexual scripts. Firstly, cultural scenarios provide a framework through which sex is experienced. These are social norms informed by definitions and behaviours as prescribed by hegemonic social institutions (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Cultural scenarios provide the scripts for how to act in a social setting, guiding how actors present themselves and behave in institutional contexts. Simon and Gagnon state; “[there is] instruction in collective meaning” (1986:97):

Cultural scenarios are the instructional guides that exist at the level of collective life. Thus all institutions and institutionalized arrangements can be read as semiotic systems through which the requirements and the practice of specific roles are given. Cultural scenarios essentially instruct in the narrative requirements of specific roles; they provide for the understandings that make role entry, performance, and/or exit plausible for both self and others: providing the who and what of both past and future without which the present remains uncertain and fragile. The enactment of virtually all roles then, must reflect either directly or indirectly the contents of appropriate cultural scenarios. (Simon and Gagnon, 1986:98, emphasis in original)

Second is interpersonal scripts: routine patterns of social interaction that guide behaviour in specific settings.

interpersonal scripts transforms the social actor from being exclusively an actor trained in his or her role(s) and adds to his/her burdens the task of being a partial scriptwriter or adaptor as he/she becomes involved in shaping the materials of relevant cultural scenarios into scripts for context-specific behavior. [...] interpersonal scripts represents the mechanism through which appropriate

identities are made congruent with desired expectations. (Simon and Gagnon, 1986:99, emphasis in original)

Interpersonal scripts are sexual-social exchanges and interactions between people as they engage in sexual activities or performances with and for each other (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). “Interpersonal scripts are seen as the ordering of representations of self and other that facilitates the occurrence of the sexual act” (Simon & Gagnon, 1986:97). As the actor moves into a group or joins a collective, he moves from an individual performance and script, to becoming a co-producer of a script shared with others.

This leads to the third level: intrapsychic scripts. Sexual behaviour and actions are constructed through internalized dialogue with the self: “the management of desire as experienced by the individual” (Simon & Gagnon, 1986:97). Intrapsychic scripting is where the subject uses cultural expressions of sexuality and (re)creates them for their own sexual desires, fantasies and expectations, which plays a significant role in the performance of sexuality (Simon & Gagnon, 1986).

Where complexities, conflicts, and/or ambiguities become endemic at the level of cultural scenarios, much greater demands are placed on the actor than can be met by the adaptive possibilities of the interpersonal scripts alone. The need to script one’s behavior, as well as the implicit assumption of the scripted nature of the behavior of others, is what engenders a meaningful “internal rehearsal in the first place,” and internal rehearsal that can become significant only where alternative outcomes are available. *Intrapsychic scripting*, in other words, becomes a significant part of the self process in proportion to the extensivity and intensity of the internal dialogue. (Simon and Gagnon, 1986:99, emphasis in original)

Intrapsychic scripting represents the internal struggle to balance and control sexual desires privately and publicly. One can imagine the actor ‘trying on’ different roles before performing the socially acceptable one publicly. In the case of ‘deviant’ representations the struggle to hide or disguise part of the self out of fear or shame would add to the inner struggle of the “internal rehearsal” (Simon & Gagnon, 1986:99). For the purpose of this study the focus will be on intrapsychic scripting as it focuses on internalized dialogues that the actor has with self to make sense of the world and his place in it.

The Work of Gender in Sexual Scripting

Sex has personal, cultural and social meanings and consequences. Sexual scripts are reflective of values, beliefs and morals: to perform sexuality is to participate in a collective drama where actors both contribute to and are recipients of culture. What is deemed acceptable or unacceptable socially and culturally is challenged and negotiated through sex and sexuality (Whittier & Melendez, 2007). Through intrapsychic sexual scripting, these social categories inform self-identification and self-awareness.

The roles and scripts that people create for their sexual identities are deeply infused with meanings from social and cultural scenarios. Sexual identity informs social cultural norms as individuals develop cultural norms through everyday activities. However, these meanings are constructed and deconstructed as individuals move from one social context to another. Whittier and Melendez state: “people create culture just as they are created by culture” (2007:195). Although intrapsychic scripts take place in the private realm, they are often informed by and, in turn, reinforce the cultural scenarios, stereotypes and stigmas attached to sexuality.

There are strict social scripts that guide the management of sexuality. Gender is performed according to cultural expectations and ideals. One of these ideals is that sexuality is conflated with gender performance. Scripting theory rests on the premise that individuals follow an internalized dialogue to construct meaning out of sexual situations (Gagnon & Simon, 1973). Scripts guide and direct responses to sexual cues and behaviours (Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Wiederman, 2005). Traditional sexual scripts can help us to understand how scripts have progressed in different cultures and to account for its influence on the performance of gender and sexuality (Wiederman, 2005). The separate evolution of sexual scripts for each gender historically serves to compliment opposing gender roles and to maintain the expectations and dominance of heterosexuality (Wiederman, 2005).

Traditional sexual scripts for men start at a young age where boys are taught that it is acceptable to view and play with their genitals, leading to the formation of sexual scripts that regard sexual stimulation in isolation to sexual pleasure. Wiederman (2005) notes that for boys early experience of sexual stimulation is encouraged and regarded as an ideal gender role act that set the stage for scripts that are centred on the body. He argues the common view of traditional male scripts calls for a sexually proactive masculinity that is goal-oriented and assertive. If a man does not display a strong interest in sex, it calls his masculinity into question (Wiederman, 2005). Furthermore, this rigid expectation of a binaried gender script forces individuals to “feel compelled to follow the traditional sexual scripts for his or her gender” (Wiederman, 2005:499). A conflict may arise between the intrapsychic scripts and traditional gender script, where the internal drive and desires may not match the expectations of the traditional gender roles. The danger of assigning traditional gender scripts is that it may be incompatible with the internal sexual script and it does not allow room for expansion and transformation of sexual desire and expression, thus limiting gender and sexual performativity.

Gagnon and Simon (1973) explain that the lines between heterosexuality and homosexuality are rigidly drawn and closely monitored, making it difficult for alternate performances of gender scripts. This, Swartz explains, is closely linked to cultural scripts that enforce the binary enactment of gender and sexuality: “our culture does not want to lose the hard edges of gender, precisely because people depend on the standards of gender enactment to help them delineate heterosexuality from

homosexuality” (2007: 85). When homosexuality is openly performed, it is often followed by violence and punishment as a way to preserve heterosexual norms (Swartz, 2007).

In the social and cultural realm, scripting of heterosexuality is central to masculinity with a profound effect on the intrapsychic scripting of the subject who picks up on these cues as a guide to scripting and performing his sexual desires regardless if these cues are incongruent with his sexual identity (Swartz, 2007). The repercussions of performing a deviant sexual script, no matter how insignificant it may be, can be cause for social exclusion, thus subjects suppress and repress their identity in order to fit in the boundaries of society. Swartz explains;

The cultural prejudice and presumption is that the presence of any homosexual feeling is a dead giveaway of ones sexual essence because homosexual behavior is somehow more a truth of the body than heterosexuality. (The reasoning seems to be that any homosexual behavior demonstrates a true core sexual predilection, since no person would take on the stigma of homosexuality if it were not compulsively necessary). (Swartz, 2007: 90)

It follows that as long as the subject does not ‘choose’ an alternate sexuality they will be spared rejection.

The ‘I’ in Sexuality – Intrapsychic Scripting

The centrality of sexuality in identity formation explores the ways in which different groups develop coherent sexual relationships. Intrapsychic scripting takes on a significant role when social contexts change and the subject finds himself in a setting where a differentiation of sexualities is present (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Usually, intrapsychic scripting is limited in a familiar social setting, where the performance of self is rehearsed and played out in the same way all the time, becoming supposedly ‘natural’ and well rehearsed. “Minor variations” (Simon & Gagnon, 1986:99) are taken into account, with adaptations to the character here and there, where the actor is used to performing his usual role or character. But, when the setting changes or the actor is moved out of his comfort zone/routine. A significant shift occurs and the intrapsychic script is ‘kicked into gear’. A “modification in the self” (Simon & Gagnon, 1986:100) takes place when the subject enters a new space, especially where multiple alternative gender and sexualities are on display or offered. As he becomes immersed in the culture and society of this new space, questions of self emerge: “What kind of I am I? What kind of I do I want to be? [these are] Questions that create the illusion of a self distinct from the roles it may be required to play” (Simon & Gagnon, 1986:100).

The intrapsychic script realizes the internal desires and binds it to social life (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Meaning is assigned to deep-seated desires, eventually performed in the social setting as the subject becomes acclimatized to the space and finds his voice and place in the collective (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). The intrapsychic script is

able to ‘mutate’ in order for two important changes to take place. Firstly, the ‘I’ that the subject is used to performing can be recreated depending on the space the actor finds himself in. A questioning of self begins to take place as the actor’s appearance is reflected through others – both actors and audience – i.e. the new strangers on the scene. The subject begins to model a new and different self through interaction (Goffman, 1959). Secondly, the matter of socialization is not a steadfast one. The intrapsychic script allows an adaptation of self in the new setting, in order for the subject to fit in so that the power of social control and socialization is weakened over a period of time, thus not having a hold on the subject, and allowing ‘the process of the creation of the self’ (Simon & Gagnon, 1986:100) to take place.

Simon and Gagnon (1986) note that sexual desire is not so much about nature versus nurture, but rather, that the intrapsychic emerges with autonomy, allowing the subject to express and experience new sexual desires that manifests as a result of interactions and exchanges in and with collective society (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). In the case of structures and systems where meanings of sex and sexuality are first derived, a crisis can occur in the intrapsychic script when conflict arises between the social world with regards to internal scripts and previous socialization scripts. Crises arise where scripts are not rehearsed – internally and externally – as in the case of sexual coercion, sexual violence and trauma.

Simon and Gagnon (1986) warn that the three scripts take on different meaning in different settings – they are not all identical in all settings (Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Thus, appearance of the self changes in different settings and according to the needs of the subject in any given context. What it means to be a man in one space can be dramatically different in another. This can occur in settings where the collective places value and where deeper meaning and emphasis is on the sexual, or where the performance of the sexual is closely monitored and measured. This plays a major role in the assessment of the individual’s worth and value in that setting, placing the intrapsychic script is under pressure. However, Simon and Gagnon (1986) caution that not all individuals will experience the same level of anxiety or pressure regarding their performances, some may assign greater meaning than others to these sexual encounters and performativities.

Part II: Empirical Research

An acknowledgement of gender and sexual orientation as fluid, complex and always changing has promoted research in the field of prison sex culture in the last few decades (Hensley, Struckman-Johnson & Eigenberg, 2000). This section focuses on prison sex issues in relation to sexuality, masculinity, and sexual behaviours of prisoners. These are all topical issues that have been instrumental in changing attitudes to perceptions of prison sex culture and sexuality (Eigenberg, 2000; Hensley,

Struckman-Johnson & Eigenberg, 2000; Gibson & Hensley, 2013; Sit & Ricciardelli, 2013). Studies on gender, sexuality and sex in prisons primarily tend to focus on issues such as male rape, sexual coercion and victimization of men in prison (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 2006; Fowler *et al*, 2010; Trammell, 2011; Einat, 2012; Michalski, 2015; Ricciardelli, Maier & Hannah-Moffat, 2015; Hlavaka, 2016; Teasdale *et al*, 2016). I do not dispute the critical need and continued attention these issues deserve, but it is equally important to have a nuanced view of sexuality in prison by striving to investigate all areas of prison sex. This is, furthermore, critical for men's understanding of their own sexuality. It is vital that prison studies more critically consider the evolution of prison culture.

There also exists a heterosexist bias in the South African literature with a propensity toward only focusing on the negative aspects of prison sexualities and sexual practices. One author that manages to present a nuanced view is Gear (2002; 2003; 2005). In general, Gear's theorizing attempts to understand male sexuality and victimization in a nuanced exploration that takes into consideration South Africa's history of race, class and gender and the ways in which these relate to sex and sexuality, and gender construction. She does not treat the prison setting as mutually exclusive or in isolation to the greater social landscape or public discourse of South Africa. Another notable exception is Achmat's (1993) article, which is the only South African analysis that addresses prison sex and sexuality from the standpoint of desire and pleasure. This study deconstructs the historiography of South African prison sex research (dating between 1890-1920). However, it was written 24 years ago and thus points to a lacuna in prison sex research that fails to investigate other avenues of sexual expression or performances, especially those that are non-penetrative such as homosocial relationships among men and consensual sexual or 'love' relationships.

It is important to note that comprehensive research on South African prison data is outdated; most studies dating back 10 to 15 years. So far, in my reading, few of the authors apply a theoretical framework that can further substantiate their findings and link it to broader epistemologies of gender and sexuality. International studies have demonstrated *some* progress in this area of research, by applying social constructivist theory to their inquiries into prison sex and sexualities (Eigenberg, 2000; Tewksbury & West, 2000; Kunzel, 2002; Gibson & Hensley, 2013; Sit & Ricciardelli, 2013). This raises a critical call for new, updated and compelling research into prison studies. The research presented in this thesis is a response to that call.

The lack of researchers who identify as male, queer, black or people of colour (POC) means the majority black male⁶ prison populace's (Lebone, 2016) narratives are told

⁶ See South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) 2016 South Africa Survey: Crime and Security.

through a predominantly white, heteronormative⁷ voice. This promotes a reductionist, stereotypical and simplified view of male prison sex culture as merely aggressive, destructive and violent. There are studies that have addressed prison sexualities through, to some extent, applying feminist methodologies (Africa, 2010; Boonzaier, 2014; Moolman, 2015b). These studies conducted by women of colour (WOC) engaged deeply in the practice of reflexivity by including aspects of their own intersectional identities to gain insight into the lived realities of their sample. However, the limitation of these studies to the current research is that it was conducted with female offenders or male sex offenders and did not primarily examine prison sex and sexualities, or focus on the theme of desire and pleasure in prison sexualities.

This study differs to other literature and empirical research conducted in South Africa so far in that 1) it is theoretically grounded in well established feminist and sociological paradigms and applies a social constructionist framework to understand gender and sexuality in prison; 2) it addresses the power of gender and sexuality performances in everyday life, regardless whether those identities are imposed or chosen to gain an understanding of forces of agency and coercion in prison and on the streets; and, 3) it investigates the emergence of alternative sexualities and gender performances in prison, and to see whether it is, like sex work, a matter of choice.

Sexualities

South African literature on prison sex tends to focus one-sidedly and within a heteronormative framework and understanding of sex. It appears that prison sexuality is negatively conflated with connotations to homosexuality and male rape, due to societal stigma and taboos surrounding same-sex desire. The studies highlighted below are critical of societal notions of ‘proper’ sexual conduct, indicative of a society that is punitive, restrictive and conservative when it comes to divergent sexual practices. This tendency in South African prison literature to focus on violence and victimization reinforces stereotypical notions of prison sexuality thus impeding open dialogue of alternative forms of sex in prison that are not necessarily violent. The current discussion of prison sex is treated in a similar fashion that sex in the mining compounds⁸ received in the early 1900s (Niehaus, 2002; Epprecht, 2013). There are few studies that address the topic of consensual sex, consenting homosexual sex, gay relationships, bisexuality, or other alternative sexualities in prison (Zungu &

⁷ Heteronormativity is the normative assumption that promotes heterosexuality as a ‘normal’ sexual orientation or ‘normal’ human state of being.

⁸ ‘Mine marriages’ (also known as *nkotshane*) took place in the gold mine compounds in Johannesburg in the late 1890s. Younger males engaged in interfemoral sex with older male patrons in exchange for protection, gifts or money.

Potgieter, 2011; Dunkle *et al*, 2013; Agboola, 2015). A more critical theoretical understanding of the multiple expressions and performances of sex and sexuality would undo the limited view of sex in prison as only operating through violence and victimization. If researchers engaged more actively in the practice of reflexivity (O'Neill, 2002; Wahab, 2003; Presser, 2005) the literature might stop reinforcing predictable societal understandings of men's sexuality as merely aggressive, forceful or deviant. This particular gap is quite pronounced in the South African literature and can partially be attributed to a colonial and apartheid history grounded in racial ideology that pathologized black male sexuality and outlawed traditional African sexual practices (Epprecht, 2013).

This pathologising of black sexuality sought to reinforce and legitimate a particular type of unequal power relation in South African society that sought to devalue black male sexuality. In this sense, Foucault's (1990a) position on the control of proletariat sexuality by the bourgeoisie ruling class, which ultimately shaped discourses and class divisions around sex, and sexuality can be contrasted with Achmat's (1993) argument relating to the similar treatment on African bodies by colonial rulers:

I suggest that the conquest of the body of the African male, and the mapping of different subject positions in terms of race, class, age and gender that arose from colonialism and capitalism, helped establish a new constellation of power relations. These in turn created new forms of disciplined and useful bodies – new pleasures and desires. By the early twentieth-century, the bodies and desires of African men and women no longer primarily bonded to the reproductive functions which secured wealth and status. (Achmat, 1993:105)

I would go further and argue that contemporary South African prison research, with its fixation on male rape and coercive sex as the dominant forms of sexual practice, is also reflective of another historical period in Africa: the 'black peril' cases in the early 1900s. The moral panic of 'black peril'⁹ cases painted a vivid image of a licentious, sexual savage with a rampant libido that would rape and victimize white women (Pape, 1990; Epprecht, 1998; Philips, 2011). This fear of black masculinity treated African and black sexuality as depraved, deviant and harmful (Saint-Aubin, 2005). This time, the prison serves as the mine compound or colonial slave-ground. The 28s prison gang with their acceptance and support of same-sex desire points to the presence of alternative sexualities in prison. Here alterity of masculinity and sexuality (gender and sexuality performances as subversion) lives side by side with social and cultural conventionality (in the 'heterosexual matrix'). We are presented

⁹ 'Black peril' briefly described as the desire of black men for white women carried heavy sanctions for black men in colonial South Africa and Zimbabwe. For a detailed discussion of black peril see: Pape, J. 1990. Black and white peril: the "perils of sex" in colonial Zimbabwe. *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 16(4):699-720.; Epprecht, M. 1998. The 'unsaying' of indigenous homosexualities in Zimbabwe: mapping a blindspot in an African masculinity. *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 24(4):631-651.; Philips, O. 2011. The 'perils' of sex and the panics of race: the dangers of interracial sex in colonial Southern Rhodesia. In *African Sexualities: A Reader*. S. Tamale, Ed. Cape Town: Pambazuka Press. 101-115.

with an alternative view of prison sex culture and can begin to envision an alternative script and narrative of prison unfolding.

Constructions of Homosexuality in Prison

Kunzel (2002) argues that the lack of historical research in sites such as prisons reveal a resistance to produce knowledge that would be unpleasant/disadvantageous to the progress made in gay and lesbian research/knowledge production. By this she argues that gay culture and gay identity would be at risk of its associations with prison, which is often regarded as a site of “sexual coercion and violence” (Kunzel, 2002:254). She counters that there is great benefit in knowing and investigating the history of sexual culture within the prison institutional setting, particularly when it is often argued in the literature that there is no historical knowledge in this area of work/study. Historians’ disinterest in same-sex desire and sexual orientation as a means to understanding prison sexual culture presents a significant gap in the literature.

Kunzel’s (2002) article deals with the historical understanding and terminology that emerged around the term ‘sexual identity’ in the mid-twentieth century by historians in the US. She argues that alternative sexualities were understood as separate and outside of ‘normal’ sex practices. A basic understanding of these sexual systems and the people who engaged in sex outside of these ‘normal’ parameters were seen as a “new species” (Kunzel, 2002:253). The historical narrative of same-sex practices, particularly within institutions such as prisons, was termed as ‘situational homosexuality’: “same-sex practices produced by circumstance, architecture and environment” (Kunzel, 2002:253). In this instance, it was implied that situational homosexuality was distinguishable from ‘true homosexuality’, or ‘real’ homosexuality.

Situational vs. True Homosexuality

Sit and Ricciardelli (2013) deliberate on earlier theoretical and empirical research on the study of prison sex and sexualities, declaring that earlier discourses frame sex in prison from a puritanical, conservative standpoint, pointing to a lack of comprehensive knowledge on this matter. They argue that the paucity in knowledge on this subject has resulted in prison administrations’, the academic community’s and the general public’s disinterest in this field of study, not warranting it as a worthy undertaking. Earlier research in this field applied essentialist views of prison sexuality and most notably started a system of classification between “true homosexuality” and “situational homosexuality” (Eigenberg, 2000; Kunzel, 2002; Sit & Ricciardelli, 2013).

Sit and Ricciardelli’s (2013) study explores how sexuality is negotiated and performed during the period of incarceration. Applying a social constructionist framework using in-depth interviewing, they assert that heteronormativity and

homophobia permeate prison culture and is evident in the ways that sexualities are constructed, negotiated and enacted. They looked at how attitudes to same-sex relations were shaped by cultural and social discourses; these attitudes, in turn, contributed to and limited prisoners behaviours and presentation of self towards others that regulated their own sexual identities. It emerged that prisoners experienced high levels of anxiety as they performed sexualities in a place where dominant attitudes to sexuality are restrictive. They identified three themes relating to the construction of an alternate sexuality in prison: “the construction of homosexuality”; “the suppression of homosexuality”; and “the assertion of homosexuality” (Sit & Ricciardelli, 2013:343). The implications of these findings are that homosexuality poses a heightened stressor in prison often resulting in ‘othering’ and violence inflicted on gay men or men perceived to be effeminate. Emphasis is placed on performing dominant heterosexual masculinity that reinforces heteronormative attitudes. Furthermore, being labeled as homosexual regulates and shapes prisoners’ behaviours and performance of sexuality and masculinity in a way that upholds heteronormative expressions of sex and gender.

A recent study by Gibson and Hensley (2013) introduces an empirical case study based in US prisons to examine whether changes in sexual orientation of male prisoners occurs when they engage in homosexual behaviour. The findings of this study shows that inmates were 52 times more likely to ‘change’ their sexual orientation when they engaged in homosexual relations during their period of incarceration (Gibson & Hensley, 2013).

The authors contend that sexuality vis-à-vis sex in prison is an under-researched topic and one of the least understood within the criminal justice system. The researchers provide a comprehensive list of studies that have been conducted over the last 60+ years, dealing with issues ranging from victims and offenders of sexual assault in prison, sex between inmates focusing on sexual assault, attitudes toward inmate sex, homosexuality and prison administrations approach to sex in prison (Gibson & Hensley, 2013). The authors note that in the last 30 years, there has been a growing interest in research that addresses consensual sex in prison. However, they claim there is a lack of theoretical application to the examination of sex in prison, which is what their study sets out to do. They critique many of the earlier works on prison sex and prison sexualities, stating the influence of an essentialist model, which resulted in a narrow focus on homosexuality as the root cause of divergent prison sexualities. They state that few researchers have addressed consensual same-sex relations in prison, and further argue that none have employed a social constructionist model to research in this field of study (Gibson & Hensley, 2013)

The Emergence of Alternative Sexualities

Contemporary prison research that investigate alternative sexualities in prisons are a fairly recent undertaking and have mainly been conducted in developed countries like

Australia, United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (US) (Jenness & Fenstermaker, 2014; Sexton & Jenness, 2016; Wilson *et al*, 2016). A recurring theme in this literature is the prevalence of stigmatization by prison officials and fellow prisoners against bisexual, gay and transgender inmates.

Jenness & Fenstermaker (2014) investigate how transgender inmates accomplish feminine gender performances in all men's prisons. Their findings revealed that successful gender performances were contingent on gender authenticity, where participation and inclusion in prison sex culture depended on their "pursuit of the 'real deal'" (Jenness & Fenstermaker, 2014:5). For transgender participants in this study being able to perform the role of a "real girl" (Jenness & Fenstermaker, 2014:27) illustrates their complicity in gendered practices that embrace and reinforce hegemonic masculinity, heteronormative ideals and hierarchies of race, class and sexuality. The study reveals that transgender prisoners engage in normative social and cultural constructions of gender and sexuality to avoid violence and denigration by a dominantly heteronormative and heterosexist masculine prison population. The authors argue that the performance to attain authentic (feminine) gender identity verifies the agentic power of marginal prison identities.

In another study, Sexton and Jenness (2016) explored the experiences of transgender women detained in men's prisons. Their analysis revealed that transgender prisoners identified with a unifying trans-community in prison and embraced a collective identity regardless of the representation of a heterogeneous trans-community. The findings of this study reveal the complex organizing and structuring of prisoner communities. In the case of prison, gender and sexuality provide opportunities for shared identities to forge collaborations and create a sense of community regardless of other distinguishing features and characteristics (Sexton & Jenness, 2016). It is the recognition of each other within the community that affirms a sense of self. It is also the recognition of their existence by mainstream prison inmates that affords these smaller communities a location, a space, or role within the larger matrix of the prison system. They are thus granted a place and role in the sexual hierarchy of the prison.

Although small in number, these studies demonstrate a renewed engagement in prison research that focuses on the diverse experiences of prison populations and points to the importance of continued engagement in this area of study.

Masculinities

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been fundamental to our understanding of the role that men play in relation to women and other men. Hegemonic masculinity is a concept used to broadly explain male power in conjunction with male hierarchy.

Connell (1995) uses the concept to illustrate the differentiation in power dynamics between men – showing us that there are dominant groups and subordinate groups. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) reveal that hegemonic masculinity uncovers the gendered and social hierarchies of society. They oppose linear thinking that regards dominant masculinities as controlling all other forms of marginal or alternative masculinities and femininities, but rather contend that all masculinities work together in a dialectic, informing the other and in turn contributing to the hierarchy, that in fact one must exist alongside the other. I apply this thinking to the South African prison context where gang culture is firmly rooted in hegemonic displays of power which bestows status and visibility, thus maintaining and sanctioning a hierarchy where strong and dominant equates to ‘real man’ and weak equates to feminized (marginal) man (Gear & Ngubeni, 2002). This is not unique to the South African context and is a feature of most prison cultures globally (Sabo, Kupers & London, 2001; Kronsell, 2005; Bandyopadhyay, 2006; Curtis, 2014; Ricciardelli, Maier & Hannah-Moffat, 2015; Bengtsson, 2016).

Hypermasculinity and violence serve as self-protective and self-defense mechanisms for prisoners. Knowledge of these displays of dominance helps us as researchers to understand the prevalence and continued use of violence in prison (Bandyopadhyay, 2006; Pemberton, 2013; Michalski, 2015). Rather than concentrating on rehabilitation only, many of the authors reviewed in this chapter argue that our efforts should be dedicated in trying to find viable conditions necessary for reintegration of prisoners into society. It is for this reason that the research being undertaken here is of such importance, since it speaks directly to the issue of reintegration of prisoners through an exploration of how the experiences of gender and sexuality in prison shape male sex workers’ choices on the ‘outside’ post-release.

Hegemonic Masculinity in Contemporary South African Culture

A review of two research publications on South African masculinities revealed different positions on the topic. The first publication, by Morrell, Jewkes and Lindegger’s (2012), draws attention to the concept of hegemonic masculinity and its use in South African scholarship. They periodize the concept starting off with Connell’s (1995) theoretical breakthrough of masculinities in the early 1990s. This is followed by a thorough account of a South African historicization of masculinity dating back to colonialism, apartheid and post-apartheid. The authors assert that the post-apartheid new democratic era has seen significant shifts and contestations in masculinities, particularly in the political arena where they foreground successful ‘new’ and “heroic” masculinities such as Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki (Morrell *et al.*, 2012:17). Included in this historical overview is a general analysis of how the concept has been utilized in South African scholarship, paying close attention to its promotion within academic and activist organizing. They argue that the hegemonic masculinity concept has advanced a gender equitable view of men and masculinity, and has been a significant contributor in the advancement of gender scholarship.

In recent years, there has been rising opposition mainly from the political sphere, arguing that dominant political discourse valorizes a heteropatriarchal African masculinity that is predicated on race and male privilege. They state this type of masculinity is backward – including white masculinity too – having benefitted historically and gained legitimacy through the use of violence, especially gender violence. The authors support the call for a ‘model of multiple hegemonic masculinities’ (Morell *et al*, 2012: 11) that takes the multiplicity of masculinity into consideration. This is in contrast to previous decades that addressed masculinity as a singular, universal entity. This historical overview provided by Morrell *et al* (2012) helps to contextualize the state of masculinities in South Africa and to acknowledge the progress made in this field of study to date.

For the purpose of this study, knowledge of intersectional identities in relation to the study of masculinity further supports an understanding of the historical, cultural and social shifts of hegemonic and marginal masculinities in prison.

A Shift from Hegemonic to Alternative Masculinity

The second publication is a discussion of alternative masculinities in South Africa, by Walker (2005), her article examines two critical points relevant to contemporary South African masculinities; the ‘crisis of masculinity’ and the emergence of alternative masculinities that reject the use of violence. A crisis of masculinity is characterized by an uncertainty over social position, sexuality, work and personal relationships (Walker, 2005). Furthermore, Walker (2005) asserts that newer more liberal forms of masculinity rising up in its place are challenging traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity.

According to Walker, South Africa’s political transition and the “society of Madiba” (2005: 231) makes it possible for men to contest violent masculinities and embrace an emerging culture of non-violence. However, she does very little to address the history of violence and intergenerational trauma that constitutes a large part of violent masculinities in South Africa and, most notably, omits what conditions pave the way for men to embrace alternative masculinities. It would be worth noting how the respondents in her study grappled with this challenge, as it would inform future theorizing in this area.

Walker argues that for men to make it in contemporary South Africa, they need to adopt the “new gender order” (2005: 229). In a country that to this day is still battling to address historical gender inequality and where men are generally resistant to give up their power and privileges over women, children and other subordinate men and groups, it is difficult to assess where, when and how the adjustment to a “new gender order” will take place (Walker, 2005: 229). We have yet to fully learn from men where the hostility and resistance to gendered change comes from.

The central point of Walker's argument is that there is a leading desire for men to embrace alternate masculinities that explicitly rejected violence (as represented in her sample). The men in her study sought a masculine identity that was softer, attentive, present and non-violent. Her respondents also mention factors such as poverty, unemployment and lack of education as impediments to achieving alternative masculinity because these very factors place them in positions of vulnerability (Walker, 2005). Walker's (2005) findings show that even when men attempt to embrace alternate masculinities, they are still caught in the cycle of hegemonic masculinity. Giving up violence in exchange for alternate masculinity also means giving up power and being vulnerable to violence inflicted by other hegemonic masculinities.

The Production of Prison Masculinities

In evaluating the gendered nature of a prison space in Kolkata, India, Bandyopadhyay (2006) discovered through ethnographic observations and narrative interviews that dominant masculine traits such as hardness, resilience and strength were re-enacted by men as features permeating the space. She argues that there is difference in the gendering of male and female prisons. The setup of men's prisons reinforces the idea of prison as a cold, hard, masculine space – to be tough or be toughened up, to act out aggressions or become aggressive in order to survive, which is attributed as the mark of successful masculinity (on the 'inside' and 'outside'). She illustrates how subordinate male prisoners negotiate alternative forms of masculinity to cope with competing masculinities, through language and communication styles. She argues that reclamation of agency and sense of self is a resolute way of constructing a space for oneself in prison. It is in the act of marking territory and making prison a place of their own that alternative masculinities are able to assert themselves in that space. Gear (2005) makes a similar argument when she discusses the subversion of wyfies¹⁰ over their husbands – the dominant partner – when they engage in consensual sex relationships with other non-gang members. In this way, the submissive partner – representing alternative masculinity – is able to forge an identity separate to the one imposed on him, a space of his own in the landscape of prison sex activity.

In another study carried out in a British prison, de Viggiani (2012) describes how men project cultural values and social traditions from the 'outside' world when they enter prison. His ethnographic study explored the ways in which men, upon entering prison, perform dominant hegemonic masculinities in order to conceal so-called weaknesses and potential threats that accompany vulnerability. Heterosexism was a preoccupation

¹⁰ 'Wyfie': meaning 'little wife', a derogatory term for men in the 28s gangs who serve as 'female' sexual partners. See: Parker Lewis, H. 2010. *God's gangsters: the Number gangs in South African prisons*. Cape Town: ihilihili Press.

evident throughout all facets of prison life, whether discursively, visually or physically. Included in this were homophobic discourses that permeate the prison space. de Viggiani's (2012) study found that social interactions and prison relations allow men to construct new identities, while putting on displays of bravado, hiding their weaknesses, engaging in heterosexist discourse was a way of conforming to the ideal type of prison masculinity as a way of gaining privilege and status. Sit and Ricciardelli (2013) emphasize that incarceration restricts certain expressions and performances of masculinity by specifically rewarding expressions of hegemonic masculinity. A key finding in their study revealed that an assertion of heterosexuality was related to higher rates of heterosexual relationships among staff and prisoners. A weak performance of hegemonic masculinity gives rise to a heightened anxiety of being perceived as homosexual and thus, contributing to a culture where homophobia is pervasive (Sit & Ricciardelli, 2013).

The Gendered Nature of Prison

Pemberton (2013) argues that sex segregation in prison reinforces very specific masculine and feminine roles in single-sex prisons. Arguing that prison produces specific forms of masculinity and femininity, thus contributing to the gendering of the prison space. This finding resonates with the South African prison context, where gang structures and rituals reinforce and reify heteronormative gender and sex binaries from the 'outside' onto the 'inside' (Gear, 2005). Pemberton (2013) argues that sex segregation has tangible negative effects on prisoners' lives. She specifically mentions transgender prisoners because the prison system (in the US and UK) use gender binaries to justify and promote sex segregation on the basis of gender, and argues that this in fact poses a threat as further exposure to harassment and violence against gender non-conforming inmates is meted out in prison. Thus, the gendering of prison has serious implications for prisoners' self-identification and sexual behaviour. Pemberton (2013) however, positions her work primarily in a western context (UK and USA). A glaring oversight is the omission of other relational influences and practices among prisoners that could help us understand how sex segregation impacts sexual choices in prison; namely sexual orientation during and post- incarceration, the influence of gang sex activity and consensual partnerships.

Stripping Away at Masculinity

Michalski (2015) considers the social construction of hegemonic masculinity in prison and argues that prison strips men of their gender identities, thus threatening their sense of self. For men in prison, hegemonic masculine identity is important in order to maintain a privileged social status: in a space where violence and dominance garners respect and recognition, an adherence to the dogma of "code of the street" is preserved (Michalski, 2015:8). A failure to reconcile this hypermasculine status reduces men to a marginal status. Relegation to an inferior masculine position opens them up to various forms of exploitation and violence (Michalski, 2015). This

‘stripping process’ is, importantly, both a physical act and a psychological act, as well. After this ‘stripping process’, there is very little left of his manhood before others impose their own ideas on it. In the face of this stripping, Crewe *et al* (2014) discuss how a common adaptation to the harsh environment of prison, men wear emotional ‘masks’ to hide their vulnerabilities. These ‘fronts’ are part of the emotional geography of prison life that shapes the ‘performative masculine culture’, which both hegemonic and marginal masculinities share in (Crewe *et al*, 2014:58). In the South African prison context, there is a short window period to create your ‘character’ or the ‘front’¹¹ you will present to other inmates before being recruited into gangs, reassigned a feminized gender role¹² or reduced to the status of *Frans*¹³. Dominant masculinity is associated with strength and virility i.e. heterosexual men, thus the reassigning of a feminized gender identity to someone who is considered as a ‘lesser man’ involves a redefining of sex roles and status. The redefining of alternative sexuality and gendering of the ‘female’ partner is a way of distancing themselves from the act of homosexuality and takes place to allow for acceptable sex between a man and ‘woman’, not a man and man (Kupers, 2001; Gear, 2005; Trammell, 2011; Moolman, 2015a).

Rescripting Masculinity in Prison

They must rescript the gender roles and performances in order for it to be socially and psychologically sanctioned. In order to engage in homosexual sex in prison, there is a rescripting of the internal intrapsychic scripts so that it mirrors the external cultural scenarios; present in the ‘imitative’ heterosexual space of the prison, all of which is fabricated in mimicry of the outside. In prison, the new role/character becomes the core of one’s existence. For most prisoners there is no before and after, who you become in prison is who you are there, and interaction with others is limited to the ‘new’ self created in prison. It is important to understand what the impact on self is as a result of this reconstruction and renegotiation of self. However, as discussed above, this stripping process is not solely a passive one. Men are active participants in the construction of masculinity, so much so that they subvert traditional arrangements of gender and masculinity as they work to reconfigure and mould it to the prison space. It is this mode of movement from one masculine identity to another; from hegemonic, to marginal to alternative that is important to show in this thesis. The renegotiation and reconstruction of multiple masculinities explicitly shows that men do not

¹¹ Goffman (1959) distinguishes between ‘frontstage’ and ‘backstage’. The former is the performance presented to an audience and the latter represents a hidden facet, away from public scrutiny. See Goffman, E. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books.

¹² Gear (2005) discusses the ritual involved in reclassifying men into ‘woman’ (wyfies) as a gender reassignment process in the *Number* gangs. See Gear, S. 2005. Rules of engagement: structuring sex and damage in men’s prisons and beyond. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. 7(3):195-208.

¹³ ‘Franse’ is a name given to prisoners who choose not to join the prison *Number* gangs (non-gang members).

willingly or unwaveringly accept the dominant forms of masculinity available to them – even when there are benefits to gain from it, but in fact, that competing masculinities shapes the gender dynamics of the prison space. It shows that there are multiple masculinities on display, not binaries, and that men in prison do in fact contribute to the gendering of the space by constantly shifting their ‘maleness’ to fit and subvert the dominant hegemonic code that the space lends itself to. This display of agency from inmates in a space that is largely suppressive justifies my claim that the prison setting can in fact be a space that is under constant deconstruction and reconstruction by the subjects/actors themselves and that the space is not totalizing¹⁴.

Prison Sex Culture

Prison is a forced space that operates along strict homogenous lines of gender and sexual binaries. A particular type of social order operates in prison where the intersections of race, class and ethnicity/nationality are important factors that shape expressions of gender and sexuality. Prison is assumed to be an abnormal space, isolated from the norms of society. In contrast to this assumption, I would argue that prisons bring in norms from the outside in mimicry of heterosexuality or, as Butler (1990) calls it, the ‘production of the heterosexual matrix’¹⁵: an insistence to stabilize gender and sex according to hierarchical heterosexual configurations. The homogeneity factor sets in process a very particular type of social engineering in which the strong survive. Very particular markers signal male dominance, so that it renders it visible and recognizable. Prison sex culture pushes boundaries and opens pathways to new explorations of sex and sexuality whilst at the same time works to defend a heteronormative status quo. The particularities of sexuality and gender construction within prison creates a specific prison sex culture that works with and against prevailing societal norms that govern sexual expressions and performances.

An overwhelming majority of the research that has gone into South African prisons focuses on the issue of male rape, sexual coercion and sexual victimization (Gear, 2005, 2010; Booyens *et al*, 2004; Booyens, 2008; Booyens & Bezuidenhout, 2014; Lindegaard & Gear, 2014; Moolman, 2015a). I contend that this angle into prison sex culture is important and most valuable, but of equal importance is the question of homosocial relations, consensual sex and other non-sexual relationships in prison. Scant attention is paid to consensual sex; with only three studies conducted in the past

¹⁴ Goffman (1961) theorizes the prison as a ‘total institution’ where every aspect of the inmate’s daily life is governed according to routine structures and regulations that control his every movement. See Goffman, E. 1961. *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*. New York: Anchor Books.

¹⁵ See Butler, J. 1990. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge. See Chapter 2: *Prohibition, psychoanalysis, and the production of the heterosexual matrix* (p 47-106).

ten years, included in this pool are those studies conducted at women's prisons (Zungu & Potgieter, 2011; Dunkle *et al*, 2013; Agboola, 2015). Hensley *et al* (2001) note similar trends in international literature, concluding that consensual sex is not warranted attention because it is seen as less of a security threat than rape.

The Politics of Prison Sex In South Africa

Gear (2005) discusses how constructions of gender and sexuality in South African prisons are usually linked to historical accounts of the Johannesburg mining compounds in the early 1900s. She notes the divided debate among scholars writing and theorizing on South African penal institutions on whether inmate identities and sexualities are created in prisons as a result of 'rupture' – a break from outside society – or 'imitation' - as a transitional identity from outside to inside (Gear, 2005: 197). The fact that theorists would consider it transitional points to the essentialist notion with which they regard gender and sexuality. It is treated as stable and given, and only through extreme changes in the environment (or corporeal space) would the person be 'forced' to adapt – similar to the process of natural selection where adaptation emerges as a result of survival – so too is the 'imitation' proposal regarded as a 'survivalist mode' for the subject. This is, in turn a duplication of the historical 'situational homosexuality' versus 'true homosexuality' debate discussed above (Eigenberg, 2000; Kunzel, 2002; Sit & Ricciardelli, 2013). Gear (2005) leads us to question whether sexual identities created inside do in fact differ from the one's outside – is it divorced from the outside in sustainment of essentialist notions of gender and sexuality or does it depart from those heterosexual ideals, created in response to sexual desires acquired on the inside?

Achmat (1993) argues that there is a refusal to acknowledge that a contested space such as prison, that is always regarded as violent, transgressive of social norms and antithetical to society's moral values, can be a place where sexual desire is created and fostered:

Rather than accepting the rupture, [...] they attempt to maintain a false continuity between the signs, customs and traditions of pre-capitalist formations and homosexual practices. They refuse to comprehend that the compound represented a new space of desire and that it fostered a number of practices, including male homosexuality – practices which irrevocably disrupted social relations in the countryside. In terms of the appropriation of pleasure in the body, a new freedom was created. I believe that the compound regime partially freed the male body through its enslavement, creating a network of new pleasures and desires. (Achmat, 1993:106)

Taking a stance, I lean towards prison sexual identity as 'rupture', in support of Achmat's hypothesis. Butler (1990) explains there is no 'true' identity and that it is all socially constructed; therefore, the prison provides the fertile space to explore and play with gender and sexuality in a way that cannot easily be replicated outside. Rather than looking solely to the subject as the creator, also take into consideration

the prison space/environment and how it cultivates the sexual identities of inmates, insulating them from the outside world. In view of this, prison becomes an incubating space: what is considered deviant outside can be explored inside. Butler's (1990) argument follows that a counter-performance of heterosexuality subverts the normalization of a gender/sexuality binary.

Gear (2005) proposes that future research on the dynamics of 'love' relationships among men in South African prisons deserves attention. It is at this point where this research study comes into focus, along with Achmat's (1993) call for a recovery of local knowledges. Achmat vehemently contests accounts of sex in the mine compounds and prison sexuality that are established as the prevailing knowledge in the academy (1993: 95). He calls for a retrospective treatment of contemporary historiography of African sexualities, particularly African (read: black) male sexuality:

My engagement with history and anthropology through the work of Van Onselen, Moodie and Harries attempts to recover from the archives a series of local knowledges for queers in contemporary South Africa. In this intervention I want to resist attempts by historians and anthropologists to incorporate "unnatural vice", "compound" and "prison" history into the hierarchies and orthodoxies of the academy. These practices are attempts to neutralise the subversive and destabilising effects of sex in the compounds, prisons, streets and, through this, to "normalise" sexual activity, fix "cultural" identity, and center monogamous, heterosexual relations. (Achmat, 1993:108)

It is interesting for this project and future research to consider that alternative forms of masculinity and sexualities can be explored and experimented within the confines of prison.

Performing Gender and Sexuality in Prison

Gear's (2005) article is central to a discussion on the construction of prison masculinities and sexualities in relation to the 'inside' and 'outside'. She introduces the concept of a "moral economy" (Gear, 2005: 195) operating in South African prisons. She states that a moral economy – under a directive of *the Number* prison gangs¹⁶ - is "established by hegemonic inmate culture in which sexual interactions are negotiated" (Gear, 2005: 195). The moral economy can be best understood as the norms that operate to uphold a gendered system where value is attached to upholding the heteronormative morals of society. Both prisoners and prison officials uphold this gendered social order. In order to ensure compliance, surveillance upholds a moral economy that discourages sexual transgressions of gang laws. Gear (2005) asserts that the gang rituals involved in gender reassignment in prison conform to social

¹⁶ The Number gangs (original name The Ninevites) operating in the South African prison system. It consists of the 26s, 27s and 28s. The gangs each operate according to their own hierarchies, laws and structures but are bound by a common 'code' (laws) that unifies the three gangs. See: Parker Lewis, H. 2010. *God's gangsters: the Number gangs in South African prisons*. Cape Town: ihilihili Press.

constructions and cultural norms relating to gender. She argues that this resonates with outside societal influences that work to naturalize gender construction. In doing so, she draws a comparison to Foucault (1990a) and Butler's (1990) analyses of knowledge/power discourses during the Victorian era where moral and medical discourse were reflected as knowers of 'true' gender identity. The discourses in prison regarding gender construction take leave from 'outside' by using terms to symbolize heterosexual norms and practices (Gear, 2005).

Sexual Relationships in Prison

Gear and Ngubeni's (2003) in-depth study demonstrates how prison marriages emulate broader South African marriages, which are very much a patriarchal sphere and domain of men's dominance and women's submissiveness. Gear and Ngubeni (2003) mention that gang culture is intricately linked to prison sex culture and that the code of conduct involved in participating in sexual activities apply to both gang members and non-members. However, they do not elaborate on that statement. The authors acknowledge that not all prison marriages may be defined by sexual coercion, but they also do not offer an alternative of what other 'marriage-type' relationships may look like. They also note that respondents for the most part agree that wifies are sex slaves, but do not expand on the types of relationships respondents may have experienced or observed by way of consenting marriages or relationships. One may call into question why this study did not engage any 28s gang members. Based on previous experience in this area, I have observed a difference in the narratives of Number gang members and those of non-gang members who are not privy to the inner workings of the gangs. This is a notable oversight because the question of prison marriages specifically falls within the domain of the 28s gang code¹⁷. Anyone unfamiliar with this area of research and the complex workings of the ubiquitous Number gangs in South African prisons would benefit from an analysis that reveals important details of the 'intricate rankings, rituals and rules' that encompass prison sex culture in the South African context (Gear and Ngubeni, 2003:12). This would make for an interesting study into the symbolic meanings attached to sex within prison, the gangs, and for the men engaged in this type of sexual relationships. The value of this is that it would not only address sexual coercion and male rape, but also aspects of prison sex that have been relegated to the margins in most research studies (within South Africa), such as consensual sex, consenting 'love' relationships¹⁸ and same-sex desire among male prisoners.

¹⁷ See Steinberg, J. 2004. *Nongoloza's children: Western Cape prison gangs during and after apartheid*. Johannesburg: South Africa: The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. See also: Steinberg, J. 2004. *The Number: one man's search for identity in the Cape underworld and prison gangs*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers.

¹⁸ Gear & Ngubeni (2003) categorize two forms of consensual relationships: *ushintsha ipondo* and 'love' relationships, which are generally understood as gay relationships defined by feelings of love between two partners.

Gear (2005) argues that the Number gang system emulates outside structures of marriage and contends that prison gendered identities and sexualities are forged in relation to their outside lives, clinging to societal notions of hegemonic heterosexuality and notions of hegemonic masculinity. Because prison marriages are based on gang members' seniority and rank it confers social and symbolic status. It is a way of showcasing successful masculinity and displaying normative views of heterosexuality. Prison wives (wyfies) are not passive actors in the 'heterosexual matrix'¹⁹. Gear (2005) explains that prison wives also engage in a practice called *ushintsha ipondo*²⁰ where they find a way to subvert the subversion; that sex for pleasure with a consenting party is a way of subverting the deception made on them when they were forced into 'womanhood' (*wyfie* status) consummated through prison 'marriages'. It is valuable for a balanced understanding to know how alternative relationships such as *ushintsha ipondo* can account for the argument that prison marriages uphold heterosexual ideals due to the reassignment of gendered roles.

Consensual Sex Relationships in Prison

The South African literature on prison sex rarely focuses on consensual sex, non-violent or non-coercive sexual practices. It is pertinent to consider studying consensual sex, same-sex desire, non-violent and non-coercive sexual practices in prisons to 1) understand the trends in this area – very little is known about this topic; 2) inform policies that would consider a more progressive stance on controlling the sexual climate in South African prisons, to decrease violent sexual activities among the prison population; 3) raise awareness that more work needs to go into understanding the contemporary prison landscape in relation to gender and sexuality and what constitutes desirable sexualities for those incarcerated.

Agboola's (2015) study on the consensual relationships among female prisoners in a South African prison presents the argument highlighted by a number of international prison sex scholars that same-sex desire develops as a coping mechanism in response to sexual deprivation (Gibson & Hensley, 2013; Terry, 2016). The findings of Agboola's (2015) study showed that a majority of her sample engaged in consensual sex as an alternative method of sexual activity. The key finding was that consensual relationships were pervasive in the female prison. Participants report that emotional, material and sexual support and a yearning for companionship are the reasons for

¹⁹ Butler, 1990 p208n.6.

²⁰ *Ushintsha ipondo* is a type of sexual practice, most common after the prison 'marriage'-type. There is no imposed gender distinction between the two consenting partners. It is outlawed by the gangs as it transgresses their laws pertaining to prison sex and 'marriages'. For a detailed analysis see: Gear, S & Ngubeni, K. 2002. *Daai ding: sex, sexual violence and coercion in men's prisons*. Braamfontein: Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation. For a brief overview see: Gear, S & Ngubeni, K. 2003. Your brother, my wife: sex and gender behind bars. *SA Crime Quarterly*. 4: 11-16.

engaging in consensual sexual relationships (Agboola, 2015). Sexual deprivation in prison on the other hand, leads to built-up anger and frustration, which in turn can pose a threat to the social balance of the space – possibly a causal explanation for the high rates of violence we see within prison settings today. Based on the review of the literature discussed above, sex takes place in prisons quite frequently; it cannot be overlooked under the pretense of feigned ignorance.

Gear (2009) notes the imperative need for a distinction to be made between forced, coercive and consensual sex. Future research in this area should address how and when prisoners make these distinctions, and how and where those who are engaging in consensual sex are able to navigate and avoid the punitive measures of the prison system and prison officials. More importantly, those engaging in consensual sex are able to manoeuvre around the Number gangs who, at present, control and regulate sex.

My call for the propagation of research into consensual relationships and same-sex desire is not to be confused as a dismissal of male rape and other violent sexual practices in prison. Alternatively, I wish to address the disproportionate efforts that go into featuring one aspect of prison sex culture. The need for innovative research that engages with multiple sexualities, exploring desire and pleasure, understanding processes of renegotiating with masculinities in prison, are all equally important issues to usher in a renewed engagement with the topic at hand and to foreground new and refreshing arguments and theories about the contemporary South African prison space and prison sex culture.

Sex Work (Transitioning to the ‘outside’)

Male sex work is one of the oldest professions in the world, whether associated with young boys in ancient Greek society or the existence of male brothels in ancient Rome; it has undisputedly been present in many societies throughout history (Foucault, 1990b; Friedman, 2014; Scott & Minichiello, 2014). Often misunderstood and targeted as perverts or deviants, male sex workers live and work in a shadowy existence. Historically, research has pathologized men who engage in commercial sex work, relegating their concerns to the margins (Scott & Minichiello, 2014). The complex nature of male sex work organizing in its arrangements, processes and structures make it a challenging topic to undertake. Such is the prevailing consensus in African literature on men who have sex with men (MSM) (Boyce & Isaacs, 2014).

Knowledge about risky sexual behaviour and MSM lifestyles are limited in the African context (Okal *et al*, 2009; Muraguri, Temmerman & Geibel, 2012). There has been significant research into female sex work but very little is known about male sex workers (MSW) and MSM in Africa (Boyce & Isaacs, 2014). Boyce and Isaacs

(2014) also note that where research has been conducted in Africa, the data has revealed a limited knowledge of male sex workers experiences. They note that most of the research and knowledge about male sex work in Africa has been conducted in Kenya.

In a study conducted by Boyce and Isaacs (2014) in five African countries – Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe – they explored the social contexts, lived realities, vulnerabilities and sexual risks experienced by MSW's with the aim of centering sex workers' narratives in the research process. They call for continued research into MSW's experiences and the development of representations that highlights the subjectivities and firsthand accounts of this exploited group. Qualitative analyses explored the narratives and experiences of sex workers. They present some of the difficulties that sex workers face in their everyday lives. Common themes that exist for male, female and transgender sex workers are: sexual abuse and trauma (over the lifespan), financial poverty, high incidence of substance abuse, high risk of HIV/AIDS transmission and homelessness (Boyce & Isaacs, 2014). These findings were supported by other studies conducted in South Africa (Needle *et al*, 2008; Parry *et al*, 2008; Leggett, 2012).

The South African literature tends to focus on sex work in relation to assessments of drug use and HIV risk as these pose the greatest vulnerabilities (Needle *et al*, 2008; Parry *et al*, 2008; Rispel & Metcalf, 2009). In Sub-Saharan Africa, there have been a number of studies that link the risk of drug use among sex workers to HIV contraction (Simoooya & Sanjobo, 2001; Agha & Nchima, 2004; Okal *et al*, 2009; Smith *et al*, 2009; Muraguri, Temmerman & Geibel, 2012). International concern about MSM risk practices have been noted in the high rates of HIV positive cases linked to the prevalence of sexual risk such as casual sex partnerships, unprotected sex and substance abuse among prisoners post-release and sex workers (Lankenau *et al*, 2004; Adams *et al*, 2011). Studies found that these behaviours are particularly evident in the first few days after release from prison where men are exposed to higher risk of escalated drug use, unprotected sex and transactional sex making the transition from prison back into the community more difficult (Adams *et al*, 2011; Vagenas *et al*, 2016). This is what Mbuba refers to as the “second cycle of societal retribution” (2012: 231), which is when offenders experience continued stigma for their criminal status on the outside. The stigmatization of their prison identity creates further barriers to accessing adequate healthcare, employment, housing or social networks.

Risk Taking Behaviour in Prison

Matshaba's (2014) study sought to assess risk taking behaviour such as drug usage, sexual behaviour and gang activities among youth offenders in a South African correctional facility. One of the principal objectives of this study was to identify the risk behaviours that youth are exposed to in prison. Presenting the findings on at-risk sexual behaviour in prison, this is what the author had to say:

Regarding sexuality in youth correctional centres, the findings reveal that sexual activities are the most common practice; a high proportion (sic) of inmates strongly agreed that inmates are forced to have sex, are raped at night in their cells, pay for sex and punished by the gang to have sexual intercourse with others if they failed to obey the gang rules and regulations. The findings also demonstrate that correctional centre gangs are the main causes of unauthorized behaviour in youth correctional centres. (Matshaba, 2014:50)

The article is reductionist in its analysis of sexual behaviour and gang activity in South African prisons, choosing to gloss over important details pertaining to gang and prison sex culture. There is very little engagement with respondents regarding their actual risk taking behaviours, whereas mere speculation is employed to explain prison sexual practices:

Incarceration does not eliminate sexual desire of inmate (sic) as they can still be involved in homosexuality while serving their sentences [...] sex in correctional centres is not always about the love or erotic levels due to the contact, body feeling and fantasies among inmates. On the other hand, homosexuality amongst inmates is also caused by coerced products of dominance, intimidation, terror and it is characterized by violent assault. (Matshaba, 2014:47)

It is these types of oversimplified statements regarding prison sex and the associated risks involved that distort and impede progressive debates about prisons in South African public discourse. This paper feeds into mainstream prison rape discourse in the South African landscape; one that supports the rape of men in prison as a punitive measure of justice for their crimes committed outside²¹. By focusing on the fear of male rape to engage public sentiment that condemns rather than supports an open-minded dialogue about the conditions of South African prisons this study does very little to analyze or reflect on the discourse that it helps perpetuate. Instead, it contributes to an established and problematic social discourse that reduces male prison sexual expression as simply homosexual and violent.

Substance abuse and HIV/AIDS Risk Among MSM

Parry *et al* (2008) conducted a multi-method study to evaluate the links between drug use and sexual risk taking behaviour among MSM in three South African cities; Cape Town, Durban and Pretoria. Their study found that drugs were used to expedite sex, which led to inconsistent condom use and other sexual risk taking behaviours, even though participants were aware of the increased risk of HIV infection (Parry *et al*, 2008). Of the sample (n=78), one third tested HIV positive (n=26). This finding concluded that there was a higher vulnerability to HIV among male sex workers (Parry *et al*, 2008). Their study found a high incidence of sex and money in exchange

²¹ For a detailed discussion of South African social discourse that supports male rape in prison see: Rossouw, G. (n.d.). *Prison rape – ‘Pappa wag vir jou’: contesting the language and silence of punishment, race, sexuality and power in the South African social order*. 1-11.[Online]. Available: <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net> [2016, January 11].

for drugs. An interesting finding was the common practice of “dealer loans”, where drug dealers would give users drugs on credit, which participants cite forced them into sex work in order to pay off the debt (Parry *et al*, 2008:47).

In a similar study conducted in Durban, South Africa, Needle *et al* (2008) explored the patterns of drug use and HIV risk behaviour among street-based sex workers. The aim of this study was to understand the social context around drug use and HIV risk behaviours and to gain an understanding of street-based sex workers’ drug use habits. Findings overlap with the Parry *et al* (2008) study: that showed male sex workers primarily engaged in sex work in order to elicit drugs, with most of the money earned through sex work being spent on drugs. Their study also revealed that clients engage in drug use and actively seek out sex workers who are users. Their findings illustrate that structural factors, such as the physical settings where drugs are exchanged for sex influences the situations in which HIV and drug related risk behaviour occurs (Needle *et al*, 2008). In comparison, this, according to Gear (2007), mirrors the correlation between drug use and sexual vulnerability in the South African prison context:

Unfamiliar with codes governing inmate relations, first time offenders are especially susceptible to manipulation and trickery regularly employed to establish sexual subordinates. A typical path into being made a ‘woman’ is for a new offender to accept food, drugs or protection from another prisoner. By doing so he is unknowingly viewed as having created a debt, which he will be expected to ‘repay’ with sex. (Gear, 2007:217)

Parry *et al* (2008) found that respondents expressed that the social and cultural factors that complement drug use as part of sex work activity was the ability of drugs to ‘turn them on’ in preparation for sex. MSW’s also mention that they could not have sex (with clients) without taking drugs, referring to it as an ‘escape from reality’ (Parry *et al*, 2008:48). I would hazard to speculate that drugs made the sex act more bearable, a similar finding in many prison studies that associate drug use with sexual activity among non-consenting participants (Gear, 2007; Sikweyiya & Jewkes, 2009; Moolman, 2015a; Terry, 2016). Parry *et al* (2008) stresses the importance of understanding the social and psychological context of drug use and sexual behaviour of MSM, arguing that it is equally imperative to explore how these men explain risk-taking behaviours. We need to rethink MSW by focusing on the power dynamics and the social and cultural complexities of the South African sex work industry. This is the central starting point of Boyce and Isaacs (2014) call for the inclusivity of male sex workers personal narratives to guide new research into this and other related topics.

Conclusion

The literature has shown that dominance of gang culture within the South African prison system promotes the continued use of violence and gender segregation through

demeaning practices of gender reassignment. While this is a critical take on prison sex, I argue that a contrasting view of alternative sexualities be explored in order to gauge the extent to which the gangs preside over sex throughout the prison system. Because prison affects the identity and lived reality of inmates at all stages of their life it is worth examining the trajectory of this passage to understand what men experience at various points in their prison journey. I attempt to understand men's experiences of gender and sexuality in prison and how it shapes their direction into sex work. I prefer to think of gender and sexuality as fluid; open to the possibility of change regardless of the environment; not entirely influenced by it nor totally outside its control, only that it depends on a spectrum of desire. As the person is exposed to new sexual experiences, not those solely based upon the contingencies of societal acceptance, so they will be open to exploring, playing with and performing new gendered and sexual identities. Take away the judgmental, righteous society and policing on sexuality, and who knows what may abound. The experiences of incarcerated men and ex-offenders are valuable in understanding the desires, needs and pleasures that men seek in the repressive system of prison. I believe that this work is under-researched but is of great value to South African scholarship on prison studies.

In the following chapter, I provide a discussion of the methodological approach taken in this research study. I provide a detailed outline of the methodological framework of grounded theory and the narrative methodology. As this is a feminist study a discussion on feminist standpoint epistemology follows. Thereafter I discuss the research design and methods for data collection and data analysis.

Chapter 3: Methodology

A Qualitative Approach

This qualitative study is modeled on the social constructionist approach to research (Silverman, 2013). The conceptual framework is located in a body of critical feminist and sociological theories, which lays the foundation for the various components of this study. Maxwell proposes an “interactive model” (2009:215) to qualitative research design that aims to integrate all components of the research design into a constructive whole. Maxwell (2009) emphasizes the conceptual framework as a guide to designing a sound qualitative research study. In the early stages of planning this study, the conceptual framework was critical to the research design process, and was reviewed continuously as new theories and empirical research was discovered. It is the solid conceptual framework that guided the coherence of various research study elements together and created a thread from one section/process to the next. To explore the social and cultural constructions of gender and sexuality in spaces such as prisons and the streets, this study employs two methodological theories: grounded theory (Punch, 2005) and narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993; 2003; 2005; 2008).

Punch (2005) explains that there is no single right way to do qualitative research, and there is no single methodological framework. There are different techniques to illuminate different aspects of the data. The same goes for theoretical approaches: each one highlights different features of the research question and attempts to engage with different facets of the problem under investigation. Punch (2005) states that multiple perspectives and practices are utilized in analyzing qualitative data because different studies address questions from different angles, using multiple techniques. Methods often overlap, are interconnected and sometimes complementary, as is the case of the study presented here which employs different theoretical perspectives to make sense of the study theoretically and methodologically to test certain theories against a dataset.

Research that uses the dramaturgical metaphor, which suggests that actors stage performances to portray their ideal or most desirable self to save ‘face’, especially in difficult situations and contexts, pairs well with the narrative approach to explain the use of storytelling in identity construction (Riessman, 2003). Comparing the construction of narratives to a play on stage, Riessman (2003) elaborates that gender identity is performed for audiences, and in turn produced by them. The emphasis on performance is not to say that identities are inauthentic and only constructed for others, but instead to highlight the importance of social interaction in constructing identities and narratives (Riessman, 2003).

The research question in this study is concerned with the construction of gendered identities and performances. It deals with extremely personal accounts of people’s

lives which is often veiled in a cloud of secrecy, shame and/or trauma and not easily shared. This study involves work with an exploited group of the population; I wanted to ensure that this research project would in no way reinforce this exploitation by doing the bare minimum with their narratives, hence the application of multiple methodologies that would uncover extensive analysis. I was conscientious and meticulous in planning the best suited methodologies that would pay attention to the finest details of analyzing the data, whilst still allowing me the freedom to be flexible in my application of these methodologies, to find a system of methods and techniques that work for me and fits my capabilities as an apprentice researcher. I make use of the grounded theory approach because it is an established methodological model that has been used extensively in the social sciences.

Grounded theory presents a methodical, detailed guide to handling data. This method works well in centering the data at all stages of the analytical process. It encourages the back and forth movement between data collection and data analysis. It treats data as a work in progress, allowing the researcher to work with small manageable 'chunks' of data at a time. This bottom-up approach emphasizes and centers the research subjects and their narratives, and not the theory as traditional positivist methods prescribe.

The narrative approach encourages deep engagement with the data. I want the men's voices to come through as if they were speaking directly to the reader. While this does present issues of interpretation and representation, I feel that Collins' (2009) intersectional approach framed within feminist methodology offsets this well and combats potentially negative effects due to power imbalances in the research encounter. The narrative approach provides a clear framework for dealing with these concerns because it focuses on the experiences of the research encounter and incorporates that into the process of data analysis specifically through the narrative analysis approach. This method forces the researcher to acknowledge their involvement and influence in the process of narrative construction. It holds the researcher accountable and sees the relational aspect of the research encounter as fundamental to the co-construction of the narrative, paying close attention to the teller/listener (actor/audience) relationship. This holds the narrator accountable and exposed, in the same way traditional research has always expected the respondent to be vulnerable, with the interviewer holding all the power in the interview relationship. It is important not to position myself as all-knowing, but instead follow what Collins calls a "connected knower" – knowledge from observation and experience (2009:277). I want to put these men's voices front and centre as much as possible. Because this study is concerned with the performative element, this narrative method accentuates the performances of stories in a way that other narrative approaches could not (e.g. structural narrative analysis, discourse analysis, conversation analysis).

I encourage the reader to view this work through a feminist lens. The kind of feminism I ascribe to is one that considers the inclusion of men and their role in

working towards destabilizing patriarchal power and hegemonic discourses that permeates through society. An engagement with masculinities is guided by my concerns with feminist politics, particularly in South African feminist academia, where an apparent divide exists between men and women, particularly within feminist scholarship that engages in research of violent masculinities. While I respect this and recognize that the high levels of violent crimes leveled against women are usually committed by men, my experiences as a woman of colour from a working class background where gangs and violent masculinities were omnipresent tells a different story. I endeavor to show the existence, even on a small scale, of alternative masculinities. I want to show another side to violent masculinities, not in an attempt to excuse their violent actions but instead an engagement in nuanced discussion that aims to take multiple perspectives/performances/stories into account, and to show a balanced view of men, as has been my lived reality to date.

This chapter presents a discussion of grounded theory and narrative analysis that underpin the methodological framework of this study. Following is a motivation for feminist research in this area of masculinity and prison studies. The second section provides an overview of the fieldwork site, followed by a review of the research study design and the methods used to generate research questions, the procedures undertaken to recruit participants into the study, and the processes of data collection and data analysis. The third section addresses ethical considerations such as informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality and researching sensitive topics. The final section looks at the role of the researcher sharing reflective experiences of the research encounter.

Research Questions:

The research question in this study seeks to understand how male sex workers experience gender and sexuality in prison before, during and after periods of incarceration. Interviews were unstructured and open-ended with many of the questions focusing on personal accounts of participants' life histories, traumatic experiences and personal relationships to sex, sexuality and criminal activities whilst in prison. The research question, interview schedule²² and subquestions below, guided the process of analysis and are attempts at understanding the personal and lived realities of participants.

General Research Question

How do men who are or become male sex workers construct and perform their gendered and sexual identities in prison and on the street?

²² See Appendix A

Specific Research Questions

1. How do constructions of gender and sexuality in prison sex culture impact on self-identification of male sex workers?
2. How do men perform and navigate gender and sexuality in prison sex culture, and does it influence their experiences of male sex work?
3. What are the experiences of sexual relationships in prison and does it influence decisions and choices to enter into, or continue with sex work post-release?

Overarching themes in this study aim to offer a response to the research question in the following way: exploring constructions of gender and sexuality in prison and its impact on self-identification; the counter-narratives and alternative performances of gender and sexuality in prison sex culture; and points of entry into sex work and its trajectory via prison and the streets.

Methodological Framework:

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory emerged in the 1960's with the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Theirs was the first description of the methods employed to do grounded theory research, which is generating of theory from data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The objective of this theory is the generation of theory from data, meaning any hypotheses and concepts are directly derived from the data, and the theory evolves in relation to the data thus pointing to the sequential relationship between data and theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The aim of grounded theory is to develop theory inductively through qualitative data analysis (Punch, 2005; Gibson & Brown, 2009). It was initially developed to study complex social behaviours, and has come to be used across a wide variety of social science disciplines and in various social contexts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Punch, 2005). Grounded theory is best defined as a "research strategy whose purpose is to generate theory from data" (Punch, 1998:163). The purpose of this approach is to collect and analyze data, to generate new theories or pathways to new theories by building on existing theories (Punch, 2005). According to Punch, grounded theory is an overall strategy of doing research through a particular set of techniques and methods: "Grounded theory is not a theory at all. It is a method, an approach, a strategy." (Punch, 1998:163).

The Use Of Literature In Grounded Theory

In keeping with its dependence on theory generation, grounded theory is guided by a more open, flexible approach to the use of literature upfront (Punch, 2005). Grounded theory supports the idea of approaching the data with an open mind, being guided by the initial research question, therefore, it states the importance that the research question comes first (Punch, 2005). The point of this is to find categories and concepts in the data first, and not bring it *into* the data from elsewhere in the literature. Grounded theory proposes delaying a review of the literature until the conceptual framework is in place and once the data has been thoroughly reviewed (Punch, 2005). In this case, the traditional approach was confronted slightly differently. It started with a brief review of some key literature for the development of a research proposal, hence there was some exposure to ideas and theories before the process of data collection. However, limitations were placed on reading the bulk of the literature until after completion of data collection and the first two phases of data analysis: firstly, coding for categories; and secondly, labeling categories into themes.

Theory Generation Versus Theory Verification

In the grounded theory approach, no upfront theory is proposed and no hypotheses are formulated at the start (Punch, 2005, Silverman, 2013). However, as much as the theory is based on inductive theorizing (i.e. a bottom-up approach), it also depends on deductive techniques: in order to develop theory, one must build on what exists already (Punch, 2005; Gibson & Brown, 2009). In the case of this study, it emerged from ideas by key theorists in sociological theories (Goffman, 1959; Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Foucault, 1990) and feminist disciplines (Butler, 1990) regarding studies on prison sex culture. As the research process progressed and newer more engaging and exciting theories presented in other texts, it was decided to include elements from various theories, and along with the initial data collected, test these theories against a pilot dataset. The research design was in a constant and steady state of progression. The grounded theory approach started off with a few ideas to test the direction of the study as a way to guide conceptualization of the topic, theoretical ideas were constantly being developed and the central research questions were altered and refined throughout the design research process.

Data Collection And Data Analysis Relationship (Theoretical Sampling)

In most research practices, the process of data collection precedes data analysis. In grounded theory, however, the pattern differs (Silverman, 2013). Guided by initial questions, the researcher gathers a small preliminary set of data, similar to that of a pilot study. Analysis begins on this small pool of data; the researcher refines the research questions, making minor changes to the approach of collecting data and then follows a second set of data collection (Punch, 2005, Silverman, 2013). This is the guiding “principle of theoretical sampling – the idea that subsequent data collection

should be guided by theoretical developments that emerge in the analysis.” (Punch, 2005:167). However, according to Punch (2005) the cycle of grounded theory does not stop at two repetitions. It continues until theoretical saturation has been reached – this is when new data no longer reveals new theoretical directions and when concepts can be linked to broader theories (Punch, 2005; Silverman, 2013).

For this research study, the evolving relationship between data collection and analysis started upon initial entry into the fieldwork site where attendance, in the capacity as an observer, at the weekly workshops with participants at the organization allowed careful observation of the sample population. Close engagement with participants, being made aware of pertinent issues relating to this study demographic and observing their daily speech and performance ‘acts’, allowed glimpses into their world. A trial of data collection started with interviews of three participants, then commenced with a preliminary analysis of those interviews. Thereafter, minor changes were made to the interview schedule, and then commencement of the second phase of interviews began, this time interviewing twelve participants. However, the scope of this research project and time constraints did not permit for ‘theoretical saturation’, as there was a limited pool of research participants and limited time in which to interview them. It is here the method of analysis departed from grounded theory and followed in the direction of narrative analysis methodology. Riessman (2008) argues that a limitation of grounded theory is a fragmentation of the data.

Narrative Methodology

Stories are a part of the representation of social reality; narratives are therefore social constructions located within power structures (Punch, 2005). Narratives and the ways in which participants use language and performance to convey meanings and experiences (figuratively and literally), the use of imagery (setting a scene in the performance) and metaphors all carry significant symbolic meaning. Narrative analysis focuses on interpretation and meanings attached to stories (Fraser, 2004; Riessman, 2008)

Narrative As Performance

Building on the dramaturgical metaphor developed by Erving Goffman (1959) that conceptualizes people as social actors on stage performing their ideal selves as they interact with the world, Riessman (2003) draws out this concept to analyze narratives, arguing that elaborate performances that engage an audience are attempts to construct particular identities and portray a desirable self. For Riessman (2003), it does not end there, departing from Goffman, she maintains that all the world is not a stage and that narratives can also be non-performative. She argues that social structures and institutions (e.g. prisons) also limit performances and hinder the possibilities of

narration. Concluding her argument, Riessman (2003) firmly states that the role of the researcher/audience member is intertwined. For researchers, to interpret people's stories and adequately represent the complexity of their lives requires application of multiple theories that will underpin the study. She uses the example of a research study where she applied two diverse theoretical perspectives to interpret and analyze various elements of her case studies. She further states, that it is the researchers responsibility to locate studies in political contexts to show how social structures impact on personal experiences (Riessman, 2003).

The Role Of Researchers In Preserving The Narrative

Riessman (1993) states that respondents often construct narratives of particular experiences or events where they feel disembodied, or where there has been a rupture between ideal self and real self, or between self and society (Riessman, 1993). They attempt to reconstruct a whole (coherent) self through the narrative as a way to embody, in reclamation, an ideal self. Because some experiences are difficult to talk about, there is often difficulty in naming experiences in the case of extreme trauma, or repressed experiences from consciousness. Riessman (1993) explains especially in the case of revealing narratives of trauma, loss or periods of difficult life transitions, the experiences will be cast in narrative form. She goes on to explain that researchers must respect respondents ways of constructing their narratives and attempt at all times to preserve the narrative in its closest original form, trying by all means not to fracture and segment it.

For Riessman (1993) not wanting to cut the narratives into fragments or into thematic categories as some traditional methods instruct, the difficulty of coding narrative is that stories or narratives are pieced together from long accounts into coherent sequences. In the pursuit of applying traditional qualitative methods and techniques the original narrative is exposed, and runs the risk of losing its core essence (Riessman, 1993). A major limitation of grounded theory, according to Riessman is that it fragmentizes the data into small pieces/chunks and in doing so it runs the risk of decontextualizing the data (1993; 2003; 2008). Biographical interviews such as the ones conducted in this study provide rich, detailed accounts, which when opened up into separate coded segments as in the process of open-coding, we lose sight of the overall picture the narrative paints. Segmenting and extensive coding reduces the richness of the data, and loses sight of the bigger picture. Whereas narrative analysis deals holistically with data from start to finish (Punch, 2005).

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis concentrates on the content of oral and written narrative and how it is analyzed (Riessman, 2008). Riessman (2005; 2008) compares thematic analysis to grounded theory in that they are both similar and both conceptualize the narrative into broad themes. Where thematic analysis differs to grounded theory, is that the thematic

approach does not fracture the data, is case-centred and not concerned with theorizing across cases (Riessman, 2008). The thematic approach aims to identify common topics in a dataset and organizes them according to a typology of general themes (Riessman, 2005; 2008).

Stories about people's lives cannot be easily structured into neat thematic categories. The best a narrative methodologist can do is summarize stories or parts of the narrative (Riessman, 1993). The task of analyzing narratives is more complex and consuming, and the challenge of thematic narrative is remaining true to the story and trying to preserve the authenticity of the original narrative as much as possible (Riessman, 1993). A limitation of the thematic narrative is that salient points are missed when only themes are drawn out of the data and little attention is paid to locating it within a specific context (Riessman, 1993; 2003; 2008).

The thematic method makes connections in and across data and finds meaningful patterns, which is conceptualized into broad themes (Riessman, 1993; 2003; 2005). It is an approach that is highly beneficial for longer narratives, as it opens the data without fragmenting it (as per grounded theory open-coding method), yet still opens the pathway for deeper analysis to take place (Riessman, 1993; 2003). For this study, thematic narrative analysis was applied in the fourth (final) phase of data analysis.

Narrative Analysis

Narrative provides a way for people to explain and contextualize their lives (Riessman, 2003). To emphasize the performative element of narrative is to demonstrate how narratives are set, executed and mindful of an audience who receive it (Riessman, 2003). Narrators negotiate how they want to be known in stories, which they develop collaboratively with the audience (through cues, reactions, applause), in the same way the interviewee co-constructs a narrative with the interviewer, Riessman explains that just as actors shape their stories for particular audiences, so too a narrator constructs a story that will serve a particular purpose – to portray himself in a certain way.

For Riessman (2008) stories represent an activity. It is an activity that gathers people, invites them to listen, to empathize and reflect on broader social, political and/or historical issues. Narrative represents a collaborative effort between a narrator and listener, like an actor delivering parts of a script, the audience receives the performance, interprets it and reflects on it. Riessman (2008) states that narrative analysis opens up representations of experience (2008). As investigators of stories and narratives we ask, “why was the story told in that way?” (Riessman, 2008). People tell stories about their experiences, and as narrative researchers and methodologists it is our duty to interpret narratives, openly and non-judgmentally. By interpreting and analyzing people's stories we are also implicated in the reorganizing and retelling of those stories, thus we become co-constructors of the narrative (Riessman, 1993).

Narrative analysis takes thematic content and narrative form seriously and attention is paid to the co-construction between teller and listener as the narrative ('performance') unfolds (Riessman, 2005). Again, using the dramaturgical metaphor, the listener questions and probes to go deeper, to elicit more meaning, and the teller ('actor') constructs meaning, inviting the listener ('audience') into a world created on stage whilst sharing his life story ('script').

In the dramaturgical sense as a director and his lead role would incorporate changes into a script thus extending it, here, through questions posed by the listener, the narrative unfolds and becomes more complex and nuanced. The important feature of this analytical method is the co-construction of the narrative, and the interaction between teller and listener as they construct meaning (make meaning) together (Riessman, 2005). As Riessman (2005) explains, this approach is useful for the study of relationships between social actors in different settings – as in the case of the study discussed here, where firstly, an attempt to understand how gender and sexual identities are constructed in prison and secondly, to understand the nature of personal relationships between men in prison.

Riessman (1993; 2008) states that an adverse feature of qualitative research is that it depicts people's stories but acts as if representation doesn't matter – an argument I have elucidated above (see page 17-18 in the empirical research section). For Riessman, a core concept of feminist theory is "giving voice" to marginalized groups which also includes their own experiences/histories of marginalization and oppression (1993:8). This perspective ties in nicely with the key features of feminist standpoint epistemology, which is to foreground the experiences of people of colour – of both interviewer and interviewee alike. While she supports the feminist approach to narrative, Riessman (1993; 2008) also cautions that representation is not the be-all and end-all. She implores researchers to acknowledge their own power and influence in the process of interaction and co-construction of the narrative, alongside that of the participant. Riessman (2008) states that narratives are ambiguous, in meaning and representation, and argues thus, that we cannot remain fully neutral in our representations and interpretations of these narratives to the world.

A Feminist Research Study

Feminist research seeks to foster the empowerment of women and other marginalized groups, they apply their findings for the promotion and advancement of social justice issues for women (and men) (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007). A research methodology guided by feminist practice aims to minimize the power differences between the researcher and the respondent by striving for an equal relationship throughout the research encounter, on the basis of developing trust and building rapport (ideally over a period of time) (Punch, 2005). This study calls for a feminist approach to research

that draws on a range of theoretical and methodological paradigms that hold different perspectives and ask different questions of the social world (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007). Feminist researchers look at the world through multiple lenses, and problematize our thinking and awareness of sexist, racist and homophobic ideologies and practices (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007).

The diversity of feminist theories and existence of various feminist epistemological positions that speak to differing perspectives of feminism marks the concept of feminist standpoint a contested terrain amongst feminist scholars (Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2002). Due to the diversities of feminist movements, there is no consensus on the basic definition of feminist standpoint; rather, it varies across feminists from a range of disciplines. Ramazanoğlu and Holland define it as “establishing relationships between knowledge and power without abandoning the hope of telling better stories about gendered lives” (2002:63). The key characteristics of feminist standpoint are that it explores relations between knowledge and power, as a way to oppose forms of power that privilege certain voices over others. A feminist standpoint is grounded in women’s experiences, making connections between the diversity of women’s experiences and knowledges it produces. And lastly, feminist standpoint is cognizant of the partiality of knowledge and resists claiming certain knowledges as ‘truth’; furthermore, it rejects any notion that regards the feminist researcher as the ‘knower’ of truth or holder of superior knowledge (Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2002).

Feminist Interviewing

Feminist research is focused on creating a partnership with the respondent rather than controlling and dominating the research encounter as traditional androcentric methods usually teach (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Brooks, 2007; Riessman, 2008). It always attempts to shift focus from the researcher as the ‘knower-of-all’ to the respondent as the knowledgeable partner in the relationship (Hesse-Biber, 2007). This approach visualizes both partners as co-creators of the knowledge being extracted, especially when biographically sensitive and personal information is being shared (Brooks, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2007; Riessman, 2008). Feminist research and feminist interviewing emphasizes the study of lives from the narrators’ viewpoint, with data seen as a shared production with researcher (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Using stories to capture lived experiences, narratives of this sort offer uniquely rich and subtle understanding of various lived realities and social situations (Riessman, 2008).

A Black Feminist Standpoint

As a feminist researcher studying masculinities especially in this case, prison masculinities, which carry negative connotations of violence and patriarchal power, is a challenging task within most feminist circles. Collins (2009) argues that a feminist methodology informed by intersectionality theory takes the experiences of people of colour (POC) in various social, cultural, historical and political contexts seriously.

Collins (2009) further argues that POC are negatively represented in public discourse and this further frames their experiences as the exclusionary 'other'. This feminist research study extends the concept of intersectionality to the researcher and respondent relationship.

The concept of intersectionality was first coined by Crenshaw (1995) and later refined by Collins (2009) who demonstrates how various categories of identity intersect at multiple axes, which either confers power or status over individuals in order to oppress and marginalize. These intersecting identities are not rigid but context specific and can change from one setting to another, thus power can shift from one situation to the next (Collins, 2009). For male prisoners who are/become male sex workers after a period of incarceration, applying intersectionality theory to think of characteristics of their identity, such as class, sexuality, gender, ethnicity and nationality was particularly pertinent to this examination. Equally so, to consider the intersectional identity of the researcher as a young woman of colour (WOC), university educated and relatively privileged in comparison to the sample population was a way to confront the gender, class, race power dynamics of the research encounter. An acknowledgment that both parties come into this relationship with diverse experiences of race, class, gender, sexuality and so on, is the first step to recognizing some of the imbalances in the relationship and working towards destabilizing those inequalities so as to better understand the other.

In the past masculinity was regarded as antithetical to the feminist struggle with many feminist researchers questioning and critiquing the work of masculinity studies in feminism or the work of male theorists working on feminist issues (Robinson, 2003; Kronsell, 2005; McCarry, 2007). Robinson (2003) notes the value of men's theorizing from feminist perspectives but remains cautionary as she warns that feminists should be attentive to theoretical and methodological shifts in male-produced feminist theories. In my view, a study of masculinity opens the way to understanding men and engaging with them in order to break down barriers across the gender divide. Ratele (2013; 2014) claims an impasse has been reached in South African theories of masculinity, specifically black masculinities that have been positioned in critical light. Ratele (2013) posing a question to theorists asks us to consider what value feminism may have for black men? He implores theorists to engage with men to determine how African feminist theorizing can shift prevailing attitudes of black masculinities in South African discourse.

The aim of this study is to apply feminist theory and methodology that works toward supplanting historically damaging images of black masculinity in South Africa, and to challenge knowledges that produce narrowly defined representations and discourses of incarcerated men and male sex workers in the South African social and cultural milieu.

South African Black Feminists Research On Prison Identities

I turn to the work of three black feminist researchers who conducted research with diverse prison populations, in male and female prison settings in South Africa. The work of these feminist researchers illustrates how women of colour (WOC) position themselves in relation to research that explores prison identities. Using feminist research methodologies and theories borrowed from African feminism (Moolman, 2015b) and Northern black feminism (Africa, 2010; Boonzaier, 2014) these researchers show what it means to deeply engage with feminist theories by immersing themselves and sharing their experiences of having to navigate research that deals with marginalized populations. The challenges they highlight, that they had to face in their respective research studies resonates with some of my own experiences and uncertainties in doing feminist prison research.

Africa (2010) conducted a study that focused on the violent crimes perpetrated by women. Her study examined the identity constructions of incarcerated women as they shared narratives about their lives and the crimes they committed (Africa, 2010). Guided by the theories of Northern black feminism, Africa (2010) uses these theories to explain women's violent subjectivities from a black feminist standpoint. Boonzaier (2014), a feminist researcher that focuses on the differential gender relationship between researcher and researched, worked with male research subjects accused of intimate partner violence (IPV) addresses the positionalities and power dynamics of the research encounter. Boonzaier (2014) refers to the "relational dynamics" (2014: 235) of the of the interview encounter where she studied performances of gender during interviews with her participants. Boonzaier refers to this process of feminist work as "reaching across the gender divide" (2014:243), which is the investment of feminist research with/on violent masculinities that pays close attention to social contexts and is vigilant of the ways in which men perform and present their accounts of violence.

Guided by qualitative methods Boonzaier (2014) locates her work in critical feminist research, and similar to Africa (2010) she draws on the work of Northern black feminists such as Collins (2009) and Crenshaw (1995) applying their theories to make sense of power dynamics and shifts in her interviews with perpetrators of domestic violence. For Moolman (2015b), an ethnographic feminist researcher, the journaling method is a way to work through challenges encountered in her research with men. She engages reflectively on her work with men incarcerated for violent sexual offences, where she writes about her experiences of navigating research with violent masculinities. Describing her research diary as a space to explore a shifting feminist identity, she shares: "my diary became a space of reflection as I studied the 'other' I was simultaneously reflecting my own understanding of power, difference and otherness" (Moolman, 2015b:204). This was a profoundly insightful lesson I learned early on in the research process and one that I adopted, although not in such a rigorous undertaking. I kept a short research journal in which I jotted brief accounts of

my thoughts, feelings, and anxieties after each interview. This simple task of reflection opened the way for me to interrogate my feminist politics and motives for entering into this field of research study.

Boonzaier (2014) and Moolman (2015b) both admit to having preconceived ideas prior to their interviews. Boonzaier (2014) admits to expecting a particular narrative of admission and remorse, and being particularly invested in the research with the hope of certain narratives unfolding. This honest account of her initial intentions is underpinned by a feminist praxis that encourages such candor where reflective engagement with research that acknowledges and builds on past mistakes in this way strengthens future research. Boonzaier (2014) claims that by far the most challenging dilemma feminist researchers who work with violent masculinities face is deciding how to navigate or confront sexism as it manifests in the interview encounter. Boonzaier (2014) weighs having to battle between one's formal training as a researcher – allowing the narrator the space to construct their narrative - versus staying true to feminist politics – that directly challenges the participant's viewpoint. Moolman (2015b) expresses how this is something she had to wrestle with too, especially having to deal with the tensions of having to explain her interest in this field of study. She grappled with tensions of having to account for the violence her subjects had inflicted on women, and rationalizing their experiences of trauma against the crimes perpetrated on others. Moolman (2015b) confronts the complexities of striking a balance between her researcher and feminist identities. Addressing conflicts between feminist politics and praxis, her research diary provided the space to express her feelings of the research encounter. It gave her a 'voice' to reflect as a feminist, intellectual, researcher and woman.

Gendered relations undoubtedly shape the unfolding narrative between researcher and subject affecting the performances by both parties. Doing work across the gender divide (Boonzaier, 2014) is being mindful of the many challenges this work presents. It draws attention to the gendered identities of researcher and research subjects. For these researchers a feminist theoretical approach to understanding discourses of violence can contribute to a broader understanding of diverse identity constructions in the South African prison context. In a similar vein I follow their examples, in this study a methodology informed by feminist theory challenges prevailing perceptions of violent masculinities and get to grips understanding men, in this way it advances (if only slightly) shifting knowledge about men that works toward dismantling hegemonic systems of power and knowledge as per the directive of feminist standpoint theory. Equally, this study engages with feminist and queer theories as a way to actively construct new understandings and representations of prison masculinities and sexualities.

The Organization – Fieldwork Site

This research study was undertaken in collaboration with Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) and the University of Cape Town (UCT) Knowledge Co-op. SWEAT is a non-governmental organization (NGO) and is regarded as a centre of excellence championing the rights of sex workers in South Africa and with partners on the African continent. They are committed to the advocacy of sex workers' human and labour rights. They educate and deliver services to sex workers throughout South Africa, offering counseling, legal advice and skills training to sex workers of all genders and sexual orientations. Their organizational structure emphasizes community development and involves the training and employment of sex workers who are now employed and appointed in leadership positions within the organization. They also developed a peer educators program, up-skilling past sex workers as workshop facilitators who run and lead the weekly life skills workshop program (SWEAT, 2016).

SWEAT spans a 20-year history fighting for the recognition and legitimacy of sex work as 'real' work. A key aspect of their advocacy campaign since 2000 is lobbying for the decriminalization of sex work in South Africa, and advocating for social and gender justice against the maltreatment and infringement of sex workers basic human rights. In 2003 they launched Sisonke ("we are together"); a movement formed by and for sex workers. Sisonke addresses a number of issues such as police harassment, access to social and healthcare services, life skills training and a 24-hour help line. In 2009 SWEAT co-hosted the first African sex worker conference. They run weekly gender specific workshops for sex workers, which comprises of a women's group, transgender group and men's group. I was invited to join the men's group ('Siyasebenza') as a visiting researcher occupying a position as a research intern.

Research Internship

My internship commenced in July 2015 until March 2016 (8 months), which ended with the culmination of my interviews for data collection. At the initial stakeholder meeting between SWEAT, UCT Knowledge Co-op, my academic supervisor and myself, I had requested to shadow at SWEAT before commencing my fieldwork. I wanted to gain a sense of familiarity with the organization's operational systems and structures, and to build rapport with the members of the men's group prior to recruiting participants to the study. For the first month, I acquainted myself with key departments to understand operational and administrative functioning. Thereafter, I attended the men's weekly workshops. They run two types of workshops, which alternate on every consecutive week. A larger group workshop, referred to as 'creative space', is a general space for all male sex workers (MSW) to engage in open forum discussions on a number of topics pertinent to their line of work. Over the course of my placement topics/themes ranged from gender and sexuality, sexual

orientation (“What makes you homo/hetero-sexual?”), marketing for sex workers (“What makes a client want you?”), social media for MSW’s (“Doing business”), challenges for MSW (“Dealing with discrimination”) and intermittently, “Health and Wellness” workshops where health awareness and safety issues were highlighted. Recurring issues that came up from week to week was accessing medical and dental care, applying for identity documents, finding adequate shelter and discussing the challenges of life on the street, to issues of discipline and conduct. The most impressive feature of these workshops was seeing the participants fully engaging with the material and activities and being given the freedom to express their needs and have their voices heard. They volunteered to be group leaders, to go on mobile site visits, to talk at public seminars and conferences and to recruit new members. This showed me that they were invested in the program as equally as was invested in them from the organization. This was not participation motivated by incentive, other than basic transport allowance and provision of a meal, there was no monetary incentives for active participation.

At the start of each year, upon recruitment into the program, participants were also contracted into smaller workshop spaces, known as ‘support groups’, which dealt with context specific needs. Some of these groups dealt with highly sensitive and confidential information in closed groups (e.g. HIV support, substance abuse and gender and sexuality support groups). Other groups were open; these were the ones I attended as an observer (e.g. mental health and trauma group, foreign sex workers and ‘fathers for the future’- a fathering support group). Workshops were all very interactive spaces that was led and facilitated by peer educators, who as previous male sex workers have a good grasp of the experiences and challenges facing MSW in the industry. I was highly cognizant of my position as a privileged outsider and the gendered dynamics involved with my position as a woman, where issues of class, education, age, race, gender and sexuality all intersect and influence the interaction with participants (to be discussed in the Reflexivity section).

It is the tireless work of advocates like those at SWEAT and the challenging work that this organization engages in that makes way for a clear civil consciousness. While they do the tireless work of advocating for the human rights of sex workers, it is something the public does not have to be confronted with. The participants of this study were well acquainted with the practices of research because they had been exposed to it so often. They were well-informed and knowledgeable about research practices, and it is because of the organizational model at SWEAT where the voices and presence of sex workers is integrated in the organization’s ethos. At SWEAT, sex workers are made aware that their stories carry weight and, as a result, they are empowered when sharing it in meetings, at conferences, in symposia and during media interviews. It is at SWEAT where they learn the value of their stories, the power of it and the vital need to share it. It is through them that these men first find meaning and value in their own voice. At the bi-weekly creative space workshops and support groups, they are taught how to share their stories, but not in a way that makes

them vulnerable to further stigma or mere bystanders in the research process or mere stories to be told and left there after the interview. They know what will happen to it, the risk of exposure, the weight their knowledge carries and how it is regarded and portrayed in public discourse; and still, they share.

This placement opened my eyes profoundly to not only the narratives being shared about their lives, but also the experience of the research encounter and how critical it is to make participants aware of their power and position in the research process. Oftentimes, we as researchers take the participant for granted once we have gained the information we need, after the arduous process of transcribing and the endless analyses they become numbers, statistics and words, but through this encounter the participants were constantly with me, they were always people with faces, they were memories, they were animated. I believe it is as a result of the months I spent with them before the actual interview. In those months I got to know them and those observations revealed so much, sometimes closely rivaling the interview. It is imperative I believe, when doing research of any kind with a group resembling this one, to seriously consider a period of internship. This subject is difficult to grasp, it is taxing and emotionally draining at times and it is vital that the researcher takes their time getting to know the participants, to build rapport and for the sake of discretion down the line. The time it took to get to know these men in the workshop spaces added not only to the value of the information but also made it easier to navigate difficult, personal and often intrusive questions as is the nature of research that explores highly personal and sensitive information.

Research Design

This qualitative study is based on the social constructionist approach, informed by feminist and sociological theories, namely, Butler's (1990) concept of performativity and Gagnon and Simons (1973) sexual scripting theory. The aim of this research design was to create a nexus between theory and methodology. To create connections between abstract concepts and ideas in theory translated into applicable methods to test on a sample population. In keeping with the principles of grounded theory and the inductive approach to theory generation, I designed the study in such a way where all aspects of the research process are recursive and the main components represent a synthesis in a connected whole. This work is located in the social constructionist paradigm where a focus on establishing 'truth' of the narratives was not a concern of this study, as meanings and experiences were being explored rather than factual or statistical data. Detailed accounts of data collection and data analysis are presented to provide a transparent report of the research process. The validity of the data can be measured by this detailed account and strict adherence to the analytical process outlined. As this study is based on the qualitative method consisting of a small sample

it is not reflective of the general population. Generalizability of the data is therefore not a concern of this study.

Methods

The focus of this research has been on participants' experiences of incarceration (before, during and after) and street-based sex work. Data was collected through qualitative method of semi-structured interviews with 15 all male participants. Interviews were conducted at the offices of SWEAT, in a private room provided by the organization. Data was collected over a period of one month (between February to March 2016). Interviews were conducted in English and Afrikaans, they lasted between 45 minutes and 90 minutes, and were audio taped and transcribed.

Sampling

Participant Recruitment

SWEAT assisted in the facilitation of participant recruitment. Potential participants were identified from their men's weekly workshop groups. I gave a short presentation at one of their weekly workshops to present an overview and purpose of the study and invited participants to sign-up. I worked closely with a senior peer educator, who assisted in communicating the purposes of the study to participants and encouraged them to sign-up to join the study. I approached selected participants and invited them to an interview session, no one declined the invitations. I provided each individual with a brief overview of the study, its aims and objectives and a clear outline of the research process in terms of volunteer participation, consent and confidentiality and the associated benefits and risks. Sampling was limited to the fulfillment of certain basic criteria, such as, participants had to have been incarcerated, currently working as a male sex worker and must identify as male. The sampling process also followed guidelines supported by principles of intersectionality theory, which was based on, but not restricted to race, gender, nationality, language and so forth.

Sample Population

The sample in this study represents a non-probability, purposive sampling method (Punch, 2005; Silverman, 2013), best described as a sample with a target population who fulfil specific criteria (Punch, 2005). Fifteen men met the criteria for selection and agreed to be interviewed ($n=15$). Respondents were aged between 23 and 40 years, with an average age of 31.5 years. SWEAT caters to South African and foreign sex workers, therefore the study was open to both South African and African foreign

nationals. Three respondents identified as Black and twelve as Coloured²³. Ten described themselves as straight, two as gay and three as bisexual. The average age of first sexual encounter was between 12 and 18 years, with many of the respondents describing their initiation into sex beginning at the age of 9 and 12 years. A number of them share early experiences of physical and sexual abuse or trauma that precedes their entry into gangs and prison, and subsequently into sex work ($n=8$). Fathering was a dominant subject for many of the men and central to their narratives, as eleven are fathers ($n=11$), and one had a baby on the way.

Profiles of the respondents reveal serious family problems, particularly with parents at an early age. They reveal an intergenerational history of incarceration, of either one or both parents serving long-term or life sentences ($n=2$) or other close family members being incarcerated for lengthy periods ($n=4$). More than half the respondents experienced tumultuous home environments which was often cited as the precursor to running away from home ($n=8$), in many cases as early as 10 to 12 years of age. Respondents generally came from working class families and low socioeconomic backgrounds where one or more caretakers were unemployed ($n=10$). This could possibly explain the high dropout rate among respondents, with only three having completed high school, two obtaining tertiary qualifications (both foreign nationals), and the majority having dropped out at primary or secondary school level in their early teenage years ($n=10$). The period that follows marked their entry into gangs, for some as early as 12 years old. The life trajectories can roughly be split in two paths: half entered sex work, followed by entry into prison, and the other half joined gangs, followed by prison and then sex work post-release.

Life on the streets poses a number of challenges; a majority of the respondents are currently homeless and living on the streets. They highlight exposure to a number of high-risk behaviours, either linked to incarceration or to sex work. Ten respondents admitted to drug addiction and substance abuse. And finally, three respondents disclosed that they are HIV-positive.

Data Collection

Data was collected over a period of one month from February to March 2016. Fifteen individual interviews were conducted, that lasted between 45 to 90 minutes. The use of biographical interviewing technique allowed participants to share experiences that occurred throughout the life history and not only those pertinent to experiences of prison and sex work. This approach is important to me as I feel it is important to

²³ This is based on an apartheid imposed racial classification system. African refers to Black African and the term Coloured refers to people of mixed race descent. In the post-apartheid setting the term 'Black' is an inclusive label to categorize African, Coloured and Indian. Going forward I will use the term 'black' to refer to the all-inclusive label.

know about the person's background and the experiences that shaped their entry into prison and sex work. The experience of prison and sex work does not happen in a vacuum separate to other aspects of the life story, thus I allow participants the freedom to explore and express in their own way and tell their stories in the way that feels best for them. Questioning followed a non-directive approach, only probing where necessary to elicit further details in the stories. In some instances, participants preferred a more direct question and answer style of interview. This called for a flexible approach to interviewing, awareness of different participants needs and picking up on cues in the interview to gauge where and when participants needed more guidance with more structured questions as compared to others who preferred unstructured, open-ended questions with very little input on my part. Observation in the big and small workshops spaces at SWEAT helped me to get to know participants and, through observation of their interactions in these spaces, I had a good sense of individual traits to be able to adapt my interviewing methods in the moment.

Interviews were conducted in one of the on-site offices, with very little noise and disturbances, although on a few occasions interviews were disrupted by staff members entering the space or noise from office traffic. Conducting the interviews at SWEAT offices provided neutral ground for both interviewer and interviewee, it was a space they were used to and comfortable with. Being regular attendees at SWEAT they are familiar with the venue and being in a space without stigma and where they are used to sharing their experiences, lent a comfortability and familiarity to the interview encounter. As per agreement with the organization (SWEAT) each participant received a transport stipend (R40.00) and lunch.

The Interview Encounter

Following the dramaturgical metaphor, the interview is a space for participants to share the scripts of their lives, in my multiple-player capacity as researcher, listener, audience member and co-director of the unfolding production. I envision this as the space where actor/script-writer and co-director read-through the script, as a rehearsal of sorts of the performance. The questions that I pose or probes are ways that I am part of the production of the unfolding script, but also through answering the questions the script is only part of the performance, it is not the final performance – it is a spotlight on aspects of the performance. In that moment the interview is a spotlight on an ever-evolving script where I am invited into a private rehearsal/performance

I had an interview guideline with me, which I left on the table for the participant to see, along with a small notebook and pen. Before starting the interview, I explained that I had the stationery in case I wanted to write down an expression or interesting note from the interview and made sure to ask if they were comfortable with this. When it necessitated e.g. clarifying words or phrases I would jot down a short note during the conversation without interrupting. Only once did a participant stop his

narrative to allow me to write, the notebook was always face-up on the desk and open for them to see what I was writing. Usually, these notes were follow-ups of sabela²⁴ or Afrikaans expressions that I was not familiar with. The interview schedule consisted of eight questions, mainly used as probes during the interview.

I would start the interview by asking participants for consent to record, thereafter I would explain informed consent, reading through the consent forms which we would both sign (I had two consent forms, one of my own and one from SWEAT). I would give the participant a copy of the signed consent forms. At the start of the interview I would explain on tape that we had just signed the consent forms. I would ask the participant about language preferences (either English or Afrikaans, or both). From there, I proceeded with the opening question, which was to ask them to tell me about their background as a way to ‘settle in’. The interview started with the first question: *“To get started and for me to get to know you a bit better, can you tell me about your background?”* From there we would proceed with the narrative, where necessary, I would follow up with probing questions, utterances (‘sure’, ‘yes’, ‘I see’) or encouragers (‘hmm’) and gestures (nodding, smiling, squinting). These are captured in the transcripts and where I was able to I would explicitly mention observations of the participants’ body language as a cue or marker for myself at a later stage when I transcribed the interview to be able to insert it into the conversation.

Once interviews were completed I would spend a few minutes writing field notes on the interview encounter, noting my experience of the interview encounter, such as challenges I faced, highlighting positives or negatives of the interview and noting my mood during or after the interview. I use these notes or observational records, to guide my reflection of the research process after the completion of fieldwork (see reflexivity section below). Due to language issues – in many cases participants would switch between English and Afrikaans and use sabela throughout much of the interview - I chose to transcribe all interviews myself. This helped as a first phase of data analysis, having to listen to interviews for hours on end.

Transcription took approximately four months to complete (at an average of 4 hours per day, three days a week). I followed a basic method of transcription: a “rough transcription that gets the words and other striking features of the conversation on paper (e.g., crying, laughing, very long pauses).” (Reissman 2008:56) One then goes back and retranscribes for selected portions. This is where I depart from Riessman’s (2008) method, choosing to work with the original (first draft) transcripts, preferring to remain closer to the original narrative as possible, as this method also triggers personal experiences and memories of the interview encounter. Gibson and Brown describe this style of transcript as “unfocused transcription”, which is a basic outline of speech or action with very little contextual detail (2009: 116). In this way, I can

²⁴ A coded prison language used in the Number gangs. While I am familiar with a few expressions in sabela and have a working knowledge of particular words there were moments when participants would say something at length and I would have to ask them to repeat or explain in detail.

provide a simple, honest representation of the narrator's voice with very little of my influence in representing it in a certain way.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed grounded theory methods in the first two phases of a four-part data analysis process. The process of data analysis started as soon as data was being collected, beginning at the initial stage of transcription. Having to repeatedly listen to the audio recordings time and again, it was at this stage when initial coding began. What distinguishes grounded theory from other qualitative approaches is the practice of generating abstract conceptual categories to explain the data being studied.

Analyzing The Data Using Grounded Theory Approach

Following in the grounded theory approach, the first level of organizing the data into a conceptual story starts with the open-coding technique. Open-coding is the “breaking open” of data, with the idea being to open up theoretical possibilities in the data (Punch, 1998:211). During open-coding, the data is separated and ordered into smaller parts (‘fractured’); it is examined for differences and similarities to other datasets, and questions are asked of the script that emerges in the story (Punch, 2005). The start of transcription also marked the start of phase one in the analysis process. At this initial stage, I was guided by early theoretical inclinations derived from early reading of empirical literature in preparation of the research proposal. Most of the codes generated revolved around prison geographies (the gendered space of prison), prison economy (which was also linked to the Number gangs), and prison gang culture. Codes relating to gender and sexuality were concerned with male rape, homosexuality in prison, hegemonic and marginal masculinities and general prison culture. Codes related to sex work were concerned with healthcare, health risks, sexual practices, substance abuse and legal reform of sex work.

The second phase kick-started the formulation of rough categories for analysis from each of the transcripts. Once transcription of all interviews was completed, the second phase of data analysis started. This was the process of generating conceptual categories; assigning data into relevant groupings (Punch, 2005). This is a “code family”: a collection of codes that fit together (Gibson & Brown, 2009:131). This technique is carefully and analytically accomplished, and not a simple thematic depiction of the data. The data now starts taking on a character where a story is being teased apart then pulled together. At this stage of the analysis process, I was able to tease out more codes, as more data was produced. Given the volume of rich data that was produced, along with further engagement with key theories, I developed sixteen extensive categories – some with sub-categories: consensual sex in prison; pathways to prison; physical prison space; performances in prison; prison rituals; entering prison; joining prison gangs; male role models/influencers; sex work as survival; early

sexual relationships; entry into sex work; relationships in prison; wyfies; religion and sex work; masculinity; culture and tradition; and, finally, trauma.

The third phase of analysis is theoretical coding, this process is concerned with producing categories (preliminary findings) around which the data is integrated with as it shapes the emerging theor(ies). Theoretical coding connects categories that emerged from open-coding (Punch, 2005). Where open-coding breaks open the data to get to categories, theoretical coding is the technique of putting categories back together. This process is concerned with organizing the data according to clusters that are relevant to theories from the literature. At this stage the data was slowly being narrowed down and becoming more refined, themes were emerging and beginning to take shape. Pulling categories into broad themes entailed grouping certain categories together, which narrowed the sixteen down to six.

The final phase of grounded theory analysis is the process of pulling themes together in the selective coding technique. Selective coding pulls together themes generated by theoretical codes (Punch, 2005). Gibson and Brown refer to this as the conceptualization of hypothesis: “a relationship between two or more variables” (2009:139). The hypothesis presents a grounded storyline and descriptive narrative of the data (Punch, 2005). A closer reading of empirical literature and organizing the literature review at this stage allowed me to conceptualize of the broad themes in accordance with themes present in the literature. As is the case of grounded theory, the data was being tested against established theory, yet at the same time pushing back to allow new concepts and ideas to emerge that was not prominently featured in the literature. Six themes emerged: ‘proving masculinity’, ‘performing masculinity’, ‘resisting prison masculinity’, ‘coping rituals’, ‘inside vs. outside’, and ‘sex work as performance’.

Organizing Narratives Into A Conceptual Whole

The inductive approach of grounded theory analysis is when codes and categories emerge from the data, to generate theory, not forcing theory upon the data through empirical research from the literature (theory verification approach) as in other qualitative methods. This first section outlined the grounded theory approach followed in the analysis of the data. The second departs from the grounded theory approach and follows in the narrative analysis approach. The reason I chose to move away from the grounded theory approach was that it had done what I had wanted; it opened up the data, sorted it into selective codes and categories. Once this process was completed I was left with a list of coded data and the narratives that I had wanted to maintain were segmented into ‘chunks’. At this point the data was becoming too abstract and I was losing the essence of the narratives, which lay at the heart of this project. I decided to use the thematic approach as a bridge between grounded theory and narrative analysis to put the data back together, into the rich, complex narratives it started off as.

At this stage of the analysis process, I could not ignore trends in the literature that revealed a very specific narrative of prison masculinities. As the theoretical framework was taking shape, I was able to narrow down my areas of focus and the lens through which I wanted to approach the question. In an attempt to remain true to the guiding principles of narrative methodology, I endeavoured to treat the data in its authentic form as far as possible – trying not to segment it into portions – and trying to frame the data in accordance with the dramaturgical framework, which treated the data as an unfolding play being scripted and reworked. In this final phase the data revealed four key findings, which I have framed into four distinct themes that carry through the dramaturgical elements and still align with my theoretical assumptions and arguments: 1) ‘performing masculinity’ relates to the topic of gender; 2) ‘getting into character’ relates to constructions of sexuality; 3) ‘fragile love’ relates to prison sex culture and relationships forged inside and outside prison; and 4) ‘it’s all staged’ is a discussion of sex work as an ‘act’ in the identity performance.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance for this research study was approved by the internal ethics committee in the department of gender studies at the University of Cape Town²⁵. In addition to internal ethics clearance, the humanities faculty at the University of Cape Town also reviewed the ethics clearance report and approved it in compliance with the university’s ethics policies.

Informed Consent

Each participant was presented with a letter of informed consent²⁶ stating the study purpose, procedures, confidentiality, possible risks, benefits and voluntary participation. Prior to the start of interviews, the researcher delivered a verbal explanation of the details under each section of the consent form to obtain verbal consent in the case of illiteracy. None of the participants were illiterate, and were therefore able to read through the document on their own as well. Participants were then invited to sign the document in agreement. A signed copy was given to each participant. The informed consent form included contact details of the researcher in the case of withdrawal from the study or if there were any queries pertaining to the research project. The researcher and participant also signed a second consent form on behalf of the partner organization (SWEAT), with one copy going to the participant and another to the organization for their records.

²⁵ See Appendix B

²⁶ See Appendix C

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Due to the sensitive nature of personal information shared in this research project, strict measures have been taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants identifying particulars. At the beginning of each interview participants were consulted on the measures taken to ensure protection of confidential information, such as assigning pseudonyms and amendments to personal identifying particulars (in the case of names of family, friends or associates, places and identifying particulars – e.g. tattoos, body markings etc. would be altered on the transcripts). All interview recordings and transcriptions have been stored in electronic format and saved in a password-protected folder on the researcher's personal computer. Backups of recordings have also been stored on the researchers personal external hard disk drive. All hardcopies of transcriptions that were used for the purpose of data analysis were destroyed in a shredder and disposed of upon completion. The details pertaining to these security measures were explained to the participants prior to the commencement of their interview. Participants were also informed of the security measures to be taken in the case of publishing this or part of the final thesis document and presentation of the data and findings of this study at conferences and seminars.

Researching Sensitive Topics

Being mindful of the sensitive nature of this research topic and the personal information being shared by participants throughout their narrative accounts and also my invitation into their workshop space carried a significant meaning throughout the research process. Meticulous explanation of the extent to which their identifying particulars would be protected in the research process. Given participants past (and present?) history I explained to them, in addition to the use of pseudonyms, the rules of disclosure, which obligate the researcher to report any illegal criminal activities to be committed in future. Taking into account this sample demographic's criminal history, the sensitive nature of their prison histories and the consequential secrecy surrounding their position as sex workers, the issue of sensitivity is of critical importance in this type of research topic.

Reflexivity

Facing Unknown Terrain

The fieldwork internship period was a critical component to me as a researcher. I wanted to ensure participants were comfortable with me prior to the interview encounter; this for a number of reasons was important for establishing rapport throughout the research internship and into the interviews. Having had some research

experience with a similar demographic I am keenly aware of the high rate of exploitation that ex-offenders and prisoners face in the telling of their stories with very little returns. In addition, I had not worked directly with sex workers before and wanted to ensure participants had a level of comfortability and familiarity with me. One of my key principles as a researcher working with a marginalized demographic is to build rapport and to recognize that this takes time, to avail myself to the research encounter for a longer period that the interview process requires. I wanted to be able to acculturate and to allow the participants the freedom to do the same with me. While this approach worked really well with the group generally, it was not without its challenges as there were some drawbacks. A limitation to this approach was trying to maintain a measure of objectivity. It is what Smith *et al* refer to as “perform[ing] boundary crossing and re-crossing” (2009:342). The biggest challenge was trying to maintain a level of closeness and suitable distance at the same time (Smith *et al*, 2009). For instance, I grappled with one participant in particular because he lived on the streets in the area close to my home neighbourhood. I would see him on a daily basis – this was after I had completed my fieldwork and placement – and our daily interactions in such close proximity affected my research relationship with him. It particularly made analyzing his narrative difficult because I was confronted with more (recent) memories and exchanges with him in a way that I did not have with fellow participants. However, as a gender scholar this provided me with an opportunity to interrogate my position as a researcher who actively seeks to engage with participants over and above the mandatory interview encounter. The reason I highlight this experience is because I think it is necessary for researchers in this field of study to be made aware of the complexities that this type of research topic encompasses.

The Personal Is Indeed Political

A core theory of gender studies is that the “personal is political”. As a woman of colour, feminist, sister, friend, researcher I bring these facets of my identity into the interview encounter. A question I often ask myself is why I have chosen to work in the area of study? The answer was always an intellectual one until recently when I had a conversation with my partner and I realized it is much more personal than that. As a teenager I lived on the premises of a local prison. I was living with my sister and her husband, who was a prison warden at the time. Living on the premises in close proximity to offenders on a daily basis was normal for me. I would see them with feet hanging out of their cells, to catch a bit of sunshine on a warm day. I would pass them in the street as they were tending the gardens of prison officials. They would serve me at the local restaurant on the premises. I thought nothing of this strange interaction. I sometimes forget that I even lived there – it was such a long time ago. This recent trigger to my memory made me deeply contemplate why I find this work so appealing and rewarding, even though it can be emotionally draining at times. I have not come to a final answer, and I am sure I never will, but this compels me to keep working at it. For now, I can only confirm that this research is my activism. It is infused in everything I do and think. It is part of me. It is indeed personal and political.

In this chapter I have situated my work in a social constructionist paradigm. The methodological framework of my study uses grounded theory and narrative methodology, namely thematic and narrative analysis. I have located this work in black feminist standpoint epistemology and provided a detailed outline of the research design, methods, research questions and process of data collection. In the next chapter I present the findings of my analysis of the narratives. I show how the analysis derived at four themes that explore gender, sexuality, prison sex culture and sex work.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

Part I: Findings

Introduction

Biographical narratives of participants' life stories yielded data that focused on life events before, during and post-incarceration with their transition into sex work. Semi-structured interviews were guided by an interview schedule with nine questions divided into three sections broadly covering three main topics; masculinity, sexuality and sex work. Interview questions were generally well received and only a few opted out of answering all nine questions. One was reluctant to answer questions about his involvement in the Numbers gangs and the other to share details pertaining to his sex work. Participants who had previously been Numbers gang members were in some cases hesitant to talk about questions relating to sexuality, or their engagement in prison sex practices, or their experiences of sex work.

Euphemism and metaphor dominates the narratives of sex and sexuality, understandably so given the limited language and spaces available to participants to describe this aspect of their lives. Narrative form lends itself to the dramaturgical form of the study and thus enriches our appreciation of what these men offer through their life stories. As is the nature of narratives, they each took a different shape in their construction. Because people's lives do not conform to linear storylines (patterns) – like that of a drama or play as in Realist theatre – it would be too simplistic of an analysis to suggest these men's lives followed from act 1 neatly through act 4. The order of the narratives that appear here are by no means the order in which these narratives took form in their telling. They are presented in this order to create a coherent flow in the argument already built by the theoretical and empirical research discussed above. The findings presented here are the stories and performances that unfolded in the interview encounter. This is an attempt to portray the stories in a way that illustrates these men's life trajectories, the paths they took, the divergences where paths split into different directions with each of them taking various routes to get to this point.

There were four themes that emerged from the analysis. Each theme is further categorized into sub-themes that are supported by quotations from interview transcripts. Each theme is broadly linked to the overarching themes that were first addressed in a review of the literature. These themes broadly explored gender, sexuality, prison sex culture and sex work. To preserve the overarching structure of the storyline the themes are ordered in such a way that the spine of the narratives are not lost.

The first theme is 'performing masculinity'. It addresses the question of gender construction paying close attention to narratives in the prison context. The four sub-themes that follow in this section, are: 'pathways to prison'; 'rituals'; 'silent performances'; and 'performing alternate masculinities'.

The second theme, 'getting into character', looks at constructions and performances of sexuality in the prison space. Sub-themes that follow here are: 'code of conduct'; 'the prison space'; 'to be or not to be...a Number'; and, lastly, '(re)negotiating sexuality'.

The third theme, 'fragile love', examines relationships formed prior to prison entry, during the period of incarceration and in sex work. Sub-themes in this section include: 'male influences'; 'early relationships', 'prison relationships'; 'consensual prison sex'; and 'wyfies'.

The last theme is called 'it's all staged'. This theme explores the meanings attached to their sex work identities. Sub-themes in this section are: 'alter ego' and 'surviving through sex work'.

There are distinct moments in the narratives where sub-themes overlap here it acts as a bridge from one chapter to the next.

Performing Masculinity

This theme showed that men in prison have to negotiate various ways to perform their masculinity. These performances are not singular and once-off, they are multiple and nuanced displays of masculinities in prison. Ever-changing circumstances that shift from one context to the next demonstrate the versatility with which these men are able to transformatively move from one facet of their masculine identity to the next. With this mode of shifting they employ ritual-like behaviours and strategies to manoeuvre their way around other men, mainly those in the Numbers gangs. Like any performance in a play, the actor has his own set of ritualistic beliefs, one may even call it superstitions, to prepare himself for a performance. For the men in this study, these rituals are important activities because through it they are able to assert a measure of control in the somewhat chaotic and disorienting space of prison life.

Pathways to Prison

For many of the men their entry into prison started off at a very young age. For many of them, having run away from home – some of them as young as ten years old – marked their entry into street gangs and school gangs.

Transcription Note:

JL: interviewer initials

PSEUDONYM: participant

(...) utterance deleted

[] substantial deletions

[summary of lines]

(p) pause

(sp) short pause

(-) break off

* character pseudonym or place change

(“ ”) participant dialogue

(‘ ’) character dialogue

JL: What got you involved in the gangs when you were on school?

NEIL: I was 13 when I entered the gates of prison. I was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

FRED: primary school ja, and uhmm at school we had a fight and I stabbed a boy at school, and he died at hospital, from school they send me to a formatory [*reformatory*] school and from formatory school I get out of the formatory school I became a gangster.

JL: Okay, how old were you then?

FRED: I was like 14, 15 years old. I became a Hard Living and I commit again murder and I went to prison. And prison I got like 17 years- 15 years and like 2 years I pick up in prison. And in prison I became a leader of the 28s and (...).

These men nonchalantly share their early entry into prison during their formative teenage years. After considerable years in prison, masculinity becomes informed by hardness and aggression. For others, a family history of incarceration and intergenerational gang membership marked an early initiation into prison life. In the case of John below, prison was almost foundational for him.

JOHN: Okay I was born in prison ja because my mother got 25 years for a murder. You see I lived in prison for a year and from there I went to foster home until I was 5 years old and from there I got foster parents in Mountain Ridge. I left them when I was 10 years old to live on the streets, to start my own family.

[later in the narrative]

JOHN: It means that ja that...that you are worthy to be called a man you see...that's what it mean (JL: hmm) you see...you have that honour and that pride and you earned it you see...they didn't give it to you like that...like a platter like the other gangs...that's why- [He says being a man in prison is about taking beatings and standing up for yourself] (...) I want it badly you see (p) its like a goal man that I didn't succeed yet you see...that...when I was like 12 and I ended up in prison I was like...wanted it badly you see and because of that goal I didn't succeed it yet...so its gonna...its gonna like be forever with me (JL: hmm) you see until I pass it you see.

Running away from home at such a young age to '*start [his] own family*' is central to his life story, of which the gangs and prison comprise a significant part. He has revolved his life around the prison and Numbers gang. Later in his interview, he talks

about his lifelong goal of being in the 27s Numbers gang and what that would mean for him to join them.

JL: What would it mean then?

JOHN: Then I will be at ease you see...just to say I've been there, done that you see...ja...its like just a dream...like every young mans dream you see...that's my dream you see...ja-

John relates how the achievement of getting his 'number' (membership) will be a lifetime success, and only then would he be 'worthy to be called a man'. For him, the stakes are high, and joining the gang is the ultimate reward in recognition of having achieved successful masculinity. This masculinity is tightly bound to the prison; it is in prison where he gives his best performance of an idealised, powerful masculinity. Getting his 'number' is affirmation, evidence of having conquered prison.

Rituals

Ritualistic behaviour shapes performances of masculinity and sexuality. Like many actors, these men have rituals that they engage in behind the scene. These are techniques that they employ to outwit the Numbers gangs especially. Many of the participants talk about how the length of time in prison is extended, because there is very little to do. It is here where ritualistic behaviour is most prominent. It becomes a staple of prison life. Rituals provide a sense of routine and structure for day-to-day prison life, having to navigate around the omnipresent gangs requires careful planning and cunning.

PHIL: As Ek sien djy's 'n dom ou dan kan Ek... Ek sal sabela met jou dan sien ek naai man djy vat aan my wat Ek jou gee...okay djy's toe (JL: toe?)...dji steek jou toe...ja Ek het jou okay... Ek maak baie van die ouense toe...baie.

[translation: If I see that you're a stupid Number then I will...I will sabela with you but then I'll see no man you believe what I'm saying...okay you're stupid (JL: stupid?)...You keep yourself stupid...Yeah I've got you okay...I fool many of the guys...many].

Phil is a charismatic man. He is the entertainer at the weekly workshop groups. Performing the humourous, likeable character, he is able to undermine ('maak toe') the authority of the Numbers. Furthermore, as a Frans (non-gang member), this is a particular feat. In this way, he uses his personality to get away with certain performances to keep Numbers gangsters from preying on him. This successful performance of marginal masculinity (the silly, funny guy) ensures that he gets their protection and he is able to move with relative ease between Numbers and Franse. Phil has come up with his own ritual to perform a version of prison masculinity (for the Number: to go unnoticed and not get on their bad side. He found an alternative way of performing for the Number without joining as a member.

Through rituals they can reclaim a measure of control over their prison existence. Over time, it becomes part of the prison identity. It is in this mode of strategizing around the gangs in assertion of their individual masculine identity, even for marginalized masculinities, that rituals become important. Below, Tony shares how he must be sharp and alert to navigate and deal with the Numbers:

TONY: I believe a lot of this Number gangsters neh they use The Number to have a easy life, that's what I saw and what I think.

JL: Why do you think that?

TONY: 'cos like for me I'm mos a Frans now in their eyes neh (JL: hmm) and although in The Number...I found a few stuff out also...I have a lot of good friends that turned into Numbers. A Frans don't exist, that's their own made up story. There's no Franse, I don't know where this Franse story come in, but okay like they say you heard that someone who is not a Number is a Frans? (JL: hm). Now if you're a Frans it's not easy. The ouense like tell you 'look here...' if you like have that fear in you or they see you scared...like a few people I get so jammer, like they had to clean the toilet everyday and there's that other Numbers that just go dirty the toilet unnecessary...and they will just tell that Frans 'go clean, go clean, go clean'. But me when I start...okay I'm smoking outside now but when I'm inside I start getting healthy. My brain start working like better...there's nothing wrong with my brain now but it...other stuff come into me man. My body gets stronger and all that and then me, I get stronger. I don't care if you're a Number, I'm gonna run you through the wall if I can.

Tony, a multiple offender who has been in and out of jail seven times, perfected his ritual over many years. As a Frans without benefits, his drug use may also be detrimental in the long term, as drugs often become a bargaining chip to join the gangs. For Tony, this is a potential weakness; thus, '*getting stronger*' – mentally and physically – is his tactic to navigate around the Number. Performing an alternate masculinity – the sober prisoner – Tony is able to circumvent the Number. Tony uses this ritual strategy and is also able to successfully subvert the Number as a Frans. Being mentally strong is a way for Tony to undermine the power the gangs have over other prisoners through their use of drugs to lure men into joining.

Silent Performances: Prison Mimes

This subtheme looks at the silences surrounding performances of masculinity in prison. For some, their silent, lone performances were also ways of moving around unseen and inconspicuously as they try to navigate their way around the gangs, particularly when it came to matters of sexual gratification. These performances are set against the backdrop of the prison walls where the silent, lone figure attempts to renegotiate a new identity as he begins the journey of moving from one masculine identity to another, where he has to figure out how to perform in moments of power and moments of vulnerability.

A number of men demonstrate how their silences in some instances were exaggerated, pantomime-like performances: they try at best to keep their head down and get on

with their duties in order to avoid being seen, harassed or exposed to physical violence and victimization.

BOBBY: [talking about entry into prison, the first day] It just felt very sad you know...just feel regret and very sad that's all.

JL: **And so...**
(interrupts)

BOBBY: and scared.

JL: **What were your experiences in there that made you feel scared?**

BOBBY: Because of all the stories and the happenings (...)I just laid low, I didn't bother nobody...even though I didn't bother nobody, they always find a way to bother you (...).

JL: **So how did they bother you?**

BOBBY: Like they...they... bother you like...if you don't wanna wash their clothes or something like that then they beat you up. So I had no choice...I had to do it in order to keep peace (...) so ja so I just did my part.

Bobby explains how he '*lays low*' and '*didn't bother nobody*' so as not to draw attention to himself. When he says '*I just did my part*' by doing womanly duties like household chores he is made to feel less than a man. His subtle silent performance is a tactic he employs to avoid beatings from the gangs, yet silence is not enough to avoid being coerced.

For some, however, performing a dominant hegemonic masculinity involved taking on a new identity. Fred shares his silent performance of shedding his old 'boy' name, along with his childhood memories, in exchange for a hardened mask that transforms him into a man. His entry into the Number and '*achieving something in prison*' marks a pivotal moment for him. With the name, he also escapes the target of being labeled a woman. In order to maintain his power, he has to ensure a steady performance of this masculine identity throughout his prison career so as not to cast doubt on his performance. The hardened masculine performance has been ingrained over the years and he has great difficulty negotiating alternative performances. He is one of the few participants' who still holds onto the veneer of the Numbers twenty years later.

FRED: Sweet Boy*²⁷...that's the name my grandmother was giving me (**J: Why was that?**). Because I was a cute* little boy man and she gave me that name and on all my photos I was seeing the name Sweet Boy*. (JL: Okay okay). (...) I grew up with that name. By the time I got to prison that name became my...like uhmm...it was a target name (...) for Sweet Boy is like a girl in prison...and uhmm I had a lot of challenges in prison before I became a Number, by that name Sweet Boy* (...) somebody come to me and ask me about sex and that sort of thing because I'm a pretty boy and they want to make me a woman and that sort of things...and I fight for it (...) they started grabbing me and say you not Sweet Boy...you Tough Guy*...see that's why they give me this name Tough Guy* [*shows me his tattoo*] See they changed a boy name and I became Tough Guy*.

²⁷ It must be noted that the name alluded to here is significant to his narrative. To protect identifying information, as per the agreement of informed consent and confidentiality, the name has been changed to a pseudonym.

JL: And what did that mean for you to have that name change? Something that you grew up your whole life being Sweet Boy*.

FRED: Ja it became like...it was giving me power and that...that time by changing that name it was like uhmm I was achieving something in prison.

Manoeuvring around the gangs was a performance of subversion. The performances of peripheral figures such as Franse who, in relation to the Numbers gangs inhabit marginal masculinities. Their performances show how participants rescript dominant narratives of totalizing gang power to show that simple moments of subversion and the rituals involved in enacting them are a way of gaining material benefits from gangs, without necessarily having to join them. For Arthur, moving between the lines from soft to hardened masculinity was a difficult process, but he claims it was a necessary one in order to survive prison.

ARTHUR: Ja because I'm a soft person and being in prison (...) its always like they say the strongest dog (laughs) whose gonna get the food, its something like that, like you need to stand up for yourself because you're not a prison gangster [pay the gangs to have luxuries in prison (in the cell)] if you not that macho man that you must be in prison then you gonna end up not sleeping...not a mattress even in prison you gonna sleep just on a blanket, nothing to close you, so you need to be that guy like (sniggers) just to earn stuff like you know. Even if it means you a bit scared like inside but you can't back down just to earn a twak pilletjie or extra blanket or whatever ja. But then sometimes like it hurts you know because I've like- (...) so sometimes when I am in prison and it being such a harsh person to someone else or bullying someone else to get something from you ja then later that...the nightmare being ...I would feel guilty.

Arthur illustrates the façade of the 'macho man' that he performs to avoid being vulnerable. By asserting his control over another, he performs a dominant masculinity, but behind the scenes, he admits to feelings of guilt, here lurks a more fragile, marginal masculinity that he must keep hidden. For many of the men, hiding behind a mask and acting the tough man is essential if one is to be taken serious as a 'real man'.

Performing alternate masculinities

An overlap occurs with gender and sexuality in this subtheme. Here we come to see how these men unknowingly perform alternate masculinities in different contexts. The multiple ways that men in prison perform alternate masculinities can be seen in contexts where they challenge the authority of the gangs, find ways to engage with fellow prisoners to avoid negative situations.

For Tony – and others like him who are Franse – with very few benefits, being able to provide for himself and others is a way to assert an alternative masculinity, whilst also undermining some of the power of the gangs.

TONY: (...) evens though I'm a Frans I can have a packet of Stuyvesant in my pocket the way I roll there 'cos there you must be a man (JL: hmm) (laughs).

JL: What does that mean to be a man in prison? What does it take?

TONY: Take a lot of heart jong... a lot of guts...

JL: Such as? Can you explain?

TONY: Yorr... how can I explain that to you...

JL: What does it mean first of all to be a man?

TONY: How can I explain to you now... uhhh you see like a normal man that looks after a family (clears throat) neh. If you do stuff like a man like that do, you do your stuff on time and you maybe look after two people... like me maybe from my stuff that I get neh then I make sure I buy sugar... you do get all that in prison but like a cup of coffee you will get once a day that's it. Now you have to buy your own sugar, your own coffee, your own milk... now I firstly see that I have that stuff and then Franse they don't worry about that. Ouense is this side. They will drink coffee every afternoon, every night and maybe in the morning also. And one or two or three of all that ouense will keep maybe so small little coffee and give it to a Frans... not because he want to give it to him 'cos he must go rinse the cup (laughs) that's why they give it to him. Now I like build myself so that I get my own stuff and me as a Frans can look after other Franse (JL: hmm) and they will see this and there's where they can't tell me I do something wrong or take their stuff 'cos I dinges it alone, drink the stuff or eat the stuff alone. I do stuff that a man is supposed to do (JL: right right).

JL: So being a leader in some way?

TONY: Ja something like that ja. I'm trying to show them ouense kan nie alleen die doen'ie, 'n Frans het net so twee hande, twee voete, twee ore, 'n mond net soes julle het. Hoeko' kan os'ie daai doen wat julle doen nie, its impossible (JL: hmm). So I just try to show them we can do what you can do and maybe better.

[translation: Ja something like that ja. I'm trying to show them Numbers can't do this alone, a Frans also has two hands, two feet, two ears, a mouth just like you have. Why can't we do what you're doing, its impossible (JL: hmm)].

Tony's daring performance as a leader and provider is a risky move that, perhaps, given his personality makes this performance even more appealing to him. Being a multiple-offender with years of prison experience, in addition to his economic capital, he is in the prime position to assert a masculinity that directly challenges the authority of the gangs. His intimate knowledge of the Numbers gangs also allows him to challenge them in a way that uses their own prison-code against them, because they have no control over him as a Frans there is nothing they can do to him. Whilst he makes an exhibition of this performance for the audience (myself included), he is also exposing how his internalized understanding of what it means to be a man is negotiated within the performance. By looking after his Franse brothers and providing for them, he successfully demonstrates how to be '*a normal man that looks after a family*'.

For Abdul, the difficulties he encountered in prison gave him the space to renegotiate what it means to be a man. Prison was an unknown territory where he had to face his fears of the unknown. He found new ways through performances of alternate masculinity to overcome his fears of prison, one of which was to share stories about his home country, educating fellow prisoners. For him, teaching was a way to get to know others and for them to get to know him, but most importantly, he felt that sharing personal details about himself would make others see him as a man. In the

end, he likens his experience to the '*school of life*' – a place where he gained new experiences and was taught how to be a different kind of man, one that takes initiative and refuses to give in.

ABDUL: Ahh for me myself I think prison like another experience...I take it like is an experience of every man...because also it teach you neh especially it takes fear in you [talks about his foreign status and generally foreigners fears of being victimized] so prison did give me another experience to don't have scared, to live in South African society and also another experience to make me strong...means if I don't have something I must look for it even if I can't...I mustn't sit and cry and say I'm hungry...no I look just for it until I get it ja that's what prison teach me...its another experience for me, its another school for me.

JL: another school?

ABDUL: Yes another school to me.

JL: Why do you say that?

ABDUL: Ja it's a school of life.

Summary

Renegotiation

Performing masculinities was the process of slowly coming to renegotiate what it means to be a man in the prison space. Behind the walls of the prison, men were able to explore in diverse and unique ways what it means to be a man. For some of them, the period in prison marks a long and slow process of letting go of ideas of hegemonic – tough – masculinity. Leaving behind ideas of what they know and have come to understand about being a man, what that may look and feel like, and how they have to carry themselves in order to perform this masculinity, convincing the world that they are 'real' men. For others finding ways to perform alternate masculinities was a way to assert power and control in little areas of their life in prison. Being able to provide for fellow prisoners or overcoming fears of prison were moments where these men were able to explore another side to their identities.

Getting into Character

This theme represents the stage where actors deliver performances of sexuality. The construction of sexuality in prison first and foremost points to a complicated nature with the prison space. Before they can even begin to explore their sexuality a settling in period is important here: learning the rules of prison (code of conduct), acclimating to the prison space, and then, the crucial test of deciding whether to join the Numbers gangs or not creates an inner-struggle, which all the participants dealt with at some point during their incarcerations. Ultimately, the proximity of so many men in one place brought about a renegotiation with masculinity and sexuality.

Code of Conduct

Similar to the code of the street, where informal rules govern the behaviour of gangs and management of law and order, so too do the gangs that govern operations and prisoner behaviour lay down the laws in prison. Knowing the rules of prison can be tricky for first time, unsuspecting offenders. Being unprepared places them in a position of vulnerability and given the limited time to make the 'right' impression they have to feel out the situation very quickly to pass through the scrutiny of the gangs.

Participants employ strategies to be alone. This involves not mingling with other prisoners, avoiding contact as far as possible and generally keeping a low profile. However, given the nature of the prison setup where overcrowding and limited space means avoiding interaction cannot be avoided, they are soon forced to figure out the code or risk serious, often violent consequences. Once again, participants share how they employ a silent, watchful performance to quickly learn the prison code of conduct.

ERIC: you mustn't come through like its your mother's house when you just enter

ERIC: (...) for me prison was very hard.

JL: What was that like when you entered for the first time? That first night even?

ERIC: Yesterday...sometimes I even uhh uhh at night when I'm laying in bed and my mind just going back to how it started and how I did end up in jail- (...) for me it was very hard the first time in prison (...) the first day when I arrive there I didn't know anything.

[later in his story]

ERIC: ja for me that first week I did just be by myself...not mingle with guys and there were some guys that used to live in the place where I live and they called my friends but in prison there is no friends...there's just a life that you must face for yourself and you must try and make the best of it and sometimes to understand the people in prison because everybody in prison is yorr (laughs) they are like skelms...so you must just observe them and look at the moves (JL: hmm) ja.

For Malik, prison is a test that separates the weak from the strong: '*inside you will see who you really are*'. He suggests that being raped or being a 'moffie'²⁸ is a sign of weakness and thus points to a lack of 'manhood'.

For Malik, being sexually victimized in prison is a sign that one has failed at adequately performing ideal masculinity.

JL: What did you feel the first time you entered? (...) What emotions were you feeling?

MALIK: The first time I went in I was sitting in the truck. I started to cry 'cos the way people talk outside [talks about the rumours he's heard outside regarding sex in prison] So I experienced when I came inside, its not like the people talk, like you gonna get

²⁸ Moffie is the derogatory term for gay man.

raped or you gonna be a moffie. Its just who you are...like they say 'outside you can be the strongest man but inside you will see who you really are'.

For Tony, his background and experiences of 'outside' equip him well enough for prison. However, details that emerge later in Tony's narrative shows that he has family members who were part of the Numbers gangs; thus, for him the translation of street-code to prison-code is more easily translated, and his 'knowingness' places him at an advantage.

JL: How did you get to that process of knowing?

TONY: Like I said compared to where I grew up in Woodhaven* it's a vast difference to this lifestyle. There its like I knew everything that go on in prison neh but I just couldn't picture...I wasn't there yet (JL: hmm).

Chris, like Tony, is also a multiple offender and his 'knowingness' also comes from repeat experience. Here he shares how his experiences changed with each new sentence served. The second time around his improved knowledge of the prison code made things easier for him as he then knew what was expected of him, in turn knowing what performance to give to prevent ill-treatment.

CHRIS: Yes it is different from the first time 'cos uhh the second time I was now knowing what goes on in prison you see...what makes a person to hit or uhh bullied around...ja so the second time was much easier.

JL: And everytime you've gone to prison has the experience changed the more you get to know it and know what it's about?

CHRIS: Uhh 'cos I could at least understand their language now you see and I know what the chiefs expect of us you know...I know the duties of a prisoner uhm yes all those things (JL: okay).

The Prison Space

The prison space represents the all-important stage where performances and interactions between actors take place. It is in the confines of this setting that a multitude of performances take place. A common depiction of prison as a cold, grey, lifeless space is transformed through the narratives of these men. Through their stories, prison is not highlighted as a formidable space. For many of them prison is the stage where their most successful performances of masculinity are staged, while for others the backstage (behind-the-scenes) settings of prison is brought to life.

In Danny's description he compares prison (inside) to the streets (outside). For him, the prison represented a setting where he could not easily act out his sexual preferences. Having to always be on the alert restricted his performance and construction of sexuality, whereas on the street he has freer movement to engage in sex work. Danny mentions several times when he would take risks in prison, with serious repercussions to follow. Through this juxtaposition of the inside and outside

we gain an understanding of how the prison setting limits performances of gender and sexuality, particularly for men that are attempting to explore alternative sexualities.

DANNY: but in prison, once you enter prison...okay yorr everything...your privacy gets taken away so everyone knows everything about you, everyone sees you wherever you go so you must be very very (snorts) alert if you want to have sex there inside...so inside and outside are totally different because here you can have privacy, inside it gets taken away (JL: hmm). Here you can still hide yourself, there you can't. Here you can make money, there you can't (JL: hmm)... so that's the thing.

In this vivid picture, Tony expresses his utter astonishment at the prison environment. By likening it to a zoo, he suggests that it is a place for wild animals (or wild people). This could explain his views of himself and others, or given his vehement rejection of the gang, how he views them. The regular bouts of laughter are also a way to express his discomfort. It is interesting, that he says *'that's not a place for me'* when he has been there on a number of occasions. By distancing himself from it and the people in it, he creates a boundary between him and 'them'. He sees himself as a peripheral character, not wanting a part in the grander production.

TONY: (sp) yorr that's long ago (laughs). It was funny man, just a weird kind of lifestyle. I was just looking at that...you know what was funny for me neh, how that place is built. That's not a place for humans actually (laughs). I was sitting in that place and I was looking in that place and I check yorr "are they really keeping humans in here?" 'cos everything is like hard, cold and closed, and dark...everything. If the sun go set and there's no light in there it's dark and cold and it's locked up (laughs).
[later in his narrative]

TONY: I always say like I told you earlier the way when I sat this one day and looked at how they build this place...that place...that's built for dogs or something man...for wolves or bears or something man, that they had to keep inside that was wild. It look like that place is built for something like that. Just the way you must walk through a gangetjie...it's a gate, then there's a gang that's walking...no escape...on the other side is a gate, you go into that place. It's shielded right around with steel... thick steel gates and all that stuff. I just thought that's not a place for me man that's why I thought it's not normal for me.

"To be or not to be"...a Number

The folklore of the Numbers gangs is mystical and enchanting, it tells a romanticized story of the gangs and Nongoloza's quest to undermine the authorities. In many of the narratives it emerged that the Number represented much more than commanding power. Sharing experiences of their involvement or their rejection of the Number, the narrative returns to the struggle for recognition and brotherhood. Participants who were part of the Numbers gangs prison was a big part of their lives. They were high-ranking members and were involved heavily in gang operations in and out of prison. Prison was (and still is) a significant period in their lives and for them the pinnacle of their masculinity was constructed and performed inside. For non-Numbers (Franse)

their rejection of the Number was an important marker of masculinity too. Being able to stand their ground against the Number and negotiate masculine performances from the margins is worthy of respect. In other cases, given their proximity to the Number growing up, it had lost its appeal and for them a lifelong commitment to the Number did not fit in their frame of successful masculinity.

FRED: Ja, Pollsmoor. I met a lot of friends there. Old friends and because of my rank they respect me. [talks about a recent short sentence in prison, after 20 years] (*p*) (*smiles*) I can't help to say it but I was part of it again. I had to stand up for the rank. I was deep involved now in this things [says he doesn't want to be part of it anymore] It's a thing I can't just drop.

JL: Why do you think so?

FRED: (...) The only way how to get out of it is to marry and uhhh be a father... to have kids-

JL: Do you know anything about your father, where was he?

FRED: My father was also a Number. A 28. And he is now a pastor.

For Fred, the nostalgia with which he recounts this story illustrates the magnitude of the Number in his life. It is where he has achieved status and authority (*'because of my rank they respect me'*) in comparison to his sex worker status, which he guards with vigilance given the shame and secrecy attached to it. The Number is something he cannot let go of easily (*'it's a thing I can't just drop'*). A history of men in his family being incarcerated offers very little examples of diverse masculine performances for Fred. It is almost obvious how he is seeing his limited options in this account. Being a member of the prison gangs for over two decades and having to leave it behind must no doubt leave Fred with a great uncertainty.

JL: And why do you think it was the time of your mom's passing that you then chose to take on the Number? What was so significant about that moment?

KEVIN: Ja like I said...my mom was my biggest role model irrespective she was using...and so on...that's the day...when I got the news my mom has passed away I said to myself "there my family goes"...so that's when I decided I got no more immediate family like close family members...sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles...I don't have anymore of them...that's where I decided I'm going to join the prison gang seeing that I'm always in and out of prison nowadays I'm going to join the 27 prison gang (...) I'm gonna make them my family-

After the death of his mother Kevin makes the choice to decide between his biological family and the Number. For him, prison took on the symbol of home (*'I'm always in and out of prison nowadays'*) and with it came the Number as his replacement family. For Kevin, actively seeking out the Number as his new family where he has to prove himself to them means that his performance of masculinity is strictly bound to the Number. Choosing the Number over his family represents a bond that cannot be easily broken.

For others performing marginal masculinities (as Franse) a rejection of the Number came as they sought ways to undermine and challenge their authority. These performances were prided on the ability to outwit the Number, to provide for fellow

inmates and to hold one's own against a powerful force such as the Numbers gangs. Their performance of marginal masculinities was positioned in opposition to and dismissal of the Number.

ERIC: But like I said...there you must just be man...like man up (JL: hmm).

JL: And what does that mean, to be a man in prison, for you personally?

ERIC: Uhm to face things that come to you...you see people...there are guys who want to rape you but not out of their own will...you got your own will to sleep with a man or maybe do things...nobody is forcing you...well you get sometimes people that comes to you that just want to...like pull your leg and see are you a man...can you stand for yourself...ja uhm and for me like I said I'm proud of myself today not even be like a gangster and for me in life to just raise my kids and be a father for them (JL: hmm).

For Eric, this moment of pride comes from his avoidance of the gangs. This subtle performance of rejecting the Number is one of the few moments that he could prove to himself and others like him that he was a man ('*man up*').

In Phil's narrative, fighting and being a gangster is not part of his personality, thus knowing that he would not be able to deliver a convincing performance for the Number ('*my heart wasn't there*') he rejected it wholeheartedly.

PHIL: You see my heart wasn't there man (JL: hmm) ja...and I met ouense...friends of mine who are ouense...they wanted to make me a 26, 27, 28...but my heart...if my heart is not there its not there you see.

In Tony's case, having grown up in close proximity to the Number, his rejection stems from years of excessive contact with gangs. He has a total disregard for it and so occupying the marginal status of Frans fits well with in his frame of masculinity.

JL: And how did you know? How did you know those things?

TONY: All the talks and stuff around me as I grew up. That is most of the people is gangsters in that place. Most of the people is Numbers in that place, so its like this that they say they sabela'ring neh...it was like normal for me, it don't affect me, its like someone else is gonna stand and listen. I'm gonna look who it is and then walk away. It's normal for me, I'm sick of listening to that already (JL: ja). I don't want to hear that in my ears evens.

Negotiating sex

In this sub-theme the narratives start to reveal how sexual identities slowly start shifting for the men. After a considerable period of acculturation to the prison setting, learning the rules for daily survival and fitting into the rhythm of prison life an exploration of self starts to take place. The number one rule in prison is that the performance of masculinity must be overt so as to dispel all thoughts of doubt, for self and others. On the flipside however, while men are trying to renegotiate what it means to be a man in prison this period is also marked by internal dialogues that reveal how they start to make sense of sexual exchanges and experiences relating to

sex in prison as they then attempt to reconcile what these exchanges mean for their shifting sexual identities.

In Danny's description we see that his performance of sexuality presents moments of uncertainty for him as he tries to figure out whether he is gay or not. In a limited sense prison allows him the freedom to explore his sexuality, something he had always questioned. In prison, he engages in a number of risky sexual practices (hidden from the Numbers) as he tries to gain a fixed understanding of his sexuality.

DANNY: now my real father was gay you check (JL: your biological?) my biological father and I sometimes think I maybe have half of him and half of- and that means I'm also gay...now gay men when I just look at them they soema smile I don't know what for...or why (laughs) that's how this transgender was looking at me [in prison].

For Malik the experience of prison presents different challenges for him as he tries to make sense of his sexual identity. It is complicated by his shifting between two sexual identity constructs, performing hegemonic masculinity on one side, and being subordinated to wyfie status on the other. Malik displays an internalized resistance to the idea of being labeled as a wyfie yet his narrative reveals that he performs alternative sexuality but holding steadfast to the idea that he '*doesn't give in*'. There are two interpretations to this story. This can be seen as a renegotiation of masculinity and sexuality on his terms, '*not giving in*' is his way of reconciling the disjuncture between internalized beliefs – that he is a man (in the prison sense) and externalized beliefs – if one is penetrated (as a wyfie) you are '[made] *into woman*'. Alternatively, a resistance to acknowledge his acquiescence in this performance as a sexual subordinate is a way of repressing the experience of being a wyfie so as to ensure that they did not '*take his pride away*'.

JL: Hmm so what happened when you entered that first day?

MALIK: uhhh the first day when I came in so I met a other ou, a ndota, so he told me here... "hey kom slaap daar by my vanaand", so I told him "wat, Ek by jou slaap, nooit!". He must rather kill me because I will never let a other man...uhmm take my pride away from me...that's...so I started to... he started to respect me. Its just who you are. If you can stand for yourself but if you give in he make you a woman inside.

JL: And what does that mean when you say 'make you a woman'? What does it mean to be a woman?

MALIK: You become his woman inside.

JL: In what way? What happens?

MALIK: You sleep with him. He have sex with you...and you become a housewife to him. You must wash his clothes. You must do everything...you see, like that.

JL: And you didn't experience that?

MALIK: I did. I also experienced that but I didn't give in.

In prison, wyfies are regarded as submissive subjects, the language that frames wyfies comparing them to women ('*being a woman*', '*make you a woman*') suggesting that wyfies are seen as weak, they don't fight back per se, whereas being a man is to actively proving that you are the opposite of a woman by fighting back and defending

your sexual identity. The language that frames men relates to hardiness and resilience ('*you fight*', '*must be tough*', '*you man up*').

Summary

(Re)negotiating Sexuality

In this theme, once again the process of renegotiation emerges. Renegotiating fixed ideas around masculinity and sexuality, and coming to terms with changing perceptions of self, as they slowly open up to questions of sexual exploration. The most prominent feature here is how they are confronted with internalized and repressed sexual desires in the prison setting whilst trying to shift their views of sex and sexuality that for the most part has been framed in a binary discourse of heterosexuality.

At this point in the narratives a shifting and rescripting of identity starts to take shape and is closely tied to the prison space and code of conduct regarding daily routine and sex practices. Once they figure out the rules and their expected behaviour, they start exploring and getting to know their sexual selves. For some, there is a reluctance to explore sexually, while others do so with caution, given the rules and regulations surrounding sexuality by the gangs.

Renegotiation is an internalized state where the subject, once acclimatized to the prison space, begins to question and explore where he fits in, where his place is in the gendered social order. In doing so, he is faced with other choices too that influences the direction he will take. Deciding to join the Number or not is one such key influence. Those who choose to follow the Number take a different path and their gendered and sexual choices are influenced by their group attachment. Those who reject the number explore gender and sexuality in different ways, having to rely on subversive tactics to navigate their way around the Number as they explore their sexual selves.

Fragile Love

Sexual relationships built on fragile experiences of sex were linked to loss, trauma, silences and hiding. In cases where men engaged in consensual prison sex, these relationships were shrouded in secrecy because it was not a common practice. A large majority of the sample recounts personal experiences of sex in prison, some choosing to engage in it despite the risks of being caught by gangs or prison officials. Whilst others rejected it for reasons linked to gang affiliation: not wanting to join the gangs, fear of victimization by them and, most importantly, what it would mean for their

construction of self in relation to their prison identity. Wylie status was a marginal (peripheral) identity in this sample, only embraced by men who openly identified as gay. For these men who engaged in consensual prison sex relationships, it offered them sexual liberation in a way that they did not get outside of prison. For others, the idea of sex in prison was tightly bound to the gang, so in many cases a rejection of gang membership meant disregarding sex or, in some cases, finding ways to subvert gangs by engaging in sex secretly. The theme examines the formative relationships among men such as relationships with their fathers and early male role models, whom many of them modeled masculinity and sexuality after. These narratives underpin the broader narratives that emerged in the study and is indicative of the significance in the lives of these men that they focus so much attention to these early influences, many of which, shaped their views of men and gender identity, and sex and sexuality.

Male Influences

For the men in this study, their early entries into both prison and sex work were greatly influenced by significant older male figures. They have to come to terms with the experiences of their initial encounters with significant male figures, which shaped their view of men as physical and sexual beings. The depiction of male sexuality in these encounters with early male role models is framed within heteronormative and heterosexual belief system. These peripheral characters shaped and impacted on their ideas of masculinity and gender. Constructions of both masculinity and sexuality were modeled after these men. The value of these early loving, caring and protective relationships laid the foundation for alternate masculinities that emerge later on in life.

Whilst John, Tony and Bobby all share experiences of an older man who acted as their prison or street ‘father’. The three presented here are particularly vulnerable cases, at the time of these relationships they were all considerably young and impressionable. Two of them had absent fathers and one had very little interaction with his.

JOHN: I was like you see...I had a father...like a street father who was a 26 gang leader you see and he taught me all this things you see...he like...he evens gave me the long road (coded message to check gang affiliation) you must have when you come inside you see. So I was prepared you see.

John, his street father acted as a guide to carefully show him the intricate ways of the gangs. Imparting specialized knowledge like a father prepared John for prison and the Numbers gangs. For John, the importance of this relationship was the presence of an older man who took the place of the father he never got to know. John was told that his father died in a prison gang war.

In Tony's case his street father was the one to deter him from the gangs. A lesson that Tony still holds onto dearly in his absolute rejection of the Numbers gangs to date.

JL: And what's your experience of that, of being in prison? Did you decide to enter into any of The Numbers?

TONY: No (laughs).

JL: Why not?

TONY: I'm not interested firstly- 'cos like I said that guy that I told you about now neh that came to me. He guided me a lot also, not only that day (JL: hmm) like through my lifestyle also as I'm growing up and he always used to tell a person, not only me, I'm maybe playing in the park and he's talking to someone else maybe playing soccer and I just picture this one time, and the ball roll past them and I hear the same thing that he said to me: 'The Number won't benefit you nothing in your life, it won't bring you nothing in your pocket.' He told that to me once and he was busy sitting and talking to a other guy and he told him the same thing. That's why I think some people long for that guidance man, to tell you 'no don't involve yourself in the Number' and stuff like that (JL: hmm) but they don't have that people around them (JL: hmm). So I still appreciate that I had someone like that. He's not family but at least he had to- he had the heart to tell me don't go there because he know what it brings you man.

This relationship is very different to John's street father who prepared him for prison and the gangs. Tony's on the otherhand, encouraged him to avoid it at all costs. Either way, their influence made a great impression on these men as they navigated the world of prison and gangs.

For Bobby, as a first-time offender, prison was a very new and scary place, the father figure he finds in prison is someone that took him under his wing and offered protection. The narrative of this older male figure is reminiscent of the protective father figure he always craved. It is in prison where his fantasy of a loving caring father is fulfilled. He does not consider his attentive, obedient behaviour as womanly – as in many other cases when men explained that they had to do housework – here Bobby in contrast to other participants sees it as his respective duty towards the 'father' figure. Finding the father figure he always craved in prison must have marked a special event for him – it is there where he finally received the attention of a loving father.

BOBBY: [talking about an older prisoner] its just like he was a father figure for me man (...) not like a father figure but he treated me like a son for almost that year man.

JL: Who is this? Who are you talking about?

BOBBY: This is a guy I met in prison. He was almost 50 years old. He took me under his wing...he protected me and that 'cos he could see man...I'm a decent. [explains how his upbringing (class) set him apart from others in prison]. He probably saw something...that I'm a good, decent guy and he saw that I did not bother anybody...that I'm not talking 'wah wah wah' (...) I soema speak English to him and that's when he heard my voice and said this is a decent man...this is not a gangster...that's what he thought...that's what I think.

JL: And did you have to do anything for that protection?

BOBBY: Huh uh but if he ask me something then I do it no problem...like if he ask me to do his clothes or make up his bed then do it no problem because he gives me whatever, which is my cigarettes and stuff...my mother come with groceries and stuff and I

give it all to him because I know he takes good care of it and then whatever I want I can go to him, but if I keep it they gonna take it off me...so I give all my stuff to him...and whatever I want I just go fetch it by him...and he never jeopardized me or anything like that.

This relationship blurred the lines between paternal and intimate at some points. At times in the narrative it suggests that the father figure extends beyond the protective and survival mode. However, the protective factor may also explain how he felt secure and loved in this relationship, which is something he had not experienced before with an older man.

JL: So you said earlier that you met your dad in prison and that you got to know him, so can you tell me a bit about that?

NEIL: Not only me...me and my older brothers older than me I met them there.

JL: How was the first time when you met him? What happened?

NEIL: (sp) The father and the...and the son part is at home (p).

JL: What do you mean by that?

NEIL: The father and son part is at home that's what I told him "you a 28, I'm a 26, there's boundaries for us" (JL: right) but I can go there and 'jonalang' I can walk there past 'skombizo' I can walk there 'cos we also rule in the skombizo you see.

JL: What's skombiza?

NEIL: 27.

JL: Okay, oh the turf?

NEIL: Ja...the turf is mos 26s, 27s, 28...

Neil's story is an interesting one. He truly got to know his father in prison, where upon entry they meet as father and son who serve opposing gangs. Throughout his narrative, he moves back and forth between praising his father and rejecting him, yet his narrative keeps returning to the father and his older role model, his brother, whom he regards as his father. It is from watching and following his brother around that he first learns his criminal behaviour. It is also his brother who fills the role of the father in various ways. So, upon meeting his 'real' father in prison it is a battle of wills. The start of this father-son relationship came at a crucial time in his life – he on the cusp of manhood and questioning what it means to be a man – entering prison, being a father (had his first child at age 15). His entry into prison marks a significant moment where he finally comes face to face with his father in the cell. He has difficulty reconciling this strained relationship, at times emulating him and, at other times, he sets himself up in opposition to him. He eventually rejects the father figure because he was not there to guide him through significant moments in his life (like his brother did) and prison is the space where he sets out to 'prove' his masculinity to his father through displays of aggressive behaviour which gets him noticed by the gangs. For Neil, his performance of hegemonic and aggressive masculinity is directed at the father. The father represents a significant point of masculinity construction for him, his limited interaction with him prior to prison created a fictional character that loomed larger than life

Early Relationships (love or trauma?)

For many, their early relationships with men marked an entry into sex that was either sexually violent or exploitative. In other cases, early sexual encounters with men (under whatever circumstances it took place) opened the way to a more fluid, albeit uncertain, understandings of sexuality. For these men, the construction of their sexual identities is a transmutable process. Shifting between a discovery of sexual identities makes experiences of sex in prison and sex work an acceptable facet of their identity construction.

Early relationships mark entry into sex work

Luke shares the story of his first relationship at the age of 18 with a man who approached him in the park one day. In this descriptive account, a dramatic silent performance unfolds, replete with stage setting, background scenery, costume and of course, actors. He juxtaposes the riches of his lover against the poverty of his home situation to make sense of this experience, narrating it vividly almost through a child's eyes. The story builds to a crescendo with the last statement uttered '*that was my first love experience*'. For Luke, his first relationship blurs the lines between love and pain. As he comes to the realization that unbeknownst to him at the time it marked his entry into sex work. As he steps back into the present moment of the interview the tale loses its performative quality and becomes more matter-of-fact as he shares details of the transactional nature of the relationship, it thus loses its romantic appeal. What this moment signifies is the extent to which Luke has repressed emotions relating to his formative years and the ways in which it shaped his performances of sexuality.

LUKE: And so this specific day...I remember it was a winters day but it wasn't raining it was just cold and uhh I dressed myself warmly and uhh I started walking and then I thought I'm gonna take a train journey and I got off at Willowpark* and uhh so I was chilling out in the park and there was this guy coming up and start chatting me up and uhh you know...Jan the stomach part of the body is very important because if you don't fill your automobile with oil and diesel and water the needleful things that an automobile needs to produce the comfort and the availability and I...I was kinda hungry and uhh you know this guy he played it through my tummy and uhh I'm a human being and I was hungry and uhh he bought me a bite. He took me...he took me ja to his home...Sunnyhill* and uhh he was staying with his mother...they from England and uhh I was visiting and...weekends I go there and I kinda liked that setup. It's a new life that I'm walking into and uhh yes I come from a poor background 'cos of a single mother a single parent and uhh lots of food and a warm shower and they bought me clothes and- [talks about details of his life with the lover] (...)
that was my first love experience- (JL: hmm).

[later on he alludes to the transactional nature of the relationship].

LUKE: Because we would (...) we was using the property project as a cover so that the colleagues (...) Because I wasn't working then, things wasn't going good at home and (...) so my pussy I had to put on the table in order for me to have a nice meal, in order for me to (...) have-

As a man who openly identifies as gay, Luke's experiences of prison sex and sexuality differs vastly to the men in the sample. He shares his experiences of engaging in consensual monogamous relationships with men in prison, where on more than one occasion the relationship continued into the outside upon their release.

LUKE: I met this African guy (sp)...Jake* and... a uhh 26 gang member...prison gang member and ja so then he accommodated me and then that was uhh the second guy that I met and I lived with in prison.

[later]

LUKE: you know as a 26...he was treating me like his woman and it was cool because you would make the bed and (...) and the tent and everything.

JL: What does it mean when you say 'woman'?

LUKE: Ja then he would treat me as his woman, as his girlfriend and uhh we...we lovers and uhh...

For Luke, wyfie status holds very different connotations than it does for the rest of the men in the study. On the one hand, the view of wyfies as weak and submissive is a fairly general agreement in the narratives. For Luke, the subversion of heterosexual identity in prison is his reclamation of the wyfie identity, an alternative sexual identity he embraces. For him, wyfie's may not fight like men with their fists but putting his '*pussy on the table*' is a way for him to access the benefits that comes with other men's hegemonic masculinities. For Luke, sex is more than a form of survival in prison, in contrast to sex work as a means of survival on the street. Wyfies are regarded as the 'other', the unseen, the peripheral character; in Luke's narrative, the body carries the performance of an exaggerated pantomime: quiet and silent yet equally powerful and compelling. Many of the participants describe how gay men, 'transgenders' and 'moffies' are seen as sexually enticing in prison. Through these observations, we gain a sense of some of the power peripheral characters hold in their silent performance.

For Bruce, this simple act of '*acting out our gayness*' is a rare but transformative moment for alternative sexuality performances in prison. In this simple, performance Bruce invites us into an alternative view of prison, as a liberatory space for sexual expression and performativity.

BRUCE: Uhh not really, we were not like sexually attracted to each other (JL: oh okay) but we just acted out our gayness.

JL: Ja, and what does that mean when you say you 'acted out'. What did you do?

BRUCE: Uhh uh we just...became like how gay can- how gay people are like you know without being afraid like you know whilst we were with these other lots of people in there (JL: hmm) you know its very different... you might see or pick up that that one is gay but still he's hiding his feelings you know things like that (JL: hmm hmm). Even out of prison there are places where you see and pick up no, one is gay and- but no, because of the friends he's got he won't act out (JL: hmm) quite a lot of people are like that quite a lot you know and where others even tell you 'look here when you see me with my friends don't you ever come to me, I would rather come to you' (JL: ja) you understand that.

Consensual Prison Sex

The narratives of the men reveal that a significant proportion of sex in prison is consensual. Consensual sex in this context was a form of sex trade in prison where men received material goods in exchange for performing sexual duties. The narratives show how some participants embraced the sex culture in prison, as it provided them an opportunity to gain some financial independence. On the other hand, there are narratives of avoidance, given the serious consequences that follow when one is caught. Furthermore, for others an intense resistance to the idea of sex with other men and contravention of gang codes were reasons for avoiding sex altogether.

DANNY: I also took my chance with a transgender once in the shower...
[detailed explanation of the incident and being caught by the 'transgenderers' lover and other Numbers members] now they can mos see this transgender when they ask him now 'is it so?' ...his ou now, 'ja because you don't want to'.

BRUCE: Because there were also benefits in prison. The same as the benefits one can get out here uhh people also are sexually (chuckles) uhh uhh I dunno whether I should say they're like hmm...sexually hungry...so there's lots of things happening. People exchange, others use money, other use food, other use all sorts of things just to get the sexual satisfaction in prison ja (JL: okay).

Bruce has a very different view of the Numbers gangs, as an immigrant he was not well prepared for the gang code going into prison. However, his experience with them sexually, has left him with a different perspective of the Number. He expresses an alternative view of prison sex within the Number and of being a 'wyfie'. Bruce's admission of feeling safe lies in stark contrast to Arthur (further below) who shares his experience of avoiding sex given his observations of the violent repercussions that follow.

BRUCE: The so-called 20- uhh I think they got three Numbers: the 27, 26 and 28. I found out that the 28s Numbers are mostly more into sex, so even when I'm outside when I see somebody with a Number 28 I'm feel I'm free to tell them whatever I want to tell them.

JL: Why is that?

BRUCE: Because I know they are more sexually you know.
[talks about the 28s gang, in his view they have more authority].

BRUCE: Ja when you surrounded by them then you also feel a bit safe you know (JL: okay).
Then you also uhh...they are also so protective you know.

Avoidance of Prison Sex

Where sex practices contravene gang laws the implications can be quite startling. Arthur's contemplation to engage in sex failed when he observed what happens when one participates in 'illegal' sex trade in prison. As a non-gang member, he was unwilling to risk engaging in prison sex work. The biggest deterrent for him was the gangs.

ARTHUR: [his entry into prison] so my first time in prison I never went there with so a mindset and so, but after a while again when I left there and came back to streets and doing sex work- doing sex work and then I ended up again for theft in prison ja (laughs) [the second time he talks about not getting visitors] my mom and I had contact but due to me ending up in prison, cheating my own stuff ja, she never wanted to come visit me (grunts) (...) then I thought of it like (sniggers) maybe doing sex work like you know [he talks about seeing other prisoners trade sex for material goods in his cell] so that's when I found out okay so this guy is like having sex with the other men for like tobacco whatever it is, for drugs and then when he like left the room I started like pondering about it, like me going to hook up with him for my surviving in prison [gang members found out about sex trade in the cell] it was a big thing in the room ja, it ended up fighting and luckily me not saying anything about what I was thinking about what I wanted to do to anyone ja so I just kept it to myself, kept quiet so I maar...let me rather not go this way 'cos I might get hurt you know. By me not being a prison gangster and so, so I can get- end up more in pain or more hurt than anyone else you know because no one is gonna back me up, so I kept that to myself and nothing happened there.

Fred's avoidance of *openly* engaging in prison sex or speaking about it for that matter is fixed to his unyielding attachment to the Number. At first, he fervently defends it (as a high ranking member of the 28s gang, he is particularly defensive about the issue of sex in prison). Openly admitting to having sex with men in prison (this is prior to his becoming a sex worker) does not fit into his idea of heterosexuality and more importantly, his performance of successful gang masculinity. Part of this ritual is scaring men into submission. This display of power is a way to prevent any suspicions being cast on his sexuality and engaging in sex at night is part of his avoidance ritual.

FRED: there's guys like me...full of tattoos- you see a guy in prison full of tattoos you get scared. You must know that these are guys that have power in prison and that- and he can- he can do anything that he like. If you can take somebody in gangster...he will do that. But not in a open space (...) Its happened but nobody sees that thing.

JL: So where are these private spaces then?

FRED: Things you do in the night (...) Now people think outside that this thing is happening [talks about the Number and its view of sex code] How can I take you into a camp and you like a woman and you think like a woman...how can I make you a soldier? (...) Because the whole Number thing is based on the military...now how can you-

Summary

Prison as Liberating Space

I make the claim that prison can act as a liberating space for marginal and alternate masculinities. However, there were also cases where men avoided sex in prison because they feared violent consequences would follow from the Number. It could be that observing sexual practices in prison opened the way for men to explore sexually later on when they were released, thus making the transition into sex work something

that they would consider more seriously. The complexity of prison as a site for sexual expression and gender performativity promotes performances of alternative sexual identity expression and sexual liberation. In this instance prison opens up possibilities for the exploration of multiple constructions of gender and sexuality. This claim, whilst bold and radical, addresses the need for sexual liberation, which this doubly oppressed and marginalized group who occupy peripheral roles in prison and on the street. Thus, negotiating gender and sexuality in prison affords them the space and time to explore their changing and fluid sexual identities to an extent either privately in prison or publicly on the street.

It's All Staged

In this theme, the focus turns to experiences of being a male sex worker. For the men in this study, sex work (SW) presented an opportunity for change. At least half the group entered SW post-incarceration. Having very few resources at their disposal, coupled with a substance abuse addiction, unemployment and homelessness the men for the most part were introduced to sex work through friends or work colleagues. Many of them state that SW is a better alternative to unemployment or a life of crime. The leading finding in this section is that, for most of the men in this sample, SW is an 'act' separate to their real lives. It is a performance they engage in only when doing sex work and is kept hidden and secret from close family and friends. Where men do disclose their SW status it is to close, trusted friends or fellow sex workers they interact with in passing. The key insight is that they uphold two realities, moving between two worlds and two separate identities, one as a man (father, brother, husband, son) and one as sex worker. In this performance, SW is a masquerade – a false show. The sub-themes are 'alter ego' and 'surviving through sex work'. Here, the analysis reveals that interactions with actors on this stage are performed behind a mask of pretense and concealment.

Alter Ego

The shame attached to sex work is an emotion shared by a majority of the men. It is for the most part an identity to remain hidden, especially from family and friends. A deep-seated fear of people finding out that they are sex workers is attached to societal ideas of heterosexual masculinity. For the men sex work blurs the line between accepted and deviant sexuality. In some case coming to terms with a shifting sexuality is made easier by the prison space where sex with men, albeit hidden, is a common practice. On the street however public stigma is heightened. The mask that they hide behind is a protective factor, as the sex worker identity becomes the self-imposed 'other', an alternate personality created and shrouded in secrecy.

CHRIS: Ja ja its tough because even if your relatives had to know about it, it sort of taken as taboo like ‘how can you do that?’ you see...ja so it’s a strange thing...it would be a strange thing.

For Chris, being a sex worker complicates his performance of sexuality. As someone who firmly identifies as heterosexual, sex work complicates his understanding of self. He talks about maintaining the pretense of sex work, to ‘*act like you enjoying it*’ but then trails off, leaving it open to question what happens if or when he does not enjoy it? This leaves him questioning his sexuality, thus making the performance less pretend and more real.

CHRIS: Ja uhh you see when you pretend you act like you enjoying something but you not neh but now when uhh...

The stigma associated with being a male sex worker is one of the biggest reasons for keeping it hidden. Avoidance of people and places where one may be recognized is the only way to maintain this secret identity. The men employ several strategies to avoid recognition and the shame that comes with it. For Eric, the humiliation that calls his manhood into question keeps him alienated from friends and family.

ERIC: like even friends of yours and they find out you doing like sex work...they say you are fokking men and... and yorr sometimes they will make a joke but for some people the joke that they make isn’t like a joke that everyone understand.

The public humiliation and branding that comes with sex work is one of the biggest challenges for these men, as they reconcile their sexual identities with their performances of masculinity.

JL: And why is it that you decide not to tell them?

MALIK: Because...I think...you know how a woman is sometimes when you have an argument with them...they always likes to throw it in your face... “ja djy dinges moffies”, you see? That’s why I rather keep it...and how will my children look at me if I tell them I’m a sex worker, it wont be nice for them to know ‘my father is a sex worker’.

The shame of facing his children and their mother and being branded a ‘moffie’ prevents Malik from sharing his SW status with family members. The fear of being judged and ridiculed is one of the reasons for keeping it secret. For Malik and Bobby, being labeled a ‘moffie’ implies that they are not ‘real men’. In this sense it is assumed that they are not tough like the gangsters who fight back and resist being penetrated by another man. Not resisting sex work, in this sense can be compared to prison sex culture where resisting rape in prison is the marker of being a ‘real man’. In this case, if hypothetically Bobby were to share his sex worker identity with his gang brothers it would be an admission of his lack of masculinity, which reduces him to the status of a woman – ‘less than man’.

JL: So I know you've said that you left the gang but how do you think it would be viewed if your gang brothers were to know that you are a sex worker?

BOBBY: I think they would discriminate me. They would say I'm a moffie maybe...obviously you mos know how it goes (...) gangsters don't roll like that...you know they tough.

Surviving Through Sex Work

In this sub-theme, they explain that through sex work they are able to support their children or, in some cases, to support their drug habit without having to revert to criminal activity. Most of the men in this category are fathers and use the money from sex work to support their children, however the difficulty of having to uphold the secrecy of their SW activities while it brings in money to pay the bills is a struggle that they have to deal with constantly.

MALIK: Ja uhh-(...) the first time when I went in I was like a...like they say a straight guy, then afterwards...like...my people didn't come to visit me and I had to make money...I had to do sex work. A gay guy he give me money that his people send him, then I...something like that...then afterwards when I came out...I heard about SWEAT also...didn't get a job outside then I started doing this.

Several participants share experiences based on observation of SW in prison. Malik is one of the few who engaged in SW as a form of trade in prison. With a lack of financial support and having had some experience with SW in prison, it becomes a viable option for him post-release. He has set ideas about his sexuality upon entry into prison, having to hustle for money in prison he emphasizes that SW becomes the last resort (*'I had to do sex work'*). In stating that it was a *'gay guy'* that paid him, he makes a clear distinction on the basis of sexuality. The fact that his client is gay leaves him questioning his own sexuality. He has to grapple with ideas around his sexuality and what it means to his sexual and gendered identity to have sex with men. He, like many the participants, does not identify strongly with his sex worker status.

SW for many of the men is a means to an end. A large majority are fathers who with the money earned from sex work support their children. They struggle with the burdens of shame, when in fact they are doing honest work to support their families. This makes the pressures of maintaining the secret more complicated as they are forced in some sense to lead two separate lives, as Danny and Arthur explain:

DANNY: when I'm with my children I can be a father and when I'm not with them and I'm on my own on the street I have to do my sex work to support them uhm there was a time when my son asked me once "daddy where do you work?"

ARTHUR: it became like (sniggers) a part of me. If I don't have money and I feel like using, or like when my baby's birthday come like and I don't have money I would go and... 'cos its something easy to do ja.

Very few of them admit to enjoying their SW. Danny, who has been a sex worker for the past seven years, has to deal with public shaming and harassment. Whilst he is one

of the few who expresses comfort with his sexuality – identifying as bisexual – the public stigma attached to sex work is a negative for him.

JL: Sure...and so what does it mean to be...for you...what does it mean to be a sex worker?

DANNY: (sp) What do you mean in terms of?

JL: What meaning do you attach to it? How do you see sex work, for yourself? How do you view yourself as a sex worker?

DANNY: I see it as...sex work I see as a good income alright...but because there is so much of stigma against it...to have it stigmatized is...yorr.

Summary

Disguise

The theme explores how the men reconcile sex work with their gendered and sexual identity construction. Many of them share the difficulty of having to navigate and renegotiate gender and sexuality on the streets. Their narratives reveal questions regarding their masculinity and sexuality. They struggle with being seen differently as men who have sex with other men, questioning what it says about the fixedness of sexuality - these are murky questions that they must come to terms with as they perform a part of their identity in disguise, in many cases, compartmentalizing their identities. These are participants that are aware of the ‘act’; the character they play as sex workers and the people they are outside of sex work are two separate people. They lead separate lives, and keeping sex work secret is critical. Secrecy follows and plagues them-having to uphold two realities and keep them apart constantly make these participants feel particularly vulnerable. They display serious addictive personalities – to drugs, sex, alcohol or all combined. They also engage in high risk-taking behaviour as part of their sex work.

Part I: Summary

In the end we come to learn and see that there is more than one performance of masculinity and sexuality in prison, for some having either achieved this insight or not, they try hard to hold onto the preferred performance of tough prison masculinity. This too varied, for some holding onto hegemonic masculinity meant a determination to maintain heteronormative and heterosexist ideals of gender and sexuality. For many of these participants a rigid resistance to alternative masculinity and sexualities, where even as male sex workers, the idea of having sex with men went against their innermost core beliefs of gender and sexuality. These marginal few choose to hold onto ideals of heterosexism and the binary of male and female gender. Others discuss how the prison space and sex work gave them the opportunity to explore new areas of their gendered and sexual selves, discovering shifting identity constructs like sexual

orientation, being fathers to their own children or other men, and in other instances, discovering how to be there for other men in a non-sexual ways too.

After a review of the analytical themes, two final themes emerge. *Renegotiation* is a process in response to a shifting context where the subject engages in an internalized monologue with self, constantly exploring and (re)constructing the gendered and sexual self. It is in this area of constructing gendered and sexual selves that the process of intrapsychic scripting is most influential. *Negotiation* is a process where the individual engages in an external dialogue with others. Through interactions with others he performs gender and sexuality publicly. As the men negotiate different ways to perform masculinity and sexuality in collaboration with others the interpersonal scripts takes on significance.

Narratives of renegotiation and negotiation illustrates there is no one way of being a man in prison. No matter how hard they try to hold onto ideas that have shaped their understanding of gender and sexuality. Until the point of entry into prison they are still subject to moments of ambiguity that calls their masculinity and later on, their sexuality into question. For the men in this study constructing and renegotiating their masculine and sexual identities is an ongoing process, it means moving back and forth from hegemonic, to marginal to alternate masculinities depending on the circumstance and the context in which they find themselves. *Renegotiation* and *Negotiation* recognizes the fluidity and social constructivist nature of identity construction. These are processes that underpin the life story as it reemerges throughout narratives of constructing gendered and sexual selves. These processes operate in a dialectical cycle, where shifting contexts causes a shift in identity construction, hence the transition from prison to the street we see a reoccurrence of the renegotiation/negotiation process taking place. In the next section I discuss the findings of this analysis in relation to the research questions, theory and empirical research introduced above.

Part II: Discussion:

Introduction

Following the dramaturgical metaphor presented throughout this study, I will present the findings of my analysis, which have been organized into two broad categories. These categories comprise of the four themes; gender, sexuality, prison sex culture and sex work that has consistently been presented throughout this study. In each section I will provide answers to the research questions presented in the study.

The first category is titled monologues: it examines the construction of gender and sexuality in prison. The central finding in this theme is *Renegotiation*; this looks at the narratives that were constructed to explain the internalized process of gender and sexuality construction with the self. The second category is titled dialogues: this looks at the performances of gendered and sexual identities in prison and on the streets. The central finding in this theme is *Negotiation*; this finding shows how men perform their gendered and sexual identities in various contexts through interaction with others.

Prison is a space for re-working and renegotiating performances of gender. Butler (1990) outlines that gender is an act that is repeated over time and space. The social constructionist model of gender and sexuality were explored to conceptualize how the men in this study negotiated their way in prison to (re)construct a gendered and sexual identity in that space. The work of Gagnon and Simon (1973) offered a three-tiered model of identity construction. Their analyses of sexual scripting guided the framework of this study by understanding how gender and sexuality are internalized constructions that take place in the personal realm, this is what they refer to as intrapsychic scripting. Interpersonal scripts are the processes of constructing gender and sexuality through interactions with others (Gagnon & Simon, 1973). The last part of this model is the cultural scenarios, these are social norms governed by dominant social institutions that inform intrapsychic (personal) scripts. The interplay between actor and script is a dynamic process, where the script comes alive in the context in which it is enacted. Intrapsychic scripting allows the individual to have power over his own script, thus *Renegotiation* is performed through monologue with the self. *Negotiation* is the dialogical process where scripts are created collaboratively with other actors. Complication arises when scripts are not in sync or where they overlap, and in some cases where certain scripts take precedence over others, or where hierarchies exist between actors.

Monologues: Constructing Gendered and Sexual Identities in Prison

How do constructions of gender and sexuality in prison sex culture impact on self-identification of male sex workers?

The main research question in this study asks how male sex workers construct and perform their gendered and sexual identities in prison and on the street. Using the conceptual framework of sexual scripts by Gagnon and Simon (1973) and the works of Foucault (1990) and Butler (1990), this study shows that constructions and performances of gender and sexuality are concerned with the personal and interpersonal experiences that characterize the construction of identity.

This study extended the use of the dramaturgical metaphor to explore how social actors construct and perform gender and sexuality through processes of sexual

scripting (Gagnon and Simon, 1973) and performativity (Butler, 1990). The stage in this case is the prison. I wish to depart here briefly to share my conceptualization of the prison as stage in order to contextualize the findings of this study. The prison acts a stage where actors perform their identities. I focus on the actors who, through gendered and sexual practices deliver performances of masculinity and sexuality. The prison in this regard is a neutral space, what it offers is the structure of walls, gates, buildings and hallways, each of which is an extension of the stage. The prison, as stage, does not inform or influence constructions of gender and sexuality as they are being constructed; it is the actors that do that. Previous studies in this area that have looked at the gendered nature of the prison space explain how prison architecture reinforces constructs of masculinity – hard, cold, alienating spaces – where people act out their aggressions as the mark of successful gender performances (Bandyopadhyay, 2006). For this study, the prison provides a space for actors to interact as they perform for and with each other.

Renegotiation: Gender

Renegotiation meant reconciling internalized beliefs about gender and sexuality and then opening up to a fluid understanding between the two, thus pointing to their relational aspect. The findings show that constructions of gender and sexuality in prison are informed by the social norms generated there. Findings that emerged show how informal code of conduct and rules set out by the Numbers gangs governed men's performances. The laws of the gangs that govern gender and sexuality were religiously upheld by gang members and conformed to by other marginal prisoners, thus confirming findings from other South African literature on gang masculinities (Steinberg, 2004; Gear, 2005). These rules, however, were not passively accepted. Narratives of the men reveal ways to perform alternate gender through silent performances that involve limited interaction with other prisoners and avoidance techniques. Findings also show how men performed alternate masculine identities through ritualized behaviour to subvert the totalizing power of the gangs.

In the case of this study, the findings show that men either choose to perform dominant hegemonic masculinities and sexualities, informed by heterosexual norms, or alternative masculinities and sexualities that goes against society's strict binaries relating to gender and sexuality. For some of the men performing hegemonic masculinity in pretense was a tactic they employed to convince others that they were tough, even if it conflicted with their inner-feelings of a softer more sensitive nature. On the other hand a predominant number chose to perform alternative masculinities, either outrightly rejecting normative roles of gender and sexuality (a marginal few) or renegotiating gender and sexuality through subversive performances that subtly undermine hegemonic constructions of masculine identity, which produced a version of masculinity that was flexible and constantly renegotiating performances in opposition to, or around dominant masculinities. This supports the claims made by Walker (2005) that men in contemporary South Africa were embracing alternate

forms of masculinity that rejected violence. This was presented through findings that show how the men used tactical subversion to undermine the power and hold that the gangs have over marginal masculinities by providing for them materially to prove to the gangs that they too could take care of their 'brothers' like 'real' men do. Others took a softer, friendly approach by trying to make friends with gang members, sharing personal information about their backgrounds, performing as teachers these men actively engaged with dominant masculinities. This finding is supported by the literature that shows how marginal masculinities compete with dominant hegemonic masculinities to forge a place of their own in prison.

Renegotiation: Sexuality

The findings show that upon entry the men choose one of two paths, for the path of alternate gender identity construction a settling-in period takes place, to acclimatize and acculturate to the setting of prison. It is important to remember that this is an individual and internalized process. Going through the internal process of gender and sexuality renegotiation, which is the first phase of identity construction in this space, tactical subversion is used in preparation to enter the interactional space of prison sex culture. The actors rescript through internal monologues. Through intrapsychic scripts, the subject emerges and is now open to the possibility of exploring his sexuality. He first has to work on his own to figure out the prison space.

The emergence of alternative sexualities is a fairly recent development in contemporary prison studies. In a study conducted by Jenness and Fenstermaker (2014) their key finding was that stigmatization against gender non-conforming inmates was a frequent issue. They argue that successful performances of alternative sexualities was contingent on being able to perform gender authentically. This study shows that performances of alternative sexualities are linked to performances of gender. This is supported by the work of Gagnon and Simon (1973) that state sexuality is conflated with ideal gender performance when gender is performed according to cultural expectations.

Gagnon and Simon (1973) argue that prison sex research has long focused on the deviance of so-called perversions such as homosexuality. The long running debate on situational homosexuality versus true homosexuality is still a prominent feature of current literature on prison sexualities. The work of authors such as Eigenberg (2000), Kunzel (2002) and Sit and Ricciardelli (2013) argues that prison due to its single gender sex segregation forces people into homosexual relations – situational homosexuality which results in heteronormative and homophobic discourses permeate prison culture. Authors further argue that sexual deprivation accounts for the prevalence of homosexual relations in prison (Gibson & Hensley, 2013; Terry, 2016). These arguments contend that performances of heterosexual masculinity dominate the prison space. For the most part this is an accurate depiction of sexuality in prisons generally, but findings in this study show subjects pushback on these dominant

performances by subtly performing and employing tactics of subversion as they negotiate sex. Findings show how the men renegotiate ideas of sexuality through interactions with others. For some, experimenting sexually or flirting with other alternative masculinities was a way to start the exploration into alternative sexuality. For others, a shifting between heterosexuality and alternative sexuality marked the beginning of reconfiguring sexual desires. This internal monologue is a period of intense exploration around what it means to be a man and how that translates sexually in the prison space. For many it marks a period of questioning and renegotiating past beliefs of their gendered and sexual selves. The outcome of this process is the point where men start to explore outside the self as they engage and interact with fellow prisoners through sexual exchange.

Dialogue(s): Performing Identities in Prison and on the Street

What are the experiences of sexual relationships in prison and does it influence decisions and choices to enter into, or continue with sex work post-release?

Negotiation: Prison as a Liberating Space

Negotiation looks at the interactive exchanges and performances among actors. Sex, as it relates to sexual behaviour, is a social process of exchange between actors, which given the limited space cannot be avoided in prison. Normalizing practices of gender and sexuality take on different meanings for men in prison. The gendered and sexual realities of outside society do not easily conform to those inside prison. The rules of gender and sexuality are blurred where what is accepted as normal on the inside may be considered as deviant on the outside.

The entry into prison marks a period where crossing the boundary from outside into the prison space causes what Achmat (1993) refers to as 'rupture'. Findings in this study support Achmat's claim that prison acts as a space where same-sex desire can be explored. This exploration, occurring under very specific circumstances, can be a liberating space for gender and sexual performance. Gagnon and Simon refer to this process as 'trying on' new roles as the individual tries to figure out their place in the social world of prison. Prison lends itself to this process as the confines of prison can act as a buffer or protector in some sense. Studies in South African literature are divided on the subject of identities and sexualities created in prison. While one half argue they are created as a survivalist technique (Gear, 2005), this argument is refuted by Achmat (1993) who argues that 'rupture' more adequately explains the exploration of same sex desire in prison. The findings show cases where men were involved in intimate love relationships or consensual partnerships; but these do not reflect a large portion of the sample. This finding supports Gear's (2005) call for future research into

this topic. A significant finding is also the presence of homosocial relationships linked to prison. Several of the men's narratives revealed early relationships with men and significant male influences prior to incarceration that to some extent equipped them for prison.

Social sexual scripts from outside do not effortlessly translate into prison. While outside there may be more spaces to perform alternative sexualities as compared to prison, however, the policing of sex work on the outside is enforced more tightly, as compared to prison where regulation of sex is less rigid (prisoners spend half their day locked up in cells). Findings show a high proportion of consensual sex practices in prison mainly around the organization of informal sex trade. Men who engaged in these interactions were mainly in it for financial reasons. With limited research into this area of prison research this finding highlights the need for future research on this topic.

The findings in this study suggest that it is in prison where exploration of alternative sexuality is more easily permissible because it is closed and cut off from society, thus the influence of broader cultural scenarios are limited in the prison context. This opens pathways to explore alternative sexualities that are usually considered deviant outside. However, there is a fine line between exploring openly in a public performance and exploring privately in a consensual relationship.

Gagnon and Simon (1973) note that intrapsychic scripts take on significance when the individual moves from an internalized state to an interactional state, particularly when multiple and diverse sexualities are being performed. They refer to the "modification of self" as a process where an internal shift occurs as the actor engages and exchanges with other actors. While alternative sexualities are not publicly on display in prison, as compared to the streets where street-based sex workers directly display their alternative sexualities, in specific settings of course, the possibilities of performing alternative sexuality is more viable in prison as compared to the streets because of the greater presence of other alternative sexual performances in that space. This shift is a signifier of the range of possibilities open to sexual exploration. One such exploration revealed in the narratives is how the men could explore a side to their sexuality that they could not do as easily on the outside.

While findings show that some men resisted engaging in exchanges in prison sex culture due to the violent repercussion that follow, it is suggested that the liberating aspect they witness through others' engagement of same-sex practices informs their sexual performances upon release from prison into the street. Thus, sexual liberation in prison takes place under certain circumstances. Where they may not have personal experiences of sexual liberation in prison, they take ideas of constructing and performing alternative sexualities with them into their work as sex workers. Through processes of renegotiation, they come to have alternative views about their own sexuality and how it can be performed differently on the streets, which is informed by

performances of alternative sexuality witnessed in prison. Changing attitudes to alternative sexualities and sexual practices informed by their interaction with multiple actors in prison, who perform both alternative and hegemonic sexualities, is translated into their performances on the street. This demonstrates the cyclical nature of sexual scripts, which fuse interpersonal scripts and cultural scenarios. The prison informs intrapsychic scripts of the individual through the process of *Renegotiation* (with the self) and *Negotiation* (with others).

How do men perform and navigate gender and sexuality in prison culture, does it influence experiences of male sex work?

Negotiation: Sex Work in Disguise

Swartz (2007) argues that no matter how inconsequential deviant performances of sexual scripts are, the repercussions that follow are cause for social alienation. Actors consciously repress their desire so that it remains internalized, relegated to the subconscious in order to fit in with societal norms (Swartz, 2007). After the relative shelter of prison where freedom to explore alternative sexualities was allowed relatively more freely, the shift into the next context, the streets, presents a crisis. Gagnon and Simon (1973) note that crises occur when intrapsychic scripts and cultural scenarios are incongruent. The crisis that sex work presents does not only relate to the shifting of context but also to a discordance between how the individual feels internally and how he performs on the outside. Crises arise because the individual is not able to find harmony between identity (internal script) and performance (external act). Findings show that sex work is a last resort for most of the men as this a resolution of crises is made more difficult due to constantly shifting contexts i.e. the move from prison to the street.

The findings highlight the difficulties of having to navigate gender and sexuality on the outside. The men are subject to the process of *Negotiation* as they work to reconcile and reconstruct their gender and sexual identities in the shifting context from prison to the street. The narratives reveal their performances are clouded in secrecy and shame, thus hiding behind a mask to protect their 'real' identity and to deter public stigma and discrimination. This supports the work of Boyce and Isaacs (2014) who highlight the stigma experienced by sex workers across the continent. The performance of *Disguise* illustrates how they construct an alter ego as they try to maintain two separate identities – the one 'real' and the other a false identity created for performance of sex work. The mask is an important part of their identity construction as sex workers, it is something they put on and take off – for the most part, shifting into an alternate performance with relative and rehearsed ease. This finding is supported by the work of Crewe *et al* (2014) that states a common adaptation to punitive settings, such as prisons and the harshness of the streets, is for men to wear masks as 'fronts' to hide their vulnerabilities. In prison the spotlight

shines on the individual whereas in the street moving around in *Disguise* is the preferred option.

In the final chapter to follow I bring the study to a close. I address the gaps by discussing the implications of this research study. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations of this study and recommendations. I conclude with a brief overview of all chapters in the final conclusion.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Implications of the Study

The lack of research into peripheral sexualities is expounded in Foucault's (1990) argument that Victorian era sex practices focused on the deviant behaviours of sex to regulate and control it. Given the empirical evidence presented here, there appears to have been little shift in this regard. As noted, the lack of historical first person accounts of prison sexuality limits the literature in this area. This is particularly evident in the South African context where research into this area of prison sex has been limited in general. A review of the South African literature has shown that research mainly focused on male rape, sexual coercion and victimization. Prison sex and sexualities is still regarded with disdain in broader social discourse. Hence, daily incidents in prisons are left unattended, only coming into public attention when high profile cases make it into the media. Even then, only pejorative discourses of prison sexualities make it into the media capturing public attention. This minimalizes the experiences of a whole population and silences other types of sexual practices that take place in the prison setting. The culture of silence that surrounds prison sex is all the more critical for research into 'peripheral sexualities' (Foucault, 1990). Just as little is known about practices in prison sex culture as they relate to the functioning of broader society. This call is pertinent to the study here as a culture of silence rooted in the repressive hypothesis has suppressed knowledge of prison sex culture. With only three studies conducted in the last six years that addressed the gap of alternative forms of sex in prison. The aforementioned gap in research regarding consensual sex and consenting prison relationships is juxtaposed with the evidence presented in this study which revealed that, indeed, a portion of the prison population engages in consensual sex and consenting partnerships. This evidence cannot be ignored. Thus, renewed research efforts into this is called for. Furthermore, the evidence also highlights informal sex trade practices in prison, which appear to be a source of financial income for men who are with limited resources. This too, is worth investigating, as it can direct us into new avenues of the prison sex cultures in South Africa.

This gap is a feature of the international literature, too. This trend is extended even further where there are even greater gaps in research focusing on prisoners' narratives and personal accounts of prison sex culture. This substantial omission is addressed through this study, where I center the narratives of men in order to get to the research question asking *how* they construct and perform identity, bringing into focus personal in-depth narratives, as opposed to asking *why* and *what*, a common feature within the literature to date. These are important considerations to make, given the exploitive situations that subjects find themselves in to begin with: research to date has largely worked to widen that gap rather than address it. My biggest critique of the current literature has been leveled at *who* is doing the work in this area, as their framing of prison sex culture is buttressed by their positionalities as researchers; therefore, we

cannot overlook their part in establishing and promoting certain discourses that have framed the sexual practices, desires and needs of incarcerated male population in reductionist terms. Hence my use of a feminist theoretical framework in this study to address issues of power, privilege and positionality that encourages transparency of the research process. Being vulnerable as a researcher holds one accountable to the research process and levels the imbalances that have been a prominent feature of the predominantly white, heteronormative frame through which prison sex studies have been investigated.

Limitations of the Study

One of the biggest limitations to this study was the issue of language proficiency. I offered participants the option of speaking in English or Afrikaans; in most cases, it was a mix of both as I wanted them to feel comfortable expressing themselves in their language of choice. Afrikaans is a second language for me, and while I can understand it very well and can follow easily in conversation, there were instances in the interview when I had difficulty articulating myself clearly or posing questions in a way that was still a respectful and considerate response. A further limitation of language was their use of *sabela* in their narratives. While I have a basic understanding of *sabela* words and phrases, this doubly complicated the transcription process as I had to do extra research into lengthier quotes in order to contextualize it and make sense of it in relation to the content of the narratives. This extended the transcription time as I had to go back and forth in order to decipher some of the expressions. The decision to work with rough transcripts was a purposeful one as I wanted to represent the narrator's voice as authentically as possible. Hence, in parts of the excerpts, I choose not to translate the quote so as not to manipulate the narrators 'voice' too much. Where I do translate Afrikaans quotes into English in the case of lengthier excerpts is when the entire narrative is in Afrikaans; this was to aid readability. In the Western Cape, where a majority of the population speaks Afrikaans, it is helpful to be bilingual in English and Afrikaans, so as not to lose the depth and richness of the narratives. I do not think participants would have shared as much detail had they not been afforded the opportunity to speak in their mother tongue. In the case of foreign sex workers, there were instances where this limitation was evident as there were moments when they were not able to express themselves as freely and had difficulty understanding my initial questions. The issue of language will always be a difficult one in any research encounter. Therefore, I highlight the importance of representing narratives as authentically close to the original as possible.

Recommendations

There is a need for continued research on male sex work (MSW). Playing close attention to the social construction of gender and sexuality of MSW is a start; not only does it provide valuable insight into the lived realities and struggles of this marginalized segment of the population, but it also helps to understand what contexts shape and impact MSW as they conduct their work. Through a few of the narratives, they revealed that the sex trade in prison was a form of sex work, where some chose to engage in it, while others did not for a number of reasons. This is an area of research that would also be worth considering, as it can deliver new insights into the extent of MSW. There is a need to demystify MSW, especially in Africa where discussions of sex and sexuality are tabooed and heavily censored. In addition, the fact that MSW and same-sex desire is outlawed in many African countries makes it difficult to approach this subject, but all the more critical that we do so in order to address the needs of this at-risk and vulnerable community.

The diligent advocacy work of SWEAT to visibilize the status of sex workers in South Africa is highly commendable. SWEAT works tirelessly to reframe MSW in a more positive light in order to reduce public stigma, granting MSW more visible status at conferences, seminars and public events is key but one also has to take into consideration, given the findings here where men are adamant in maintaining two separate identities not to coopt their voices. Given the finding that disguise and creating an alter ego are two of the dominant coping mechanisms of MSW identity construction and performance, visibility also invites stigma. Thus, MSW may not welcome this direction of research, as the alter ego is a protective factor that they guard religiously.

The findings have highlighted the challenges MSW face as they transition from prison into the streets. It would be worth SWEAT as an organization to provide support space to ex-offender sex workers as they readjust to life outside. The weekly support groups are a space where these men are able to share their experiences, in a larger cohort, where others share similar experiences and backgrounds. Many of the participants mention in the interviews that it was the first time they were sharing these experiences, so it would be worth having a designated platform where they could discuss some of the issues highlighted in the findings of this study.

Conclusion

The central aim of the study was to examine the narratives of male sex workers' constructions and performances of gender and sexuality in prison. This study sought to understand how male sex workers experience gender and sexuality in prison. To explore how prison sex culture shapes alternative expressions of gender and sexuality,

given that dominant narratives in the literature and public discourse portray prison sex as only violent and coercive. The chapters in this research study have presented the feminist and sociological theoretical frameworks underpinning this study. This was followed by a review of current literature in the field of prison studies, followed by a detailed overview of the methodological process of the research study, culminating in a presentation of the findings.

A review of the literature shows that sex in South African prisons has historically been constructed in reductionist and narrow ways. In recent years, the lens has been fixed on coercive sexual practices and violent relationships in prison, with a bulk of the research going into male rape in prison. It must be acknowledged that there has been an attempt to explore some aspects of consensual sexual relations in prison. It is imperative that a shift occurs within the literature on prison sex in South Africa, so that it informs a balanced view of both violent and non-violent sexual practices, with the hope of influencing a more nuanced view of prison sexuality and sex practices.

The findings show that there are two pathways men followed as they construct and perform gender and sexuality in prison and on the street. As individuals navigate new and shifting contexts, like the transition from prison to the street, so too a shifting of identity occurs, processes of renegotiation signal this. Movement characterizes each of these processes. *Renegotiation* of self is a personal, internalized process, where shifting from one context into the next forces the individual to rescript his ideas of gender and sexuality as he works to construct a gendered and sexual identity. *Negotiation* is the external process of interaction with others that informs performances of gender and sexuality publicly. Constructing the gendered self means always having to renegotiate internalized beliefs and ideas of gender. Performing gendered and sexual identities involves the second process of negotiating with others.

Throughout this thesis, I have argued for a nuanced engagement with sex and sexualities in prison. I have proposed that research into prison sexualities not only focus on dominant forms of sex that has been researched extensively. I have noted the importance of understanding from individual and personal experience how men construct their gendered and sexual selves in the prison space. In the theoretical framework I firstly, introduced arguments by Foucault (1990) to illustrate how the historical treatment of peripheral sexualities has either been relegated to the margins or heavily regulated and censored. Foucault's (1990) critique of the repressive hypothesis was used in this study to draw attention to the silences of sexuality in marginal spaces such as prison. In conjunction with the empirical literature presented in this regard, we see that the limited research that has gone into an investigation of peripheral sexualities has been stymied by research that mainly focuses on coercive forms of sex in prison. The findings of this study show that peripheral sexualities do in fact exist in prison, as do alternative forms of masculinity. This indicates that men do not altogether passively embrace or fear dominant masculinities and sexualities.

In the second part of the theory, I introduced Butler's (1990) concept of performativity to explain how gender is socially constructed and that alternate performances of gender are a way to subvert dominant heterosexual ideals of gender, which she argues is itself an imitation given the social constructed nature to begin with. Butler's (1990) concept of subversion uses gender performativity to subvert the notion of one true gender existing. Subversion highlights the fact that gender is a production that is staged repeatedly and that scripts and performances are written and rewritten, thus pointing out that it is not fixed. Butler asserts that alternative sexualities are pathologized to normalize heterosexuality, and that heterosexuality operates in imitation, given that gender is a social construct. Butler's (1990) consideration of alternative performance of gender as subversion is supported by the findings, which show how the men in this study find ways to navigate around dominant masculinities to achieve their objectives. Furthermore, that these alternative performances are a way to challenge the status quo where hegemonic masculinities govern how and where people interact with each other sexually. The empirical research presented here showed that violence against gender non-conforming inmates was a common occurrence, which impacted on their sexual behaviour and self-identification. The results from this study show that a third of the men were open to and performed gender fluid identities.

Butler's (1990) performativity theory links to the work of Gagnon and Simon that supports the social constructionist argument regarding sexuality. Their model of social sexual scripting argues that gender and sexuality is influenced by personal, interpersonal and cultural influences that shape and impact on the construction of sexuality (and gender). The influence of society frames gender in very specific ways through the process of socialization. Through the work of Simon and Gagnon (1973), I explored how cultural scenarios influence the internal intrapsychic scripting of subjects as they entered the prison space. Based on the findings of this study the interaction between intrapsychic, interpersonal scripts and cultural scenarios interact in a dynamic process, with one informing the other. Constructing a gendered and sexual identity in prison and on the street follows patterns of the script, which can be open to interpretation by others, and rewritten with others. In the findings, we see how men work through personal and cultural meanings of gender and sexuality as they renegotiate their place in the social sexual order of prison. As they begin to interact with others, this renegotiation process is further influenced through their exchanges with others, which results in them having to negotiate their own ideas and performances of gender and sexuality against the performances of others. This process is a back and forth movement and is impacted each time the person moves from one context to the next. Men are embracing alternative performances of gender and sexuality in prison, and there is considerable pushback against dominant hegemonic performances of masculinity.

The research study presented here seeks to challenge the heterosexist framework that governs gender and sexuality, particularly for those who do not fit neatly into

heteronormative gender and sexuality binaries. This is a challenge that will no doubt always need to be dismantled. The gap addressed through this study is an attempt to understand where marginal identities fit into the hierarchy and the methods and performances they engage in to get a share of this power.

The men in this study are more than prisoners, gangsters, or sex workers. They are people with a past that are often marked with trauma and great challenges, but their narratives tell stories of considerable resilience. They tell of hope, of dreams and moving beyond trauma to remake and reclaim a masculinity beyond marginality. Theirs are stories of perseverance as they navigate daily life.

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Appendix A – Interview Schedule

Interview Overview

Beginning phase of the interview

- **Introductions:** Introduce Myself
Explain anonymity and pseudonym for confidentiality
Gain permission to record
Discuss language preferences (English/Afrikaans)
- **Explain and discuss the research topic and purpose of the study**
- **Overview of Interview:** Discuss duration of the interview (approx. ±1 hour)
Briefly explain the interview structure
- **Informed Consent:** Read and sign copies of the confidentiality agreement/informed consent form

Introduction:

Building rapport

1) Tell me about yourself, your family etc. for me to get to know you better

Prompts/Probes: Can you elaborate? Can you explain? Can you tell me more?
What does that mean?

General questions to be explored (as guide/prompt questions):

Masculinity in prison:

- How did you come to enter prison? What circumstances led to your entry into prison?
- How has the experience of being in prison shaped or changed your view of yourself as a man?
- What does it mean to be a man in prison?

Sexuality in prison:

- How do you identify your sexual status?

(prompts) What was your sexual status before going to prison? Did it change while you were in prison? Did being in prison affect your sexual status?

Sex work:

- How did you enter into sex work?
- Why did you decide to become a sex worker?
- What did sex work mean to you before entering prison? did your view change after prison, when you were released?
- What does being a sex worker mean to you?
- What are the challenges of re-entry ('outside') after you were released from prison?

Appendix B – Participant Informed Consent Form
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Invitation to participate in research investigating:

MALE SEX WORKERS EXPERIENCES OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN PRISON

Study Purpose

You are being invited to participate in a research study being conducted by a Masters student in Gender Studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The purpose of this study is to establish **the experiences of male sex workers who have been imprisoned**. This study is open to South African and non-South African citizens. This study is not open to minors (under 18 years of age).

Study Procedures

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an **individual one-on-one interview**. The interview session should take no longer than two hours.

Anonymity & Confidentiality

All information obtained from you will be kept **strictly confidential**. There will be no way to link the information you have provided to your name or any other personal particulars. All **personal details will remain anonymous** in any form of recordings, electronic copies, hardcopies, publications, reports, presentations or written documents.

Possible Risks

There are **no known risks** specific to this kind of study participation. There are no penalties whatsoever should you choose not to participate, or refuse to answer a particular question.

Possible Benefits

Transport (at a standard rate of R40.00) and lunch will be provided for each interview session attended (including follow-up interviews). There are **no other direct benefits** to you in participating in this study, but we hope that information gained from this study will help us answer questions about male sex work and prison in South Africa.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is **completely voluntary**. You may **choose not to participate** in this study, and your decision regarding participation in this study will not have any consequences for you. You may refuse to answer any question. If you do decide to participate, you are free to change your mind and discontinue participation at any time without any consequences.

Questions

Any study related questions, problems or emergencies should be directed to the following researchers

Primary Researcher (UCT): Jan-Louise Lewin email: lwnjan002@myuct.ac.za

Research Supervisor (UCT): Dr Adelene Africa email: adelene.africa@uct.ac.za

Research Supervisor (SWEAT): Dr Gordon Isaacs email: gordon.isaacs@sweat.org.za

Questions about your rights as a study participant, comments or complaints about the study may be presented to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities faculty, University of Cape Town (UCT).



Please complete the consent form if you wish to participate in this study:

MALE SEX WORKERS EXPERIENCES OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN PRISON

I, _____, hereby **voluntarily consent** to participation in the research study as described. I have read the information provided and I understand what is required of me. I am satisfied with my understanding of the study, its possible benefits, risks and alternatives. My participation is voluntary; I know that I can withdraw at any point and that this will have no negative consequences for me. I am of consenting age (18 and over). The researcher has answered all my questions. I have been offered copies of this consent form.

Signature of participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C – SWEAT Participant Consent Form

Media Consent Form

I give permission to From (company name)..... to interview me on behalf of SWEAT or Sisonke. I give permission for my **photographs**, **video footage** or **audio recording** taken of me during an **on record** interview²⁹.

I agree for the interview to be used in publication or television or online platform the journalist represent³⁰.

Should the material be republished in other media platforms with the knowledge of the company - **the journalist must notify SWEAT**³¹.

The interviewer will share the final production of the interview with SWEAT/Sisonke to use for advocacy and reports³².

No exclusions (can use real name, surname and photograph)	
Don't use my real name and surname	
Don't use my photograph	
Other (please specify):	

The terms of this agreement have been explained to me, and I understand them fully.

Agreed on this date: _____ in _____ (area/city)

Signed by interviewee:

Signed by journalist/interviewer:

Signed by SWEAT/Sisonke representative present during the interview:

Physical address: 19 Anson rd, Observatory, 7925, Cape Town, South Africa
Postal Address: P O Box 373, Woodstock, 7925, Cape Town, South Africa
Tel: +27 448 7875 **Fax:** +27 21 448 7857 **Email:** info@sweat.org.za **Web:** www.sweat.org.za **Help Line:** 0800 60 60 60
SMS sweat to 32759 for our contacts or Sms tips to 32759 to subscribe to our human rights tips service
NPO Number: 005-104

²⁹ This means the interviewee whose name is printed above agreed to be interviewed

³⁰ The interviewee agrees for the interview to be published

³¹ The journalist will try by all means to notify SWEAT should the interview be republished by other media outlets

³² The journalist or researcher must share the final production with SWEAT when published.

Appendix D – Interview Transcript Sample

Interview Transcript - #9 DANNY

JL: Okay so I have Danny here and we are starting the interview now. I've introduced myself, Jan. I've just explained informed consent and confidentiality, and you've signed the form, you give me permission to record right? (DANNY: yes) Okay in terms of language preference English or Afrikaans is fine? (DANNY: ja). The interview will take about an hour and I have explained the outline of the interview and ja so we're good to go. Okay so Danny just tell me a bit about yourself uhm where you come from uhh where you grew up...that kinda thing...how old you are, stuff about your family even you know...(DANNY: ja) your childhood and that kinda thing just for me to get to know you

DANNY: Okay I'm...I'm Danny* ...surname Jacobs*. I was born in Silvercrest* uhh raised...I was raised and went to school in Clarksville* uhm I'm actually...okay when I was a baby I was adopted so my sisters is my sisters obviously and my parents is my parents even though I was adopted I'm just as family to them...well I'm the only boy I have six sisters...parents has passed on (JL: hmm) uhm ek is laat lametjie soos hulle sê and uhh I left school at an early stage...standard five uhh I moved to (*Province*) when I was 14 and I went to go work there for my uncle in a motor spares shop uhh there...I was there for the first six years. I started using heroin...ended up on the streets and you know actually through my wrong choices that I made...hmm...uhm when..when...while I was there in (*Province*) I actually started with my first uhh sex work (snorts). It was a white guy...someone introduced me to him...actually a girl...she was also a sex worker...I slept with her and she...this guy actually wanted to have like a threesome kind of a thing and I'm never bottom I'm always on top so I had to make it clear to the guy that is why I actually started first off with my sex work in (place)

JL: Okay, sure. How old were you at the time?

DANNY: That time I was 22... okay...then I came back home ja to...uhm okay wait...I picked up...I was HIV positive...I only found out when I became positive in (place)...I didn't even know...someone told be I was losing weight (JL: hmm) and I had to go check it out 'cos I had a beer pens (JL: hmm) you know I was drinking a lot and then when I found out I am HIV positive I decided to come back home and then here at home there was a little bit of a how can I say stigma with my family...you know when I had to tell my sisters...its not all of them...some of them...like the one who is working here by the college on top by the medical college...she's the youngest one of the six sisters...she still helps me a lot you know...actually all of them do only the elder one and my nieces and them...they like 'you can't use the soap, you can't use this...you know...don't go in the kitchen' you know or you can't walk past their bedroom or whatever (JL: hmm) or 'don't sit on that couch' so you know you have to they have like stigma against me 'cos I'm HIV positive that's why I come to Dr Gordon's [at SWEAT] classes to have myself more educated on how it works and what it is and then I can go home to tell them but I don't feel like it 'cos they mos stubborn like I am (JL: hmm) you know we're all the same we stubborn (smiles) uhm ja...so then I

went to go stay in Picket Lane* and there I was...someone laid a charge against me for housebreak and theft which I didn't do because I was doing tile work at Pollsmoor prison for about two weeks and there you have to sign in, in the mornings and sign out about quarter-to-four and when I got home my sister say someone laid a charge against you for housebreak so you need to go to the police station and I stay right across from Picket Lane* police station, and when we went there the sergeant or superintendent said no they gonna ask me a few questions so...and they tell this one guy to put me down there in the cells just because for the mere fact that someone laid a charge against me and I'm already like...you know there's a docket against me...

[a momentary pause as someone enters the room]

JL: Okay so you were saying that someone laid a charge against you and they put you in a holding cell

DANNY: ja and when I appeared in court I was sentenced to prison for three years six months but I ended up going to prison at Pollsmoor. There I actually...in the...in the room where I was sleeping there was this one transgender and this transgender always used to go sleep by this guy in the back and now me I'm mos not a Number...they call us mos Franse (JL: hmm)...the next...I slept that night...the next morning this one who comes to me and he says where do I want to be, you know by the Sonop or Sonaf...me I don't understand not one of those fokken things but...(JL: and this is a Number that comes to you?) Ja, he's asking me like and so I said 'no I'm gonna sleep by the Sonafs', so when he said okay ja "is dji sterk bene met die ouense?" en so and and so...and I'm like 'why?' because "ek ga't jou ndoda maak" en al die and he's gonna make me now like them and he's gonna want to have sex with me you know. So I'm like 'okay' 'cos I check the guys the ouens are obviously...in prison they will fuck you and what what and then...jinne yorrr I'm gonna be fokked up...that's what I'm thinking now (JL: hmm) okay and I'm like okay let me maar...that's why I say 'ja okay it's fine' so he say "okay tonight when everyone is finished shower then you go shower last" and he will come after that and so I'm like 'ja okay, its fine'. During the course of the day there is some other guys also that's 28s they went school with my sister and now they remember me when I was small and "don't you have a sister?" and this and that...and talking...get to know each other and I'm like 'ja I remember you, you were also on the primary school when I was standard two and you were standard six' you know mos (JL: hmm) So now I started asking him now what this guy just told me he has to have sex with me to make me ndoda and I asked him now questions...so I tell him now 'no this one who come to me and tell me tonight when everyone finish shower then I must go shower and then he will come and he has to have sex with me to make me a 28' and this guy I'm talking to also belongs to the 28s and he was like "who said so?" and I say 'that guy standing there with the twak pilletjie, that guy there' and he say "are you sure?" I say 'ja'...he say "okay when is this gonna happen?" I say 'its gonna happen tonight' he say "okay now you just keep quiet I will call you just now" and then he went to my room...he don't sleep in my room but he sleep in the same section...and he went to my room and in my room there's this one guy that sleeps in the corner now he and this transgender is like having some kind of thingy there. So this guy went to that ou and they were talking...now this is my first time in prison now my heart is basically sitting in my arse already 'cos I didn't know

what is gonna happen and then (sp) it wasn't long then they called me in the room and I had to go sit there by the two of them and then as one explained to the other ou that okay he knows me but it doesn't mean because he knows me The Number...his broers in prison you know...so his broers come first nevermind what I say 'cos I'm a Frans because they have to keep that ou's word and what he say...now that ou can plant me gevaarlik and then they can make me in my moer (JL: hmm) okay and then I explained it to this ou and he said "okay are you sure?" and I say 'ja' he said "now when is this gonna take place?" I said 'no tonight when all of ya'll is finish in the shower then I must go shower and he will come and he's gonna fok me in my arse and I'm a 28, that is what he said and I said fine'...so they said 'okay leave him, you just do that tonight and then we will sort him out after that'...so I'm like 'ja but I'm not gonna let him fuck me you check I will rather fuck him I don't want him to get me like this' and they say "huh uh you mustn't talk like that about the ouense because you will get hiding"...now I don't know mos 'cos its my first time and he is just correctifying me and then the evening I went to go shower and this ou came and then when he came he got undressed...now there's two showers...I was showering this side and he this side (indicates left and right) there's curtains on all three sides so whoever comes in can't see and then he said...he got undressed and I was already basically finished to shower but the water was still running...and he get undressed and all that so I said 'yorr my broer you kak late and I'm already finished' (laughs) 'you check...I'm done in the shower and I'm gonna go fokken sleep now' and he say "naai kom man, wil djy dan nie 'n ndoda raak'ie?" while he was saying that another three walks in which is also you check they ask him "hey my broer what's happening here?" 'cos the time they come in they thought...they like...they gonna like catch him on the act you know (JL: hmm) but then I stopped it there already, but then I also took my chance with a transgender once in the shower...

JL: So what was the outcome of that whole situation?

DANNY: Uhh they actually moered him with the Viral slots [padlocks] they moered him in his moer...and they taught me also a lesson...they also did skop me in my moer because I like kind of agreed 'cos I also went to find out...so I didn't get so much of a hiding then I only got about three smacks but they moered him with Viral slots that his whole head was full of...it was bleeding in the hospital (JL: hmm)

JL: But you were made a Number then?

DANNY: No...I...I rather prefer to stay the way I am because the other even told me "you know what rather stay the way you are, no one can do you nothing. They can't force you, they can't do that"...so I check okay fine. But he say "whatever it is that you want to do...if its wrong in the other guys eyes you gonna get hiding". This transgender was like...he's like sleeping two beds away from me so he's like throwing me twak and giving me this and that, and he always smiles with me and stuff like that...now my real father was gay you check (JL: your biological?) my biological father and I sometimes think I may be have half of him and half of...and that means I'm also gay now gay men when I just look at them they soema smile I don't know what for...or why (laughs) that's how this transgender was looking at me

JL: So this is the 'transgender' that's kind of in a relationship with the other one in the corner right? (DANNY: in the corner ja)

DANNY: And he's like the dik ding there in that section. And I tell this transgender 'hey psst go there now' ...I needed to relieve myself (laughs) because I was already like what...going for about two weeks in there....I kind of like got used to most of the guys inside you know....the way they are and you know how to handle them so I had to...that's why I'm looking only pussy but so far I'm there and this one here...and I actually had sex with this transgender in the shower...we also got caught...someone like watching through the...correctional officer was watching through the window and he was having this stick...you know that they always (JL: the baton...the black one) ja...and he heard the shower water running and he was like who is showering this time and he's moving the curtain and he checked me (snorts) I'm busy with...this transgender...and he's like screaming "julle fokken donners" ...everyone now in the room they were watching tv and they jumped up and they came to the window and to the door to check there outside who's that screaming like that...from the other guys who's also not ouense...Franse...they were also in the toilet and they saw this transgender showering and I'm showering this side, but when he screamed and I did pull out but I didn't shower off I was getting done...and then this correctional officer was like shouting to this other guys "he's fucking this transgender here in the toilet" and then the other ouense came in there inside and I said "this ou is mad man, he's talking kak I don't know what he's talking about. Jy ga't doen jou werk daar buite jy moenie an'er mense" ...now they can mos see...this transgender when they ask him now 'is it so?'...his ou now... "ja because you don't want to" ...there I was again in kak...because they fokken moered me again. I ended up in hospital 'cos one of my ribs were broken and that's about it...that's about it...that's about the most injury that I had...and then after that I never like actually took a chance in prison doing sex work...but then after that...like you see like this guy that knew my sister...he's now out...he's also staying in (place)...now every weekend when I go home...most of the time...there's a couple of times when I walk past him or stuff like that and he will like... "hey daa's daai bunny-naaier" and like that or something like that...I don't look because everyone else is looking at him, who's he talking to and because I'm not looking he's making an arse out of himself, because I'm not replying to him (laughs) you understand (JL: hmm) now people walk past when he say that people is looking at him and who is he talking to but because I keep on walking they can't see who's he talking to so they must think he's befok in his head you know (JL: hmm) so that is what I do...not to let it get to me you know... 'cos I don't know maybe tomorrow like...when I was here in the city I also had a client in Oceanside*...we ended up there by Cloverhill* and uhh this police van came out there one night and they caught me and this guy...also got arrested for that...uhh and it was written on my file in my docket...even for that...okay they didn't keep me long there I was in for a weekend and Monday I came back out. While I was lying in there...in die selle...and because it was in my docket...you know the guys want to find out why are you there... "no I'm here for possession... no I'm here for armed robbery..." ... 'now I'm here because I had sex with that guy' and they were like "ohh so djy naai die mans mense" you know like...

JL: And how does it feel when you hear those kinds of comments?

DANNY: Well it...it kinda hurts but then I always correctify them... 'listen here... 'cos I have a son that stays in Place A* I have daughter here in Place B* so instead of me not letting non-support moering me for not having work I rather do that and earn an honest living instead of robbing someone and breaking into houses so that I can support them (JL: hmm) you know...that's why you do what you do...you rob and steal and then you like to end up here because this is like your second home...this is not my second home' ...you see (JL: hmm) it kinda hurts when people tells me that...it hurts...

JL: Why?

DANNY: Actually I'm a very soft kind of a person uhm when I can...I can remember when my sister's them used to shout at me and stuff like that I always used to cry...I don't like to fight. I'll try to avoid it but if I can't and I have to defend myself I can...then I can really injure someone (JL: hmm) like my sisters and them will always tell me and my brothers-in-law will say don't let him go out there to go fight now...you know my brother-in-law is maybe drunk and someone told him shit outside now he will come moan moan in the house and I will say 'what's wrong?' ... "no this guy here, here outside" ...now I will go out to see who is it and nah this guy I can make him in his moer and now I soema gou go there...now my sisters will always stop me and tell my brother-in-law "just go get him there" because I will maybe hurt that person like that. Even here...you know Queens Hospital* (JL: hmm) they were mos breaking down there at Queens*...I think it was 2011, 2012...me and my one friend and his girlfriend we went there to go steal some copper wire and I (snorts) I sent him (snorts)...he must take off all the brass slots from the doors and cupboards...two rooms away from me and I tell his girlfriend listen here you must look out this window out to the square and see when the securities is coming around that corner there and while he's moering the brass off there I was having sex with his girlfriend (laughs) and when he came and he caught us...okay he was pissed at me for that so I'm like it wasn't me it was she 'cos she say you don't want to give her and she asked me to sort her out and I did it mos and you must sort her out and it won't happen...and he was okay...but even him even I did it with him...you know 'cos there was a time when I was...I didn't know I could get heroin here in Cape Town when I came from (*Province*) and then...he knew you can get it in town and I was like...one day I was like kak sick you know my sisters didn't want to give me money and stuff like that and I didn't tell him I was using heroin I told him I got the flu... a cold you know...this guy actually said okay now if you gonna give me a blowjob then I'll give you a 100 [Rand] and I'm like what the fuck I need that 100 bucks 'cos then I can buy five...and then I did it with him...and that same girl that I was having sex with while he was moering the brass off...she came in the house and she caught me sucking him (snorts)...and you know now...I didn't see her now for a long time when I go home but after that also she kinda like spread the news in the area...but the people don't look at me or like how can I say...call me like or call names or something like that but its like I can feel it 'cos when I walk past them they look at me they look at me with a other...kak gedagtes you check like that (JL: hmm) but I'm also not gonna correct...try to correctify them on that 'cos that is what I do you know...they always ask me "why you don't come home? why don't you stay at home?" and I say 'no, I don't want to because I prefer better to be out there' because like now I'm trying to get into a shelter. I was

staying in Woodburn* shelter they even put me out there because there was a guy from America a 74 year old man, he was grey...greyer than father Christmas... and he...he's also like a bisexual and he actually enjoyed sucking me off and so...and I even...like...he used to pay me a lot of money you know and and there was this one transgender...he used to come to SWEAT also, his name is Johnny*, and Johnny* caught me and this guy...he came into the toilet and he actually came to come tik there in the toilet but me and this buddy boy in the other toilet next door and he stand on the toilet and watch over the wall and he's checking this buddy sucking my dick (snorts) 'ek wil mos sê jy en die timer het 'n fokken storie aan' [Johnny*]...you know like that...and Johnny* also...Johnny* also wanted me to have sex with him you know and I never did and just because of that he went to go tell the manager of the shelter you know...I'm like 'you know its not the old man's fault its my fault you can rather put me out but don't put him out... you know... because he's not from here and all that and anything can happen to him... it was actually me forcing him you know...I actually threaten him, so I said if he's not gonna suck me off I'm gonna tell you [the shelter manager] and uhh you know he's having sex with the other younger guys here inside they gonna throw him out so he had no choice so he had to maa' do it so its not his fault its my fault' ...so then they put me out and he's still staying there uhh...

JL: What was that about, why did you choose to do that?

DANNY: Huh?

JL: Why did you choose to do that?

DANNY: Because he was actually a good guy...he was a good...I can't let them put a 74 year old guy out onto the street, especially not in Woodburn* that is so dangerous because he's not used to staying on the street...so I rather prefer to do that you know instead of them putting him out on the street you know. I still see him now and then...here in Greenwood*...he comes to one of his friends here and when he's finish visiting his friend...on Tuesdays the pensioners drive for free train...so he comes through and I get him on the station early in the morning and then he will go to his friend and then I go to SWEAT and when I'm finish here I go back to Greenwood* and I go get him and take him back to the station, but on the way also I disappear with him (smiles)...(JL: so he's a client?)...basically ja

JL: So I mean like...you know you've shared so much and I have a few questions...so how would identify your sexual orientation?

DANNY: I would say I'm a bisexual

JL: bisexual...do you have...so you're attracted to men and women (DANNY: ja) but earlier you said that you think you might be gay as well... (DANNY: laughs)... is that something that for you changes depending on the situation that you're in or do you identify as bisexual because you've had sex with both men and women?

DANNY: Ja I would say I...I describe myself as bisexual because I have sex with men and women uhm...

JL: Is there attraction to both?

DANNY: Hmm no not really...maybe just women ja...but uhh mostly women...men...when I had...I just do it its because I have to do it and because until I have my ID [identity document] sorted out...once I have my ID sorted I will obviously get me a real job (JL: okay) and I will try and minimize my male sex work you know but if I work for a place and my salary is not good enough and I still have to do this then I'll...then its one of those things I have to still keep on doing it (JL: sure) because at the end of the day you make more money with this then that (JL: hmm) ...working for someone

JL: Hmm...and how long have you been doing it now? So when you went to (Province)?

DANNY: Uhh I'd say I've been doing it now for 7 years

JL: 7...and so is it something that you think you will be able to leave?

DANNY: When I...ja it will be something I'll be able to...its something that I learned on...its not something I was born with you know so there must be a way of leaving it. I always say something that doesn't have a mother and a father you can leave it...you know...uhm jaa it will take some time maybe but I might...I will be able to do it

JL: Sure...and so what does it mean to be...for you...what does it mean to be a sex worker?

DANNY: (sp) What do you mean in terms of?

JL: What meaning do you attach to it? How do you see sex work, for yourself? How do you view yourself as a sex worker?

DANNY: I see it as...sex work I see as a good income alright...but because there is so much of stigma against it...to have it stigmatized is...yorr...its gonna take years years... its gonna take a moerse long time for the government to make it legal...for MSM [men who have sex with men] you know so (JL: hmm)...I don't think that's a lifetime option for me you know to do it but...as time goes on I just maa' have to do it to support myself and my two children that I have

JL: I think a better way then to put that question is - how does it feel to be a sex worker?

DANNY: Uhhh...yorr...it it all depends sometimes say like for instance if I'm with that guy that 74 year old guy then...how can I say then for me it always feels ni-...it feels lekker to be with him you know because he's willing and all that you know...he's not uhh...there was a few other clients that I sit vas with you know...some of them want to have sex without a condom then I have to disclose to them about the HIV status that I have now I have to come with...think fast you know about how I'm gonna convince this guy to have sex with a condom you know then I say 'did you ever think of testing yourself?' then he'd say "no, why do you wanna ask me something like that?" ... 'I'm just asking because I was thinking of having myself tested' ...then he will maybe...I just hope he'd say "okay I guess I have to tell you" ...like three guys told me already they are positive so I'm like 'oj is it...' like I didn't know you know (JL: hmm)...but I knew because I also sometime have sex without a condom but I'm just feeling...gooing there by them when he said no he don't want to and why... then I just say 'no cos I'm just thinking of being safe' (JL: hmm) "oh okay"...so then I thought to myself okay

then maybe you are also HIV positive. He didn't tell it to me in so many words...I'm still not gonna tell him so I need to gooi there by him another thing there to get it out of him (JL: hmm) 'think of testing yourself' or 'did you go test yourself?' or whatever... 'yes or no?' "ja" [client] 'and then, what was the outcome? Negative or positive?' and he's like "ja okay I'm positive" and so I say 'now why are you scared to tell me? You must tell me then I know because I'm also positive but that doesn't mean that you are and I am is that we can have sex without a condom because I'm undetectable and you are...' so you see (laughs) I have to disclose to them to do that also I have to like also bring it up in conversation or maybe gooiing, making a joke or something like that just to get an answer out of people (JL: hmm) to disclose to them myself. Like this old man, he's negative so he also wanted to like suck me off without a condom so I'm like "no no no, you know what it doesn't taste lekker like that. You know what, I have these flavoured condoms here so which flavour do you want?" ...so he don't know about things like that (laughs) (JL: hmm) so I'm like "do you want to eat a banana?" ... 'ja maybe, I know you're always right so let me try this one' [old man]. So after that he likes it so now I always go to [the clinic] to fetch the flavoured ones...you know I keep it (laughs) so that when I meet up with him on Tuesdays I have different flavours (JL: hmm)...but sex work...ja...I'm still gonna do it though. I'm not saying I'm gonna stop it immediately...still gonna do sex work but uhm I don't think its gonna be forever you know

JL: Ja...how much of a part of your life is it?

DANNY: I'd say if I must think of uhh 100 percent I would say 75 percent

JL: So quite a big part then?

DANNY: (laughs) ja, because I have twelve regular clients that I...that I have to like you know...some of them... 'cos there comes sometimes two in a day or maybe three like that...but I always tell the third one "hey I'm booked full" you see or whatever because I always go to the internet shop to jump on my email and that is how I communicate with them (JL: sure) because the cell phones always get stolen you know and stuff like that...and because I'm also doing heroin it also get...I'll fokken take it and go sell it so I rather go to the internet shop, pay a R10, sit there for an hour (JL: hmm) you check (JL: ja)

JL: And then...you mentioned that you're a father also, so what does it feel like being a father and a sex worker? Your family doesn't know that you're a sex worker?

DANNY: No my sisters doesn't know

JL: And your children?

DANNY: My children don't know also...okay uhm so...

JL: So how does it feel...because you said you know that a big part of doing sex work is that you support your children (DANNY: I support them ja) and so what's it like being a father...or a sex worker who is a father?

DANNY: Well...uhm...I'm...how can I say...I'm someone...I can always fit in, so when I'm with my children I can be a father and when I'm not with them and I'm on my own on the street I have to do my sex work to support them uhm there was a time when my son asked me once "daddy where do you work?" ... 'uhh (JL:

what did you say?) “No, I’m working here by Hilton*, I’m a hoister driver” you know and stuff like that. It’s actually not good lying to them but I don’t think it’s the time to tell him and even if I have to tell him and he’s a little bit older then what’s he gonna think of me then (JL: hmm) so it kinda like gets to me sometimes especially when I...mostly when I’m alone...when do I tell them? What’ll happen if I tell them? you know even with my sisters ‘n them...so I tell my youngest sister and she spread the news to the other you know...because if I’m definitely going to tell my eldest sister then she’s gonna jump through the fucken roof (JL: ja) she’s obviously gonna tell the others and the way she’s gonna bring it to them...shes gonna bring it in a worse way you know...the way you can describe...make it worser...so I don’t think I should disclose to them you know (JL: hmm) I think I should keep it myself...ja my kids I will disclose to them but not now maybe when they a little bit older

JL: Ja...and what would be your reason for explaining to them?

DANNY: What *would* be my reason?

JL: Hmm well even why do you want to disclose to them at some point in time?

DANNY: You know how is kids when they grow up, they become naughty, always catch up shit and get up to shit...right it will come to that stage no doubt about that unless you bring them up properly uhh okay (laughs)...because I’m not with them most of the time I think maybe because of that...I never grew up with my biological father and my birth mother who I don’t know who she is or what she look like...I think what I’m doing to my children is exactly what my parents did with me...biological parents...and I *don’t* want that to happen with my children but unfortunately the predicament that I’m in you know...that’s why I’m trying to get back into a shelter so that I can get off this heroin thing you know ‘cos it will be quicker to get to a rehab through the relationship with them...so...ja...

JL: I think you answered quite a lot of my questions I was gonna ask you know...did prison in any way shape uhm your entry into sex work? But you had already been a sex worker before you entered into prison. So then was there any further influence from that time in prison that kind of affected your (DANNY: sex work?) following on with sex work, or even being in prison and uhm engaging with sex in prison?

DANNY: Uhm ja if I should get locked up again and end up in prison most definitely no I won’t do sex work there because its not a good thing, because uhh inside uhh especially for you that is not a Number...even if you are a Number (p) ja...and from what I experienced in one prison no I didn’t gain anything from there but for me to carry on with sex work is just...is like...maybe I have a choice but I just don’t want to know it because I think it’s a quicker way of making money...there’s what...6000 and odd gay men in South Africa especially here in the Western Cape mostly uhm ja so I think MSM sex work here is always available seeing as the unemployment is so (grunts)...(JL: high?)...ja

JL: And when you say sex work in prison, what do you mean by that?

DANNY: To do sex work in prison is totally out of the question

JL: Okay, but is it the same like sex work on the street?

DANNY: No totally not

JL: So how is it different?

DANNY: More risky (JL: hmm) So more kind of a risky thing 'cos just...anyone can see you

JL: But is it the same like in terms of the transaction, in terms of payment, you know in terms of advertising is there a client setup...that kinda thing you know when you say sex work in prison is it then exactly the same (DANNY: like outside) ja like what sex work is like outside, or how is it different then?

DANNY: No, you won't have clientele there inside uhm ja outside you get paid for your sex work...inside you also get paid but you get paid with tobacco, sugar or whatever and stuff like that...uhm ja there is...

JL: So it's not like monetary transactions?

DANNY: Ja, but mostly the transgender they will...I don't know how's it there for them inside but for us as men it's a bit difficult instead of the transgender...because you have this dik ding sleeping here in this section now he can do whatever he want to but you can't (JL: hmm) you understand? (JL: hmm). They want to jump on your arse and moer you to fokken hospital but because he's a dik ding you can't do him fokol but he can do whatever he wants to but he doesn't do it for the benefit what you doing it for...you know...so...I don't think it's a good idea for MSM to have uhh...to do sex work in prison

JL: Okay, and when you say MSM, what do you mean by that?

DANNY: Its men sleeping with men

JL: Okay, versus men who are sex workers? So what's the difference in your understanding?

DANNY: Uhh there's no difference, its men sleeping with men and men having sex with men. If a guy is a transgender or whatever and because I'm a bisexual I do it with men and women but only if he wants to...I'm not gonna like force myself onto that...like I said maybe walking in another section in prison I see another transgender other than the one that's sleeping in my section... I don't know they soema start smiling with me and its always like that...you know maybe have a conversation for fun or that...see when we gonna get exercise tomorrow then I know already...but in prison, once you enter prison...okay yorr everything...your privacy gets taken away so everyone knows everything about you, everyone sees you wherever you go so you must be very very (snorts) alert if you want to have sex there inside...so inside and outside are totally different because here you can have privacy, inside it gets taken away (JL: hmm). Here you can still hide yourself, there you can't. Here you can make money, there you can't (JL: hmm)... so that's the thing

JL: So you would say that inside - like you say - there isn't really freedom to explore (DANNY: sex work, ja)...sex work right...that's interesting. Okay, I'm just trying to see if there's anything that I missed, but you covered quite a lot (DANNY: laughs). I think that's it from my side, is there anything else that you want to share?

DANNY: Uhh no not now...not at this moment but maybe it will come to me at a later stage.

JL: Oh there was actually one question that I was thinking of. So you were talking about dealing with so much stigma...stigma of being a sex worker, stigma of...you know like the guy that said 'bunny' and that kinda thing, stigma because of your HIV status from you family even, so stigma in all circles...so how do you deal with that on a day to day? Living with all this stigma, what does it do to you?

DANNY: What I told is I...well...if I think about it, it kinda like hurts me...it freaks me out but what I try to do is I try to block it out of my mind...not to...otherwise its gonna get me down, its not gonna make me want to get where I want to get or to achieve or to accomplish what I want to you know so...they getting whatever they want to I just don't give a shit (snorts) (JL: hmm)

JL: And how do you block?

DANNY: Huh?

JL: How do you block?

DANNY: I keep myself occupied and busy with something else you know...I go sit by the internet or the library, check my emails or chat with my clients over the internet you know and stuff like that...not thinking of that...especially like weekends when I go home I only go to certain sisters you know not to the other ones that is like having stigma against me (JL: hmm) but when its someone's birthday and all of us is like now *have* to be there...the younger one will always say 'its that one's birthday everyone is gonna be there they say you must come'... 'okay ja I will come' but then I don't go or if I go I will just pop in and soema weer out...you know I won't sit there and soema have a conversation with them but then when the party is over and everyone is going home and tomorrow I go there to that one and sit there and talk because they don't have...they don't judge me or anything like that (JL: hmm) you know because they the ones that I at least can say 'you know if I use that soap I can't give you HIV' you understand or 'if I use the toilet I can't give you HIV, you must have sex or intercourse with me, or I must give you 20litres of my sputum just to...uhh like affect you so I don't know why the hell are you people scared'. I'm not gonna like risk...have any risk factors like if I see I'm bleeding walk here all here in between you people...I'm obviously gonna stop that bleeding (JL: hmm) you know I won't expose myself to you people...oh okay so some of them understand me...the elder one is the only one that...(JL: really doesn't ja)...so for me to handle that I have to maa' block it out...keep myself busy not thinking them...even this people here in the street...if someone is walking like I said and maybe call me names or whatever...I just don't look at them or I just don't reply to them because by me not replying to him pisses him more off number one...number two is making an arse out of him because everyone else will be looking at him like who is he talking to 'cos there's no one retaliating to him (JL: hmm), no one looking at him like saying "yorr my bru why do you have to say something like that, there's people walking toward the station and you talking to this guy but that guy is not even talking to you so why the fuck are you talking to?"...(JL: hmm, so like turning back on him)...you understand so (snorts) I like...whatever is behind me is behind me, whatever comes in front I have to face...so that's (laughs)

JL: Okay. Thank you. Thanks a lot for your time

DANNY: Alright