
GANGS, DRUGS AND POLICING THE CAPE FLATS**Irvin Kinnes¹**

ABSTRACT

This article presents a view on the recent gang violence that has held the people of the Cape Flats captive for a number of years. It examines the key imperatives of gang violence on the Cape Flats and the attempts by policing agencies to police gang violence. In particular, the article examines the new approach of organised armed violence employed by organised, armed violent gangs when dealing with rivals, community members and the police. The incessant calls from politicians for the military to be employed in the fight against gangs are also investigated. However, it is the police approach and actions that ultimately shapes the violence of the gangs through the gangs' responses to those police actions. The response of the Cape Flats gangs needs further examination.

Keywords: *Armed, organised gangs, organised violence, police, policing and political interference*

INTRODUCTION

The 'recent' ongoing gang war¹ on the Cape Flats is old. The beginnings of the war that found expression between the organised armed gangs of the Cape Flats,² the Hard Livings and American gangs had its genesis four years ago towards the end of 2010. It should be noted that at the time of writing this article,³ the war between different gangs in different communities has been raging on intermittently for more than five years in various forms. The fighting took the form of drive-by shootings, gang members shooting at each other in full daylight and attacks on people in their homes.⁴

These types of gang attacks and violence have become synonymous with violence on the Cape Flats. Researchers (Goga, 2014; Samara, 2008; Standing, 2006) have begun to document the current gang practices on the Cape Flats in order to get a better understanding of the complexities of gang governance.

For the purposes of this article, the focus is on three key areas on the Cape Flats in Cape Town where gang violence have been pronounced over a longer period of time. Manenberg, Hanover Park and Nyanga have had high levels of gang violence with Nyanga being the community with the highest murder rate in the country. It should be noted that while the murder rate in any community provides figures for all types of murders, it is not necessarily indicative of the gang murder rate as police do not provide separate categories for gang murders. They have, however, provided separate murder statistics for a three month period for 2013 (see below).

It has been argued that the gang war has been ever-present in a muted form in Manenberg for the past year. However, it was the fatal shooting of Spes Bona learner, Glenrico Martin on 15 May 2013 and subsequent murder of Donovan 'Gaansie' Uys and his girlfriend, Sandra Simpson, on 23 May 2013 (Solomons & Meyer, 2013) that forcibly propelled the area into a full-scale gang war between Americans and Hard Livings. It was a well-known fact that *Gaansie* Uys was one of the senior leaders in the Hard Living gang as identified by the police. Media reports placed the death toll in that gang war at 15 fatalities and over 40 injuries (Afrika, 2013). The South African Police Service places the deaths and injuries as a result of gang violence lower than that of the media as the Table 1 below shows the numbers of gang-related deaths and injuries between 20 May to 20 August 2013 in Manenberg, Hanover Park and Nyanga.

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Table 1: The numbers of gang-related deaths and injuries between 20 May to 20 August 2013 in Manenberg, Hanover Park and Nyanga

Area	Killed	Injured	Drug Arrests	Firearm Arrests
Manenberg	14	56	1148	53
Hanover Park	14	27	n/a	n/a
Nyanga	100	62	613	47

(Source: South African Government News Agency, 2013).

Gang violence in Manenberg continued unabated for more than three months before there were attempts to end the violence through a mediation process (Hartley, 2013). In that time, there were 56 people injured and 14 fatally wounded. Similarly, in Hanover Park, a smaller community adjacent to Manenberg on the Cape Flats, 14 people were killed and 27 injured over the same period. Nyanga, on the other hand, experienced up to 100 murders, although all of these deaths cannot be attributed to gang murders.

In the process, up to the time that a peace deal was brokered in Manenberg between the gangs, the violence between gangs wrecked many lives. The question here examined is whether police strategies in fact contribute towards the violence between these gangs?

The on-going gang violence between the Americans and the Hard Livings gangs on the Cape Flats of the Western Cape has, over the last thirty years, been well documented (see Kinnes, 1995, 1996, 2000 & 2009; Standing, 2006; Legget, 2001; Dowdney, 2007; Samara, 2011). The consequences and changing nature of the violence, with better organised methods and technologies at the disposal of the gang leadership, has unfortunately resulted in more casualties.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research forms part of a broader research project for a PhD thesis that examines the gang and police contestation of each other's governance and nodes of power. Having tracked gang violence on the Cape Flats in Cape Town between 1996 and 2013 and documented the gang wars and police responses, has provided the researcher with good qualitative information by means of interviews with gang leaders and police leaders. Use is also made of the researcher's own involvement in anti-crime structures and conflict resolution approaches to gang violence through mediation sessions with gangs and the communities affected by gang violence.

One of the enduring questions debated amongst researchers is often what the best methods for studying gangs are. Although there is emerging evidence that researchers prefer using an ethnographic approach of documenting life histories and spending time with their research subjects (Jensen, 2008; Steinberg, 2005; Bourgois, 1995; Pinnock, 1984), it is by no means exhaustive as a research method. The research for this study has been heavily reliant on qualitative research methodologies such as ethnographic approaches and participant observation as a result of the researcher's participation and involvement in several Community Police Forum meetings that were held over the research period, in order to discuss the impact of the violence in different parts of the Cape Flats. Neuman (2000: 126) notes that: "Qualitative researchers emphasize the human factor and the intimate first-hand knowledge of the research setting; they avoid distancing themselves from the people or events they study".

Many of the meetings with Community Police Forums were held in order to discuss the violence and often gave rise to emotional outpourings against gang violence. Helen Allan (2006: 404), has describe the impact of this process (in the field of nursing practices) as one of immersing oneself through participant observation and using ethnographic methods as a

method for dealing with resulting emotions. Having served in a facilitator capacity and trained members of Community Police Forum in conflict resolution technologies, the resulting researcher-community interactions were used to document gang conflicts and police responses over the research period.

FINDINGS

There are four key trends that have emerged from the research. All of it relates to the governance that gangs exercise in the communities where they operate. Firstly, gangs are succeeding in closing down government services such as education and health clinics. Secondly, the gang wars have emphasised its cyclical nature. Thirdly, the gang wars between established gangs are lasting longer and fourthly, the gangs are a brand that is selling influence.

Closing down government services

In both Manenberg and Hanover Park, the gang violence has brought essential government services in health, education, transport and local government to a standstill during the periods of the gang wars. During the gang war in 2013, the government was forced to close 14 schools, because it was too dangerous to send children to school since there were constant fears that they would get caught in the crossfire (John, 2013). The closure of the schools in Manenberg was one of the most serious challenges to the authority of the state. In previous years, the gang wars had led to temporary closure of the local clinics, housing offices and libraries in both Manenberg and Hanover Park. When such violence affects the community, and the state is unable to stop the violence, then there is clearly a crisis facing the approach of the state in dealing¹ with armed, organised violent gangs.

There are, of course, other scholars who argue that the violence that is perpetrated by gangs is organised and therefore there is a need to treat it as an 'urban' insurgency. Accordingly, such an approach would then justify the engagement of the armed forces against violent organised gangs (Manwaring 2005). Rodgers (2006), argues that gang violence in Nicaragua should not be seen as chaotic, but rather as established local regimes of order in the face of the state and social breakdown. Jensen (2010), has shown that the nexus between security and development takes specific forms in the 'war on gangs' approach in Cape Town. As a consequence such a 'war on gangs' takes on a counter-insurgency approach and that it is, in effect, a response to the problems of governance.

There appears to be agreement that the problems faced by government with respect to gangs, is not easily solved and represents a serious challenge to the sovereignty of the state. The gang problem is also not solved through tougher paramilitary and counter-insurgency approaches that feed off a 'war on gangs' approach. However, such an approach merely increases gang solidarity and entrenches the violence.

However, such agreement does not lead to workable solutions in addressing the fact that there is a challenge to the authority of the state in the manner in which gang governance is exercised. The nuances and complexities of gangs fighting each other must first be considered, especially since there is no clear evidence that gangs go out to specifically challenge the authority of the state by forcibly closing the schools. The disruption of governance and governance processes is an unintended outcome of violence and arises as a result of weak governance practices by the state and its institutions. There are also other facilitating factors which must be taken into account such as the cyclical nature of the violence.

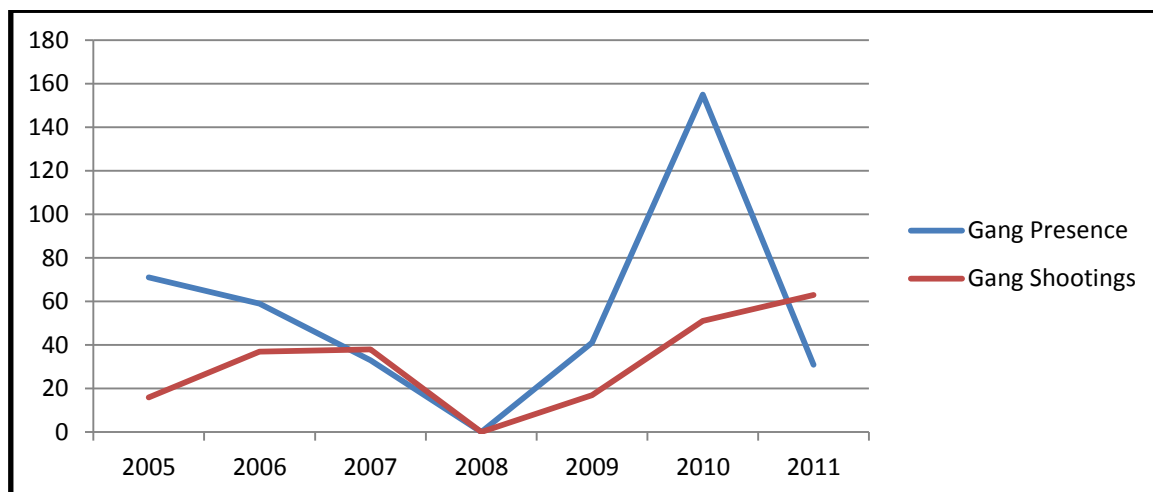
The cyclical nature of gang violence

The argument here put forward being that while the gang violence on the Cape Flats is cyclical, it has significant impact on urban social life and spaces on the Cape Flats. While this is not new, if we look closely at the significant periods of violence between gangs, one can see certain trends emerge. Examining the data from the last twenty years one can see regular spikes in the murder rates on the Cape Flats. These periods of gang violence are protracted and interspersed with periods of great calm – periods when ‘nothing happens’. During the last twenty years, there have been seven significant periods of violence between gangs on the Cape Flats, particularly between the large organised but violent gangs. The periods: 1993; 1996; 1998; 2002; 2006; 2011; and 2013, have been seen as periods of particularly violent gang fights with the accompanying violence meted out against opponents and residents in the areas where these gangs are based.

The statistics provide by police do not aggregate the percentage of crime for which only the gangs are responsible. However, in September 2014 the Western Cape Provincial Police Commissioner of the Western Cape, Gen. Arno Lamoer, admitted that gangs were responsible for 18 percent of the provincial murder totals for the previous years (SAPA, 2014).

Judging from the sparse available data, it would appear that the gang violence in the Western Cape occurs in periods of great social and political upheaval in the province and particularly when there are looming changes in governments, both at local and provincial level. In other words, prior to national, provincial and local elections. While this is in itself an interesting development, it is not the purpose of this article to uncover the reasons for this trend. (These developments are the subject of further research and are being addressed elsewhere in the author’s research).

The cyclical nature of gang violence provides researchers and police officers with opportunities to map the violence when it peaks and for how long it lasts. It is significant though that gang violence also peaks at particular times when schools re-open after vacation breaks. The figures from the Safe School Programme of the Western Cape Education Department, show that violence in schools peaks in particular months. As the graph below shows, the incidence of gang shootings and gang presence at schools increased significantly over the December to January periods of the period 2009-2011. These were periods when schools were about to close and re-open. The figures for 2008 were not provided and therefore show zero incidents.

Graph 1: Gang presence and gang shootings at schools

(Source: Safe Schools Division, Western Cape Education Department).

Both gang violence and reported gang presence at schools, gang shootings increased from 2008 to 63 reported incidents in 2010, while gang presence at schools peaked during 2010 with 155 reported incidents. The murder rate for the Western Cape Province was 2 580 cases from March 2012 to April 2013. According to the Western Cape SAPS Provincial Police Commissioner, gang-related murders account for 464 (18%) of the murders in the Western Cape (SAPS, 2014).

On the whole, gang wars on the Cape Flats continue as the unresolved issues between them are dragged on over months. The cyclical nature of gang fights also provide more motivation for gang members to look for new means of settling old scores. It impacts in the longer term on the form the gang war takes, the number of people involved and the time it takes to settle the scores.

Gang wars are lasting longer

Venkatesh (2008), who spent time documenting the planning and organisation it takes to engage in conflicts with opposing gangs and dealing in drugs, lays out the social organisation within the gang structures which enables it to be effective. The Nicaraguan 'broder' or gang experience is also clearly laid out by Rodgers (2007), who documents how the gangs plan and execute attacks against each other and other gangs, through executing discipline in their own structures and how they prepare for fights with other gangs.

An important change in the nature of the violence taking place on the Cape Flats is that the gang fights have been fought over longer periods of time. During the gang violence that occurred between gangs in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the violence between gangs was over a shorter period (usually days and in the worst case scenario, weeks) before it subsided.

It is apparent from recent trends that these disputes between gangs and the resultant violence last longer and are much more difficult to resolve as a result of its complexities. In 2006, in the community of Hanover Park, the gang war lasted for the better part of six months (Department of Community Safety, 2008: 17). In Lavender Hill, during 2011/12, it lasted for eight months. Tracking these gang wars was primarily done through communications with community-based organisations, community police forums and newspapers such as the *Argus* and the *Cape Times*, which are Cape Town's daily newspapers.

In 2012 there was a protracted gang fight in Hanover Park that lasted for just over eight months. This followed a gang fight in the same area, between the same gangs in 2008 which lasted for six months. Similarly there was gang violence in Lavender Hill which also lasted for well over eight months intermittently from 2011 to 2012. In 2013 in Manenberg, the gang violence lasted for three months. Firstly, as a consequence of this development, is that more people are dying. Secondly, the violence is more widespread and affects more communities. Lastly, more layers of youth are joining the gangs and participating in the violence.

In the middle of the communication technological revolution⁵ taking place, gang members have a lot more to lose as the space they occupy becomes less defensible and more accessible to the march of technology, better drugs and a better armed opposition.

At the other end of the pendulum is the police and policing. What is being seen in this situation is a greater reliance on short-term policing that is designed to create a control of the situation, through the short-term governance of space. In this sense the gangs and police create contested governance in nodes where gangs influence how the police approach the gangs (Kinnes, 2012: 32). They shape and influence what and how the police govern the spaces they contest. More importantly, the police help to shape the manner in which the gang exerts its influence and governance of the textured spaces on the Cape Flats. This is because their approach is becoming more desperate and this leads to a more brutal approach on the part of their operational approach. However, in the end, it leads to the alienation of young

people, greater social solidarity and greater sympathy (and fear) for the gangs. All of this equals to less co-operation from the community with the police.

Gangs are a brand and are selling influence

Seeing the gangs as a brand that influences a generation of youth who are resistant to the dominant social and political cultures and rituals, helps us understand the complexity of relationships and networks that span the Cape Flats. The research conducted by Schärf (1990), Pinnock (1984), Kinnes (2000), Standing (2006), and Jensen (2008), places the levels of complexity into perspective when it comes to the rich history of gangsterism displayed so viscerally on the Cape Flats.

The point is that because of this history that in fact spans more than a century, the modern organised violent gangs have become smaller, but their influence on young people has grown phenomenally. The early estimates and quantification of the numbers of gang members have never been independently verified. So the figures on gang sizes that Pinnock (1984) and others have previously estimated are not here repeated. Standing (2006), in particular took issue with these figures, which on occasion the author has repeated in his research as well (Kinnes: 2000). Instead, the suggestion is here made that, after 2006 and prior to the enactment of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act, gangs have decentralised their structures and set up branches in different communities (even moving into rural and farming communities). Despite the claims by People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), that it has dealt with gangs through its strategies, the gangs have endured and have shown greater resilience in the face of both state and community pressures.

At this point in the discussion issue needs to be taken with some researchers who argue that no distinction between gang leaders and drug dealers is made in research previously carried out on the Cape Flats (including the author's) (Standing, 2006: 99). Now there is a distinction between gang leaders and drug dealers, which really is inconsequential. Most gang leaders peddle drugs, but not all of them supply drugs. A few established gang leaders have been able to supply drugs, and those who have succeeded in their criminal enterprise have become fulltime drug dealers, outgrowing their gangs.

But to return to the diminishing mass-based gangs. What is now being seen are highly mobile groups of youth that belong to gangs, who are able to fight, trade and commit crime in any area in which they choose to do so. It is often this 'can-do-mentality' of gang members and leaders that is the cause of many gang fights on the Cape Flats, especially when they enter the 'turf' of other gangs.

Today in the gang fights, you are seeing young people who belong to one gang, turn and join their opposition because of the sheer strength of numbers and influence of some of the more organised gangs. In the earlier wars on the Cape Flats, this was taboo, especially if you were part of a so-called 'numbers' gang.⁶ In fact gang members are known to have killed their own members when they did not display absolute loyalty to the gang leader.

There are significant inter- and intra-conflicts emerging on the gang landscape that show fissures and cracks that previously were non-existent. It is no accident that even in today's terms, technology⁵ has helped to create these divides and younger people who are recruited into the gangs are smarter and are finding more creative ways of challenging their own leaders and their opposition. In the cases of Manenberg, Lavender Hill and Hanover Park, there were rivalries inside the gangs and contestations between younger and older leaders of the gang.

While the gangs such as the Hard Livings, Sexy Boys and Americans have seen their leaders jailed,⁷ others quickly took their places and this invariably saw a contestation of leadership when the older leaders were released. Today, smaller numbers make up the gangs in the different communities, but their influence is pervasive. The violent and organised

gangs have a brand that is spreading very fast because there are always consequences for wayward behaviour for their own members (by gang standards), and for members of the community that co-operate with the police.

The certainty of retribution for people who co-operate with the police against the gangs has been demonstrated by the shooting of the witness in the Staggie case in Manenberg recently (Underhill, 2013). At the time of writing this article, the mother of a member of the police's Operation Combat which was formed to investigate gang violence, was shot and killed by gang members.

So even though youngsters will make a decision of not joining the gang, they will not go against its wishes. When this happens, then the influence of the gang is consolidated.

DISCUSSION

Cape Flats violence

Manenberg, Heideveld, Lavender Hill, Elsies River, Nyanga, Guguletu, Philippi, Mitchell's Plain, Hanover Park and Khayelitsha are some communities that define and are the centrepiece of what we call the Cape Flats. These communities have rich histories of forced removals and proud struggles of resistance to apartheid. Despite this, if we look at the Cape Flats today, we see that the legacies of apartheid have not left us. There are rows and rows of housing units in Manenberg, Heideveld, Hanover Park and Lavender Hill amongst others were called the 'Flats' (apartment buildings). Designed by apartheid planners (Jensen: 2008; Samara: 2011), these flats are meant to accommodate forty-eight families each, but hold far more. The population densities in these areas are bursting at the seams. Apart from this there are what is known as 'backyarders', (people who are on a waiting list for accommodation who illegally rent space and put up shack structures because they have no accommodation), making the population density a major problem in these communities. According to Statistics South Africa (Teo & Nzuzi, 2011) the population density of Mitchell's Plain and Khayelitsha which is part of the Cape Flats had 6 960 people per square kilometre.

From a design point of view, many of the communities where there are Council flats, have myriads of alleys and places you can disappear into when you commit a crime. When gang violence flares up, gang members easily make use of these alleys to melt into. With the fear factor, the police are almost always unable to stop the violence and often come under attack themselves.

In many respects, gang fights in Manenberg are almost always violent and drag on over a number of months because it holds the strongholds and organising centres of both the Americans and Hard Living gangs. In this respect, it represents the 'jewel in the crown', the seat of illegality and a safe space from which to conduct operations. The fight is always intense and brutally violent.

Similarly, the gang wars in Hanover Park have seen a fair share of violence between the Ghetto Kids and the Americans gang. Hanover Park is one of the areas where gang violence and shootings have shown an alarming increase. According to police statistics, gang murders in Hanover Park increased from 18 in 2011/12 to 40 in the 2012/13 financial years. Scholars have long argued that policing, and its approaches to those it is entrusted to police, influences the nature of crimes and violence in particular areas (Jensen: 2008; Cohen: 1972; Bailey: 2006; Shaw: 2002; Brogden & Shearing: 2006; Steinberg: 2008). The police and their responses to crimes sometimes create *moral panics*⁸ and deviant groups react to such labelling.

Policing the Cape Flats

There are four points that need to be made about how the police have dealt with the gangs on the Cape Flats. Firstly, that operations against gangs have largely been of a temporary nature and have not yielded the results expected. Secondly, 'normalisation and stabilisation' as a theoretical policing approach is based on outdated securocrat and counter-insurgency military ideologies. Such approaches are based on the old National Security Management System (NSMS) and were extensively used to pacify the population through winning their hearts and minds (WHAM). Scholars (Seegers: 1988; Cawthra: 1986) have documented how the system operated and what its resultant failures have been. However, the SAPS still cling to such outdated notions in their policing approaches. Thirdly, the police are singularly incapable of dealing with the gangs; we have to look the other way at the rest of society. Lastly, in order to effectively fight gangs, we have to look away from gangs towards young people not in gangs.

Police operations

The researcher's own research shows that since 1995, the police have launched several high profile operations against the gangs with no tangible results. These operations were variously conceptualised only because the Police have come under public pressure to deal more robustly with gangs. If we look at the period 1995-2000, SAPS launched eight high profile operations to deal with gangs, which have not moved the centre of gravity for the gangs. It was at most seen as an irritant and necessary thing for gang leaders. With names such as operation Gangbust, High Density, Recoil, Saladin, Good Hope, Crackdown, Slasher and Lancer, the SAPS have not produced tangible results with the exception of Lancer which saw visible reductions in the presence of drug dealers and some leaders of some gangs. The author's own research shows that the SAPS have zig-zagged from operation to operation without the necessary evaluation (post operation) to make sure that they have achieved their required objectives. The police persist with this mentality and it does not help since it promotes temporary results that are based on the saturation strategies for 'hotspot' policing. The gangsters interviewed in this research all say that they know the police must eventually 'go home' (leave the area). They (the police) cannot stay in the policing area forever. They have to go home and sleep in their beds. So the sustainability of this approach is brought into question by the recipients of the action.

Normalisation and stabilisation

Here this article argues that the police do not learn from their mistakes. They neatly fit into the definition of 'madness' by doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results. When the police are confronted about their policing approach they argue that they can only 'stabilise the situation'. 'Someone else' must normalise the situation. Police can only stabilise the situation. By 'someone else' they really mean the other government departments of the criminal justice system. The point here made is that because the police have used this approach during the old apartheid policing era to deal with what they termed agitators, activists, political protest and the political opposition at the time, this culture has endured and seeped into the democratic order. They do it (police the same way) because it's what they know.

The police have difficulty displaying innovation in dealing with gangs, precisely because of their institutional and occupational culture, which acts as a brake on police planners and their structures. The gangs on the other hand have moved with the times. They have become more organised, using communication technology effectively and are flexible, mobile and innovative when it involves exploring new markets and new opportunities.

Civil society and policing

Marijan and Guzina (2014: 51) argues that civil society organisations play an important role in the oversight of police and that in turn contributes to greater legitimacy for the police. Their work in Northern Ireland indicates that legitimacy is a key ingredient of the professionalisation of the police. Such co-operation with civil society by the police also acts as a brake on corruption.

In South Africa, co-operation with civil society through community police forums is a legislative requirement of the South African Police Service Act (Act 68 of 1995). Section 18(1) of the Act provides for the police to:

- (a) Maintain a partnership between the community and the police;
- (b) Improve communication between the police service and the community;
- (c) Promote co-operation between the community and the police in fulfilling the needs of the community regarding policing;
- (d) Improving the rendering of policing services to communities at national, provincial and local levels;
- (e) Improving transparency in the Service and accountability of the Service to the community; and,
- (f) Promoting joint problem identification and problem-solving by the service and the community.

The Act places a responsibility on the police to make efforts to work in a sustained fashion with the community and civil society. However, despite its provisions, community policing has not been optimally used to foster better relations and trust between the community and the police. Instead, South Africa is in the grip of vigilante killings because of the huge feelings of distrust between the community and the police.

An outcome of this trust has been the establishment (in 1996) and subsequent growth of PAGAD. PAGAD's stated aim was to eradicate drugs and gangs from the Western Cape. A state of war between PAGAD and gangsters entranced the police between 1996-2003 when even the police became targets of PAGAD and were attacked (Kinnes 2000).

In addition, the independent Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Police Inefficiency and a Breakdown in Relations between SAPS and the Community in Khayelitsha, established by the Western Cape Premier on 24 August 2012, to examine the relationship between the community and police developed very important findings that were an indictment on the type of police services provided to community. One of the key recommendations of the Commission was that each police station in Khayelitsha should adopt a community policing commitment in consultation with local residents (O'Regan & Pikoli, 2014: 439).

It appears that the SAPS have not been able to use the goodwill of the community to its advantage in fighting gangs in particular. Such resolve was dependent on a good relationship between the community and the police. The SAPS have struggled to develop sustained good relations as the rise of vigilante movements in South Africa have shown.

Corruption, bribery and fear permeate some approaches by the police and gangsters brag about their prowess in bribing police officers (Kinnes, 2009). Rather than looking only at the police, there have been calls for all sectors of society to become involved in fighting crime and gangs (Berg & Shearing, 2011: 23) through a 'whole-of-society' approach. Berg and Shearing put forward an argument that suggest that society can benefit if the police together with the rest of the Criminal Justice System departments and civil society all become involved in a small way to fight crime and gangs. This option provides for an activist and

interventionist approach that is harder and tougher to negotiate with partners, but is much more sustainable in the long run.

Fighting gangs is turning the focus away from gangs

The seduction of researchers with gangs must stop. Research has shown that resilience is only built through long-term interventions with young people. In view of half the population being youth (according to the 2011 Census), then there has, in the long run, to be an investment directly with young people who are not members of gangs. Building confidence with sections of communities where people are not involved with gangs through education, jobs, opportunities and sport amongst requires a long term investment in youth. While there remain no guarantees that it will diminish the influence of gangs, there are glimmers of hope that such approaches and models do in some small way provide hope to young people as the example of the Proudly Manenberg Campaign⁹ have in some small way shown in the past. The police and all other authorities would do well to focus on what works in communities and spend their budgets building and supporting young people that show the best potential for succeeding in their endeavours. If the police adopt such an approach, then more people will become involved in fighting gangs. It will make the job of the police that much easier, since it helps to build a better culture and break down gang brands.

Bring in the Army to fight gangs

As already indicated earlier, there have been calls by politicians to bring in the army to fight gangs. There are certain arguments by American sociologist who argue that gangs are a threat to a nation's sovereignty and that they should be dealt with as an enemy army. This argument was very effectively dealt with by Dennis Rogers in his work on gangs in Nicaragua. The reality is that the army is a conventional war fighting machine and do not have the mandate, strategies and tools to fight gangs. Who are the gangs they should fight? How will they know who are gangsters, if the police themselves appear not to know? That is why the brutality is increasing against people who live on the Cape Flats. SAPS have used the Tactical Response Team in Manenberg and this has only increased the social solidarity against the police.

CONCLUSION

This research has shown that gangs are vehicles for making meaning for young people even though most of the organised violent gangs are led by older men. The gangs have been able to sustain livelihoods for young people by making sure that the drug economy works for them. While many participants in the gang economy are not rich, they can earn a living from participating in the drug economy. The gangs of the Cape Flats are the distribution agents and will continue to draw young people to them unless the government refocuses its priorities within the communities where the gangs operate.

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ENDNOTES

1. A number of communities on the Cape Flats experienced gang attacks and violence at various times between 2011 and 2013. In some communities on the Cape Flats, the attacks and reprisals amounted to a low intensity war between gangs. These areas included the Manenberg, Hanover Park and Lavender Hill communities (See Anon. 2013).
2. First described by John Western (1981) in his book: *Outcast Cape Town*.
3. This article emanates from the paper presented to the CRIMSA Biennial Conference: Research and application in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Pretoria, 17-20 September 2013 and forms part of my PhD research.
4. The local Cape Town newspapers, *The Cape Times*, *The Argus* and *Weekend Argus*, covered most of the gang violence over this period.
5. Mobile phone technology makes it far easier to communicate with other gang members in the face of attacks
6. The so-called Numbers Gangs originated in the prisons of South Africa, and are particularly powerful in the Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town. Their influence has spread throughout the prison system and they are notorious for forcing (recruiting) new inmates to become members with an almost ritualistic and violent initiation system and demanding absolute loyalty to a particular gang and adherence to the gang culture (specific set of rules). The most well-known of these prison gangs, whose influence has now spread back into the gangs on the outside, are the 26s, 27s and the 28s. Originally three rival gangs had been formed, with the first being called the '26s' (twenty-sixers). The numbers appellation, as the story goes, was that there were six members making up the original gang. Each numbers gang was responsible for different activities. The 26s being the wealth accumulators involved in gambling and smuggling into prison, the 28s the 'fighters/warriors', while the 27s were the guardians of the gang laws and for keeping the peace between the 26s and 28s (see Steinberg, 2005 for more detail of the prison numbers gangs).
7. During 2008, the leaders of the Hard Livings and Americans gangs were jailed for various serious offences.
8. This term was first used by Stan Cohen in his research into the Mods and Rockers gangs in the UK in the 1970s.
9. The Proudly Manenberg Campaign was started in Manenberg in 2005 and aimed at building a better Manenberg through building dignity and creating opportunity for young people. It lasted for seven years before funding and leadership battles affected its ability to effectively implement its programme.