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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

Correctional centres are an epitome of the western institution, with western systems that are imposed through colonialism (Barberet, 2014). In South Africa, the development of the prison system was introduced simultaneously with the expansion of colonial rule from the Cape Peninsula to the modern boundaries of South Africa and beyond. The development of the prison system in South Africa was closely linked to the progressive institutionalisation of racial discrimination (Human Rights Watch, 1994). Therefore, the South African prison system has been largely influenced by the apartheid regime, which entailed a gross violation of human rights. This system was largely dominated by a focus on the safety and security of the officials, harsh discipline, control and punishment that was often based on racial discrimination, segregation and a militarised organisational culture (uniforms and staff ranking system) which obviously impacted largely on how the offenders were treated (Mutingh, 2007). Most importantly, the prison system was structured in a patriarchal manner and very little consideration was given, if at all, to the possibility of increasing number of women offenders in the future (Giffard, 1997).

The democratic elections of April 1994 brought with it the government's commitment to transform South African society at all levels. Therefore action was taken to start restructuring and reforming correctional centres. Amongst other changes made to the prison system was that the department's name was changed from the Prison Services to the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). This emphasised corrections as being key in the correctional services system. Amendments were made to the Correctional centres Act no 58 of 1959 which dealt with the

abolition of apartheid in the correctional system. Most importantly segregation of offenders was removed and correctional supervision was enforced, thereby keeping the increasing correctional population at bay, a factor that is also financially beneficial for the department. Post-apartheid, the South African correctional system was overloaded with addressing many of the challenges brought about by the apartheid system (White Paper on Corrections, 2005). These included a need for responsive and flexible programming that meets the needs of female and male offenders (Jules-Macquet, 2014). However, even though there have been recommendations and implementations seen in terms of the White Paper on Corrections (2005), little has been done to restructure and reform correctional centres in a way that responds to the rehabilitation needs of women (Artz, Moul, Hoffman-Wanderer, Colpitts, Meer & Aschman, 2013).

Women offending, different types of offences perpetrated by women, as well as the socio-cultural context that informs women offending has been considered insignificant in both numerical and statistical terms. Female violence has also been dismissed as inconsequential in comparison to male violence. The social construction of femininity and its impact on women engagement with and participation in crime and violence has for the most part been ignored, resulting in a paucity of research in this area, especially the gender sensitive programming needs (Artz, Hoffman-Wanderer & Moul, 2012; Dastile, 2014; Jefthas & Artz, 2007). Artz, et al. (2012: p.5) argue that many policymakers, scholars and practitioners lack an understanding of even the most rudimentary aspects of women-centred approaches, resulting in continuous neglect and limited effort in providing programmes that are responsive to the needs of women in the correctional centre population. Furthermore women suffer from closely linked issues of mental health, substance abuse and trauma and the limited programming that is available in most correctional centres is still based on models developed for males (Covington, 2007).

While there is literature available on female criminality, gendered pathways to crime and rehabilitation experiences (Artz et al., 2012, Dastile, 2014; Haffejee, Vetten & Greyling, 2006; Human Rights watch, 1994; Vetten, 2008; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2014) few studies focus on the rehabilitation experiences of women classified as maximum security offenders. The current study aims to make a contribution into providing needs-based rehabilitative programmes that specifically address the needs of women classified as maximum security offenders. Insights from the study would assist the DCS and the rehabilitation team in providing services that respond to the needs of women classified as maximum offenders.

Over the past few years, research has been conducted on women and their unique and dynamic needs. This has resulted in improved lives for women in the fields of education, health, mental health, substance abuse and physical health (Covington, 2007). However, such knowledge of the dynamics that influence women does not seem to be applied in the same manner, or rather to the same extent, in the criminal justice sector (Bloom, Covington, Owen & Raeder, 2003). This therefore possibly indicates a need to transfer such knowledge and to even strive for a better understanding of women in correctional centres, with the aim of improving their lives. The most important aspect to always consider in an effort to improve the lives of women in correctional centres is to understand the influence of the intersection of various dynamics like gender, sexuality, race, class, poverty, power dynamics and victimisation in the criminal pathways of incarcerated women (Artz et al, 2012; Covington, 2007; Dastile, 2014).

Literature on the subject of women offenders in the South African context and globally has been largely focused on understanding the specific needs of women offenders, as well as offenders in general (Artz et al, 2012; Dastile, 2014; Dissel, 1996). There are also studies looking at HIV/AIDS in correctional centres; post-traumatic stress disorder; and other mental health issues like substance abuse, depression and anxiety (Naidoo & Mkhize, 2012; St Lawrence,

Eldridge, Shelby, Little, Brasfield & O'bannon, 1997). Other studies have looked at the conditions of correctional centres and have provided valuable insights into negative conditions like overcrowding, violence, victimisation, sexual abuse as well as substance abuse that occurs in correctional centres (Mkhize, 2003; Sable, Fleberg, Martin & Kupper, 1999; Walser, Tran & Cook, 2012). Whilst these studies provide valuable insights into correctional centre life, very few of them have been able to provide an in-depth understanding of the rehabilitative experience of women classified as maximum security offenders. Therefore the current study seeks to contribute to the limited research in this area.

“Correctional centres discriminate against women in a number of ways, often because women are such a smaller percentage of prisoners. They overclassify them and isolate women more because of fewer available correctional centres for women in their geographical areas. Women prisoners are thus more invisible than men prisoners. Women are also provided with fewer programmes and training schemes than men due to the economies of scale. Women suffer greater social stigma than men in prison (due to having violated criminal law and gender norms). Correctional centres have the tendency to infantilize women and pathologise them, further oppressing them” (Barberet, 2014: p.160).

It is within the above quotation that the current study seeks to explore the lived experience of rehabilitation as narrated by women classified as maximum security offenders. Historically, correctional centres have been known to replicate the same form of social control for women that exists in society (Dastile, 2014). This meant that the correctional centres, as well as the rehabilitative programmes offered in correctional centres, stereotyped women offenders into socially constructed gender roles. Instead of being seen as people who had violated the rules of law, they were seen as having violated society's moral standards of what is expected from a woman (Labane, 2012). Incarcerated women who are mothers also faced an additional stigma of being labelled as unfit and indifferent mothers, an issue when combined with past painful history and current incarceration challenges, can impact negatively on the incarcerated women's self-esteem (Mignon & Ransford, 2012; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2014).

Domesticity was, therefore, one of the themes that dominated the literature on women rehabilitation in the past, with the aim to “refeminise” women offenders from their “fallen woman status”. As a result, rehabilitation programmes were seen as a way of restoring the “true woman” as per socially constructed gender stereotypes (Barberet, 2014). Therefore, rehabilitation largely involved training women in gender stereotypical jobs namely clerical, cosmetics and food services with few opportunities for non-traditional vocational training like plumbing, electrical and carpentry (Sharp, 2003). Female offenders were therefore employed in laundry and sewing activities within the correctional centre system. For example, in the Kwazulu-Natal city of Durban correctional centre, women did the laundry not only for their own facility but also for the four male correctional centres and the staff members.

In Kroonstad, women were sewing mattress covers, pyjamas and their own uniforms while others did the laundry for the whole correctional centre. Women incarcerated in the Eastern Cape town of Umtata, were also responsible for the laundry of both men and women’s correctional centres. Vocational training was available to a small proportion of female offenders and almost exclusively to male inmates (Human Rights Watch, 1994). Whilst there is acknowledgement of rehabilitation practices that promoted gendered behaviours in correctional centres, literature on women offending (Barberet, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 1994; Sharp, 2003) does not seem to articulate clearly the notion on a non-binary definition of gender and thus possibly contribute to further marginalisation for women whose gender identity falls outside the traditional gender roles. The current study therefore also hopes to bring to the fore an argument that seeks to encourage society and the correctional centres to engage more with the meaning of gender sensitive programming whilst taking into consideration the various gender identities within their system.

According to Thinane, (2010) historically rehabilitation in correctional centres was also largely informed by the disease model of treatment of human beings, whereby offenders were seen as having malfunctioned or being diseased and were capable of being treated usually by a range of professionals within the criminal justice system. This made rehabilitation to be more focused on treatment to the exclusion of other development programs which are also rehabilitative. This theory of rehabilitation was also flawed as it overlooked the context of crime in society and the fact that crime may be a response by people to facts and conditions in society. As a result, rehabilitation programs failed to view the offenders/incarcerated people in relation to their families, communities and socio-economic backgrounds. With regards to women, the disease model meant that certain feelings that women expressed are pathologised. For example, anger that is sometimes a genuine response to frustrations that are bred by the society of which the correctional centre system is a microcosm of, is often seen as an indication of pathology in women offenders (Africa, 2010).

Wooldredge and Steiner (2014) explain that anger in incarcerated women sometimes highlights gender differences in the correctional centre population that are further reflected in incarcerated women's vulnerability to victimisation. For example, the incarcerated women's inclination to have strong familial bonds may result in a struggle to adjust emotionally to the separation from their families. This, in turn, may lead to more acting out that may sometimes provoke others to respond aggressively towards them. The visitation for women in correctional facilities by their children and significant others has therefore been found to be one of the relevant inhibitors to subsequent crime and also facilitates better adjustment in the correctional centre environment (Artz et al., 2012). This also highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of the rehabilitation needs of women classified as maximum security offenders in order to ensure that programmes respond appropriately to their needs.

In South Africa, women offenders recommended a need for better access to mental and physical health services, including drug rehabilitation (Haffejee et al., 2006). Although access to health has been extended as a right for offenders as well, this seems to be in theory only in South African correctional centres because the experiences of women offenders indicate challenges in accessing health care. The health care system in South African correctional centres is often inadequate and unsatisfactory as per female inmates' experiences. South African correctional centres have been designed to accommodate males only. Consequently the health needs of women are often overlooked and sometimes ignored (Dastile, 2014; The Gender, Health & Justice Research Unit, 2012).

Women have unique health needs, like gynaecological challenges and childbirth, and these are not adequately catered for. Most of the women in correctional centres indicated how access to health is sometimes delayed or even ignored in their female facilities (Artz et al., 2013). Overcrowding; risky sexual behaviours; lack of knowledge, as well as lack of HIV testing and counselling for women inmates were seen as major challenges in addressing the health issues for incarcerated women (Singh, 2009). While these studies offer valuable insight into women offenders' experiences regarding access to health, the rehabilitation experiences of women, particularly of maximum security offenders, has not received attention. Following from meta-analysis and reviews of studies on effective rehabilitation programmes, Dissel (2012) recommends that one of the key factors in rendering successful rehabilitation programmes in correctional centres is adherence to the responsivity principle, which argues for programmes that are meaningful and delivered in ways that are appropriate to the offender's learning styles. Therefore the lack of research into the needs of women classified as maximum security offenders creates the risk of ineffective rehabilitation programmes that continue to inappropriately respond to the needs of women offenders.

Offenders are all subjected to an institutional classification which involves a process where they are designated a minimum, medium or maximum security classification and are housed accordingly, with the aim of providing the safest and least restrictive environments possible (Bloom et al., 2003). Mnguni (2002:111), however, argues that incidents have revealed that a number of offenders who should not be allocated to a maximum security category are classified as such. While offender classification is used as the most important tool in rehabilitation planning (Labane, 2012), the classification and methods utilised have been quantitative, therefore providing a limited view on the needs of each offender. Some of the classification procedures used do not always provide the information that is needed; have not been adapted for use with female offenders; and are not always useful in matching women's needs for programming (Van Voorhis & Presser, 2001). This results in a tendency to over-classify women and this practice has an impact on their rehabilitation (Bloom et al., 2003). According to Mutingh (2005) it has also not been a norm for South African correctional services to use qualitative methods as a way of understanding the real issues faced by each offender.

There has been limited literature on the best management approach to the classification, housing, staff selection and staff training in institutions housing women offenders (Morash, Byman & Koons, 1998). I would therefore like to argue that because of this limited knowledge, available classification systems that seek to guide planning and governance in the correctional system seem to be at the centre of replicating the very same power, discipline, control and segregation discourses that continue to disadvantage women. It is hoped that the current research will create a platform where a more narrative based paradigm of understanding, as opposed to classifying women, is considered to better inform a much more gender responsive rehabilitation for women. The classification strategies that appropriately target offenders who have a high risk need for maximum security (through examination of individual needs domain indicators) found that women offenders were especially needy in the areas of substance abuse, community

functioning, mental health and suicide potential, suggesting more maladaptive coping strategies compared to males classified as maximum security offenders (Blanchette & Motiuk, 1997). However, the rehabilitation experiences of women offenders have frequently been explored in combination with other offenders, where focus has been on all women offender classification categories (Artz et al., 2012; Dastile, 2014; Human Rights Approach, 1994) and all offenders (Dissel, 1996; Labane, 2012). While these studies have shed some light on the rehabilitation experiences of women, little attention has been paid to the rehabilitation experience of women classified as maximum offenders.

“There has been a significant increase in the proportion of South Africans incarcerated who are to serve life and long-term sentences. This poses particular challenges to the department, as the provision of a structured day of activity and rehabilitation and correctional services to people over such extended periods of time will drain a lot of resources. Given that this category of offenders also tends to be inclined towards aggression, the consequences of inactivity of such persons are a threat to the secure, safe and orderly management of the correctional centres where they are detained” (White Paper on Corrections, 2005:81).

The above statement also reflects the position of correctional services towards maximum security offenders, indicating classification principles informed by the length of sentences and aggression. The statement on rehabilitation indicates a conflicted view on how to handle these offenders, as reflected by anxiety over threats to security in the correctional centre as well as a demand placed on the resources due to the length of stay for this category of offenders. This statement also highlights some of the realities faced by the DCS as the average length of sentence handed down to women is also increasing. In 1995, women served, on average, sentences of three years two months. In the 2004/2005 annual report of the Judicial Inspectorate of Correctional centres (JIP), this average is now said to be five years ten months (Haffejee et al., 2006). According to the JIP (2004), the number of women serving sentences longer than seven years has risen by almost 300% since 1995. In a study by Haffejee et al. (2006), More than one in three women (38%) across the three correctional centres had been convicted of murder or attempted murder, making

this the most common offence for women in correctional centres. Women were least likely to be incarcerated for drug-related crimes.

1.2 Rationale for the study

The increasing number of long-term offenders in South Africa necessitates a critical re-examination of how these offenders serve their terms of incarceration. Mutingh (2005) predicted that over the next 25 years, there will be a decline in the proportion of short-term offender and an increase in the long-term offender population. Further analysis and calculations by Mutingh (2005) estimate that less than 7% of the required bed space for the next 25 years in South African correctional centres will be occupied by offenders serving a term of fewer than two years. On the other hand, 56% of the required bed space for the next 25 years will be occupied by offenders serving a term of longer than seven years. The balance of 37% will be needed for offenders serving a term of longer than two years, but less than seven years. It is a strategic decision that will need to pass intense scrutiny as to whether rehabilitative services could and should be concentrated in any particular sentence category.

In the context of longer correctional centre terms, the effects of institutionalisation and incarceration cannot be ignored. Sentence plans, as well as rehabilitation interventions, ought to accommodate these factors. Managing long-term correctional centre sentences in a productive manner can be a costly business and the rapid increase in the proportion of long-term offenders without a corresponding increase in resources places these individuals and, ultimately, the community at risk. How offenders spend their days, the programmes they participate in and how they maintain (or build up) contact with the outside world are questions of critical importance if they are to be prepared adequately for their release (Thinane, 2010).

In essence, this means that rehabilitative programmes with long-term offenders (7 years and more) must be tailored to the individual's needs and abilities and must incorporate an

understanding of their different responses to incarceration. The real challenge lies in providing programmes of such a nature to more than half the sentenced correctional centre population in a sustained and effective manner (Mutingh, 2005). However, whilst there has been a reported comprehensive focus towards rehabilitation in DCS policies, these seem to have focused more on offenders who are most likely to return to society in the near future. This possibly indicates priority in minimising re-offending by released offenders in the community outside the correctional centre. While this is an important goal for rehabilitation of offenders, ignoring the impact lack of adequate or comprehensive rehabilitation may have on increasing re-offending within correctional centres by inmates who are classified as maximum security offenders and adequately preparing them for release in future, continue to pose serious challenges for DCS and the community.

Maximum security inmates are often treated in a routine manner and with little flexibility due to concerns about security risks. The concern over this group posing security risks is based on the perception that they are the most dangerous group within the correctional facility (Mutingh, 2005). Maghan (1996) argues that an offender is classified as maximum security if they fall into any of the following categories: sophistication of the crimes and criminal history; patterns of impulsive serious and callous violence; violence against authority; arson; sex crimes; group gang membership; history of moving between cities; suicidal and/or psychological instability. According to Mutingh (2005), it is not clear how the assessment and conclusions about this group of inmates as being dangerous comes about. Their classification as maximum security offenders implies a need for more security and control, which also has implications for their rehabilitation (Labane, 2012). While this further highlights some of the challenges faced by DCS regarding the comprehensive rehabilitation of maximum security inmates, experiences of maximum security women offenders have not been thoroughly investigated from a contextual perspective. Consequently, their rehabilitation needs continue to not be understood. Therefore, an

understanding of the rehabilitation experiences of women classified as maximum security offenders is deemed crucial for informing future and relevant rehabilitation programmes for this group of offenders.

South Africa would benefit from locally-developed, easy-to-use, standardised and culture-sensitive assessment tools for male and female offenders, in a variety of languages that are available at low or no cost to criminal justice service practitioners (Jules-Macquet, 2014). The DCS also acknowledges the importance of ensuring that rehabilitation programmes should be developed based on needs analyses, literature review and analyses of current international and local practices. The analyses should subsequently, inform the design, structure and content of programmes. The profile of offenders is also recognised as one of the most important factors in informing the development of such programmes (White Paper on Corrections, 2005).

Implementing rehabilitation and re-integration on the scale contemplated in the White Paper on Corrections (2005) requires a broad assessment of the target group so that one might describe some salient characteristics and identify areas of particular concern. It is hoped that this study will respond to this need. Psychology has a role to play in the assessment and rehabilitation of offenders apart from traditional one on one individual psychotherapy. Therefore this study intends to provide recommendations on how psychologists and other offender rehabilitation systems can expand, collaborate and improve their contribution especially in response to the rehabilitation of women classified as maximum security offenders.

The gender differences inherent in incarcerated women as compared to men, i.e. invisibility in research and policy, stereotypes, pathways to crime, addiction, abuse, homelessness and relationships, need to be addressed (Haffejee et al., 2006; Jules-Macquet, 2014). Such issues have a major impact on women offenders' successful transition and integration to the community, in terms of both programming needs and successful re-entry.

Unfortunately, these issues have until now been treated separately, despite being generally linked to the lives of most women in the criminal justice system. The absence of a holistic perspective on women's lives in a discussion of criminal justice leads to a lack of appropriate policy, planning, and program development (Covington, 2007). The current study is therefore seen as part of a wider framework for assisting the DCS in working towards a continual understanding and improvement of the rehabilitative vision for maximum security women offenders in South Africa.

Mutingh (2005) argues that a more punitive approach will not contribute to reducing crime levels, nor will longer correctional sentences facilitate rehabilitation. With more than 6 000 sentenced offenders being released from South African correctional centres monthly, a planned and rigorous approach is required if the expectation that rehabilitation will have an impact on crime levels is to be fulfilled. It is therefore of utmost importance that a new paradigm for the implementation of women offender reintegration and rehabilitation be based on a thorough understanding of the socio-cultural context that influences their offending behaviours in order to appropriately respond to their needs (Dastile, 2014).

As of March 2013, there were 3 380 incarcerated women in South African correctional centres, which comprised 2.2% of the total correctional facilities population. Of this figure, 988 are the un-sentenced awaiting trial and 2 392 are sentenced. Since 1995/6, the female correctional centre population has increased by 33%, peaking in 2002/02 at 4 253 women. The levels of overcrowding experienced at female correctional centres differ from correctional centre to correctional centre, the lowest being Queenstown correctional centre which is only 70% occupied and the highest is Thohoyandou which is 395% occupied (Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative, 2005). Therefore, despite various changes and continuous improvements that have been implemented post-apartheid, rehabilitation still continues to be compromised by other factors that

seem to take priority (White Paper on Corrections, 2005). Rehabilitation also needs to be responsive to the different categories of offenders, as well as their diverse needs. While attention has been given to other categories, for example in the mother-child sections of correctional centre, which also continue to be in need of resources and other rehabilitation programmes, little attention has been given to the women classified as maximum security offenders. The current study hopes to allow women classified as maximum security offenders to voice their rehabilitation needs, which may be overlooked in the face of the many challenges that the DCS is seeking to address.

1.3 Aims of the study

As already indicated, literature (Artz et al., 2012; Dastile, 2014; Victoria Government Department of Justice, 2005) indicates that women offenders have different dynamics and contributors to crime to that of male offenders. Examples of these include being victims of intimate partner violence; their crime is sometimes linked to their roles of being primary caregivers at home, a prevalence of mental disorders, as well as the role that relationships (with family and other significant others) play in making women vulnerable to committing a crime. The gender dynamics outlined above clearly show a need to consider alternative ways of addressing women's offending and re-offending patterns. Role players need to ensure that policies, programs, services and other interventions that address these issues are designed and delivered to reflect the unique needs, characteristics and life experiences of women (Artz et al., 2012; Dastile, 2014). The current study aims to create a novel understanding of the rehabilitation needs of women classified as maximum security offenders in correctional centres through capturing the inmates' experiences, feelings, beliefs and opinions about their rehabilitation journey.

South African literature on women incarceration indicates a lack of consistent research in understanding the profile, statistics and needs of women incarcerated in correctional centres, with greater paucity for maximum security women offenders (Artz et al., 2012). A clear picture of rehabilitation services for women remains another challenge that needs to be understood and addressed (Artz et al., 2013). By understanding the current experiences of rehabilitation by women classified as maximum offenders, this study aims to bring to the surface a continued representation of incarcerated women in research in order to consistently ensure that their rehabilitation needs are adequately attended to.

1.3.1 Objectives of the study

The study aimed to explore the rehabilitation experiences of women classified as maximum offenders through:

- a) Their understanding of rehabilitation;
- b) Forms of rehabilitation they are currently receiving;
- c) Motivating factors for attending the rehabilitation programmes available;
- d) Benefits of rehabilitation; and
- e) Their rehabilitation needs.

According to Hunter (2009) the acknowledgement of the impact of societal views on people's narratives, and restraints placed on them is crucial in conducting research with marginalised groups. Therefore in the current research, the women's experiences will be explored through semi-structured in-depth narrative interviews as these have a potential of capturing the social and cultural meanings applied to rehabilitation of women. More importantly the narrative approach also gives an opportunity for multiple truths to emerge in the understanding of rehabilitation experiences of women who are classified as maximum offenders.

1.4 Definition of terms

1.4.1 Offender

Any person, whether convicted or not, who is detained in custody in any correctional centre or who is being transferred in custody from one correctional centre to another correctional centre (Correctional Services Act, 1998). In South Africa the term prisoner has been replaced by offender.

1.4.2 Maximum security offender

In line with Silverman's (2001) definition on the classification of offenders, maximum security offenders are those offenders who are serving long sentences, with an inclination to violence and escape. These offenders are deemed to be requiring extreme control and supervision in order to prevent escape and violent behaviours (Silverman, 2001). Dissel (1996) describes maximum security offenders as those offenders who have committed "serious offences" with long sentences or multiple sentences, with a few serving sentences for fraud.

1.4.3 Correctional centre/s

A place established under the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998 as a place for the reception, detention, confinement, training or treatment of persons liable to detention (Correctional services Act, 1998). This term replaced the word prison.

1.4.4 Rehabilitation

The White Paper on Corrections (2005) defines rehabilitation as a process that combines the correction of offending behaviour, human development and the promotion of social responsibility and values. It is a desired outcome of processes that involve both departmental responsibilities of government and social responsibilities of the nation. Rehabilitation should not be viewed as a strategy to preventing crime, but rather as a holistic phenomenon encouraging social

responsibility; social justice; active participation in democratic activities; empowerment with life-skills and other skills; and a contribution to making South Africa a better place to live in.

Cullen and Gendreau (2000) state that rehabilitation is not a haphazard and deterrent process but rather a carefully planned and explicitly undertaken process, aimed at changing certain aspects (attitudes, cognitions, mental health, education and vocational) about the offender that are believed to cause the offender's criminality. Rehabilitation is also aimed at preventing the offender from breaking the law in future. According to Dissel (2012), rehabilitation is a term that is broadly accepted to mean a planned intervention aimed at changing the behaviour of the offender, with a broad definition encapsulating social relations with others, education, vocational skills and employment with the intention to reduce recidivism.

1.4.5 Gender-based rehabilitation programmes

According to Van Gundy (2013), gender-specific programmes can be defined in the following ways:

General model: based on programmes that are designed for both men and women.

Gender neutral model: based on addressing the crime and it is not focused on the individual.

Gender-based model: rehabilitative models based on gender from assessment, design and implementation. These are also referred to as gender responsive or gender sensitive.

Even though certain programmes may be referred to as gender neutral, gender based and or gender responsive, social gender roles and expectations are so deeply embedded in our societal structures such that most people cannot imagine any other ways of understanding gender. As a result gender is often referred loosely in a binary form in terms of language and practices (Corwin, 2012). Therefore the definition of gender-sensitive programmes and gender based models in correctional centres also seems to ignore the various gender identities, with implications of a "gender sensitive rehabilitation programme" that does not truly recognise the

expansiveness of gender and the true meaning of rehabilitation within the variations of gender identity.

1.5 Situating the Study

Women's criminality continues to be explained as emanating from a psychological disorder and a fractured self and therefore rehabilitative strategies are still implemented to perform such gendered beliefs about female criminality. As such the gender sensitive rehabilitation practices for women often solidify women boundaries, discourage free and choice based relationship formations and tend to restrict and contain women's emotions (Wyse, 2012).

Whilst the current study intends to focus on women's experiences on rehabilitation in the correctional centre, one cannot ignore the fact that gender is performed both through language and embodied or non-verbal actions. Therefore the term 'woman' in itself carries a discursive interaction that mostly reinforces traditional gender stereotypes. This is so because the word 'woman' symbolises a binary view of gender which has implications that undermine the notion of various gender identities, with implications for further social marginalisation, stereotyping and exclusion (Corwin, 2009). Therefore the current study aims to capture experiences of all women with a non-binary view of gender, hoping to capture experiences of all women within the gender continuum, whilst taking into consideration that their narratives can also be influenced by the traditional constructions of gender.

Chapter 2

Literature review

The current chapter provides a historical context of rehabilitation by providing philosophies that originally influenced incarceration, which provides an understanding of how correctional centres were originally designed with a view to punish. A history of correctional centres is also provided with emphasis on how punishment and rehabilitation was implemented during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era in the African continent. The impact of incarceration on human beings is also reviewed with a focus to indicate the negative impact of a punitive philosophy. The latter part of the literature focuses on research and theories regarding the incarceration of women with significant emphasis on highlighting the intersection of various locations of inequality that influence women criminality, available policy guidelines and the classification of women. Gender-sensitive programmes are also discussed as well as the role of civil society in rehabilitation.

2.1 Philosophy on Incarceration

There are two philosophical approaches to incarceration, namely the conservative view and the liberal view. The conservative view is based on the notion that people are rational in their thinking and actions and therefore deserve logical outcomes. Consequently, incarceration with deterrent and incapacitation is seen as a logical follow-up from deserving outcomes. The liberal view is however, based on the assumption that human behaviour is influenced by upbringing, poverty, education and life experiences in general. Hence, rehabilitation is advocated mostly in this view. The liberal view thus advocates for positive prevention that fosters awareness of the law amongst offenders, stabilises norms of behaviour and preserves the general population's trust of the justice system (Orth, 2003).

Historically, correctional centres were meant to specifically punish those who had wronged society, through inflicting physical pain on the body. However, the purpose of corrections has recently been expanded to include more than punishment which has seen correctional centres incorporating deterrence and rehabilitation in dealing with offenders. The aim, therefore, was to start working with the body and mind of the offender so that they leave the correctional system transformed and, hopefully, rehabilitated. However, according to Tomar (2013), the psychological welfare and freedom of an individual offender does not only depend on how much education, counselling and recreation received whilst incarcerated, but also depends on the relationships and encounters they have in the correctional system.

2.1.1 Retributive approach

The retributive approach is based on balancing wrong through punishment. Punishment is the infliction of pain and is seen as a just response to the offender's crime, ways of educating the offender, protecting society and a way to deter other potential offenders (Orth, 2003). This approach implies that society has the right to punish whilst the offender has the right to be punished. The retribution philosophy is based on the presumption that all society members are subject to a social contract of ensuring safety for everyone by not violating the security of others. This approach has been criticised for dehumanising and almost denying human beings of the right to be equal, as offenders are therefore not treated equally in comparison to people outside correctional centres.

It has however been established that using punishment in attempts to correct offending behaviour has not always yielded positive change (Snyman, 1989). One can argue that the retributive approach is based on the premise that human behaviour is logical and therefore criminal offences should also be viewed as a rational act or choice made by human behaviours that deserve punishment. On the other hand, this premise fails to see the fact that in some

instances, human beings are not in complete control of their behaviours and in other instances, out of their own choices they have learned behaviours, attitudes and thinking that makes them vulnerable to criminal behaviours (Tomar, 2013). Consequently, this approach is responsible for the punitive stance in how correctional centres are managed which basically make rehabilitation services to be very challenging to implement. One can also argue that this approach also individualises crime and ignores the role of social factors in offending behaviours.

As part of enforcing the retributive approach in corrections, women officers were not allowed employment in the custodial function for men due to a fear of them being easily manipulated, less aggressive and more likely to be pro-rehabilitation and helping inmates with their emotions, thereby causing unrest. As a result, women were placed as custodial officers for other women as well as juveniles, with the hope that they will mother those (Hussemann & Page, 2011). This highlights the fact that the correctional system in itself was gendered, as reflected by the employment of women in what was thought to be fitting the stereotypical gender roles. Such stereotypes still possibly exist in the system, as Hussemann and Page (2011) state that the employees, as well as the offenders, import socially constructed gender roles from society into the correctional services system. The implication is that women are seen as more pro-rehabilitation and less pro-justice (punishment, custodial) in their understanding of the purpose of incarceration in comparison to men.

Hussemann and Page (2011) further state that with time, the attitudes of correctional officers get shaped by the correctional culture which emphasises risk management (prevention of escape and violence) in correctional centres. As a result, all officers, whether male or female, are eventually socialised formally or informally into becoming rule enforcers in terms of ensuring emotional detachment and deprivation of offenders which produces the pains of incarceration. Simultaneously correctional officers also face disrespect of their authority and threats to their

own safety. As a result, they also adopt a work personality that is characterised by viewing offenders as dangerous villains which then causes suspicion, hypervigilance, isolation and cynicism on the part of correctional officers, which fuels pessimism and loss of hope in rehabilitation. Such factors are deeply embedded in the correctional culture and contribute to the challenges in implementing rehabilitation, especially gender-based rehabilitation in correctional centres.

2.1.2 The Utilitarian approach

This approach views punishment as evil but beneficial for the offender as well as society at large in order to prevent the same offence from happening again. Therefore, punishment is seen as good if it is for the benefit of the majority. The utilitarian approach sees punishment as a means to an end, the end being deterrence, incapacitation and/or rehabilitation. Incapacitation involves taking away the capacity the criminal has to commit the crime, while rehabilitation is defined as an internal change that results in the cessation of the targeted behaviour (Orth, 2003).

The theory of deterrence advocates that certain punishment, if harsh enough, can deter future crimes (Mays & Winfree, 2005, p. 5). Deterrence focuses on future results rather than past misdeeds. With general deterrence, the idea is that the punishment that an individual offender receives should deter the community from committing such an act. An example of this may be the death penalty. The purposes thereof are to give the highest punishment there is for the type of crime committed but at the same time, it is to deter people from committing such an act. In South African courts, for example, heavier sentences are imposed on offenders, more than have been usually imposed and this is done to warn the rest of the community not to commit such crimes. However, the high rates of recidivism place uncertainty in this theory. Snyman (1989, p. 21) highlights that deterring a person from committing a crime by imposing punishment upon others can in all probability certainly not be proven.

Cavadino (1997, p. 34) indicated that “catching and punishing offenders stigmatises them as criminals”. This label is often a source of stigma in the community which potentially serves a deterrent role in preventing crime due to the connotations attached to such labelling. However, within the correctional system, such labelling can provide an opportunity for offenders to view the corrections environment as a place where one can learn more about crime, especially for offenders serving lengthy sentences. Dissel (1996) also confirmed that maximum security offenders indicated that instead of being rehabilitated in correctional centres, they actually end up learning more about crime. This was seen as one of the consequences of lack of meaningful rehabilitation programmes for this group of offenders.

2.2 History of Correctional Centres in the African Context

2.2.1 Pre-Colonial Period

Penal incarceration seemed to have been rare in the pre-colonial period as no evidence is found to support the existence of a systematically organised penitentiary system in Africa. Criminals, prisoners of war and slaves existed but this related to war and was not regarded as a specific form of treatment. Correctional centres were introduced after the advent of colonialism to support the existence of a systematically organised penitentiary system in Africa. In the pre-colonial period penal systems, in traditional societies were characterised by compensation to the victims for injuries inflicted in all cases of crime and the damage would be determined by the traditional leaders of the society concerned (Petè, 2008). Spiritual sanctions where religious rites were conducted to protect the community were performed. Ostracism was occasionally used through a mild form of social isolation within the community itself or by the most severe form of total banishment by means of a formal ritual.

The purpose of compensation during this era was always about restoring equilibrium in society and at times, the family of the offender would be collectively held liable for compensation. Penal sanctions were only considered when the effects of the crime threatened the stability of the community as a whole (Petè, 2008). This approach resembled African principles of Ubuntu as defined by Hanks (2008) who postulated that they embody a collective worldview that sees relationships with others as far more important than the individual experience. Community well-being and harmony is viewed as primary to individual well-being. Therefore, the approach to handling crime involved a more collective and community inclusive approach than an individualistic approach that seeks to locate and pathologise the crime within an individual. In the latter process, society is excused from solving the problem even though the ‘criminal’ is a product of the social power imbalances that continue to be perpetuated and reproduced through institutional structures and practices that maintain or even exacerbate the “problem”.

2.2.2 Colonial Period

Although correctional centres existed in the central continent of Africa during the colonial period, these became widespread in most of sub-Saharan Africa and eventually South Africa towards the end of the nineteenth century, as the colonial powers extended their control across the length and breadth of the African continent. These institutions were physically and administratively designed to play a role in the expansion and consolidation of colonialism and racial control. By 1933, forced labour became a frequent sentence that saw government build more prison camps devoted to agricultural and public works (Petè, 2008).

In the South African context, correctional centres were seen as part of the wider set of institutions which were designed to implement and maintain apartheid policies. Correctional centres in South Africa were used to impose colonial control of indigenous population (Petè, 2008), resulting in penal policies that perpetuated chronic overcrowding, with severe corporal

and capital punishment being characteristic of how offenders were treated. The aim was to secure white sovereignty and control, with African offenders viewed as brutal and savage but at the same time simple and childlike. Therefore, the management of these institutions reflected ethnocentrism and a western individualistic approach that sought to alienate offenders from their communities and the historical traditions of their culture (Hanks, 2008). African women apparently experienced the worst conditions of confinement because of the intersection of gender, race and offender status and were thus exposed to greater abuse characterised by chronic neglect as invisible objects in the system (Petè, 2008). It is my argument that the intersection of identities of incarcerated women still leads to them receiving more differential treatment, especially with the other additional locations of inequality like class and maximum offender identity.

2.2.3 Post-Colonial Era

The post-colonial era has been characterised by the liberation of many African countries and the dawn of democracy in South Africa. Whilst this was supposed to be a period of relief, there was still a tremendous task to reform correctional centres from the apartheid system. Therefore, dealing with challenges of overcrowding, inadequate human resources and violation of human rights were inherent in the correctional centres (White Paper on Corrections, 2005). This was done through collaboration at an international level with other African countries where reform in African correctional centres was prioritised. However, with having to attend to the challenges mentioned previously in the correctional centre, attention to the needs of women in correctional centres was not given priority (Sarkin, 2008).

Foucault (1977) argues that reformation in correctional centres involved a theatre of punishment in which a complex system of representation and signs continue to be displayed publicly through the establishment of courts, sentences and correctional centres. Despite attempts

to reform, discipline and punishment still remain part of the modern penal system, where the body is arranged, regulated and supervised rather than tortured. This therefore means that correctional centres were not originally designed to reform inmates but rather to replace outmoded forms of punishment and to a large measure, capital punishment. Therefore, what correctional facilities replaced was never reformatory as reflected in their disciplinary power exemplified by Betham's Panopticon, a building that shows how individuals can be supervised and controlled efficiently (Foucault, 1977).

The thought that correctional centres might have a reformatory value has gradually evolved on a trial and error basis and as such, is still subject to critical evaluation (East, 1947). The argument above reflects that the value of correctional centres as reformatory agencies is a discourse that has a long history. In the past, the principal function of a correctional facility was seen as more diagnostic than therapeutic. Therefore, through this model, the correctional centre was viewed as a diagnostic clinic where an understanding of problems and frameworks only were obtained, with reform being handed over to the community agencies of supervision following release. This function of correctional centres was based on the notion that incarceration is incompatible with reformation. The argument advocated by East (1947) was that for the reformation of the offender to be accomplished the correctional facility itself must still further be reformed. I also argue that this narrative is still relevant in the correctional services rehabilitation discourse today. This is so because as much as there has been legislation internationally for example Bangkok rules (2010/2016), and locally the Correctional services Act 111 of 1998 and the White Paper on Corrections (2005) that seek to implement rehabilitation, the challenges in achieving the outcomes of rehabilitation can be located in the of lack of reform in the structure, operations and the mind-set of correctional staff, as well as society.

The correctional system continues to reproduce and maintain the very same architectural space, classification systems and rehabilitation programmes that are deeply embedded in the old systems of discipline and punish, which reflect correctional centres as a network of power that spreads through society. Calls for the transformation of correctional centres have failed to recognise how deeply rooted correctional centres are in the power discourses found in society (Foucault, 1977). Therefore, although the desire to rehabilitate offenders looks good on paper, the correctional environment and systems make it practically impossible to achieve the effective implementation of rehabilitation, especially gender-sensitive rehabilitation for women.

2.3 The Impact of Incarceration

Although the harsh physical punishment that used to be implemented in correctional centres has “stopped” due to the implementation of human rights-centred policies, the psychological punishment still exists. Psychological effects of punishment may not be visible but one cannot overlook the possibility that being in a correctional centre can have a profound impact on an individual’s personality and sense of personal worth (Travis & Waul, 2003). The main theme in the effects of incarceration is deprivation, control and a sense of degradation, which gives a sense of a gendered discourse that happens in the correctional environment and is bred by the architectural space as well as relationships that exist within that environment. Therefore, one can imagine that the correctional services environment requires a considerable adjustment for the rehabilitation vision of women to be achieved.

Tomar (2013) indicated that people who are incarcerated require psychological services to cope with the psychological effects of incarceration relating to adjustment to their new lives after sentencing, the separation from home and family members, as well as adjusting to the correctional centre culture which in many ways is different from the culture outside the correctional centre. However, despite this identified need for psychological services Dissel

(1996) argues that offenders still remain a forgotten population or the ignored population since they are usually judged and condemned by most people. Faust and Magaletta (2010) also argued that the voluntary use of psychological services by female inmates was limited and seen more in inmates who have a history of use of such services prior to incarceration, based on the existence of a mental illness combined with adjustment problems. This possibly implies that female inmates who are not familiar with the psychological services prior to incarceration may not use it voluntarily during incarceration due to a lack of knowledge about the role of such a service. Language and culture are also some of the barriers that limit offenders' access to psychological programmes in correctional centres (Faust & Magaletta, 2010).

2.3.1 Loss of liberty

The loss of liberty is an obvious impact of incarceration for offenders and is experienced on two levels: They are confined *in* an institution and they are then confined again *within* the institution, as the movement within that institution is not dependent on them mostly, but is dependent on orders received from security, especially for maximum security offenders. Such a loss is also compounded by the loss of contact with relatives, family and friends. The constant scrutiny by correctional officers with the commensurate lack of privacy can be psychologically debilitating (DeVeaux, 2013). The deprivation of liberty may mean a loss of emotional connection, isolation and boredom for the inmates. However, the pain of the loss of liberty comes from the symbolic representation of confinement as being morally rejected and condemned by the free community. Furthermore inmates are also deprived of goods and services. In other words, although the inmates do receive services like medical attention, food and clothing, how these are distributed to the offenders is quite controlled with little input from the inmates (Tomar, 2013). Like any gradual change, the impact of incarceration is also progressive and accumulative. Initially, when offenders reach the institution the first few months or years become stressful and difficult as it can be painful to adjust to this new rigid environment characterised by limitations and

deprivations, with a diminished and stigmatised sense of existence. However, as the years progress, a process of transformation happens where the offender starts getting accustomed to the wide range of restrictions, deprivations and indignities that they face (Travis & Waul, 2003).

2.3.2 Deprivation of heterosexual relationships

According to Tomar (2013) for inmates who do not engage in homosexual relationships, the correctional centre confinement can be interpreted as figurative castration as they get frustrated and at times experience fragmented self-identity and guilt as a result of the occasional homosexual sexual encounters that they engage in to relieve their sexual frustration. While Tomar (2013) puts forward an argument of deprivation of heterosexual relationships in correctional centre environments, this argument also reflects a heteronormative view of gender and sexuality which perpetuates homophobia, bias and ignorance of the challenges encountered by offenders who engage in homosexual relationships.

2.3.3 Deprivation of autonomy

Inmates are further deprived of the autonomy to make decisions about their behaviour as they are subject to rules and laws within the system that are designed to control their behaviours in detail. The rules and decisions made on behalf of the inmates are not always explained and they are just expected to comply. All this creates a feeling of being dehumanised and treated like objects with no feelings and opinions, and being reduced to the status of a weak, helpless and dependent position, which presents a full threat to the offender's self-identity as an adult member of society. Such deprivation of autonomy can also have negative consequences for self-growth and development of the inmate who at times has an added baggage from their history and social circumstances (Tomar, 2013). According to Travis and Waul (2003), the deprivation of autonomy may result in long-term dependence on the institutional structures so that the inmate may be uncomfortable when such autonomy is given back. This therefore means that with long-

term institutionalisation, the offender's decision-making capacity may become impaired.

Velimesis (1981) argues that even though women have different personal problems than men, women correctional centres have been administered by methods that are only a slight modification of those developed to control men. Under the correctional system, dependence on authority figures is maximised and opportunities to learn and exercise responsible decision making are minimised. Many women are often in the correctional centre because of an excessive dependency on others and, as such, this type of administration may exacerbate the thinking and behaviour patterns that are personally and relationally destructive. They therefore continue to learn that they are powerless and dependent, resulting in verbal attacks and physical abuse by women inmates which are sometimes an attempt to counter helplessness, even though they know that disciplinary measurements will follow.

2.3.4 Deprivation of security

The other reality faced by incarcerated people is the constant anxiety about their own safety from that of fellow inmates and correctional officers (DeVeaux, 2013). This anxiety often comes from knowing that one is surrounded by people who may have committed worse crimes, who are violent and who may therefore attack anyone at any given point in time. What is even more anxiety inducing is that once one is attacked and is defeated or fails to defend oneself, one is then perceived as weak and vulnerable and is more likely to be constantly attacked by others (Tomar, 2013). As a result of being in an environment where security is constantly under threat, whether in reality or perceived, inmates eventually develop a sense of hypervigilance, interpersonal distrust and suspicion. They may be constantly on guard, avoid certain areas or people that are perceived to be dangerous and even keep some weapons that they may use in case of being attacked or victimised. Furthermore offenders also develop strong emotional control, where they control and restrain their emotions so as not to appear weak and vulnerable to exploitation. Such emotional control often leads to an unbridgeable distance from self and others which sometimes

extends beyond the correctional centre, where offenders might find it hard to reconnect with themselves and other people (Travis & Waul, 2003).

2.3.5 Diminished sense of worth

As a result of being treated in an inhumane manner as characterised by the deprivation of basic human freedom, autonomy and dependency to correctional control, offenders experience a diminished sense of worth. This feeling is exacerbated by the correctional facility conditions of overcrowding and lack of resources which leave offenders in very uncomfortable environments. Therefore, their loss of control and the degrading conditions in which they find themselves are a constant reminder of their plight and stigmatisation (Tomar, 2013). As much as the correctional system is meant to rehabilitate offenders and changes have been made to incorporate rehabilitation services, it is apparent that the nature of the system still continues to possibly harm the offenders and exacerbate existing psychological problems which offenders come with into the system.

According to Artz et al. (2012), for most women the correctional system serves as an extension of the abusive domestic context where aspects of the domestic context are relived and re-experienced, which depict bullying and other behaviours that represent controlling, threatening, unpredictable and continuous disempowerment. Tomar (2013) argues that in most instances, correctional centres do more harm than good and thus some offenders develop psychological problems for the first time or already existing psychological problems may be exacerbated because of the nature of the system. The correctional setting produces psychological effects in offenders in the form of phobias and trauma-genic responses (fear of the unknown, hypervigilance, trust, fear of one's own life being threatened as a result of witnessing violence). Tomar (2013) further states that the correctional facility culture is exploitive, victimising,

degrading and disempowering in nature and offenders are expected to adjust to such, with the element of having to learn individually how to find ways to pass the time.

2.4 Incarceration of Women in South Africa

South Africa has 241 correctional services centres nationally. Within this number, only 8 are specifically for women offenders, whilst 91 accommodate women in a section within a general correctional centre; 13 of these centres are for the youth whilst the remaining 129 are for men only (Jules-Macquet, 2014). Black female offenders constitute the largest percentage of female offenders (Jules-Macquet, no date). While there is an indication of low numbers of the availability of women correctional centres, the DCS recognises the key challenge presented by the presence of women in correctional centres. There is recognition that women present with unique challenges and require a specific approach. This is compounded by the fact that the current correctional centres are designed for men and do not accommodate the specific needs of women (Department of Correctional Services, 2011/2012). This possibly highlights the continued need for attention to be given to the incarceration of women in general, not only in their accommodation, but in other factors such as their rehabilitation too. This should probably involve more research as well as public discussions on the topic of incarcerated women in order to better respond to the unique challenges that women present with in correctional centres.

Female offenders constitute 2.22% of total sentenced offenders, whilst the male population is 97.78% of the total sentenced offender population (Department of Correctional Services Offender Population Register, 2008). During, 1995 there was a total of 1905 sentenced female offenders in South Africa with this number increasing to 3045 in January 2005 (Haffejee et al., 2006). In 2011/12, there were 2663 female sentenced offenders compared to 109804 male sentenced offenders (Department of Correctional Services, 2011/2012). There seems to have been a drop in the number of sentenced women in South African correctional centres between

2005 and 2011. The trend in the drop of sentenced women, as well as the contributing factors, can be attributed to the release of women under special remissions in 2005. However, in general due to a lack of consistent and progressive research on incarcerated women in South Africa, this trend has been a challenge to completely track (Artz et al., 2012).

Similar to international trends (Alarid & Reichel, 2008; Covington, 2007), recent statistics released by the acting National Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services indicated that there is an increase in women incarceration as evidenced by 4032 incarcerated women nationally (Media release, 2015). Statistics derived from DCS 2015/2016 (table 2) annual report also indicated the number of incarcerated women to be 4105 in March 2016, indicating an increase from the report released in 2015. The statistics table on the DCS report also depicts a growth in the number of incarcerated women between 2011 and 2016. This rapid growth in incarcerated women possibly indicates that this area can no longer be ignored, as new issues and challenges continue to emerge. For example, there are consequences to incarceration for females, their families and the administration that are impacting at a policy level. Furthermore, women are receiving longer sentences which results in challenges like declining health, loss of friends and fear of dying (Aday, Krabill & Deaton-Owens, 2014). Since 2005, an increase in longer sentences for women offenders was also noticed in South Africa, indicating a growth in women who stay in the correctional centre environment for more than seven years (Sloth-Nielsen, 2005). Since 2011, statistics reveal that similar to international trends as reflected by Spjeldnes, Jung and Yamatani (2014), women incarcerated in South African correctional centres also present more with more economic crimes and drug-related offences in comparison to men (Table 1) (DCS, 2011/2012).

Table 1: Crime Categories

Crime Categories	Women Sentenced	Men sentenced	Total Number	% Women	%Men
Economical	1200	24173	25373	45%	22%
Aggressive	1009	60088	61097	38%	55%
Sexual	15	18018	180033	1%	16%
Narcotics	275	2442	2717	10%	2%
Other	164	5083	5247	6%	5%
Total	2663	109804	112467	100%	100%

Source: DCS (2011/2012)

Table 2: Average number of inmates per gender category in correctional facilities per financial years

The following table represents the average numbers of inmates in DCS correctional facilities	Unsentenced inmates			Sentenced offenders			Average inmate population		
	Female	Males	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
2010/2011	963	46 794	47 757	2 625	110 714	112 934	3 588	157 508	161 096
2011/2012	1030	44 868	45 898	2 735	110 309	113 044	3 765	155 177	158 942
2012/2013	988	44 742	45 730	2 392	102 486	104 878	3 380	150 608	153 968
2013/2014	1005	43 853	44 858	2 490	105 206	107 696	3 495	149 058	152 553
2014/2015	1048	41 029	42 077	2 867	112 197	115 064	3 915	153 226	157 141
2015/2016	1053	41 327	42 380	3 052	113 899	116 951	4 105	155 226	159 331

While we have the recent statistics on the population of offenders aggregated in terms of gender, we continue to see how a binary view of gender continues to permeate practices and analytical view of the world. Statistics of this nature do not reflect the gender identity variation available in the correctional centre, a practice that obviously has significant consequences regarding exclusion and discrimination of more gender identities.

A profile of the situation of women in South African correctional centres was conducted by the Judicial Inspectorate of Correctional centres in 2005. The survey was conducted on all seven female correctional centres in South Africa and it indicated that most of the women who were in the correctional centre during that time were single, between the ages of 30 to 50 years

and about 85% of them had children (Sloth-Nielsen, 2005). This finding was not that different from a recent profile done by Artz et al. (2012) who found that a majority of incarcerated women were below the age of 40 and 75% of them had children. A majority of these women were incarcerated far from home, an issue that posed challenges in terms of visits and contact with their family members, especially their children. However, in contrast to statistics produced by DCS (2011/2012), a majority of women in some Correctional centres were incarcerated for aggressive crimes (murder, assault and culpable homicide), followed by economic crimes (fraud/forgery, theft and robbery) (Artz et al., 2012; Sloth-Nielsen, 2005).

Statistics reflected by the DCS Offender Population Register (2009) indicated that the majority of offenders are classified as mediums and comprise of 60.13% of the total sentenced offender population, followed by maximum offenders with a total of 29.14%. The majority of offenders are incarcerated for aggressive crimes and they constitute 55.83% of the total offender population. These statistics indicate an overall increase in violent offences for both men and women. However, there has been a general agreement within the criminal justice system that few women pose a serious risk to society as a result of their crime. Despite this, current sentencing laws are still largely based on models of male criminality and often fail to take into account the women's lives, characteristics and roles in crime (Bloom, 2003). This indicates how a new paradigm of understanding female criminality needs to be developed not only in terms of policies but also in terms of the research methodologies, theoretical frameworks and basic assumptions about female criminality and the different contexts that shape such.

The survey conducted by the Judicial Prison Inspectorate, indicates that South African correctional centres were generally perceived to have not changed to accommodate the needs of women. For example, there were inadequate child care services and in some instances, female inmates with children were sharing the cells with 35 other women (Sloth-Nielsen, 2005).

Although the profile provides valuable information about the demographics of the women in South African correctional centres, it does not delve deeply into the lives of women in correctional centres, especially regarding their rehabilitative experiences while incarcerated. Therefore, more research is needed in providing valuable insight into the lives of women in correctional centres. The study was also conducted in 2005, therefore may be outdated as the demographic trends of women offenders may have changed significantly since then.

Research on women incarceration in South Africa (Sloth-Nielsen, 2005; Singh, 2009; The Gender, Health & Justice Research Unit, 2012) also reflects to a certain extent how policies have failed to adequately address the needs of poor women. Existing research conducted on incarcerated women reflects that women offenders continue to face challenges that discriminate against them on the basis of their gender and, as a result, continue to face many social challenges that are not addressed at a broader and more specific level. A study by Artz et al. (2012) and Jules-Macquet (no date) on incarcerated women reflects that many female offenders have backgrounds marked by violence, economic deprivation and household disruption. Artz et al. (2013) further state that the specific vulnerabilities that women face and the ways in which these vulnerabilities interact with other risk factors and shape the specific contexts in which women choose to commit crimes, are not sufficiently known or understood. Hence, a need exists to engage more with research in this population so that recommendations are made on how best to rehabilitate and influence policy in a way that has a significant impact on women's lives in general. This also indicates that a better understanding of the incarcerated women population has a role to play in informing the reflection on how progressive governmental policies are in addressing inequities faced by women in various sectors of communities.

The need for gender responsive rehabilitation programmes is highlighted in a study by Spjeldnes et al. (2014) who established that all offenders including, male and female, have different categories of needs namely, education; vocational training; housing; physical and mental health needs; as well as chemical dependency. However, women offenders have more needs than male offenders in almost all categories with more health and re-entry needs, whereas men presented more with violence and recidivism rates than women. Across genders, the most common factor for incarceration was drug related, with women reporting more of this trend than men. Furthermore, women had more child responsibility and housing needs than men. Often women had to avoid finding themselves in the same abusive relationships that they were in prior to incarceration.

Similar to findings by Van Voorhis and Presser (2001), women in the Spjeldnes et al. (2014) study were found to be more open and positive about their needs and such openness can be read as a positive predictor of willingness to participate in programmes geared at responding to such needs. Covington and Bloom (2006) emphasise that incarcerated women tend to be even more disadvantaged in their backgrounds and face more deficits in social capital (inadequate job training, limited employment histories and economic marginalisation) than incarcerated men. It is quite clear that women in correctional centres are often poor; undereducated; unskilled; from troubled family backgrounds where they were either raised in mixed families or foster families and most of them committed crimes related to gender-based violence, substance abuse and economic deprivation (Artz et al., 2012; Howells, 2000).

A study by Sable et al. (1999) indicates that incarcerated women are more likely to have experienced more than one type of violence (physical and sexual) in their lives in comparison to the general population. This pattern suggests that women offenders represent a more severely victimised group that is extremely at risk of multiple poor health outcomes that have been

associated with severe trauma. Such backgrounds of victimisation and disempowerment tend to impact on the women's ability to be in control of their lives, which then impacts negatively on their adjustment to the correctional centre. The lack of control perpetuates co-dependency with abusive men who also have some criminal elements and feelings of insecurity and inferiority that further complicate their adjustment process in the correctional centre environment (Wooldredge & Steiner, 2014). Therefore, in terms of incarcerated women, rehabilitation efforts should be made for such services to respond to these needs for women. Sable et al. (1999) suggest that it is, therefore, important to address the concerns of women offenders who are victims of violence not only when they are incarcerated but also when they are released. These programmes among others may involve parenting programmes with a view of preventing women from abusing their own children. However, despite the identified special needs for female offenders, the absence of gender sensitive programming continues to be a challenge in South African correctional centres (Jules-Macquet, no date).

According to Artz et al. (2012), what is known about crime, justice and punishment in South Africa is mostly based on frameworks and conclusions that have been developed to explain the experiences of men. Little is known about the incarceration of women and the circumstances that lead to particular patterns of offending. Not much is known about the way in which female offenders experience life in the correctional centre or the impact of their incarceration on their health, well-being and their connections to people in their lives. Studies from other countries (Covington, 2007; Farber, 2013) indicate that the experiences of women in correctional centres are quite different from men and with South Africa's unique history of apartheid an application of international studies in the South African context might be a challenging one. Similar to international trends, South African correctional centres are also male-dominated in terms of the number of offenders that are housed in the correctional services (Department of Correctional Services, 2011/2012). As a result of this, one would inevitably imagine that the custodial culture

is dominated by the needs of men. The implications, therefore, are that as correctional centres were historically male dominated, this meant that the needs of men always superseded those of women. Recently in South Africa, legislation has been complemented by the united rules for treatment of women correctional centres (Bangkok rules, 2010/16), indicating that efforts are being made to meet the needs of women offenders, especially with the increase in the women offender population.

2.4.1 Policy Guidelines on Incarcerated Women

As already indicated, that historically the correctional system in South Africa was designed in the context of the apartheid system, where at the time forced labour was expected of offenders (Petè, 2008). Consequently, the facilities were of such a nature that they only allowed for resting after spending a great deal of time working at the farms. Rehabilitation was not at the centre of correctional programmes, as a result there was no focus on acquiring resources in line with a rehabilitative vision. In 1959, legislation was passed that abolished the use of offenders in labour. This was replaced by parole for short-term sentences where the offender would be expected to serve their sentence under correctional service supervision. Parole was also used as a reward for good behaviour. The Correctional Services Act of 1959 entrenched a military culture in the correctional system. This meant that there was a clear command type of approach with uniforms, discipline and hierarchical management styles as part of the system. The wardens were not allowed to interact with offenders and the correctional staff were not trained in rehabilitation and human development (Goyer, 2004).

In 1991, significant amendments were made to the Correctional Services Act of 1959 which was then replaced with the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998. The changes implemented by the new act involved demilitarising the correctional service system and introducing parole as an alternative to incarceration in some instances. The Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998 was a significant step in creating a clear correctional centre governance and

monitoring system. Currently in South Africa, the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) is guided by domestic and international legislation in providing a suitable environment and services to the general correctional centre population. The South African Constitution puts emphasis on the dignity of offenders by highlighting their rights, which in essence provides a legal framework for the regulation of correctional centres and treatment of offenders (Correctional Services Act, 1998). The conditions under which offenders should be treated are to be consistent with human dignity and this is to be ensured through providing the basic rights that are consistently the same for all South Africans. These include adequate accommodation, nutrition, reading material and medical treatment.

Through the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998, a policy advisory board was formed with the National Council of Correctional Services, Judicial Officers and Senior Department of Correctional Services officials. The act further setup the Judicial Inspectorate of Correctional centres to monitor correctional centre conditions and abuses against offenders through appointing independent correctional centre visitors to receive and investigate offender complaints. The effect of this monitoring body is evident as the issue of correctional centre conditions are now consistently raised in parliamentary debates (Goyer, 2004) and calls for rehabilitation processes sensitive to the needs of women and development programmes that are non-discriminatory are made (Artz et al., 2013). Correctional centres were mandated to incarcerate women as close by as possible to their families in an effort to ensure more visits and thus better social support for women offenders (White Paper on Corrections, 2005). However according to Artz et al. (2013), the White Paper provides very little information on what the needs of incarcerated women are, thereby indicating a need for further exploration of these.

The Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998 offers guidelines regarding the treatment of women offenders, namely:

Section 7(2) (b): states that female offenders should be separated from male offenders. However this does not necessarily mean separate facilities. Meaning that male and female offenders can be housed in the same correctional centre but in different sections;

Section 8 (2): states that the nutritional requirements of pregnant women must be accommodated;

Section 14 (4): states that every correctional centre should ensure that a gender-sensitive environment exists;

Section 20: gives women offenders the right to have their children live with them up until the age of five; and

Section 27 (3) (b): body searches should be done by the same sex gender in the absence of the opposite gender.

Some of the guidelines of the Correctional services Act 111 of 1998 are quite generic, lack specification of what each section means, are not derived from the lived experiences of women in the South African context and may be outdated due to the lack of consistently evaluating the need for review and update. Therefore, these guidelines create the risk of standardising the treatment of women offenders without consideration of the contextual factors that characterise each woman's lived experience within and outside the correctional centre. The Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998 has also been complemented by the United Nations Rules for the treatment of Women offenders and Non-Custodial means for Women Offenders (Bangkok rules, 2010/16), to which South Africa is a signatory as well. These rules provide several guidelines, specifically on the treatment of women offenders as indicated by the following rules:

Rule 2: special attention should be paid to admission procedures for women and children in order to respond to their special needs. Furthermore prior to their admission, women with caretaking

responsibilities should be given adequate and reasonable time to make arrangements for alternative care and accommodation for their children.

Rule 3: the names, ages and custodial arrangements of the children should be recorded on admission and be kept confidential.

Rule 4: women offenders are to be incarcerated in correctional centres closer to their homes, taking into consideration their children, their preferences and the availability of rehabilitation programmes.

Rule 5: all correctional centres are to strive to have services that meet the specific hygiene requirements for women, for example, free sanitary towels etc.

Rule 12: specifically recommends that individualised, gender sensitive and trauma informed mental health and rehabilitative programmes be made available for women with mental health needs (Bangkok Rules, 2010/16). This generally responds to the unique nature of women's health needs as informed by a mentally compromised position that they inherit from being victims of childhood and adulthood abuse, as well as a history of domestic violence.

Rule 69-70: requires that states organise, promote and publish research on female criminality including the reasons that trigger women's confrontation with the criminal justice system as well as on programming designed to reduce recidivism.

Although the Bangkok Rules (2010/2016) legislation seems to be quite comprehensive in addressing the specific needs of women offenders, there still remains much work in specifying, developing and ensuring that the rehabilitation programmes available in correctional services are indeed addressing the unique needs presented by women in correctional centres within the South African context. In section 32 (8) of the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998, provisions are made for individualised and personalised assessments of offenders in a way that informs a needs-based rehabilitative programme. Such assessment entails first generation assessments which are in-depth and are based on the assessor's professional intuition and practical experience of

offending behaviour, which is drawn from scientifically sound needs and risk assessment tools. However, individual and personalised assessment and treatment procedures in South African corrections are often not the norm due to staff shortages. Consequently, a one size fits all approach is used (Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit, 2012).

Research conducted by the Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit (2012) also indicated that sentence plans derived from these initial assessments are often incomplete and not detailed enough to guide the inmate's rehabilitation process. The women offenders in the research also mentioned that their past history of trauma and violence is also not always taken into account, because when asked to record their life history, they tend to write about the recent events or issues related to current incarceration. This, therefore, highlights a need for more in-depth, face-to-face qualitative understanding of the narratives of incarcerated women in order to provide a comprehensive view of their needs, which will later inform a comprehensive guide to the rehabilitation of women in South African correctional centres.

2.4.2 Classification of Women Offenders

To deal effectively with the risk of offenders in correctional services, a classification system is used. This classification system is applied on two levels. The initial classification is usually based on the system-wide external assessment and basically classifies the level of custody (medium, maximum, community, etc.), programme needs and other needs required by the offender. On arrival, the offender undergoes the internal classification process based on their behaviour, personality traits and specific programme needs. In short, the external classification system addresses the inter-institutional needs whereas the internal classification system addresses the intra-institutional needs (Hardyman, Austin, Alexander, Johnson & Tulloc, 2002).

The classification system is seen as crucial in guiding the general governance of the correctional centres and impacts significantly on the planning strategy of the resources (staffing levels, bed space and programming) and services offered in correction centres (Hardyman et al., 2002). Effective offender classification can lead to the prevention of wrong classifications; inappropriate allocation to treatment programmes; unsuitable work allocation; wrongful release of the offender to society; and should specify the offender's need for security, treatment, education, work assignment and readiness for release (Labane, 2012: 29). Herbig and Hesselink (2016) state that in South Africa, the classification of offenders is currently done in a way that balances the security needs of the individual against himself/herself; the staff; other offenders; and the public, as well as the human development and correctional needs of the offender. As a result, in balancing the security and rehabilitation needs in classifying offenders, recommendations are made for the correctional centre to take the following into consideration: personal particulars of the offender, crime category, nature of the crime, nature of the relationship of offender to the victim(s), circumstances under which the crime was committed, the effective length of sentence, number and nature of previous convictions and time elapsed since the previous conviction. This information is then balanced with the threat to the community, the escape risk, the threat to fellow inmates and staff, the vulnerability of the individual to others and the need for protection from other inmates and/or himself or herself. The approach is also based on the understanding that the rehabilitation process of the individual will impact on this classification and ongoing case management that allows for reconsideration of the conditions of the management and security classification of inmates (White Paper on Corrections, 2005).

This means that the type of offenders kept under any security classification is not static. It changes as per variation of the variables above, some of which do change whilst the offender is still in custody. However, balancing the rehabilitation and security needs is always paramount in the classification and re-classification process. Therefore, it is imperative to explore how these

needs are balanced whilst taking into consideration that some offenders do get released or are to be released in the near future. For incarcerated women, it is important to also consider how gender-specific aspects like the socio-economic (gender-based violence and financial dependence) context that women come from are integrated into the classification system in order to inform a gender responsive rehabilitation journey.

The classification system used in correctional centres is deemed as not being completely responsive to the gender specific needs of female offenders. White (2012) and Van Voorhis and Presser (2001) argue that most classification systems were developed based on the Level of Supervision Inventories which tend to classify offenders as high, medium or low risk. The challenge with most of these assessments is that they were originally designed for men and are quantitative in nature, and are therefore distant and inhumane. Such classification is based on static factors like past criminal offences as well as dynamic factors such as interaction with their peers in the correctional centre environment. Such classification, if blindly applied to women, runs the risk of either over-classifying or under-classifying the women. Inherent in that risk is the tendency to overlook factors that shape the context which influence women's vulnerability to committing crimes, as many of the security risk classification tools are based on the assumption that the risky behaviours that need to be addressed are primarily the offending behaviours (Howells, 2000).

Hardyman et al. (2002) propose that there should be no standard classification system used. Instead, classification systems should be tailored and validated for the specific population that they will be used in. In other words, female classification systems for women offenders should be tailored to specifically address the unique issues for women. Howells (2000) also suggests that such assessment should focus on the "criminogenic" and "non-criminogenic" factors of women offenders. Criminogenic factors are those factors that are functionally related to

the women's offending behaviour and non-criminogenic factors are the factors that are usually distressing and/or socially disempowering and are part of the background that the women offender comes from.

The classification of offenders in itself brings about certain challenges in the rehabilitation of offenders, especially for those classified as maximum security. As a result despite the recent positive developments in South African correctional centres, the rehabilitation of maximum security offenders continues to pose a challenge in terms of developing and ensuring that the inmates participate in programs that are beneficial (White Paper on Corrections, 2005). This is related to the fact that the group of offenders classified as maximum security are sometimes those who are high risk in terms of security and escape. As a result, strict security control measures make it impossible for them to participate in diverse correctional services rehabilitative initiatives (Thinane, 2010). The implementation of rehabilitation programmes for maximum security offenders is also influenced by the correctional officer's perception of these offenders as unlikely to change and therefore deserving more punishment than rehabilitation (Hussemann & Page, 2011).

Apart from the security risk amongst the maximum security offenders, one wonders whether the length of their sentencing also contributes to the lack of participation in rehabilitative programmes as the return to society is sometimes not imminent in comparison to those classified as minimum security offenders. Interviews conducted with maximum security offenders indicated that most of them were not participating in any rehabilitative activity. Consequently, they spent most of their time with other inmates and felt that instead of being rehabilitated, they end up learning more about crime (Diesel, 1996). The information from Diesel (1996) was based on interviews conducted with male offenders which were summarised into an article. Although providing valuable information relating to rehabilitation concerns from maximum security

offenders, the experiences of women offenders were not captured and therefore one can argue that there is still a need to focus more on exploring the rehabilitation experience of women classified as maximum offenders. This raises a question of why there should be rehabilitative programmes in place for such offenders if they are not utilised or they are underutilised.

It is, therefore, my argument that the “classification system” or the phrase in itself is problematic and contributes to the replication of the same system of discipline and punish rather than rehabilitation in the correctional centre environment. The very act of classification implies categories (minimum, medium and maximum), labelling and a mathematical and inhumane approach that is applied to human beings. The very act of labelling offenders definitely impacts on the offender’s identity and the differential treatment that they receive within the correctional centre, which may breed more stereotypes in addition to the stereotype of being an offender. For women who are vulnerable because of their gender, the system of classification may bring forth a whole set of factors that perpetuate the experiences of power, control and discrimination. Similar to a proposal by Van Voorhis and Presser (2001) that community risk-based assessments be used, this brings to the fore my weaving argument about the importance of applying a completely different and a more humane paradigm of “classification” or understanding of female offenders in a way that seeks to relate to them as social beings shaped by their contexts. Furthermore, Jules-Macquet (no date) also argues for a locally developed user-friendly, culturally sensitive assessment tool that is available in all languages for both women and men offenders.

2.4.3 The health of women in correctional centres

Rehabilitation is intended as a holistic development of the offender through focusing on the spiritual, social, mental, physical, educational, moral and vocational aspects of offenders (White Paper on Corrections, 2005). Whilst rehabilitation is concerned with changing the behaviour as well as circumstances, attitudes and behaviours related to the offence, attention also needs to be

given to the general health of the female offenders. Participation in other rehabilitation programmes may even be more challenging or unsuccessful when the physical and mental health of the offenders is not taken into consideration in the process.

2.4.3.1 Physical Health of incarcerated women

In South Africa, the provision of healthcare in correctional centres is guided by the Constitutional obligation that affords incarcerated people basic rights to access health, accommodation and food. Whilst the DCS is committed to meeting the conditions of the Constitution and Correctional Services Act No 111 of 1998, the Judicial Inspectorate of Correctional centres (2004) has identified a wide gap between what is expected and the actual reality. Singh (2009) found that women offenders complained about the poor quality of medical attention they received, the delay in the provision and sometimes neglect when someone is sick. Most of the women were also poorly informed about health policies and lacked in-depth knowledge of HIV/AIDS.

The shortage of health facilities in most correctional centres is one of the many challenges faced by the DCS in its attempts to make health accessible for incarcerated women. Women's health has also been encompassed in the same umbrella as the general needs of the correctional services population. Whilst women tend to have unique health needs in comparison to their male counterparts, little or no specific focus is given to the unique needs that may present in female offenders (The Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit, 2012). Singh (2009) states that women face unique gender specific needs, for example, an irregular period as a response to stressful events that they are faced with in the correctional centre. Some women enter the correctional centre environment pregnant and therefore they may require adequate prenatal care as well as postnatal care, depending on the general health condition of the pregnant women (Covington, 2007).

In addition to their gynaecological health needs, women are also exposed to other diseases that affect the general correctional centres' population. For example, as a result of overcrowding women offenders also share their rooms with many other women and are often at risk of contracting TB, as the cells do not have proper ventilation. The study by Singh (2009) highlights the fact that healthcare for women offenders is frequently unavailable, an issue that may pose challenges in the rehabilitation of women, as women may be unable to attend or even benefit optimally from such programmes if their medical problems are not adequately addressed. Whilst contributing to the paucity of research in this field, the research by Singh (2009) only focused on the medical needs of women.

2.4.3.2 Mental Health of incarcerated women

A study by Mkhize and Naidoo (2012) indicated that there is a prevalence of mental disorders within the South African correctional centres' population. These ranged from depression to substance abuse, psychotic disorders, anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorders. Although this study was conducted amongst the general correctional facility population it does highlight the mental health challenges within the correctional centre population and the need to investigate the specific mental health needs of women offenders in correctional facilities. The study also highlighted the challenges of inadequate mental health facilities to meet the mental health needs of offenders, as most of the offenders diagnosed with mental illness were not under treatment, an issue which may present a challenge in the implementation of other rehabilitation services. Furthermore, the number of mental health care practitioners within the correctional centre was reflected as being inadequate to address the mental health needs of the correctional centre population, an issue which would have an obvious impact on the availability of comprehensive and gender-based mental health programmes.

Women have also been found to manifest mental illness differently from men. Whilst men would externalise their emotions, women have been found to have a tendency to internalise their feelings. As a result, men have been found to have a tendency to be more physically and sexually threatening and assaultive while women tend to be more depressed, self-abusive and suicidal (Covington, 2007). According to Covington and Bloom (2000), female offenders are most likely to have used drugs even prior to their incarceration and some have co-existing psychiatric disorders and low self-esteem. Farber (2013) argues that the controlling nature of the corrections environment coupled with close scrutiny and supervision of basic bodily functions, as well as overcrowding, are some of the factors that contribute to the onset and exacerbation of mental health problems for female offenders in the correctional centre environment. Parental stress is also one of the other mental health concerns for offenders who are mothers and it may sometimes manifest as anxiety and/or depression (Jules-Macquet, no date).

In her article, Farber (2013) argues that female offenders have a high prevalence of eating disorders in comparison to their male counterparts. This phenomenon is characterised by purging (vomiting, using laxatives), compulsive exercise, binge eating and the total refusal to eat. The female offenders' eating disorders have been largely seen as a way of gaining control over the correctional centre environment and also as a safe vehicle for expressing their emotions, particularly anger and despair, especially in situations where verbal communication is not given much attention. In some situations, eating disorders were interpreted as the means by which offenders attempt to shock and get the attention of the correctional centre staff. What was also observed was the contagious factor in the prevalence of eating disorders amongst female inmates. This was observed as a tendency for the eating disorders to spread across individuals and groups as either a learned attention seeking behaviour and/or a way of bonding and belonging to each other, bonded by the common act of purging or refusal to eat. As a result of the contagion phenomenon, some female offenders develop eating disorders in correctional centres.

In addition to eating disorders, suicide is one of the major mental health concerns in the female offender population. A study by Völlm and Dolan (2009) indicated that many female offenders had suicidal thoughts and more have attempted suicide. Many of these women engaged in self-harm without a suicidal attempt while others attempted to take their own lives. Of those who harmed themselves/made suicide attempts, over a half did so before coming to the correctional centre. A majority of women in the study used cutting as a method of self-harm, with the intention to relieve feelings of anger, tension, anxiety and depression. In this study, psychological distress, daytime activities and treatment information were rated as the most unmet needs for a majority of the women. This, therefore, highlights how female offenders attempt to meet their needs within the correctional centre, a factor which is highlighted already in this study where females use self-harm through cutting as a way of relieving psychological distress. What was also concerning in this study was that some of the women with self-harming tendencies or behaviours were not identified by the correctional centre system pre-entry procedures. As a result, recommendations were made for more screening to be done on a continual basis in order to target at-risk groups and the specific psychopathology that puts such groups at risk for suicidal behaviours.

Studies by Farber (2013) and Völlm and Dolan (2009), whilst basically reviewing international literature on the prevalence of eating disorders and suicide amongst women offenders, also highlight a basis for recommendation of gender-specific correctional centre rehabilitation programmes for females in order to address women's needs. These studies, however, conducted little or no exploration of the precipitating factors to mental disorders amongst women. There is also less focus on the women classified as maximum security offenders. In an effort to explore contributing factors to women's mental health challenges in correctional centres, a study by Short, Cooper, Shaw, Kenning, Abel and Chew-Graham (2009)

indicated that correctional services employees may have a better understanding of the suicidal behaviours of female offenders.

The results of this study indicated many reasons for women to engage in self-harm and or suicidal behaviours. These were cited as a history of family neglect and violence, past sexual abuse and substance abuse. Some indicated that correctional centre conditions, especially isolation which results in a lack of or rather an absence of relational means of expressing feelings, is one of the major contributing factors to female suicidal behaviours in the offender population. Very few thought that suicide was related to the adjustment of newly sentenced offenders into the corrections environment. More staff also saw self-harm amongst female offenders as a manipulative gesture that most of the women have learned to use in the correctional centre environment in order to receive more attention or to get something that they want (Short et al., 2009). As a result of the reasons for self-harm behaviours identified by correctional employees as per description above, the suicidal behaviours of female offenders were labelled as “those that are genuine “and “those that are not genuine”. Such differentiation was made based on the superficiality of the wounds or method used to self-harm.

The labelling often resulted in feelings of resentment and anger towards these women, with correctional officers withdrawing their support and a sense of emergency towards women who present with “non-genuine suicide attempts”. This obviously is most likely to have implications in validating feelings of worthlessness in women offenders, thereby exacerbating the challenge of suicidal behaviour. This labelling and the consequent withdrawal of attention from these women also highlights the possible neglect of women offenders’ psychological needs in the process (Short et al., 2009). The above study further highlights the contributing factors to self-harm, as well as the psychological needs of females in correctional centres. However, the study is largely based on the perceptions of staff members. Therefore, a need to explore the understanding

of the factors contributing to the suicidal behaviour of female offenders from the offenders themselves is again highlighted as this will better inform the rehabilitation guidelines.

Similar to international studies (Covington & Bloom, 2000; Covington, 2007), the impact of past child abuse and neglect on women offenders is also reflected upon in South African research (Artz et al., 2012). Whilst the study was not specifically focused on establishing the prevalence of mental health disorders, it sheds light on the impact of undealt with past trauma on the current mental health of women offenders. A co-occurring relationship was also found in exposure to childhood trauma and substance abuse in most of the females. Childhood trauma often co-existed with harsh economic conditions of poverty, as well as harsh parenting, which is deemed to have had a profound impact on the mental health of these women (Artz et al., 2012; White, 2012). A link was also observed between undealt with past trauma and anger and later adult criminal behaviour. Exposure to extreme childhood trauma has also been linked with the onset and development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders, Borderline Personality Disorder and Mood Disorders in adulthood. Women in correctional centres have also been found to have such disorders. However, literature on such has not clearly highlighted this aspect, probably in an attempt to avoid pathologising the criminal behaviour of incarcerated women (The Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit, 2012). While the rehabilitation of women is important in order to ensure change in their behaviours as well as readiness for their release, attention to their physical and mental health forms the basis for successful rehabilitation programmes.

Most of the literature reviewed (Artz et al., 2012; Mkhize & Naidoo, 2012; Singh, 2009; The Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit, 2012) highlights the challenges faced by correctional centres in meeting the physical and mental health needs of women offenders. Consequently, one can only imagine the complexity and dynamic nature of the challenges that are faced by the DCS in adequately addressing the rehabilitation needs of women offenders.

2.4.4 Rehabilitation of women in Correctional Centres

2.4.4.1 Intersectionality Theory

According to feminist criminology, women crime and deviance should be understood within the framework of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, nationality, religion, physical ability and other locations of inequality within a society (Burgess-Proctor, 2006). The implication is that there should be an attempt to understand the role of gender inequality in women's deviance and their experiences of the correctional system. There are a number of theories within feminism and for the purposes of this research, the postmodern feminism theory of crime will be utilised to contextualise the arguments. Postmodern feminism questions the existence of one truth as suggested by other feminist theories. The main premise of this theory within the context of crime is to interrogate the social construction of concepts such as crime and justice and challenges accepted criminological truths. Postmodernism is a move towards an intersectional approach that recognises that issues of race, gender, class, equality and other locations of inequality are dynamic, historically grounded, socially constructed power relationships that simultaneously operate at a macro and micro structural level (Burgess-Proctor, 2006; Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013).

An intersectional theoretical framework, which entails analysing the multiple ways that race, poverty, power and gender interact with class in women incarceration and rehabilitation, was used in grounding the study (Cho et al., 2013). Intersectionality is a term that refers to interconnected, multiple and related layers of existence and complex power relations within which our identities exist (Gines, 2011). This includes existentialism, race, gender, class, sexuality, nationality, culture and religion. Drawing from this framework, one would view women criminality and incarceration as a product of intersecting patterns of complex power

relations within society. Sharp (2003) further states that in most societies women (relative to men) and offenders (relative to non-offenders) are marginalised.

One would therefore argue that the experiences of women in correctional centres tend not to be well represented in the discourses of feminism or anti-racism and politics because of the intersectional identities of gender, race and class that colour the discrimination of women and somehow contribute to the plight of incarceration that women find themselves in. Therefore the experiences of women offenders can also not be looked at within the traditional boundaries of race and gender only. Rather, one needs to build on looking at how race, gender and social class dimensions intersect in shaping structured, political and representational aspects of the marginalisation of women in correctional centres (Crenshaw, 1991). Postmodern feminism asserts that women criminal behaviour should be viewed as an interaction of a lot of interrelated societal factors which include the family system, the community and the correctional services (Dastile, 2014; Erez & Berko, 2010). The reasoning is that most incarcerated women come from dysfunctional family backgrounds where there was a form of violence while others experienced sexual abuse by their family members. Some female offenders have themselves been victims of domestic violence perpetrated by their partners (Burgess-Proctor, 2006).

Research conducted by Artz et al. (2012) indicates that women who are exposed to prolonged domestic violence end up killing or hiring people to kill their spouses. In some cases, domestic abuse contributes to women's criminality as it often leads to negative coping skills (i.e. gambling, substance use) such that some women end up resorting to crime as a way of financing their coping mechanisms. In some instances, due to victimisation, these women are often coerced into criminal activity. As a result, for most women in abusive relationships, crime and incarceration was seen as an escape from such relationships. The other societal factors that contribute to criminal behaviour is poverty, as well as the rate of unemployment as indicated by

the profile analysis of female offenders. Therefore, it has been observed that some of the female offending behaviours are also linked to challenging social factors within and outside the corrections system (Mihaiu, 2013).

There is an inter-relatedness of a range of factors and events that create a context that limits and shapes women's choices toward criminality. Most of the factors around women criminality reflect richly detailed and complex aspects that are deeply rooted in South Africans' lived experiences, including experiences of race and violence. Consequently, the gendered nature of crime and incarceration, including the gendered nature of poverty, care-giving and abuse, and the ways in which these experiences shape women's choices and interact with other life experiences and events in particularly gendered ways may lead to risky behaviours and problematic coping strategies, and the decision to offend cannot be ignored (Artz et al., 2012). This also highlights the fact that women in correctional facilities have generally experienced subordination as many of them have a history of being unemployed or low-income earners, with past violent relationships. Many of them were and continue to be burdened by poverty, child care responsibility and a lack of job skills. These burdens are largely a consequence of gender and class oppression compounded by the racially discriminatory employment and housing practices women faced. These factors have contributed largely to hindering women from accessing creative solutions and alternatives to their criminal behaviours (Crenshaw, 1991; Sloth-Nielsen, 2005).

Therefore, rehabilitation for incarcerated women should indeed be geared towards intervening on the complex and intersectional boundaries of race, class and gender within the different levels of society (Crenshaw, 1991). To best respond to the needs of incarcerated women, Sharp (2003) recommends that a thorough assessment and overview of their lives prior to incarceration, as well as an understanding of the current state of correctional centres, is

necessary. In general, research indicates that the incarcerated women's life histories are often a story of physical and psychological traumatising with high rates of child sexual abuse and intimate partner abuse; substance dependency; poverty; sexism; racism; and inadequate access to health care and education and that correctional centres often replicate and reinforce such victimisation and marginalisation of women (Bloom et al., 2003; Dastile, 2014).

The development of mental health challenges, trauma and substance abuse as a result of the intersection of the dynamics of race, gender, power, poverty and abuse that shape the context of incarcerated women has been established as one of the challenges that influences their crime trajectories. An understanding of such complex intersections can provide a more in-depth understanding of incarcerated women, which can later inform gender sensitive rehabilitation strategies that respond to the needs of women (Bloom et al., 2003). Therefore, theories that guide such understanding of women are also relevant in developing policies and planning gender sensitive programmes for women.

2.4.4.2 Relational Theory

According to Covington (2007), relational theory is one of the recent developments that offer insight into the gender differences that characterise how women and men develop psychologically. As a result Covington (2007), recommends that an understanding of the relational theory is quite important in guiding the principles upon which correctional rehabilitative programmes are to be based, especially for female offenders. This is important in avoiding the recreation of settings and relationships that may hinder the development and growth of women in correctional centres as well as their transition to their communities post-incarceration. The culture of corrections created by the criminal justice system at times complicates the aspect of rehabilitation further as it is often in conflict with rehabilitation. The corrections culture is based on control and security, while rehabilitation is based on the concern

for safety and change. Consequently, much work still needs to be done in changing the perception and the implementation of rehabilitation services in the correctional environment. Covington (2007) suggests that the application of relational theory on a system-wide basis can have an influence in changing the culture of correctional centres.

The importance of understanding the relational theory is reflected in the recurring themes of relationship and family seen in the lives of female offenders. Disconnection and violation, rather than growth-fostering relationships, characterise the childhood experiences of most women in the correctional system (Artz et al., 2012). These women have also often been marginalised because of race, class and culture, as well as by political decisions that criminalise their behaviour. Also evident is how relational concerns have been at the centre of female criminality since in some instances female offending (i.e. drugs) would be linked to familial and intimate relationships of women. Some murders committed by females are also linked to threatened losses or fear in such relationships (Covington, 2007). Subsequently, in changing the lives of incarcerated women, the focus should also be on providing the relational experience that does not repeat their past histories of neglect, abuse and disempowerment.

Traditional psychological theories, especially psychoanalytical theories, have described human development in relation to the transition from childhood to adulthood as reflected by maturity. Such maturity is often understood as individuation-separation that is characterised by a quest for self-sufficiency, autonomy and independence. Emerging research indicates that this notion may have been based largely on describing male experience of maturity. The female maturity process is about developing meaningful connections (characterised by mutuality, empathy and power with others) with other people, thereby indicating that connection rather than separation is the guiding principle for maturity development in women (Miller, 1987). Such maturity is reflected by relationships that are characterised by a sense of understanding the self in

relation to feeling valued and understood by others. As a result, most of women's psychological problems are understood to be stemming from dysfunctionalities (non-mutual, abusive) or violations in familial, intimate or societal relationships that were meant to foster a sense of growth and maturity for them (Covington, 2007).

2.4.4.3 Trauma Theory

As indicated in various studies (Artz et al., 2012; The Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit, 2012; White, 2012), many women who enter the correctional service system are survivors of violence, either from being direct victims or witnessing such in their early lives or as adults. Therefore, an understanding of trauma within the criminal system is seen as beneficial in better informing the gender-based rehabilitation programmes for females (Covington, 2007). Herman (1993) describes three stages in how people process and heal from trauma: 1) Establishing a sense of safety, as there has been a violation of the body, emotions, thoughts and relationships; 2) Remembrance and mourning, where the trauma survivor tells the story and mourns the loss of self that has been altered or destroyed by the trauma; and 3) Reconnection, where the survivors establish a new self and start the process of creating a new future. Covington (2007) argues that the model of trauma as explained by Herman (1993) provides the best guideline for the criminal justice system, as the first intervention for rehabilitation of women should be to facilitate a sense of safety both externally and internally.

The external sense of safety would be to prevent re-traumatisation through sexually and physically harassing and abusive relationships that violate integrity and women's sense of safety. The internal sense of safety can be created through teaching women self-soothing ways of coping that may replace substance addiction. These may mean incorporating other women relevant programmes as proposed in the relational theory (empathetic and mutual connections). In this way the correctional setting can be a safe haven that facilitates trauma healing for some women

who come from abusive backgrounds (Covington, 2007). This indirectly highlights the importance of raising awareness to the staff members at the correctional centres about the impact of trauma on women and how their relationships need to be improved and re-established to provide healing effects in traumatised female offenders.

In creating an environment that promotes growth, change and development for incarcerated women, the acknowledgement of their context as well as their growth and development as explained in the theories above is crucial. In other words, the correctional system has to recognise that at the centre of gender responsive rehabilitation lies the need to encourage the development and maintenance of healthy relationships, the understanding of the intersectional context and identities that shape women's criminal behaviour, the impact of trauma and the role of substance addiction in incarcerated women, whilst encouraging the art of self-management. Covington (2007) argues that the understanding and the application of such theory is crucial as the correctional system is a microcosm of the larger society, in that it reflects the larger patriarchal society which is based on power and control. As a result, connections are discouraged as the system is largely based on power and control over others instead of power with others, where relationships are non-mutual and disrespectful. Such negative relationships are perpetuated by the correctional service staff and reflect general challenges in the entire system, highlighting the change and shift of the organisational culture that needs to apply at a wider system level, as staff members play a significant role in the rehabilitation of female inmates (White Paper on Corrections, 2005).

2.4.4.4 Addiction Theory

The addiction of incarcerated women to drugs cannot be ignored. While research indicates that incarcerated women criminal pathways often involve a journey with substance addiction, there is also an indication that drug abuse is often linked to mental health challenges as well as coping

strategies (numbing of emotions associated with trauma) that women use in dealing with their traumatic histories and family dynamics (Bloom et al., 2003; Dastile, 2014). The pathway to substance abuse is understood to be more complex for women in comparison to men.

It has been established that for women there is typically a breakdown of individual, familial and protective factors that often predispose them to using substances. Women are also introduced to drugs by men who are their sexual partners and often women would continue using the drug as a way of maintaining the relationship (Simpson, Yahner & Dugan, 2008). What therefore transpires in the addiction theory for women is that they are most likely to use substances as a way of coping with trauma and challenging individual and family factors that they encountered. Therefore, one would wonder how such women cope in the correctional centre which is a microcosm of the larger society in the way it operates.

Although the theories (trauma, relational and addiction) on gender-based programming offer much-needed guidelines, they are more concerned about developing and fixing individual offenders. It is therefore my argument that none of these theories seem to provide answers into rehabilitating or changing the socio-cultural context that shaped the criminal pathways for incarcerated women. Although offenders may have been rehabilitated, the society remains the same in terms of the intersection of dynamics of race, gender, power, poverty and other forms of inequalities that continue to disadvantage women. This, therefore, indicates that a paradigm shift that promotes social justice is also required in order to provide gender-sensitive programming that is relevant to the socio-cultural context that has shaped the criminal pathways for women. Much remains to be learned from Afro-centric notions of social psychology, specifically Ubuntu, that indicate knowledge and evidence that human beings are social creatures whose survival and thriving depends on communal belonging (Hanks, 2008).

2.4.5 Gender responsive Programmes for women offenders

2.4.5.1 Women's pathways to Crime

The pathways project offers a comprehensive view on the importance of gender-specific rehabilitation programmes. This project highlights a number of common pathways that expose women to crime and has implications for guiding the development of gender-responsive programmes. A study by Simpson et al. (2008, p. 86) revealed the following pathways that are linked to women's criminal behaviours and these are similar to pathways identified by Artz et al. (2012):

Street women: this category included women who had ran away from home either as a result of domestic violence, dropping out of school and delinquency. Life on the streets exposes them to drugs and prostitution, through which crime also becomes a way of sustaining the developed drug habit. As a result, these women find themselves committing petty crimes to support their drug use.

Harmed and harming women: this is a group of women with a history of childhood trauma like sexual abuse, neglect and violence. They come across as violent, many have mental disorders and are also addicted to drugs.

Drug connected women: This group concerns women who are either using drugs or selling drugs through family relationships or partner relationships. These women are usually not addicted to drugs or they are more recent users and have no multiple criminal histories.

Battered women: This group involves those women who were exposed to extensive domestic violence and their offending behaviour is often linked to the domestic violence they faced in their lives.

Other women: For this group, criminality was mostly related to a need to live a secure and comfortable life, which women were unable to afford. However, they decided to turn to criminality as a way of funding their expensive or desired expensive lifestyle.

This classification is quite useful in highlighting the unique needs of women in correctional centres and their different circumstances, which all need to be taken into consideration in the design and planning of gender responsive rehabilitation programmes for women offenders. Van Gundy (2013) indicated that if the pathways to crime for women are different from men, one can assume that their rehabilitative programmes cannot be exactly the same. According to Covington and Bloom (2006), in order to design and implement rehabilitative programmes that are responsive to the strengths and needs of women, the profile of women in correctional centres has to be understood. Such understanding needs to not only focus on the pathways to crime as outlined in the pathway theory but rather to be seen as responsive to the life circumstances that were faced and are still to be faced by women post-incarceration. Research and understanding of gender-based programmes for female offenders should provide a foundation and guiding principles on which to base the rehabilitation programmes that are relevant to women. These principles need to be sensitive to gender differences and be clear on the acknowledgement and appreciation that there are clear distinguishing factors between male and female offenders (Artz et al., 2012).

Furthermore, a safe and supportive environment needs to be the cornerstone of all rehabilitation programmes in order to respond sensitively to the history of victimisation and to prevent recreating an abusive environment that perpetuates the same feelings. Van Gundy (2013) and Covington (2007) also stated that rehabilitation programmes for female offenders ought to reflect the multifaceted, communicative, trauma based and relational nature of women's lives. These should, therefore, focus on increasing independence, empowerment and health awareness

and should be age sensitive, culture sensitive and be gender sensitive to physical, emotional and reproductive issues.

White (2012) and Artz et al. (2012) indicate that even though relevant gender responsive rehabilitation programmes do exist in most correctional centres, such programmes are not comprehensive enough to meet the needs of incarcerated women. Challenges highlighted in such programmes involved women offenders feeling like the rehabilitation programmes were still largely based on male informed models of rehabilitation. The women also felt that there was a general sense of resistance to the development of gender responsive rehabilitation programmes by correctional services management. They also suggested noncustodial forms of incarceration for women who were nonviolent. In general, these studies also indicated a possibility of better success rates in women who participated in gender-based rehabilitation programmes in comparison to women who were exposed to general correctional centre programmes.

2.4.5.2 Relational Programmes

Shapiro (1995) provides a comprehensive understanding of how the rehabilitation of female maximum security offenders is largely influenced by internal and external factors, through analysing a narrative of correctional centre experience by a female offender. The internal factors involved aspects within the female offender that made it possible for her to cope with the challenging life of maximum security correctional centre. These factors included a participatory attitude, motivation and determination to learn and help other female inmates through empowering and parenting them. The external factors included visits by family, friends or even supportive and motivational strangers, as well as innovative programmes within the correctional system (church, educational programs, etc.). All these factors provided a coping mechanism as well as progress and success in the correctional centre, which not only benefits one within the system but can also be transferred outside when one is released. This article also highlighted the

importance of relational factors in female rehabilitation that need to be taken into account in designing and implementing female offender's rehabilitation.

Although the article by Shapiro (1995) provides valuable insight into what constitutes rehabilitation for female offenders in maximum security correctional facility, it was an essay written by one woman and therefore provides one voice, so there is no opportunity for multiple experiences by other women offenders who were classified as maximum security offenders. Furthermore, it was the experience of a woman from an American maximum security correctional centre and the context may be different for South African women maximum security offenders. Therefore, one may argue that the internal and external factors that influence the rehabilitation process for South African incarcerated women may be unique based on the extent of the impact of sexism, poverty and violence that has been also intensified by the history of apartheid and diverse cultural backgrounds. It is therefore significant that the unique experiences of South African women offender rehabilitation is captured in order to build-up and further develop gender-responsive rehabilitation services that speak to their unique experiences. Ubuntu-based programming and curricula could be developed to reframe the experiences of women offenders through, positively accentuating the healing powers of community existence within the correctional centre. (Hanks, 2008: 129).

Consistent with the argument advocated by Hanks (2008), Covington (2001) also states that programs and environments in which relationships are at the centre are beneficial for the growth, change and recovery of women in correctional centres. Consequently, it is quite useful for correctional centres to strive to provide a setting that makes it possible for women to experience healthy relationships with staff, one another and the community. The challenge is that the patriarchal nature of the criminal justice system discourages women from coming together, to trust, speak about personal challenges or even forming bonds of healthy relationships.

Visits from Children and Family

Central to rehabilitation programmes for female offenders should be a strong relational component due to the consistent theme of the importance interpersonal relationships in women's lives. Such programmes should incorporate women's relationship with their children inside and outside the correctional centre (Covington & Bloom, 2006). More women than men are responsible for the care of their children prior to incarceration, which indicates more children left without their parents whilst mothers are still serving their sentences. This is one of the most damaging aspects of incarceration for women, which can be exacerbated by a lack of contact with their children (Artz et al., 2012). When a mother gets incarcerated, she often worries about the loss of influence over her children, the quality of care they are receiving in her absence, the weakening of their bonds in her absence and whether to tell them about the reasons for her incarceration. As a result, the absence of visits and information about the whereabouts of their children, quality and well-being of their children can be very stressful for the mother (Artz et al., 2012; Haffejee et al., 2006).

Visits from children have thus been found to be useful in assisting with the adjustment into correctional services as such visits would inspire a sense of hope and encourage positive behavioural change and prevent recidivism in women offenders (Mignon & Ransford, 2012). It is therefore my argument that the incarceration of women also has the potential of exerting more pressure on different systems of society (home, school, social development), where the gap created by incarcerated women who were staying with their children has to be filled and as such, may also contribute to most of the social problems of homelessness, poverty and crime. The significance of motherhood in positively influencing the behaviour of incarcerated women cannot be ignored (Mignon & Ransford, 2012; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2014). This is a factor that needs to be considered in designing and implementing rehabilitation programmes for incarcerated

women (Covington, 2001; Jules-Macquet, no date; Van Wyk, 2014). Overall, this can involve the correctional services department taking initiatives in collaboration with non-governmental organisations, professional organisations and volunteers in developing, mending, maintaining and reconciling family relationships for incarcerated women.

Mignon and Ransford (2012) further recommends that an in-depth assessment of the individual incarcerated women's family needs are to be conducted and it should focus on information about their children and their relationship with their children. These needs-based assessments are best completed by a team that allows input from professional and custodial staff. Feedback from such assessments will then provide a framework within which relevant relational programmes can be designed, matched and implemented for such women. Participation in programmes that have a family focus for incarcerated women, like parenting skills, is also encouraged in collaboration with social agencies, a factor that assists in preparation for release and unity with their children (Van Wyk, 2014). Berry and Smith-Mahdi (2006) further indicated that incarcerated women who are mothers defined motherhood the same as what could be expected from the general population. The common themes in the definition were love, availability and providing for their children's needs at all costs. Incarcerated mothers also indicated that they fulfilled their role as mothers through using their time in the correctional facility to self-improve so they can become better mothers upon release. Others indicated that they used the time to keep a positive outlook, writing poetry and drawing, which affirmed their love for their children and encouraged them to behave well. Some of the mothers also indicated that they used the time to reflect on their faith and pray for their children. A few of the mothers counselled, disciplined and expressed love for their children. The women in the study also gave emotionally touching accounts of how they miss their children.

Berry and Smith-Mahdi (2006) clearly highlight a need for rehabilitative programmes that encourage women to stay committed to their role of motherhood, whilst adjusting to life without daily contact with their children. According to Geiger and Fischer (2005), there are gender differences in how the identity negotiation between female and male happens. Male offenders apparently succeed at exhibiting a sense of mastery from their criminogenic behaviours and consequences and were often found to be proud of the personal strength they had acquired, such as courage, honesty, autonomy and loyalty. Female offenders, on the other hand, have been found to view themselves as helpless and hopeless victims passively responding to oppressive circumstances. Their responses seem to have been shaped by female offenders' tendency to adhere to the master status of motherhood, which in turn compromised gaining any positive sense of self because of the internalisation of being bad mothers who have abandoned their children due to incarceration.

Casey-Acevedo and Bakken (2002) also highlighted the importance of visits for females in maximum security's correctional centre adjustment, maintaining relationships with the outside world and how this can be crucial for reintegration into society. In the study (ibid.), most women received visits from family, friends and their children, with friends seeming to visit more frequently than family members. What was observed was the positive impact of these visits on the mother-child relationship through constant provision of reassurance to the child that the mother is still alive and "cared for". What was also beneficial was the opportunity for intimate moments of physical touch through hugs and kisses and face-to-face communication that allowed children to discuss personal challenges with their mothers.

Whilst correctional services officers reported sadness of the female inmates when friends and family members left, there was a general agreement that the visits provide a positive buffer for better adjustment for female offenders. However, there are general challenges with the visits

as some of the families stay far from the correctional centres and often do not have the financial means to afford frequent visits and some stay in remote areas where phone access is a challenge. In some cases, family members were also incarcerated and therefore unable to visit. Some of the women indicated that they were not in good relations with family members, hence there were no visits from them, highlighting the importance of the need to strengthen family bonds through various interventions at different levels during the incarceration period. The tension was sometimes associated with the stigma of incarceration, which was also kept a secret from their children by family members (Casey-Acevedo & Bakken, 2002; Sloth-Nielsen, 2005).

Relationships with other inmates

Female offenders have been found to sometimes have positive, supportive, affectionate and cooperative interpersonal relationships with other fellow inmates and have a tendency to form pseudo-families more than their male counterparts (Shapiro, 1995). Depending on the nature of the relationship, such relations have also been found to have a positive influence on changing the behaviour of the inmate. Similar to findings by Shapiro (1995), a study by Wulf-Ludden (2013) indicated that female offenders reported having at least one close friend in the correctional centre. Such friendship was seen as beneficial in offering simple companionship, perspective and advice regarding the problems and challenges that they encounter. The other benefit of such friendships was a general feeling by participants that it helped to keep them out of “trouble” (conflict, violence and drugs). This was related to the fact that their friends would advise them to lead good lives, which often led to self-improvement for many. Most offenders in the study indicated that their spirituality became more enhanced and they stopped using drugs as a result of advice and encouragement from their friends.

A study by Greer (2000), however, indicates that relationships amongst female offenders are possibly changing from being supportive and positive to breeding more negative and stressful

patterns. In her study, women offenders indicated that relationships amongst female offenders are often characterised by mistrust and manipulation. This is similar to an observations by Shapiro (1995) that, in some cases, such relationships amongst female offenders can breed conflict and violence in the correctional centre, due to a number of dynamics like gossip, mistrust and violent behaviours. Most violence and negativity has been reported in sexual relationships among female inmates as such relationships are often characterised by manipulation linked to economic deprivation, peer pressure and challenges relating to adjusting in the correctional centre environment. Some of the women indicated that due to the unstable nature of women in the correctional centre, they often find it safe to have superficial relationships as it becomes difficult to trust anyone.

The other factor that contributed to reluctance in forming close relationships with other inmates was the perceived temporal nature and the negative feelings associated with a sense of abandonment when the other women are released or transferred to another facility. Of significance in this study was that despite these sentiments of mistrust and manipulation, the same women were found to have formed close relationships with a few other women (Greer, 2000). This, therefore, highlights the fact that forming close relationships with other incarcerated women is inevitable but at the same time is infused with a lot of insecurities and vulnerability. These are factors that need to be considered when designing and implementing relational programmes for women offenders.

2.4.5.3 The role of spirituality in rehabilitation

Women offenders often attend religious practices and activities during their incarceration. These practices are either personalised, for example individual prayers or group prayers, where women also get to share their experiences with spiritually like-minded inmates. Aday et al. (2014) state that older women who were sentenced to life in the correctional centre often started with

religious conflicts and anger at God, as they felt He could have protected them or prevented them from getting into the situation they find themselves in. However, over time these women indicated that they were able to introspect and find religious meaning and reconnect with their Creator. Such recovery was often with the assistance of religious leaders and volunteers from outside who visit them in the correctional centre, as well as other religious activities that they would engage in, for example, prayer.

Other women however also recounted how religious leaders and volunteer would not often easily relate to their situation due to a limited understanding of the correctional centre life and the circumstances of the women with life sentences. Despite this, however, the role of religion was acknowledged for the sense of hope, comfort and support through the challenges that women faced whilst being incarcerated. Although Aday et al. (2014) provided insights into the benefits of religion, there is a need for the religious community to have a better understanding of the impact of the correctional centre environment on the life of incarcerated women.

2.4.5.4 Individual and group counselling and therapy

According to Herbig and Hesselink (2016), the individual and group counselling offered to women in the correctional centre should be comprehensive and relate to the context and structure of the realities faced by women in the correctional centres and in response to the larger social issues of poverty, abuse, race and gender inequalities. Furthermore, such programmes should be individualised and responsive to the cultural backgrounds of the women in order to create a sense of inclusivity. The mental health needs of female offenders have been found to be qualitatively and quantitatively different from those of male offenders, thereby indicating a need for gender responsive therapy programmes (Covington & Bloom, 2006). Due to their past traumatic histories and general exposure to gender inequalities, women in correctional centre present with trauma, substance abuse and mood disorders that are largely influenced by women's unique

circumstances. Therefore, therapy programmes should be structured in a way that responds to such needs (Bloom, 2003).

Tomar (2013) recommends the use of positive psychology approaches in correctional centres. This is largely based on the notion that correctional centres breed a lot of negative emotions. Therefore, positive psychological approaches are seen as instrumental in promoting factors that nurture and produce positive emotions amongst inmates. Such programmes entail specifically teaching inmates how to have intentional thoughts and mindedness regarding choices which have resulted in positive habits, a positive outlook and better thought control, especially for women inmates. While relatively new and promising, this approach, has a potential to encourage a culture of curing/fixing the inmates and may therefore downplay the quick pace in which advocacy for gender-based correctional system and rehabilitation programmes needs to accelerate. It is therefore important to also highlight that whilst one is advocating for gender-based rehabilitation programmes, it is important to look at the transformation of the entire correctional system to be responsive to the unique needs of women. Velimesis (1981) argues that the present institutional concepts and methods of control, discipline and punish need to undergo change so that the atmosphere of the correctional system also supports the goal of gender-responsive needs programmes.

In South African correctional centres, the following in-house rehabilitation programmes are available:

Anger Management Programme: aimed at assisting offender's awareness and better management of their anger.

Crossroads Behaviour Modification Programme: aimed at behaviour modification of substance abuse and criminal behaviours.

Preparatory Programmes on Sexual Offences: aimed at changing sexually offending behaviour.

Pre-release Programme: aimed at facilitating preparation and readiness for release by empowering inmates with skills and knowledge that facilitate better adjustment in society post-release.

Substance Abuse Correctional Programme: aimed at overcoming substance addiction.

Restorative Justice Orientation Programme: aimed at facilitating offenders' understanding of restorative justice and later integrating them into restorative justice programmes.

Spiritual Growth and Development Programmes: these are aimed at encouraging and ensuring spiritual encounter and growth for offenders and take various form of individualised, group and focused training.

New beginnings: an orientation programme aimed at facilitating better adjustment and coping in the correctional centre (Department of Correctional Services, no date).

According to Nxumalo (2002) as cited in Labane (2012: p 243), programmes at the correctional centres are subdivided into the following categories:

Universal programmes: these programmes are mainly aimed at effective control; nevertheless, they still focus on the modification of the behaviour of the offender. They are activities which are appropriate to all offenders. Examples of universal programmes are gratification, security classification, discipline and privileges.

Subgroup treatment programmes: to accommodate offenders who have ordinary qualities for structure, control, support and/or confrontation, these programmes make provision for differentiated treatment strategies. The treatment of young offenders, identified personality disorders and short-term offenders are examples.

Problem-orientated programmes: these programmes consist of single or multiple actions which focus on the particular problem, for which a permanent ordinary structure and control is not necessary. These programmes are aimed at abolishing a specific adaptation, criminal or

community interpretation problem. The following are examples of these programmes: job skills, alcohol and drug abuse, basic education and sexual adaptations.

Individual programmes: such programmes make conditions for offenders' personal needs that cannot be accommodated in the subgroup treatment programmes or problem-orientated programmes. They are accessible for each offender, irrespective of other programmes in which the offender is engaged in. Examples of individual programmes are medical care, after-hours classes, consensual individual therapy and support.

Even though these are based on needs analysis as indicated by the DCS, few of these programmes seem to be directly targeting the specific needs of women as indicated in the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998. According to Howells (2000), existing standard rehabilitation programmes like the anger management and substance abuse programmes should also be structured differently for women. What has been reflected is that the antecedents and functions for anger and substance abuse in women are different from men. For example, alcohol has been found to have a numbing of emotions function for women and anger may be caused by different factors for women and may be expressed differently than it is for men. This, therefore, highlights the importance of looking at how such differences can be reflected in practice or presentation of such programmes, especially for women. In South Africa, the DCS intends to offer needs-based rehabilitation as informed by a thorough assessment of the needs of each offender, thus speaking to gender responsive based programmes. As a result, a variety of mental healthcare practitioners are available to provide such comprehensive treatment i.e. psychologists, social workers, nurses and psychiatrists. However, the available number of healthcare practitioners is not adequate in fulfilling the comprehensive needs based rehabilitation mandate (Herbig & Hesselink, 2016).

Another challenge that faces the DCS is to also ensure that within the comprehensive needs based rehabilitative mandate, the unique needs of women offenders are addressed. As already reflected in previous studies, at the core of most of the challenges faced by women behind bars is the reflection of unstable relationships characterised by violence and abuse (Artz et al., 2012; Covington & Bloom, 2006). This has often led to women resorting to negative coping behaviours such as drug abuse, which has significant implications for guiding therapeutic interventions for incarcerated women. A recommendation is for incarcerated women rehabilitation programmes to be guided by theoretical perspectives on women development, trauma and addiction, with a sense of safety, connection and empowerment as strong pillars of such therapeutic programmes (Bloom & Covington, 1998).

2.4.5.5 Vocational Training

As reflected in the profile of incarcerated women, most of them have low levels of education, with a history of unemployment, therefore reflecting a gap in skills acquisition that will make them employable after incarceration (Muntingh, 2005). This, therefore, highlights the need for women to receive educational and job training relevant to their needs, which serves a significant role in empowering women to be in a position to support their families and to prevent recommitting economic crimes for some of them (Bloom & Covington, 1998). Workshops on life skills have also been recommended to empower women to better adjust to the correctional centre environment, as well as in preparation for release for others. In all these programmes, collaboration with the community and non-governmental organisations is necessary to better equip and prepare women for better adjustment and successful integration to the community (Covington & Bloom, 2006; Jules-Macquet, 2014).

2.4.6 Rehabilitation of women in South African Correctional Centres

While the aim of DCS is to contribute towards the maintenance and protection of a just, peaceful and safe society by enforcing court-imposed sentences, detaining offenders in safe custody under humane conditions and promoting the social responsibility and development of all offenders and persons subject to community corrections (White Paper on Corrections, 2005), this is not the case in practice. Scholars agree that available policies have failed to improve the conditions of women in correctional centres (Sloth-Nielsen, 2005; Singh, 2009; The Gender, Health & Justice Research Unit, 2012). The mission of the DCS as derived from the guiding principles of the White Paper on Corrections (2005) is to place rehabilitation at the centre of all departmental activities. This indicates that rehabilitation is regarded as the core mandate of DCS in collaboration with private and public entities, including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). At the core of this mandate is changing the behaviour and developing the human being. According to Herbig and Hesselink (2016), in South Africa, offenders are usually blamed the most for re-offending without much scrutiny provided on the actual rehabilitation they receive whilst in the correctional centre. Therefore, whilst crime is a complex phenomenon influenced by history, socio-political and economic factors, a review of the rehabilitation of women in correctional centres also needs to be investigated further.

Currie (2012) argues that rehabilitation programmes for incarcerated women have been modelled from men's programmes or rather do not entirely meet the needs of women. Most female rehabilitation programmes are based on traditional male dominated theories and look at the following factors: education, employment, economic status, drug use, delinquent peers, anger and aggression. In a study by Currie (2012), the argument is made that female incarceration should be considered a specialised area of policy, as failure to do so renders it an afterthought project that is usually subsumed under the male offender population, which often results in little

differentiation between the two in terms of the reform decisions that are made. Whilst equality means equal respect and treatment, in terms of gender equality it expands to include a duty that men and women should be treated with equivalent respect according to their different needs, meaning equality must embrace not only fairness but also inclusivity. This will, therefore, result in different policies and services for men and women as there are fundamental differences between the two (Corston, 2007).

Overall rehabilitation statistics in South African correctional centres reflect that over the past five years, offenders have received rehabilitation. However, a majority of offenders seem to be participating in social work services (108%), as well as sports, recreation and culture programmes (92%). Few offenders seem to be accessing formal education (20%) and psychological services (12%). A very low percentage participated in agricultural activities and production workshops (Department of Correctional Services, 2012/2013). The challenge with these rehabilitation participation statistics was that there was no disaggregation in terms of gender (Jules-Racquet, 2014). In their submission to the parliamentary review committee, specifically responding to the DCS 2012/2013 annual report and the Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services' Annual Report 2012/2013, Artz et al. (2013) indicated that the absence of gender disaggregated statistics in terms of women needs and participation in life skills and rehabilitation programmes makes it challenging to evaluate whether the minimum standards and guidelines for the conditions and treatment of women are met. It may be argued that this representation of statistics possibly indicates that some correctional centres are using a general model for rehabilitation where all genders participate in the same programmes. In view of this, Artz et al. (2013) further suggest that DCS evaluations should include a specific analysis of policies, programmes and data that reflects the conditions and needs of incarcerated women.

A recent report by the Acting National Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services indicated that women are considered for and involved in services that are aimed at motivating behaviour change and development. These programmes, though educational are also seen as empowering female offenders coming from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. He further highlighted that to date, about 432 women were involved in building, construction, plastering, assistant chef and beadwork programmes since 2012. Eighty-two female offenders were registered to write the Amended Senior Certificate examinations between May and June 2015. As of March 2015, 169 female offenders were registered in the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College Programme, National Certificate Vocational NC (V) Level 2-4, Engineering and Business Studies N1-N3. Forty-four female offenders were furthering their studies with Unisa and other Higher Education institutions, while 29 female offenders participated and completed the President's Award for Youth Empowerment (Ministry of Correctional Services, 2015). While there is an indication of availability of vocational and educational opportunities for women in local correctional centres, the disaggregation of these according to different classifications was not available, making it challenging for one to ascertain the level of participation for women classified as maximum offenders in such opportunities

2.5 The role of Civil Society in Rehabilitation

The role of civil society in the rehabilitation and integration of offenders has been acknowledged in the White Paper on Corrections (2005). A review done by the Civil Society Prison Reform with 21 civil society organisations that focus mostly on the rehabilitation of offenders post-incarceration indicates existence of organisations that are interested in changing the lives of offenders post-incarceration. These programmes generally offer services aimed at addressing individual and group needs with specific focus on drug rehabilitation; behaviour modification through training and incentives; insight building through restorative justice; skills development;

exposure to community through collaboration with community institutions like families and employment preparation (Muntingh, 2008).

As much as the White Paper on Corrections (2005) recognises the role of civil society in the rehabilitation of offenders, Muntingh (2008) argues that the application and collaboration of these services with the DCS internal rehabilitation programmes has not yet been fully established. There was also an observed disconnect with the visions of the White Paper on Corrections (2005) and the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998, as all the organisations that were reviewed did not cite the two significant documents as a motivating factor in the initiation and implementation of the programmes (Muntingh, 2008). This possibly highlights a need for more focused collaborative and integrated work between the DCS and civil society organisations in the rehabilitation of offenders. Also noted in the description of the programmes was a lack of focus on gender-specific rehabilitation programmes and theory as one of the driving elements in informing the content of such programmes. Even though these may possibly be covered, the fact that there is no specific mention of gender-based rehabilitation programmes indicates how generalised the programmes are. Whilst the positive contribution of civil society is important to note, a gap in terms of looking at more gender-specific reintegration programmes for females cannot be ignored.

A call for civil society to engage collaboratively with the DCS was also made by the former minister of Justice, Sibusiso Ndebele, who encouraged and reminded society to support the rehabilitation vision of the DCS through supporting offenders who are released from correctional centres (Ministry of Correctional Services, 2012). In his statement, Mr. Ndebele also mentioned eight offenders who were released from correctional centres, had participated in rehabilitation and were able to get employment with some having started their own businesses. While this initiative clearly indicated DCS's commitment to encouraging society to play a role in

rehabilitation, there was no specific mention of a commitment to the rehabilitation of women. Furthermore, all of the offenders who were mentioned as examples of success stories were males. It is with the above in mind that this study aimed at understanding the lived rehabilitation experiences of women classified as maximum security offenders in order to encourage the correctional system and society to pay attention to their needs, which are most likely to be neglected due to their minority status within the correctional centre.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The current chapter provides an outline of the methodology used in the current study, with specific focus on the research design, sample, data collection method, the actual research process and data analysis. The rationale for choosing qualitative research paradigm and in-depth semi-structured interviews is also discussed with reference to the sample and the intersectional framework that guides the whole research process.

3.1. Research Design

The ontological assumption of constructionism argues that the knowable world is that of meanings attributed by individuals. Therefore social reality or an absolute reality valid for all persons does not exist, rather multiple and diverse perspectives from which people interpret and perceive social facts exists (Corbetta, 2003). It is within this context that a qualitative research methodology was used in the current study. According to Bowling (2002), when research is aimed at understanding a topic that is not widely researched and therefore not widely understood or has a potential of being complex for a standardised tool, qualitative methods are much more appropriate in providing an in-depth understanding of what is being researched. As indicated earlier in the literature review, very few studies have been conducted on the experience of rehabilitation by women classified as maximum security offenders in the South Africa context. As a result, I employed a qualitative approach as it was my contention that it would play a significant role in laying a basic foundation for rehabilitation processes for women classified as maximum security offenders and would assist in providing recommendations for further understanding this group of incarcerated women. This study thus aimed to provide a narrative analysis of the experience of rehabilitation by women classified as maximum security offenders in the Johannesburg Correctional Centre.

Based on the social constructivist theory, the narrative inquiry used in the current study was an approach aimed at capturing personal and human dimensions of experience over time, taking into account the relationship between the individual experience, language and social contexts (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). This methodology was adopted with a view to applying an empathetic interaction between the researcher and participants (Corbetta, 2003) with the intention to listen, observe and then reflect on their lived experience of rehabilitation in the correctional centre. Narrative interviewing was deemed appropriate as it allowed the women to tell their stories without much interference from the researcher and I also did not want to confine the interview sessions into what may be deemed as a rigid structure (relying on pre-determined questions).

Hunter (2009) further states that the process of telling a narrative is believed to have a potential to transform the participants' experiences. Therefore the narrative inquiry was specifically chosen to give agency to the voice of women classified as maximum offenders with a view to give an opportunity for their experiences to be transformed through the research process as they participate, as well as through the ongoing analytical process where not only one generalizable truth emerges, but to bring up more truths and narratives. Further to this, narrative inquiry as a method also allows for acknowledgement of the impact of societal views on people's narratives and the restraints placed upon them in terms of what is an acceptable narrative both in childhood and in adulthood. This method was deemed as significant for the current topic as being a woman reflects an intersection of many factors (gender, race, class, sexuality) that reflect how society continues to reinforce stereotypes that further discriminate women. Narrative inquiry as a method in the current study therefore brings hope of challenging visible and underlying gender stereotypical assumptions about female criminality and the implications of such on rehabilitation policies and implementation.

3.2 Sample

The interviews were conducted with eighteen women. Four of the women were initially classified as maximum security offenders but have been reclassified as medium currently, while the other fourteen are still classified as maximum security offenders. As already indicated, South Africa has 241 correctional centres, of which 8 are for women only, 129 accommodate males, and 91 have a section where females are also accommodated. In Gauteng, there are two women's correctional centres, one in Johannesburg/Sun City and the other one in Pretoria. The Heidelberg correctional centre primarily houses male offenders but has a section where women are housed. Johannesburg Correctional Centre has women offenders sentenced to medium and long-term sentences, including life sentences.

Pretoria's female correctional section houses medium sentence women offenders, while Heidelberg houses only short-term women offenders (Haffejee et al., 2006; Jules-Macquet, 2014). Therefore, the current research was conducted in the Johannesburg Correctional Centre since the majority of women maximum security offenders are housed in this correctional centre. Eight of the maximum female offenders were originally sentenced in their provinces and they were moved to Johannesburg Correctional Centre for security reasons (as some correctional centres do not have the resources and facilities to house maximum offenders) and better rehabilitation services, which included being closer to family (for some, as there would be changes in the family system through deaths and family members moving to Johannesburg).

Thirteen of the women interviewed are incarcerated for murder only; three women were incarcerated for murder, robbery with aggravating circumstances and attempted murder; one was incarcerated for murder, kidnapping and robbery with aggravating circumstances; and one woman was incarcerated for fraud. The murders involved spouses, own children, siblings and employers. The age for the women who were interviewed ranged from twenty-three to sixty-nine.

Ten of the women have been sentenced to life, with one sentenced to four life sentences and a few sentenced from ten years to eighteen years. Eight of the women were unemployed before incarceration, ten of them were employed, five of them held professional jobs, one was self-employed, while four were employed as domestic workers.

Regarding the level of education, four of the women had completed tertiary education, nine had not completed secondary education, two had completed matric, two had not completed the senior primary phase and one indicated that she has never been to school. The number of years that the women have already spent incarcerated ranged from one year to twenty-one years. Thirteen of the women had children, while five had no children. Eleven of the women were widows and five of these women are incarcerated for the murder of their husbands, four of the women's husbands died of natural causes before they were incarcerated and for two women, the husbands died when they had already been incarcerated. Six of the women are single, one woman is divorced and one woman who was a widow, is currently remarried.

All the eighteen women were African including one Indian. While the study focused on understanding experiences of all women, a majority of women that volunteered to be interviewed were African. One white woman cancelled the interview. This demographic aspect reflects how gender and race are correlated with the likelihood of incarceration. This also indicates that African women are incarcerated more frequently and for greater lengths in comparison to other races. This speaks to ways in which women incarceration is a consequence of the problematic social structures that form our society and that cannot be divorced from notions of race and gender (Henderson, 2012). Women incarceration cannot be understood or looked at in a vacuum as corrections functions as a microcosm of our society. The women who participated in the study were also of different ethnic groups like Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Pedi, Venda, Indian and

XiTsonga, therefore reflecting diverse cultures and languages within the correctional centre, an aspect that is also crucial in guiding the rehabilitation policies and practices.

Table 3: Profile summary of the women who participated in the research:

Pseudeoname	Age	Nature of Crime	Sentence	Level of Education Before incarceration	Employment Status	Marital Status	Number of Children	Years into the sentence	Classification
Angel	23	Murder, kidnapping and robbery with aggravating circumstances	Life	Grade 11	Unemployed	Single	None	5 years	Maximum
Nomusa	26	Murder	10 years	Grade 11	Unemployed	Single	None	1 year 3 months	Maximum
Joyce	28	Murder	Life plus 15 years	Grade 11	Domestic worker	Single	None	8 years	Maximum
Gabisile	30	Robbery and Murder	18 years	Grade 10	Domestic worker	Single	3	4 years	Maximum
Aruna	36	Fraud, robbery	10 years	Degree	Employed	Single	None	5 years	Maximum
Anita	38	Murder	Life	Degree	Employed	Remarried	1	7 years	Maximum
Paulina	38	Robbery, attempted murder	35 years	Grade 11	Unemployed	Single	None	14 years	Medium
Matilda	43	Murder	Life	Grade 10	Unemployed	Widow	2	1 years	Maximum
Ruby	46	Murder	Life	Diploma	Employed	Widow	3	4 years	Maximum
Lizy	48	Murder	Life	Grade 12	Unemployed	Widow	3	7 years	Maximum
Margaret	55	Murder	Life	Grade 8	Self employed	Widow	4	5 years	Maximum
Yolisa	56	Murder, armed robbery and attempted murder	Life	Grade 11	Employed	Divorced	3	10 years	Maximum
Sindy	58	Murder	13 years 4 months	Grade 12	Employed	Widow	2	12 years	Maximum
Jane	60	Murder	13 years 4 months	Grade 6	Employed	Widow	5	15 years	Medium
Dorothy	60	Murder	13 years 4 months	Grade 8	Unemployed	Widow	3	13 years	Medium
Edith	62	Murder	Life	Grade 6	Domestic worker	Widow	5	21 years	Medium
Caroline	62	Murder	Life +10 years	Diploma	Employed	Widow	3	5 years	Maximum
Xoliswa	69	Murder	Life x 4 +16 years	None	Unemployed	Widow	4	7 years	Maximum

3.3 Data Collection

Contemporary feminist criminology bears the responsibility of advancing an inclusive feminism, one that simultaneously attends to issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, nationality, religion, physical ability and other locations of inequality as they relate to crime and deviance. Therefore to advance the understanding of gender, crime and justice that achieves universal relevance and is free from past ways of thinking, research methods must also examine linkages between inequality and crime using the intersectional framework (Burgess-Proctor, 2006). The significance of narrative interviewing in the context of understanding experiences of marginalised populations cannot be ignored as voices of such individuals are often limited, minimised or ignored. Therefore narrative interviewing seeks to provide attention into restoring

their voices as marginalised people who often lack control and power over their lives (Pederson, 2013). It is within this context that narrative interviewing was used as a method of data collection for women who are classified as maximum security offenders. Women are historically marginalised and a status of being an offender carries further marginalisation which for women intersects with other forms of inequality like gender, sexuality, class and race. Therefore being classified as a maximum security offender also carries further marginalisation for women in the correctional environment and their voices are ignored and therefore invisible.

According to Corbetta (2003), narratives are stories of experience and meaning that allow access to ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared events, deferrals of telling and refusals to tell. Narratives also provide a study of identity that focuses on the local practices which are produced in particular times and places. While narrative interviews still maintain the standards of research regarding preparation for the interviews and continued commitment to ethical guidelines, narrative interviewers enter the research field with a mind-set of a co-participant encouraging participants to speak in their own way. At an applied level this translates to starting the interview through invoking narrative terms such as “tell me your story” with a more descriptive prompt. In the current study there were questions that were prepared in line with the aims of the research so as to guide the interview process (Appendix A). The questions focused on invoking narratives about the women’s experiences of rehabilitation and a description of their rehabilitation journey. Women were also asked to provide their own experiences of the rehabilitation programmes available for maximum women offenders, the benefits of rehabilitation and their motivation to participate in rehabilitation. They were also asked to also describe the rehabilitation needs of women classified as maximum security offenders.

Riessman (2008) argues that narrative interviews differ from generic in-depth interviews because the goal of the narrative approach is to capture a full story. Such interviews are also

designed and aimed to overcome the common tendency to radically decontextualize and disconnect the respondents meaning making efforts from the concrete setting and larger socio-cultural contexts from which they were originally designed. It is therefore important to recognise that narrative interviews are also social, often producing, reproducing and even changing cultural narratives. The interviews were all conducted by me in the language that each woman felt comfortable with. A majority of the women preferred the use of their home languages, which were isiXhosa, Sesotho, Sepedi, Setswana and isiZulu. Other women mixed English with their home languages while others preferred English. The issue of being allowed to speak in their own language is also believed to be one of the most important aspects in restoring the women's voices and allowing women to speak in their own way.

3.3.1 The Research Process

Permission to conduct the research was formally requested from the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) (Appendix C). This entailed submitting application forms, the proposal, letter from my supervisor, confirmation of registration with Unisa and my identity document. The response from the DCS was received quickly, with recommendations that were deemed useful, especially in terms of the participants. One of the recommendations was that in order to get the most in terms of the rehabilitation, I must target women who have been in the correctional centre for some time. This was possible but it also depended on women's willingness to participate in the research. Once permission to conduct the study was formally granted by the Department of Correctional Services, an entry negotiation was initiated with the correctional centre management. After several phone calls that were not answered, eventually contact was made and I was informed of an appointment to meet with the Head of the Johannesburg Correctional Centre. On arrival, I was introduced to the Psychologist who was my internal guide and I was offered to use an office which was private. However, the correctional centre environment is

generally noisy because of an echo sound that one can hear from the offices and when walking through the passages.

The internal guide took me to the section where the potential participants were. Upon arrival, we went through logistics of correctional centre security (being searched, producing my identity document, checking of the possessions and I had tape recorder, notepads, as well as consent forms). This was all familiar as I was used to visiting the correctional centre for the church ministry and individualised visits. When we arrived at the offices, just before we could get into the third lock-up gate leading to the cells, we were informed by the correctional officers that there was an escape by one of the women in the cells so movement by offenders was very limited as there were strip searches being conducted and I was advised to come back the following day. The correctional centre was generally quiet and indeed, no offenders were seen in the passages. This was a confrontation with some of the challenges that come with conducting research in the correctional centres.

My immediate analysis was that the correctional centre is an unpredictable environment. Therefore, I had to quickly adjust myself to working within this framework. I generally prefer structure, but at the same time, I negotiate within myself which helps me a lot in minimising stress and in dealing with environments where change is fast and rapid. Therefore, I also realised that I need to be patient and possibly wake up very early the next day. This experience was reflected on later by one of the women, Ruby, as she was narrating the challenges of being a student in the correctional centre environment, especially with being classified as a maximum security offender. She indicated that in order for one to survive as a student one needs to be patient, strong and have a begging attitude.

On the following day, I was escorted by the internal guide to the cells and she allowed me to introduce myself to the potential participants and the correctional officers. Some of the ladies I

had seen before from the church ministry projects, but I did not know them that well. After the introduction, two ladies were willing to participate immediately in the research. Following these two interviews, the rest of the participants were obtained through a snowballing technique, as some were invited by their friends. On other occasions, I still went back to the cells with correctional officers to introduce myself and the research and again I would get women who were interested. At times, I was unable to interview all of them and I would book appointments for the following day with the assistance of the psychologist and the social worker. Overall, I interviewed two and sometimes three participants per day over a period of three weeks.

3.3.1.1 Reflections from the research process

In the current research, the reflexivity process involved paying attention to the experiences, emotions and feelings of the women, as well as the researcher's feelings as the women narrated their stories. This was important to reflect on each interview as the experiences were quite unique. The reflections in terms of emotions ranged from feelings of sadness to frustration and sometimes I found myself being preoccupied and almost haunted by the stories and feelings associated with listening and making sense of the women's narratives. Some of the stories had traumatic content and these haunted me for days especially in cases where the women detailed how they committed the murders. In one instance I experienced a nightmare after listening to the details of how the crime was committed. As a way of coping and ensuring continuity with the research, I then decided to work with the stories during the day. Other feelings that stood out were the pain I also felt as a mother, of women relating difficulty in coping with absence from their children. In general, most of the women gave a sense of struggle and finding ways of surviving in a difficult environment where their voices are not heard, instead attempts at voicing out their feelings and opinions are sometimes met with victimisation.

After introducing myself, the aims of the research and dealing with the consent matters for each of the women, the interview process was opened with a request for each woman to tell me about their experience of rehabilitation. The other themes were addressed as follow-up explorations to the overall umbrella request. Most of the women were quite open and therefore the other guiding themes were indirectly addressed from the opening request, with some needing direct probing and follow-up questioning.

In each of the interviews, the women were able to voice their own understanding, their behaviours and choices regarding rehabilitation in the correctional centre. The other aspect that was considered, which is in line with narrative research was that the narratives were constrained and influenced by social circumstances (the correctional system and the society) and are indeed a reflection of the interaction between the researcher and the participant. The women had expectations of the researcher as some possibly thought the research was about assessing them for possible parole and others saw an opportunity to address some of their needs that are not addressed by the system. Moreover, it was also important to understand that the narratives of each of the women changed over time and that change was evident within their current narratives.

Riessman (2008) states that the role of the researcher is then to enter the interview as a co-participant but allowing the interviewee to tell the story from his/her experience and perspective in his or her own way. Therefore, as the researcher in the current study, my role was to facilitate the navigation of the participants' own stories about what is being researched. In other words, it had to be clear in the process that I am interested in each participant's own story about the topic and how the participant structure the story was entirely up to them (Pederson, 2013).

The first interview went well in terms of openness and there was an instant connection with this woman who was young and quite frank in her communication. This seemed to have paved a way for generally great interviews with all the women, with just two of these deemed as quite challenging. With the one interview, the process seems to have been influenced by the fact that the woman felt that rehabilitation was not relevant for her. As a result, even during the interview she was less engaging, answered in monosyllables and generally seemed to lack interest in the process, which possibly reflects how she currently engages with the correctional system or even with the rehabilitation processes. She felt that there is nothing that she needs to change. Instead she engages in the programmes just to ensure personal development, especially in education and therefore is not that much concerned with other programmes. The interview with her was quite short and not as lengthy as other interviews. However, the pain and sadness within her dominated the interview. I remember how the encounter with her haunted me for days and her face became a graphic memory every time I was reading, listening and writing up about her in the research process. In another situation, one woman used the interview initially as a way of addressing her immediate and pressing concerns, which felt like a complete deviation. As a way of establishing rapport, I listened to her concerns and we scheduled a follow-up interview. During the follow-up interview, she was open about how her concerns influence her rehabilitation process negatively.

With most of the women, especially the young and middle-aged, we generally had a bubbly (expressed through laughter) start to the interviews and most of the women came across as just longing for a conversation with someone who cares, as most of them were just keen on sharing their experiences and we had interviews that generally lasted an hour to an hour and thirty minutes for some. The mood in most of the interviews fluctuated between bubbly, excitement, sadness and pain, especially when narrating their painful stories of abuse, rejection and challenges their children go through in their absence. One woman was quite angry at some

point during the interview when she was narrating her experience with homophobia inside and outside the correctional centre.

I also felt sad at different points during the interview, especially when listening to the narratives of absent parenting and the attempts by the women to cope with this aspect of their many identities. I could sense the pain of regrets, pain of abuse and pain of suffering that came through in some of the women's voices as they narrated their stories and survival mechanisms within the correctional centre. One of the women actually ended the interview with a question that left me with a sense of thinking that as researchers, we need to think beyond the research and actually start making a clear link with projects that can be better informed by our research or even start projects that are linked with our research findings. The woman specifically asked me what my plans are once I have established or gotten feedback from maximum security women offenders in correctional centres about rehabilitation.

Some of the interviews led to encounters with very soft spoken women who came across as very calm and well-groomed for the interview. It reminded me of one narrative from a woman (who is also classified as a maximum security offender) I used to visit who would say that because of limited exposure to the outside world they literally dress up as if going to town when coming out for visits. This was a possibility as some of the interviews were appointments made from the previous day. Some of the women's demeanour actually fitted with what one of the participants described as: *some of the women who are incarcerated for murder are actually sweet* (Aruna) and therefore the nature of their crime does not make sense but when you listen to the context then you understand better.

Another woman whom I also easily connected with was very open and at the end she was surprised by what she interpreted as a calm response from me as she spoke about her crime. Her response reflected her journey of self-forgiveness which also indicates her sensitivity to the

community response towards her crime and reflects the journey of community forgiveness towards offenders. Hers was a story of loss, betrayal and loneliness that possibly rendered her into negative coping skills that escalated into her committing the crime as a way of punishing her partner and perhaps relieving herself from the personal strain she endured, as well as fear of being a single mother.

As the interviews continued at the correctional centre, on some days the internal research guide was not available but she sometimes would leave the office keys for me as per our agreement. On one of the days when I went in, I was again escorted to the cells and when I got to the correctional office two women had a fight. It was a middle-aged woman and a young adult woman. It was evident that the fight was physical as the middle-aged woman had blood oozing on her forehead and they were still breathing heavily and almost sounding tired. They were still exchanging words and swearing at each other in front of the correctional officer and myself. This culture of violence, especially amongst the young offenders staying in communal cells, was narrated by some of the women during the interviews. The correctional officer was preparing charge sheets for both of them, which again reflects the punishment system that was also narrated in some of the interviews as a consequence to negative behaviour from the offenders.

The other interview that really stood out for me was with an elderly woman who spoke with humility and I actually related so much to her because she represented the epitome of a woman that I am familiar with, a rural woman, as I was born and bred in a rural area. Her language was indigenous and rich, she spoke with humility and constantly positioned me as a child as she often referred to me as 'my child'. She was also very outspoken and seemed to long for interaction as well. In some of the interviews, as I listened to the women share their experience of the correctional centre, what also came across was the challenges of expecting and implementing rehabilitation in a penal system. I, therefore, could not stop wondering whether this

was a realistic expectation from all stakeholders. I also could not help wondering about how the psychologists and social workers negotiate their identity as part of the rehabilitation team in such a system and how they manage the impact of the correctional system culture on their professional identity. Psychologists and social workers wear uniforms as well and that on its own made me wonder how this may have an impact on the offender's perception of the psychologists in relation to the other correctional officers who are viewed as objects of security, power and control and the implementation of strict rules as expected in their roles.

According to Hunter (2009), when the storyteller narrates their story it is not a mere reflection of the unitary self but rather a reflection of many selves and voices, each situated in a particular context and working strategically to resist those contexts. Therefore as a researcher, I needed to also observe and listen to the many selves or identities and voices that were communicated in the narratives and how women resisted the context from which their narratives were located. Apart from being offenders, some of the women are daughters, mothers, wives, partners and students; and they related how they negotiate these many identities within the correctional system. Also evident in the narratives was how women also struggle to negotiate their gender and sexual identities beyond the traditional notions of gender and sexuality in society and within the correctional centre. Narratives of homophobia and discrimination on the basis of sexuality was also evident in how some of the women narrated their experiences.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research entails organising what has been seen, heard and read into a meaningful whole (Watt, 2007). In narrative analysis, this happens throughout the research and it is not a separate process from data collection and the write-up process. Therefore, the main focus is on co-constructing the meaning of what happens between the researcher and the participants. The research process then becomes a harmonious and organic process where the researcher,

whilst listening and reading the conversations, takes in what is being said and compares it with their own personal understandings without filling any gaps but enquiring about how pieces of stories make sense together (Ekman & Skott, 2005; Hunter, 2009; Watt, 2007). In narrative analysis, the basic premise is that comments of individuals as they tell their stories should not be ignored or taken at face value. Instead, they should be taken as a possibility that could reflect wider social structures of discourse and power. Therefore, the following narrative analysis stages, as suggested in an article by Fraser (2004), were used in making sense of the narratives told by the participants in the current study:

Hearing stories, experiences and reflections: According to Watt (2007), researchers have levels of participation and emotional involvement in the different projects that they are involved in throughout the interview process. Therefore, their experience during the process often provides insight into how the participants experience the world that the researcher is seeking to understand. When conducting qualitative research, reflexivity is considered as an important aspect where the researcher constantly observes their identities, thoughts, emotions and behaviours and how these are shaped and responsive to the research process. This process also allows the researcher to take stock of their own biases and prejudices and how these affect the research process. More importantly, the journaling of the researcher's experience also helps the researcher to track the progress of the research and when there is a need for changes to happen, these can be done timeously. Therefore, throughout the research one needs to be observant and journal how they are responding and in the process shaping and being shaped by the research and how one can become a better researcher throughout the research project. Reflexivity is a dynamic process of interaction within and between the researcher and the participants at all stages of the research.

Interpreting Individual Transcripts: The attempt here is to make sense of the embodied character of one's life in relation to other events, narrated within a particular kind of plot. This involved looking for specific themes within each story, looking for language used and the meaning implied by verbal (screams, language) and non-verbal communication (silences etc.). During this phase, each story was named according to the direction it took in terms of the rehabilitation experience. For example, in one story the direction was basically communicating a need to be understood in rehabilitation, while in another reflecting the importance of education and positive relationships in rehabilitation. The language used in the stories was also seen as significant. For example, most of the offenders still use the terms "jail" and "tronk" instead of correctional centre, as it is now officially called.

Scanning across different domains of experiences: Stories are always embedded and linked to certain kinds of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships and set within a particular cultural background. The context is however interpreted and reworked in a particular way by the teller. The intrapersonal background in the stories was observed through listening for self-talk and specific references to choices that each woman made about their own rehabilitation, the diverse understanding of rehabilitation, the benefits and motivating factors. The interpersonal domain was reflected by the collective representation ("we") of some of the experiences and sometimes addressing other women even outside the correctional centre. The relationships and interactions amongst each other as offenders as well as with the correctional officers were also one of the interpersonal domains of experience discovered in the women's narratives. The culture of control, limiting, non-empathetic, fear of victimisation and fear of "a dirty file" consequences-based system was evident in how some of the offenders expressed their view of rehabilitation in the correctional centre.

Andrews, Taboukou and Squire (2013) indicate that the context in which narratives are produced reflects the social and cultural characteristics of the environment that influence the narrator. In some of the women's experiences (Angela, Lizzy and Anita) there was an indication of fear of victimisation by correctional officers pertaining to them having disclosed certain information to me. This was seen as a reflection of women's lived experience of silenced voices through having to imagine the negative consequences associated with telling their stories. In a way, this reflects how the correctional context embodies a culture of silent voices which becomes a part of the woman's psyche and in how they express their stories which may have influenced the structure, depth and other aspects of how they narrated their stories. There were also other aspects of the research process that influenced how the women's stories were narrated. My identity as an African woman who spoke their languages seems to have encouraged more openness for some of the women and others also saw the opportunity to express their frustrations, which was possibly influenced by my other identity as a psychology student. Some of the women's responses were also influenced by their knowledge of the research process as one woman was concerned about the publication of results and therefore at some point she had to stop and reflect on her narrative using a pseudo name. Below are some of the excerpts that indicated how the research process may have been influenced by the different aspects as already discussed:

Do not write my name, they going to be mad; do not write my name, as we talk like this you are going to write another name....because they will ask why I am saying these things, they get angry....when the minister comes we reveal everything, tomorrow they treat us bad
(Lizzy)

uh I will say that uh with me (laughs) so I don't know this will this be published or what (laughs) especially the story.....Okay I as Maria I as Maria I as Maria you know I was in a relationship where I'll say that I want to get out of it....”(Anita)

actually, here at home [in prison], they are evil sister, I will tell you the truth...just you don't see just this thing that we are talking about.....Because when they hear this thing they are going to lock me up for long... (Angela)

Therefore in analysing narratives, one needs to pay detailed attention to what narrators say, how they say it and the narrative context in which the narrator produces a particular account, while also orienting to the cultural. As a result, taking time to understand how women classified as maximum security offenders interpret and represent their stories from the context of the correctional centre and society formed a very large part of how the data was analysed. As Andrews et al. (2013) posit, this form of narrative analysis could also be seen as a version of psychosocial analysis in that it attempts to give equal importance to individual and social processes.

Looking for commonalities and differences among and between the participants: This stage entailed looking at unique and common experiences amongst and between the participants as reflected by their narratives. For example, their pathways to crime were different and yet common in some instances, especially relating to murder of partners because of abuse. The uniqueness was observed in how each woman had different contextual factors in their pathways to crime. Few of the women were reportedly wrongfully accused. There were common factors observed in their rehabilitation experience. For example, a view shared by many was that rehabilitation is a choice and an individualised process. This stage in the analysis process was instrumental in paving a way for writing the personal narratives of the women in a more meaningful way.

Writing academic narrative about personal stories: This process entails a more coherent and academically sound representation of the stories. This was the most challenging aspect of the analysis stage. The challenges faced were to restore authorship to the women and to write up a coherent and meaningful representation of the narratives. Initially, after summarising each story and pulling up themes within each story, I thought that representing each story separately would be the best way to restore authorship and reflect the uniqueness of each story. However, upon

completion, it was evident that as much as the stories are unique there are some common themes that can be used to organise the narratives into a more meaningful whole. The authorship was restored through attempting to limit the researcher's interpretation and thus writing the narratives as closely as possible in the language used by the participants. The unique experiences and understanding for women were also represented by including some of the narratives from different women under a specific theme. In some instances, it would mostly be one woman who reflects more under one particular theme. Attempts were also made to include the whole narrative of each participant before introducing another participant's narrative within the same theme.

Chapter 4

Results

The current chapter provides the narratives of eighteen women that were interviewed at the Johannesburg Correctional Centre. Fourteen of the women were classified as maximum security offenders, while the other four were once classified as maximum offenders but have now been reclassified as medium offenders. The presentation of the narratives was guided by the analysis process, where attention was given into the specific themes in each story, language used and the underlying narratives that reflect the sociocultural contexts of the women.

4.1 Socio-Cultural Context: Pathways to crime for women classified as maximum offenders

All of the women provided a context that assisted in understanding the background and circumstances that led to their criminal behaviour. Some of them were able to go as far as providing a trajectory of their criminal behaviour starting from their childhood experiences and community experiences to the point of committing the crime. Others would provide the immediate contextual factors around their crime. Overall, the socio-cultural context that shaped some of the women's pathways to crime involved negative family dynamics, abuse by their spouses, poverty, spiritual and cultural factors, with few of the women indicating that they have been wrongfully accused and therefore wrongfully incarcerated. The understanding of the socio-cultural context of these women also provided insight into where some of their rehabilitation needs might be located, therefore also providing an opportunity to understand whether their rehabilitation experiences are in any way reflective of attempts at intervening in the context that shaped their pathway to crime.

4.1.1 Family Dynamics

Four of the women narrated stories that reflect how family dynamics such as rejection; abandonment; betrayal; loss of a father figure; challenges in parenting difficult children for single parents; as well as family disintegration as a result of parental separation in their families paved a way that created vulnerability to criminal behaviours for them. Their experiences reflect how each one felt vulnerable as a result of the negative dynamics in their families. Crime also became a way of escaping the uncomfortable experiences emanating from complex dynamics that also came into being through their attempts of crafting survival strategies in the face of painful experiences in their families.

Rejection/Abandonment in the family as a pathway to crime: Angela's narrative

"I have that blood of all this life, all over my body"

*Okay let me start from the beginning for you, okay, let me tell you everything about Angela... Angela okay? Angela...okay since I have already told you that I was my grandmother's child. I was raised by my grandmother, you see? A lot of the time well my mom I know her but she was never there, like she was there but she was far...not knowing if I am a person who wants to really be close. I don't know why but she was there far, my mom was an alcoholic and loved men...Like you see she confused my life a lot also...I felt adopted and what made me more crazy it's not like my parents are not there.... I started from when I used to live with my grandmother, I would smoke marijuana and bunk school...I learnt how to drive there in the streets...I hang around, galavant with the taxi drivers, you see, those kind of things until I met this other boy, so he was my friend in actual fact... Only to find that he was smoking drugs, you see, so I also got hooked on rock, you understand... I disappeared with him in town there with Nigerians, I smoked drugs all of these things so I came back and when I came back I found my grandmother had a stroke, you understand, because of this issue of mine, she didn't know where I was, she passed away....I hung out with those Nigerians, I smoked drugs ...they asked me if I wanted to live a nice life and have everything...and I was like yes obviously I do want that, you see? I was like yes I do want to, you see? So next thing I saw, I was being fetched by some other Nigerians from Cape Town, you see? They came to fetch me, not knowing that this [Nigerian] one from Hillbrow had sold me already..... when I arrived in Cape Town, my sister, it was full of girls, it was them only, they were smoking and obviously I also wanted to smoke, you see..., I smoked there and now they see that I am already in, only then they told me that, if you want to make money, you want to always eat, always be clean, have clothes and have everything there is no other thing that you can do, you have to be a prostitute you understand, ***yhoo*** my sister I used to sleep with more than ten men in a day, old ones, young ones medium...everything...and you understand that the life on the streets sometimes you find those that have bad hearts, a person would rape you and leave you, I have that blood of all this life, all over my body ...there was nothing that I could do*

other than to sleep with a man to survive and they would beat me up, the Nigerians, they would...Like they would sell me like I wouldn't see that now I have been sold, when he is done making money through me he would sell me to this other one and when that one was finished he would sell me to another one ... ****yhoo**** I don't know how I can explain it, you know ****sighs and teary****...I am trying to find a way to explain that I was used a lot, you understand, I was used a lot and abused a lot people made a lot of promises to me and they didn't keep them, you see, people really defrauded me and when all of this thing ended, I didn't end well man, you see, I fell ill and during my illness I went back to my stepmother...and you know what I felt that they made me feel [bad]that I was sick. There is bathroom at the house but just because of the fact that I was sick they would put me there in a [back] room that is there and they would put me there alone, they...and my food when they would bring it they wouldn't bring it like... I always felt adopted you see*emotional*... ..so I got arrested with my stepbrother Paul so I told him, I narrated the story... "look this is how it is my brother, you guys can also see that I can't be bought anything here in the house, I am the way I came here, I don't have cash, I am just like this and I can't look like this obviously I have to make a life for myself" ...so I meet this guy who was a doctor, Timothy so this guy was hitting on me, asking me out and that irritates me.....I just wanted money so that I could buy clothes, be clean, toiletries, food and everything for myself, you understand? so this guy told me that he wants me to be his girlfriend, you see, those kind of things...so he said he wants to take me to a hotel so that he can sleep with me I was like I am not going there due the experiences that I had in Cape Town anything can happen.... Paul said okay Angela I understand the fact that you don't want to sleep with him, okay cool, you must just take whatever you want to take from him when push comes to shove and he wants to sleep with you we will come in, you see, that was what was planned***yhoo***, hey, they tortured him, they tortured him and then we asked him for his card, I drove the car to the garage to withdraw money it was only R1000 just so I could get the things that I wanted, you understand, when we came back I got the money he had three cards so basically I got R3000.....and Paul said "we are burning this person" he said we are burning him, you understand so they bought petrol in one litres I still remember it was Schweppes in one litres, they carried petrol in it ... ****sigh****near police station not far.....near the freeway, we went in there you see, I just saw us going in in actual fact we arrived when they were taking this person out, he was innocent, he was just trying to help me, you understand? And he—looked at me this person maybe he was asking himself what he did and all that.....they put petrol there and poured it on him and they set it on fire...I saw him burning, my sister there, we had put cello tape on him, obviously when fire catches on cello tape...ah ****lifts voice**** he screamed there I saw him burning my brother even reversed the car and rode/drove over him five times...I saw that I had blood everywhere, everything, we went to the club, I think the owner of the club saw that there is something because Muzi and Sphiwe were 14 years old, Paul and I were like 16 so I think the owner of the club saw that, no man something is wrong with these children, so they called the police and that's how we got arrested you see ... I actually don't have a problem with my sentence... It's a guilty conscience that is punishing me otherwise I don't have a problem with my sentence....

Angela is a 23 year old female who has been incarcerated for murder, kidnapping and robbery with aggravating circumstances and is serving a life sentence. She was raised by her grandmother as a result of rejection by her mother. Her narrative embodies an archetype of a woman harmed by painful life experiences, a pain that was quite evident in the interview as reflected by heavy

silences, exclamations (yhoo!), tears fought back and red eyes as she narrated her experiences. A theme of feeling adopted dominated her family experiences as reflected in her comparison with her cousins and her relationship with her stepmother. What then emerges later is a narration of a troubled life position reflected by an archetype of a young street girl with subsequent exposure to an illegal lifestyle characterised by drugs and men who enabled more exposure to a risky lifestyle (driving at an early age). Paired with a loss of her significant attachment figure which resembled a need for her to grow and take care of herself, her narrative of a young street woman expanded to how she continued to be exposed to more drugs and prostitution as way of meeting her basic human needs.

A gendered discourse of how men use women as sex commodities becomes apparent in how she narrates her life in Cape Town with Nigerian men. Of significance in her story is the narrative of this as a bigger problem in society as reflected by her indication of other girls who were in the same position as her. Coupled with this is the emergence of gender based violence that she experienced as evidenced through being raped and beaten up. A tragic end to her lifestyle is also narrated through her getting sick with TB and coming back home. Coming back home seemed to have perpetuated feelings of being adopted which again started the cycle of prostitution as she saw an opportunity to meet her basic needs through sleeping with a man. She however met one man at a time when she seemed to have redeemed herself from sleeping with men and prevented herself from a sexual encounter with this man through planning his killing after getting what she wanted. A narrative of guilt and trauma from her criminal act emerges as reflected by a graphic memory of the sight and sound of events that unfolded during the murder. This graphic representation also became one of the vicarious trauma elements for me during the interview process and repeated exposure to the story through listening to the transcripts.

Loss of a father figure, subsequent abuse in a relationship paving a path to “crime”: Nomusa’s narrative

“...my father passed on and left me...”

*I am from a family of four. And I am a third born. I have an older brother and older sister. I am the third and I have a younger sister and then my father passes away in 2004 and then I was left with my mother...and in 2005 I did my matric and the thing is after my father passed away and I was like you ***exclaims*** know what I don’t have interest in anything because my father used to be a person whenever we talked about school, righthe will do anything, anything for school, right and when he passed away ***tearful*** I had that thing, right that you know what my life is f**d up because he would do anything and then he passed away in 2004 and then I did my matric in 2005 and then after.... I wanted to study media and I did my research saying I need to have 28 points and it will take me three years to fulfil my dreams and all of a sudden it went, you understand in 2006 I met this guy and our relationship was a long distance relationship and we continued in 2007 I fell pregnant and in December the 16th I gave birth and unfortunately my baby passed away and I fell pregnant again so I gave birth to a baby girl we named her Nomonde...so then things were good between me and her father so then my mother decided that “it is not safe for you to stay with a small baby/child at home”right, so then my mom asked her father to no... “I think this person must come and take care of you and the child because it’s not safe.” So it's fine he moved in and still he wasn’t working my mother was a breadwinner my mother was taking care of me through the baby, you understand? So in 2012 he started working then you understand that this person, he used to drink, right but the thing is when its 10-o’clock he will be home you understand? So after he started working it’s only then he started like these things of he will be home around 11/12/1 and when he comes home he will wreak havoc man, we would fight, you understand and by then we would fight even when the child is there, now the child was seeing that....and when he would go she would ask “Mom, you and my dad have been fighting for a while, why are you fighting? and it went [on] right, until 20.....2014..2013 and you understand I couldn’t handle....this guy I love him and it happened that my child grew up it became too much... and you phone someone and tell him that I am in such and such a place, I’m in hospital can you please come fetch me with the child, its late at night, I can’t go home, taxis are finished and he would tell you that you will see, you understand and you know that it’s not a problem of finance, there is no such. I would tell him that I came home, you understand you expect the person that he would come and see whether you and the child reached home safely and then what but the person doesn’t do that and you will hear from people that he just passed here with girls and that disturbed me a lot that thing, my child fell ill I became stressed I was wearing size 34 and I lost weight and I even wore size 28. I would phone him, and he wouldn’t answer the phone I would call his home/ his family and tell them that my child is sick and I am not working I need finance until it happens I decided that look, this is enough and the child was sick so bad that day and I was like this is too much I can’t stand it , no ***tearful*** that day it was on the 12th September 2013 ...so I can’t stand this, right and I was like okay I locked the door, right...closed the windows and all that and I looked at her she was asleep...asleep by then and I looked at her and I decided you know what this is the end of her and I, I can’t bring life on this earth and it suffers, so and I decided you know....I sent an sms, sms you know sending an sms hoping that somebody will respond I sent him an sms that “you know what, since then we are not worth it to you and you decided to find your own life and I was hoping that you were not the person who would dump me and you and I, I*

*was hoping that we are going to be husband and wife..... be lovey Dovey family” I told him that “ this is the end of you and I” and I sent it and he never responded...and I think it was around 3 o’clock he never responded its fine around 6 o’clock and then I decided that okay for sure that, no he doesn’t care right, and I did, I took poison and I mixed it and gave it to my child just like that and I also drank it and you know sometimes life is unpredictable and she died right and I hold her, she died and the thing about me was I took as much as I wanted but it never did me anything right..... the other thing that hurts me the most is that her father doesn’t want to know what went wrong ...even though when I try to say look let me meet you half way I know I didn’t have the right to take another person’s life on earth you understand me? but he doesn’t want to meet me half way, you understand me, that is the thing that tortures me ***teary*** every single day and night you see that I wanna explain my side and he doesn’t want to hear anything and the thing is ... so that is the thing I don’t wanna that I know that he won’t forgive me anyway and I also I can’t blame that he let me do that I should have been a better person and stand up for myself but I decided to take the shortest ...path the shortest path... my mother was so scared of me she...well like couldn’t stay ***teary*** sit in the same room with me after what I did you see she was like “no, no you will kill me” like serious. The thing is, right if I was still blaming people, no I would, I would, no, not be here because I was going to continue having that thing that, look, I didn’t accept that this is what I did so the thing is that’s why I am saying I was still blaming people, I would not***inaudible*** ...you understand that my father passed on and left me, if he hadn’t passed on, I would’ve been 1,2,3, this is the choice that I made. The choice not to follow what I want because I wanted to do something but at the end I let something small distract me you see...*

Nomusa is a 26-year-old African female who is incarcerated for the murder of her child. She is currently serving a 10-year sentence. Nomusa’s socio-cultural context reflects a narrative of shattered dreams following the death of her father who seemed to have encouraged his children to value education. This was followed by her mother becoming a breadwinner for the family, thus leaving the children to head the household in her absence. In the process, Nomusa found a man and a gendered discourse on how she described her attraction to him emerges, i.e. “he was not working he was just an ordinary guy”, which represents the social construction of males as providers thus paving a way for Nomusa to possibly view this man as a provider for realising her shattered dreams. Nomusa had also suffered the loss of a child. However, she subsequently had another child with her partner.

A narrative of how society shapes women to depend on men in the absence of support from other systems also emerges in how Nomusa’s mother possibly out of her own financial struggle suggested that her boyfriend moves in with Nomusa so he can “take care” of her and the

child. What later emerges is how their relationship changed to become emotionally, financially and physically abusive, especially after he started working. Nomusa seemed to have struggled to cope with seeing her child suffer in the absence of emotional and financial support from her partner and this seems to have triggered her suicidal and homicidal ideation and attempt, with only her child dying and her surviving in the process. Nomusa also narrates on her desire to explain the context of her “criminal” behaviour to her partner and seems to be met with resistance from him. This narrative is reflective of how society focuses mostly on the criminal act, with no willingness or even openness to understand the context of the offender’s behaviour. This often seems to leave offenders feeling isolated and alone in processing what they have done and thus crime becomes an individualised rather than a collective process. Yet, the context reflects a collective pathway to the crime as the partner is part of the context that enabled the end result of how Nomusa eventually coped with what was happening. Therefore, in addition to being incarcerated Nomusa continues to experience further detachment and isolation in dealing with her crime and in a way she has also embodied the “you are the problem” narrative that society gives to offenders. This is the process that she possibly finds in the correctional system as she seems to have embodied an angry woman who ended up killing her child because of difficulties in managing her anger, hence she feels that she has now learnt to manage her anger.

Parenting a child with behavioural problems: Dorothy’s narrative

“I came here because of a child....”

what has brought me inside here is anger...yes, like what I did, it was my emotions, I was angry, for me to end up being in prison.....I came here because of a child, I used to stay with my child, it is my child, I used to stay with her in my house, we were staying with her and my brother’s children I used to stay with them, they liked staying with me. Like when schools closed they would come to my house, the little ones would come after when schools have closed, it is boys only now and we stay in the house. This one, my daughter she is older and she is now dating, you know when you are a mother you know these things, you were once in that stage where she is, she sometimes just leaves the house. The thing that bothered me a lot about her is when she was away she would come back and leave again without my knowledge. ...So she was a child who would leave and come back whenever she comes back, so now she

continued to do that so in the end when she came back some boys came in the house and said “we are here to get money, your child took our money and this happened”. I took it out with a sore heart but I gave them anyway, I was doing it to save our lives, you know how it is in the lokshin, I avoided her from the conflict then in the end they burnt down my house....yes they burnt down my house, right now when I leave here I do not have a house, I do not have it, that is when I said to the other children “you saw what your sibling did” even my brother’s children I said “ it is your sibling [cousin]”. That is when they went and killed her...

Dorothy is a 60-year-old woman who reported having finished serving her 13 years four-month sentence. At the time of the interview she was re-classified as a medium security offender after spending nine years as a maximum security offender. She is incarcerated for the murder of her daughter after she was found to have instructed her nephews to kill her. Dorothy was widowed at the age of 30 and has three children currently. She also suffered from insulin-dependent diabetes, hypertension and epilepsy prior to her incarceration and has developed a kidney disease as well as high cholesterol while incarcerated. Her pathway to crime reflects the challenges of a single parent who had significant health challenges and struggled to deal with her child’s behavioural problems characterised by truancy from home and subsequent threats to the safety of the family due to her daughter’s choice of friends. Like most of the maximum women offenders that have been interviewed, Dorothy also has embodied the identity of an angry woman that ended up in the correctional centre because of difficulties in controlling her anger.

Family disintegration: Joyce’s narrative

“I told myself that even though I have problems with my parents, I shouldn’t just sit like any other child....”

I dropped out of school because of family problems. I left home in Limpopo and ended up arriving here, looking for a job. I didn’t drop out of school because I wanted to, I just wanted to see, like the children that come after me being educated, being better than me, but I told myself that even though I have problems with my parents, I shouldn’t just sit like any other child whose parents have fought and resulted in me being stuck. I wasn’t able to finish matric but what did I tell myself? Those who follow after me, I want them to succeed, they must finish their matric, that’s what I wanted in my life, so my coming here to Gauteng was in order for me to look for a job so that I can be able to help the children that follow after me, I am their sister, you see, I am the first born, yes. So from there I found a boyfriend, I told myself that he was a person who would help me , with the problems that I had at home, he would help even

my siblings, he was working in the military. We met in August, in that month of August it was very nice, from there he started changing and revealing his true colours. I found a job from 2007 until the crime actually happened, it happened in November of 2008. It happened that in November he showed me his true colours, what kind of person he was until he, like have you ever seen a person nagging you about where you work, “where do you work, I want to come and see where you work”. Like I wanted to talk about that thing to my cousins and even there where I worked but I wasn't able to, it's like it would happen that I would call one of my colleagues and try to tell them but when I had to talk to them, I couldn't, those words just would leave me and I would end up telling them some other useless thing. Then came a day when that thing happened, and then what happened? That is how I landed up in prison.

Joyce is a 28-year-old female sentenced to life plus fourteen years for the murder of her employer. Her narrative reflects the impact of lower class income earners like domestic worker's vulnerability to commit crime as a way of supplementing their income. Joyce came from a background of family disintegration through parental separation. As a first born child, she felt she needed to provide for her family in the absence of her father who was a bread winner. Her crime involved planning with her partner to rob and kill her employer. Her relationship with her boyfriend also reflects a gendered narrative where women are dependent on men and see them as a solution to financial problems, as reflected by how she hoped her newly found boyfriend would resolve the financial problems at her home.

4.1.2 Abuse

Women abuse characterised by emotional, physical and financial abuse emerged as one of the factors that contributed to a “criminal offence” for four of the women that were interviewed in the current study. While the abuse context and the factors around the abuse are quite unique for each of the women, there are similarities regarding the complex dynamics of gender-based violence and an individualised response and distancing by the community as represented by families and friends towards these women. Feelings of isolation due to a perceived lack of support from their families characterise the experiences of two of the women during the abuse phases, an experience that seems to be relived through their experiences of incarceration and perceived lack of support of their rehabilitation by DCS and the community.

“I fell into that trap”: Anita’s (Pseudoname given by researcher) narrative

*I as Maria (Pseudoname that she chose to use) I was in a relationship where I’ll say that I want to get out of it as early as possible because I can see the signs of abuse as young as I am uh let me go out of it because it is also culturally influenced. For an example with my husband... isithembu he wanted he was a Zulu...polygamy he wanted to take another...another woman another wife and when I asked him why now I’m still young why do you want to take another wife...no you know I am Zulu don’t you know. I fell into that trap where I felt that my man is a general manager and I am in this industry and when I’m dating him then things will be fine not knowing that he’s got his own weaknesses and shortcomings that I will not be able to tolerate with his own status. Maybe if for an example I was empowered before this happened, somebody spoke to me about it to say that oh if Anita she was married to him wasn’t a friend it wasn’t they were just they just got married because then he was driving big cars... only if I knew I was not gonna allow it because I know that I am very jealous and especially now in this marriage. I want I don’t wanna share you I want to be alone if you say that you are going to take another woman. I said that no, I cannot be able to stay with you let me get out of it, out of this relationship as early as possible so he said that you are not going to go out of this relationship. “I married you...you are my wife remember so you are not going to, you will listen to me. I am the one who is in control here, I am the head of this house blah blah blah”. So I will say that no if that’s the case then be the head with another woman not with me. I am leaving so I took everything I packed everything I was pregnant then I took everything put in my in the boot.....and then you know I will call my mom this what is happening I will be crying and now I don’t want this anymore I want to come back home and now he’s telling me that this is what he is going to do and you know they are human they will be scared ***yhooo*** don’t bring problems ***yhooo*** in this house and staff like that. I know that he was going to do that, so then when I was there then he will be abusive you know then he will start doing the I love yous on the phone while I’m listening and staff like that and I couldn’t take that you know then we will fight almost...almost every day you know then it was fine he will go and not come back and you know it was that it was that kind of a lifeso what now what am I going to do now I’m no longer talking to you we are no longer talking to one another. When I want to leave you are planning you know a whole lot of things now we end up stabbing one another in the house and then I told him that no there was a time now that I reported the case to the police you know many times I will say that you know please come help. I need your help I need your help then no one even bothered you know so there was nobody intervening at that particular point in time and it went on and on and on until I got tired of it.*

Anita is a 38-year-old female incarcerated for 7 years following murder of her husband. She has been sentenced to life. Her narrative reflects the impact of gender-based violence on women that cuts across all socio-economic statuses. In her case, the cycle of abuse as described by her started when she resisted her husband’s desired cultural practice of polygamy. Anita depicts a middle-class woman who also embraced the social construction of men as financial providers and her

choice of a marital partner was based on this discourse. Her's reflects how women have also embodied the gendered discourse of women as dependent and seeking value from men who can provide financially. A narrative of women's disempowerment characterised by a lack of self-awareness, independence and assertiveness that makes them vulnerable to choosing partners based on social construction of "men as providers" is highlighted.

Of significance in her story is an emergence of how men then use their social status to control and abuse women. She also feels that women are often not empowered to have a full view of the idealised and socially constructed status of men as "providers" which according to her may come with other issues as men use this status to abuse and control women. In her experience, the expression of feelings and anger that women would experience as a result of the cycle of abuse is often met with a strong assertion of male dominance that seeks to silence the woman and render her a helpless object that needs to submit to her husband's dominance. Issues of community distancing and individualising the abuse as her own problem become evident in how her family, as well as the police, responded to her attempts at seeking help from them, resulting in her coping through killing her husband.

"I was being abused": *Sindy's narrative*

*I was being abused I, I, I, I my spouse was abusing me through things like cheating, getting a girlfriend, he would beat me up, he, he, he would abuse me emotionally um, um, um physical abuse, he was abusing me..... **lowers voice**, it's Mr., Mr., was cheating and he would even take my things yes, like table charm dinner set , **exclaims** and my, even my **voice volume increases** Even my clothes he would take them and when Mr. my Mr. he wanted to, he actually wanted to kill me, yes with, with Magic, he would take my clothes and go to the Setswana witch doctors, he wanted to kill me in Setswana it's just that I was assisted by my family. I, you know my in-laws are people whose family is just not getting along well, my husband doesn't have parents, and even when we used to fight they would be happy, there was no one in their family who would come and sit us down and guide us, and instead they would be happy. No, instead it was my family who would be concerned and ask us what the problem was, so if they, if they lack support themselves... do you see it? My family? Yes, my family they have time for me, unlike the in-laws, the in-laws ever since I, I came to prison, no, I have never seen even one of them, I have never seen even one of them..... Well we were constantly fighting and he had that girlfriend of his staying there, you see and on the day of the incident he attacked me with his girlfriend and really they were used to the fact that when*

they meet me even in the house that we used to live at, our common house, they would come and provoke me, yes they would come and provoke and confront me and start a fight, you see? Even if I would meet them on the street they would provoke me, he would take my car and my last born was at boarding school, they sent word that my child is sick, he took the car, I said please help me with the car so that I can go and see the child, he didn't want, you see I was struggling like that, he would make me struggle like that, you see.....He would provoke me, man, he would provoke me , left and right, to and fro, he would provoke me and so on the day that I killed this girl [woman], in fact I actually wanted to kill him, he had beaten me up badly and he was with this girl when he did it and then I said "no man, I am going to kill him" so I found him gone, and I said, "okay let me finish this girl" and well, I finished her, it is then that I came here.

Sindy is a 58-year-old female who had a converted sentence as she was originally sentenced to life, which was converted to 20 years in 2004 and later to 13 years 4 months for killing her spouse's girlfriend. Her socio-cultural context reflects the impact of gender-based violence on her as she narrates the experience of emotional and physical abuse by her husband. Cultural beliefs are also part of her narrative in explaining how unwanted she felt by her husband who planned to kill her through consulting witchdoctors. Her narrative also reflects how she felt the traditional ways of resolving conflict and guiding her and her husband were not utilised by her in-laws, who in her opinion, needed to intervene through convening a family meeting. Sindy clearly felt unsupported by her in-laws as they have not visited her in the correctional centre. Her narrative reflects a feeling of constant anger being provoked by different situations that her husband would engage in and somehow her anger was still felt during the interview as she narrated her experiences in her marriage. Her crime is then directly linked to how she felt after her abuse by her husband in front of his girlfriend and as much as the anger was directed at her husband, in his absence the other woman was the target.

“I stayed because I wanted to satisfy my husband”: *Ruby's narrative*

I never had time for myself I only had time for other people of which my time with being me was neglected that's the reason why I committed this....in fact I did not commit this crime I ended up being here because of a crime that was committed because of my ignorance and then because people will say to me Ruby why don't you leave because we can see the way this husband is treating you and then I will look at the house and say no I can't leave my house.... because I was married neh and then my husband was a teacher neh and I was an interpreter

at Ramatsoe Magistrate and Sezeno Magistrate and then I interpreted in most of the languages which are not spoken.....so they decided to give me an office where I can stay with one of the ladies who was doing administration and then she was doing protection orders and so on....So I only went to court when there was a need maybe when there was someone from...who will be speaking Xhosa who will be speaking Zulu and then out of that I got extra payment and then the colleagues those who were working there they became jealous and then out of their jealousy I remember on the 22nd of August and then one of my colleagues who was very much jealous of me because he.... he said he was 14 years in the field but I am getting more money than him...then he told my husband that he wants to see him and then I did not think there was nothing wrong in them meeting but if I knew that there was something that's gonna happen which....of which the results were going to be bad how I wouldn't have allowed my even if I would have stopped him but I couldn't how would I have done that so they met and then that man told my husband that I am having an affair at work that's why I am getting so much money and then my husband started abusing me...Instead of moving away from the abuse.....I stayed...why did I stay? I stayed because I wanted to satisfy my husband and show him that no I am not that kind of a person and not realising that the anger is building up in me... I wanted to stay and then I thought of my kids and then I thought of the house that if I stay that means I'm gonna loose this house and another woman is gonna stay out of what I have worked for.

Ruby is a 46-year-old woman who is also serving a life sentence for the murder of her husband and his girlfriend. She seemed uncomfortable talking about her “crime” and what could be drawn from the conversation was her attempts at distancing herself from the “criminal act/identity” as she spoke about the crime in a paradoxical manner. Ruby’s socio-cultural context reflects a history of abuse that emanated from her male colleague who spread rumours about her having an affair at work as she earned more than the male friend. Here we see a narrative of how men punish women who are perceived to be earning more than them in a working environment. Ruby also embodies anger that she locates from the experiences she had in her relationship with her husband. Lack of understanding of the complexity of the dynamics experienced by women in abusive relationships by the community is also evident in how people expected Ruby to leave the relationship with her husband. The social construction of “fighting for her marriage” also emerges as she reflects on how she stayed because she wanted to please her husband and was not willing to leave what she has worked hard for. This, however, seems to have left her with self-blame as she now seems to embrace the notion that the crime happened because of her ignorance,

which again excludes everyone involved and reinforces the “choice discourse”, which undermines the complexity of experiences of women in abusive relationships.

“My husband was abusing us through money, he would beat us up”: *Margaret’s narrative*

*My husband was abusing us through money, he would beat us up and then when her child went to report what happened to her father, that we killed him, we did this, we did that, when she described all those things to the extent that she even lied saying her father was a good person, he would come home on time***emotional*** when he was going somewhere he would phone home, she just put her father on a pedestal in such a way that the court didn't even want to hear me out, it didn't want to listen to me. I ended up just keeping quiet.....My father passed on when I was 6 months old after I had just been born. So my mom left me at my grandmother's house and I was raised by my uncles[mother's brother] and aunt [mother's younger sister]. So I was raised well but at home my grandmother raised me in church, and all of that, you know that grandmothers like that. I was my granny's child, in fact, so I became filled with anger without realising it, one day I was fighting with my aunt, I was hurt here ***demonstrates***so my aunt used to cause conflict between myself and her kids, so when my mom appeared on the road while I was fighting with my aunt, when she got there, she said words to the effect of “no, not my mother's child, why do you have to fight with my mother's child?, and so on and so on, so when she came in I also fought with her, the reason why I fought with her “you left me at your family home if you hadn't run after marriage after I was born and made a home for me, maybe it wouldn't be this way”. So I grew up with that thing. My granny passed away in '87 and when my granny passed away in '87, then my uncle and aunt started fighting over the[family] home, the house and now my aunt said these words that each and every child must go to their mothers house and now when I thought about it, I do not have a home, my mother was married to some man and that man rejected me, he didn't like me, so that's when I saw that oh, that is where my anger is...at home in Klerksdorp they rejected me, even the ones that I used to attend church with, I was a St Anne, I was a St Anne member the ones with purple clothes from the Roman Catholic Church...Yes so they rejected me, they have never visited me since I was arrested, I've got five years now inside here, they do not come, my relatives also.....*

Margaret (55) is sentenced to life for the murder of her husband. Her pathway to crime also reflects a history of gender-based violence as reflected by her narrating a history of emotional, physical and financial abuse from her husband. The justice system is not always keen on listening to the women's narratives about the crime as reflected by Margaret, who felt that the court was not interested in listening to her side of the story. She also offers an interpretation of her anger that she feels stemmed from abandonment by her mother that subsequently led to her staying with her grandmother.

After the death of her grandmother, she narrates an experience of being chased away to her mother's place where she was rejected by her stepfather. The abuse by her husband is seen as a situational factor that she feels exacerbated her anger. Although Margaret reflects on anger as a contributory element in her criminal behaviour, such reflection seems to have come after attending the anger management course. A narrative of how the community rejects offenders because of condemning and judging them emerges in Margaret's story. While churches are often thought to be at the forefront of modelling forgiveness and support of people who have committed crimes, here an interesting observation is made on how churches or religious organisations also reflect similar dynamics of condemnation and rejection to those observed in the larger society.

4.1.3 Poverty

Few of the women in the study mentioned poverty and need for money as a factor that influenced their motivation towards crime. Some of the women indicated being influenced to committing the crime. The influence came from friends and intimate partners for some of the women.

“I just wanted extra cash in my pocket”: *Paulina's Narrative*

Okay, uh, when I when I came in I was like a youngster I was 25 years old, I'm arrested for armed robbery and attempted murder, so committing the crime, yes it was very difficult for me because of my background... I am in prison, whereby because of my past, my father passed on, I was age of ten that is the thing that makes me commit a crime because my mom didn't work and I've got these siblings that have to go to attend school and then I committed crime, came in here.... I just wanted extra cash in my pocket, you know, but okay I did have it and they caught me after I spend the money, yes....so I was a breadwinner at home for my mom, my brother and sister....today's youth are out there doing drugs, out there with uh, older people than them that use them, like I'm one of them that I was out with older people than me, so I couldn't say no because I was afraid that they are older than me and they want me to do that so I continued with that, so I will stop them not to listen to somebody who will led them to be in prison. I've got a nephew that, uh, he quit school because he failed so two month-last month he got arrested. It was very painful, I thought because I'm in prison so he have to also fall in there and what will my mom say? That okay my child is in prison now my grandchild is also going to prison? So it's something in, in the family, I have to stop it there and there.

Paulina is a 38-year-old African woman who is incarcerated for armed robbery and attempted murder and was sentenced for 35 years and had served 13 years of her sentence at the time of our interview. Paulina's pathway to crime also reflects challenging socio-economic circumstances that compelled her to do something to provide for her siblings as her mother was an unemployed widow. Her narrative reflects different challenges in society which are drug problems amongst the youth and older people who take advantage of the vulnerable youth, as she relates this to her situation. She also reveals an altruistic narrative that reflects her intentions to use her experiences as a way of assisting in preventing incidences that make youth vulnerable to crime. Her altruistic attitude seems to be also motivated by personal circumstances that make her seek to prevent the generational spread of crime in her family as she reflects on her nephew who is currently awaiting trial.

“Listening to friends when you are struggling financially”: *Edith's narrative*

****Eish***, it is about friends. It is about friends, listening to friends, it is because of listening to friends when you are struggling financially. My friend said let's do this so that we get money, you see that's what brought me here.... I cry because I struggled with my children a lot, I don't want to lie. Their father used to drink alcohol when he was there it was the same, you understand until he died. But it was the same even when he was alive; I used to struggle with my children alone.... I used to struggle, the money was little at work.*

Edith is a 62-year-old woman who was originally sentenced to sixteen years for the murder of her friend's employers. Edith is originally from Mpumalanga and was employed as a domestic worker. She struggled financially and thought the plan suggested by her friend (who was also a domestic worker) would ease the financial burden that she faced as she had to feed her children. She still appears to regret (as reflected by her use of the exclamation Eish) what happened and also acknowledges her role in the crime and still takes responsibility for what happened. She had nine children and currently only six are alive. Her narrative also reflects how women are left to struggle financially without the support of their husbands and instead of being supportive, there would be more strain added on the woman as she also had to deal with a husband who was also

an alcoholic. Her pathway to crime also reflects the plight of low-income workers and the impact of this in the community as a whole as they seem desperate to put food on the table for their families, thus resorting to crime as a solution. Edith is incarcerated far from her children but because they are all working, they manage to visit her. Even though on paper it is recommended that offenders are housed in centres closer to their homes, this is sometimes not possible for certain offenders as sometimes centres closer to their families do not have resources to house maximum security offenders. She was therefore transferred to Johannesburg Correctional centre for security reasons as the correctional centre where she was housed in Mpumalanga did not have security resources for maximum offenders.

“I wanted to put bread on the table”: *Jane’s narrative*

And I got deceived by men, I was deceived, you see. A person deceives you and you get deceived and I regret later because I wanted to put bread on the table, to feed my children. A person deceives you and you get deceived and you think about it later and regret, you see. Yes, that is it..... And those I killed are Ethiopians from Ethiopia and they did not have children..... And my bosses loved me and I loved them too. And one day I regretted being here, I was thinking why.....they should not have shot my bosses

Jane is a 60-year-old woman who has five children who are all adults. She was employed as a domestic worker prior to her incarceration. She is incarcerated for the murder of her employers. Jane was originally sentenced to twenty years, which was reduced to 13 years 4 months. Jane’s pathway to crime also reflects a narrative of how women who are struggling financially are often tempted by men to engage in criminal activities, as she had planned with her boyfriend and his friends to rob and kill her employers. She has completed 15 years of her sentence. Her narrative reflected an anxious wait to go home experienced by women that had their sentences reduced. Even though some have completed their 13-year 4-month sentence, they report no direction in terms of when they will be released. As a result, there is a constant fear of making mistakes that will result to being charged, *leading to a longer stay in the system.*

4.1.4 Spiritual factors

Few of the women linked their criminal behaviour to spiritual factors. These ranged from religious to cultural explanations of their criminal behaviours.

“It was a time where my soul was sold to the devil”: Aruna’s narrative

This is as I said my crime is so different.....I was uh I went to the... I was referred to the spiritual healers.....so the thing is I think that was my root, very root but I think the biggest part for me I should presumably I should have told my aunties that I don’t believe in all that stuff and I also believe that it was because I was 33 and not married and I was engaged two times and two times the engagement broke off and so my aunts were concerned and they took me to the spiritual healers they obviously see other things that you know they already know your life they know everything it’s so weird but in any case yhaa to cut a long story short...it was a time where my soul was sold to the devil I was finance director of a company I worked for them for four years so the level of trust was very high. I was also very strict finance director so..... Over a period of two months I took 3 million rands from the company I was uhm a victim of this crime where these people so my aunt had taken me to these spiritual healers I had no knowledge of..... So they had got to me and they put a spell on me...so I needed deliverance from that. So my root of it if you would ask me and I discussed this with Angelaina...the root with me is that I should not have I should have faith in my own faith (Hindu)....my own and stick to it and not listen to other people also because my Aunties...and in here I struggled because mine is a spiritual crime and I mean I was delivered from it outside already ...I lost my job and my company sequestrated me and took all my assets and whatever and this too.....here I mean everyone was quite clear with me you took the money you took the money irrespective of whether everybody in the company knew you were taking the money.... And I was able to look at the mind-set in that two months when I was out of the spell it was very much a mind of a gambler...you know a gambler. I was never a gambler before that.

Aruna is a 36-year-old female serving an 11-year sentence for fraud. Her narrative reflects a pathway to crime that has a religious and cultural context. A reflection on how women are socially pressurised to attain a marital status is reflected in how she had also embodied “the concern” that her aunties had by agreeing to resolve the matter through consulting spiritual healers. The cost of funding the spiritual healers seems to have created a pathway for her to engage in a criminal activity. A narrative of self-blame emerges as she reflects on how she needed to have not listened to her aunts, which makes the criminal offence her own problem that has nothing to do with anyone else. This narrative paves a way for society to exclude itself from the rehabilitation of offenders who are the product of the very same society. What also emerges

in Aruna's narrative is the forced rationalisation of her "criminal behaviour" which she seems to have also embodied at the same time undermining her religious interpretation of the context of her crime.

"My spirit leaves my body and then you come in this place": *Gabisile's narrative*

Okay I did robbery and murder and I was sentenced to 18 years and then for myself it was anger as I was, I was saying that the old Gabi and the Gabi of now it's too different things, anger is what brought me here, in this place, because of what? I was fighting with that person and then you find that I was physically stronger than her, you see? And you find that you are just defending yourself, u so, so like for example like my spirit leaves my body and then you come in this place. I am still maximum when I asked the time when I went to sit in they told me that I will get my medium next year, it means I, I, I would've stayed a quarter of a sentence so I can get my, my medium.....I'm a , we are five in a single mother we were raised by a single mother and I'm a first child, I'm a first born okay since I'm here they are supportive that, uh gives me that knowledge that you know what that gives me that mind that I'm very important to them and uh according to whatever that I did, what I did in the past and then it ended up putting me in this place okay I've disappointed them but they didn't desert me and they were, they are still there for Gabi.

Gabisile is a 30-year-old female who is from a family of five siblings raised by her single mother. She has been sentenced to 18 years for robbery and murder. She was not comfortable talking about her crime. However, she also embodied the anger narrative as she felt that she murdered the other woman due to anger. She also provides a spiritual explanation for her crime as indicated by an experience of her spirit leaving the body and she ended up committing the crime. Her narrative also reflects attempts in rejecting the maximum security offender identity and introducing the imminent medium offender re-classification that she is due for next year, which indicates that women generally have challenges embracing the maximum security offender classification. Her motivation to change is influenced by the support that she gets from her family, which highlights the importance of family support in rehabilitation.

“There is maybe a purpose for me from my ancestors from the gods”: Xoliswa’s narrative

*You see that I have been arrested, I am here in prison, I was robbed, I just saw them saying “times one times four.... what I need to do is to keep trusting that maybe since I am here in prison... there is maybe a purpose for me from my ancestors from the gods, I don’t know what that is then but because you are educated, you will understand what that thing looks like... Okay since I am also here, I was arrested because of my brother and his wife and my sister in laws father and my brothers and sister in laws son.....I was a person who sold brooms, you see? Yes, my husband passed away in 1988, then I started selling marijuana, then I stopped....we would sell those brooms, okay then I arrived at home, I was back from Johannesburg, my children said to me “hey mom, you almost found our uncles house covered in trees, people were going to burn the house, ***inaudible*** oh okay then this other woman arrived, I think this woman came in the evening if I am not mistaken, then there was also another man who came, who said “no, please reprimand there at your home, people are saying that there is some wicked behaviour of some sort. They are stealing cattle, they are stealing goats, it’s as if there is some witchcraft going on, in fact it’s not as if or a maybe, there is really some witchcraft going on” I then said “ I will jump up and go” then I went, when I arrived there, my brother breeds dogs, so if you have to get in his house you have to yell, okay then I went, when I got there I spoke with them and said “my brother and sister-in-law I came here to you because people are saying you are being naughty, in actual fact you are practicing witchcraft, they say you are even being caught in other people’s homes, my brother..... I am here to reprimand you that if you are doing these things, remove yourself from it.....”*

Xoliswa is a 69-year-old female who has been sentenced to four life sentences and 16 years for four counts of murder (brother and his wife, sister in law’s father and sister in law’s son), attempted murder and arson. Xoliswa states that she was implicated in influencing a community mob into killing her relatives after she warned them to stop bewitching community members. Her understanding of her reasons for her incarceration are very culturally informed, as understood to be a purpose by the ancestors that is yet to be revealed to her. Her narrative also reflected that given a choice, she would have and still does consult traditional healers whom she believes have the power to influence the outcome of one’s fate regarding the legal processes, as reflected in one of her narratives about her nephews who were never incarcerated after being convicted of murder.

4.1.5 Wrongfully accused?

“I want the truth”: *Caroline’s Narrative*

I was arrested, came here but I was surprised that there has been pressure and how did I end up here. I was surprised but couldn’t get the answer. And then we went to court from then they found us guilty. We had to admit but I had doubts since I have been here I have had doubts, I still do. I’m still having some doubts; I didn’t get answers that I wanted.....Because of the things that happened I wasn’t involved even though people won’t believe me about the things that happened. Let me briefly tell you about what happened, it’s a murder case about my husband. And then when he went missing for 11 months, he was a pensioner and my children and I were working, we woke up and went to work. On that day when we got back we found out that he wasn’t there, he was missing in the house from that day he was missing from the 3/10 till he was found in 2011....and we got arrested and they opened a case for us and we went to court. We went to court and we found lawyers, advocates and there was there 3 of us and each person had their own advocate. So the one that I had was not so defensive and I couldn’t find what I wanted, I wanted the truth, I want the truth, I want the truth.....

Caroline is a 62-year-old woman who has been sentenced to life for the murder of her husband.

Caroline gives no history of traumatic background nor any history of a volatile relationship with her husband. She only reflected normal challenges in a marriage, which were about her husband getting very sick at some point with her being left alone with the children and the challenges of raising their children. She was however arrested with her sons eleven months after her husband’s remains were found. She maintains that she has not been involved in her husband’s murder. What was noticeable was her difficulty in articulating what happened to her husband as she kept on referring it to the “thing that happened”. This possibly indicates the difficulties she has in even bringing herself closer into comprehending what she has been charged and convicted for. Her children have been released and charges were dropped against them. She is still searching for the truth regarding what happened. Caroline came across as a very calm person who seems to have accepted her sentence and where her life is at the moment. Her narrative of her incarceration experience reflected a person who generally avoids conflict with anyone and complies with what is expected, a strategy that seems to work for her.

“That thing that happened, I did not do”: *Lizzy’s Narrative*

Sometimes when I got here, I was so surprised that is it me in prison or what? And that thing that happened, I did not do you see.....they took me to South of Gauteng with Gali and the accused they asked him when I got there they said your husband is dead and you killed him and there is no way, it is you who killed him, we got arrested and went to prison.....they just gave me a sentence to life imprisonment or 25 years. When I got there I was guilty of everything, and even my sisters in law they concluded because we were not in good terms, you see they say “you are a murderer”, they say “it’s over for you, you are going to rot in prison, I didn’t respond anything to them I said “all is well”. And my situation made me know God. I didn’t expect that I will know God the way I love Him and the way He is doing the miracles to me.

Lizzy is a 48-year-old African woman who is also serving a life sentence for the murder of her husband. She distances herself from the criminal identity through explaining how she has been falsely accused of plotting to murder her husband. She also seems to find it challenging to comprehend the association between herself and the crime as indicated by her words: *that thing that happened, I did not do you see*. Lizzy is a mother of three daughters. She states that she had a volatile relationship with her husband and attributes her being a suspect in his death to the marital discord they had. Her narrative also reveals how she was labelled and judged by her in-laws and also condemned to prison a narrative that reflects how society responds to women who are offenders. Lizzy seems to also draw strength from her religion in dealing with the treatment received from the community.

“I also confessed....because they were beating us up”: *Matilda’s Narrative*

*I had bought my child clothes, the older one, because he never did anything for him so that’s what we were fighting over. I also bought him/her a phone, and we fought over that, he even chased my child away. My child left and went to stay there at home, in Soweto. The relationship was never alright from there. He started cheating, cheating with tenants here in the yard, when I was at home he would sleep with them in the house and the relationship changed got ruined like that.....by the time he passed on, it was just a relationship because we are married ...but he was starting to tell me that I must also leave.....It was not good really that’s why even the suspicions of me being the one who... when the police arrested us, when they went to arrest me, they came with these other boys, saying that, in actual fact, the police were given information that these boys are the ones who killed him, they went to arrest these boys.....they said that I am the one who paid them.....They beat us , ***exclaims*** they beat us, they beat us and we just confessed, I also confessed and said yes, I had paid them. Because they were hitting us/beating us up.*

Matilda is a 43-year-old woman originally from Lesotho but raised in Soweto, as her family moved when she was still young. She is currently incarcerated for the murder of her husband and has served one year of her life sentence. Her demeanour toward the interview was characterised by detachment. She provided monosyllabic answers and mostly responded with “I don’t know”. Matilda also distanced herself from the criminal identity by explaining how she has been falsely accused because she had a volatile relationship with her husband that was characterised by abuse. Of all the people interviewed, she was the only one who was not talkative. She, however, did express that she is not a talkative person. Even though she was not verbally expressive, her facial expression communicated emotional pain as could be seen with the tears that she was fighting as we continued with her interview. As much as her interview was very restricted verbally in comparison to the other interviews, her nonverbal communication of pain stood out for me and became a graphic memory of the pain incarcerated women go through as I continued to work with her interview.

“I do not know why I am here”: *Yolisa’s Narrative*

*Firstly since I arrived I have never been alright the reason being that I do not know why I am here.... because I was sentenced to a life sentence..... ...first I was fired from my job, they saidI went for the disciplinary hearing, they said that I sent people to go and rob the shop.....I asked them then that how can I send people because first of all, I have 6 years working here, I started with FNB taking R250 000 cash with a security guard, when I came back we put it in the head office...they sent me to Nqamako...from Butterworth to Nqamako its 30 kilometres, I went there one out, when I came back from Centani...I went to Willowville, driving alone, they had given me R50 000,at the last station they had given me R100 000 cash, in these 6 years, not a single one day have I ever said the money is short or I was robbed, how was I going to send a person whom I don’t know in that place. I did an appeal, I don’t remember whether it was within 14 days or 21 days, I did another one and sent it with my brother when he came to visit, nothing came back. I repeated it in 2006, I repeated it when I was in East London, nothing came back, I appealed again in 2009 again in East London, and nothing came back. I then decided in 2009 that I would write each and everything that I did in a diary , in September of 2010, I was drafted to come this side , I had applied for it because my children are this side. My children are ‘upside down’, they drink a lot.... The one who is a girl has shortness of breath, she had depression, when she, for example, if there is something that is worrying her, she faints, so she is frequently going to the doctor. The doctor asked her “what is it that is worrying you?” she said “I have times when ***emotional*****crying*** she said, “I have times when I miss my mum”. When I left, the*

*oldest one was 18 years old, he is 29 years old this year, the youngest one who is a boy, was 6 years old, he is 17 years old this year ***emotional*** he also he drinks, he smokes marijuana, he is struggling at school, even the oldest one drinks, even the one who is a girl used to drink a lot, she says when she tells , me, she says “Mama I would sometimes finish R1000 in a day, drinking with friends....*

Yolisa is a 56-year-old woman and a mother of three children. She has been incarcerated for murder, robbery and attempted murder and has been sentenced to life imprisonment. Her interview reflected the experiences and frustration that incarcerated mothers face as a result of helplessness in terms of rescuing their children from destructive behaviours that they feel the children are experiencing as a result of the absence of their mothers. Yolisa also distances herself from the criminal identity through relating how much she has been appealing without success, revealing her desperate attempts to go home as she also states that she does not know why she is in the correctional centre.

4.2 Rehabilitation Experiences

Listening to and reflecting on the maximum security women offenders' experiences of rehabilitation also allowed the researcher access to the dilemmas and troubled subject positions the women narrated as they told their stories. The element of being incarcerated mothers seem to be a story reflective of pain and hurt experienced by the women as mothers who cannot be physically available to support their children. A dilemma is reflected by the conflict they seem to experience in their identity as mothers and yet not being physically available to mother their children. Their story of motherhood reflects a narrative of what society expects from women in terms of parental responsibility. Consequently, one of the women feels that she has wronged her children through her incarceration and therefore her rehabilitation is seen as playing a role in making up for having wronged her children, as she believes that her engagement in rehabilitation gives the children hope and allows her to have confidence in mothering her children whilst incarcerated, as reflected in the following excerpt:

...with the way in which my kids life go through without me it's also another thing...because if I think about my kids then I can see that you know what I have wronged.....I have wronged them and if I am gonna continue being the person I was before.....So but now if you doing something better...then you also sending a message to your kids because they will say okay at least mommy is studying. Even when you reprimand them when you say Lucy don't do this then she will realise that okay mummy is a better person ...I usually tell my kids that you know what even if I can be in prison but I am still your mother...I am still your mother and then for me to prove that I am still a mother I must do the right things (Ruby)

The key narrative evident in the women's understanding of rehabilitation reflected a repeated construction of themselves in the interviews as agents of personal change under difficult circumstances. Central to participating in rehabilitation is focusing on bringing about change from the past and the beginning of a new life. These narratives of personal change under harsh circumstances are clearly embedded in their personal narratives, shaped by how each one of the individual women feels the need to change in relation to what contributed to their crimes. However, their personal narratives also reflect expectations of other social contexts that influence these women in that the DCS and society also expect them to change. Some of the women also construct their family members (children and parents) as readily available in their process of rehabilitation as they continue supporting them through visits as they see them being changed by the process of rehabilitation. Their narratives about rehabilitation also support Polleta's (2006) suggestion that stories can make a moral point, in that some of the women's narratives actually reflect a quest for change as a response to possibly indicate remorse and acknowledgement of having wronged society.

The women's narratives also reflected stories of redemption, where satisfactory outcomes are crafted from an unpromising start and journey. Even though for all of the women the correctional centre is narrated as a harsh, punitive context, some of the women also expressed a sense of gratitude in terms of how the experience has shaped their lives in a positive way (*Prison is not right for a woman but prison makes a person straighten their ways-Jane.*). The redemptive stories were also evident in how the women initially struggled with the culture of control in the

correctional centre and how the same culture has taught them patience, humility and discipline. The women also construct themselves as strong characters which gives an impression of women maximum security offenders as women who continually strive to get the best and get on with their lives in the best way possible and being strong enough to deal with what comes with being in a context where liberty to self-manage and plan one's day or even life is not allowed.

As much as some of the maximum security women offenders seem to have reframed the correctional centre environment in a positive way as an environment that has helped them to be humble, patient and obedient, some of their narratives actually reveal that the system reproduces women who are trained to be docile in the face of disrespect and unfair childlike treatment. These women are also groomed to be dependent due to their classification status, which makes their lives completely dependent on the correctional officers. This raises concerns in terms of how are they expected to survive when they are released as some of their appeals do become successful. The following excerpt from one of the women captured this narrative of dependency and docility:

Like now, if you can check here in prison most of the officials are younger than us ...and as she comes to me and says Ruby sweep here and I will say if by then I will say no I won't sweep who do you think you are? do you think you must come and tell me to sweep the floor whereas my daughter or my son won't tell me to do what to do when...eh won't...won't...won't instruct me to do what you saying I must do now I am not gonna do it neh...But after doing those courses I don't even check the age the only thing is I must respect her position... that is her position and she is doing her job. If she says Ruby irrespective of the age if she says Ruby go and sweep Ruby clean here I will do it because that is part of rehabilitation, listening, following instructions. You don't do as you wish here if they say Ruby we gonna lock you up okay it's fine no problem if they say Ruby you not gonna go here okay it's fine. If I need something I need to talk to my officials in a very polite and respective way I don't just talk the way I want". (Ruby)

Some of the women felt that there is no rehabilitation for maximum women offenders and as a result, they are left to find ways of crafting the rehabilitation themselves. The choice narrative in rehabilitation was also evident in most of the women's experiences, thereby highlighting that this is a responsibility delegated to them, which again makes the process individualistic in nature and indirectly excludes the institution from its responsibility to rehabilitate women classified as

maximum security offenders. The classification of women maximum offenders results in stereotypes and the extreme security control systems imposed on this group provides a narrative of discrimination when it comes to rehabilitation programmes that are provided in the correctional centre. While women who are classified as maximum offenders are rehabilitated through the attendance of courses, challenges regarding these courses are highlighted. Education seems to be one of the most valued form of rehabilitation by women who are classified as maximum security offenders, however, lack of support and resistance by the system is highlighted. The management of the rehabilitation process for women who are classified as maximum offenders (which is characterised by exclusion and a hurried response when the offender is about to go home) is deemed to be one of the factors that contribute to recidivism for this group.

4.2.1 Lack of rehabilitation

In narrating their experience with rehabilitation, three of the women indicated a lack of rehabilitation in the correctional centre. Even though the three women felt that there is no rehabilitation at the correctional centre the experience of what lack of rehabilitation meant for each of the women was quite different. Common to their experiences, though, is a reflection of a system that is not sensitive and empathetic to the context that has shaped women's experiences prior to incarceration, as well as women's needs while incarcerated. For Angela, the lack of rehabilitation in the correctional centre is reflected by her loss of hope in a system that she feels is aware of the context of rejection, drug abuse and gender-based violence that she went through prior to her incarceration but responds in a dehumanising, non-empathetic way by silencing her attempts at verbal self-expression through punishment.

The lack of hope in the system has resulted in Angela withdrawing into herself through finding rehabilitation by focusing on her needs and doing programmes that are meaningful to her.

For example, Angela chose to do an HIV course as she wanted to understand more about her HIV positive status. She also paved her rehabilitation journey through focusing on her artistic talent (music) and growing from such. A narrative of self-rehabilitation through positive self-talk emerges and she seems to find comfort in her music, which she presents as a collective experience that she likes to share with other people. Her positive self-talk and focus on music probably represent her discovery of safe ways of expressing her experiences in a system that seeks to silence her voice, as it is evident that verbal expression of such is met with harsh consequences. The following excerpt captures Angela's sentiments about rehabilitation as a woman classified as a maximum security offender at the correctional centre:

When I was outside I was confused, I was lost, I didn't know a thing...and they also know, they know my whole story... they know everything but there was no one who ever wanted to understand me like there is no one who ever wanted to understand me, they never even tried to understand me, not even a little...you understand? Obviously, I'm also human, sister, I feel pain...you see?.....So well, myself, to be honest with you, I don't see rehabilitation here in prison, my version, I don't see my version of rehabilitation here in prison, I see it being...being from you... it comes from you if you want to be rehabilitated/to rehabilitate yourself... As you can see, I am a person who likes music, you see? I can't explain the feeling but it relaxes my soul...now it...singing makes me feel like everything is going to be alright....I have a group that I have opened/started now, two months back so I have grown it and put your dramas, your dancing, everything... Otherwise, the courses and stuff I did HIV basic care course , even there, it's just that I did it because I myself I am HIV positive so I feel that I need to know. The truth is when you tell them something those mothers say that you are insulting them and you do not have respect, you have anger and at that time you are just telling them what you feel, they take the charge sheet and charge you just like that.

Another woman, Sindy, also felt that there is no rehabilitation in the system. At face value, the interview with her felt like a digression as she was preoccupied with lost possessions that disappeared after one of the DCS strip searches. Her interview was extremely productive for the analytic process as it provided contextual and associative cues that actually lend to a rich understanding of the DCS context and the impact on women. Although it felt as if Sindy was not prepared to answer the initial question through talking about rehabilitation programmes, she actually proceeded with a complex narrative that described her experience of losing her personal belongings through one of the strip searches. The narrative gave insight to her anger at the

authorities, her anxieties and how this experience hampers her ability to benefit from or even focus on rehabilitation, as well as contributing to feeling stuck and helpless in a system that she perceives to be perpetuating the “abused women syndrome” that she came with.

Sindy’s narrative of her experiences reflects how the correctional environment replicates the same experience for women who have been in abusive relationships. Her experience of losing documents that are very important to her evoke feelings of anger, which was evident during the session as she spoke about this. Sindy further highlights how anger can be a continuous factor for women classified as maximum security offenders as they continue to be faced with situations that evoke anger. She is also anxious about what may potentially happen with those documents. However, the most frustrating part seems to be the helplessness and hopelessness felt as a result of realising that the system is not assisting her. Her persistent attempts at finding her documents seem to be dealt with through threats and charges as a way of silencing her from raising the issue again, highlighting the use of the discipline and punishment in offenders who are vocal about issues in the correctional centre. Sindy’s experiences highlight the discourse of whether rehabilitation can successfully happen within correctional centres characterised by a system of discipline and punish aimed at silencing offenders, in the process exacerbating their distress, as reflected in her narrative below:

*Oh, in fact, myself, with regard to rehabilitation I don’t see a difference because the way I got here it’s like they exaggerated my behaviour, you know? I came in here because I have been abused like I am telling you that I was a battered woman in syndrome. And then, here instead of me being transformed and rehabilitated the thing that I have experienced from outside is extremely worse in which way? I’ll give an example **makes sound with mouth**the members you are aware that they do searches, right? They took my investment documents, they took my family’s photo albums, you know very important documents, remember that an ID is a very, very important document and these nowadays you know fraud happens, fraud, happens more especially because there are insurances, right? foreigners can come and defraud my family’s things.....and now that thing you know they stress me, straight they are stressing me, now so how will that kind of person be rehabilitated?. They are not even giving me a clue, on top of that I have been threatened, I have been charged, and I have been charged. Now a person will still be the same instead of this institution helping me the more they are giving me a problem I don’t see the difference, as far as rehabilitation is concerned I*

don't see how this institution is beneficiary for rehabilitation.....so they are making the anger that I've had, that I had outside- it must be a continuous thing do you see(Sindy)

The perceived lack of rehabilitation by women classified as maximum security offenders relates to how they are treated in the system as reflected by their experience of punitive systems and degrading focus as a driving force in how they are treated by correctional officers. Being stereotyped as people who lie and therefore cannot be trusted, with no one willing to listen to them, is one of the practice that denies women classified as maximum security offenders agency. Such experiences seem to also drive women in making rehabilitation meaningful for themselves in a way that seems fitting under the circumstances. So what emerges is that maximum offenders have decided to rehabilitate themselves through education and focusing on their spirituality, as reflected below:

Because rehabilitation, here they don't rehabilitate us at all instead of rehabilitating us it's the more they press charges, it's the more the undermine you when you talk to them you are now lying you not telling the truth, you are lying you want to do your things.... With mediums...they rehabilitate them so that they can do things like choir and travel with their choirs. So they don't allow us because of the sentence that we are serving. That is why we see that "no man there is many ways to kill a cat". Let's take our rehabilitation through education and do God's work. (Lizzy)

As a result of the perceived lack of rehabilitation by women classified as maximum security offenders, some view the reasons for incarceration as purely for punishment, as indicated by Aruna's statement of *so yhaa in here particularly uhm I think we just here for punitive reasons I'm gonna be honest*. This, reflects a conflicted position that is expected of the correctional system in balancing the security (discipline, control and punish) and rehabilitation roles as reflect by Ruby:

if really if really if this is a rehabilitation centre within this five years am I not yet rehabilitated? That means the 25 years it's the time frame in which they think that I'll be rehabilitated is this punishment or what?

4.2.2 Rehabilitation as a choice

Five of the women interviewed view rehabilitation to be a choice that women classified as maximum security offenders have to make in the correctional centre. This choice seems to be one of the two other choices that are available in the correctional context. Underlying the narrative of choosing rehabilitation as an option is the indication that if one does not choose rehabilitation then they chose “prison life”. The prison life is equated to choosing to eat, sleep, smoke drugs and smuggle, as opposed to rehabilitation.

I believe that it is per individual's decision as to how do you wanna do it, you know how do you wanna do it or whether you want to do it or not it's up to a person there are people who that will say that no I don't need to study or you know I studied outside or you know there is no need for studying and stuff like that so it's up to a person as to whether you want to study or not you understand? So if you feel that you know you are one person that really has a purpose in your life you want to study; you want to get busy; you want to do things. There are people that will just get busy during the day...smoking doing whatever that they want to do getting busy doing wrong things and stuff like that (Anita).

The choice narratives creates an impression that women classified as maximum security offenders have choices that they have to make based on internal processes of intent, self-understanding and understanding of what put one in the correctional centre, which determines what women want to do in the correctional environment. The choice to be rehabilitated seems to be motivated by the desire to change and to become a better person for others; a desire to be integrated into society; motivating and inspiring their families to continue supporting and visiting them, as they can see the efforts that women are putting into changing their lives. Self-reflection and introspection are seen as fundamental in informing the rehabilitation choice that women make in the correctional centre. One of the five women, Aruna, feels that even though that rehabilitation is a choice very few women get rehabilitated. She further explains that rehabilitation requires constant nurturing and self-monitoring. She also views rehabilitation as a spiritual journey that is determined by one's choice, as indicated below:

Look I think rehabilitation at the end of the day it's a choice...right, and uhm in here we see it I see it and...everyone probably 5% of women actually uh make a change for the better.....It's a choice I said it's a choice and is something that you have to nurture every day it's not something that it's something you have to be watching yourself every day that's what it is and it's also introspection.....So the lot of it has also got to do with your God relationship...it's a lot of it in here spending time with your Creator you know that is the purpose finding that meaning but it's a choice again....(Aruna)

The narrative of choice in rehabilitation also extends to the different rehabilitation programmes that are available for one to attend in the correctional centre. These range from spiritual and life skills courses, schooling, psychologist and social worker. One of the women indicated that on orientation they are often told about programmes that are available at the correctional centre. This, therefore, implies that women have a variety of rehabilitation programmes that are available for them that they can choose from when they make the choice to be rehabilitated as explained below:

When I got here they explained to me why I needed to be here and they said I'm here for rehabilitation. Then they explained to me when I got here, that with rehabilitation I'm going to meet psychologists and we have social workers and then there are courses as well that I can attend then I will see which course I will choose according to my life (Caroline)

Even though rehabilitation is deemed to be a choice that women classified as maximum security offenders need to make in the correctional system, Anita, felt that the DCS needs to also show commitment and support for the rehabilitation of women classified as maximum security offenders. Anita's experience of rehabilitation reflects a narrative of unmet expectations as evidenced by her perceived lack of commitment by the DCS in the rehabilitation of women classified as maximum security offenders. The role of DCS in motivating maximum women offenders to engage in rehabilitation programmes is highlighted as a need, since rehabilitation is one of the most important aspects in incarceration. This also indicates how women prefer a more relational approach to their engagement in the system, as also highlighted by Anita that "*they just called me for orientation*", implying a very superficial engagement that possibly lacked the motivation that she was looking for. Her narrative also probably reflects how rehabilitation is

documented well in policy and yet is not felt to be pushed in time by the system for women classified as maximum security offenders, as she feels that rehabilitation is not supposed to be up to an individual but that the system must make it compulsory for people to participate in rehabilitation programmes as early as possible so that they are rehabilitated by the time they go home. Anita's sentiments about rehabilitation for maximum offenders are reflected below:

Coming in coming here there was no one who like really motivated me to study or tell me anything about it. They just called me for orientation where I was oriented what I am expected to do that there are courses but there is just no person that really pushes or...or..or initiates that you know what you make sure that you study. It should be with me it was supposed to be a must for me to be told that I need to do something with my life... It's supposed to be the system has to also push you to do it in time (Anita)

4.2.3 Maximum Security Women offenders' discrimination in rehabilitation

Even though rehabilitation is expressed as a choice, this did not seem to be the case as women narrated their experience of being classified as maximum security offenders. A narrative that emerged in the identity of being classified as maximum security offender in relation to rehabilitation reflected feelings of segregation, demoralisation, unworthiness and being used. The status of being a maximum was also equated to a group that the system has no hope for. As a result, maximums are not allowed to participate in certain rehabilitation programmes, particularly those that are meant for medium offenders who are deemed to be going home soon. This, according to the participants, often demoralises women who are classified as maximum security offenders. Consequently, they end up not engaging in any rehabilitation. One participant reflects the rehabilitation of women maximum security offenders as follows:

since then 2009 I just decided when I saw people going to courses I said no let me just go when I went they told me that no there are certain courses that you know you are still a maximum so you know when you are a maximum you are really classified as "this person" according to me the way I see things it's like we are not, we are segregated as maximums....within the system we are segregated in a ... in a sense that you find that when there are certain things that are happening when there are certain courses that are...are being called for uh...uh... inmates to do they always say we want mediums to do those courses even when it comes to the skills and staff...they say we want mediums to come and do

the course because they will be going home soon so that you know it demoralises one that it's just....it's like they don't have that faith that you know your appeal might come out you might go home (Anita)

Therefore, the choice narrative in terms of available courses is not a practical one for maximum offenders as, clearly, there are certain courses that they are not allowed to participate in because of their maximum security classification. Engagement in those programmes seems to be limited by security reasons for maximum security women offenders. As a result, their rehabilitation is limited to programmes that they can only do inside the correctional centre. Some of the maximum security women offenders' narrative of rehabilitation also reflected a routine engagement in activities within the correctional centre with the aim of keeping themselves busy. The experience of being a maximum security women offender reflects limited movements and restriction to only engage in rehabilitation programmes conducted internally. Being a maximum is further associated with negativity and the continuous expressions of anger by maximums equals to maintenance of this identity, as reflected in the following excerpt:

Yeah, when you are maximum, you, you've got short steps, like I would say because there is nothing you can do, you can study, but uh, like....there's nothing you can do like going out, outside like the mediums. Mediums you've got the opportunity to go out, to sing outside, join the choir play sports and go out and play with the other correctional centres like nationally. But with the maximum you can't, there's a criteria that they use for only maximums, maximums you have to stay indoors, each and everything that you are doing, you do it internally not external..... And if you are a person who's got a short temper or, you will stay there, because you'll be fighting with people (Paulinah)

Some of the women's experience of rehabilitation reflect that when it comes to rehabilitation, the system not the offender sometimes chooses the rehabilitation programmes based on what is deemed to be relevant for a particular group of offenders. Maximum security offenders are also stereotyped as an angry group or their anger is pathologised and therefore needs to be managed. Hence they are referred to anger management as well as psychologists, as indicated below:

The only courses that we are allowed to do here maybe they will say "you maximums you have a lot of anger you can go and do anger and then do psychologists" (Nomusa).

Other narratives reflect that maximum security women offenders are denied attendance into courses that they think will be beneficial for them upon release, despite their interest. The classification of women as maximum security offenders and denying them exposure to certain rehabilitation programmes as a security measure does not seem to make sense, as some of them do not see themselves as a danger to society. Women who are classified as maximum security offenders are also stereotyped as violent and some are housed together in communal cells with 39/40 offenders, sometimes with older women. The environment in such cells is reportedly characterised by violence, drugs and the safety of other offenders is also not guaranteed. Most of the maximum women offenders who do not participate in rehabilitation programmes stay in these communal cells.

The resulting lack of interest in participating in the programmes by maximum offenders points to possible passive-aggressive behaviours which the women are using to communicate their dissatisfaction with programmes that are not addressing their needs. Lack of engagement in rehabilitation by women classified as maximum security offenders is also seen as a contributing factor to criminal activities within the system. There is also general feeling that inmates are often blamed without looking at the role of boredom in exacerbating criminal behaviour in correctional centres:

and then when someone is sitting one thing for sure one's mind is always working neh and then at the end they end up doing wrong things and then now whom do they blame?...they blame the same inmates forgetting that there is nothing that they do there is nothing that they do for the whole day that's the problem (Ruby)

The women also reflect that on a larger scale, especially for older women, there are still instances where they do gender stereotypical programmes like sewing, beading and embroidery with limited exposure to other rehabilitative programmes. One of the women's rehabilitation experiences reflected that she has spent most of her sentence working engagement in the correctional centre on gendered working roles starting with a caring/helping job which is

traditionally associated with women. She then moved to work in the workshop where she worked mostly with sewing machines and upon closure of the workshop, she started with beading, as reflected below:

I work with helping patients, yes to help patients and at night when they have left, when they have knocked off, I am left with the patients in the cells, yes, even at night when they need something I am here to help them. I am here to help them with certain things that we have here, others do not know how to change themselves at night, and napkins, they did the napkin with me, I change their napkin and clean them up....then I worked at the workshop, at the workshop that is where I taught myself to work with machines, yes sewing machines. When the workshop closed last year that's when I went to do beadwork, right now I work with beads, yes, yes, I do not just sit around here (Dorothy).

4.2.4 Significance of Language in rehabilitation

A narrative of language discrimination in how the programmes are presented was evident, as reflected by one young woman who felt that the programmes are conducted in English which according to her, most of the elderly women do not understand. This narrative was later confirmed by three older women, one reflecting on the experience of being interviewed by me in her own language. She expressed gratitude, which felt more like an appreciation of acknowledgement and feeling recognised through being allowed to express her rehabilitation experiences in her own language. A narrative of exclusion through language was also reflected by Jane, as indicated below:

....now others do not do not want these courses, you hear them saying "no they teach in English"

The discrimination against women classified as maximum offenders through language also extends to how women possibly feel excluded from participating and even making the rehabilitation experience more meaningful for themselves through asking questions in their own language. Exclusion through language is also seen in how one of the women felt excluded in her access to health care within the system. A conversation between the nurse and the doctor about her was in English and she felt excluded in the process. As a result, it seems she walked away from the consultation with a feeling of her concerns and anxieties about her self-diagnosed illness

of cancer not being addressed, therefore perpetuating a sense of disempowerment in understanding her health concern, as reflected below:

I told them that I don't know how to speak English... I don't know how to speak English, okay then I said what was not sitting well with me, okay, when I asked the male Doctor.... Then they even asked who the Sister who was on duty, then I said it was Sister Caster. Then they said, what was her response? Then I said, um, she just asked me..... "What is wrong Ms Mndaweni?" then I explained to her. After that, the doctor spoke in English and I do not know how to speak English... then it was as if there was an argument, you see...(Xoliswa)

A relational narrative also becomes evident when the women express their preference for courses to be presented by a black person in their own language. This narrative speaks to cultural relatedness in that the women feel that they can be more understood and therefore freely express themselves in the presence of someone whom they feel can relate to their culture and language:

When they say they have this and that course go and join those courses even if that course is taught by white people....you see the heart work course we were taught by white people, self-esteem was also being taught by white people, Anger Management was taught by a white person and there was no black person, restorative was also taught by white people and there was no black person at times we would say, you know....Sometimes our black people attend so that we can ask them some things properly, yes if all these powerful courses are taught by black people, yes, sometimes black people come and they can explain properly in our African languages....(Dorothy)

The significance of language in terms of rehabilitation was also observed in the form of the labels that women chose to use when referring to the correctional centre. In line with the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998, there were names recommended relating to the changes that were to be implemented. For example, prisons were referred to as correctional centres, prison wardens referred to as correctional officers and prisoners referred to as offenders. However, in almost all the interviews, the women did not use the up-to-date terminology as they still refer to themselves as prisoners (*isiboshwa*). The correctional officers are also referred to as the securities (*abomantshingilane*) and police (*amaphoyisa*). The correctional centre is still referred to as jail or tronk (*ejele/tronkong*). Correctional officers refer to some of the women classified as maximum offenders as "lifers". I heard this when one of the correctional officers questioned me about the

characteristics of women that I wanted to interview for my research. This term that labels the women according to their life sentences is a constant reminder of an identity associated with being a maximum security offender and the loss of hope in one ever being released or being re-integrated into society.

While the new terminology is meant to reflect a more corrections based environment with a rehabilitation focus as part of it, the terminology used by women in this study actually highlights the true nature of the context of the correctional environment as experienced by women classified as maximum security offenders which reflects a more security, control and punitive military system amplified by the uniform that the correctional officers wear. This raises the question of how effective rehabilitation would be for women with histories of trauma, violence and abuse in a context that still resembles control, harshness and punishment. These narratives possibly imply that as much as the shift is proposed on paper, the implementation is still a challenge as it has not been felt by some offenders and also raises the question of whether balancing security needs with rehabilitation needs is possible within the current correctional system.

4.2.5 A way to parole board

As a result of the courses not meeting the maximum security women offenders' needs, as well as the "choice narrative," it is believed by three other women that maximum offenders sometimes would only attend courses for the sake of getting certificates to present these to the parole board without really benefiting much from the course. This also points to a lack of qualitative evaluation of how women maximum security offenders benefit from the rehabilitation programmes they attend, with only the certificate as the outcome indicating participation in the programme. Two of the women, Anita and Nomusa, shared their experience regarding this:

when you are about to go you are just doing it when they say come and do it you also want to do it because now it's just a way of going home you understand like it just gives you a leeway of going home you find that you are not really rehabilitated because you are doing it eh for the mere fact that you want to go home...not that you are doing it because you want it. It is not for yourself anymore, it's not something that you are doing it because you want to empower yourself...you are doing it for the sake for the sake of uh going...it's like a passport....to go the parole board and go home (Anita)

Some people they only go there just to get the certificate and when you ask at the end "what is that.... that you learned?" Some people they only do the certificate just to go to the parole board when the sentence is almost finished they will go to parole board and just show them that oh I did this course but when they are asked what is it that your learned?.... someone didn't learn anything you understand (Nomusa)

The motivation by women classified as maximum security offenders in doing the courses just to obtain certificates is seen as a way of coping with a lack of programmes that speak to the needs of the women. As a result, the women are quite clear about their reasons for attending such courses, which does not have anything to do with rehabilitation but to attain certificate, some of which are understood not to be needed even after release:

Yes, you will get here and do, there is for example Ministry, I don't want to be a priest, it will help me get a certificate, that I will get home and destroy, yes. Our calling is not in the same place for everyone...you find that all of them direct you to the bible, yes they have 40 days of love..... We do, there are courses, I did one for bible study, I even did the ' 50 days of prayer ' I have a certificate for it, when it started, it started here in 2011, there was no certificate, 2012 I repeated it and there was one... (Yolisa)

4.2.6 Rehabilitation through courses

Eighteen of the women interviewed indicated that they have attended courses that are part of the rehabilitation programmes offered at the correctional centre. Courses that were highlighted are spiritual courses (Touching Hearts, Alpha course) that focused on assisting the women with prayer, the Bible, forgiveness and managing anger. The other courses that were highlighted were self-esteem, anger management and restorative justice courses. Also highlighted, especially for older women, were courses that focused on skills acquisition (beading, embroidery, horticulture).

The diversity of courses offered to women classified as maximum security offenders seem to be an area that needs to be explored. Five of the women interviewed feel that courses

offered to women classified as maximum security offenders are mostly spiritually based and a majority of these are based on the Christian principles informed by the Bible. While some of the women acknowledge the need for spiritual growth, they feel that a recognition of rehabilitation engagement in other areas is also needed for women classified as maximum security offenders.

I don't see rehabilitation for maximums.....the only thing that we do are these spiritual courses, things like touching hearts...okay well, we do need them but sometimes we do need something that we can also, you see, your dramas, your choirs, to get outside, you see experience something like that. We do not get that chance, it's not rehabilitation for me (Angela)

Most of the courses are spiritual courses..... (Lizzy)

Our calling is not in the same place for everyone...you find that all of them direct you to the Bible,(Yolisa)

Women offenders also have limited choices when it comes to available spiritual courses. The spiritual courses offered to women classified as maximum security offenders sometimes do not cater for the diverse spiritual needs of the women as there are people from different religious groups. However, in the absence of such diversity and limited choices women still found ways of closing the gap for themselves using what is available:

here the thing is they are based like on religion you understand and you can understand we are from different eh backgrounds I do believe they are not meeting other peoples' criteria....Well I will say some people are Christian, some are maybe Muslims you understand and they will bring those courses whereby you will have to read the Bible (Nomusa)

I mean a lot of the spiritual even though is Christian based I found so much of similarity between Hinduism and Christianity you know and I think any religion that anybody chooses to follow you need to make it a way of life it's more making the way of life than preaching and worship and no acting it you know that's the thing and...And so it's my choice to.....and some of the Christian courses have been phenomenal (Aruna)

Most of the women have attended the anger management and self-esteem courses and one of them indicated that these courses are compulsory for women classified as maximum security offenders. While most of the women find the courses useful in offering practical aspects of self-awareness and self-management, there are also a few women who believe that these courses do

not work for everyone and change is a personal commitment process that cannot come from a course. The reflection that arises from the women is that even though people go through these courses, the violence and conflict in the communal cells for women classified as maximum security offenders is still common:

But still the person does the same thing, they teach them about anger management and you find that they fight inside and hurt the other person. So you see anger management did not help at all there (Lizzy).

The stereotyping of maximum women offenders as an angry group, as indicated previously, leads to an embodiment of anger for these women. As a result, they seem to interpret their “criminal behaviour” from an anger perspective which results in an individualised approach to rehabilitation, thereby excluding the context contributing to their anger, which is also pathologised and unwanted in the system:

Ok in my case I attended three courses, are Anger Management, Heart worker, Self-esteem. These three courses that I attended it is like they ‘built’ me, they showed.....they have taught me what humanity is and that you shouldn’t always be angry, and that what has brought me inside here is anger (Dorothy)

While women who are classified as maximum security offenders are stereotyped as an angry group within the system, some of their anger seems to be exacerbated by the correctional centre dynamics of overcrowding, limited resources and relationship dynamics (between the maximum offenders and correctional officers) characterised by strict control and a military approach, as indicated by two women:

*.....what I have learnt is that it doesn’t take much to make prisoners fight, they fight for small things, we can fight because we stand in a queue for the sink because in one cell we 36,42 of us can stay, there, is one toilet you can because I was standing in line, waiting my turn, maybe I go inside and come back, when I get there is now another person, when I say to her “no I am next in line”, you can fight over that, you just fight for small things even queueing for a sink to wash your dishes and it just ends up being a big issue because, but it’s a small thing. Even space, our spaces are this size***demonstrates (Yolisa)*

.....otherwise these police, I, there is nothing that they have done for me, not even a little, they just make me angry, otherwise, I don’t know if it’s me or I don’t understand or what (Angela)

In the face of a system that does not seem to encourage expression of anger and empathy, four younger women who are classified as maximum offenders seem to have found art (drama, music) as a form of expression and comfort for their emotions in a system where expressions of anger are unacceptable. As a result, even though they are not allowed to go outside to share their experiences with other people, they seem to use their bodies as a site of expressing their emotions, as reflected in the following excerpts:

...drama and drama is also rehabilitation because there we can communicate and we talk about our cases we talk we can you know we act like about life [my life] like I know that now we are acting about my life I can read a letter maybe it is something I wanted to say to my mom. I write a letter I will go and read it and you the audience don't know but I will be reading it which for me is rehabilitation because I let everything that is inside of me out you see...(Joyce)

Some of the women's narratives about rehabilitation reflect that the courses offered for rehabilitation do not always work and are not always relevant for every offender, depending on what they believe in. One of the elderly women, Xoliswa, strongly believes in one learning to change themselves through prayer and the Bible, not the courses that are offered. Although quite rooted in her cultural beliefs, Xoliswa also seems to have had no choice but to find value in another faith system as she generally quoted the Bible and prayer as the most significant activities in her rehabilitation journey. Her reflection on the Bible as *written by a white person, okay it is fine then* reflects on a narrative that indicates her having to learn to relate to an experience that is not of her cultural beliefs, due to limited choices.

4.2.7 Rehabilitation through Education

Ten of the women that were interviewed are busy studying in the correctional centre, with five women doing and others having completed Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) level 3 to level 4, with intentions to register for matric. One woman has completed matric while in the correctional centre. Five of the women are registered with Unisa for undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Women classified as maximum security offenders seem to value education

as playing a big role in their rehabilitation as it empowers them, keeps them busy and away from doing the “wrong things” while incarcerated. Education is also seen as a stress buffer as it diverts their attention away from focusing on life stressors, including their sentences. Two of the women capture the benefits of studying for maximum security women offenders as follows:

education is the key to your success in everything that you are doing, prison, outside the prison, education is the key to your success (Paulina)

You know what sometimes it's difficult...when you study at least it alleviates certain problems from your shoulders... ..keeps me going because if I study I know that when they close I take my assignments and they are very much thought provoking.....and then when I have if I cannot catch sleep round about 1h00 if I start thinking a lot I will wake up again and I take my books and I read that's what makes us go on... One other thing I will think okay even if they say I am gonna go back I am gonna go home 20something (silence) now that means if I stop studying that means I am gonna go back to D3 and then I'm gonna sit heee...and now I'm gonna look at those people smoking dagga doing this and doing this ultimately I am also gonna fall sick because of stress no I am not going there I can rather study (Ruby)

While most of the women who were interviewed valued the role of education in their rehabilitation, within the same narrative a reflection of how the tertiary education for women classified as maximum security offenders is resisted by the system also emerges. Women seem to be consistently fighting for their right to tertiary education to be realised as policies of the system towards maximums make it challenging for them to be in full control and to plan for their studies. This in turn directly undermines their right to access tertiary education while incarcerated. While they are allowed to register and pay for their own distance tertiary learning, the lack of finances and limitations posed on access to the internet makes it challenging for women to realise their goal of rehabilitation through completing tertiary education. Delays related to having to wait for an escort in order to access resources needed for their studies also make it challenging for women to plan and fully manage their studies as their lives within the correctional system are not in their control. The following excerpt captures the challenges in accessing tertiary education for women classified as maximum security offenders:

.....it's difficult really its it's about passion if you really have passion for studying then you will persevere but if you don't you can just say no I cannot go on like this. Because today is the last day is the 7th and then I was supposed to submit 4 assignments of which I made

arrangements on Friday so that I can submit them at least some days before but it was difficult for me because now when I had to go out of the gate and look for Mrs James I must wait for the escort and by the time I reached Mrs James's office they are not there. So I had it's about begging and perseverance but with the courses here I don't see anything, anything that goes hand in hand with rehabilitation because even those who are doing level 4 neh...if they pass level 4 what do they do if they don't have money they go back to D3 they go and sit and do nothing.....(Ruby)

The “rehabilitation through education discourse” also highlights continued active resistance by women classified as maximum security offenders against a system that continues to disempower women through denying them their right to tertiary education by limiting access to resources that make such education possible. Such activism has been highlighted by how women have practically fought to have resources that make access to tertiary education possible. This, therefore, brings a narrative of empowered, focused, self-determined women who are committed to fighting for their rights and thereby influencing the system to take cognisance of their existence:

*I decided I made a choice to say that that I'm going to study I am going to rehabilitate myself (laughs) so the system didn't do anything really to rehabilitate...because things are not easy here especially with uh Unisa students...with Unisa students we have been struggling you know....we just struggle to have every little thing it's its uh a h**l of a thing you know to have a laptop in our cells we had to go to the...to courts and do motions and stuff like that....we had to do motions just to make sure that we had laptop in our cells...we had to fight they said no the policy I understand they say the policy doesn't allow that but I mean education cannot be curtailed by anything not even incarceration it's a right for me to study so I decided to say that you know what I am going to study regardless of the incarceration or the sentence or the wall or what, even the system is not going to stop me from studying.... We were not allowed to come into single cells we had to fight for that as well to say we need a conducive environment for us to study. I cannot study in a cell where there are 40 people 40 inmates it's just not on I cannot concentrate the lights switch they switch off the lights at 10 o'clock you know ...they just make noise there are radios.....so there is no way that you can study in such an environment so we decided that we want single cells at first....in fact they just don't say yes to anything you just have to fight for anything it's not easy I understand they say its policy which is written but I believe that somewhere somehow their policies need to be amended you understand (Anita)*

The empowered women narrative that emerges from women classified as maximum security offenders seems to extend beyond the correctional centre as some of them also expressed a need to empower other women in the community through their stories. This reflects that women

classified as maximum security offenders are not just helpless but have also been empowered by their experiences, with a desire to positively change and influence other women's lives, through sharing their experiences. For example, one woman, Anita, felt that provided an opportunity she could empower other women about the importance of self-value before engaging in relationships with men to prevent a cycle of abuse. She felt that spousal killings by women could be prevented if women are more empowered on self-value and assertiveness. This narrative was supported by another woman, Nomusa, who felt that women also need to learn not to depend on men.

Therefore the women in the correctional centres are not only concerned about themselves but the community outside and therefore they see themselves as agents of change that could prevent other women and youth from falling into the same circumstances they find themselves in. One woman has already started encouraging women in abusive relationships in the community to leave as early as possible to prevent spousal killings. The narrative of empowering other women in the society is captured in the following excerpt:

when I, when I look at it maybe if I had divorced maybe I would have been free. Even the last time my younger sister who comes third after me had a problem with her husband, she has been having problems for a while, so I wrote her a letter advising her not to even do what I did because she will end up leaving her children and being right here, it is better that she goes home, leave this man, yes and she did that, last week when I phoned home my last born told me that her aunt went back home and left her husband and her other child in their house...(Margaret)

4.2.8 The role of Psychologists and Social Workers in Rehabilitation

Three of the women interviewed indicated that they had therapy sessions with the psychologists during their stay. One of the women, Nomusa, felt that the sessions helped her in learning to be open, exploring the context around her crime as well as considering options. She also felt that the sessions helped her in dealing with her sense of shame and guilt relating to the crime, due to the universality of crime that she was able to reflect on during the sessions. Even during our interview Nomusa seemed puzzled by my response towards her crime as she reflected that I did not seem shocked and therefore she did not feel judged during our interview and that helped her

to up open more. Overall, her narrative reflects the need for empathetic listening that women classified as maximum offenders require which seems to pave a way for coming to terms with their traumatic past. Her reflection of the sessions with the psychologist is indicated below:

Well I can say at first I never talked to anyone about my feelings and then I attended the psychologist when I came here and we talked about things that make me do what I did. That's when I start to realise that I should have done better not take things like doing what I did. I used to be emotional a lot at first because I was like the I am the only person who did something wrong but when things went by she made me realise that you know what you are not the only person who's doing such things there are people who made worse things than yours so then that's when she helped me (Nomusa)

For Paulina, a group session with the Psychologist benefitted her in making peace with her past, self-liberation and a sense of continuity with her life while in the correctional centre. As a result of the group session, Paulina believes she was better able to deal with self-blame for incarceration and the impact of her father's death and the challenging socio-economic factors that contributed to her committing crime:

...the big thing that helped me is a group that I was doing with the psychologist ithelped me a lot because I couldn't deal with my past , I blamed myself, I am in prison, whereby because of my past....it helped to deal with my inner peace, until I came to a point then I said no I'm free, I am totally free , I can't think of anything else but I have to continue, I have to continue with my sentencing , so at maximum, I stayed for 9 years before they classified me to be a medium.....(Paulina)

Although women who are classified as maximum security offenders value the role of the psychological services and recommend it for other women, Aruna reflected that Psychological services are not easy to access due to staff shortages. As a result of this and as reflected by Anita, the services provided by psychologists towards women is seen as reactive rather than proactive as they are also inundated with administrative work comprising of assessing and writing release reports for offenders who are in the process of release from the correctional centre. Anita felt that the services for psychologists and social workers are proactively needed especially in assisting newly sentenced offenders with adjustment in the correctional centre. Their reflection highlights

that the role of psychologists is currently based on a crisis intervention or dealing with priority issues due to staff shortages:

...at one stage I remember it was so difficult to get an appointment with Thenji because she was the only Psychologist for a while you know and this is there is more than 1500 women here one Psychologist to 1500 women in an environment like this where you gonna constantly be going up and down emotionally.....you know is so from that point you know they do limit (Aruna)

....I mean it's a it's a you've got a cultural shock it's a culture shock in fact when you come here that you don't what is a psychologist or Social Worker whether there.....not that they are not doing at all I am saying you find that they do at a later stage....yha it's not a proactive thing (Anita)

The women also do not seem to know the differences between Psychological and a Social Work services as there seem to be similar expectations for both departments to play a role especially with regards to assisting with family and children challenges. The general expectation seems to be for these professionals to assist in the maintenance issues relating to their children:

....I have a small child. The father doesn't want to pay maintenance and then how is the child going to survive? and then when I have that problem I must come to the Psychologist and then when I come to the Psychologist for help they say Ruby we cannot help you need to engage your parents...your people outside so what the what's the purpose of having a psychologist here...(Rubby)

4.3 Rehabilitation and recidivism

Two of the women indicated that recidivism that is experienced also relate to how the rehabilitation for maximum offenders is managed. One of the women Anita indicates that in her experience there is a high number of offenders who come back to the correctional centre after release compared to those who do not come back. She attributes this to lack of commitment by DCS in motivating and encouraging women maximum offenders to study. Anita also feels that people who do not come back to prison are usually the ones who start their rehabilitation process quite early. Studying while incarcerated is seen as the most important aspect as it provides hope for finding work and being able to support one's family when released. People who are rehabilitated are also seen as those who have the resilience that is seen through patience and hope

build from the correctional system and it's believed to also help them to survive outside. From her experience Anita feels that most of the people released by the parole board from the correctional centre would still be people that have been engaging in destructive behaviours and possibly not rehabilitated when they go out of the correctional centre:

....So they are saying go and reoffend if they say no you can't study here you can't do this you can't have this they are saying go and do it again and come back here....that the system plays a part in recidivism in people reoffending...People that do come back that do often come back to prison I would say 90% so its astronomically a huge number of people or vast majority of people that are coming to prison more than those who are not coming back to prison because those who are not coming to prison they are very less....But when you check people that didn't not come back to prison there are those who get who did get rehabilitation at an early stage they studied they went outside they started to work because they know that they have got families to support you know, they've got future they've got purpose....People that are studying those who are really rehabilitated are very less than people that are not rehabilitatedmost of the people that go home when I look at them I don't see them being rehabilitated you find the person still doing wrong things....I'm going home tomorrow and you look at the person "really now....as you are?You are given a date to say that the parole board has really given you a date to say that you are going home?" (Anita)

Even though women who are illiterate are offered skills development courses, Aruna feels that the biggest challenge in terms of rehabilitation is reintegration into society. Her view is that the lack of integration into society contributes to recidivism. There is a suggestion from her that the rehabilitation programmes in the correctional centre should follow through at a higher level in order to assist and guide the inmates with using the skills outside the correctional centre. She suggests that this should be possibly done through linking up with NGOs that encourage women to utilise such skills when back in society:

so in terms of here when I talk about courses some most of these ladies are illiterate so yes there are skills courses that are available there are lots of skills from the beading to the...but the problemthere is no reintegration into society that is why people reoffend... people need to.... be shown the how to if someone does a beading course there is no higher level there is no channel and the thing is DCS is not done with an inmate you not done with an offender you not done with them until it does not mean if people leave this correctional facility and go on parole DCS is done with them no....I'm sure there's other organisations out there that can help the person to say that says that okay fine you found that you love and enjoy this and this is how you can earn a living with this and sort of guide the person there is no reintegration at all you know (Aruna)

The attendance of courses for getting certificates towards the release time is believed to be one of the contributing factors to recidivism. This is seen as a challenge because it is believed to be linked to the practice of women classified as maximum security offenders generally not beginning their rehabilitation early enough in their sentences. As a result, they spend the first few years of their sentence engaging in destructive behaviours with no focus on rehabilitation. They are only seen to engage in rehabilitation when they are closer to release, a practice that is deemed to be quite hurried, with the objective of collecting certificates for the parole board without real change in terms of the behaviour of the offender, as reflected in the excerpt below:

...and now when you are about to go you are just doing it when they say come and do it you also want to do it because now it's just a way of going home you understand like it just gives you a leeway of going home you find that you are not really rehabilitated because you are doing it eh for the mere fact that you want to go home...not that you are doing it because you want it is not for yourself anymore it's not something that you are doing it because you want to empower yourself...you are doing it for the sake for the sake of uh going...it's like a passport.... To go the parole board and go home that's it and then you find that when you go outside it causes things like.....recidivism or reoffending....because you were not rehabilitated in the first place when you go outside you are not equipped, you are not educated you are not..you are not empowered... (Anita)

4.4 Impact of Physical and Mental Health on Rehabilitation

Nine of the women interviewed had chronic medical conditions (diabetes, hypertension, epilepsy) and degenerative diseases (arthritis and gout) which are managed in the correctional centre.

Overall, the women reported no challenges with receiving their treatment, with only one woman highlighting occasional delays in getting their medication. One woman is also taking Psychiatric medication for “controlling her moods”. Some of the women acquired the conditions immediately after sentencing, others relate these to stress emanating from family dynamics especially with regards to the welfare of their children. The health struggles for women classified as maximum security offenders are reflected by two women below:

...when I was sentenced to life my blood pressure increased, I was never someone who had high blood pressure, I even take pills for, this high blood pressure (Yolisa).

*...because I had stress, from this child of mine who is a girl who had opened a case against her brother, so I started being stressed, my high blood just ***demonstrates*** (Margaret).*

The deteriorating health of older women seems to result in anxieties and concerns over the possible impact on their rehabilitation, as reflected by one of the elderly women below:

I continued, continued but my heart is not well, it is because I saw progress, progress through rehabilitation but now it seems that I am going backwards because of this, yes this, my health. Yes I am worried about my health (Caroline)

Another woman, Xoliswa, seems to have anxiety about breast cancer and her fear of death was apparent as she spoke about her experience with pain in one of her breasts. The beginning stages of the interview were dominated by this narrative as she took me through her anxieties, experiences with lack of empathy from the system and feeling excluded in the process of wanting to understand what was happening in her breast:

... I asked them to fix... so that they can see what my problem was ...whether it was cancer because the leading disease now is cancer. ...then I eventually asked this lady, the one- oh then I went one day here at the hospital , when I got to the hospital I told-there was this Sister called Minky.... Okay then I told that doctor that my breast is sore, I can't sleep, it is hot, it vibrates with pain, I have to cradle it when I sleep, I am asking you to please take me to Bara, so that they can try and see what it is , he said "I won't take you at your own time, I will take you at my time.....it means here you can be so sick and even die, having a condition that they say kills....(Xoliswa)

4.5 Conclusion

The socio-cultural context of women classified as maximum security offenders reflects complex negative family dynamics, gender-based violence, drugs, poverty and spiritual factors that shape their pathways to crime. While a majority of them acknowledge and take responsibility for their criminal behaviour, a few of the women distance themselves from the criminal behaviour that they have been incarcerated for, with implications of disengagement and having to find rehabilitation experiences that are meaningful for their own journeys. The rehabilitation experience of women classified as maximum security offenders highlights a lack of gender-

sensitive rehabilitative programmes that are empathetic, relational and cognisant of their history of trauma, abuse, violence and poverty. Whilst women seem to engage in available rehabilitation programmes, some of these programmes are not sensitive to their cultural and language needs. Although rehabilitation is viewed as a choice, how this choice is exercised seems to be very limited for women classified as maximum security offenders. The classification of women into different security systems on its own poses challenges with regards to their rehabilitation choices and options. As a result, they are confined into finding programmes and initiatives that are available within these limitations, with education and spiritual growth emerging as what seems to be more meaningful for most of the women.

Women classified as maximum security offenders are a discriminated group that is segregated within the system and as such are viewed as a violent and angry group of women. Such stereotyping seems to narrow their rehabilitation experiences from the system as characterised by a lack of commitment from the system to rehabilitate this group, with an overemphasis on anger management as one aspect that needs attention. While there may be the reality of anger amongst this group of women offenders, the stereotyping and labelling leads to an individualised and pathologised focus on the anger. This practice seeks to minimise the role of the context inside and outside the correctional centre in manufacturing and exacerbating this anger for women classified as maximum security offenders. Anger is therefore an emotion that is not tolerated in this group and as a result, a few of the women indicate having learnt to access their body's as a safe site of expression, with docility and submission as a survival strategy under the circumstances.

The security emphasis on this group of women as also highlighted by their reflection, results in an extremely militarised focus on how this group is handled with a limited focus on the context that shaped each of the women's criminal pathways, thereby handling them as a

dangerous group requiring tough security measures. This focus seems to make a practical balance of security and rehabilitation for this group an impossible ideal. Instead, what emerges is a narrative of discipline, punish and control that seems to characterise the early years of their sentence which speaks more to a retributive approach, with more emphasis on rehabilitative aspects when they have been classified as mediums and due for release. Consequently, this creates a group of disengaged women who display their dissatisfaction with the system through destructive behaviours (drugs, violence and power dynamics) which replicate and maintain the same context that the women came from before incarceration, with others possibly getting a new experience in such an environment. Apart from having to cope with challenges of navigating rehabilitation in an environment that is harsh and punitive, some of the women seem to have challenges with declining health relating to their age.

Despite the challenges that these women face in a context that replicates their experience prior to incarceration, what also emerges within this group is the changing narrative of incarcerated women as they are also an empowered group. Such empowerment stems from their own experiences, education and resilient resistance that has the potential of slowly influencing the system to recognise them. Their empowerment is also felt by society as some of them have plans and are already engaging in empowering other women in society through sharing their own experiences.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Research done on women incarceration in South Africa (Sloth-Nielsen, 2005; Singh, 2009; The Gender, Health & Justice Research Unit, 2012) reflects how policies have failed to adequately address the needs of poor women in correctional centres. Since the publication of these findings, there seems to have been little shift if at all in how policies have adequately addressed or implemented programmes that address the needs of incarcerated women in correctional centres. The experiences of the eighteen women who are and were classified as maximum security offenders in the current study continue to reflect that the rehabilitation of women in correctional centres indicates challenges in implementing gender sensitive rehabilitation programmes that address the needs of incarcerated women. While their pathways to crime indicate that most of them committed crimes related to gender-based violence, substance abuse and or economic deprivation (Artz et al., 2012; Howells, 2000), their reflections on rehabilitation for women classified as maximum security offenders generally indicate a lack of change in a system that continues to perpetuate gendered forms of existence similar to the one they experienced in their societies, with the correctional system being a microcosm of society.

Therefore, as already alluded to in the literature review, the discourse on prison reform that existed in the post-colonial era seems to be relevant even today. However, what is more concerning is a reflection of how long this debate around prison reform has been going on with little transformation or implementation of the recommendations suggested in the literature. As indicated by Foucault (1977), despite ongoing calls for transformation in correctional centres, the paramount function of the penal system continues to be characterised by systems of discipline and punish (with security, control and supervision as pillars of such a system) in how offenders are treated and managed. Consequently, the rehabilitation of women proves to be a challenging

task in such a system. This is also indicated by Aruna and Ruby in the current study as they reflected on the system as punitive in nature through the types of sentences handed to women offenders and the punitive environment under which they serve their sentences. Therefore, what is highlighted is the need for correctional centres to reform in order to achieve the rehabilitative vision in such spaces, especially the form of rehabilitation that endeavours to respond to the needs of incarcerated women.

Similar to observations by Dissel (1996) on the rehabilitation of male maximum security offenders, women classified as maximum security offenders indicated that in the early years of their sentencing there is no commitment from the DCS on their rehabilitation, with focus and pressure to rehabilitate only after reclassification into medium security and when one is about to go home, as reflected by Anita:

...we have seen lots of people getting their appeals done where their sentences many...many times where they are just released while they least expected or their sentence..ntences be...being reduced and when you are supposed to be going home you find that there is no course that you have done you understand then you have to go through that process and when you do it now you are in hurry.... They just say come do it quickly so that you can go to parole board so it is just a way of going to parole board.

This in turn, according to Anita, results in offenders leaving the correctional centre without being properly rehabilitated and thus changes the purpose of rehabilitation to a means of presentation to the parole board rather than actually rehabilitating the offender. Also evident in these narratives is the influence of colonialism as evidenced by ethnocentrism and devaluing of non-western cultures through continued use of English as the dominant language in rehabilitation programmes even though other women cannot understand the language. Christianity is also the most available religious practice, which leaves women with different beliefs forced to practice Christian religious belief systems. African-centred notions of Ubuntu can also play a role in informing gender sensitive rehabilitation programming in the South African context, through providing a collective and interdependent form of existence within correctional centres (Hanks, 2008).

5.1 Gendered pathways to crime

Post-modern feminism asserts that women criminal behaviour should be viewed as an interaction of a lot of interrelated societal factors which include the family system, the community and correctional services (Dastile, 2014; Erez & Berko, 2010). The reasoning behind this argument is that most of the incarcerated women come from dysfunctional family backgrounds where there was a form of violence and sexual abuse from their family members. While this study was not focused on establishing the gendered pathways to crime, it was also evident from how women crafted their narratives that similar to research that involved women from all categories of classification in the correctional centre, pathways to crime for women who are classified as maximum security offenders are also gendered (Artz et al., 2012; Bloom et al., 2003; Burgess-Proctor, 2006; Dastile, 2014).

Similar to arguments by Covington (2007) and Sloth-Nielsen (2005), many of the women in the current study also have socio-cultural histories that reflect subordination as many of them have a history of being unemployed or low-income earners (domestic workers-Angela, Joyce, Paulina, Edith and Jane), as well as a history of past violent and abusive relationships with their spouses (Anita, Sindy, Ruby and Margaret). Some of them were burdened by poverty (Paulina, Edith and Jane), and child care responsibilities (Dorothy, Nomusa and Edith).

Lack of job skills compounded by low education levels are also evident as eleven of the women had not completed high school, one has never been to school and only two have completed their matric. Only four of the women had completed their tertiary education. Although women indicated interest in pursuing their tertiary education, most of them are reportedly limited by lack of finances in pursuing their tertiary studies. All these burdens of unemployment, low income and low levels of education found in incarcerated women are largely a consequence of gender and class oppression compounded by the racially discriminatory employment and housing

practices women faced (Crenshaw, 1991; Sloth-Nielsen, 2005). These have contributed largely to hindering women from accessing creative solutions and alternatives to their criminal behaviours (Burgess-Proctor, 2006).

Consistent with findings by Artz et al. (2012) indicating that women who are exposed to prolonged domestic violence do end up killing or hiring people to kill their spouses, three of the women (Anita, Ruby and Margaret) in the current study ended up killing their spouses after a prolonged history of domestic violence. What was also clear in all of the women in the current study was the intersection of the issues of power; substance abuse; gender-based violence and poverty with subsequent mental health and physical health problems which characterised most of the women's narratives in that not only one factor was identified as a pathway to their criminal behaviour, but rather a complex dynamic of interrelated factors characterise their lives prior to incarceration, as indicated by Angela:

like outside, you see, outside I had a drug problem...so much addicted to drugs, I lost my grandmother... myself and my stepmother we don't get along.....so I ran away and went to live in Cape Town with Nigerians ...so when I come back, I come , I came being sick, I had TB and that's when I also found out that I am [HIV] positive....so I came back sick...just when I recovered, I was arrested , you understand? I came to prison.

The above excerpt is consistent with reflections from other studies (Artz et al., 2012; The Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit, 2012; White, 2012) that indicate incarcerated women histories of trauma, substance abuse and abusive relationships. Some of the women did indicate trauma related histories from their background as well as in their relationships with their spouses. However, in addition to these traumas, some of them reflected trauma relating to their crimes (Angela and Nomusa) as reflected by Angela that *it's a guilty conscience that is punishing me*. Angela's apparent trauma seems to be infused with guilt and graphic details of how the murder happened.

In coping with trauma, women are believed to turn to using illegal substances as a way of numbing emotions (Bloom et al., 2003; Dastile, 2014). Although none of the interviewed women indicated that they are currently using substances, two of them had a history of substance abuse while a few of them indicated that substance use is quite prevalent in the communal cells that house women who are classified as maximum security offenders. Although this was attributed to a lack of engagement in rehabilitation programmes, it could also be reflective of the argument that in the absence of programmes that specifically seek to assist women with healthy coping mechanisms to deal with their trauma, they utilise illicit substances to cope with their trauma, as reflected by Anita:

...because you don't see any meaning you don't see anything good out of what is happening out of the sentence that you are serving you start smoking dagga.

The awareness of such complex intersections that shape the gendered criminal pathways for women classified as maximum security offenders provides a more in-depth understanding of incarcerated women which can later inform gender sensitive rehabilitation strategies that respond to the needs of women (Bloom et al., 2003). In utilising the pathways theory to crime for women as described by Simpson et al. (2008), the following women could be identified from the current study: *Street woman*, Angela whose narrative of crime reflects a history of rejection and abandonment which paved a way for her to live on the streets leading to exposure to drugs and prostitution. Her crime was related to her finding ways to cope financially through seeking such from men. The other category was the *battered woman* represented by Anita, Sindy, Margaret and Ruby whose crimes were related to ending a chronic history of abuse by their husbands. Other women's crimes were related to *poverty* and a desire to improve their financial circumstances (Joyce, Paulina, Edith and Jane). Again, also notable in their vulnerabilities is the presence of male figures who in Joyce and Jane's cases seem to have influenced their pathways to the crime. In Angela's case, she was also with men when the crime was orchestrated and she seems to have been used as the woman to "lure the victim" through sex.

The pathways theory, however, did not cater for women whose criminal offences were attributed to spiritual and/or cultural factors (Aruna, Gabisile and Xoliswa). The other category of women in the current study involved those women (Lizy, Matilda, Caroline and Yolisa) who indicated that they did not commit the crimes they were incarcerated for. Even so, their circumstances indicated issues of domestic violence (Matilda); a need for finances in the face of single parenting children (Yolisa); and volatile relationship with a husband (Lizy) with only one woman indicating a stable relationship with her husband (Caroline). The latter category of women raises issues of how rehabilitation can be structured for such a group. At the same time, all of them have engaged in rehabilitation with the view of self-development and improvement in case one gets released.

Even though the current study was not aimed at understanding the pathways to crime for the women classified as maximum women offenders, it became clear that such information is inseparable from the rehabilitation experience of women, as in their narratives they could not talk about rehabilitation without revisiting their crime and context prior to incarceration. This, therefore, speaks to an argument by Covington and Bloom (2006) that in order to design and implement rehabilitative programmes that are responsive to the strengths and needs of women, the profile of women in prison has to be understood. The women in the current study were also able to provide a window to their life circumstances prior to incarceration, which provided some insights regarding their rehabilitation experiences and needs. Such understanding, however, needs to not only focus on the pathways to crime as outlined in the pathway theory but rather to be seen as responsive to the life circumstances that were faced and are still to be faced by women post-incarceration.

5.2 Negotiating the different identities

5.2.1 Maximum Offender Identity

Contrary to findings by Geiger and Fischer (2005), fourteen of the women in the current study did not negate nor reject their criminal behaviour. Instead they provided a sociocultural context of their lives while fully acknowledging the wrongfulness of their act. Geiger and Fischer (2005) found that in negotiating their criminal identities, some of the women attributed their deviant behaviours to circumstances at the time of the criminal behaviours. Psychologically, one can assume that the women are attempting to negotiate this identity that is also stigmatising and judgmental through providing explanations to the context that has led to such behaviour, in a way distancing themselves from the negative identity in pursuit of a positive identity. Geiger and Fischer (2005) argue that when offenders attribute their criminal behaviour to external factors, then the tendency is to assume a victim role which may indirectly negate them of the responsibility in the deviant behaviour, which may have implications in terms of rehabilitation.

As already indicated, a few of the women (Tinky, Matilda, Caroline and Yoliswa) dealt with the criminal identity during the interview through completely denying involvement in the crime. This, however, raises concern in women who may not have committed the crime and thus finding themselves being labelled with such identity, an issue which also has consequences in terms of their rehabilitation. This was the case with Matilda who felt that rehabilitation is not relevant for her as she was wrongfully accused. Therefore, she seems to be engaging in rehabilitation as a way of self-development, not necessarily changing behaviour that led to the criminal offence. Similar to a definition of maximum security offenders by Dissel (1996) and Silverman (2001) that indicates a group of offenders where there is more emphasis on security, the women in this group indicated that they are also highly supervised as indicated by Nomusa:

...you see everywhere you go you'll have to be escorted there is not that thing that you can go and visit someone in another section you have to be escorted every time.

5.2.2 The incarcerated mother

According to Geiger and Fischer (2005), there are gender differences in how the identity negotiation between female and male happens. Male offenders apparently succeed at exhibiting a sense of mastery from their criminogenic behaviours and consequences and were often found to be proud of the personal strength they had acquired, such as courage, honesty, autonomy and loyalty. Female offenders, on the other hand, have been found to view themselves as helpless and hopeless victims passively responding to oppressive circumstances and their responses seem to have been shaped by female offenders' tendency to adhere to the master status of motherhood, which in turn compromised gaining any positive sense of self due to their perception of having failed their children through abandoning them as a result of their incarceration. Similar to the argument by Geiger and Fischer (2005) most of the women in the current study expressed pain, regret and sorrow over not being able to be there for their children due to incarceration, a study that reinforces a role of women as caregivers.

It is however important to note that contrary to the finding by Geiger and Fischer (2005), the women in the current study were not found to be passive in dealing with the oppressive circumstances resulting from their context prior to incarceration and the challenges faced in the correctional centre system. In negotiating the identity of being an incarcerated mother, some of the women felt that good behaviour, continued support towards their children, (which involved praying and encouraging them) as well as their continued efforts in striving to be rehabilitated while incarcerated seemed to assist them in maintaining the positive identity of being a mother. This finding produces relevant recommendations in terms of how rehabilitation needs to also be focused on empowering women in perceiving themselves as decision makers capable of acquiring competence in other areas apart from motherhood, for example through education, training and skills development. These, according to Geiger and Fischer (2005), are some of the

enabling conditions that would facilitate the acquisition of self-confidence in their ability to do something worthwhile and valuable while incarcerated and after being released from the correctional centre.

5.2.3 Incarcerated Students

Similar to what Nxumalo (2002) as cited in Labane (2012:p.243) described as problem-oriented programmes which are aimed at abolishing a specific adaptation, criminal or community interpretation problem, some women in this study are engaged in the schooling system at the correctional centre while others are registered with the University of South Africa (Unisa). Studying seems to be associated with positive distraction and personal growth for the women as indicated by Ruby:

...when you study at least it alleviates certain problems from your shoulderskeeps me going.

However, there is a continuous struggle for access to resources that comes with the high-security level for women classified as maximum offenders, which has implications for the effective management of their studies, especially for Unisa students. This was highlighted by Ruby who indicated that sometimes waiting for an escort to access modems results in delays which impacts on the time they have in using the modems. Offenders who pass their matric are sometimes limited by a lack of funds in terms of furthering their studies. In some cases, the identity of being a student seems to conflict with the identity of being a mother, which sees women sacrificing their studies to prioritise their children's needs for education as indicated by Ruby:

..now my daughter is doing teaching.... and then you have to...weigh options which one comes first you must weight your...priorities you must know do I have to continue with my studies or do I let my kids get their education first.

5.2.4 Sexual and Gender Identity

Homophobia continues to be a challenge that reinforces the exclusion of women in the correctional centre. A heteronormative view was evident in the discourses of some women indicating antipathy towards homosexuality as indicated by the following excerpt:

To disintegrate means that You.....you just loose it you lose yourself you just you no longer yourself together you just like you end up smoking dagga like you no longer you see now there is no hope there is no you don't have a vision in your life you then start now indulging in wrong things....like I will give examples here we've got eh things like lesbianism (Anita).

A continued binary view of gender from society permeates through the correctional centre environment and continues to anger, dislocate and discriminate against women whose gender identity falls outside the traditional gender roles. The following excerpts by Angela and Matilda indicate challenges in negotiating gender identity in society and within the correctional centre:

*their mother (stepmother)...***exclaims***...you sometimes say things such as...-“Angela is trying to turn herself into a man...satanism, those kind of things....I am a lesbian mama, okay, yes and I am just a lesbian this way. I am not trying to be a man and I always tell all of them here at home [in prison], I am not trying to be a man, I am not trying to change myself so that I can become a man because anyway even if I really wanted to or would've loved to, that will never happen. I am just a woman who loves other women, you understand? Obviously when you come to me and speak about hairpiece things, panties, those things about bling-blings, those things.....I know that I am a girl and that will never....I hate,I hate a person who will come to me with negatives I hate it, you understand? I want you to come to me and we understand each other and accept each other and tolerate each other, you understand? I get angry man*** exclaims***...I get very angry, you see (Angela)*

I don't go to church, I used to go to church. At church the way I dress, even from outside [of prison] I dress like boys so at church they label us, I don't like being labelled....they say I do Lesbian things, because I don't do Lesbian things it's just the way I dress.....I am now scared to even go to other churches because I will get hurt and end up saying other things that are not right (Matilda).

Therefore the classification of offenders although not gender sensitive, is also not comprehensive and inclusive enough to provide a basis for gender rehabilitation programmes that also respond to the various gender identities. It is also clear that binary view of gender provokes pain for women who experience discrimination in various institutions within society i.e. church, with the correctional centre as one of the institutions that also represents reinforcement of such discrimination for women who do not fit into the traditional gender role descriptions.

5.3 System not yet conducive to rehabilitating women offenders

One of the guidelines relating to managing women offenders in the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998 is Section 14 (4) which states that every correctional centre should ensure that a gender-sensitive environment exists. Tomar (2013) states that the prison culture is exploitive, victimising, degrading and disempowering in nature. While women in the current study are indicating engagement in rehabilitation programmes, there is also a sense that the correctional centre system is an environment that is not conducive to rehabilitation that is gender sensitive as for some of the women it is found to be disempowering (Ruby) and exacerbates some of the feelings that women experienced outside (Sindy). The corrections culture is based on control and security, while rehabilitation is based on the concern for safety and change. Therefore, much work still needs to be done in changing the perception and the implementation of gender sensitive rehabilitation services in the corrections environment.

Covington (2007) suggests that the application of relational theory on a system-wide basis can have an impact in changing the culture of correctional centres to accommodate gender responsive programming for women. Her suggestion is based on the argument that the female maturity process is about developing meaningful connections (characterised by mutuality, empathy and power with others) with other people, thereby indicating that connection rather than separation is the guiding principle for maturity development for women (Miller, 1987). This was

also highlighted by Artz et al. (2012) who indicated that a safe and supportive environment needs to be the cornerstone of all rehabilitation programmes for women in order to respond sensitively to their history of victimisation and to prevent recreating an abusive environment that perpetuates the same feelings. The indication of the correctional centre as a system not conducive to the needs of women was reflected by Angela through highlighting a lack of empathy despite the knowledge of her context prior to incarceration, as reflected in the following excerpt:

and they also know, they know my whole story... they know everything but there was no one who ever wanted to understand me.

5.3.1 Militarised Culture

While the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998 seeks to demilitarise the correctional system, remnants of the militarised culture in the correctional environment are still evident, as reflected by the uniform worn by the correctional staff members as well as the use of language by offenders that indicate emphasis on security and control (security and police) principles, especially on women classified as maximum security offenders. Therefore, similar to observations by Foucault (1977), the correctional system continues to be characterised by principles of discipline and punish, evident through a theatre of punishment in which a complex system of representation and signs continue to be displayed publicly through the establishment of courts, sentences and correctional centres. Discipline and punishment still remain as part of the modern penal system, where the body is arranged, regulated and supervised as reflected by one of the women, Nomusa, in the current study that *you see everywhere you go you'll have to be escorted.*

The discipline and punish principles therefore reflect a lack of reform in the penal system that fails to accommodate the rehabilitative function of correctional centres despite longstanding debates on the need for such. Similar to the notion by Foucault (1977), the focus on discipline and punishment is further evident in the narratives from women that were involved in this study

who indicated that instead of being listened to or helped, they are disciplined and punished, as reflected by Cindy that *they are not even giving me a clue, on top of that I have been threatened, I have been charged*. The focus on discipline and punishment was also witnessed by me, as in one of the days I walked into a space where two women had a fight in the communal cells and were brought into the office of the correctional officer. What was clear was that they were still in conflict as evidenced by verbal abuse towards each other in front of the correctional officer and myself. However, the correctional officer was not paying attention to their conflict. Instead, she was busy preparing a charge sheet with no attempts at resolving the conflict through mediation.

As a result of the militarised approach to the correctional system, gender sensitive rehabilitation programmes that are based on multifaceted, communicative, trauma informed and relational nature of women's life will still be challenging to implement (Covington, 2007). For example, the model of trauma management as explained by Herman (1993) indicates that an environment that facilitates a sense of safety externally and internally is ideal for the rehabilitation of women with traumatic experiences. The external sense of safety would be to prevent re-traumatisation through sexually and physically harassing and abusive relationships that violate the integrity and the women's sense of safety. The internal sense of safety can be created through teaching women self-soothing ways of coping that may replace substance addiction, which may mean incorporating other relevant programmes as proposed in the relational theory (empathetic and mutual connections). However, the militarised nature of the correctional system environment seems to contradict such requirements and instead is a culture that seeks to perpetuate and exacerbate trauma for incarcerated women. Such a culture seeks to undermine the rehabilitative efforts of the correctional centre, as reflected by Aruna's statement of *so yhaa in here particularly uhm I think we just here for punitive reasons I'm gonna be honest*.

5.3.2 Correctional Officers represent the culture of the punitive system

At the centre of the culture that is not conducive to the rehabilitation needs of the women is a narrative of power dynamics reflected by victimisation, provocation of anger and the differential treatment of women offenders. As such, this is perceived by Cindy as exacerbating the feelings of abuse and anger that one experienced in the society outside the correctional centre as reflected by: *instead of me being transformed and rehabilitated the thing that I have experienced from outside is extremely worse*. This is, therefore, similar to observation by Artz et al. (2012) who indicated that for most women the prison system serves as an extension of the abusive domestic context where the aspects of the domestic context are relived and re-experienced depicting bullying and other behaviours that represent controlling, threatening, unpredictable and continuous disempowerment. Cindy's frustration with the system was related to her feeling unassisted and again perhaps not understood. Instead her needs were also met with threats by the correctional officers whom she feels are supposed to help her with her problem. This observation seems to undermine the vision of the White Paper on Corrections (2005) for the correctional officers to be regarded as potential rehabilitators in addition to their custodial function.

The victimisation of offenders in the face of verbally expressing their concerns is reflective of a system that encourages the suppression of feelings. Again, the same culture is reinforced by correctional officers, as explained by Angela that *.....when they hear this thing they are going to lock me up for long, really here at home [in the correctional centre] they are evil*. The expression of feelings of dissatisfaction with the system is often viewed as offensive to the correctional officers, who seem to retaliate through enforcing punishment through segregation in isolation cells. A study by Farber (2013) indicates that as a result of the fear of victimisation in the form of punishment, female offenders' eating disorders have been largely seen as a way of gaining control over the prison environment and also as a safe vehicle for expressing their emotions particularly anger and despair, especially in situations where verbal communication is

not significantly given much attention. Even though none of the women in the current study indicated symptoms related to eating disorders, there is a parallel that can be drawn with the results from Farber (2013) as in the current study women like Angela, Joyce and Paulina have also found art (music and drama) and gym as a way of utilising the body as a site of expression.

Travis and Waul (2003) indicated that offenders are further generally deprived of autonomy to make decisions about their behaviour within the system, as they are subject to rules and laws that are designed to control their behaviours. The rules and decisions made on behalf of the inmates are not always explained and they are just expected to comply. While this leaves a feeling of being dehumanised and treated like an object with no feelings and opinions, it also contributes to offenders being reduced to the status of a weak, helpless and dependent childlike state, which presents a full threat to the offender's self-identity as an adult member of society. Such deprivation of autonomy can also have negative consequences for self-growth and development of the inmate who at times has added baggage from their history and social circumstances (Tomar, 2013).

According to Travis and Waul (2003), the deprivation of autonomy may result in long-term dependence on the institutional structures so that the inmate may be uncomfortable when such autonomy is given back. This culture of dependence and docility is also enhanced for women who are classified as maximum offenders, as they also rely on correctional officers for making decisions regarding the day-to-day running of their lives in the correctional centre. As indicated by Velimesis (1981), under the prison system, dependence on authority figures is maximised and opportunities to learn and exercise decision making is minimised, which in turn disempowers women in the hands of the correctional officers, who apply policies as per institutional expectations. This culture of dependence and docility, camouflaged as "respect", is reflected by Ruby in the current study as reflected by: *I must respect her position ...it's about*

begging and perseverance... is part of rehabilitation, listening, following instructions. You don't do as you wish here. The dependence that is enforced through strict security measures makes it challenging for women to plan their lives, as further reflected by Ruby that dependence on being escorted by correctional officers' impacts negatively on her time management as a Unisa student.

Even though the role of the correctional officer is expected to transform through incorporating a rehabilitative function into their traditionally understood custodial role (White Paper on Corrections, 2005), such a shift does not seem to be experienced by women classified as maximum security offenders, as reflected by the language that some of the women use to refer to them i.e. "*amapoyisa* (police)" "*abomantshingilane* (security)", which basically reflects the perceived custodial role of correctional officers. Similar to an argument by Velimesis (1981) that even though women have different personal problems than men, women correction centres have been administered by methods that are only a slight modifications of those developed to control men. Many women are often in correctional facilities because of excessive dependency on others and, as such, this type of administration may exacerbate the thinking and behaviour patterns that are personally and relationally destructive.

Administrative reliance on rigid authoritarian concepts to control women in closed settings results in limited freedom in their daily lives. As a result of this, Dissel (1996) and Velimesis (1981) agree that most maximum security offenders do not participate in any rehabilitative activity and are often treated in a routine manner, with little flexibility due to concerns about security risks (Mutingh, 2005). One of the women in the current study, Paulina, also highlighted the limitations posed by strict security controls on women classified as maximum offenders, as reflected in the following excerpt:

..yeah, when you are maximum, you, you've got short steps, like I would say, because there is nothing you can do, you can.....there's a criteria that they use for only maximums, maximums you have to stay indoors.

Van Voorhis and Presser (2001) also indicated that correctional officers perceive women offenders to be more difficult to supervise than male offenders as they tend to question authority and want to talk things over. Staff inexperienced with these differences seem more likely to “write up” women inmates, resulting in unnecessary re-classification and discipline. This was reflected by Lizy who indicated that correctional officers respond to complaints by offenders through charging or threatening to charge them, as reflected by her comment: *when I complain they say I am going to get charged*. Therefore, being at the centre of the culture reflective of the correctional system, the women correctional officers responsible for women are to be trained on gender awareness, gender sensitivity and the management of women classified as maximum security offenders (Bangkok, 2010/2016). Such a need was also recommended by Lizy, as she stated that *they must also get lessons and those skills will help them because they have anger from outside, then when they get here they can't control you*. Her recommendation also highlights the importance of looking after the emotional well-being of correctional officers so that they are in a much better position to facilitate a correctional context that is sensitive to the gendered needs of women offenders.

5.3.3 Limited gender sensitive rehabilitation programmes

While most of the women in the current study indicated involvement in rehabilitation programmes that are educational, skills-based, psychosocial and spiritual in nature, a call for a more empathetic and relational approach to incarcerated women's rehabilitation is quite evident, as reflected by Angela in how she explains her lived experience with lack of empathy in the correctional centre: *and they also know, they know my whole story... they know everything but there was no one who ever wanted to understand me*. Similar to findings by Dastile (2014), Angela's reflection highlights a need for programmes that are guided by an understanding of the gendered routes of incarceration for women, which reflect intersections of class, gender, abuse and substance abuse in rehabilitating women. Furthermore, this reflection by Angela confirms

arguments by scholars (Covington, 2007; Miller, 1987) that the female maturity process is about developing meaningful connections (characterised by mutuality, empathy and power with others) with other people. Her desire to be understood reflects a need for mutual connections with correctional officers and a sense of understanding the self in relation to feeling valued and understood by others. This was further highlighted by Lizzy regarding incarcerated women who were in abusive relationships:

...they must be patient with them because there are others that have done it because of abuse.....they must rehabilitate them here or give them enough chance to sit them down and hear their story about their problems.

The results from the current study actually highlight the argument brought by Currie (2012) that women's rehabilitation programmes in correctional centres have been modelled from men's programmes or, rather, do not entirely meet the needs of women. Such programmes pay attention to the following factors: education, employment, economic status, drug use, delinquent peers, anger and aggression. In South Africa, a recent submission to the parliamentary review committee by Artz et al. (2013) indicated that the absence of gender disaggregated statistics in the DCS annual reports in terms of women's needs and participation in life skills and rehabilitation programmes makes it challenging to evaluate whether the minimum standards and guidelines for the conditions and treatment of females are met.

Jules-Macquet (no date) argues that despite the identification and awareness that incarcerated women have special needs, there are few specialised programmes available in South Africa designed to meet the needs of women in correctional centres. In the current study, while there is an indication that women classified as maximum security offenders are engaging in programmes that are available in the correctional centre, none of these seem to be specifically based on addressing the key issues of trauma and connections for women as suggested by theoretical perspectives on effective programmes for women offenders (Bloom & Covington, 1998). This observation is possibly linked to a limited focus on the rehabilitation of women

classified as maximum security offenders due to their long-term sentences. As a result they are perceived to be a group that potentially puts more strain on the limited resources of the DCS (White Paper on Corrections, 2005).

It is clear that some of the women classified as maximum security offenders continue to engage in substance use; present with histories reflecting abuse and trauma; and require connection-based programmes that are characterised by empathy and sensitivity to their backgrounds. The programmes highlighted by women in the current research indicate a focus more on their general psychological needs (addressing anger and self-esteem), spiritual needs, general health needs, skills and educational needs. Also significant in this group was a reflection of fragmented rehabilitation services that women engage in. Bloom et al. (2000) argue that the integration of trauma, substance abuse and connections based intervention in services that are gender sensitive for women is more beneficial than fragmented services which put the burden of incorporating these services on women who are in the process of recovery especially, in a system that is also not structurally conducive for such recovery. Therefore, the suggestion of an integrated pack of services that holistically address needs that are specific to women maximum security offenders would be beneficial.

Mental health concerns for incarcerated women also require attention when designing programmes responsive to women's needs because women who are incarcerated are found to present with suicidal tendencies and depression, as well as eating disorders (Farber, 2013; Short et al., 2009; Völlm & Dolan, 2009). While the focus of this study was not on exploring mental disorders, some of the women indicated that there are high levels of stress, suicidal tendencies (*there are people that committed suicide here because now you are stressed-Anita*) and psychological/psychiatric problems (*I stayed in hospital due to psychological and psychiatric things and all that- Angela*) amongst women classified as maximum security offenders. The

mental health concerns for women relate to multiple factors that they have to deal with while incarcerated. These include their experiences and adjustment in the correctional centres as well as the impact of challenges experienced by their families and children in their absence. Anita also shared an experience where one of the women in the cells died of a possible heart attack or stress, after having gone through a period of multiple bereavements in her family as well as learning about the trauma that her child went through as reflected by:

there was a lady.....there was a lady that passed on. I think it was last year that had her child raped, that had her husband killed and stuff like that. In fact, she was going through a whole lot of things at the same time so she got stressed until she passed.....on I think she... died because of heart attack or stress.

Consistent with findings by Jules-Macquet (no date) indicating that parental stress presenting through anxiety and depression is a common factor in incarcerated women, the women in the current study also indicated parental stress evidenced by the onset and exacerbation of medical problems. Some of the women indicated a new diagnosis of a chronic medical condition in response to stress emanating from home circumstances regarding their children, therefore indicating the significance of motherhood for incarcerated women. However, in the current study, the parental stress did not present as depression or anxiety. Rather, it was physically manifested through the body i.e. hypertension as indicated by two women, which again reflects how the body becomes a site of expression for women in a system where emotional expression is not encouraged.

The negative impact of motherhood for incarcerated mothers in relation to their children's' challenges outside the correctional centre as identified by Artz et al. (2012) was also emphasised as an inhibiting factor in rehabilitation for women who are mothers in the current study. Anita and Ruby felt that the motivation to participate in rehabilitation activities diminishes when one's children are not taken care of or when they learn of their children's suffering. Anita reflects this as:

...you find yourself saying why should I study, doing courses while my...while my child is suffering, while my child is not going to school. Why should I study while there is nobody taking care of my own kids then so what let me just leave it?

She also felt that social workers and psychologists are the most important service for women and they need to intervene proactively through maybe visiting the cells. The suggestion by Anita indicates a need for psychological and social work services to be more community-based rather than an office-based approach, which basically would be about informing offenders of the service and reassuring them of the availability of the service. While psychologists and social workers are reflected as a needed service, similar to findings by Mkhize and Naidoo (2012), two of the women in the current study highlighted the limited resources especially in psychological services, due to the low numbers of psychologists available who are at the same time expected to serve a large number of women in the correctional centre.

5.4 Need for gender sensitive classification models

Even though the classification of offenders is supposed to be done in a way that balances security needs with the rehabilitation needs of the offender (Herbig & Hesselink, 2016), in the current study there seems to be an overemphasis on the security and control factors for women, as indicated by how they understand the maximum security offender status assigned to them.

Angela reflects her understanding of her classification as: *maximums are people*

who....okay.....aggressive crimes, we are not allowed to go out apparently escape issues.

Dorothy understands the classification as a maximum offender to be reflective of the length of the sentence and nature of crime most of which is violent as indicated by her reflection:

11 years upwards to life, a lot of people that are here it is murder, yes a lot of them it is murder. There are those for robbery....they call you maximum, after certain years you are removed then, when you have stayed certain years then you are taken to D2, yes D2 it is where the mediums stay.

Classification systems used in correctional centres have been criticised for not being completely responsive to the gender specific needs of female offenders as most of the classification systems

were developed based on the Level of Supervision Inventories, which tend to classify offenders as high, medium or low risk (Dastile, 2014; White, 2012). Similar to arguments by Bloom and Covington (1998), some of the females who have committed violent offences are not frequently seen as at risk of committing violence against the general public. In the current study, Nomusa, who is also classified as a maximum security offender and sentenced to 10 years for the murder of her daughter does not view herself as a danger to society as reflected by the following statement:

like I'm a maximum I am not allowed even though I am not dangerous to the society but I am not allowed to go like other places.

The context of her crime reflected a young woman who was overwhelmed following a history of neglect and abandonment by the father of the child. Now the question to ask is if she is classified as a maximum offender, considering the context of her crime, how dangerous is she to society? Similar to Van Voorhis and Presser (2001) who support use of social context based risk assessments than custody based assessments in classifying women, it is also my contention that there may be value in utilising more qualitative and narrative based models that seek to fully understand the context that shapes women's pathway to crime in the process of classifying women offenders.

5.4.1 Multiple marginalisation of women classified as maximum security offenders

Similar to findings by Sharp (2003) indicating that in most societies women (relative to men) and prisoners (relative to non-prisoners) are marginalised, the results of the current study also indicate that women who are maximum security offenders are marginalised in comparison to women classified as medium security offenders. Women in the current study indicated that the classification of women into maximum security offender status results in marginalisation of women in the correctional centre, as reflected by Anita:

...when you are a maximum you are really classified as this person according to me the way I see things it's like we are not...we are segregated as maximums.

Such segregation according to Anita, results in the marginalisation of women with regards to participation in rehabilitation programmes that they find interesting. This finding supports a contention of the White Paper on Corrections (2005) which indicates that despite the positive developments achieved in South African correctional centres, the rehabilitation of maximum security offenders continues to be a challenge. Strict security control measures make it impossible for maximum security offenders to participate in diverse correctional services rehabilitative initiatives (Thinane, 2010).

A reflection by one of the women in the current study, supports a finding by Hussemann and Page (2011) which indicates that the implementation of rehabilitation programmes for maximum security offenders is also influenced by the correctional officer's perception of these offenders as unlikely to change and therefore deserving more punishment than rehabilitation.

Anita shared her experience regarding this as follows:

It's like they don't have that faith that you know your appeal might come out you might go home.

This perception of maximum offenders results in limitations regarding their rehabilitation. Such a notion possibly indicates that this group of offenders is deemed as not deserving priority when it comes to rehabilitation. This is also interpreted as representing a lack of commitment by the DCS in rehabilitating women classified as maximum security offenders as reflected by Anita:

somehow you need that support from management or from the DCS. We need that support that they support us in doing...in rehabilitating ourselves.

Violence, drug use and smuggling are characteristic of this group, as described by some of the women. Such behaviour is deemed to a result of being idle and not participating in any meaningful rehabilitation programmes as stated by Angela: *that is why most of the time when*

they say there are strip searches they find phones and things/stuff because we do not have anything to do, there is nothing that we do. This is similar to statement made in the White Paper on Corrections (2005) that because of a lack of activity, the long term sentenced offenders may continue to pose a security concern for the correctional centre if there is no investment in their rehabilitation. While this may be true for the general population of maximum security offenders, for women classified as maximum security offenders the “illegal behaviours” that they engage in may be a response to frustrations associated with segregation and neglect from the system, which again for some may be a repetition of experiences that they went through prior to their incarceration.

Petè (2008) indicated that African women experienced the worst conditions of confinement (greater abuse characterised by chronic neglect as invisible objects in the system) due to intersections of gender, race and offender status. Similar to this women classified as maximum security offenders continue to be neglected and side-lined in rehabilitation because of the length of their sentences and their classification status. The main goal of rehabilitation is integration to society and women classified as maximum security offenders are not seen as a group that is going to return to society anytime soon. Consequently, the goal of reintegration is deemed to be an unrealistic one for them (Kubiak, Kim, Fedock & Bybee, 2012). However, it does not seem like there is any goal for women classified as maximum security offenders. In the absence of clearly formulated goals, this group of offenders are left to formulate goals of rehabilitation for themselves which are in a way similar to the goals of other offenders, as reflected by engagement in rehabilitation with the hope of reintegration (*in your stay you are supposed to be studying so that when you are about to go home, already you are rehabilitated-* Anita). This contributes to feelings of marginalisation when they are excluded from engaging in programmes they deem useful for their future, in case they are released. It is apparent that, the

rehabilitation goals for this group of women offenders need to be clarified by the DCS in a way that also takes into account the context that shapes their lives prior to incarceration.

In addition to the marginalisation that comes with the classification of women as maximum security offenders, there is also a tendency to stereotype and pathologise them as an “angry group”. As a result, they are all perceived to be a group that needs to attend anger management courses or see psychologists. While this may be a reflection of some of the experiences, I argue that not all women who have been incarcerated for murder and/or received long sentences struggle with anger and/or pathology. Therefore, the stereotyping and generalisation contributes to marginalisation and further rejection of this group within the system and creates a general perception that silences their real issues as women (Africa, 2010). In the White Paper on Corrections (2005), rehabilitation is intended as a holistic development of the offender through focusing on the spiritual, social, mental, physical, educational, moral and vocational aspects of the offender. Some of the women in the current study felt that their rehabilitation is more focused on their spirituality (*Our calling is not in the same place for everyone...you find that all of them direct you to the Bible-Yolisa*) as well as in addressing their anger (*you maximums you have a lot of anger you can go and do anger and then do psychologists-Nomusa*) and self-esteem. While these are deemed as necessary, the narratives by the women indicate that some of their needs are not met. This, therefore, points to limited programming available for women classified as maximum security offenders. Even though education is encouraged for all offenders, for women classified as maximum offenders there is a narrative indicating that access to resources that enable rehabilitation through tertiary education continues to be a struggle, as indicated by Anita that: *with Unisa students we have been struggling you know....we just struggle to have every little thing it's uh a h**l of a thing.*

Also evident in this group of offenders is that some are elderly women who also have chronic health problems like diabetes and hypertension, with one of them indicating anxieties over dying in the correctional centre (Aday et al., 2014), as reflected by Xoliswa that: *it means here you can be so sick and even die, having a condition that they say kills*. Therefore, one would expect that rehabilitation that seeks to recognise their needs and anxieties would also be more relevant. However, similar to an observation by Dastile (2014) their engagement in rehabilitation seems to reflect the past where attempts in understanding the differences between men and women were met through providing gender stereotypically based rehabilitative services for women. In the current study, some of the services that older women are participating in involved caring for the sick, beading, laundry, embroidery and sewing as reflected by Dorothy: *I work with helping patientsthen I worked at the workshop, at the workshop that is where I taught myself to work with machines, yes sewing machines. When the workshop closed last year, that's when I went to do beadwork.....*

5.4.2 Need to understand 'anger' of women classified as maximum offenders

Women offenders are generally believed to pose less risk in terms of violence or there is a relatively small percentage of women that pose a risk of violence in comparison to men (Van Voorhis & Presser, 2001). The women in the current study have embodied the stereotype of a 'pathologically angry woman', which seems to be associated with their criminal offence, security classification and behaviour in the correctional centre. There is also a sense that the meaning of angry or violent women in the correctional system still remains a concept that needs to be understood. While it is understood from literature that women offenders tend to question and are open about their feelings (Spjeldnes et al., 2014; Van Voorhis & Presser, 2001), a reflection by Angela indicates that such behaviour is interpreted as anger (*The truth when you tell them something those mothers say that you are insulting them and you do not have respect, you have anger and at that time you are just telling them what you feel...*). Anger in itself is a gendered

concept that is generally associated with males and therefore provides an explanation of why it is almost forbidden for a woman to feel angry, let alone express this emotion, hence the harsh responses in the correctional system towards women who are deemed to be expressing this emotion.

The question posed by Van Vormer (2013) regarding how dangerous a female offender is point to a need to further understand violent offences perpetrated by female offenders. Also underlying this question is whether in reality all women who are first-time violent offenders are indeed violent and angry women in general or they had an episode where they managed to express their anger at a particular point in time resulting in a criminal offence, as reflected by Aruna in the current study: *some of the women they came for murder and you'll never say because they so quiet and so calm and so sweet you know, but he hit and hit and he was an alcoholic and a drug addict and used to hit and beat and one day I decided, one fine day to get back and I reached for the knife and it was one small just to scare him I didn't expect.* Nomusa, who has been sentenced to ten years for killing her child does not perceive herself to be a danger to society and therefore seems not to understand her classification as a maximum and the resultant exclusion from certain rehabilitation programmes.

Artz et al.(2012) and Dastile (2014) argue that pathways to crime for women who commit murder (such as infant, child or spouses) is often described as a response to an intersection of various circumstances such as domestic violence, abuse and poverty and being overburdened with childcare in the absence of social and financial support from the spouse or partner. Ten of the women in the current study also committed crimes in the context of challenging socio-cultural dynamics which include poverty and gender-based violence. Evident in the current study is the tendency to pathologise and problematize women's anger as indicated by suggestions for women classified as maximum security offenders to consult psychologists and attend the anger

management course. This, therefore, highlights a lack of understanding of the women's context in the classification and thus rehabilitation processes. Consequently one may ask whether anger management in the absence of other programmes that seek to address the needs of women as reflected in their socio-cultural context prior to incarceration does indeed respond to addressing the 'anger' of women.

5.5 The paradox of the choice narrative for rehabilitation in a penal system

Even though the women initially indicated that rehabilitation is a choice for women offenders, this narrative was later followed by an indication that there are barriers that limit women classified as maximum security offenders in exercising this choice (*The programmes for the maximum, right, they are like limited....because if I am arrested for murder and I want to go and do entrepreneurship. They will say, "no, no you are not allowed to do that kind of course it's only for people who did fraud"*-Nomusa). Allowing human beings to make choices regarding their lives is an ethical and moral obligation. Such allowance is also informed by the freedom and liberty afforded to respect the autonomy and independence of people in making decisions about their lives (Patterson, Adelle & Parker, 2000). For maximum security offenders, the system seems to have already decided which rehabilitation programmes are suitable for this group, as indicated by: *"you maximums you have a lot of anger you can go and do anger and then do psychologists"*-Nomusa.

As indicated in the results section, women who are classified as maximum security offenders are also studying through correspondence and they reflected that the DCS policies sometimes are a barrier that makes studying through correspondence quite challenging. Patterson et al. (2000) indicate that the principle of choice should be aimed at encouraging active participation in rehabilitation programmes, through making meaningful and informed choices about the selection of rehabilitation goals, objectives and services. This, therefore, means that

policies in an institution must enable each individual to make informed choices regarding the selection of long-term, short-term or intermediate rehabilitation objective. Most importantly, each individual receives appropriate modes of communication regarding the availability and scope of choice and the manner in which their choice may be exercised.

The process of informed choices, therefore, has the potential of clarifying expectations and within the DCS, as much as there is an indication from two women (Anita and Caroline) that women are offered information on rehabilitation services that are available in the correctional centre, not much emphasis is put on providing comprehensive information about the available choices or the scope of these choices. As a result of this, the narrative of: *it's like they are not doing what we are supposed to be getting in their house which is this DCS* by Anita also indicates how women may feel that the DCS is not meeting their needs, which sometimes speaks to limited communication about the choices available for women classified as maximum security offenders.

In light of the above, my argument is that the narrative of choices in rehabilitation represents an underlying narrative of a system that delegates responsibility to the offender in the absence of mechanisms that facilitate an informed choice process. In a penal system infused with power dynamics inherent in the culture of the correctional system, exercising freedom of choice may not always be possible for offenders, as indicated by one of the women (*Anger management you, you have to attend it when you have done a violent crime like it's a must it's not that it's your choice that you attend it but it's a must for you to do it-Gabisile*). The choice narrative in a penal system rehabilitation seems to be about making a choice between two alternatives, which is either choosing rehabilitation or not. Within that choice, there are limits in terms of the programmes that the women classified as maximum offenders get into, should they choose rehabilitation. This does not make sense, especially when understanding the strategic direction of

the correctional system that places rehabilitation at the centre of all activities (White Paper on Corrections, 2005: p9).

There is an expectation from all levels of society that people who offend are incarcerated to be rehabilitated. Yet they are given a choice to either engage or not engage in rehabilitation. One then questions the use of having rehabilitation as a specified goal if there are still people who may not engage in the rehabilitation process, which also raises the question of who benefits from the rehabilitation of offenders at the end of the day? My contention is that it is society, correctional services and families as well as the offender who benefit from rehabilitation. Without rehabilitation, the societal harmony and balance continues to be impacted negatively whether or not offenders are reintegrated as offenders interact with community members through visits. One of the women indicated that engagement in rehabilitation and observed change in them by their children instils a sense of hope that one may positively influence their children while incarcerated, as indicated by Ruby that *if you doing something better...then you also sending a message to your kids because they will say okay at least mommy is studying*. The choice narrative inside the penal system indicates a delegation of responsibility for rehabilitation largely onto the shoulders of the offender, which then results in an individualised rather than a collective approach to the rehabilitation of offenders, which in turn undermines the effective implementation of the narrative of “corrections as a societal responsibility” (White Paper on Corrections, 2005).

5.6 Blame the offender and exonerate society narrative

In the precolonial period, penal systems in traditional societies were characterised by compensation to the victims for injuries inflicted in all cases of crime and, as such, the damage would be determined by the traditional leaders of the society concerned (Petè, 2008). The purpose of compensation during this era was always about restoring the equilibrium in society

and at times the family of the offender could be collectively held liable for compensation. Penal sanctions were only considered when the effects of the crime threatened the stability of the community as a whole (Petè, 2008). Therefore this approach to handling crime involved a more collective and community inclusive approach than an individualistic approach that seeks to locate and pathologise the crime within the individual. Contrary to a more collective approach to crime, the current justice system and subsequent approach to rehabilitation reflect a more individualistic and offender-focused approach.

Imprisonment through a life sentence by its nature implies rejection and abandonment from society. Angela reflects that: *It means that you have a long sentence and the thing that you did is very serious.....the community really doesn't want you... you must.....be locked up and die here.* The reality of continued rejection by society is also highlighted by Margaret who reflects:

...at home in Mpumalanga they rejected me, even the ones that I used to attend church with... yes so they rejected me. They have never visited me since I was arrested, I've got five years now inside here, and they do not come, my relatives also.

All these narratives indicate the response of society towards offenders, more so to those who are incarcerated for violent offences. What is clear in terms of how society responds to offenders is that the behaviour of the offender becomes individualised. Consequently, they are thrown out of society into one of society's institutions for "rehabilitation", or to never be integrated (as understood by Angela).

The lack of commitment in the rehabilitation of maximum security offenders reflects society's and thus the DCS's (as a microcosm of society) response towards this group. It is one which seeks to blame the individual and exonerate society. While maximum security offenders are defined as a group which has committed serious and violent offences (Dissel, 1996; Silverman, 2001), it has already been indicated that their profiles also reflect gendered lived experiences of women that make them vulnerable to committing crimes. Therefore, they also deserve to be rehabilitated. The current attitude of society towards this group of offenders reflects

a colonial ideology that seeks to breed an individualistic rather than a collective approach to crime and rehabilitation. This therefore highlights that the societal responsibility towards rehabilitation may be achieved through revisiting and understanding African and pre-colonial notions of Ubuntu in approaching the crime and rehabilitation of offenders.

5.7 De-colonising correctional centres

5.7.1 Colonial influence through Language and Culture

Barberet (2014) argued that correctional centres are an epitome of a western culture, indicated by the application of western ideologies and systems in the management and rehabilitation process. Therefore, correctional centres are by nature promoting a westernised, individualistic stance for resolving crime in the community. Offenders are literally removed from families and communities who are meant to provide relational experiences to them. They are then expected to adjust to a new community in the correctional centre. The demographic profile of offenders in correctional centres reflects diverse ethnic and racial groups, as evidenced by the participants in the current study. The women who participated in the study were of different ethnic groups like Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Pedi, Venda, Indian and XiTsonga, therefore reflecting diverse cultures and languages. However, as reflected in the narratives of three women (Dorothy, Jane, Xoliswa), the use of indigenous languages in rehabilitation programmes is limited resulting in a lack of interest and participation for these women. This situation, therefore indicates ethnocentrism (Hanks, 2008) through the lack of acknowledgement and accommodation of diverse cultures in the process, which in its current form negates the existence of such people, as their languages represent who they are and provides a sense of being valued as human beings.

The significance of language was also affirmed by Edith who expressed a sense of gratitude in being allowed to express herself in her own language during the session. While this may not be taken seriously, it does become an emotional issue for her as indicated in her

statement: *I get irritated when a person talks English and I say change and speak my language.*

The issue of language in the correctional centre also reflects the country's progress in terms of recognising and implementing indigenous languages. Even though in policy South Africa has eleven official languages (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996), the implementation and thus recognition of indigenous languages is still a challenge. This also reflects that the correctional centre system maybe representing double ostracism for the offenders, namely, ostracism from their communities and subsequent ostracism from their cultures through exposure to language that represents a colonial influence and the denial of their African existence. This supports Petè (2008) argument that in the South African context, correctional centres were seen as part of the wider set of institutions which were designed to implement and maintain apartheid and to impose colonial control on the indigenous population. Covington (2007) indicates that women respond positively to programmes that are relational and empathetic in nature. Consequently, striving towards the implementation of programmes in indigenous languages is one of the pillars in implementing culture and gender sensitive programmes as it also creates a sense of acknowledgement and importance of people and willingness to understand and relate to the women offenders' world.

The ethnocentric approach in the management of the correctional centres is further evidenced by practices that seek to alienate offenders from their communities and from their historical traditions of their culture (Hank, 2008). The devalued existence of the other non-western cultures has been reflected in some of the narratives in the current study through the lack of recognition of the women's indigenous beliefs in what they believe to be the contributing factor to their criminal behaviour. Aruna, Xoliswa and Gabisile narrated a spiritual and cultural understanding of their criminal behaviour. However, because there are limited spiritual services that are relevant to their beliefs (Hindu and African) Aruna and Xoliswa have no choice but to utilise the Christian religious services that are available in the correctional centres. Rehabilitation

through courses also reflects a western approach towards rehabilitation with the production of certificates that indicate attendance of the course. This results in rehabilitation being approached almost like a formal “exam”, with English cited as the language commonly used thereby marginalising those who do not speak or understand it. Therefore, the purpose of rehabilitation, as indicated by the offenders changes from being a transformational issue into being certification to go home. Narratives indicate that some of the women participate in the courses not for rehabilitative purposes but to get the certificate. As indicated by Yolisa: *there is for example Ministry, I don't want to be a priest/pastor. It will help me get a certificate, that I will get home and destroy, yes.*

5.7.2 Individualistic existence

Einat and Chen (2012) hypothesised that gossip within the female prison population requires further exploration, especially the understanding of the social functions of such behaviour. These authors are of the view that gossip affects the social climate of prison, maintenance and safety as it may increase distrust, tensions and social conflict. Such tensions may, in turn, interfere with various rehabilitation, educational or vocational programs. In the current study, although women indicate varied views on the relationships amongst maximum offenders, a few of the women expressed reluctance to communicate their problems with other women due to the fear of these being used maliciously against them.

One of the women in the study revealed how her life was challenging as a result of a gossip or rumour that was created about her by a fellow inmate. When understanding the reasons for such gossip about her, it appears that she was perceived as a person who has a strong character and therefore would answer people when she felt violated or offended. She feels that, as a result, she was persecuted, which in a way is an indication of how gossip can also be used as a form of social control, punishment and to promote an individualistic existence for offenders. On

the other hand, there is also a group of women who seem to get along very well, in the process providing emotional and practical support to one another, which seems to be one of the most crucial aspects in promoting gender sensitive rehabilitation. The choice narrative also appears to encourage an individualistic existence as it individualises the rehabilitation process to be the responsibility of an offender and indirectly excuses all the other stakeholders in the process.

5.7.3 Ubuntu/Collective existence: Lessons from older women

Shapiro (1995) emphasised the value of supportive relationships inside and outside the correctional centre in the rehabilitation of offenders. A similar observation was seen in the older women who seem to have established a community existence through providing support to each other in the correctional centre. Their involvement was reflected in their narratives as they also shared about each other's health struggles and how they support each other when they are not well. A sense of community has also been extended to their families, especially children who now know that they can communicate with any of the other women when there is a challenge about their mother. The women also indicated that they go to the visits together as a group when one family visits. This seems to be a supportive and protective factor for those women who do not get visits as a result of being ostracised by the community or in cases where their families are unable to visit due to lack of finances. The collective existence also highlights the principles of Ubuntu characterised by caring, compassion and hospitality which empowers and edifies the other person through interrelatedness (Hanks, 2008; Covington, 2007).

Also reflected in the current study is that women offenders are active agents who already have resources from their backgrounds that help them to influence their rehabilitation through coming up with activities that support their journey in the correctional centre. The wisdom from the older women in the current study provides an opportunity for lessons on how the application of African indigenous forms of collective existence can be used as a guiding principle to promote

the sense of Ubuntu amongst women offenders. This in turn may provide a sense of interdependence and communal existence which can also extend to the younger women in the correctional centre, their families and communities outside the correctional centre (Hanks, 2008). While the value of communal existence was observed in older women, this was not highlighted to effectively exist amongst younger women. Instead, more conflicts and fights are seen, as reflected by Caroline that *some get into fights that are serious. You find that one person poured water on another and they fight, it is these youngsters*. However, younger women also indicated a need for a relational experience as reflected by a need to be understood (Angela), to be listened to (Lizy) and motivated (Anita).

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The marginalisation of women classified as maximum security offenders in terms of rehabilitation as reflected by perceived exclusion and struggle to engage in rehabilitation creates the impression of a group that is not prioritised nor seen as deserving of rehabilitation. However, despite their lengthy sentences, beyond their criminal behaviour women classified as maximum security offenders do require rehabilitation. The results of this study indicate a tendency for the correctional system and society to classify and respond to these women based on their criminal and sometimes violent behaviours while incarcerated. Limited emphasis is placed on understanding and responding to their socio-cultural contexts characterised by abuse, poverty and mental health challenges (trauma, stress and substance abuse).

Women classified as maximum security offenders are also mothers who have left their children in society. The suffering of their children in their absence seems to be one of the deepest wounds that they experience. Consequently, parenting programmes that recognise the parenting responsibility for women offenders are highly recommended as they seem to be engaging in distance parenting of their children. Rehabilitation for women classified as maximum security offenders is challenged by limitations that come with the high-security measures imposed upon them. Furthermore, there are programmes like anger management, self-esteem, psychology services, spiritual courses, beading, embroidery and social work services that are understood to be for women classified as maximum security offenders, with anger management and self-esteem being compulsory programmes for this group.

While some of the women indicate the benefits of these programmes, the issues of language (with English used in most programmes); limited choices of programmes that address

women's cultural and religious beliefs; and security control are some of the challenges that limit access to the available programmes for women classified as maximum security offenders. The current rehabilitation programmes for these offenders are also deemed as not being responsive to their needs. To cope with this some women seem to participate in the programmes as a way of getting certificates to present to the parole board, while others utilise a lack of engagement as a means to escape the current rehabilitation programmes. A few of the women appear to have embraced spirituality and education as the most appropriate ways of getting rehabilitated under the present circumstances. Access to tertiary education is a challenge however, due to limited access to resources which is linked to their security classification and limited financial resources.

The militarised culture of a correctional system characterised by power dynamics between offenders and correctional officers, discipline and punishment, as well as strict security procedures are characteristic of how the system responds to this group. Consequently, punishment is felt more than rehabilitation. As much as rehabilitation for women classified as maximum security offenders may not necessarily be geared towards preparation for release, gender sensitive rehabilitation is required for their self-development, empowerment, emotional well-being and better adjustment in the correctional centre. Such interventions also serve as proper preparation for release for those with successful appeals.

The results of the current study, reflect the difficulty and almost impossibility in implementing gender sensitive programmes for women classified as maximum security offenders due to the high-security control, punish and discipline culture inherent in a correctional system. The pillars of gender sensitive rehabilitation programmes require an empathetic, listening and relational environment which most of the women indicated as a need as well. Their socio-cultural context is characteristic of rejection, poverty, trauma, substance abuse and domestic violence from partners. This indicates a need for an environment that recognises their traumatic

backgrounds through providing a sense of safety, support and the facilitation of healthy coping skills. However, feedback from the current research indicates that the correctional centre represents an environment that seeks to replicate the same experience for women. Therefore, the study reflects a need for the entire system to transform.

This study therefore offers a recommendation for DCS policies that specifically address and detail the aspects and nature of gender sensitive programs to be implemented for women classified as maximum security offenders. There should also be training of correctional services management as well as officers on gender-sensitive rehabilitation programming. Psychologists can also play a significant role in the training and support of this programme. Therefore, training and relevant exposure for them in this area of specialty is recommended. However as indicated in the White Paper on Corrections (2005) the rehabilitation of offenders is a societal responsibility which subsequently emphasises a collective and a collaborative approach to this mandate. Having said this, reflections from the current study indicate that an individual choice rather than a collective responsibility discourse has not been encouraged for women classified as maximum security offenders.

6.1 Rehabilitation as a responsibility rather than a choice for offenders

The rehabilitation principles in the correctional centre continue to be informed by Western principles of individualism, as reflected by the narrative of choice highlighted in the current study. It is therefore recommended that the narrative of choice in rehabilitation evident in the stories by women classified as maximum security offenders in the current study is replaced by a narrative of responsibility, communicated to the offenders as well as the community of the correctional centre, extending to society at large. In the White Paper on Corrections (2005), the narrative of corrections as a social responsibility is encouraged and thus communicated to society (for example, there is a painting that reflects such at the gates of the Lilian Ngoyi Community

Health Centre in Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital as you travel towards Soweto). However, the narrative of choice in the correctional context seems to contradict this mandate for offenders as they view rehabilitation more as a choice than a responsibility on their side.

A consistent message of responsibility needs to be communicated to all stakeholders that are to be involved in the rehabilitation process, including the offenders. Furthermore such communication and implementation of gender sensitivity for women offenders' rehabilitation needs to be guided by African-centred notions of communalism and interdependence. This has a great possibility of enhancing the principle of collective responsibility in rehabilitating offenders and is a principle of "It takes a village to raise a child" that is inherent in African communities (Codrington, 2013). The older women in the correctional centre, as indicated in the discussion section, seek to represent great examples of older people utilising the wisdom of existing collectively within the correctional centre and, as such, it spreads to the community.

The current study also reflects how certain institutions of society, like religious organisations that are supposed to play a crucial role in rehabilitation are the very same institutions that seek to reject women who are convicted and incarcerated. Young (2005) argued for a social connection model of responsibility where all agents who contribute by their actions to the structural processes that produce injustice have responsibilities to work to remedy these injustices. Responsibility from social connection model, then, is ultimately political responsibility. Taking responsibility in a forward looking sense under this model involves joining with others to organize collective action to reform the structures through public communicative engagement with others for the sake of organizing our relationships and coordinating actions. Therefore, much communication and collaboration is needed in order to encourage and support all agents in playing a role in a comprehensive and inclusive gender sensitive rehabilitation of women classified as maximum security offenders.

More research needs to be done on how Correctional Services can support and engage religious communities in the rehabilitation of offenders. I am also a member of a religious organization and I belong to a Women's Correctional Services ministry. In our group I felt that we had limited knowledge about how best to support the rehabilitation of women offenders. Thus far, the group has been engaging in offering church services to offenders, organizing donations and facilitating visits for women who do not get visitors. I was inspired by this initiative to understand the rehabilitation needs of women classified as maximum security offenders. While the ministry has existed for a few years with support from correctional services, I, however, felt that an understanding of the needs of women will also serve this group well in how to appropriately respond and even extend services to meet their needs of women offenders. Often a common response when trying to encourage people to participate in the correctional services ministry is "fear" of women in prison and the general fear of being in that space.

Further research needs to be done in understanding the perceptions of the community about incarcerated women in order to better inform programs that seek to encourage community responsibility in rehabilitation. Psychology has a role to play in guiding and training facilitators who are interested in taking the responsibility of rehabilitating women offenders through gender sensitive programmes. Therefore, one of the most important aspects is to identify the key sectors in communities who can offer gender sensitive rehabilitation for offenders and offer such training to these sectors. Some of these sectors are families, religious organisations, non-governmental organizations and volunteer organizations that are willing to engage in the rehabilitation of women classified as maximum security offenders. However, in addition to these, there is a wide range of professionals who can also be approached to provide services in the correctional services.

6.2 Correctional centre environment replicates Gender Based Violence dynamics

Evident in the current study is the narrative of the correctional centre environment as a replica of the experiences of gender based violence that some of the women experienced from outside. Therefore incarcerated women continue to experience practices that resemble patriarchy or male dominance. Social relations and interactions between women and correctional officers are shaped by power and privilege, which possibly models how the women interact with each other as offenders. The influence of patriarchy is manifested through intimidation, victimisation and punishment aimed at instilling fear and powerlessness which silences women about their negative experiences in the correctional environment. Labelling and judging of women classified as maximum offenders as liars, lifers and angry by correctional officers on the basis of their sentences and crime further stigmatises them and renders them as an insignificant group of people that are underserving of genuine human interaction.

This treatment often exacerbates anger for women, which then gets acted out. The expression of anger is met with punishment which fuels a cycle of abuse quite similar to gender based violence dynamics that some of the women were exposed to prior to incarceration. The restrictive nature of the environment with significant deprivations on autonomy, independence and security instils a sense of unsafety and dependence on those that have power and control. Further to this a culture of “obedience” with an underlying message of suppressing any form of expressions of dissatisfaction, results in docility that further strips incarcerated women of their power. The narrative of a group that is unwanted by society due to the nature of their crime and heavy sentencing also promotes a sense of unworthiness and loss of value.

All these dynamics depict a reinforcement of gendered existence for incarcerated women within the correctional centre, which in turn undermines the rehabilitative goal for women offenders. Therefore the experiences shared by women in the current study echo Ritchie’s (2012)

argument that incarcerated women's experiences demonstrate the need for attention to issues of social marginalisation and community disempowerment. This also highlights the need to rethink rehabilitation outside the boundaries of traditional definitions of gender, sexuality, racism, class and other locations so as to provide comprehensive gender sensitive programming. This further leads to a serious consideration of whether incarceration under the system of punishment is the solution to female criminality that is linked to structural problems in society. The danger of relying on mainstream state institutions like correctional centres to solve complex social problems that are embedded in race, class, gender and sexuality in contemporary society cannot be ignored, as such institutions maintain the status quo.

6.3 Rethinking and reimagining rehabilitation for women: The need for social justice and action in rehabilitation: A Need for Relevance

The multiple marginalities evidenced by women in the current research, questions the role of societal organisations (churches, professionals, schools, correctional centres and families) in social justice work within the correctional centre and in society at large. It also challenges all stakeholders on the need to review the existential question of how advanced is social justice for women? What is the nature of services offered to women in society and in correctional centres? and how does it translate to making the change that they require to minimise and prevent female criminality? Societal organisations like churches, correctional centres, families and professional entities continue to reinforce gender stereotypes and to play a passive role in transforming societies, making the oppression and violence against women even more dangerous.

It is within this context that Richie (2012) cautions against the success of women anti-violence movements that are measured by factors such as public and private funding for services and academic credibility, and legislative changes. Such movements continue to bring unintended

negative consequences for women whose experience of crime and incarceration does not fit the dominant narrative within which most of these anti-violence movements have established their credibility. According to Bethea (2013), it is important for all stakeholders involved in the rehabilitation of women offenders to realise that social justice is an important aspect of rehabilitation service to the society and women offenders. This approach requires one to look beyond the traditional ways of understanding women classified as maximum offenders that locates their rehabilitation within the confines of their crime, sentence and classification. There is, therefore, a need for society to introspect and begin to position itself and to make a determination about how to work towards a social justice rehabilitation that seeks to restore the dignity and humanity of all women, especially incarcerated women. Research alone is not enough. Angela, one of the women interviewed during this research asked the question: “*what then after your research?*” Her question challenges us to review the relevance of research in changing people’s lives.

The narrative of discrimination of women has been a topic of research debate in the fields of law, psychology and sociology, with feminist principles at the cornerstone of such debates with little change in how women are treated in society. Research is important in actively challenging and transforming the assumptions and beliefs that seek to encourage the practice and maintenance of the power imbalance discourse in society. However the review of policies at a macro level, as well as implementation thereof for incarcerated women needs to reflect a view that recognises and adopts an intersectional approach in developing and implementing policies for understanding incarcerated women.

6.4 Evaluating the research

6.4.1 Narrative research with marginalised groups

There is a tendency by researchers to question the validity, reliability and generalizability of findings in qualitative research methods. This tendency is aligned with the positivist paradigm that seeks to explain human experiences quantitatively, with an inclination to view qualitative methodologies as less scientific. While narrative research involves stories lived and told, the liberty and freedom in how people chose to articulate their experiences when asked needs to be respected. Attempts at validating people's stories represent the positivist paradigm that seeks an absolute truth, whereas narrative research is about unravelling multiple experiences as shared by individuals (Corbetta, 2003). Therefore, narrative storytelling proves itself to be one of the significant research methods that seek to represent the voice of the marginalised. However, it continues to be overtaken and silenced by positivist approaches that criticise it as unscientific and unreliable. According to Corbetta (2003), narrative research is a way in which individuals subjectively create and recreate themselves as well as their realities. Therefore, the tendency to argue for objectivity in subjectivity still indicates the struggling voice of narrative paradigms in a positivist dominated research space.

6.4.2 Ethical considerations

In line with the requirements of conducting research, an ethical clearance (Appendix B) to conduct the research was obtained from the ethics Committee at Unisa and approval to conduct the research was granted by the DCS research committee. Subsequent to a recommendation from the ethical clearance committee further steps were taken to ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical manner. The project arose out of an interest based on the attendance of religious services, visits and the attendance of family days, as well as other rehabilitation services meetings which meant more familiarity and being known by some of the offenders especially

women that I used to visit one on one. A deliberate effort in ensuring women participated voluntarily in the research was ensured. Before commencing the interview, all the women were given an opportunity to consent to the research process through signing a consent form (Appendix C). Women who have had a one on one visit with me were excluded from the research and this was explained to them as they came across wanting to participate. Care was also taken to protect the confidentiality of each woman by providing pseudonyms and providing different names to the places of residence mentioned in their stories.

6.4.3 Limitations and recommendations

The study was aimed at reaching out to a diverse group of women who have participated in rehabilitation programmes at the correctional centre and the voluntary nature of the study meant that women could not be forced into participation. While the study was open to all participants that were interested in participating, diversity in terms of race was not achieved, as there was only one Indian woman who participated. Attempts were made to interview one white participant who had initially agreed to participate, she cancelled the appointment the following day. There were no coloured participants who showed interest in the study. While this study automatically lends itself to providing an experience of African women classified as maximum security offenders, it also highlights the intersection between gender and race for incarcerated women, with black women forming the majority of incarcerated group in comparison to other races. It is however also recommended that future studies focus on exploring and comparing experiences of women from all racial groups.

Many would argue for conducting multiple interviews with correctional service officers as well as champions of the rehabilitation programmes in addition to the women who are classified as maximum security offenders. This view is based on the narrative that seeks to present women offenders as untrustworthy and therefore any information collected from them

would be viewed with some level of doubt or with gaps requiring collateral. Contrary to the perception of women in the correctional centres as untrustworthy and unwilling to talk about their lives, I found that most of the women actually appreciated an opportunity to share their lives with someone, perhaps another black woman who was willing to listen. Like any other human being, some also had aspects that they were not comfortable discussing and that was respected. I have also interacted with women offenders classified as maximum security offenders in church services and visits organised by our ministry and I have walked away from such interactions with knowledge and experience that has helped me to continually seek ways of how I can support them with their ongoing challenges. Overall, I felt honoured for an opportunity to continue to learn about the ongoing struggle of women against gendered socio-cultural dynamics and spaces in societies through the interviews with women classified as maximum security offenders.

The narrative of collateral when interviewing marginalised groups in society plays a role in further discrimination and silencing of such groups, with attempts at gaining collateral seen as a way of validating their responses. Therefore, a need for collateral was not identified for this group. Interviewing this group of women alone seeks to present rehabilitation experiences as voiced by the women who are classified as maximum security offenders without validating or comparing it with any other group. The aim of the study was to understand the lived experience of rehabilitation as articulated by the women classified as maximum security offenders. Therefore, the decision to interview women classified as maximum offenders is thus an attempt to resurrect their voices, some of which were silenced prior to incarceration and which continue to be silenced in the correctional centre. Recommendations are thus made for further studies to explore the understanding of gender-based programmes by correctional services officials in order to inform gender awareness training based on African notions of communalism and interdependence.

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Appendix A

Narrative Interview Guide

1. Tell me about your experience of rehabilitation in the correctional centre.
2. Tell me more about your understanding of rehabilitation.
3. Describe your rehabilitation journey whilst in the correctional centre.
4. Tell me about the different rehabilitation programmes available for maximum security women offenders.
5. Tell me about the benefits of rehabilitation
6. What motivates you to participate in the available rehabilitative programmes
7. Describe the rehabilitation needs of maximum security women offenders.

Appendix B



Ethical Clearance for M/D students: Research on human participants

The Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at Unisa has evaluated this research proposal for a Higher Degree in Psychology in light of appropriate ethical requirements, with special reference to the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Psychologists of the HPCSA and the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.

Student Name: Sibulelo Agatha Qhogwana **Student no.:** 51881225

Supervisor: Dr Puleng Segalo **Affiliation:** Dept. of Psychology, Unisa
Title of project:

A narrative analysis of the experiences of female prisoners rehabilitation in maximum security prisons in Gauteng

The proposal was evaluated for adherence to appropriate ethical standards as required by the Psychology Department of Unisa. The application was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology on the understanding that –

- Because of the sensitivity of the information being sought and the fact that the participants come from a vulnerable population, it should be made clear to the participants that participation is completely voluntary;
- Ethical principles related to informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and the right of participants to withdraw without penalty should be strictly enforced;
- Additional clearance will have to be obtained from the Department of Correctional Services to confirm that any and all formal procedures that need to be followed to gain access to the participants and to obtain information for the purposes of research which may be required by Department of Correctional Services, have been adhered to, and that the relevant authorities are aware of the scope of the research.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read "P Kruger".

Date: 4 November 2014

Prof P Kruger
[For the Ethics Committee]

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) *The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
- 2) *Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the Psychology Department Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.*
- 3) *The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*

Appendix C

Consent form

My name is **Sibulelo Qhogwana** and I am a student in the Psychology department at **Unisa**. My research project is entitled “*A narrative analysis of rehabilitation experiences by women classified as maximum offenders in the Johannesburg Correctional Centre*”. This is a research study intended to explore and understand the rehabilitation experiences of women classified as maximum security offenders. I would like permission to interview you about your experiences of rehabilitation as a women classified as a maximum security offender.

This interview will take approximately 1 hour to 1 hour thirty minutes. With your permission, I would like to audio-record this interview so that I can record the details accurately. The tapes will only be heard by myself and my supervisor. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I and my supervisor will have access. Please note that, at any time, you can refuse to answer any questions or end this interview.

The risk involved in this study is that you may feel uncomfortable discussing some of your experiences during the interview and should this happen, please know that you can stop at any time and should you need to talk further about the uncomfortable feelings that might arise, I will have someone whom you can speak with. The benefit of your participation is that what you share with me might help us understand the rehabilitation needs of women classified as maximum security offenders. There will be approximately twenty participants taking part in this study.

I may publish results of the study, but names of people or any identifying characteristics will not be used in any of the publications. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at smatrose@gmail.com or my supervisor, Prof Puleng Segalo by email, segalpj@unisa.ac.za. Should you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact the Unisa Ethics Office.

Thank you for your participation in the study.

I agree to have this interview audio-recorded please [circle one]: Yes No

Participant's signature	Date	Researcher's signature	Date
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