CONTESTING POLICE GOVERNANCE: RESPECT, AUTHORITY AND BELONGING IN ORGANISED VIOLENT GANGS IN CAPE TOWN

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ABSTRACT
Gangs establish their own governance arrangements and in so doing, contest the governance processes of the police. Gangs also govern themselves and the communities in which they live and contest police governance through their own governance practices. This research describes the types of governance practiced by armed and violent gangs, the impact on the manner in which they are policed and how this impacts on and regulates the police. This article also examines the gang problem through a nodal governance lens.

Keywords: contested governance, gang culture, nodal governance, gang institutional culture

INTRODUCTION
This article is a discussion on how the governance arrangements impact on the way the gangs conduct their activities, relate to the police and how this affects the order that is maintained in communities within which gangs operate.

The police in post-apartheid South Africa continue to play a direct role in governing communities (Altbeker, 2007: 138) by means of a variety of policing operations, approaches and methodologies. Since 1994, the police have launched a variety of operations aimed at rooting out gangs on the Cape Flats under operation names such as Gangbust, Crackdown, Good Hope, Sethunya, Recoil, and Saladin. None have succeeded in rooting out gangs in these geographic areas. Repeated police operations against criminals, and gangsters in particular, might create perceptions among members of the police and the public that the police are ‘in control’ of ‘the community’ as far as crime is concerned. (The term ‘community’ as used here does not refer to a heterogeneous group, but to a geographical space, known as the Cape Flats (cf an explanation of the genesis of the Cape Flats Western, 1981)). The researcher wants to dispel that notion by examining the relationship between the Cape Flats gang institutional culture and the policing of these gangs, and how the two regulate each other. By applying the theories of Foucault (1977) and Latour (2005) to the interaction between the South African police and the Cape Flats gangs, the research reveals that in this context too the concepts of control and power are both complex and contingent.

The term ‘governance’ has been challenged by a variety of scholars (Bayley & Shearing, 2001: 2) who have been influenced by the thinking of theorists such as Foucault (1977) and Latour (2005). Sheridan (1980: 184) summarises Foucault’s (1977) theory by stating that power is everywhere, not because it is exercised everywhere, but because it comes from everywhere. Latour (2005) makes a similar point when he argues that political power should not be seen as arising from a single source, but rather as having many sources.

This understanding of power was developed within the domain of security governance, through the concept of ‘nodal governance’ (Burris, Drahos & Shearing, 2004: 5). In this conception of governance – governance being understood as actions intended to shape the flow of events – power is seen as being exercised by all sites or ‘nodes’ that have governance capacity.

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RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY
The researcher used the concept of governance to research the relations between the gangs, the police, and the community on the Cape Flats. Looked through a ‘nodal governance’ lens, a very different understanding of these relationships emerges, which fundamentally challenges established understandings of these relationships. This research wanted to establish how the gangs of the Cape Flats govern themselves; how the gangs police themselves and the communities within which they are situated and how the gangs and police influence and regulate each other.

After presenting the findings with respect to each of these questions, the implications of these findings with the findings of others are discussed. This may contribute to understanding the complexities and nuances of gang governance and their contestation of police governance, thus contributing to the literature that seeks to understand the relationships between gangs and policing.

THEORETICAL APPROACH
According to Lewis (2011), it is common knowledge that gangs on the Cape Flats are involved in armed violence (Lewis, 2011: 1). Every violent gang fight is an opportunity to contest the authority of the police and, in so doing, establish a particular gang’s own form of governance in a community. Indeed, looking at the structure and hierarchy of both gangs and police there are similarities in the manner in which they establish their respective forms of governance: both use force and fear, uniforms and discipline, and one could argue that both are influenced by the other’s institutional culture. Gangs influence and regulate the behaviour of the police when they interface. By regulate, is meant that the behaviour, actions and mentalities of the police are influenced and affected by the attitudes, mentalities and actions of the gangs. This understanding of regulation is illustrated by Biradavolu, Burris, George, Jena and Blankenship (2008: 6), in their research on sex workers in India. They described how sex workers, with the assistance of an NGO, succeeded in regulating the behaviour of the police. As a result of the advocacy work of the NGO in support of the sex workers, the behaviour, approach and methods of the police, when dealing with sex workers, subsequently changed, and in turn, the sex workers started to change their attitudes and behaviour towards the police.

Black (2002: 2) states that we should get used to the idea that regulation is ‘de-centered’ from the state. Regulation can and should include categories other than state regulation, because the state is not the only ‘node’ of governance. As Burris, Kempa and Shearing (2008: 3) point out:

Once it was dogma that our collective world was divided into two fundamentally different spheres: the public sphere which was the realm of governance, and the private sphere - the realm of the governed. This crucial distinction has eroded. States do not enjoy the monopoly on governance, and themselves are often governed by non-state actors.

Manuel Castells (2000: 19) reiterates that networks are a useful way of looking at forms of governance, because they dissolve traditional centres of power and hierarchies:

Networks dissolve centres, they disorganize hierarchy, and make materially impossible the exercise of hierarchical power without processing instructions in the network, according to the network’s morphological rules.
From this theoretical viewpoint, one could argue that gangs constitute a network in communities and that these networks are constantly contesting and influencing one another, as well as other networks that operate within the community. For instance, during the period of this research, a state of undeclared war existed between the gangs of the Cape Flats, the police, and a vigilante group called People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) (Dixon & Johns, 2001: 49).

If one therefore uses the nodal governance theory and approach proposed by Burris, Drahos and Shearing (2005) as a framework to analyse the interaction between gangs and police, it becomes clear that the network of gangs constitute a node of power and governance contesting other nodes of power and governance within the same geographic space. Burris, Drahos and Shearing (2005: 5) propose the nodal governance model as a tool for analysing power and governance arrangements between nodes and networks. According to Burris, Drahos and Shearing (2005: 37), nodes have four essential characteristics:

1. A way of thinking (mentali\(\text{t}\)\(\text{t}\)\(\text{i}\)\(\text{t}\)\(\text{s}\)) about the issues that the node has emerged to govern;
2. A set of methods (technologies) for exerting influence over the course of events;
3. Resources to support the operation of the node and the exertion of influence; and
4. A structure that enables the directed mobilization of resources, mentalities and technologies over time (institutions).

The mentalities, technologies, resources and institutions employed by the gangs, for instance inter- and intra-gang violence, influence policing on the Cape Flats and therefore the nodal governance lens will be used to systematically answer the research questions, as posed earlier in this article.

**METHODOLOGY**

Observations in this article are drawn from a larger research project in which the researcher conducted 20 separate interviews with gang leaders, former police planners and commissioners, community-based organisation leaders, and former members of the executive committees (MECs) of the Western Cape Government. The interview participants were chosen because of their direct involvement either in responding to gang violence, or being part of gang violence, over the period 1996 to 2006.

The leadership of the bigger, violent, organised gangs on the Cape Flats (in areas such as Mitchell’s Plain, Manenberg, Ottery and Lavender Hill) were selected as participants because their gangs were directly involved in the violence on the Cape Flats during the research period, as well as those police commissioners and police planners involved in responding to and planning operations against the gangs during that period. The researcher also selected only those community leaders who, between 1996 and 2006, mobilised the community against the gangs. The MECs were chosen because they occupied the political posts at the time of the conflict.

The interviews were conducted over the period of a year, between 2008 and 2009. The duration of each interview was one hour, and the results were transcribed and analysed. The interviews took place in some of the mentioned areas and locations on the Cape Flats.
For the purpose of this research, the researcher has also drawn on own past experiences with the gangs of the Cape Flats. The researcher’s extensive experience during the last nineteen years of conducting mediation sessions with gangsters has also enabled him to make observations about their behaviour, philosophies, mentalities and approaches. These mediation sessions, as well as informal interviews and social encounters with gangsters, provided valuable insights into the governance of gangs. In addition, the researcher also conducted mediations between the gangs, vigilantes and the police during that time, often at the behest of community police forums.

The formal interviews were not always successful. Some gang leaders refused to be interviewed, either because there were still charges pending against them and it would be dangerous to speak, or because they thought that the interview would compromise their own safety. This notwithstanding, the ethics of the research process gave participants the opportunity to refuse an interview, leave the interview at any point, and allowed for anonymity. This encouraged some participants, especially the police officers that were interviewed, carte blanche to speak their minds.

HOW DO THE ESTABLISHED GANGS OF THE CAPE FLATS GOVERN THEMSELVES?
In analysing gang governance in Cape Town, an important starting point was the work on gangs of early researchers such as Pinnock (1984), Schärf (1990), Kinnes (1995, 2000) Salo (2005) and Standing (2006) who wrote about gangs in Cape Town. Don Pinnock (1984) conducted ethnographic research on the Mongrels gang in Cape Town during the early 1980s. This research was steeped in the tradition of the early Chicago theorists (see, for instance Whyte (1943) and Thrasher (1927)). Pinnock (1984) utilised the perspective of the Mongrels gang to tell the story of the formation and structuring of the different types of gangs in Cape Town. The forced removals of coloured people (James, Caliguire & Cullinan, 1996; Field, 2001) from the inner city areas by the Nationalist government and the social exclusion (Erasmus, 2001) of coloured and black people during apartheid, is central to understanding how social control by the police manifested itself in South Africa. Pinnock (1984: 81) argues that the police played a role in urban control. Wilfried Schärf (1990) built on Pinnock’s work by examining the reasons for the resurgence of street gangs in the 1980s, as well as the responses of the community to them.

Gangs produce and reproduce their own space. Philippe Bourgois (2003:65) commented on the production of space through his ground breaking ethnographic study to illustrate how crack drug gangs produce their space and how they were policed in East Harlem, New York in the mid-1980s. He explored the issues of how the gang govern the barrio (community) through the selling of crack, looking at other equally important and sensitive issues of social marginalisation, segregation, racism and poverty and the reaction of the urban youth to them. His study on the life of his prime character, Primo, explored the question of how the unintended consequences of the activities of a local crack gang govern community spaces through the selling of crack cocaine.

Since this early body of research, much has changed. Firstly, the extent to which gangs control and exert influence over socially marginalised sections of communities across the Cape Flats has deepened. The gangs have been able to extend their control over marginalised areas to the point that nothing happens in such communities without the knowledge of the gangs. Moreover, the manner in which gangs control the Cape Flats communities has taken on governance overtones. One of the gangsters interviewed boldly asserted: “The gangsters
were governing the township. They were running the welfare system. If you don’t have rent, you go to the drug dealer” (BM, 8 July 2008).

And, as is evident from the statement of a former police commissioner who was interviewed, the police are aware of this:

The one thing is that the gang phenomenon has got its roots in the social circumstances of the people. They first vested themselves in a particular community, especially the poor communities. They are seen as the providers, the alternative to government (ML, 4 August 2008).

Secondly, Cape Town gangs have undergone a transformation. The nature and extent of gangs are changing (Kinnes, 2000: 7). Since the political transformation in South Africa, there has been a greater level of social organisation amongst the gangs. The changing nature of gang structures influences police responses and mentalities in policing gangs.

The gang typologies identified by Pinnock in 1984 were eclipsed by new street organisations that blurred the former neat categories he once identified. Criminal syndicates had grown in number in post-apartheid South Africa, especially as a result of the growth in the drug economy. Indeed, Pinnock (1984) identified four major gang typologies: the street or defence gang, the family mafia, the syndicates and the prison gangs. The reformatory gangs had long since died out. Pillay (2002: 44) contests Pinnock’s structural formulation and suggests:

Conventional explanations of gangsterism in the Western Cape tend to be reductionist, essentialist and descriptive. They underplay the role and construction of cultural symbols and meanings and the relationship between the local and the global in gang identity formation.

Working with the gangs has indicated that this transformation commenced during the political transition in South Africa (Kinnes, 1995, 1996, 2000 & 2009). As the new democratic state struggled to assert itself, the bigger, more established gangs quickly underwent major changes. This process is still ongoing. Schärf and Vale (2006: 33), note that as the state prepared legislation to deal with asset forfeiture, gangs began to decentralise their activities. They soon started to set up areas of specialisation for different leaders and they started to take responsibility for different aspects of criminality, such as extorting money from taxi drivers, supplying firearms and drugs, extortion of nightclub owners, running and managing nightclubs and sex workers and so forth. The data shows that gang leaders prefer to see themselves as ‘business people’ rather than gangsters (Interviews with WM on 16 October 2009, PD on 17 July 2007).

Research by Schärf and Vale (1996), Kinnes (2000) and Irish-Qhobosheane (2007) all found that gangs in Cape Town have become more organised. Standing (2006: 71) contests this view, arguing that gangs in Cape Town are not organised, except at the leadership level. It is, however, the researcher’s opinion that Standing (2006) overlooked the duality of gang organisation as there is both informality and formality of organisation. The nature of decision-making, the planning and arrangements of gangs appear to be informal to the outsider. To the insider, it is alongside this informality that the formal organisation occurs. It is often difficult for outsiders to ascertain which members of a community are gang members, how they operate and the process by which they govern themselves and the community in which they are based. As Standing (2006: 104) concedes that: “[t]o outsiders it is not always clear who is a ‘real gangster’ and who is not.”
To understand how this duality of organisation plays itself out, an understanding of three critical elements of gang culture is required: ‘belonging’, ‘respect’ and ‘power/authority’. ‘Respect’ and ‘respectability’ in the gender relations of the organised violent gangs on the Cape Flats intersect and give rise to different sources of power in such gangs.

**Belonging and new recruits**  
Knott, Shapiro and Theron (1990: 2) state that the need for social acceptance is the result of the role that families of gangsters play when they reject them. In order to satisfy this need, they are drawn to each other and find a sense of belonging in the solidarity of other gang members. Young people who experience challenges communicating with their families and tend to deviate, are often looking for people who ‘understand’ them. Gang leaders generally do not discriminate against anyone that could potentially be an asset to the gang. They are welcoming and make a point of demonstrating the necessary empathy, patience, understanding and mentorship towards the young potential new recruits. It is this ‘close’ style that persuades the young person to remain in the company of gang members, and to eventually become a gang member. Belonging is something that is not taken for granted and in exchange, loyalty is expected. Not only is loyalty expected from the leadership, the new recruit immediately understands what is expected of him and the reasons for it. Young people on the Cape Flats are forced to join gangs for their own safety. When young people who are not gang members associate with neighbours or friends who belong to gangs, the former are often considered as members of that gang by rival gang members (Kinnes: 2012 (forthcoming)).

A new gang member knows that he belongs to the gang when he is privy to acts or events, which by virtue of his presence at the scene of the crime, incriminates him and therefore binds him to the future of the gang. Furthermore, a common recruitment method is to request a young person to accompany a friend (who is already an initiated gang member) on an errand. The new recruit is not aware that the initiated gang member could have been given the instruction to rob, kill, maim or injure a member of a rival gang. The new recruit is driven with the initiated gang member who then commits a drive by shooting on another gang member (Valdez, 2003: 27) By virtue of the fact that the new recruit is in the vehicle, is a witness to the action and thus faces possible incrimination; he is unable to extricate himself from the gang. Any attempt to do so will have violent consequences for him and his family. In the process, he also becomes a legitimate target for the opposition gang. He now belongs to the gang. On the other hand, young men living in the vicinity of a gang often join it through a sense of social solidarity (Green & Pranis, 2007), particularly after being caught and roughed up by police during operations against the gangs, despite being an innocent bystander.

Once the need for ‘belonging’ has been satisfied through joining a gang, ‘belonging’ assumes new meanings. It has both benefits such as acceptance and unconditional protection, and drawbacks, such as a lack of autonomy to do little outside of the gang and inevitably a criminal record.

**Respect**  
Knott, Shapiro and Theron (1990) and Pinnock(1997) argue that there are many reasons why young people make cost-benefit decisions to join gangs, but that a key reason is that young people find a sense of self-respect in gangs that they are not afforded in their own families and communities. Howell (2010: 4) states that young people join gangs because it meets their social needs. Gang members receive the necessary recognition and respect from their fellow...
gang members. Respect is a commodity that has real currency in a gang and is also a means to affirm the individual. Gang identity is affirmed, recognised and valued when potential gang members demonstrate their individual ability to dispense violence (Parker Lewis, 2006: 27). The more violent and ruthless, the more respect he earns. However, the same ability to dispense violence is also celebrated when the same gang member demonstrates respect towards other gang members. Respect is central to the definition of a loyal gang member.

Respect and respectability

Conversely, in the interaction with community members and in particular older people and older women (Salo, 2005: 4), gang members have to show a different level of respect. The meanings and underpinnings of this respect are different from that of the respect shown to gang members. Respect shown to gang members is about fear while the respect shown to community elders is about acknowledgement of their role and power. From the research findings, however, respect for community elders may be on the decline: One gang leader stated that the older gangsters respected their community, said that:

[i]In previous years, if we had a gang fight and an older woman would pass by, we would stop and allow her to pass. Thereafter we would continue to shoot at each other. Now they shoot, they kill the older women. We had respect for our community (PD, 17 July 2008).

Salo (2005: 6) alleges that masculinity and gangs must be seen within the context of men and gangs relations with women. In her seminal study on gender relations in Manenberg, Salo (2005) argues that it is older women who mediate the concept of respectability - what she calls ‘ordentlikheid’. According to Salo, younger girls are mentored by their mothers (who tolerate gangsters because they know the consequences of their actions) and mediate notions of meaning and respectability. Steffen Jensen (2008: 27), in his study of gangs in Heideveld, looks at the converse of gender and respectability by arguing that the apartheid authorities were able to emasculate young men on the Cape Flats through a series of control measures. The labelling of a young man as a ‘skollie’ was meant to deny him dignity and power. Jensen (2008: 168) notes:

State officials and township residents were on a constant lookout for signs of the ‘skollie’, leaving men little room in which to manoeuvre. Parallel with this, the everyday exigencies on the streets of the city, the violence and the poverty compelled many men to engage in practices that were associated with the gang and the criminal.

The older women set the parameters for respectability and interfacing with government by mediating the social grant system, but it is the younger women who are attracted to the power of the gang (Kinnes: 2012-forthcoming). Although Salo (2005) and Jensen (2008) go to great lengths to describe the roles women play in the communities, they stop short on commenting on the sensitive issue of the role of women in gangs. In this regard, it should be noted that women have a very marginal role when it comes to the more organised gangs on the Cape Flats. Their role is marginal despite their significant role in shaping 'ordentlikheid' in the community. This is not because they choose the peripheral role, but because gang leaders do not provide the space and opportunity for them to play another role. In his entire work on gang mediation, the researcher has yet to come across a female leader of one of the organised violent gangs on the Cape Flats.
Authority and power
Authority in a gang is derived from an innate ability to provide leadership in times of crisis. On the streets of the Cape Flats, many young people are confronted with the daily crisis of survival. Invariably such people look for shortcuts, handouts and an easier route for survival. Such a scenario presents gang leaders with opportunities to establish themselves as authorities in communities. While not all situations are the same, it is when the helping hand, in the form of gang leaders, emerges that the crisis is temporarily solved for the young person. That solution is the gang. It is the gang leader with his perceived fearlessness, experience, suggestions, solutions and violence that captures the respect (and fear) of the youth. The sum total of which adds up to reputation, which in turn is the hard currency of the street gangs and is what provides the authority and power to the gang leader (Whyte, 1943). Respect and authority mutually reinforce one another as separate and distinct concepts. In this way, gang leaders are able to force obedience from the rank and file members of their own gang, and by dispensing violence and thus fear, they are able to maintain their social dominance over rival gangs and the community.

HOW GANGS POLICE THEIR OWN SPACE AND THE COMMUNITIES WITHIN WHICH THEY ARE SITUATED
Bayley and Shearing (2001: 5) point out that gangs play a role in policing their space.

Unfortunately, the economic interests active in constructing security are not always legal. In many parts of the world, criminal enterprises, such as crime syndicates and juvenile gangs, play a significant role in organizing security. They do so in their own interests, of course, and usually in direct opposition to government. But in so doing they govern security for the people among whom they live, becoming in some places the only effective police that exist.

Firstly, in order to protect their own interests, they set themselves up to protect ‘their turf’ from attempts by rival gangs to establish a basis from which to sell drugs. The more established, violent gangs, such as the American and Hard Livings place lookouts all over ‘their territory’, particularly in times of gang wars, who alert the leaders when rival gangsters entered ‘their space’. Attempts by opposing gangs to enter areas and spaces under the control of a particular gang, result in retribution attacks, often with fatal consequences. The boundaries of the spaces controlled by a particular gang appear invisible to the outsider. These could be a street or a landmark, such as a school or public library (Kinnes, 2012: forthcoming).

In the mediations that the researcher has been involved in, gang leaders would often say that life in their community requires self-imposed form of restriction, because their movements are limited. They referred to this as ‘living in a box’. (During work with members of the Hard Living gang, most used this phrase to describe their existence in Manenberg.) Gangs mete out justice to errant members of their own gang, while larger, more established gangs also police their space by mediating disputes among smaller gangs. Additionally, where gangs have such dominance and control over sections of their communities, they take on the role of the police by keeping the peace between residents and some residents keep the peace instead of going to the police. As Daniel Reed (1994: 161), a film producer who produced a documentary on the Hard Living gang recalls in his written work on the production of the documentary:
The lack of a credible police led to the emergence of gangsters' kangaroo tribunals (the equivalent of 'people's courts' in the Black townships). One morning in Manenberg the parents of a teenage boy came to Rashied (leader of the Hard Living gang) with a problem. They pointed out their son, tall, good-looking, about sixteen or seventeen. They said he had tried to rape his ten-year-old sister. If they called the police he would get a record, a few days in the cells, a few months in the 'formatory'. The parents said the boy must be punished so that he never did it again.

The boy was severely assaulted by the gang and they tried to break his arm as punishment (Reed, 1994: 161). Finally, gangs contest and often usurp the authority and governance role of the police where the opportunity presents itself through the structural dysfunctionality of the policing process, that is, where the police institution is too weak to perform its role.

Dual Power, later a Triad of Power, and claiming space

The inability of both the police and the state in the late 1980s and early 1990s to extend their hegemony over communities across the Cape Flats led to resistance on the part of the communities and provided an opportunity for gangs to occupy the space left by the illegitimacy of the police. The period between 1990 and 1993 was an ‘in-between moment’: the (Apartheid) state was too weak to govern in its own name and the anti-Apartheid resistance movement, the ANC, had yet to assume power (cf Pinnock, 1984; & Schärf, 1990).

In many local communities, and notably on the Cape Flats, a situation of dual power emerged. The police, as the public face of the Apartheid Government, were challenged by ever stronger communities, aware of their own power, not only to consult with the communities they policed, but to change the way in which they policed (Marks, 2005). As one police commander responsible for policing gangs, who was interviewed, remarked:

*It's almost a psychosis of that time that police officers...that we came from a culture of policing where it was not offensive and a violation of any human right structure for us to engage in violence with our suspects. Those were the difficult times in the political environment in our country where many police officers in the riot unit etc. were accustomed to violent actions. I still remember around 1996 or so, we had to sign the peace accord where we undertook not to use violence. That was a huge orientation process for us as if one day you can violence and the next day you can’t. It was almost an accepted method (HK, 9 July 2008).*

This situation of dual power allowed gangsters in some communities to move into the governance vacuum. In 1993 there was a surge of gang violence on the Cape Flats. The South African Police Force Internal Stability Unit (Manenberg) Force report (1994: 2), reporting on operation Gang Bust in the communities of Manenberg and Philippi, provides the following arrest statistics for the three-month period June to August 1994:

- Murder: 11
- Assaults: 49
- Possession of unlicensed firearms: 54
- Homes searched: 149
- People searched: 2 716
- Firearms confiscated: 27
- Homemade firearms confiscated: 7
In 1995, the gang war continued and between January and July of that year, there were 2026 gang fights in eleven areas, resulting in 89 deaths. Between 1 October 1994 and 30 March 1995, in the Manenberg area alone, there were 44 murders committed of which 28 (63%) were gang-related. Similarly, in Bishop Lavis for the same period, 49 murders took place of which 25 (51%) were gang related. In 1998, there were 353 gang related shootings on the Cape Flats (Kinnes, 1996: 17).

The gang violence during this period was about gangs claiming space and preparing for their governance of communities, which they anticipated occurring immediately after the first democratic elections in 1994 (Kinnes, 2000). It could be argued that gangs have become the ‘accidental governors’ in certain communities on the Cape Flats. This is so because gangs moved into the vacuum left by the police when everything they did was challenged by community police forums during the early years if its establishment. The net result, however, was that the police were not able to solve the problem of gangsterism on the Cape Flats. During one of the interviews with a gang leader, it became clear that the authority of the government was not recognised in Manenberg. He said the following:

The government cannot stop gangsterism because people won’t give up their power. They won’t do this. They will not have the authority in Manenberg (HJ, 8 July 2008).

In 1997, this duality of power took on a complexity, not from the contestation for governance between the police and the gangs, but by the emergence of a community group calling themselves People against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD). It is debatable whether this group qualifies as vigilantism (Dixon & Johns, 2001: 49), but that they made up a third and significant node of power is irrefutable.

Boshoff (2001: 25) indicates that during the years 1997-2000, a state of war existed between gangsters, PAGAD and the state. Boshoff (2001: 25) also states that by 2000, a total of 437 gang incidents and 22 PAGAD-related incidents had occurred. In the Western Cape Provincial Commissioner’s Report to Portfolio Committee on Community Safety in Western Cape Parliament, dated 16 September 1998, the police reported that for the period 1 October 1997 to 31 August 1998, there were 624 urban violence incidents, of which 429 were attributed to gangs. Of the 624 incidents, there were 86 pipe bomb attacks, 33 petrol bomb attacks, 377 shooting incidents and 126 violent incidents, which include stabbings and assaults (South African Police Service, 1998:7). Most of these were directed toward PAGAD.

HOW GANGS AND POLICE INFLUENCE AND REGULATE EACH OTHER

The act of exercising governance requires the consent of the community (Steinberg, 2008: 22), the use of force (Marks, 2005: 46) and new ways of seeing the people they police (Sacks, 197: 285; Van Maanen, 1978: 309). From the data of the current research, when viewed through the lens of ‘nodal governance’, it emerges that the police make sense of gangsters and gang violence through a set of attitudes (mentalities), and practices (technologies), which construct gangsters as people that have to be dealt with violently.

Mentalities

In many ways the police and gang institutional culture mirror each other. The mentality of the police with regard to gangs is that violence is of necessity required when dealing with gangs. Gangsters are violent people that require a violent response.
One of the gang leaders described the police as having no respect for the policing profession and that they have developed attitudes toward gangsters:

*These people don’t know how to interact with you; they don’t even know how to speak with you. They see your tattoo and then they develop attitudes* (PD, 17 July 2008).

As a former head of the gang unit explained during one of the interviews:

*There was no community policing focussed methods of dealing with the gangs. Often, violence was met with violence. I think to some extent, the gang unit did influence the nature of gang violence* (HK, 9 July 2008).

Quoting a police shift commander’s view of what is required to do his job, Jensen’s (2008: 135) research reiterates this mentality: “You have to be violent to do this job. Believe me, I hate myself for having to act in that violent manner but if you don’t, you will not be able to do this job.”

Reiner (1992: 118) labels vulnerable marginalised groups, such as sex workers, homeless people and drug addict groups as being ‘police property’. Police live up to this label in the manner in which they police gangs. Because they ‘own’ the gang problem, they exact their own methods to deal with gangs. Institutionally, the bigger gangs in Cape Town have developed a worldview, a philosophy known as ‘the book’ and the structures to carry out their governance approaches (Steinberg, 2004: 45; Parker-Lewis, 2006: 27). The ‘book’ of the gangs is essentially the laws of the prison gangs that recruited members adhere to. They internalise these laws and introduce them into society when they are released. In her book on prison gangs, Heather Parker Lewis (2006: 27) describes the ‘book’ as follows:

Members of The Number refer frequently to *The Book of the Twenty-Six* or *The Book of the Twenty-Eight*. These ‘books’- also called *Makhulu Book* (big book) - are not in any written, tangible form, but have been passed on orally from one generation of inmates to the next. They are memorised – to be repeated to the letter when required – and cover the history of the gangs, codes, rules, laws, regulations, punishment rituals, structure (judicial, civil and military), hierarchy, uniforms, insignia, roles of each rank and even ‘drillbaan’ specific instructions for the drilling of the soldiers – as well as detailed instructions on how, when and where the leadership of the three branches of The Number may meet to communicate with each other.

The ‘book’ is to the gangs what the police standing orders are to policemen. It provides the standard operating procedures for the gang members. There are certain rules which members of the 26 and 28 gang members will not transgress. For instance, it is not part of the philosophy of the 26 gang members to rape. They are primarily focussed on robbing people. If they transgress the rule, they are disciplined inside prison.

It is the unquestioning obedience through fear therefore that keeps young men in gangs loyal to their leaders. It is this loyalty bred out of this fear that engenders a certain type of fearlessness and resistance towards police. Having observed numerous police actions and operations against gangs, it has become evident that the two institutional cultures – that of the gang and that of the police – mutually reinforce each other. When police operations against
the gangs occur, it is usually the younger gang members who offer the most challenge to police authority. They have more to prove to gain the respect of other gang members. Conversely, it is also the younger, more inexperienced police officers who show the greatest eagerness to deal with the gangs; this is their way of gaining the respect of their superiors and more experienced police officers. It challenges the police’s own institutional culture of bravado, machismo and fearlessness.

Furthermore, whilst the showing of respect is one of the unshakeable codes of the gangster, another is being dismissive of and showing disrespect for the police. Police label gang members as ‘skollies’ (gangsters) (Jensen, 2008: 3), but conversely, gang members label the police, and socially construct police officers, as ‘vuilgatte’ (dirty asses), ‘mapuza’ (dirty dogs) and as having ‘skollies’ in their midst (interviews: WM, 16 October 2009; & PD, 17 July 2008). Labelling police officers in the same way that the police label gangsters makes it easier for gangsters to show their disrespect. It is this disrespectful, provocative behaviour of the younger gangsters that the police respond and react to when they interact with them.

Technologies
Kinnes, (2009: 191) showed how the police dealt with the problem of gangsterism mainly by taking sides against opposing gangs. Fear and force, however, appear to be key technologies used by police to govern communities: force against gang members and the subsequent fear that is spread amongst the community. As one community leader who was interviewed stated that: “The people also complained about police brutality and corruption. Out of fear, people did not trust the police” (WG, 8 July 2008).

Both the gangs and the police rely on fear as a technology of governance, but under the Apartheid system, gangs colluded in the security system’s use of fear as governance technology. Apartheid created an all-powerful police force that steadfastly relied on fear, coercion and co-option as a means of getting people to comply, self-regulate and spy on others. In the true sense of the word, the Foucauldian theories’ (1977) emphasis on self-regulation was acted out in practice by Apartheid society. Some members of the coloured communities actively participated in the Apartheid project, including well known gangsters. During the South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1998: 461) hearings evidence emerged that confirmed that gangsters co-operated with the apartheid police against members of their own communities.

However, during the early 1990s, when it became clear that the lifespan of the apartheid government was coming to an end, many established gang leaders did a cost-benefit analysis and changed political sides, realising that political power was fast shifting and that it would be beneficial for them to build new political alliances (Kinnes, 2000: 21).

Another technology employed by the police was to cultivate gangsters and prostitutes as police informers, as a senior police commissioner stated that:

Many a case that I and my colleagues solved, and that are probably being solved today are solved with information that comes from gangsters! You know a detective does not get his information in a church. If you have a bank robbery, for example many years ago, the first thing the bank robber does is hire prostitutes. And what better source than having a good prostitute as an informer? (KL, 19 August 2008)
Conversely, gangs recruit informers within the police. From the interviews conducted, a central theme that both police and gangs agree on is the fact that police officers are recruited as informers for the gangs. Gangsters bribe police officers to alert them to imminent raids and operations against them. Consequently, police have difficulty policing gangs. As one gang leader, when commenting on the police, stated:

_They do good work, very good work. For example they come and search me but I know about four hours before the time that they are going to come and search my premises. It gives me enough time to stash away everything that I have. That’s for a price. In other words they are on a payroll, they get wages. They get wages every week. You are told when they will raid you; you are phoned to inform which of your people are being sought. He will be given information from police officers and told to bring his people who need to be arrested and they (police officers on the payroll) will arrange bail for them. Before the individual is arrested he already knows that he will get bail. That’s why I say the gangs regulate the cops, not the other way round (WM, 16 October 2009)._  

While the idea that police are on the payroll of gangsters is not new, the fact that this practice seems to be tolerated, reinforces the notion that gangs have the resources to regulate the police. As one police commissioner (WL, 3 February 2008) pointed out:

_Unfortunately, most of the policemen who are in the Western Cape, grew up in the Western Cape amongst the gangs, had friends in the gangs, and had family members who were gang members. That on its own was a major problem. Information was given out by these people I suppose. I can’t show you the facts and the figures, but I believe that many of our operations were leaked beforehand by police officers. That is why we did not have the success that we would have liked to have._

Almost all of the police officers and gang members interviewed for this research project indicated that corruption existed. Police officers saw this as a problem in their ranks while gang members saw the police as performing ‘good work’ by policemen who were on their payroll. There is clearly a need to address the issue of corruption in both the police and the gangs who recruit corrupt police officers.

**CONCLUSION**

The researcher used an established framework (nodal governance) to illuminate contested governance practices between nodes of power. In this case, the nodes of power being the police and the gangs on the Cape Flats. Gang governance nodes interact with one another, influence one another and react to police nodes and in the process influence and regulate the police. The nodes employ their own technologies, mentalities, attitudes and frameworks for governing their own environment and making meaning of everyday life.

Police governance consists of the mentalities, methods, technologies and structures used by the police to extend control over the areas in which they have jurisdiction. While using this nodal governance framework, the researcher had new insights into how forms of governance as practised by the established gangs. This is of importance, because we have not observed these developments before. In this article the researcher produced evidence of how gangs contest police governance and in the process, govern the actions and reactions of the police. The researcher also indicated why the institutional culture of violent organised gangs
in its interface with the police, creates alternative governance arrangements in marginalised communities. In addition, the mentalities and resources which gangs employ to contest the governance of the police is fragmented and refined in some instances.

At a cultural level, the researcher has also shown how the three key institutional elements of gang culture: respect, authority and belonging is common to the police institutional culture as well. This is reinforced by the manner in which the police implement policing and attempt to regulate the gangs. The methods used in policing gangs, only reinforce social solidarity and organisation amongst the gangs (Greene & Pranis, 2007). It is also clear from this article that gangs play a policing role within their node. Lastly, the researcher revealed the similarity in the elements of police institutional culture and subcultures and that gangs reinforce each other in their contestation for power. There is uniformity of understanding and a mutual recognition amongst these two adversarial nodes, that neither the police nor the gangsters are sole governors of security on the Cape Flats. They merely regulate each other’s behaviour by contesting the space and the governance arrangements of each other.

LIST OF REFERENCES


James, W., Caliguire, D. & Cullinan, K. (1996). *Now that we are free: Coloured communities in a democratic South Africa*. Cape Town: IDASA.


ENDNOTES

1 The researcher agreed not to divulge the identities of gang members and police officers who were interviewed.