

**IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE INCARCERATED  
ADOLESCENT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

by

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Dedicated to my parents J.L. and S.D. Peacock

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## SUMMARY

<b>TITEL:</b>	Identity development of the incarcerated adolescent: a comparative analysis
<b>BY:</b>	Robert Peacock
<b>PROMOTOR:</b>	Professor Aubrey Theron
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Social Work and Criminology
<b>DEGREE:</b>	Doctor Philosophiae

The plight of the incarcerated adolescent has been mostly ignored throughout the centuries. Adolescence is perceived as the most critical developmental stage to achieve a personal identity, necessitated by the need to acquire new coping skills, particularly, in a complex society undergoing large scale socio-political transformation. In a prison environment marked by overcrowding, deviant subcultures, role stripping and loss of goods and autonomy, incarceration could, however, undermine feelings of uniqueness, self-value and a normative identity.

Due to a dearth of research on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent, exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and comparative analyses were conducted. Erikson's psychosocial theory served to guide this research. Through purposive sampling 83 incarcerated adolescent male research participants were included in this study. On the basis of the literature a questionnaire was developed that tested quantitatively a number of variables in relation to a quantitative assessment of the level of identity achieved by the research participants. Their level of identity development was assessed and compared with regard to the committing of different types of offences, parent-child and peer relationships, race and ethnic group, discrimination, and the relationship between the prison environment, the inmate code, prison victimisation, deviant group integration (prison gangs), treatment programs and individual identity development. Descriptive statistical analyses were utilised to describe the general characteristics of scores in the sample and to organise, summarise and visualise the data (frequency distributions, means and standard deviations). The inferential tests served to compare the levels of identity development of the research participants, and refer to the t-test,

ANOVA, Correlation and Factor analysis. A Cronbach alpha of the Erikson scale was calculated that showed that the measuring instrument was reliable.

Analyses of the data revealed that the offending behaviour and subsequent incarceration of the research participants deprived them of an opportunity to create a psychosocial moratorium, thereby “arresting” greater interpersonal differentiation. In accordance with the process of epigenesis their delinquency could be viewed furthermore as a residue of a basic mistrust in themselves and others, a lack of belief in the future, their role and value confusion together with a lack of purpose and direction. In a deprived, hostile and isolated prison environment the findings of this study highlight in particular the compensatory nature of the prison gang in relation to the provision of an identity pathway, identity capital and a collective identity. Prison victimisation was a prevalent and pervasive feature of the institutional life of the research participants. Concerning the relationship between their victimisation and identity development, two significant correlations were established. Incarcerated adolescents with higher levels of identity development are less likely to be the victims of assault by more than one inmate at the same time or to be gang raped by other inmates. Research participants with a lower level of identity development are also more likely to exercise and use weights to enhance physical strength and to sleep as an escape mechanism. On the other hand, research participants who obtained a higher level of identity development are more likely to employ a strategy of keeping quiet when provoked. The items that reached the set level of statistical significance concurred with both the features and general adjustment ability of a more stable sense of self-definition and the features of identity consciousness rooted in doubt and shame that counteracts and complicates a personal sense of autonomy. The research participant, who has obtained a higher level of identity, is thus more able to contain himself when provoked, while the less self-directed incarcerated utilises more aggressive precautions to deter prison victimisation (physical strength and endurance training) or opts for sleeping as an escape mechanism. No significant statistical correlation was established between participation in treatment programmes and the level of identity development of the research participants.

Recommendations for further research were formulated focusing on the plight of the incarcerated adolescent. It was concluded that the uniqueness and fluidity of responses during the critical developmental stage of adolescence needs to be appreciated. The chronological young and vulnerable developmental age of the incarcerated adolescent, his particular susceptibility to conform, together with his need to feel accepted and his general quest for behavioural

directives, may render him in particular vulnerable to societal strain, institutional and interpersonal victimisation as well as subsequent devaluation of his identity.

### **KEY TERMS**

Incarcerated adolescent, identity and incarceration, identity and crime, prison gangs, prison conditions, prison victimisation, discrimination, institutionalisation, identity diffusion, negative identity, psychosocial moratorium, adolescent identity.

# 1. GENERAL ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

The plight of imprisoned children demands urgent attention worldwide. In this regard one can refer to the United Nations project of 1986 that exposed some of the adverse conditions under which children are incarcerated in countries such as Turkey, Chile, Morocco and Pakistan (Tomasevski, 1986). As prior to democratisation in 1994, the imprisonment of children remains a problem in post-apartheid South Africa. The main reason for this is that South Africa does not yet have a separate and unique criminal justice system for children and enacted incoherent statutory provisions (mainly in the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977, the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 and Correctional Services Act 8 of 1959) have been described as rendering in practice the exact opposite than the envisaged protection (McLachlan, 1986:47; Peacock, 1989:18; South African Law Commission, 1997:90). To create greater synergy between the mentioned statutory provisions, a new Child Justice Bill was formulated in 2002 but still needs to be passed by parliament.

From the objectives of the South African correctional system, as embodied amongst others, in section 35(2)(e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), section 2 of the Correctional Services Act (Act No 111 of 1998) and chapter four of the White Paper on Corrections (2005), the responsibility of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) is first and foremost to correct offending behaviour in a secure, safe and humane environment to facilitate rehabilitation and avoidance of recidivism. The following discussion will show that the position of children deprived of their liberty, remains problematic. One of the problems that could arise is that contact with the criminal justice system, and imprisonment in particular, may have a profound effect on their identity development. According to Erikson (1959:89) the developmental stage of adolescence is in particular a critical and vulnerable phase for the establishment of a personal identity.

## 1.1 CONCEPTUALISATION

To gain a better understanding of the relationship between identity, incarceration and adolescence, the following discussion will elucidate concepts central to this study.

### 1.1.1 Identity

The concept “identity” is derived from the Latin word *idem* which means “the same”. It refers to the ability of an object to remain consistent or to form unity, or as in the case of a person, individuality and sameness. The complexity of the construct identity is reflected by the variety of definitions for it. Some definitions suggest that identity refers to the unity and continuity of personality (despite changes within the social environment), whereas other definitions describe identity as part of a collective identity. This applies when the individual is a member of a specific group and shares an identity with the group. In this regard, one could speak of a Xhosa, Afrikaner or an African identity (Thom, 1988:90; Tsang, Irving, Allaggia, Chau & Benjamin, 2003:361; Umana-Taylor, Diversi, & Fine 2002:304).

For the purposes of this study, identity refers to what Erikson (1956:57) considers as the attainment of a person’s own expectations. If such attainment is in accordance with group membership norms and values, the individual is likely to experience a sense of sameness and continuity. Group membership could provide the individual with directives to ensure feelings of conformity and continuity. Ego identity, would therefore, refer to the state in which the individual perceives him or her as an unique individual but whose aspirations, values and behavioural norms are integrated with those of significant others.

The above definition operationalised for this study, is a combination of the two aforementioned perspectives on identity. On the one hand, a personal identity would refer to self-definitions of unique characteristics such as physical and intellectual attributes, motives and values. Whereas on the other, a social identity would pertain to that aspect of the self-concept that is derived from a person’s knowledge of his<sup>1</sup> membership to specific groups, as well as the value and emotional significance he attaches to membership.

Although identity development may reach its peak during adolescence (Hart, Atkins & Ford, 1999:376; Van Hoof & Raaijmakers, 2002:201), it needs to be noted that identity formation is not exclusive to adolescence. It may reach its peak during adolescence due

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<sup>1</sup> This study focuses on the identity of development of the male incarcerated adolescent. For the purpose of this study, the masculine form will be used rather than the gender neutral terminology.



to the necessity for dealing with considerable physical and cognitive changes, as well as the need to acquire productive skills but it also involves a synthesis of previous childhood experiences and identifications (Newman & Newman, 2001:516). Therefore, references to the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent would also refer to identity development attained during previous developmental phases.

### 1.1.2 Adolescence

The term “adolescence” was used for the first time during the fifteen century and is derived from the Latin verb *adolescere* which means “to grow into maturity”. Despite this early interest, it was only during the twentieth century that the importance of this life stage was fully realised. Stanley G. Hall (in Thom, 1988:1) was one of the first scientists to express the opinion that the adolescent developmental stage is one of the most important stages to study. In addition to its fascinating nature, this age group is the most responsive to scientific intervention measures, if and when needed.

Given the importance of this developmental stage, it does not surprise that the concept adolescence has been defined from a number of perspectives. In this regard one could refer firstly to the biological perspective, which considers biological changes associated with puberty as a prerequisite (Thom, 1988:4). Secondly, from a social perspective, adolescence is defined according to the status and role expectations pertaining to the adolescent within his particular social context. According to this perspective, the adolescent is seen as neither an adult, nor a child. Finally, in accordance with the psychological perspective, the adolescent is viewed in terms of the manner in which he perceives himself as in relation to the social environment. The psychological perspective emphasises the process of identity development as essential to such social interaction. Identity development occurs primarily as the result of the acquisition of new coping skills such as achieving greater emotional dependence from parents and to further develop intellectual and cognitive skills (Compas, Davis & Forsythe, 1985:677; Reis & Youniss, 2004:33).

Considering the foregoing, it is apparent that adolescence could be distinguished for the purposes of this study, as a specific developmental phase with its onset characterised by puberty and the associated psychological and social changes. Given the feelings of

confusion and turmoil often associated with these changes, it is appropriate to refer to adolescence as a critical period of development, in which a person may become particularly vulnerable to develop a diffused or negative identity especially when surrounded by conflicting value systems.

When defining adolescence, it needs to be emphasised that biological, psychological and socio-cultural factors may cause fluctuations with regard to the exact demarcation of this phase. It may be a brief or extended period, depending on the specific individual, and/or his socio-cultural environment (Kroger, 1989:4; Olawu, 1983:265; Yoder, 2000:98). Puberty may for instance **begin** as early as eight years of age, or may be delayed due to variables such as malnutrition or poor health. The demarcation of the **end** of adolescence is also problematic, because of less obvious development towards the end.

Considering the dynamic nature of adolescence, researchers (Adamson, Hartman & Lyxell, 1999:22; Dreyer, 1980:14) agree that adolescence generally occurs during the period 12 to 22 years. For the purposes of this study, the age group 15 to 18 would be of special significance. Not only is this the most crucial stage for identity formation versus identity diffusion but at this stage identity establishment is no longer dominated by physiological changes but develops along personal, social and cultural dimensions of personality (Ochse & Plug, 1986:1240; Thom, 1988:216). The age group 15 to 18 is representative of the middle years of adolescence but moreover, forms a considerable segment of youth that are incarcerated (Arndt, 1989:23; Criminal Justice Monitor, 2003:1; Sloth-Nielsen, 1998:4). The official response to deviance may in turn have a profound effect on the development of a so-called “spoiled”, “victimised” or “negative identity”.

### 1.1.3 Incarceration

In South Africa, imprisonment or incarceration entails the admission, confinement and detention of a person in a prescribed place for the duration of his or her sentence. The Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977 provides for “ordinary” and “periodic” imprisonment, as well as for “indeterminate” prison sentences. Sections 51 to 54 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 105 of 1997 makes also provision for compulsory minimum sentences

of life imprisonment for a number of serious crimes such as murder, robbery and rape but section 72(1) of the proposed Child Justice Bill (2002) prohibits life imprisonment of a child who at the time of the offence was under the age 18 years. Also, section 69 (4) of the Child Justice Bill of 2002 stipulates that when imposing a sentence of imprisonment on a child, the period of imprisonment must be announced, rendering unlawful an indeterminate prison sentence.

Section 29 of the Correctional Services Act 14 of 1996 allows for children charged with serious offences to be held in prison awaiting trial. A child “in need of care” can also be referred to prison or police cells as a “place of safety.”

The Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977, Child Care Act 74 of 1983 and the Correctional Services Act 8 of 1959 (in the case of children sentenced to prison until end of September 2004), and the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998 (since October 2004) provide statutory provisions for children and juveniles to be sentenced to prison. In this regard, the Department of Correctional Services (1995:13) classifies children as persons younger than 18 years and juveniles as between the ages 18 and 20 but not yet 21. For the purposes of this study, incarceration will refer to an ordinary prison sentence.

## **1.2 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

By their very definition, “children” are considered different from “adult” offenders. If nothing else, they are younger, and therefore, presumably less responsible for their actions, as well as more responsive to change. However, it is only within relatively recent history, that children have been distinguished from adults.

### **1.2.1 Ancient times (700 to 1500 A.D.)**

Very little is known about the plight of children within western civilisation as from the period 700 to 1500 A.D. Children were not perceived as a distinct group with unique needs and behaviour, and if “troublesome”, could be sold-off as slaves, or killed by the father. Under ancient Roman law the father, or patriarch, enjoyed unlimited power to decide over the fate of his children or “property” (Peacock, 1994:138; Van Niekerk, 1991:42). Furthermore, in classical Roman times imprisonment was in general not a

prominent form of punishment. It was mainly regarded as a place of detention for purposes of torturing or execution and not for punishment as such (Van Zyl Smit, 1992:1).

The following discussion will focus on the development of child and juvenile corrections as from medieval times, with specific reference to changes in family life, the *parens patriae* (English) doctrine, and the birth of the juvenile court, all precursors to modern-day juvenile justice.

### **1.2.2 The Middle Ages (1500-1600)**

The roots of contemporary juvenile justice systems originated in sixteenth and seventeenth century England. The English statutes known as “vagrancy laws” and “poor laws” reflected the onset thereof, as well as the paternalistic nature of English and European society (Finckenauer, 1984:108).

The European father dominated his family during the Middle Ages and legal and institutional systems adopted father-like roles with regard to children. Family control of children with behavioural problems became the primary model and children were treated as second-class citizens subject to severe disciplinary measures such as flogging and execution. In colonial New England, for instance, children could receive the death penalty for cursing or “smiting” their father or mother. The legal system favoured adults and the courts generally upheld the “reasonableness” of parental action despite the apparent lack of parental affinity towards children during this period. Children were considered the property of their parents without due regard for actions such as child abuse (Stinchcomb & Fox, 1999:504; Van Niekerk, 1991:42).

The Poor Laws of 1535 provided for the appointment of church wardens to identify vagrant, delinquent and neglected children and to place them in “poor-houses” or “work-houses.” Children could alternatively, be placed with a master, who had complete authority over them, with the intention to teach them a craft. Also, at this time, the first houses of corrections were created in England, referred to as the Bridewells. According to Finckenauer (1984:107), London’s Bridewell opened in the mid 1500s and is considered the first institution of its kind with the specific purpose to control youthful

beggars and vagrants. The underlying theme of the Bridewells, “work-houses”, “poor-houses”, the “apprenticeship system” and “Poor Laws” in general was that severe punishment would have a crime deterrent effect and hard work would facilitate the rehabilitation of children.

### 1.2.3 The nineteenth century

Until the early nineteenth century, children above the age of seven were treated brutally in the United States of America (USA) as well as England and Europe for simple acts of mischief. They were confined in work-houses, or in prison where they served their sentences alongside adult criminals who frequently harassed and sexually abused them (Clear & Cole, 1990:530). In England, children were hanged for “offences” that would now be considered almost trivial, such as rebelliousness, and likewise, in the nineteenth century in colonial America, a thirteen-year-old boy was for instance hanged in New Jersey, drawing also no distinction between child and adult offenders (Reid, 1981:347). In the year 1824, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was established, exactly 50 years before the creation of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1874. This highlights the fact that animals were perceived to be of more importance than children (Stinchcomb & Fox, 1999:505).

The nineteenth century was also characterised by large-scale family disruption and social disorganisation as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Traditional forms of social control began to disintegrate as rural families migrated to urban areas where they experienced typical problems associated with urbanisation such as unemployment, poverty, population density and cultural conflict inherent to culturally heterogeneous populations. The latter was especially a feature of urban life in the USA as large numbers of immigrants from Europe arrived in the hope of securing a more promising future (Siegel & Senna, 1988:363).

The growth rate of cities was four times that of the rural areas and in comparison to a simple pastoral life organised around religion, had a corrupting influence on children. The first attempt to offer specialised treatment to children occurred in the English Court of Chancery applying the doctrine of *parens patriae*. The Lord Chancellor Court exercised jurisdiction over children on behalf of the *pater patriae*, the King but dealt only with

neglected and dependent children. Criminal violations of children were matters for the regular adult criminal court. Taken from the chancery practice, *parens patriae* was used to justify the State's power in acting in *loco parentis* (substitute parent). Eventually in 1899, the juvenile court was established, extending the doctrine of *parens patriae* also to delinquent children (Clear & Cole, 1990:531; Finckenhauer, 1984:109; Reid, 1981:347).

Prior to the emergence of the nineteenth century Reformist Movement, children were brutally punished in the colonies of the European settlers. Despite recommendations for the separate detention of children from adult offenders, it was only during the year 1881 that a parliamentary committee was established in the Cape Colony to determine whether a separate facility was indeed warranted for delinquent juveniles. Recommendations of this committee were implemented and the Porter House reformatory was established during January 1882 but noticeably, was the absence of any similar institution in the then Transvaal, Natal and Orange Free State until the twentieth century (Van Niekerk, 1991:52, 55).

#### **1.2.4 The Twentieth century**

The Union of South Africa was established on 31 May 1910 and all four colonies were united with the promulgation of a new prison act, namely the "Wet op gevangenis en vebeteringgestichten", Act 13 of 1911. This act provided *inter alia* for the establishment of prisons but also for industrial schools and reformatories for children. Industrial schools and reformatories were reserved for emotionally difficult or "disturbed" children as well as for children with learning difficulties or those who have "low" intellectual or academic capabilities. However, the phenomenon of juveniles incarcerated with adult offenders in adult facilities remained a problem, despite South Africa's ratification in 1955 of the United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders (Erasmus, 1985:22; Venter, 1959:62).

The new Prisons Act 8 of 1959 (as amplified by the Consolidated Prison Regulations) provided rules that governed all prisons, police cells and lock-ups. Few provisions were, however, made for juveniles. As a result little difference occurred in the treatment of adult and juvenile prisoners (McLachlan, 1984:29). The new legislation extended racial segregation within prisons in line with the "differential development" apartheid policies of

the apartheid regime and entrenched the militarization of prisons. The prison system was closed off from inspections by outsiders, which in turn served to enforce a closed institutional culture with little regard in practice of basic international standards or prescripts concerning norms of prison law (White Paper on Corrections, 2005:45).

Apartheid became a hall mark of twentieth century South Africa and according to Shaw (1996:13) the main aim of the criminal justice system was to enforce apartheid rather than curbing crime. The research of Slabbert (1980:1) shows that during this time of racial oppression, South Africa had the highest prison population in the world, of which 80% were short-term prisoners - most of them incarcerated under the pass laws.

During the mid 1980s children were arrested and detained when they engaged in the liberation struggle against the apartheid regime. They rejected the inferior Bantu education and unrest became prevalent countrywide amongst black schools and universities (Cleminshaw, 1987: 38; Manganyi & Du Toit, 1990:53; Minnaar, 1990:78). A State of Emergency was declared in June 1986, giving the police and military forces wide ranging powers to suppress the unrest (Langa, 1987:6). Under security legislation, 173 000 children and juveniles were detained in prison or police cells for extended periods, without trial or legal representation (Foster, Davis & Sandler, 1987:38). These figures do not include the detention of children in the then so-called "independent homelands". It also does not refer to children dealt with by unofficial vigilante forces allied with and often directed by the apartheid regime. According to the Detainees' Parents' Support Committee (1987:13) 30-40% of all people killed, wounded, arrested or detained in police or prison cells were children and juveniles.

During the 1980s juveniles were detained in prison under emergency regulations as well as for ordinary crimes. However, until 1992, no policy existed ensuring their safe detention in conditions conducive to human dignity. It was common practice for juveniles to be detained for long periods of time, also as awaiting trial prisoners, often together with adult prisoners. The death of Neville Snyman in 1992 brought these conditions under the spotlight. Whilst he was detained in police cells in Robertson, he was assaulted by his cellmates, sodomised and scalded under a hot shower (Lewis, 1997:7).

This incident resulted in the issuing of a report by the University of the Western Cape and Lawyers for Human Rights, entitled, *Justice for Children: No Child should be Caged* (Community Law Centre, 1992). Greater awareness for the plight of children in prison followed and in 1994, the first democratically elected State President, Nelson Mandela called for the removal of children from prisons in South Africa in his first address to parliament. The implementation thereof took place in May 1995 but did not proceed without difficulties as there was no system in place for the supervision of these youths and many of them escaped. Its was also accompanied by an outcry from the public due to concerns about community safety and the serious nature of the crimes for which some of the children had been arrested. This in turn led to the promulgation of the Correctional Services Amendment Act 14 of 1996. Sections 28 and 29 allowed for children charged with serious offences to be held in prison awaiting trial, under strict conditions, as a last resort and for the shortest possible time (Lewis, 1997:7; Maphila, 2000:92).

In 1997 the South African Law Commission issued a paper (project 106) dealing with recommendations for juvenile justice in South Africa. This paper culminated in the proposed Child Justice Bill (2002) attempting to bring together various fragmented pieces of legislation (mainly in the Criminal Procedure Act 51 Of 1977, the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 and Correctional Services Act 8 of 1959) to form a juvenile justice system. The Bill endeavoured to protect the rights of children entrenched in the Constitution and international instruments (such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989) and placed special emphasis on steering children who have committed less serious offences, away from the criminal justice system. Provision was also made for a Child Justice Court (section 50) that operates at a district level and has jurisdiction to adjudicate in respect of all offences, except murder, rape and treason. Cases involving the child accused may be heard in a regional or high court but preference must be given to the referral of cases to the child justice court.

According to Dissel's (1999:9) research, the average number for sentenced child prisoners for 1995 was 672, during 1996 the average was 824 and during 1997 the average number rose to 1 115. Up to 1996 the increase was 22%, and from 1996 to 1997, an increase of 35%. In the proposed Child Justice Bill of 2002, relatively little attention has been paid to children who have been sentenced to imprisonment, despite the increase in their numbers over the past years.



## 1.3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Within the South African legislative framework, the doctrine of *parens patriae* remains with the state as upper-custodian of all children with a duty to protect their well-being (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996). However, as far back as 1948, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, it was recognised that the treatment of individuals should not be left to the discretion of the individual states alone (Dissel, 1996:1). The following discussion will focus on legally binding international instruments, where-after an exposition will be given of domestic legislation relevant to the treatment of incarcerated children in South Africa.

### 1.3.1 International legal instruments

Article 10(1)(b) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights lays the foundation for the distinction between juvenile and adult prisoners (Dissel, 1999:7). In this covenant it is stated that juveniles shall be separated from adult prisoners and be accorded with treatment appropriate to their age and legal status. The United Nations addressed the specific treatment of juveniles in detention in 1985 with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules), and together with the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (1990), the aim is to establish minimum standards of treatment for incarcerated juveniles.

In 1995 South Africa ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). This convention is probably the most important internationally binding legal instrument dealing with children deprived of their liberty. Article 37 refers in specific to their rights.

South Africa is also a member of the African Union (formerly the OAU) and the British Commonwealth. These bodies subscribe to the protection of the rights of children. Most notably is the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR), which was adopted in 1986 and is relevant to countries on the African continent. The charter includes the recognition of human dignity inherent to any human being, while

exploitation, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment is prohibited (Dissel, 1996:2; Stout & Woods, 2004:117).

### 1.3.2 Domestic legislation

Section 23 of the proposed South African Child Justice Bill of 2002 states that the purpose of sentencing is to:

- a) Encourage the child to understand the implication of and be accountable for the harm causes;
- b) Promote an individualised response which is appropriate to the child's circumstances and proportionate to the circumstances surrounding the offence;
- c) Promote the reintegration of the child into the family and community; and
- d) Ensure that any necessary supervision, guidance, treatment or service which form part of the sentence assist the child in the process of reintegration.

A sentence of imprisonment may be imposed on a child if the child is over the age of 14 years at the time of the commission of the offence; and if substantial and compelling reasons exist for imposing the sentence; but not in respect of offences referred to as Schedule 1 offences (Child Justice Bill of 2002, section 69(1)(a), (2)(a)). Schedule 2 offences (sections 11 and 14) and Schedule 3 offences (sections 15, 33, 36, 58 and 81) apply but section 72(1) of the Bill prohibits life imprisonment of a child who at the time of the offence was under the age of 18 years.

Schedule 1 offences (sections 7, 11, 14, 62 and 69) are referred to as

- assault without the infliction of grievous bodily harm
- malicious damage to property where the damage does not exceed R500,00
- trespassing

- any offence relating to the illicit possession of dependence producing drugs with the value thereof not exceeding R500,00
- any statutory offence where the maximum penalty by that statute is imprisonment for three months
- any conspiracy, incitement or attempt to commit any offence referred to in Schedule 1.

Schedule 2 offences (sections 11 and 14) are referred to as

- public violence
- culpable homicide
- assault, involving the infliction of grievous bodily harm
- any offence referred to in section 1 of the Intimidation Act (Act No 72 of 1982)
- housebreaking with the intent to commit an offence, not exceeding the involved amount of R20 000
- the illicit possession of dependence producing drugs where the quantity does not exceed the value of R20 000
- forgery or fraud, where the amount does not exceed R20 000
- kidnapping
- any statutory offence not exceeding R20 000
- any conspiracy, incitement or attempt to commit any offence referred to as a Schedule 2 offence.

Schedule 3 offences (sections 15, 33, 36, 58 and 81) refer to

- murder
- rape

- robbery with aggravating circumstances, or the misappropriation of a motor vehicle
- indecent assault with the infliction of grievous bodily harm
- indecent assault on a person under the age of 16 years
- any offence referred to in section 13 of the Drugs and Drug Trafficking Act (Act No 140 of 1992) if the value of the drugs in question is more than R50 000 or R10 000 when the act was committed in the furtherance of common purpose or conspiracy (for instance, if related to organised crime or crime syndicates)
- any offence related to the dealing and smuggling of fire-arms, ammunition, explosives or armament
- any offence related to corruption, fraud or forgery involving amounts of more than R50 000 or R10 000 if the offence was committed in the execution of common purpose or conspiracy
- any conspiracy or attempt to commit any offence referred to as a Schedule 3 offence.

Once found guilty of any of the offences referred to as a Schedule 2 or 3 offence, the proposed Bill provides very little detail on the treatment and conditions for incarcerated children. For the Bill to be implemented (either in full or in part) formidable obstacles still need to be overcome. The social and political environment in which it needs to be introduced cannot be ignored. Stout and Woods (2004:131) refer to a general lack of resources and capacity needed for purposes of its implementation. A lack of capacity may lead to the criminal justice system adopting a more punitive approach in its efforts to compensate for a lack of accountability. Also, the furore generated by the media and public (see 1.2.4.) when the government previously attempted to curb the detention of children in police and prison cells may again impact on political will. With limited domestic resources, more pressures may also mount to attend to the needs of victims, rather than to develop a comprehensive range of services for child offenders. According to Van Zyl Smit and Van der Spuy (in Newburn & Sparks, 2004:201) child lobbyists remain uncertain whether the blanket prohibition of imprisonment for children under the

age of 14 will stay in tact together with the advocated total exclusion of life imprisonment for children. On 31 December 2005, 12 children under the age of 14 were in prison (Judicial Inspectorate of Prisons, 2006:16).

Concerning the treatment and conditions of children deprived of their liberty the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998 was passed. In terms of section 19 of the Act, child prisoners are subject to compulsory education. The Commissioner is also obliged to provide every child with “social work services, religious care, recreational programmes and psychological services” (S 19(2)). If practical, the Commissioner should also ensure that child prisoners retain contact with their families through visits and other means.

The Bill of Rights (Chapter 2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), in particular section 28, which describes the rights of the child, and section 35, which describes the rights of arrested, detained and convicted persons, are of special relevance to children deprived of their liberty. Similarity exists between sections 10, 12, 14, 28 and 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) and the contents of article 40 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Article 40(1) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) prescribes to state parties to recognise the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognised as having infringed penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child’s sense of dignity and worth. This should serve to reinforce the child’s respect for human rights and fundamental freedom of others. Treatment of the child should also take into account the child’s age and the promotion of the child’s integration in society in order for the child to assume a constructive role.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996, section 28):

Every child has the right not to be detained except as a measure of last resort, in which case, in addition to the rights a child enjoys under sections 12 and 35, the child may be detained only for the shortest appropriate period of time, and has the right to be treated in a manner, and kept in conditions, that take account of the child’s age.

Section 28 states further:

“Every child has the right to be kept separately from detained persons over the age of 18 years” and “every child has the right to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment [and to] basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care and social services”.

According to section 29: “Everyone has the right to a basic education”.

Section 33 states:

“Every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation.” And: “Everyone who is detained, including every sentenced prisoner, has the right to have a legal practitioner assigned to the detained person by the state and at state expense if substantial injustice would otherwise result, and to be informed of this right promptly”.

Section 35 stipulates:

Everyone who is detained, including every sentenced prisoner has the right to conditions of detention that are consistent with human dignity, including at least the provision, at state expense, of adequate accommodation at least exercise [and] at state expense of reading material.

These rights provide important constitutional safeguards to children deprived of their liberty, as they are under the powers of others in a closed environment where maltreatment can flourish.

Their deprivation of freedom needs to be strictly regulated but with reference to the new Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998, referring in specific to the conditions and treatment of children in prison (as largely excluded by the Child Justice Bill of 2002), Dissel (1999:7) is of the opinion that although Act 111 recognises the basic needs of children in prison, it falls short in establishing a comprehensive policy regarding the incarceration of young people. Constitutional safeguards remain nevertheless but in this

respect it may be useful to focus briefly on the international experience. As was mentioned above, correspondence exists between the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) and contents of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). This brought South Africa in line with international norms, standards and safeguards but also subject to international law. However, according to human rights watch organisations (Pangaea, 2000:1) this most widely ratified convention in history has been violated “systematically and contemptuously” by many countries. The USA and Somalia are the only states that did not ratify the convention and this could be the very reason why the administration of international justice is problematic. In other words, why would member states adhere to its stipulations, if not mandatory for all to ratify? From this one could argue that without the political will of governments as well as a respect for human rights, the plight of children deprived of their liberty will remain a problem, legal barriers notwithstanding.

## **1.4 MOTIVATION FOR AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The following discussion will provide a further rationale for this study focusing on a dearth of research on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent as well as the relevance of the study to both society and corrections.

### **1.4.1 Prison conditions**

According to Nesor (2001:87) penitentiary space is a scarce commodity in South Africa and this situation will not change in the foreseeable future. In 1992, the imprisonment rate in South Africa was 368 per 100 000 of the population and by 1999, the number rose to 390 prisoners per capita (Muntingh, 2001a:5). During May 2000, prisons were 71% overpopulated in comparison to the 30,5% percent during December 1996 (Criminal Justice Monitor, 2000:3). Fagan (2005:1) is of the opinion that South Africa is one of the most aggressive countries in the world in its use of incarceration with 4 out of every 1 000 South Africans in prison. The number of children in prison under the age of 18 years has also increased by 161% between June 1995 and 2000 (Criminal Justice Monitor, 2003:1). According to Roper (2005:3) young offenders constitute 41% of the prison population whereas they form only 26% of the general South African population.

South Africa is experiencing a rapidly increasing prison population due to a number of reasons. Some of it refers to its population demographics, such as a young population, which is also more vulnerable to crime and victimisation risk factors (Davis & Snyman, 2005:185; Schurink, Snyman, Krugel & Slabbert, 1992:44). Other factors refer to the worldwide trend of large-scale imprisonment as part of popular political campaigns of getting “tough on crime”, public opinion that favours retribution, urbanisation, economic inequality, more strict bail conditions and hence also a growth in the number of unsentenced prisoners, as well as mandatory minimum sentences for schedule 6 offences as stipulated in sections 51 to 54 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 105 of 1997. In a countrywide survey of presiding officers from lower and high courts, it was found that 80% of the research participants claimed that they never or almost never consider the capacity of the correctional system to carry out a sentence when imposing a sentence (Steinberg, 2005:13).

According to an Annual Report of the Department of Correctional Services (1999:4) the continuous increase in the prison population places an enormous strain on the Department’s available resources and hampers its effective functioning in many respects. A 2004 inspection visit (Judicial Inspectorate of Prisons, 2005:12), highlights the deterioration of prison conditions. Facilities are described as outdated and unhygienic. Living conditions of prisoners are subsequently adversely affected with over-population not only impacting negatively on their humane detention, treatment and relative comfort but also on the infrastructure of prisons, as well as on the supervision, control and safe custody of the inmates. The Office of the Inspecting Judge (Judicial Inspectorate of Prisons, 2006:17) reported again that numerous prisons still remain badly overcrowded.

In a situational analysis of prison conditions children are exposed to, Sloth-Nielsen (1998) found that a tendency towards using large communal cells exists in South Africa. In her study, cells were frequently over-populated. In Gauteng, for instance, one juvenile section was 200% full. Some cells were described as dirty, dark and damp as well as inadequately ventilated. Concerns were also expressed about poor sanitation and hygiene, insufficient bedding, frequent shortage and poor condition of clothing, as well as an inadequate diet and insufficient medical care of the children. The general condition of children in prison in South Africa was described as poor, with the children often



exhibiting symptoms of malnutrition and suffering from injuries. Many of the children were covered with sores and were stunted in growth (Sloth-Nielsen, 1998:28).

In addition to basic health and sanitation risks, overcrowding can also lead to high risk activities in that simple items such as blankets and shoes are used as commodities that can be exchanged for sexual favours. Estimates are that of the 10 000 prisoners released every month, 6 000 are HIV positive. Death in prison (due to both natural and unnatural causes) has also increased by more than 600% between the years 1995 and 2000 (Criminal Justice Monitor, 2003:1). The current level has escalated to 9.1 deaths per 1 000 prisoners per annum (Judicial Inspectorate of Prisons, 2005:31).

In addition to the above-mentioned problems, Kupers (1999:51;57) and Muntingh (2001a:12) refer also to “carceral suffering” as the disorienting result of the meaningless of time in prison. Often prisoners are unable to concentrate, cannot control their memory adequately and many experience sudden “mind voids” and dizziness. Feelings of emptiness are also linked to self-negation when prisoners make themselves “invisible” in an effort to avoid constant observation, albeit from the other inmates, or prison staff. Bodily functions and senses are atrophied, for instance, eyesight deteriorates as a result of the confined space, whilst hearing becomes over-developed resulting in a hypersensitivity to noise. It therefore does not surprise that the suicide rate in prisons is also six to seven times higher than outside. Tonry and Petersilia (1999:300) refer to young prisoners as the most likely group to commit suicide due to their particular susceptibility to prison stress.

#### **1.4.2 Societal relevance of the study**

In comparison to the apartheid era, the incidence of crime shows a rising trend in contemporary South Africa (Criminal Justice Monitor, 2000:1). Although the definition of crime is relative to the prevailing norms and values of a society, and crime statistics do not always reflect the true distribution of crime, statistics could be indicative of serious social problems (Slabbert, 1980:1).

Estimates of recidivism are between 85% and 94% (Muntingh, 2001a:19). More than ever, it has become imperative that the cyclical nature of crime is adequately addressed.

Juvenile recidivism poses a serious threat to the rights of citizens to be secure from crime in their respective communities. By isolating offending adolescents from society, citizens are protected from offending juveniles but confinement creates also a prison community that requires from the inmate to adjust to unfamiliar values, traditions and social relationships. To survive a prison climate of deprivation and often degradation, many prisoners detach themselves from the outside world in an attempt to construct a life within the prison environment. Often, in this process of adaptation, they experience changes in personality. Sometimes these changes take place as soon as they enter the prison for the first time. Many prisoners compare the routine of stripping off their civilian clothes with stripping off their personal identities (Yamanoha, 1985:33).

It may be especially difficult for the young prisoner to maintain a positive sense of self-worth. Being young he must be prepared to engage in conflict in order to establish or maintain his status in the prison community, or alternatively, to seek protection from older prisoners in exchange for sexual favours (Gear & Ngubeni, 2002:14). Given the influence of the social environment on the formation of identity (Capozza & Brown, 2000:17; La Voie, 1976:372), it can be postulated that many incarcerated adolescents do not only experience an identity crisis but adverse prison conditions such as overcrowding, violence and gangsterism, may cause a large majority of them to develop a negative identity and subsequently, to engage in repeat offending.

### **1.4.3 Dearth of research**

Despite the problems associated with the imprisonment of adolescents, little research has been undertaken on this topic during the apartheid era in South Africa. In this regard, one can refer to the exploratory study of *Defence for Children International* (DCI) (Tomasevksi, 1986), which was the first attempt of its kind to focus on the fate of children imprisoned in adult facilities. This study included empirical surveys, carried out in a number of selected countries, including South Africa. The data gathered was fragmentary, because not all of the researchers could obtain permission to conduct interviews with incarcerated subjects. As had been presumed at the initiation of this exploratory study, the subject of children and juveniles in prison has been neglected by academics, relevant governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations alike. The study reflected the limited scope of existing information and also testified to

the urgency for the protection of the rights of incarcerated children and adolescents, where it was most threatened.

The research of McLachlan (1986) on children and juveniles in South African prisons, contributed significantly to the afore-mentioned project of the DCI. It was mainly socio-legal in nature and confirmed that the position of incarcerated adolescents in South Africa was by no means different from that in countries such as Turkey and Chile, which are notorious for their prison conditions.

Similar to McLachlan's research, the investigation of Arndt (1989) focused on conditions prevailing in South African prisons but he also included police cells and places of safety in his study. Arndt's research was prompted by the State of Emergency that had existed in South Africa for a number of years as well as concomitant detention without trial. This study dealt mainly with the special laws that made possible the arrest of children and juveniles during the apartheid era.

The lack of research on the effects of imprisonment in South Africa can be attributed primarily to the negative attitudes of the prison authorities in the past to research. The few research projects undertaken in this field have evoked great displeasure during the apartheid era. Some researchers have been declared *persona non grata*, while the research of Slabbert and Van Rooyen (1978) on tattooing in prison, McLachlan's (1984; 1986) work on institutionalised children, and the research of Foster et al. (1987) on the psychological effects of detention, were met with great disapproval (Hansson & Van Zyl Smit, 1990:8).

Since the death of Neville Snyman (see 1.2.4), juvenile justice has become a topic of much discussion. However, most of the research conducted has been of a legal or socio-legal nature. In this regard, one could refer to an independent report *Justice for Children: No Child should be Caged* (Community Law Centre, 1992) published by the University of the Western Cape, or the research of Pinnock, Skelton and Shapiro (1994) on proposed juvenile justice legislation. The issue of children awaiting-trial received much attention (Nilson, 2000; Skelton, 1993; Sloth-Nielsen, 1996; 1999) as well as diversion of youthful offenders (Lewis, 1997; Muntingh, 2001b; Muntingh & Shapiro, 1994).

Sloth-Nielsen's (1998) situational analysis of children in South African prisons provides invaluable information on prison conditions but has also adopted a legal framework, whereas the experimental study of Van Zyl (2000) could not be conclusive in its assessment of the short-term impact of a life-skills programme on the locus of control and self-concept of incarcerated youths. The penological study of Van Niekerk (1991) focuses on the treatment of juvenile delinquents in South Africa but refers in essence to a specific project at Leeuwkop prison with recommendations for its management and functioning.

As far as could be ascertained, few research projects have been undertaken internationally on the topic of "criminal identity", and specifically, that of the incarcerated adolescent. A project worth mentioning is the research of Little (1990). He explored the existence of a criminal identity by means of an analysis of the behaviour patterns of a small group of young prisoners. This exploratory study provides valuable information pertaining to reasons why a specific group of adolescents "chose" and "suppressed" particular aspects of a negative identity. Little's research has limited value as he made use of a small non-representative sample, which in the absence of a control group, provides little information other than what applies to his subjects. Sheu (1986) made use of a larger and more representative sample than Little but confined the meaning of identity to only that of a cultural identity. Likewise, Vigil (1988) limited identity development in his research to be primarily the result of group membership, while Protinsky and Farrier (1989) ignored the influence of group membership determinants such as race and cultural identity, in their assessment of criminal identity. According to these researchers deviance refers mainly to behavioural problems associated with learning difficulties, and is therefore not a holistic representation of crime, nor negative identity development.

In the discipline of psychology, Thom (1988) conducted a comparative assessment of adolescent identity in South Africa with specific reference to parent-child and peer relationships also as pertaining to the development of an occupational identity. White and black adolescent's level of identity and occupational identity development showed no significant differences. However, a follow-up study (Thom & Coetzee, 2004) rated the level of identity development achieved by black subjects higher. This change in trend

seems to suggest that the new political dispensation in South Africa may at present impact positively on the collective identity of black South Africans.

More research is needed on delinquent youth and in particular on those whose identities often develop outside the realms of conventional society. In this regard, one could refer to the negative effects of deviant socialisation processes inherent to delinquent subcultures as well as the consequences of a prison environment that is marked by a gradual process of role stripping, loss of autonomy and insecurity. In a climate of deprivation, the adolescent's emotional and security needs may be fulfilled by deviant groups in prison. Belonging to a gang, may fulfil these needs and could contribute to identifying with the corporate identity of the gang.

Furthermore, as a result of the incarcerated adolescent's contact with the criminal justice system, he is officially labelled as "deviant" or "criminal". This negative labelling may create a set of expectations that could encourage negative identity formation as the adolescent incorporates into his identity, state and societal reactions towards delinquent behaviour. Negative labelling may also have a profound effect on the incarcerated adolescent's self-concept. Greater centrality of the deviant identity, together with a low self-esteem, may give rise to less containment, or a limited sense of control when an offence is contemplated, albeit in prison, or upon release.

Severe stress during adolescence may also cause identity diffusion (Erikson, 1968:87). With reference to crime prevention, research on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent could contribute to intervention measures focusing on the alleviation of anxiety, lack of purpose, inadequate sense of direction and self-destruction of identity diffused subjects. Especially, when taking into account that intervention measures have been proved to be the most successful during the developmental stage of adolescence (Ferrer-Wreder, Lorente, Kurtines, Briones, Bussell, Berman & Arrufat, 2002:169; Holleran & Waller, 2003:344; Thom, 1988:47). Research on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent could also identify variables that have had an influence on identity development, prior to the adolescent's contact with the criminal justice system. Although identity development reaches its peak during adolescence, it should be noted that identity development entails a life-long process, with its onset as early as during the infancy developmental stage (Erikson, 1959:89; 1966:281). In this

regard, research on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent should also accommodate the possible contributions of determinants such as parent-child relationships, socio-economic status, peers and level of schooling.

In the above discussion it was highlighted that a dearth of knowledge exists concerning the identity development of the adolescent deprived of his liberty. However, identity formation is a universal and cross-cultural phenomenon. In this regard, the identity theory of Erik Erikson (1956; 1958; 1959; 1963; 1964; 1968; 1969) has become the principal tool towards an understanding of human identity and specifically, that of the adolescent (Damon, 2000:1; Hall & Lindzey, 1985:101; Mischel, 1981:55; Waterman, 1982:341). As no comprehensive theory exists on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent, the psychosocial identity theory of Erikson will be used to direct this research.

#### **1.4.4 Aims of the study**

The following aims of this study were formulated on the basis of the shortcomings identified in research on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent:

- (i) To assess the level of identity development achieved by a group of incarcerated adolescents.
- (ii) To compare the level of identity development achieved between incarcerated adolescents who have committed different types of offences.
- (iii) To assess the nature of the relationship between the prison environment, prison victimisation, deviant group integration and individual identity development.

### **1.5 CONCLUSION**

The plight of children in prison has been mostly ignored throughout the centuries. It became infused with the political landscape in South Africa and despite a new democratic political dispensation and legal safeguards, remains a human rights issue in post-apartheid South Africa. To achieve a personal identity, the incarcerated adolescent

is confronted with the developmental task to acquire new coping skills. In a prison environment marked by overcrowding, deviant subcultures, role stripping and loss of goods and autonomy, incarceration could, however, undermine feelings of individuality, self-value and a normative identity. The uniqueness of the developmental stage of adolescence needs to be appreciated whilst addressing repetitive crime and victimisation sequences inherent to the prison as a correctional facility.

## 2. IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVE

There is general consensus that the psychosocial theory of Erikson (1958; 1963; 1968) is the most significant contribution made towards the study field of identity (Damon, 2000:1; Hall & Lindzey, 1985:101; Waterman, 1982:341). Not only has Erikson's construct of identity become the principal guide to assist in the understanding of human identity and specifically that of the adolescent, it has also become the theory of choice in numerous research projects on this topic. To make an assessment of the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent, Erikson's theory is for this study, an obvious choice. It is not only the primary theory on identity development, but with its emphasis on the social environment, it provides a valuable reference for determining the contribution of the environment to the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent. In this regard, reference can be made to the impact of the criminal justice system, parents and peers alike, on identity development. Erikson (1968:155) views identity formation as a life-long process, which could take place either in a simple or complex manner. With reference to the disorganised social environment in which most juvenile delinquents find themselves, and in particular, that of adolescents deprived of their liberty, one can expect their identity development to be mostly a painful and complex process. The following discussion will begin with an explanation of the afore-mentioned, with specific reference to the identity crisis which usually typifies the identity formation of the adolescent.

### 2.1 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT: A LIFE-LONG PROCESS OF REFLECTION AND OBSERVATION

Identity development can be described as a process of progressive differentiation and integration as the person grows older and becomes increasingly aware of significant others in his world. Interpersonal differentiation focuses therefore, on the emergence of an autonomous self. According to Erikson (1963:211) this is a life-long process which begins the moment the baby becomes aware of himself and his mother, as two different people. Identity development declines once this awareness of being *separate* diminishes. It is therefore, never completed, or entirely stagnant.

During the process of identity formation, there is constant interaction between the child and his role models. The nature of introjection (e.g. the baby's incorporation of the image of the



mother) depends largely on the nature of the relationship between the mother and the child. A mutually satisfying relationship will provide the basis for the baby to identify successfully with other individuals in future developmental phases.

Identification during childhood depends largely on the meaningfulness and reliability of the roles the parents provide the child with, and with which he can identify. When focusing on the dysfunctional nature of the families of most delinquents (see 2.5.1), one can expect that these children are not always exposed to positive role models. However, it needs to be noted that even though the identities of children from dysfunctional families will include some of these negative identifications, their identities will not be the sum total of the identity material provided by members of the family system. The child has to form his own unique identity. In order to form a unique identity, some identifications incorporated from others will be maintained and others will be rejected (Erikson, 1956:68).

Even though identity development reaches its peak during adolescence, individuals are constantly confronted with changes in identity. The ability to deal with new roles during adulthood will depend largely on successful identity development attained during previous developmental phases. In this regard, Erikson (1963:235) is of the opinion that in their search for continuity and sameness, people have to “refight” many of their battles of the previous years.

Identity formation is furthermore characterised by a process of reflection and observation. According to Erikson (1968:159) there is constant interaction between the individual and significant others in society. As part of this interaction the individual receives continuous feedback from others about himself. One could also ascribe crime to this process of reflection and observation. In this regard, Becker (1963:9) maintains that some people persist with their criminal behaviour because they feel that it is expected of them by other people, and are therefore almost forced to accept and maintain the prescribed role of a criminal.

The research of Gossop and Kristanjansson (1977:272) confirms this interaction between crime and the process of reflection and observation that is inherent to identity formation. They have found that negative labelling is primarily responsible for convicted juveniles committing more offences than non-convicted delinquents.

Identity formation takes place primarily on a subconscious level. The individual may, however, at times experience identity awareness. Especially during adolescence which is characterised by biological changes causing a sense of self-awareness (Thom, 1988:116).

## **2.2 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AS A SIMPLE OR COMPLEX PROCESS**

For identity development to be a simple or complex process, depends largely on the number and compatibility of previous and present identifications that need to be united. Also of importance, is the variety of social roles and choices available to the adolescent and the societal demands on him (Erikson, 1968:257). In this regard, researchers (Konopka, 1973:295; Nurmi, Poole & Kalaski, 1996:444; Thom, 1988:233) maintain that in a relatively small community there might be few role models and with greater similarity, than is the case in a more complex, technological society. In an advanced or complex society, different social domains could set up multiple contexts for identity development (Reis & Youniss, 2004:33). From this one could argue that the demands for achieving a sense of identity may be less in a small community. Although identity development may be short and uncomplicated in such a society, it may also contain an element of inflexibility and lack of depth. On the other hand, identity development in a complex society could be difficult and problematic, as well as long in duration. Holleran and Waller (2003:335) refer to social disorganisation, poverty, violence and the prevalence of gang activity as particular risk factors impacting negatively on role experimentation and identity formation.

According to Erikson (1968:257) the mentioned socio-cultural conditions will determine whether the adolescent will experience any problems in the development of an integrated identity. The adolescent is increasingly confronted with the demands of a complex society. He needs more time to prepare himself for adulthood, which in turn may give rise to a more extended, and therefore richer sense of identity. The juvenile delinquent is expected to experience difficulties in a complex society as he may be surrounded by conflicting value systems and negative role models (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1990:54), making his identity development a complex, prolonged and negative experience.

## 2.2 IDENTITY CRISES

Erikson (1968:16) proposes that an identity crisis is not necessarily a negative experience. He refers to it as a turning point, or a crucial moment when the development of the individual must proceed in one or another direction. As a result of the crisis, the individual has to mobilise resources of growth, recovery and further differentiation.

These crises originate from what Erikson (1966) refers to as the *Eight Ages of Man*. Each of these developmental phases contains a crisis, which can be ascribed to the growth of two conflicting personality traits. Once the conflict has been resolved positively, certain virtues develop, such as the development of hope as a positive outcome of the conflict between the establishment of trust and mistrust during infancy. Other crises include: Autonomy versus shame and doubt (early childhood); initiative versus guilt (later childhood); industry versus inferiority (school years); identity versus role confusion (adolescence); intimacy versus isolation (early adulthood); generativity versus stagnation (middle age) and finally, ego integrity versus despair during old age.

Bernard (1981:350), as well as Kumru and Thompson (2003:491) agree that a successful resolution of the crises contributes generally to the well-adjustment of the individual. Accordingly, various researchers (Adams & Shea, 1978:87; Adamson et al., 1999:24; Leadbeater & Dionne, 1981:118; Meeus, Iedema, Helsen & Volleberg, 1999:451; Stark & Traxler, 1974:26) have established a positive relationship between successful crisis resolution and a positive self-concept as well as personal congruency.

It must be noted, that the resolution of these developmental crises is not absolute but on a continuum, ranging from positive to negative. In other words, when a positive trait has been successfully developed, the negative trait remains subordinate. For example, a person can never achieve a **complete** sense of autonomy, industry or (in the case of the adolescent) identity. Similarly, an individual is seldom totally mistrusting or totally isolated. Depending on the level of identity development previously attained, he will tend to function either on a predominantly positive or predominantly negative level. Successful resolution of a crisis will also enable the individual to confront the next crisis in a positive way. If a crisis is not adequately resolved, the individual is likely to be more vulnerable to difficulties encountered in subsequent developmental phases. A crisis could therefore be a decisive point that may

be followed by either greater personal strength, or increased weakness (Erikson, 1958:248).

The following discussion will provide a more detailed account of the various developmental phases and the development of the relevant personality traits of the juvenile delinquent in particular.

## **2.4 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT ACCORDING TO THE EPIGENETIC PRINCIPLE**

In the conceptualisation of his theory regarding the eight developmental phases, Erikson (1958; 1963; 1968) based his views on the principle of epigenesis. According to this principle, the organism develops from an undifferentiated state to the differentiation of all its parts. This process is genetically programmed, and the development takes place accordingly in a specific sequence. In the same manner as physical differentiation evolves from a genetic design, so do psychological traits develop from an earlier *ground plan*. Thus, the entire life cycle can be viewed as an unfolding event of developmental phases.

Erikson is of the opinion that with proper guidance, the healthy child can be trusted to obey the inner laws of development. These laws will contribute to the creation of a succession of potential, which in turn will assist the child in meaningful interaction with those people and institutions which are of significance to him. Although this interaction may vary from culture to culture, it must remain within the proper rate and proper sequence characteristic of the process of epigenesis. Erikson (1968) describes this process as follows:

Personality, therefore can be said to develop according to steps predetermined in the human organism's readiness to be driven toward, to be aware of, and to interact with a widening radius of significant others and institutions. (p. 93)

Although the development of some personality traits will predominate in a specific sequence according to the epigenetic principle of development, traits reaching a critical stage in a subsequent phase might already be developing during a previous developmental phase. In this regard, Erikson (1968:95) uses the example of the baby who attempts to be autonomous by wriggling his hand loose, but has as yet not entered the developmental phase characterised by autonomy. However, certain components of the body and

personality are more vulnerable during their critical stages of development. German measles, for example, more seriously affect the development of the eyes during a particular stage than at other times. So too is the vulnerability of personality components stage specific.

Also, it must be noted that although the sequence of stages is fixed, individuals may pass through these stages at either a faster, or a slower pace. Therefore, a child does not *have* to learn basic trust by his first birthday, or that identity *must* be achieved by the age of 20. The pace is determined by physical maturation and social demands.

An exposition of the eight developmental phases with their accompanying crises, is given in Table 1 (see p. 32).

The psychosexual aspect of Erikson's first four phases seems to be comparable with the oral, anal, phallic and latency stages of Freud (Maddi, 1980:37). Erikson, however, extends the concept of psychosexual development beyond the physiological, or intra-psychic, to include a social aspect of development. The first phase, for example, is not only of significance because of the localisation of pleasure in the mouth, but is also meaningful due to the social interaction taking place between the mother and child during the feeding process. Depending on the nature of this feeding, the infant may experience feelings of trust or mistrust towards the mother.

Also, Erikson places the term "latency" in inverted commas which refers to it as a delay of physical maturation. More detailed attention will be given now to each of the developmental phases.

Table 1  
*The Eight Stages of Identity Development*

Development Stage	Psychosexual Aspect	Crisis	Identity Virtue
1. Infancy (0-1 year)	Oral	Trust vs. mistrust	Hope
2. Early childhood (1-3 years)	Anal	Autonomy vs. shame and doubt	Will
3. Later childhood (3-6 years)	Genital	Initiative vs. guilt	Purpose
4. School age (6-12 years)	"Latency"	Industry vs. inferiority	Competence
5. Adolescence (12-20 years)	Genitality	i) Time perspective vs. time confusion ii) Self confidence vs. insecurity iii) Role experimentation vs. role conflict iv) Industry vs. work paralysis v) Sexual polarisation vs. bisexual confusion vi) Leader and followship vs. authority confusion vii) Ideological commitment vs. value confusion viii) Identity vs. role confusion	Identity
6. Young adulthood (20-30 years)		Intimacy vs. isolation	Love
7. Adulthood (30-65 years)		Generativity vs. stagnation	Care
8. Mature age (65+ years)		Integrity vs. despair	Wisdom

*Note. Adapted from Erikson, E.H. (1963). *Childhood and society*. New York: Norton: 245; Erikson, E.H. (1968). *Identity, youth and crisis*. London: Faber & Faber: 94).*

### 2.4.1 Infancy (0 – 1 year)

According to Erikson (1966:281) the first demonstration of trust by the baby can be seen by the ease of his feeding, the depth of his sleep and the relaxation of his digestive track. The baby learns that even when the mother disappears, he can rely on her return. This knowledge enables the baby to trust in his own capability to endure the absence of his mother. Each time the mother returns, the feeling of trust in both himself and his mother, is strengthened. A sound relationship between the mother and child is essential for the infant

not to feel abandoned. Trust gained from this positive interaction will contribute to a firm sense of personal trustworthiness, which will in turn typify his interaction with other people in later life.

Maternal rejection of juvenile delinquents during early infancy is frequently reported (Caukins & Coombs, 1976:441; Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1990:118; Peacock, 1993:174; Weisberg, 1985:71; Yablonsky, 2000:314). Often, maternal deprivation does not provide these children with a sense of trust from which feelings of “being all right” could have emanated in later life. This may lead ultimately to compensatory or rebellious behaviour such as crime. According to Ammaniti et al. (2000:330) such individuals tend to minimise the importance and impact of attachment relationships in their own lives and display an excessive preoccupation with the self.

Maternal deprivation may also cause failure to develop a **time perspective**. If the mother does not regulate the needs of the infant according to a specific pattern, the child may satisfy his own needs in later life in a similarly erratic manner. Crime (such as theft or rape) could provide gratification to his needs. It could be performed instantaneously whenever the need arises.

The tendency to commit crime is possible, especially when the virtue of **hope** is absent as the result of a negative resolution of the crisis of trust versus mistrust. In this case the person does not believe that his needs will be gratified in the future, and may feel that crime is his only possible solution.

#### **2.4.2 Early childhood (1 – 3 years)**

As a result of muscular maturation, the child becomes highly mobile, and must then learn what he may or may not do. His constant pursuit of new experiences confronts him with two demands, on the one hand, to submit to the control of others, and on the other, to acquire self-control. The mother figure needs to teach the child to control his developing capabilities (through toilet training), as well as allowing him to exercise his free will. The relationship between the mother and child is essential for the child's development of autonomy. If this relationship is not based on mutual trust and acceptance, the child may experience feelings of shame and doubt, as opposed to being proud of himself (Erikson, 1966:228). The virtue

of **will** develops as a result of the child's efforts to exercise self-control. As he grows older, this virtue will enable him to exercise choice and to restrain himself when necessary.

When focusing on the dysfunctional nature of most of the families of juvenile delinquents (Geismar & Wood, 1986:43), one finds that variables in the families such as excessive discipline, parental abuse and rejection, could hamper the development of autonomy and a free will. In this regard Erikson (1963:227) believes that too much shaming can leave the child with a lasting sense of insecurity, which in turn fails to provide the child with the courage to be his own person, or a feeling of "I am what I can will freely". Not only may an unsuccessful resolution of this phase lead to later problems with identity development but the child may also become involved with crime as a result of being ashamed of himself, or doubting himself. Criminal behaviour could emanate from these feelings of self-consciousness as the child may be easily influenced by others (especially peers), and may at times become uncooperative, stubborn and aggressive whilst attempting to assert himself. Abused street children who were the subjects of research by Hersch (1988:28) and Peacock (1989:83) entered a criminogenic street lifestyle in an attempt to compensate for lost autonomy and self-respect in their parental homes. In their quest for control of their own lives, they rebelled against their lost independence by accepting a street lifestyle, away from abusive parental figures.

### 2.4.3 Later childhood (3 – 6 years)

The third stage takes place roughly during the fourth and fifth years of the child's development, and is characterised by the child's eagerness to learn and master new skills. This **initiative** of the child can become aggressive and manipulative as the child may display almost unlimited potential for the exploration of new subject matters at times. According to Erikson (1966: 287) feelings of **guilt** may occur when the child exceeds the limits of his imagination and initiative. Erikson describes this guilt as a result of the conflict between the child's inner urges and parental guidelines, which attends the development of a superego that is the basis of moral reasoning, resilience and therefore, also social capital for the community.

Problems in superego formation may arise when the child's superego becomes more restrictive than the parents intended, or when the child resents his parents for not allowing



him to behave in the way they do. These problems do not only manifest in the role inhibition of the child, but also in the child's experience of rage due to the suppression of his hopes and fantasies, and failure to develop the virtue of **purpose**. In this regard, Bartollas (1985:127) is of the opinion that crimes (especially violent crimes) are often the result of this tendency of an over-developed superego to suppress negative feelings.

On the other hand, **inadequate** superego formation can be a negative result of deficient parental identification and imitation that typifies this developmental phase. Under normal circumstances, feelings of initiative enable the child to identify and imitate his parents, which in turn assist him in his preparation for future roles and the attainment of certain goals. He therefore experiences a feeling of "I am what I can imagine I will be". If, however, inadequate socialisation takes place in his family, crime might be a result of inadequate superego formation in that societal norms and values are not internalised appropriately. Also, he might lack remorse about his crimes and might be unable to learn from previous experiences.

#### 2.4.4 School age (6 – 12 years)

This developmental phase covers approximately the age range of 6 to 12 years. It is socially a very decisive phase, because it is mainly concerned with the child's acquisition of social **worth** (Erikson, 1963:233). It is viewed as the "apprenticeship" for life, because the child learns to control his lively imagination and has to conform to the standards of formal education. A sense of **industry** develops as the child's initiative increases with every task he completes successfully, and he experiences himself as "I am what I can learn to make work". Through the child's mastering of tasks and the development of a sense of industry, the virtue of **competence** develops. If the child, however, views the success of work as the only norm for human worth, his identity development may be restricted to this area of competence. This restriction will limit a more complete expression of himself.

When focusing on the typical problems associated with the school careers of most delinquents, such as repeated failure, or even complete illiteracy (Peacock, 1989:98), it becomes evident that these children are likely to develop what Erikson (1968:124) refers to as a lasting sense of **inferiority**. Usually, inferior feelings manifest in a sense of futility that will not only contribute to identity diffusion during adolescence, but could also promote the

committal of compensatory crimes. Especially, if the individual is of the opinion that nothing is worthwhile and that he is evaluated according to the insignificance of his role in the community. This situation could be made worse when the child becomes aware for the first time that he is not only judged in terms of personal achievements, but also by the colour of his skin and socio-economic background.

In support of the above-mentioned, Cote (1997:580) is of the opinion that a higher educational level is associated with the development of identity capital whereas a passive acceptance of anomic social conditions refers to the converse, impacting henceforth negatively on a personal sense of competence.

#### **2.4.5 Identity development during adolescence (12 – 20 years)**

According to Erikson (1959:89) identity development is not exclusively a product of adolescence, but it becomes more acute during this phase because of the necessity to deal with physical and cognitive changes, genital maturity, and the acquisition of productive skills. Identity formation assists the adolescent in his confrontation with the problems arising from these challenges, while he has to cope with the demands of an approaching adulthood in a complex modern society. Erikson (1968)) describes the difficulties associated with adolescence in the following terms:

[T]he body changes its proportions radically, when genital puberty floods body and imagination with all manner of impulses, when intimacy with the other sex approaches and is, on occasion, forced on the young person, and when the immediate future confronts one with too many conflicting possibilities and choices. (p.132)

Many adolescents experience **identity diffusion** as a result of the confusing demands placed on them. Often they are in doubt about their physical attractiveness, sexual identity, career identity and cultural identity. This confusion may not only result in crime, but may also give rise to feelings of complete bewilderment regarding their roles in society. To cope with this identity crisis, many develop a **negative identity** or enter a **psychosocial moratorium**.

With the following discussion attention will be given to these variations on identity development during the developmental phase of adolescence, focusing firstly on the actual process of identity achievement.

#### 2.4.5.1 Identity achievement

Whereas crime may provide temporary relief for the adolescent that is experiencing an identity crisis, the achievement of an identity will ensure feelings of continuity and uniqueness. To develop a strong personal identity, the adolescent has to consolidate previous identity developments with prevailing changes in physique, and outlook on life. In addition to this integration, the adolescent needs to finally resolve the crises experienced with previous developmental phases, and also to extend earlier identity development. He will then develop what Erikson refers to as the virtue of **fidelity**. This virtue will enable the adolescent to be faithful towards his own value system, whilst being challenged by other value systems, thereby enhancing an increasing sense of a personal identity. Erikson (1968:165) describes this sense of a personal identity as: "a feeling of being at home in one's body, a sense of 'knowing where one is going', and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count."

This process of integration is explained by Erikson (1959:141; 1968:181) as follows: Identity development during infancy is essential for the adolescent's development of **trust** in himself and other people. He needs to be loyal towards himself and significant others, and may at times become fanatical about his own ideas. This extremist approach is often characterised by cynicism which in turn masks his need to believe in other people and to trust them.

Identity development during early childhood gives rise to the adolescent's need to exercise his own **will** and becomes apparent in his demands for more autonomy. **Initiative** that has evolved from identity development during the play age becomes imperative during adolescence in that it enables the adolescent to endeavour in his aspirations and hopes for the future. Finally, a sense of **industry** that develops from the school age becomes of importance insofar as the adolescent experiences feelings of competence, which are of special relevance to the configuration of a career choice and identity.

Erikson divides the foregoing process of integration into seven components the adolescent needs to confront as part of the resolution of the identity crisis.

- (i) First, the adolescent must develop a **time perspective** as opposed to **time confusion**. A perspective on time will enable him to experience feelings of continuity, as he becomes adept in distinguishing between the past, present and future. This perspective also results in the development of an awareness of time when having to conduct certain tasks. On the other hand, time confusion may cause him to react with a certain feeling of urgency or total apathy, as he mistrusts people and situations in general.
- (ii) The adolescent may become **self-confident**, as a result of growing more confident after an initial period of being uneasy about his body and new social roles. He may also become **identity conscious** which, according to Erikson (1968:183), is a painful awareness reflected by discrepancies between one's self-ideal and one's appearance in the eyes of other people.
- (iii) The adolescent could experience either **role experimentation** or **role fixation**. Role fixation occurs when the adolescent becomes restrained in his initiative, due to excessive feelings of guilt. He becomes prematurely fixated in a role, with premature and incomplete identity development as result. Role experimentation that conforms to both the needs of the individual and society is essential in order for the adolescent to develop an identity that is rich in its resources.
- (iv) The adolescent needs to make a career choice, which is essential for the development of his career identity. Due to feelings of personal insecurity, **work paralysis** can occur, as opposed to the development of a sense of **tradesmanship**. In this regard Erikson (1968:185) is of the opinion that much delinquency can be attributed to a basic mistrust in oneself, as well as to disbelief in the future. Adolescents may also experience a work paralysis due to a discrepancy between their potential and the opportunities offered by society. Factors such as poverty or racial discrimination may prevent some from sharing equally in opportunities, causing henceforth, feelings of futility.

- (v) The adolescent needs to experience **sexual polarisation** as opposed to **bisexual confusion**. In other words, he needs to identify with the gender he belongs to biologically. This is necessary for the development of a sexual identity, which in turn will provide the basis for heterosexual intimacy as well as contributing to identity development on the whole. Bisexual confusion occurs when the adolescent is not viewing himself as a member of a specific gender. This may contribute significantly to feelings of self-consciousness and confusion.
- (vi) For the adolescent to assume adult responsibility, he needs to acquire a sense of **leadership** simultaneously with that of **followership**. By learning to assume leadership (and to obey other leaders), the adolescent learns to accept authority, as well as to distinguish between various authority structures. If he cannot rely on his own value system to assist with the above, he may experience **authority confusion**. He would not know which leaders to obey, or to whose demands priority must be given. Often, this confusion results in feelings of isolation from mainstream society.
- (vii) Without an **ideological commitment** the adolescent may be experiencing **value confusion**. When the individual is not committed to an ideology that reflects the value system of his culture, he may become confused with regard to the definition of his role in society. He may also be lacking in the security and stability that are characteristics of successful identity formation. On the other hand, the ideologically committed adolescent experiences integrity as a result of his commitment and accordingly perceives life as meaningful.

With reference to the foregoing, one can surmise that the incarcerated adolescent is unable to successfully resolve previous identity developmental phases, as well as to consolidate these phases with the developmental phase of adolescence. The unsuccessful resolution of this crisis may generate identity diffusion that is characterised by time diffusion, identity consciousness, role fixation, work paralysis, bisexual and authority confusion, as well as value confusion. On the other hand, the adolescent with a strong sense of personal identity is experiencing a time perspective, role experimentation, trademanship, sexual polarisation, leadership and followership and ideological commitment.

#### 2.4.5.2 Identity diffusion

As is evident from the previous discussion, strong identity development (ego identity) and identity diffusion refer to contrasting outcomes of the psychosocial crisis that occurs during late adolescence. According to Erikson (1963:235) this phase of adolescence is characterised by decisions as whether to become more independent from parents and to develop more complex thought patterns. As was mentioned, it is also necessary to synthesise childhood identifications in such a way that a reciprocal relationship with society can be established, without the adolescent having to lose a sense of inner continuity.

Research indicates that adolescents with strong identity development are characterised by success in resolving the aforementioned crisis, whereas identity diffused subjects are not as well adjusted. Typically of identity diffused subjects is a sense of self-awareness pending precariously on external confirmation for self-validation whereas identity achieved subjects are more self-accepting and display a more stable self-definition (Adamson & Lyxell, 1996:580; Kumru & Thompson, 2003:482). Furthermore, Marcia (1975:155) as well as Stark and Traxler (1974:31) have found that adolescents with a high level of identity achievement are secure about their career choices and have in general, relatively low anxiety levels. Bernard (1981:353), La Voie (1976:379) and Meeus et al. (1999:429) established a positive relationship between strong identity development and a positive self-esteem as well as successful overall adjustment. Well-adjusted adolescents also display a strong sense of security with regard to their sexual and physical identity (Tasker & McCann, 1999:51). Furthermore, there is a positive correlation between high levels of identity achievement and the ability to solve intellectual problems (Berzonsky, Macek & Nurmi, 2003:113; Chapell & Overton, 2002:314; Klaczynski, Fauth & Swanger, 1998:204; Leadbeater & Dionne, 1981:118).

Marcia (1967:119; 1975:157), however, has found that identity diffused subjects had a common lack in direction and purpose of their lives. Erikson (1968:185) is of the opinion that juvenile delinquency can be attributed to this lack of purpose. Without any sense of direction, identity diffused subjects experience feelings of worthlessness and their delinquency becomes a tool of self-destruction. Also, they tend to defy authority, and hence do not always accept the same values as those of their parents. Often, they are impulsive

and irresponsible, which are indicators of weak superego strength and therefore, also behavioural traits that could promote crime.

In support of the above, various researchers (Hardwick & Rowton-Lee, 1996:269; Jensen, 1973:470; Maphila, 2000:73; Veneziano & Veneziano, 1987:100; Waldo & Dinitz, 1967:197) have found that most juvenile delinquents lack self-control and coping skills. From this one may argue that a strong sense of a personal identity will enhance self-control and coping skills. Moreover, a strong identity may act as a barrier against environmental conditions that favour the committing of crimes.

Identity diffusion is not only harmful to the adolescent, but also to society at large. Some adolescents may resort to crime in order to alleviate anxiety resulting from identity diffusion. The search for an identity is avoided by, for example, drug usage or other hedonistic activities such as vandalism that could alleviate emotional discomfort.

Also, identity diffusion can promote crime in that the adolescent uses crime to compensate for feelings of inferiority that stem from a work paralysis. This work paralysis does not equip him to be successful in a competitive society, and often makes crime the only survival mechanism. This is especially the case if he has become alienated from the acceptable norms and values of that society. This alienation is also reflected by the juvenile delinquent's confusion regarding authority, as he disobeys the law and authority figures. Due to his lack of a strong personal ideology he could become, in prison or as part of a deviant subculture, easily influenced and fixated in the role of a criminal. This may be especially true once he is isolated from main stream society.

#### **2.4.5.3 Formation of a negative identity**

Normative identity development entails accordance between the identity of the individual and the values and norms of his culture. A person with a normative identity has internalised the values and norms of his culture. Accordingly, the richness and depth of his identity is determined by the nature of his culture. In contrast, deviant (or negative) identity development is described by Erikson (1968) as follows:

The loss of a sense of identity is often expressed in a scornful and snobbish hostility towards the roles offered as proper and desirable in one's family or immediate community. Any aspect of the required role, or all of it - be it masculinity or femininity, nationality or class-membership - can become the main focus of the young person's acid disdain. (pp. 172-173)

The individual with a negative identity is committed to those roles and values that have always been presented to him as most undesirable. Erikson (1959:131) explains negative identity formation in terms of it sometimes being easier for an adolescent to derive a sense of identity out of identification with what he is least supposed to be, than to struggle with demands that he cannot meet. In this regard one can also refer to the subcultural theory of Cohen (1956:5) according to which lower class delinquent boys reject the values of the middle class, because these values are not within the reach of lower socio-economic groups. In accordance with the view of Cohen, Erikson (1968:88) states that in a society where socio-economic problems such as poverty are rife, there is limited opportunity for the establishment of a normative identity. The establishment of a negative identity in such a society is further promoted by being a member of a minority group. According to Thom (1988:130) members of these groups tend to develop their negative identities as a result of anger and hatred against the dominant group, rather than relying on the positive aspects of their own culture.

The adolescent's development of a negative identity may also be ascribed to certain characteristics of formal operational thought, for example hypothetical-deductive thought, which promotes the ability to explore possibilities (Berk, 2003:245; Reimer, 2003:129). In a complex society, the choices might be overwhelming and the adolescent may choose to reject mainstream values rather than being confronted by these choices. The development of a negative identity can then be supportive to the adolescent when he finds himself in desperate situations, especially when traditional structures are of little value or support. On the other hand, offending might be the result of the juvenile's inability to attain a stage of formal operations, in which case he is not equipped with internal mechanisms for controlling and resisting temptations when in a desperate situation.

Moreover, abstract thought and adolescent egocentrism make possible what Erikson (1968:257) refers to as the development of a historical perspective. This perspective



enables the adolescent to realise that life has a beginning and an end, and to reject the values of parents and authority figures, because he views it as inconsequential in this irreversible sequence of life. He thus becomes very egocentric in his approach, which can provide the basis for delinquency.

Furthermore, Erikson (1968:313) points out, a normative identity inherently contains aspects of a deviant identity. Everyone must hide in himself those identity fragments that are considered by society as undesirable but when experiencing a crisis, these identifications can become dominant. This is especially true in the case of the adolescent, who is in a vulnerable developmental phase.

#### **2.4.5.4 The psychosocial moratorium**

In the process of attaining a personal identity, most individuals experience temporary periods of confusion. The task of integrating one's experiences into a meaningful self-definition is a painful and time-consuming process. Erikson (1959:111) believes that this task could be facilitated by a period of role experimentation that must ideally be accompanied by a release from the social demands placed on the adolescent. He refers to this period of free experimentation before identity is achieved as a "psychosocial moratorium" (Erikson, 1970:157). A psychosocial moratorium will allow the adolescent to experiment with values and roles, and could result in an understanding of how to fit into society. It will also assist him to maximise his personal potential and to gain positive recognition from his community. Marcia (1967:120) agrees that a moratorium is necessary before the adolescent can achieve a personal identity.

Erikson (1964:34; 1968:157) suggests that a great deal of juvenile delinquency could be considered as an attempt to create a psychosocial moratorium. Outside the realms of institutionalised conventions, delinquency can provide an outlet for experimentation. Such a moratorium could, however, be a failure when the adolescent is labelled as deviant during this sensitive period of identity formation. The adolescent could be forced by circumstances such as arrest, labelling and institutionalisation, to end up in a "social pocket" from which escape could prove to be difficult. A period of transition or moratorium, which could easily have been regarded as a phase of "foolishness", can therefore account for an adolescent becoming a recidivist.

Although identity development reaches its peak during adolescence, adolescence should not be viewed as its developmental endpoint (Erikson, 1959:113). For this reason brief attention will be given to the various phases that succeed the developmental phase of adolescence.

#### 2.4.6 Young adulthood (20 – 30 years)

The sixth phase, that covers roughly the age group of 20 to 30 years, is characterised by the crisis of **intimacy** versus **isolation**. Intimacy is the result of people seeking loving and caring relationships with friends as well as with sexual partners. Those seeking intimacy are ready to commit themselves to others, even though this commitment might be accompanied with a certain degree of compromise or sacrifice. The person with a true sense of personal and sexual identity is ready to share himself in a trusting relationship. According to Erikson (1966:292), **love** is the virtue that emerges from the mutual devotion of partners and it enables them to overcome antagonisms that are often the result of differences in their personalities, experiences and roles.

Isolation on the other hand, is the result of a person's inability to risk the security of his identity by sharing true intimacy. A fragile identity may prevent the person from forming a close relationship for fear of responsibility or intimacy. It is only after a person has developed a firm sense of who he is, and what he wants from life, that he can be part of an intimate and successful relationship.

#### 2.4.7 Adulthood (30 – 65 years)

This phase covers more or less the age group of 30 to 65 years and concerns itself with the development of **generativity** as opposed to **stagnation**. According to Erikson (1963:240) generativity entails the need to guide and care for the next generation. This means that adults want children to whom they can transmit their values and ideas. The virtue of **care** emerges for what has been generated, while the person who does not experience generativity, risks stagnation and may become self-centred.

### 2.4.8 Mature age (65+ years)

After the individual has cared for and guided others, he enters the final phase at about the age of 65 years. When reflecting on a life that was meaningful, the person experiences feelings of **integrity**. He is prepared to defend his lifestyle and acquires the virtue of **wisdom** as he conveys to others his accumulated knowledge. When a person is of the opinion that his life was meaningless and realises that it is not possible for him to go back in time to rectify some of his mistakes, he may experience feelings of **despair** as opposed to feelings of integrity (Erikson, 1959:98).

## 2.5 INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS ON IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

With reference to the previous discussion, it is evident that identity formation takes place primarily in a social environment. Identity development refers to a dynamic interplay between the adolescent and his context and can be viewed as a process of balancing the intra- and interpersonal parts of the identity. The first (intra aspect) refers to a sense of self and the latter (interpersonal aspect) relates to developing a defined ego within a social reality. Ideally, there should be a reciprocal relationship between group identifications and individual identity but with reference to the context of the incarcerated adolescent one could expect this to be a negative experience.

The following discussion will provide a more detailed review of research on this interaction between social determinants and identity development. With specific reference to the juvenile delinquent, attention will be given to the influence of determinants such as the family, culture and peers on identity development whereas the following chapter (Chapter 3) will focus on adolescent identity development within the context of the criminal justice system.

### 2.5.1 Family

Erikson (1964:30) maintains that the growing child derives a sense of identity from his awareness of being a member of his family, as well as due to the socialisation process that takes place within the family. During this process, where cultural norms and values are

conveyed to the child, the nature of the relationship between the parents and child is of critical importance. In this regard, Thom (1988:190) emphasises that identity achieved subjects, usually have parents that are warm, supportive and consistent in their discipline. Identity diffused respondents on the contrary, have parents that are either excessively restrictive or permissive in their disciplinary measures. Adolescents who experience their relationships with their parents as positive also rate higher in self-esteem and are more autonomous than the rebellious, less self-directed identity diffused subjects (Adamson & Lyxell, 1996:575; Ammaniti et al., 2000:330; Newman & Newman, 2001:521).

The research of Donovan (1975:53), La Voie (1976:381), Von der Lippe and Amundsen (1998:26) and Waterman (1982:345) support the above-mentioned viewpoint of Erikson, that identity development and the resulting changes are greatly influenced by childrearing practices. Their findings show that identity diffused subjects are generally hostile towards their parents, and in comparison with identity achieved adolescents, more alienated from their families. In addition, those adolescents with identity foreclosure (premature identity achievement) are considered to be the closest to their parents, because of their readily endorsement of authoritarian values. Also, identity diffused adolescents are often from broken homes characterised by autocratic child rearing practises and resulting parent-child conflicts (Enright, Lapsey, Drivas & Fehr, 1980:544; Waterman, 1982:353).

Positive identification with parental figures is conducive to identity achievement and according to Hart, Atkins and Ford (1999:375), high levels of parent-adolescent joint activity in cognitively and socially rich environments, is also a marker of moral identity formation. Furthermore, positive identification with both the parental figures promotes the harmonious blend of both feminine and masculine components in personality. High levels of male and female characteristics in a person contribute to a positive self-image as well as identity achievement (Bartle-Haring, 1997:553; Bartle-Haring, Brucker & Hock, 2002:441; Bernard, 1981:353; Dignan, 1965:477).

The family's role in the genesis of juvenile delinquency is recognised widely (Bartollas, 1985:236; Conklin, 1981:232; Haskell & Yablonsky, 1982:79; Siegel, 2004:214; Wedge, Boswell & Dissel, 2000:32). It is noteworthy that striking similarities exist between the research done on the families of identity diffused subjects and the families of juvenile delinquents. Broken homes are found to be prominent amongst juvenile delinquent

populations, but this appears to be a less crucial factor than family discord and deficient parent-child relationships (Geismar & Wood, 1986:18). It seems the nature of parental love and supervision has a greater influence on adolescent delinquency than the absence of one or two parents. Though, the stress placed on the single parent may contribute to neglect and inadequate supervision of the adolescent. In this regard Kratcoski and Kratcoski (1990:117) have found that delinquent boys are usually from families characterised by internal conflict and tension. Also, disciplinary measures are more often than not inconsistent, and the father figure of these boys tends to be aggressive and hostile in his relations with the family members. In the extended family of the black adolescent, this situation can deteriorate when the adolescent is subjected to the authority of many "fathers" (Lambo, 1972:8).

Alcoholism of the parent(s) is also rife, and these adolescents often experience neither parent as dependable and feel frequently rejected. Parental rejection has been found to be a major cause of aggressive delinquent behaviour, as the adolescent can no longer endure the emotional stress and high levels of tension in the family environment and finds a relief in "acting-out" behaviour (see also 2.4.5.2). Excessive hostility towards parents and the total rejection of their values have been noted as characteristic of this "acting out" behaviour and are often reported amongst juvenile delinquent populations (Peacock, 1989:81; Weisberg, 1985:44).

The family also functions in a broader social context. According to Adams and Marshall (1996:439) undesirable macro-level features such as poverty, unemployment and violence increase the likelihood of restricted role models for imitation and identification and often lead to micro-level behavioural interactions that are filled with threatening and constricted social interactions.

## **2.5.2 Culture**

Erikson (1964:30) posits a cultural component to identity development. The individual's identity reflects the value orientation and normative support of his reference groups and the resolution of his search for identity becomes the final step in his internalisation of cultural values. A positive sense of group identity provides the confidence to the individual that he is

meaningfully connected to society and that he has a cognitive map of the characteristics of the social landscape as well as skills to navigate the terrain.

Identity development can, however, be impeded when the adolescent is made to believe that the cultural group to which he belongs is inferior to that of the dominant culture (Erikson, 1964:33). In this regard Holleran and Waller (2003:344) as well as Tsang et al. (2003:374) are of the opinion that minority adolescents in particular have to confront issues of prejudice and discrimination as well as structural barriers that limit their aspirations and hinder their achievements and complete expression of self.

According to Kilpatrick (1974:409) the adolescent who experiences an identity crisis at the time his culture is undergoing a crisis of identity, is confronted with what he refers to as a “double identity crisis”. Living simultaneously in two opposing cultures is not conducive to the formation of a secure identity, particularly when there is nothing definite about either culture.

Salo (2003:347) refers to global cultural flows that could lead to either cultural hybridisation or hegemonic cultural practices. The previously marginalised black population in South Africa needs to dismantle apartheid notions of personhood in national and international context as well as in local context, crossing boundaries of race, age, gender and social class. According to Alberts and Meyer (1998:287) the socio-political climate that prevailed in South Africa had a profound bearing on the development of a collective political identity among the African youth, providing in a moral struggle against oppressive forces. Wedge et al. (2000:36), however, chronicled engendering cycles of violence, particularly in young men who follow resorting to violence as a problem-solving model set by their fathers, as their only means of asserting themselves in society.

### **2.5.3 Peers**

Peers are regarded to be of great importance to the adolescent, because they can assist each other with the stress that is associated with this developmental phase (Berndt, 1982:1447; Garrod, Smulyan, Powers & Kilkeny, 1992:170; Tarrant, 2002:110; Valliant, 1983:135). This process of growth and exploration is hampered when not in interaction with

significant others, and thus ideally, peer friendship can provide the adolescent with an opportunity to establish his identity (Damon, 2000:2; Wright & Keple, 1981:559).

The peer group defines the identity of the adolescent through a process of reflection and regulation. In other words, the peer group renders some “feedback” about personality traits of the adolescent. Especially in the case of close friendships, this definition of identity can transpire through discussions with each other, mutual support and general acceptance. In this regard, Yoder (2000:99) is of the opinion that identity achieved adolescents are not as dependent on their peers as identity diffused subjects. The need for peers thus diminishes as a sense of personal identity increases.

Considering the preceding, it is evident that peers and specifically friends are considered to be important to the adolescent whose identity is still in flux. Peer groups afford membership in groups, cultures and ultimately, the greater society. Although the family is an antecedent for subsequent investments in meaningful group relationships, the developmental stage of adolescence is characterised by the need to function more autonomously (see also 2.4.5.1). Montemayer (1982:151) confirms that often the opinion of the peer group becomes more important to the adolescent than that of his family. Also, adolescents turn to peers for emotional support, especially when deprived of it at home. The importance of peers is also illustrated by Brinthaupt and Lipka (2002:13) who found a positive correlation between high self-esteem and positive evaluation by the normative peer group.

Friendships are, however, not always conducive to identity formation. Out of fear of rejection, the adolescent could place his needs as subservient to that of the group. This submissiveness could reduce self-confidence and consequently contribute to identity diffusion or loss in “overall identity” (Reis & Youniss, 2004:40). However, the intensity of group control is also closely correlated to the degree to which the adolescent is committed to the interests of the group (Theron & Peacock, 1992:57).

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

From the preceding discussion it is apparent that identity development takes place largely within a social environment. The nature of the social expectations pertaining to identity choices arising from especially the family in its cultural context and the peer group will

contribute to the particular identity development pathways followed. Without sufficient levels of trust, autonomy, initiative and industry, the more likely it is that the adolescent will become identity diffused, or develop a negative identity, especially when in a criminal environment that supports deviant values and norms.



### **3. EFFECTS OF IMPRISONMENT ON IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT**

Whereas the focus of the previous chapter was primarily on identity development as viewed by Erikson, the aim in this chapter is to provide an exposition of some of the most pertinent problems encountered in the criminal justice system (and in prison specifically), that may adversely impact on identity development. Firstly, attention will be given to the adolescent's introduction to the criminal justice system (arrest) where-after the emphasis will be on problems experienced by him (such as overcrowding, violence and gangsterism), once incarcerated.

#### **3.1 ARREST**

Stereotypes that surround unemployed working-class boys may have consequences for both their arrest and identity development. Perceptions regarding race, social class and crime underscore criminal justice decisions. In the United States of America (USA) for instance, young males from minority groups such as African-Americans and Porto Ricans, are more likely to be arrested by the police, or viewed as suspects than their white counterparts. Sentencing research consistently shows the racially disproportionate numbers of African-American and Latino juveniles are imprisoned in the USA (Brown, Esbensen & Geis, 2001:158; Mcneely & Pope, 1981:13; Siegel, 2004:72).

In South Africa, the identity of "being outside the law" is one of few that is readily available to disenfranchised youths. In a climate of economic and social deprivation the "surplus population" (occupationally marginal youth who are unemployed or unemployable) has to form an identity with limited identity material at their disposal (see 2.2). Moreover, being labelled as deviant by the police and courts, a "spoiled" identity is produced, making it exceedingly difficult for the adolescent to maintain that he is not that "kind of person". Becker (in Brown et al., 2001:370) is of the opinion that the label "deviant" assumes master status that blinds other individual characteristics. According to Cooley (in Siegel, 2004:232-233) such depreciation may cause permanent harm and shape future behaviour as the labelled and isolated individual identifies with members of an outcast group and becomes, as such, locked into a deviant career. Official labelling increases the likelihood of the individual being perceived by the public as deviant,

because in addition to publicising and sanctioning the delinquent label, the criminal justice system provides an official definition of the adolescent's social identity. Members of the public who were unaware of the behaviour or who previously perceived the labelled behaviour as normal or not as serious may now take this label into account when in interaction with the labelled adolescent.

Although a spoiled identity may make it more difficult for the adolescent to maintain a personal identity, it is important to note that culture, social class, the delinquency of one's peers and disrespect for legal authority are factors that may influence the relationship between official labelling and a spoiled identity. During the apartheid era, many black South Africans may not have perceived their "criminal behaviour" as deviant, but merely as a reaction towards a political system with which they could not identify.<sup>1</sup> Whereas their social identity might have been spoiled on a political level, a normative identity could have been maintained as their "deviant" behaviour could have been justified by perceptions of being victims of an unjust political system.

Recent research (Thom & Coetzee, 2004:188) shows that since the advent of democracy in South Africa, some black adolescents are developing a stronger sense of identity than their white counterparts. This could be explained in terms of the importance of the promotion of a strong cultural identity for the development of an individual identity. The identity and criminal behaviour of the incarcerated adolescent could, however, continue to be symptomatic of structural victimisation and its aftermath. In his case, a political struggle has been replaced by an economic struggle and his behaviour could be an outcome of the experiences of recurrent indignities and multiple deprivations associated with apartheid and class struggles (Peacock, 2002:40).

According to Barak, Flavin and Leighton (2001:16-17) inequalities in crime control and justice are part of social constructions of class, race and gender differences. What constitutes unacceptable social injuries and acceptable controls are shaped by the underlying constructions of social organisation, referring also to the production and distribution of economic, political and cultural capital. This differential distribution of power and privilege may not only shape individual experience and identity but varies according to

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<sup>1</sup> The research of Slabbert (1980:1) shows that during this time of racial oppression, South Africa had the highest prison population in the world, of which 80% were short-term prisoners – most of them incarcerated under the apartheid pass laws.

one's socio-economic position in relation to crime control. This is supported by the views of Turk (1969:10) who is of the opinion that criminality is a social construct, applied by those in power and fuelled by discriminatory law enforcement practices. For disenfranchised youth this could translate into police brutality or what Tannenbaum (in Brown et al., 2001:369) coins as the "dramatization of evil" through the application of legal relativism.

## **3.2 PRISON CONDITIONS**

Once arrested and incarcerated, many adolescents are exposed to adverse conditions in prison. These conditions may have a compounding effect on identity problems already generated by arrest and attendant labelling.

### **3.2.1 Overcrowding**

Conditions of overcrowding impede on the very nature and function of institutional life and reflect a crisis in the entire criminal justice system. According to the John Howard Society of Alberta (1996:3) overcrowding places a strain on available resources, the safe custody of the inmate, and limits opportunities for the inmate to participate in self-improvement programmes. Idleness, fear and the inability to maintain a personal identity could all add to the stress associated with a lack of "defensible space" culminating in a defensive attitude, social withdrawal or suicidal behaviour. Reydt (2004:1) found that the recent explosion in prison numbers in Britain is directly related to the high rate of suicides and self-mutilating behaviour of the inmates. The research of Carranza (2001:13) concurs that overcrowding accounts for prison rates of suicide eight times higher in Costa Rica than the national average.

In South Africa, the number of children in prison under the age of 18 years has increased by 161% between June 1995 and 2000 (Criminal Justice Monitor, 2003:1). As mentioned earlier (see 1.4.1) the tendency in South Africa is towards large communal cells accommodating up to 50 juveniles. According to Sloth-Nielsen's (1998:16, 19, 21) situational analysis of prison conditions for children in South Africa, cells were frequently over-populated and in one correctional facility, prisoners under the age of 18 were sleeping three on a single bed. In some cases of chronic overcrowding, children who had been issued with only one blanket had to sleep on the floor. The provision of

bedding varied. In some instances children had sufficient blankets to keep them warm but complained about the blankets being dirty and the prevalence of lice. Washing of bed linen (if provided) seemed to be irregular and inadequate. A shortage and poor condition of clothing of children occurred in almost every South African prison.

These conditions are *on a par* with harsh prisons conditions elsewhere on the African continent. A review by Cherubin-Doumbia (2004:5) of eight NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) countries (Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda) confirms that harsh and inadequate prison conditions are a problem in all of the countries with the exception of Algeria that meets the basic international standards. Overcrowding is a problem in all the other countries. With the exception of Ghana, all the states under review ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child<sup>2</sup> and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>3</sup> A Human Rights Watch Prison Project in Africa (2005:1-8) outlines conditions of overcrowding as a grave human rights concern in South Africa, Burundi, Mali, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Zambia. According to Human Rights Watch (2001:1) a rapid growth in the establishment of government-backed human rights bodies throughout Africa during the last decade has not generally led to better protection but served to deflect international criticism of their human rights abuses rather than addressing it.

The United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (1990) stipulates that the possession of personal effects is a basic right and essential to the psychological well-being of juveniles and that they should have access to facilities and services that meet all the requirements of health and human dignity. Also, according to section 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) every sentenced prisoner has the right to conditions of detention that are consistent with human dignity, including at least adequate accommodation (see 1.3).

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<sup>2</sup> Entered into force on 29 November 1999.

<sup>3</sup> The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted for ratification by the General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989. It entered into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49.

Due to conditions of overcrowding, the incarceration of adolescents could constitute a cruel and inhumane form of punishment.<sup>4</sup>

Overcrowding in prison increases tension, hostility and aggression. A lack of privacy and excessive noise levels cause irritation and generate conflicts over what are often trivial matters. Also, as a result of overcrowding there is usually a breakdown in the supervision and control of the inmates. This breakdown is not only demoralising for the morale of the staff that are unable to perform their duties, but will impact negatively on rehabilitation and classification programmes (Reid, 1981:171; Reydt, 2004:2). Overcrowded prisons tend to be heterogeneous and there is a strong tendency to misclassify offenders on the basis of the space available rather than for purposes of security risk assessment and programs most suitable for them (Carranza, 2001:31; John Howard Society of Alberta, 1996:4).

Misclassification and overcrowding could create a merciless cycle for the incarcerated adolescent. This cycle could begin with his admission to an overcrowded facility and misclassification. Misclassification and placing the adolescent with groups he does not fit in with could increase stress and have a negative effect on his identity. Stress reactions to the institutional environment and lack of services, his subsequent lack of progress within the system and labelled as “failing to adjust”, may contribute to further rule infractions, denial of parole and regressive transfer to another section or high risk facility.

Prison overcrowding increases the likelihood of repetitive crime and victimisation sequences and jeopardises the physical health of the inmate due to strain on the infrastructure of the prison and availability of material resources.

### **3.2.2 Sanitation, health and nutrition**

According to the Human Rights Watch Prison Project (2005:4) poor hygiene, inadequate sanitation and a lack of clear water contribute in Africa to high levels of deaths in custody. Concerning prison conditions for children in South Africa, Sloth-Nielsen

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<sup>4</sup> The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and of Inhumane or Degrading Treatments (in Carranza, 2001:13) recognises that overcrowding constitutes a cruel and inhumane form of treatment violating the fundamental rights of prisoners but also that of prison officials who must carry-out their functions under difficult and risky conditions.

(1998:21) refers to ablution areas as a general cause of concern, especially when considering all pervasive smells from such areas to the cells. In some instances, 40 children are sharing two toilets and two sinks, while some cells have one toilet per 20 inmates, but no shower or wash basin. In another South African prison children have to use buckets to bath as the shower water is too hot. Some prison cells are dark without outward facing windows and adequate ventilation. Dampness occurs while sinks, taps and showers are leaking. These are all conditions that increase the likelihood of diseases being transmitted, as is particularly the case with upper respiratory diseases, typhus, relapsing fever and trench fever (Robinson, Leo, Provic & Barber, 2003:2). Due to conditions of overcrowding and poor ventilation, prisons could also function as an incubator for tuberculosis (Goyer, 2004:34). Despite these health risks, South Africa is listed as one of the NEPAD countries severely lacking in medical access and care for its prisoners (Cherubin-Doumbia, 2004:5).

Most of the NEPAD countries under review do not provide adequate meals to prisoners. This finding concurs with the local research of Sloth-Nielsen (1998:25) reporting that children complain about being hungry, the taste of the food and of losing weight. An inadequate diet and disease are variables that could affect the normal physical and psychosocial development of the incarcerated adolescent resulting in physical underdevelopment and under-activity. Berk (2003:186) highlights the critical importance of growth spurts in the human cortex during adolescence when the brain requires appropriate stimulation (dietary and otherwise) for the optimal development of human intelligence. Such arrest of development may in turn impact negatively on the adolescent's ability to rationally calculate a risk-reward outcome when a crime is contemplated.

### **3.2.3 Degradation**

According to Section 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. With a lack of privacy and limited access to food and even the most basic amenities such as showers and toilets, degradation in prison may have a profound effect on the adolescent's sense of self-worth. It could destroy his conception of being an acceptable, respectable and worthy individual because adolescence is associated with a heightened sense of self-awareness and an acute concern with body image (Berk,

2003:201; Santrock, 1986:354). A lack of privacy may cause feelings of vulnerability and undermines the adolescent's ability to monitor his social thoughts. Within a deprived environment, the development of social cognition and the preservation of a positive self-esteem and identity could become major tasks, culminating in feelings of frustration and hostility in his attempts to manage personal and defensible space.

### **3.3 PRISON VIOLENCE**

Prisons are inherently institutions that could generate explosive and violent behaviour. Behind a façade of treatment having rehabilitative value, individuals prone to antisocial behaviour are contained in a limited space, socially invisible and exposed to regimes of deprivation and degradation in a prisoner culture that shapes and supports conflict (Edgar & Martin, 2000:2; Stinchcomb & Fox, 1999:363, 370). The following discussion will focus on the nature and incidence of prison violence, causes thereof, and its regulation of behaviour.

#### **3.3.1 Nature and incidence**

Prison violence can transpire through a variety of acts, ranging from verbal threats to sexual abuse and murder. It may also consist of a combination of these forms involving acts of violence between inmates and guards, guards against inmates, or inmates against each other (Edgar & Martin, 2000:2; Harer & Hagan, 2001:5; Randall, 1998:1; Reid, 1981:202). It remains, however, difficult to determine the true extent of violence in prison, as many cases are not reported due to fear of retaliation, which in itself leads to further victimisation. Leggett, Louw, Schönreich and Sekhonyane (2003:2) cite a conservative number of 3 011 recorded violent incidents in South African prisons during the year 2002. Of these incidents, 2 429 incidents were perpetrated by prisoners against prisoners and 582 by warders against inmates. In another study (Luyt, 2001:5) more than half of the incarcerated children observed assaults by staff. Whipping and smacking of the inmates occurred as well as solitary confinement. Nearly 30% of all the research participants were fearful of victimisation by other inmates.

Porporino (in Carlie & Minor, 1992:155) is of the opinion that violent incidents such as homicides are the most likely to occur between 19:00 and midnight in the cells of young

and short-term offenders. Most commonly, the victim is strangled, stabbed and beaten by three or more assailants over what is often a drug or sex related matter. Edgar and O'Donnell (1998:644) and McCorkle (2004:3) distinguish between passive and aggressive precautions to deter attacks. Passive behaviour (self-imposed solitary confinement, avoidance of certain areas and activities in prison) is associated more frequently with fearful, older and socially isolated inmates. Younger inmates with longer histories of institutionalisation and more past victimisation experiences tend to use more aggressive and proactive techniques such as weapons, physical exercise (weightlifting) and threats.

### **3.3.2 Causes of violence**

Physical and psychological discomfort, depression, anxiety as well as goal blockage could result in aggression. Such stress may impede behaviour through the production of stimulus overload and the creation of feelings of irritability, frustration, arousal and discomfort (Felson, 1992:2). This scenario may be applicable to inmate behaviour as prisons in particular require prisoners to conform. Everyday, prisoners are dictated to, even with regard to menial tasks such as when they should wash themselves, and are told when and what to eat, or when to go to sleep. Hostility could emanate from frustration at the completely enforced subservience to authority. This may worsened by their concern for their families, or confusion about their own futures. As a result, they may prod other inmates into states of anxiety and aggression, especially when confined in an overcrowded and unsanitary environment.

If development deficits such as a lack of impulse control (due to deficient socialisation prior to and during incarceration) exist, the issue of autonomy versus captive constraint may also become easily emotionally charged when the adolescent displays a low frustration tolerance against personal constraints and acts out angrily. According to Howells and Hollin (1992:283) the matter of autonomy relates to definitions of adulthood and emancipation, but in the case of the incarcerated adolescent this may be a paradoxical issue. In other words, in a captive and deprived environment he may alternate between dependent and violently rebellious behaviour, hinging on whether his needs are met or frustrated.



Another important cause of violence refers to the need and desire to “save face” (see 3.4). This is a critical concern to many inmates as the behaviour of one antagonist is a powerful determinant of the behaviour of the other. Behind a composed exterior or charade of “courage” and “confidence”, aggression and violence could escalate in a trial of strength between individuals or two or more different gangs. Edgar and O’Donell (1998:644) refer to the public demonstration of the weakness of an inmate (or gang) as a significant risk factor for assault and repeat victimisation. This perception of vulnerability leads to others feeling more confident in marking the individual or group as a suitable target.

Van Zyl (1996:114) identifies uncertainty and confusion about release policies, abusive disciplinary measures, personnel shortages, inadequate recreational activities and prevalence of gang activities as further causes of prison violence. Randall (1998:2) refers furthermore to the improper training of prison personnel and deficiencies in medical and psychiatric treatment. A general lack of therapeutic intervention measures and social services could be added (see 3.8). Finally, the conflict centred model of Edgar and Martin (2000:4) outlines racial differences as a significant precursor to prison violence as well as the need of the inmate to defend his possessions with force, especially in relation to a prison regime that deprives prisoners of their privacy and generates competition for scarce resources.

### **3.3.3 Regulation of behaviour**

Howells and Hollin (1992:282) describe inmate-on-inmate violence in prison as compensatory behaviour because it serves as a defence mechanism against low self-esteem. The experiencing of low self-esteem might be the direct result of problems associated with ego identity. According to Haney (2001:12) degraded conditions remind prisoners of their compromised social status and stigmatised role as prisoners. This could aggravate identity problems and the adolescent could find temporary relief in “acting-out” (violent) behaviour.

In the process of attempting to preserve his own identity and to validate his own masculinity, the violent offender attempts to destroy the identity of his victim. The violent offender's control over the identity of his victim is favoured by the nature of the prison

environment. Victims of prison violence could experience themselves as “deserving” objects of violence when internalising their inferior status within the context of substandard prison conditions and treatment. In an environment characterised by physical separation, isolation and segregation, as well as a lack of normative friendships and emotional support, the offender attacks the beliefs, attitudes and values of the victim. In many cases, the victim is made completely subservient to the offender, as they are engaged in a system that is based on regulation of behaviour, referring to punishment for undesirable behaviour and reward for desirable behaviour (Knowles, 1999:270; Romero, 1985:537).

In Dissel's (1999:22) study most of the incarcerated children (92.7%), were first offenders, a characteristic partially attributable to their young age, but also indicative of the willingness of the courts to utilise custodial sentences for a first offence. The young first offender's exposure to violence in prison is important, not only because of victimisation vulnerability, but his identity may be shaped in such a way that an attitude, based on aggression when relating to others is formed concerning relating to others - and this may not be easily shed when he returns to society. Being young, he must always be prepared to fight to establish and maintain his status within the prison community. As a result he could continue with aggressive behaviour (albeit in prison or outside) until it becomes irrelevant in his quest for both an identity and survival. Hyper-masculinity with its adoration of force and domination could subsequently function as an essential component of his identity.

### **3.4 PRISONIZATION AND INMATE CODE**

The inmate adapts to the hardships of a prison lifestyle through a process of what is referred to as *prisonization*. As a result of prisonization, the new inmate internalises prison values, norms and behavioural expectations that in turn reinforce the acceptance of a criminal ideology (Stinchcomb & Fox, 1999:363, 370). Initially, the new inmate may harbour a limited view of the world. According to Van Zyl (1996:108) a more radical attitude could become apparent during the early stages of incarceration but usually develops into a politicised mindset after about nine months of imprisonment. Through association with other inmates and subsequent mastering of more techniques to commit crime, the adolescent could find expressive value in crime, particularly as for purposes of the furtherance of a politicised and personal criminal ideology.

Reid (1981:176) is of the opinion that the process of prisonization depends on the susceptibility of the individual inmate, his background as well as terms and conditions under which he is confined. For example: how many prisoners are with him in a cell, or with what type of prisoners he has to share living space? The end result of this socialisation process is usually manifest in the internalisation of a criminal value system, impeding on the inmate's successful integration into the community, once released from prison (Neser, 1989:147).

Virtually immediately upon incarceration, the adolescent could progressively replace his identity with that of a negative identity, which in his efforts to compensate for identity diffusion, may be characterised by "acting tough" (Sykes, 1999:78). Through such identification, he may gain a sense of fidelity towards a prison code that is characterised by amongst others, a façade of courtesy to authority figures and non-committal responses to fellow inmates that could be devoid of emotional investment, or an unwillingness to betray others.

Sykes and Messinger (in Wilson, 1978:193) divide the inmate code into five categories. The first category refers to "not to interfere with other inmates"; the second, "to refrain from arguments with fellow prisoners"; the third, "not to exploit inmates"; the fourth, "not to be weak"; and the fifth, "not to respect guards, or the world they represent". Adherence to these informal rules may, however, not necessarily lead to cohesion or less violence amongst inmates as tension between these maxims could create an environment that is partially or fully unstable.

Elements of an inmate code could be indigenous or imported from the outside world. Indigenous in the sense that a prison subculture could arise from the pains of imprisonment (deprivation of autonomy, heterosexual relationships or personal security) or imported and converged from different criminal subcultures in the outside world (Clear & Cole, 1990:367). Or as an alternative explanation, it could be the combined result of the deprived nature of the prison environment and prevalence of a criminal ideology.

The acceptance of a criminal code and assimilation into a prison subculture may be of particular importance to the incarcerated adolescent. For the first time, he might be experiencing a sense of belonging and the prison subculture may also compensate for

other needs never fulfilled outside the prison context. The adolescent may feel protected, loved and cared for - all variables that could provide almost paradoxically a formula for the development of a negative identity and recidivism.

### 3.5 PRISON GANGS

Inmates subject themselves to informal social control by adhering to the inmate code, which is further reinforced by gang activities. Typically, gangs are authoritarian and totalitarian in structure and characterised by violence and intense rivalry for power and control. Gang codes require members to be obedient and loyal to fellow gang members and not to “snitch” or to co-operate with the authorities (Bonner, 1999:65; Goyer, 2004:36; Lötter & Schurink, 1984:67).

Sloth-Nielsen (1998:47), who conducted interviews in a number of South African prisons, found that while some children admitted to belonging to a gang most of them were extremely fearful of gangs and disclosing their gang membership. Fear of retaliation was also cited as a major reason for the lack of disclosure. Conditions in prison such as overcrowding, boredom and powerlessness provide excellent breeding grounds for the formation of gangs, and while membership is theoretically voluntary, the young inmate may be compelled to join a gang for his own protection as well as the gratification of needs.

Gang activities permeate almost every sphere of prison life in South Africa. In essence, there are three number gangs (26s, 27s and 28s) and of the other gangs, the Big 5s and Air Force are perceived as the most powerful. Antagonism and violent conflict are features that divide the gangs but each gang also has a distinct code of conduct, structure, symbolism, language, gestures and fantasies. For instance, the 26s engage mainly in monetary issues and stabbings whereas the main activities of the 28s are sex and prostitution (Gear & Ngubeni, 2002:13; Goyer, 2004:36; Lötter & Schurink, 1984:67, 78, 81).

Lötter and Schurink (1984:91) identify institutional complexes (functional imperatives) in which structural and systemic elements of prison gangs are employed for purposes of goal attainment. The particular gang code or gang law refers to the mode of goal attainment in

relation to the recruitment, education, promotion, management, criminal justice, communication, security, warfare, sex and care-giving systems within and between the different gangs.

Steinberg (2004:24) is of the opinion that gangs are “locked in an eternal relationship with their captors”. In other words, with the fostering of masculine traits such as bravery, solidarity and stoicism, the scope of the gang's imagination is exhausted by the very universe against which they rail. The more deprived the prison environment, the more value is attached to the said characteristics and the more the opportunity to re-enact power struggles based on the custodian-inmate relationship. This reactionary mode of adaptation is also evident from the construction of social meanings attached to “men” and “women” in prison. The majority of “women” or “wyfies” are under the control of gangs in prison and by largely defining “men” in relation to “men” and their masculinity, a re-enactment is created of the patriarchal heterosexual model.

As result of a loss of attachment to other role models, the gang frequently provides the incarcerated adolescent with a corporate identity and behaviour directives that may assist him in his efforts to cope with the fears of a fragmented identity in a hostile prison environment. The dysfunctionality of these adaptations of the adolescent to institutional life could therefore be viewed as “normal” reactions to a set of pathological conditions.

### **3.6 SEXUAL ASSAULT**

Prevalence estimates of sexual assault in prison are problematic. Reporting is likely to be inhibited if prisoners believe the authorities will take no action or if they fear revenge on the part of the assailant(s) (Coxell & King, 2000:80; Kupers, 1999:146). Also, the definition of what constitutes sexual assault is another important factor in hampering attempts at determining prevalence rates. Research definitions could be inconsistent with the prisoners' definition of what constitutes a sexual assault. For instance, Sloth-Nielsen (1998:52) translates “hulle soek jou boude” (they seek your bum – *own translation*) as “they seek your thighs”, which in essence refers to a different sexual act (interfemoral sex) than what was intended. To refer to “homosexual rape” or “homosexual aggression” in prisons (Glanz, 1992:397) is also incorrect if it is taken into consideration that research frequently shows

that it is the heterosexual inmate who is the instigator of sexual violence and not the homosexual prisoner (Booyens, Hesselink-Louw & Mashabela, 2004:5; Saum, Surratt, Inciardi & Bennett, 1995:416).

Sloth-Nielsen (1998:52) claims that consensual sexual activities (anal penetration) occur amongst adolescents and children in South African prisons. Although it is not refuted that consensual activities do take place, it should also be noted that for children to be locked up in cells for 17 out of 24 hours, such consent could falsely dichotomise free will and victimisation. Non-consensual acts (male-on-male rape) refer to gang activities and their practice of making “wyfies” (wives) of the younger and more physically attractive boys.

Although the 28s gang is most frequently associated with sex in South African male prisons, other gangs also practise “husband” and “wife” relationships even though their codes forbid homosexuality. To be a “wife” or sex object is usually associated with inferiority, stigma and a loss of status within the inmate culture (Steinberg, 2004:28). Many have been coerced into their roles, drawn from a pool of vulnerable young and first time offenders (Gear & Ngubeni, 2002:13, 15).

Most of the lasting effects of sexual abuse chronicled in the literature appeared to be the most critical during adolescent and post-adolescent periods (Muller, 1994:57). Adolescence is marked by an emerging sexuality and with its associated rapid physical development, trauma to the body threatens the security of the self. Feelings of fear, anxiety and anger are aroused and the sexually abused adolescent interprets the trauma according to his cognitive level of development. Due to a lack of cognitive skills, sexual abuse could render the incarcerated adolescent inept to integrate the many selves of childhood into a cohesive identity.

Sexual abuse may not only disrupt the developmental tasks associated with adolescence (such as achieving a personal identity) but could also expose the adolescent to HIV/AIDS (Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). Estimates are that of the 10 000 prisoners released every month, 6 000 are HIV positive (Criminal Justice Monitor, 2003:1). These estimates are supported by international data that prison populations are at more risk of HIV infection than general populations (Olivero, Clark, Morgado & Mounce, 1992:105; Simooya, 1995:1388).

Finally, due to the deprived nature of the prison environment, sex could be a focal point of gang warfare and revenge. It may also be associated with the smuggling and possession of illicit drugs such as *cannabis sativa* (dagga), or the exchange of simple items such as blankets and shoes in return for sexual favours. Sexual deprivation may also cause emotional arousal, violence and gang rapes, and may furthermore favour the abuse of power of corrupt prison warders (Gear & Ngubeni, 2002:37, 67; Simooya, 1995:1388; Solursh, 1993:441).

### 3.7 STAFF PROBLEMS

Prison staff may not always serve the interests of all the prisoners and could perpetuate problems already prevalent in the prison environment. Faced with the task of controlling unwilling inmates, warders often resort to stereotypes about prisoners that are unsympathetic, hostile and degrading (Carlie & Minor, 1992:141). Whether these beliefs are derived from attitudes towards crime and offenders prevalent in the outside world or adopted from other staff members, it provides the correctional officer with moral justifications in an environment that favours both exploitation and identity destruction. According to Sykes (1999:75) frequent refusals to explain regulations and commands descending from bureaucratic prison staff may entail a profound threat to the inmate's self-image. Such custodial regime may reduce the incarcerated adolescent to the weak, helpless and dependent status of early childhood.

To maintain control of prisoners, warders could become more punitive towards them. Insults, obscenities and other forms of abuse are commonly used to denigrate prisoners and to assert the authority of the guards (Carlie & Minor, 1992:141; Randall, 1998:1). Warders may also use other prisoners as a means of control. For example, prisoners could be used as informants or gang leaders may receive privileges and status in exchange for maintaining control over their members. By selectively regulating activities such as sex and gambling or the use of drugs and alcohol, guards maintain "control" and simultaneously reaffirm the status of some prisoners. According to Goyer (2004:37) prison warders could also be actively recruited by gang members to increase their power base. Some warders are not only known to facilitate sexual activities, but also to engage in such practices as part of their gang membership. Their involvement could also be

extended to the smuggling of weapons as well as prostitution of juveniles to other prisoners.

Given the authority structure in prison and negative role of some of the prison staff, prisons may evoke regressive behaviour that relates to identity issues experienced during adolescence. With reference to the incarcerated adolescent's inability to resolve feelings of dependency versus independency in a captive environment, negative attitudes towards parental authority are often transferred to impersonal authority figures such as prison staff. Prison staff may therefore agitate identity problems such as violently rebellious behaviour or gang and drug dependency (Howells & Hollin, 1992:283; Lapsley, Harwell, Olsen, Flannery & Quintana, 1984:527; Steinberg, 2004:73).

### **3.8 TREATMENT PROGRAMMES IN PRISON**

Identifications imbued with conflict, ambivalence, fear, anxiety, frustration and rage may impair the development of a sense of unity, wholeness and integration, which is necessary to promote the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent. According to Muller (1994:58) identifications that comprise anxiety and ambivalence persist within the person, but tend to be repressed and dissociated from an active sense of self, producing henceforth, a fragmented, split and dissociated identity. Although memories and feelings are split off and dissociated, such repression is seldom complete and returns as feeling states, behavioural re-enactments and depersonalisations. Due to damage to the core of the identity of the incarcerated adolescent, defence mechanism could be employed such as drug abuse, prostitution and self-mutualisation to prevent acknowledgement of prison victimisation. Briere (in Muller, 1994:59) postulates that the energy used to maintain such dissociations (and to remain vigilant to the environment) diverts from developmental tasks that should take precedence in the life-cycle.

Prisons require inmates to relinquish their autonomy and the incarcerated adolescent may adjust to this muting of initiative with a generalised lack of spontaneity and the development of a "prison mask" characterised by emotional over-control and flatness (Haney, 2001:9). Internal controls could also atrophy as a result of becoming increasingly immersed in a network of external institutional limits, albeit organisational in nature or as part of the inmate code. Muntingh (2001a:13) refers to feelings of a "menacing emptiness" due to the inmate's



self-negation in his efforts to become invisible in an environment that is marked by constant surveillance. The meaninglessness of time in prison could also become disorienting affecting the adolescent's time perspective and sense of reality.

Meaningful and normative interpersonal contact is severed in the artificial prison environment. Feelings of isolation and unwillingness to trust others out of fear of exploitation may cause social distancing and isolation as well as a re-enactment of traumatic childhood experiences of abuse and parental rejection (see 2.5.1). Furthermore, future involvement in relationships and intimacy could re-evoked the old fears of trauma sustained in a hostile, deprived and denigrating prison environment. Severe disturbances of the self have also been associated with a loss of concentration and cognitive impairment in the work environment (Kupers, 1999: 41, 53; Muller, 1994:59).

Despite the preceding depiction of carceral suffering, Sloth-Nielsen's (1998:55) situational analysis of children in South African prisons highlights an absence of case management and multidisciplinary co-operation. In general, prison staff seems unmotivated and overwhelmed by their workload due to conditions of overcrowding. The research of Hesselink-Louw and Joubert (2003:91) affirms the shortage of professional staff with a psychologist/prisoner ratio of 1:6 493 and a social worker/prisoner ratio of 1:405. Muntingh (2001a:13) estimates recidivism rates of released prisoners to be between 85% and 94%.

When isolated and "treated" in prison, the identity of the incarcerated adolescent risks to develop an identity characterised by immaturity. His isolation in prison deprives him of appropriate role models and normative support systems, while his relationships are suspended with the entire outside world. His punishment may breed resentment and further alienation, causing him to continue to reject societal norms imposed on him. Behind the charade of treatment or intervention measures punishment often continues unabated. Continuation of punishment in prison could limit the adolescent's worldview to that of the prison environment, obstructing a more complete expression of identity.

### **3.9 RELEASE**

It could be viewed as an anomaly to teach young offenders how to adjust to society by removing them from society. At first, total institutionalisation serves as a defence

mechanism for the incarcerated adolescent to adapt to the pains of imprisonment. However, upon release the stigmatised inmate has to deal with his devalued identity away from the external structures and systems of prison that kept him controlled and directed. Upon release, he is also confronted with what could be perceived as a myriad of other decision-making challenges usually associated with non-institutional life. The very nature of confinement that creates these problems needs to be addressed, while simultaneously reconstruction services are essential to those adversely affected. According to Muntingh (2001a:17) the sheer number of prisoners and the concomitant strain on the resources of the Department of Correctional Services renders offender reintegration almost impossible as in accordance to standards set by the Correctional Services Act No 111 of 1998. This is despite the laudable aims of the Act and the good intentions of the Department of Correctional Services.

### **3.10 CONCLUSION**

Outside the realms of conventional society and in an undermining, hostile and deprived prison environment the incarcerated adolescent is confronted with the task to revise and integrate previous identifications and to develop and establish a personal identity. The preservation of an identity could become a major task in prison, but also an antithesis to the plight of the adolescent who, in particular, is confronted with the need to maintain inner sameness and continuity. His agony may not only resonate in his search for an identity but also in an inability to gain a sense of competence in his personhood. Behind a prison mask, internal chaos, stress, alienation and fear may occur. As a result of incarceration the adolescent could lose the capacity to initiate normative behaviour and to make sound decisions for himself. He may also employ aggressive avoidance strategies and achieve master status as not only isolated and hyper-vigilant but gradually losing the capacity to rely on internal controls to guide his actions and to restrain his conduct.

## 4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

To fulfil the aims of this study as set out in Chapter 1, a number of hypotheses have been formulated. Due to a dearth of scientific knowledge on the identity development of incarcerated adolescents and on the identity development of offenders in general (see 1.4.3), a rationale derived from the literature could not be provided for all of the hypotheses. Given the exploratory nature of the research, hypotheses without a rationale are nevertheless included to initiate further research that could explore the identity development of incarcerated youth. Hypotheses derived from theory and research referred to in the literature survey, is provided with a rationale (Huysamen, 1994:205-206). Although alternative hypotheses ( $H_1$ ) are formulated, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), that predicts that no significant differences exist between the different groups, will be tested in all the cases. If the  $H_0$  is not supported, the alternative hypothesis will be accepted (Huysamen, 1976:64).

The following hypotheses are formulated:

**Hypothesis 1: A significant difference in identity development will exist between incarcerated adolescents with regard to**

**Hypothesis 1.1: the different cultural groups.**

**Hypothesis 1.2: the different ethnic groups.**

### **Rationale for hypotheses 1.1 and 1.2**

According to Erikson (1968:155) identity development is a complex process that is influenced by various factors. Being incarcerated is one situation that could have an effect on how an identity will be established. Although it cannot be disputed that identity development is influenced by social and environmental factors it is also true that individuals have a free will that enables them to make certain choices (Erikson, 1958:1969). It can therefore be postulated that whereas some adolescents' identity development may be influenced negatively by incarceration, others may develop a positive identity despite their circumstances.

Despite identity development being a life-long and a universal process, Erikson (1963:211) points out that cultural differences and changing circumstances may have an effect on identity development. In this regard Thom's (1988) research shows that identity development in black and white adolescents did not differ. However, in a later study (Thom & Coetzee, 2004:8) it was found that a group of black adolescents achieved a higher level of personal identity than their white counterparts. On the basis of this it is postulated that cultural and ethnic differences regarding the level of identity development could occur between incarcerated adolescents.

**Hypothesis 2: A significant difference in identity development will exist between incarcerated adolescents with regard to their level of identity achieved and their belief that they had been the target of discrimination.**

### **Rationale for hypothesis 2**

When considering the research of Holleran and Waller (2003:344) as well as Tsang et al. (2003:374), it is apparent that culturally marginalised adolescents in particular need to confront issues of prejudice and discrimination. In some instances being subjected to such conditions, could hinder one's achievements and complete expression of self.

**Hypothesis 3: No significant differences will exist between the level of identity development achieved and different offences committed by different groups of offenders.**

### **Rationale for hypothesis 3**

Concerning the process of epigenesis, Erikson (1968:185) refers for instance to juvenile delinquency as an outcome of a basic mistrust in oneself or belief in the future or as a residue of identity diffusion concerning its associated lack of purpose and direction. Erikson (1964:34; 1968:157) suggests furthermore that a great deal of juvenile delinquency can be considered as experimentation, an attempt to create a psychosocial moratorium, outside the realms of conventional society. Erikson (1956:88; 1959:131) explains negative identity formation in terms of it sometimes being easier for an adolescent to derive a sense of

identity out of identification with what he is least supposed to be (delinquent) than to struggle with societal demands that he cannot meet. In addition, concerning the “fluidity of responses” during the stressful and critical developmental stage of adolescence, Erikson (1956:73; 1968:313) points out that a normative identity inherently contains aspects of a deviant identity. Everyone needs to hide in himself those identity fragments that are considered by society as undesirable but when experiencing a crisis, these identifications can become dominant. The aim of Erikson’s (1956; 1958; 1959; 1963; 1964; 1968; 1969) theory is, however, not to link identity development with different types of offences. It rather serves to describe interpersonal differentiation as a life-long process with the focus on the emergence of an autonomous self. With reference to “dormant” potential of all individuals to commit an offence and the need of the adolescent in particular to experiment in order to gain a sense of competence in his personhood, all of the offences of the research participants could be viewed as a response to alleviate the stress associated with the critical developmental stage of adolescence in a complex society.

Holleran and Waller (2003:335) refer to social disorganisation, poverty, violence and the prevalence of gang activity as particular risk factors impacting negatively on role experimentation and identity formation. According to Erikson (1968:257) the mentioned socio-cultural conditions will determine whether the adolescent will experience any problems in the development of an integrated identity. Concerning the social roles and choices available to incarcerated adolescents as offenders, no significant differences in their identity development is anticipated in relation to different types of offences.

**Hypothesis 4:           The level of identity development achieved will be significantly related to interpersonal closeness with family members:**

**Hypothesis 4.1:       Incarcerated adolescents who experienced a close relationship with the mother figure will show a significantly higher level of an identity than those who did not experience such a relationship.**

**Hypothesis 4.2:** Incarcerated adolescents who experienced a close relationship with the father figure will show a significantly higher level of an identity than those who did not experience such a relationship.

**Hypothesis 4.3:** Incarcerated adolescents who experienced a close relationship with siblings will show a significantly higher level of an identity than those who did not experience such a relationship.

### **Rationale for hypotheses 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3**

According to Erikson (1964:30; 1968:159) identity formation is characterised by a process of reflection and observation. The socialisation processes inherent to the family as a primary reference group is stressed in particular. This is supported by various researchers (Adamson & Lyxell, 1996:575; Ammaniti et al., 2000:330; Newman & Newman, 2001:521; Thom, 1988:190) who emphasise the importance of positive, supportive, warm and consistent parent-child interactions for the child to develop a personal identity that is rich in resources. From this one could postulate that incarcerated adolescents with a lower level of identity development will experience their parental figure(s) as less dependable than identity achieved subjects.

**Hypothesis 5:** Significantly more incarcerated adolescents with a lower level of identity achieved will be from broken homes than those with a higher level of identity achieved.

### **Rationale for hypothesis 5**

Erikson (1964:30) maintains that the growing child derives a sense of identity from his awareness of being a member of his family. Various researchers (Donovan, 1975:53; La Voie, 1976:381; Von der Lippe & Amundsen, 1998:26; Waterman, 1982:345) support this viewpoint of Erikson. As the result of death, divorce or parental separation the parent-child relationship becomes easily disturbed and is often associated with feelings of abandonment, confusion, anxiety or behavioural problems of the child such as truancy or

rebelliousness. Craig (1986:337) highlights the stress of the demands on the child when compelled to acquire new roles and responsibilities in his attempts to relate to the parent(s), or stepparents in new ways. Broken homes, family discord and parental disciplinary measures that are either excessively restrictive or permissive, may contribute to a total rejection of the values of the parents/parental figures and therefore, also to the development of a negative identity. In this regard, Erikson (1959:131) is of the opinion that it may be at times easier for the adolescent to derive a sense of identity out of identification with what he is least supposed to be rather than to struggle with new, conflicting or uncertain demands he cannot meet.

**Hypothesis 6: Incarcerated adolescents with a low level of identity development will show a significantly less positive relationship with the peer friendship group than those with a high level of identity development.**

### **Rationale for hypothesis 6**

The importance of peers to the adolescent is highlighted by various researchers (Berndt, 1982:1447; Garrod et al., 1992:170; Tarrant, 2002:110; Valliant, 1983:135). Peers can assist each other to cope with the stress associated with adolescence and in so doing, provide the adolescent with the opportunity to establish his identity through its provision of behavioural directives, mutual emotional support and general acceptance. Brinthaup and Lipka (2002:13) established a positive relationship between a high self-esteem and a positive evaluation by the normative peer group, but in the case of the incarcerated adolescent, it can be postulated that out of fear of rejection, he may place his needs as subservient to that of the peer group. Subservience to the peer group is likely when the adolescent is deprived of emotional support within the family environment (Montemayer, 1982:151). According to Reis and Youniss (2004:40) this submissiveness could constitute an over-all threat to identity development due to its complicity to group regulation of individual behaviour and subsequent negative impact thereof on the individual's sense of self-confidence and self-value.

- Hypothesis 7:** A significant relationship exists between the level of identity development of the incarcerated adolescent and coping with prison conditions:
- Hypothesis 7.1:** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with bedding conditions than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.
- Hypothesis 7.2:** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with ablution facilities than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.
- Hypothesis 7.3:** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with food provisions than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.
- Hypothesis 7.4:** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with the size of their cells than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.
- Hypothesis 7.5:** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with exercise opportunities than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.
- Hypothesis 7.6:** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with available reading material than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.



**Hypothesis 7.7: Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with exposure to fresh air than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.**

**Rationale for hypotheses 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7**

Researchers (Thom, 1988:90; Tsang et al., 2003:361; Umana-Taylor et al., 2002:304) refer to a high level of identity achieved as the ability of the individual to maintain unity and continuity despite changes within the social environment. This stable self-definition of identity achieved adolescents is usually associated with relatively low anxiety levels, successful over-all adjustment and an ability to solve problems (Adamson & Lyxell, 1996:580; Bernard, 1981:353; Berzonsky et al., 2003:113; Chapell & Overton, 2002:314; Klaczynski et al., 1998:204; Kumru & Thompson, 2003:482; Marcia, 1975:155; Meeus et al., 1999:429; Stark & Traxler, 1974:31). From this one could postulate that a high level of identity achieved will enhance self-control and coping skills with adverse conditions in an overcrowded prison environment (Cherubin-Doumbia, 2004:5; Human Rights Watch, 2001:1; Human Rights Watch Prison Project, 2005:1-8; Sloth-Nielsen, 1998:16, 19, 21). On the other hand, Erikson (1968:87) is of the opinion that severe stress during adolescence may also cause identity diffusion. One could therefore postulate that the stress associated with prison conditions of overcrowding may also amplify the identity consciousness of the incarcerated adolescent who has achieved a lower level of identity development, giving rise to a less stable sense of a personal identity, albeit diffused or negative.

**Hypothesis 8: The level of identity achieved will be significantly related to victimisation proneness in prison:**

**Hypothesis 8.1: Incarcerated adolescents with a lower level of identity development will be more prone to prison victimisation than adolescents with a high level of identity development.**

**Hypothesis 8.2: Incarcerated adolescents with a lower level of identity will be more inclined to employ passive precautions to deter prison victimisation than adolescents with a high level of identity development.**

### **Rationale for hypotheses 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3**

Prison victimisation points to the instability of the prison environment and a lack of defensible space in a captive environment. This may accentuate discrepancies between the self and social environment (Berk, 2993:201; Santrock, 1986:354). It is postulated that prison deprivation and conflicting norms of control (Carlie & Minor, 1992:141; Felson, 1992:2; Goyer, 2004:37) may generate both feelings of vulnerability and victimisation proneness as the less self-directed adolescent could lack a feeling of “being at home” in his body together with being deprived of an “inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count” and not “knowing where one is going” (Erikson, 1968:165). One could therefore expect that the less self-directed adolescent, who has achieved a lower level of an identity development, will be less self-contained and employing more aggressive precautions to deter prison victimisation, whilst the adolescent with a higher level of identity development will have more confidence to utilise proactive techniques (McCorkle, 2004:3).

**Hypothesis 9: The level of identity achieved will be significantly related to adherence to the inmate code:**

**Hypothesis 9.1 Incarcerated adolescents with a lower level of identity development will be significantly more committed to the inmate code than those with a high level of identity development.**

**Hypothesis 9.2 Adolescents with a high level of identity development will agree significantly less with the attitude statement that guards should not be shown respect than those with a low level of identity development.**

## **Rationale for hypotheses 9.1 and 9.2**

As a result of deficient socialisation processes inherent to an overcrowded prison environment that supports deviant values, one can expect that the incarcerated adolescent will progressively replace his identity with a deviant or negative identity enabling him to assimilate into the prison subculture, especially when surrounded by threatening strictures of inmate appraisal and extortion. Both Reid (1981:176) and Van Zyl (1996:108) refer to the time dimension inherent to the said process of prisonization. This translates also into the criminogenic value of both frequency and intensity of exposure. From this one could postulate that adherence to the inmate code and subsequent greater centrality of the negative identity will be associated with the length of time spent in prison, but also with the need for behavioural directives in with what could be perceived and be experienced as a threatening prison environment. This “normal” adjustment to a set of pathological conditions may, however, agitate identity problems and contribute to further value confusion as negative attitudes towards parental authority are often transferred to impersonal authority figures (Howells & Hollin, 1992:283; Lapsley et al., 1984:527). Adherence to the inmate code may alleviate the agony associated with a lack of self-definition and thus assist with stress in a hostile environment, but may also re-evoked childhood trauma. It can be therefore expected that a high level of identity achieved will be associated with more autonomous behaviour in prison whilst adherence to the inmate code will become a function of either the fears of a fragmented identity in a hostile environment or to be an outcome of the readily endorsement of deviant values of the adolescent who presents with a negative identity.

**Hypothesis 10:            A significant relationship exists between the level of identity development achieved and membership to gangs:**

**Hypothesis 10.1        Incarcerated adolescents with a low level of identity development will be significantly more members of a prison gang.**

**Hypothesis 10.2**      **Incarcerated adolescents with a low level of identity development will be significantly having more friends that belong to a prison gang than those with a high level of identity development.**

### **Rationale for hypotheses 10.1 and 10.2**

According to the pioneering work of Lötter and Schurink (1984) on gangs in South African prisons and recent research (Gear & Ngubeni, 2002:13; Goyer, 2004:36; Sloth-Nielsen, 1998:67), prison gangs are a common phenomenon in South Africa. Gangs enforce the inmate code and are characterised by providing behaviour directives as well as causing conflict. It can be postulated that gang membership will serve to protect the incarcerated adolescent against other inmates/gangs and may assist the adolescent with the attainment of ego identity through its provision of an identity pathway – enabling him to attain his own expectations as well as that of the group. This may be the case in particular of the adolescent who experiences development deficits. In other words, prison gangs may not only satisfy the need for affiliation, but may also fulfil the emotional and security needs of the adolescent with a low level of identity. Such needs may have never been gratified in the family environment and may contribute to identification(s) with the corporate identity of the gang. The common lack of purpose, value and direction usually associated with the identity diffused adolescent (Erikson, 1968:185; Marcia, 1967:119; 1975:157) may render him vulnerable to become a member, whilst the incarcerated adolescent with a negative identity may identify with the very nature of the gang whose corporate identity of conflict resonates with his own identity of “acid disdain” pertaining to roles and identifications presented as desirable in normative society (Erikson, 1968:172-173).

**Hypothesis 11:**      **Incarcerated adolescents who participate in treatment programmes will display a significant higher level of identity development than those who do not participate in treatment programmes.**

## **Rationale for hypothesis 11**

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, a rationale could not be provided for hypothesis 11. This hypothesis should nevertheless serve to stimulate further research on multidisciplinary treatment strategies in correctional context. Such strategies may identify, alleviate and reduce stress, anxiety and “acting out” behaviour when compelled to develop a unique identity, with limited normative identity material available to offenders in a closed prison environment, typified by conflicting value systems.

## 5. RESEARCH DESIGN

Against the background of the purpose and aims of the study and to test the hypotheses formulated in Chapter 4, it was necessary to choose a specific methodological approach. An exposition of the methodology and measuring instruments utilised for this study follows together with a presentation of the nature and characteristics of the sample as well as a discussion of the statistical techniques employed to analyse the data.

### 5.1 METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research methodology was used for the purposes of this study. This allowed for a process of deductive analysis, moving from the theory of Erikson (1958; 1963; 1968) to the testing of hypotheses rather than inferring from a specific case study (inductive reasoning) to the sample as a whole (Hagan, 1997:19). This approach allowed furthermore for the standardised measurement of the level of identity development of the research participants, rather than the “shifting of gears” to accommodate new issues previously not assumed to be of importance. The latter being a feature of a less linear or more qualitative research process.

The individual administration of semi-structured or non-directive interviews often associated with a qualitative research design (Esterberg, 2002:83), is a lengthy and time consuming process and not suitable for a large sample as in the case of this study. A lack of standardisation of the data collecting process could render internal validity low, which together with the said time frame, were also points of criticism (Thom, 1988:207) levelled against the research of Marcia (1967; 1975) on his assessment of different identity statuses. For the purposes of this study, it was therefore decided to assign numerical values to concepts in a self-administered questionnaire which in turn was statistically analysed in tandem with a standardised scale (Erikson scale).

As a similar study of this nature has not been done, this study can be considered exploratory, descriptive and explanatory in nature. According to Mouton and Marais (1985:43-45) the aims of the exploratory study is to gain new insights, to serve as a pilot study for the undertaking of more in-depth studies, to determine priorities for further research and to generate new hypotheses. Whereas the descriptive study can be

undertaken in various ways, one of the approaches is to report on the frequency with which certain variables (behaviour or phenomena) occur within a sample. Explanatory studies on the other hand focus on casual relationships between variables.

In view of the above, it was decided to report the frequency with which certain variables (behaviour or phenomena) occur and that, where possible, the relationships between these variables (behavioural aspects or phenomena) will be tested by means of correlation studies. In other words, besides reporting the research participants' responses to questions in terms of percentages, hypotheses concerning these aspects and the level of identity development achieved will be tested statistically.

## **5.2 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS**

The measuring instruments deemed most suitable for undertaking this research are a questionnaire and the Erikson scale.

### **5.2.1 Questionnaire**

On the basis of the literature a questionnaire was developed that could test quantitatively a number of variables in relation to a quantitative assessment of the level of identity achieved by the research participants. The questionnaire (Appendix 1) consists of four sections:

- **A: General information**

Questions included in this section serve to capture data essential to describe the sample. Amongst others, aspects of relevance here are chronological age, cultural group, and nature of offence and length of prison sentence. This section consists of nine questions.

- **B: Experiences before imprisonment**

This section consists of four questions and a number of sub-questions. Questions formulated here refer to an assessment of perceptions of discrimination on the basis of

race, socio-economic status, parental and sibling conduct as well as discrimination in the educational environment, during arrest and court proceedings.

- **C: Family and peer relationships**

Social determinants such as family and peer relations were included as items in the questionnaire to accommodate variables that could have had an influence on identity development prior to incarceration. This section refers to family structures and family systems as well as the nature of peer relations. It consists of 10 questions.

- **D: Prison conditions**

To assess the nature of the relationship between the prison environment and level of identity development achieved, questions were formulated focussing on prison conditions, exposure to victimisation, gangsterism and participation in treatment programmes. A Likert-type scale was developed for purposes of determining adherence to the inmate code. This section consists of 11 questions with its respective sub-questions.

### **5.2.2 Erikson scale**

There is general consensus that the psychosocial theory of Erikson (1958; 1963; 1968) has made the most significant contribution towards the study of identity (Damon, 2000:1; Hall & Lindzey, 1985:101; Reis & Younis, 2004:31; Waterman, 1982:341). The study of Gruen (in Ochse & Plug, 1986:1240) supports Erikson's theory of epigenesis. In his study of 56 men and 52 women, the highest correlations occur between chronologically adjacent stages, a finding Gruen believes indicates sequential rather than concurrent development of the personality components. One of the first successful cross-cultural and comparative applications of Erikson's personality dimensions was conducted by McClain (1975). The ANOVA (analysis of variance) of the scores of the first six crises residues of 2 609 research participants, from six countries, indicated consistent differences among the different cultural groups.



Concerning the issue of the influence of “social desirability” led responses on scores obtained from an application of Erikson’s personality components, it is important to note that Erikson (1956:57) considers ego identity as the state in which the individual perceives himself as a unique individual, but whose aspirations, values and behavioural norms are integrated with those of significant others (see 1.1). The most fundamental and distinguishing aspect of ego identity would be the reconciliation of the individual’s concept of himself with that of the community’s recognition of himself. Ego identity is therefore not a mere self-definition but denotes sharing essential self-characteristics with others. According to Ochse and Plug (1986:1248) it can therefore be expected that individuals who score high on a scale measuring Erikson’s personality components, are likely to score high on a scale measuring social desirability. Not necessarily because they wish to “fake” good, but they really believe good of themselves and that of their social image.

Ochse (1983) has developed a standardised scale (Appendix 2) based on Erikson’s theory specifically for the South African context. The scale can be used for both male and female adolescents (15–19 years) and has tested to be reliable in terms of cross-cultural comparisons of Afrikaans, English and African language speaking groups (Ochse & Plug, 1986:12444; Thom, 1988:210; Thom & Coetzee, 2004:188).

The Erikson scale consists of the following subscales: trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority and identity versus identity diffusion. The scale includes an overall of 59 items that create a single score pointing to the degree of identity development of an individual. Some items are written in the reverse, in other words, a high score indicates a low level of identity development. These questions were scored in reverse before the total score per research participant was calculated, also prior to determining the reliability of the scale. The final score for the scale was calculated by obtaining a sum across all the items (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = fairly often and 4 = very often), therefore the maximum score that any person could have obtained was 236 (4 times 59), while the minimum was 59 (1 times 59). The higher the score the more developed was the identity construct.

The reliability of the scale refers to the degree of relatedness of the individual items in one factor or scale/construct (Rosnow & Rosenthal 1996:124). To determine the

relatedness of the items in the identity development scale, the Cronbach alpha was calculated. Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer and Tourangeau (2004:264) explain that when many different questions are used to assess the same construct, the Cronbach alpha is a widely used method of determining reliability.

The Cronbach alpha has a range of 0 - 1, where 0 is no internal consistency and 1 is the maximum internal consistency. A general rule of thumb for determining what constitutes a good internal reliability is given at 0.75 (Terre Blanch & Durrheim, 1999:90). The Cronbach alpha of the Erikson scale is 0.78. This value is above that of the cut off points suggested by Terre Blanch and Durrheim and is therefore considered an indication that the scale is reliable. This confirms that the Erikson scale could be well utilised in different contexts, ranging for instance from its successful administration within the educational environments (Ochse & Plug, 1986:12444; Thom, 1988:210; Thom & Coetzee, 2004: 187) to its reliable application in correctional context.

The average scores obtained on the Erikson scale administered to the research participants (N 83) are given in Table 2.

Table 2

*Average Scores of the Research Participants on Level of Identity Development Achieved*

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Identity	83	134	228	165.42	17.84

The highest score of a single research participant on the scale was 228 while the lowest score was 138. The average was 165. The standard deviation which is relatively small indicates that 68% of the participants rated between 183.26 and 147.58. The mean score of 165.42 is lower than the South African white male (173.97) and black male adolescent research participants (176.85) as was recorded in the study of Thom and Coetzee (2004:188). Ochse and Plug (1986:1243) included in their study different age groups rendering their sample not homogenous with this study in terms of chronological developmental age.

### 5.3 PILOT STUDY

Twelve research participants were included in a pilot study prior to the undertaking of the entire data collection process. According to Babbie (1990:220) a pilot study is useful to anticipate and eradicate any problems in the field prior to undertaking the research. Furthermore, it served as an indicator of the time-frame (30 – 45 minutes) required for purposes of the completion of the questionnaire and Erikson scale. After the pilot study the following changes were made to the questionnaire:

- Under Section A (General Information), question 5, the option of a Trade was added.
- Under Section C (Family and Peer Relations), question 18, the word “deceased” was replaced with “not applicable” to accommodate paternal absence other than through mortality.
- Under Section D (Prison Conditions), question 28.4, a synonym “take advantage” was provided for the word “exploit” (question 28.4).
- At the onset of further data collection sessions, care was also taken to explain the following terminology used in the Erikson scale: “optimistic” (item 13), “admiration for mankind” (item 17) and “unnecessarily apologetic” (item 19).

No further problems were experienced by the research participants in the pilot study. The data collected was of high quality and was added to the data obtained from the final sample.

### 5.4 DATA COLLECTION

After permission was obtained from the Department of Correctional Services to conduct research on a 100 research participants (Appendix 3), only male incarcerated adolescents (15 – 18 years) who could read, write and speak English were selected for participation (see 5.5 on the sampling procedure). The research participants were provided with instructions on how to complete the questionnaire and Erikson scale. It was administered to small groups of approximately 12 research participants during a

single session to further clarify any possible ambiguity or uncertainty as to the exact meaning of the single items. Special care was taken to assure the research participants of the confidential nature of the study. The purpose and nature of the research were also related to the participants. In accordance with the ethical principle of freedom from harm, it was discussed and stated in a written note that accompanied the questionnaire and Erikson scale that the participants could withdraw at anytime from the study if and when experiencing any emotional discomfort. A social worker from the Department of Correctional Services assisted to monitor the process of data collection, also to provide any possible after-care services in the event of a need for debriefing. None of the research participants terminated their participation prematurely and their voluntary participation was furthermore guided by the principle of informed consent (see Appendix 4).

## **5.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

Due to practical constraints it was not feasible to collect a random sample of all incarcerated adolescents in South African prisons. A random sample within a single correctional centre would only yield randomly obtained data applicable to a single centre and would also not be representative of the universe of incarcerated adolescents in South Africa. It was therefore decided to employ a purposive theoretical sampling technique. According to this technique the aim was to create an operational population, in other words, a population that is theoretically constructed in such a manner that it represents the ideal (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:95; Gilbert, 1993:74). With identity development reaching its peak during adolescence (Erikson, 1959:89; 1968:132) the aim was to furthermore include adolescent male participants whose identity establishment is no longer dominated by physiological changes, but develops along personal, social and cultural dimensions of personality (Adamson et al., 1999:22; Dreyer, 1980:14; Thom, 1988:216). In addition, it was imperative that all of the select elements of the sample could read and write English for purposes of the self-administration of the data collection instruments. Once the above-mentioned criteria were exhausted the sample size totalled 88 incarcerated adolescents in a select correctional centre. Due to incomplete and or corrupt data received from five participants, their responses were excluded from the study, arriving thus at a sample size of 83 research participants.

## 5.6 DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

The following discussion focuses on further characteristics of the sample, namely chronological age distribution, cultural and ethnic characteristics, home language and level of education of the research participants as well as frequency distributions of offences committed, length of prison sentence and length of time incarcerated. Table 3 refers to the chronological age distribution of the sample.

Table 3  
*Age Distribution*

	N	%
15 years	1	1.21
16 years	8	9.63
17 years	18	21.69
18 years	56	67.47
Total	83	100.00

The sum ( $\Sigma$ ) of the ages in the sample is 1 457, while the mean age of the sample is 17.55 years. Fifty-six (67.47%) of the participants are 18 years of age whereas the youngest participant is 15 years old. This age distribution can be mainly attributed to the sampling requirement of basic English language proficiency as criteria to have been selected as a suitable participant for the purposes of this study. Chronological age and level of education obtained, is usually associated. It is also possible that younger offenders are not as frequently incarcerated than their older counterparts.

In Table 4 an exposition is given of the cultural groups to which the research participants belong.

Table 4  
*Cultural Group*

Cultural group	N	%
Asian	1	1.21
Black	64	77.10
Coloured	17	20.48
Other	1	1.21
Total	83	100.00

The majority of the participants, namely 64 (77.10%) are black, followed by 17 (20.48%) Coloured participants. While only one Asian participated, the research participant who

The cultural distribution of the sample is graphically represented in Figure 1:

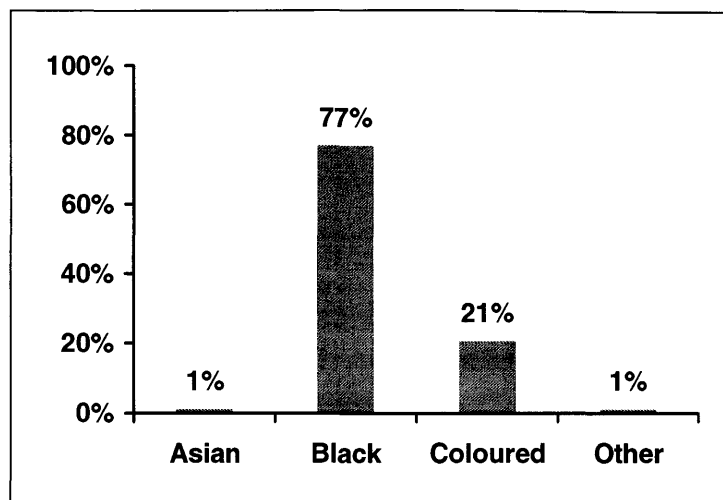


Figure 1. Cultural group

In addition to cultural group, the specific ethnic group that the participants belong to was also asked. Table 5 presents the number and percentage of participants in each ethnic group.

Table 5  
*Ethnic Group Distribution*

Ethnic group	N	%
Zulu	24	28.92
Tswana	10	12.05
Afrikaans	9	10.84
Pedi	7	8.43
Sotho	7	8.43
Coloured	5	6.02
English	5	6.02
Ndebele	4	4.82
Xhosa	4	4.82
Shangaan	3	3.62
Swazi	2	2.41
Venda	2	2.41
Other	1	1.21
Total	83	100.00

The three largest ethnic groups are represented by the Zulus, namely 24 (28.92%), then the 10 (12.05%) participants from the Tswana group and thirdly the nine (10.84%) participants from the Afrikaans group. "Other" refers to the participant mentioned in the discussion following Table 4.

The three largest ethnic groups are represented by the Zulus, namely 24 (28.92%), then the 10 (12.05%) participants from the Tswana group and thirdly the nine (10.84%) participants from the Afrikaans speaking Coloured group. “Other” refers to the participant mentioned in the discussion following Table 4.

Table 6 presents the home language distribution of the sample.

Table 6

*Home Language*

Home Language	N	%
Zulu	27	32.53
Afrikaans	13	15.66
Tswana	10	12.04
English	7	8.43
Pedi	7	8.43
Sotho	6	7.23
Xhosa	6	7.23
Ndebele	3	3.62
Tshivenda	2	2.41
Xhsonga	1	1.21
Swazi	1	1.21
Total	83	100.00

The home language of participants reflects the ethnic group distribution yet some differences were recorded. This could be attributed amongst others to identification with the ethnic group of one parent (e.g. the father) but adopting the language of the other (e.g. the mother). Most research participants, namely 27 (32.53%) speak Zulu as their first language, followed by 13 (15.66%) who speak Afrikaans and 10 (12.04%) who speak Tswana.

In Table 7 the level of education of the sample is given. One research participant omitted to indicate his level of education.

Table 7

*Highest Level of Education of Respondents*

Schooling	n	%
No schooling	5	6.10
Up to grade 4 (std 2)	4	4.88
Grade 5,6 and 7 (std 3-5)	12	14.63
Grade 8-9 (std 6-7)	20	24.39
Grade 10 (std 8)	23	28.04
Grade 11 (std 9)	10	12.20
Grade 12 (std 10)	3	3.66
Trade e.g. N1	5	6.10
Total	82	100.00

included in the study. A few participants (8) have completed matric (Grade 12) or have obtained a Trade qualification (9.8%).

Information on the type of offences committed and the length of prison sentences is presented diagrammatically in Figure 2.

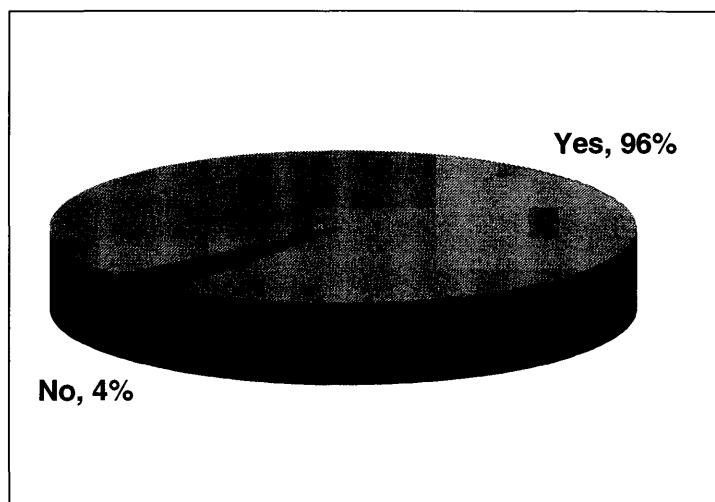


Figure 2. First time in prison

As can be seen in the above pie chart 80 (96%) are in prison for the first time, while 3 (4%) are recidivists.

In accordance with the classification system of the Department of Correctional Services (DOC), the types of offences for which the research participants have been incarcerated are grouped into four categories, namely, aggressive, economic, sexual and "other". The category, "other", includes social fabric crimes, such as drinking in public, or trespassing as well as offences such as kidnapping, malicious damage to property, possession of burglary tools and an possessing as unlicensed fire-arm. None of the research participants were incarcerated for narcotic offences, a fifth category used by the DOC. This concurs with the research of Dissel (1999:9), which shows that imprisonment is seldom used for children convicted of drug offences. The respective categories and the percentage of participants who committed each offence are presented in Table 8.



Table 8  
*Type of Offence*

Offence	N	%
Aggressive	41	49.40
Economic	25	30.12
Sexual	11	13.25
Other	6	7.23
Total	83	100.00

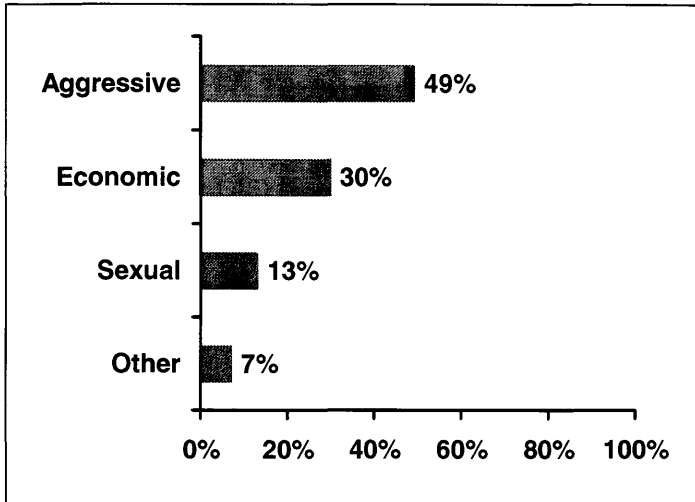


Figure 3. Type of offence

From Table 8 and Figure 3, in which the type of offence is graphically illustrated, it is apparent the 41 (49.40%) of the research participant is in prison for aggressive offences such as murder, attempted murder, robbery, aggravating robbery and assault to cause grievous bodily harm. A further 25 (30.12%) have been incarcerated for committing economic offences such as housebreaking, theft and fraud, whilst 11 (13.25%) have been sentenced to prison for committing sexual offences such as rape and indecent assault. The 6 (7.23%) who fall into the category “other” have been sentenced for kidnapping, malicious damage to property, possession of burglary tools and possessing an unlicensed fire-arm.

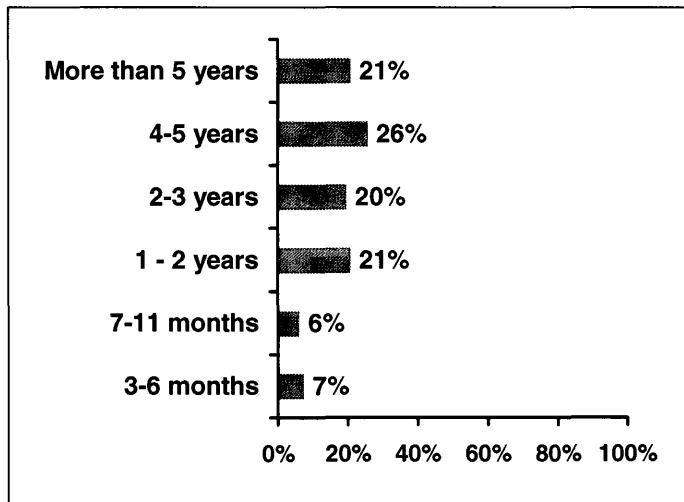
Besides the actual offences committed, the research participants were also asked to indicate the length of their prison sentences and the length of time that they have already served in prison. This is presented in Table 9.

**Table 9**  
*Length of Prison Sentence*

Length	N	%
More than 5 years	17	20.48
4 – 5 years	22	26.51
2 – 3 years	16	19.28
1 – 2 years	17	20.48
7 – 11 months	5	6.02
3 – 6 months	6	7.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Whereas only 11 (13.25%) research participants have short sentences ranging from 3 to 11 months, 55 (66.27%) have been sentenced for periods ranging between 1 and 5 years and 17 (20.48) have sentences exceeding five years.

In Figures 4 and 5 length of prison sentences and length of time incarcerated are illustrated graphically.



*Figure 4. Length of prison sentence*

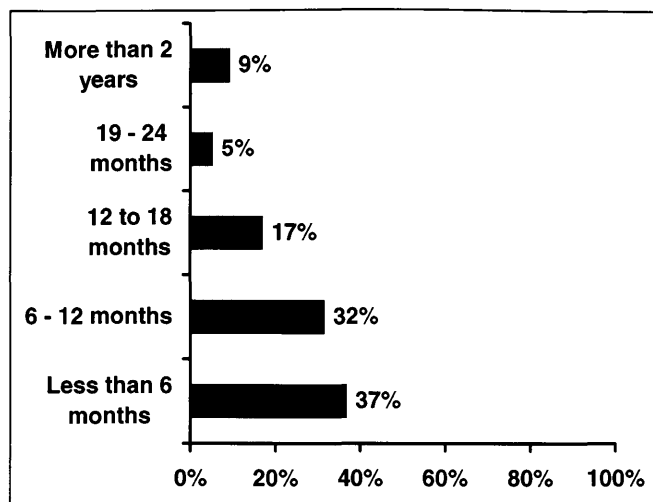


Figure 5. Time duration in prison (n = 76)

Despite their relatively long prison sentences, most of the research participants have not been in prison for longer than a year. Of the 76 (91.57%) research participants who answered the question on the length of time spent in prison, 30 (39%) have been incarcerated for less than one year.

A cross-tabulation between the types of crimes and the length of the prison sentence is set out in Table 10.

Table 10  
*Cross-tabulation between Length of Prison Sentence and Type of Offence*

Length of prison sentence	Offence							
	Aggressive		Economic		Sexual		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
3-11 months	1	2.44	7	28.00	2	18.18	1	16.67
1-2 years	7	17.07	8	32.00	1	9.10	1	16.67
2 years and longer	33	80.49	10	40.00	8	72.72	4	66.66
Total	41	100.00	25	100.00	11	100.00	6	100.00

Table 10 shows that in terms of short sentences, the economic group dominates. Whereas 28.00% of economic offenders received sentences of less than one year, few aggressive offenders (2.44%) as well as sexual (18.18%) and “other” offenders (16.67%), were given such short sentences. Most of the aggressive offenders (80.49%) were sentenced to prison for a period of two years and longer, followed by the sex offenders (72.72%) and “other” group (66.70%). Of the economic offenders, 40% were sentenced to prison for a period of two years and longer.

## 5.7 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

The statistical techniques used to analyse the data can be grouped into two broad categories, namely descriptive and inferential statistics.

### 5.7.1 Descriptive statistics

According to Salkind (2001:150) descriptive statistics describe the general characteristics of a set or distribution of scores and serves to organise, summarise and visualise the data. Descriptive statistics calculated for the study refer to frequency distributions, means and standard deviations.

*Frequencies* are the number of times a response has occurred (Salkind, 2001:150). A *mean* is the sum of a set of scores divided by the number of scores. It constitutes the arithmetic midpoint of the scores and represents all the scores in the sample. *Standard deviation* refers to the variability around the mean and indicates the average to which scores in a distribution differ from one another (Salkind, 2001:154).

### 5.7.2 Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics determine the degree of confidence with which results from the sample can be generalised to the larger population. The inferential tests used in the study include a t-test, ANOVA, Correlation analysis and Factor Analysis.

#### 5.7.2.1 t-test

The t-test assesses whether the means of two groups are statistically different from each other. In other words, whether the differences observed in the means of two samples are likely to exist in the population. A t-test for the independent measure was used to compare the two sample means from two unrelated groups.

### 5.7.2.2 Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

ANOVA, or analysis of variance, tests for differences (variance) in means, as does the *t*-test, but compares variance between two or more groups. Where the *t*-test refers to differences in means and standard error calculations, the ANOVA engages only in variances (Kerlinger, 1986:208). According to Hagan (1997:361) the principle feature of analysis of variance entails a significant *F*, which indicates a difference between means (*F*, similar to *t* presents with a table of probabilities with which the calculated statistic is compared).

### 5.7.2.3 Correlation analysis

According to Field (2005:111) a correlation describes the degree of relationship between two variables. This relationship could refer to a linear relationship between variables. The calculation most used when computing a correlation coefficient was developed by Pearson and is known as the Pearson product-moment correlation, or the Pearson correlation coefficient. This study made use of the Pearson correlation coefficient to determine linear relationships.

The correlation coefficient, contrary to the *t*- and *F*-values, has value beyond providing an indication of significance only. Firstly, the size of the coefficient indicates the strength of the relationship, a one (1) reflects a perfect relationship and a zero (0) no relationship at all (Graziano & Raulin, 1989:100). Secondly, the sign of the correlation coefficient (+ or -) defines the direction of the relationship, a positive correlation coefficient means that as the value of one variable increases, the value of the other variable increases; similarly, as the value of one variable decreases, the other decreases. A negative correlation coefficient indicates that as the value of one variable increases, the other decreases, and vice-versa.

### 5.7.2.4 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical procedure that identifies underlying patterns or dimensions among a series of scale items. It therefore observes interrelationships of data to generate clusters that different items seem to have in common (Hagan, 1997:456). Concerning the apparent complexity of such an analysis of the data obtained from the

Erikson scale, all statistical analyses in the study were computed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows Version 13 (Field, 2005).

### **5.7.3 Statistical significance**

The level of statistical significance is usually set in terms of the risk or willingness to be in error in not supporting the null hypothesis (accepting a significant relationship). Customarily, the 0.05 probability is used ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) as the minimum acceptance level for statistical significance (Hagan, 1997:357). This implies one is willing to be 95% confident that the relationship between two variables is a real one, however, willing to accept being in error five times out of a hundred. For the purpose of this study, the significance level of 0.05 is considered adequate.

Although directional and non-directional hypotheses have been formulated the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), namely that no significant differences will exist between groups will be tested in all instances.

In those instances where percentages are reported the discussion will focus on those variables where 50% or more of the research participants responded affirmatively to the specific variable.

## **5.8 CONCLUSION**

This quantitative study has been conducted in accordance with scientific guidelines, informing the methodological procedures followed and data collection techniques employed. The data collected with the measuring instruments (questionnaire and Erikson scale) was analysed statistically and the results thereof are presented in Chapter 6.

## 6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

In this chapter, exploratory and descriptive data is presented together with the testing of the statistical significance of the research hypotheses to empirically verify the aims of the study.

### 6.1 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE

The exploratory and descriptive data gathered prior to the testing of hypotheses 1.1 and 1.2 and 3 is presented in the previous chapter under the description of the sample description (see 5.6).

In hypothesis 1 it is postulated that a significant difference in identity development will exist between incarcerated adolescents with regard to their cultural group (hypothesis 1.1) as well as their ethnic group (hypothesis 1.2).

#### 6.1.1 Hypothesis 1.1

In hypothesis 1.1 it is postulated that a significant difference in identity development will exist amongst incarcerated adolescents with regard to the different cultural groups.

An overview of the findings is given in Table 4 (see Chapter 5, 5.6). In terms of the different cultural groups, the sample consists of black (77%), Coloured (21%), Asian (1%) and other (1%) research participants. Due to the small number of research participants in the categories "Asian" and "Other" the statistician (Ms M Coetzee, personal communication, April 24, 2006) recommended that they be excluded from the statistical analysis. Despite the remaining two groups not being equal in size, a comparison of their respective identity development scores was possible.

Table 11

*Difference in Identity Scores of Black and Coloured Research Participants: t-test for Independent Means*

Cultural group	Mean identity score	t-test	p-value
Black	165.9	0.328	0.774
Coloured	164.4		

The identity scores of the two cultural groups do not differ significantly. Therefore the hypothesis is not supported.

While this finding is contrary to Erikson's (1963:211) point of view, namely that cultural differences may have an effect on identity development, it concurs with Thom's (1988) research showing that no significant difference occurred between the level of identity development achieved by black and white adolescent in South Africa. In a later study Thom and Coetzee (2004:8) found that a group of black adolescents achieved a higher level of identity development than their white counterparts. Although this finding supports Erikson's point of view, it is important to note that the comparison relates to the black and white cultural groups and not black and Coloured groups as in the current study. One could therefore deduce that the experiential world - and subsequent impact thereof on identity development – of black and white adolescents may be in greater contrast than between Coloured and black cultural groups.

According to Thom and Coetzee (2004:186; 191) the dismantling of apartheid provided powerful and positive role models to African youth for the development of both a collective and individual identity. A common social identity forged in a moral struggle against apartheid, brought about resilience, approval, change and status in the identity development of black adolescents. The same may hold true for the previously disadvantaged Coloured group. On the other hand, white South African youths can no longer take it for granted to be the solely respected cultural group in South Africa and could thus increasingly experience an extended psychosocial moratorium in want of strong and positive role models. Considering the size of the sample and that all the research participants are incarcerated, it is essential that further studies should be undertaken to include larger numbers of incarcerated adolescents from all the different cultural groups (Asian, black, Coloured and white). Furthermore, incarcerated and non-incarcerated groups should be cross-culturally compared.

### **6.1.2 Hypothesis 1.2**

Hypothesis 1.2 states that a significant difference in identity development will exist between incarcerated adolescents with regard to the different ethnic groups.



In Table 5 (see Chapter 5, 5.6) the findings regarding ethnic group is presented.

In this study the demographic variable, ethnic group, showed too much variability to allow for a meaningful statistical comparison (statistician: Ms M Coetzee, personal communication, April 24, 2006). There are, for instance, 13 different ethnic groups with some cells being as small as 2. Hypothesis 1.2 could therefore not be tested.

To determine whether or not the level of identity achieved and the relationship thereof with ethnic group shows a significant difference, it is recommended that research be undertaken with larger samples and that small samples should not include such a large variety of ethnic groups. Together with ethnic group affiliation, attention needs to be paid to ethnicity and its relationship to identity development and the committing of crime. According to Erikson (1956:104) humanity never lives completely in the present and the *ideologies of the superego* (or the superego as a “vehicle”) perpetuate the past and the traditions of the race, which yield gradually to the influence of the presence and to new developments. Thom (1988:72) as well as Thom and Coetzee (2004:186) emphasise the importance of a synthesis, or mutuality between traditional and modern cultures to arrive at both a meaningful collective and individual identity. Such mutuality could ensure improvements to self-esteem and self-image and may assist the incarcerated adolescent to overcome role confusion, a prerequisite according to Erikson (1959:141; 1968:181), for the development of a sense of a personal identity. Role fixation, on the other hand, may occur when the incarcerated adolescent becomes isolated and restrained in his initiatives and experiences. A possible outcome is identity foreclosure without feelings of reciprocity between himself, his ethnic group and society in general.

According to Thom and Coetzee (2004:186) both black and white cultures in South Africa, can be regarded as “change-oriented” cultures. Given the large-scale socio-political transformation since the advent of democracy in South Africa, one could in this regard also include the Coloured group and other groups, such as Asians. Further research on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent needs thus to assess the historical background of ethnicity in terms of its customs, religion, values, mores, language, arts, science and technology in a society undergoing transformation.

The following discussion provides exploratory and descriptive data on race and ethnicity that could serve to initiate more research on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent.

### 6.1.3 Exploratory and descriptive data

In South Africa, race and ethnic group were variables traditionally associated with discrimination (Alberts & Meyer, 1998:287; Thom & Coetzee, 2004:186). Although institutionalised racial discrimination has been eradicated from the statutes and human rights are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), some adolescents are still discriminated against. In this regard the research of Holleran and Waller (2003:344) as well as Tsang et al. (2003:374), shows that marginalised adolescents in general need to confront issues of prejudice and discrimination. When subjected to such conditions, it could hinder one's achievements and complete expression of self.

Due to the nature of incarceration, the adolescents in this study are particularly marginalised. As is shown in Table 12, they were confronted by issues of discrimination prior to incarceration.

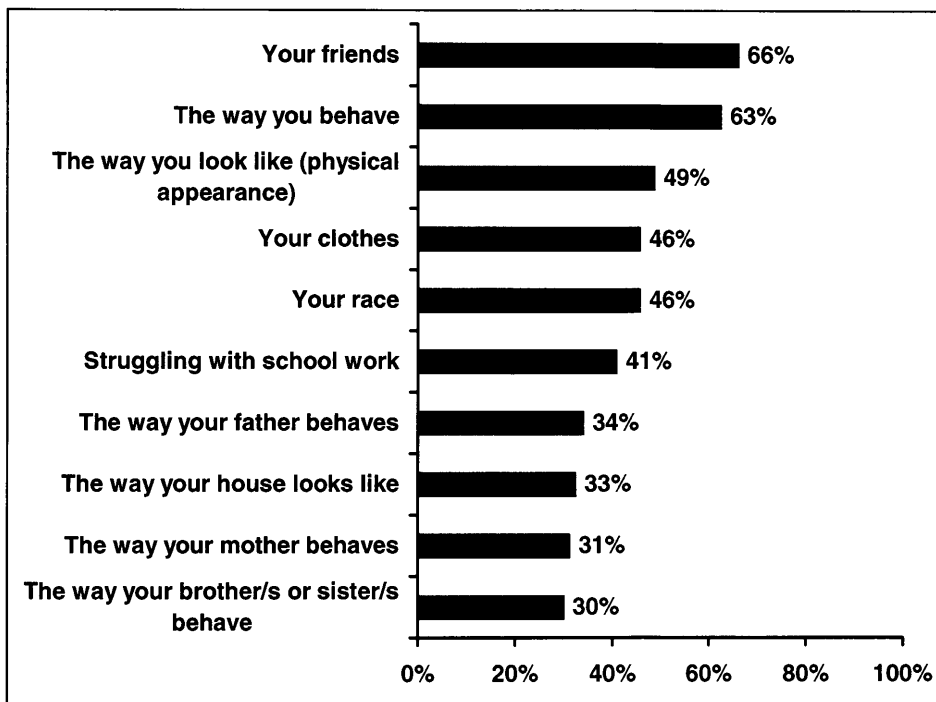
Table 12  
*Perceptions of Discrimination Prior to Incarceration*

Discrimination	N	%
The way you look like (physical appearance)	40	49
Your race	38	46
The way you behave	52	63
Your friends	55	66
Your clothes	38	46
Struggling with school work	34	41
The way your house looks like	27	33
The way your mother behaves	26	31
The way your father behaves	28	34
The way your brother/s or sister/s behave	25	30

According to Table 12 most of the research participants (66%) experienced feelings of discrimination due to their association with friends. This was followed by perceptions of discrimination due to their own behaviour (63%). According to Adams and Marshall (1996:431) the social context in which identity development occurs is considered

essential to experience both feelings of individuation and connectedness. Table 12 shows discrimination impacting negatively on the inter-system differentiation and relatedness of the incarcerated adolescent. However, concerning his identity development, percentage points have limited value and a statistical analysis of the data was also done and presented in the next section.

For purposes of further elucidation, the ranking of experiences of discrimination is presented in Figure 6.



*Figure 6.* Percentage distribution of experiences of discrimination prior to arrest and incarceration

Figures 7 and 8 respectively highlight experiences of the research participants with regard to treatment by members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) during their arrest and also during the trial phase.

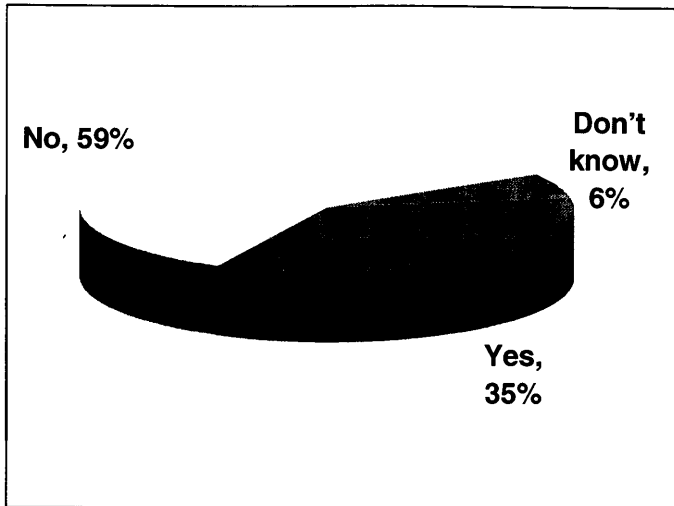


Figure 7. Fair treatment by police during arrest

Figure 7 shows that 49 (59%) of the research participants felt that they were not treated fairly by members of SAPS during arrest. This finding relates to the views of Barak et al. (2001:16, 17) emphasising that inequalities in crime control shape the discriminatory experiences of disenfranchised youth. This could be a reason for the absence of the white counterpart in the sample of this study, as stereotypes regarding race and socio-economic status underscore criminal justice decisions worldwide (Brown et al., 2001:158; Mcneely & Pope, 1981:13; Siegel, 2004:72). Likewise, Turk (1969:10) is of the opinion that criminality is a social construct, applied by those in power and fuelled by discriminatory law enforcement practices. For the disenfranchised research participants in this study, experiences of SAPS discrimination could translate into the application of legal relativism.

Concerning a fair trial (Figure 8), none of the values are however, 50% or above.

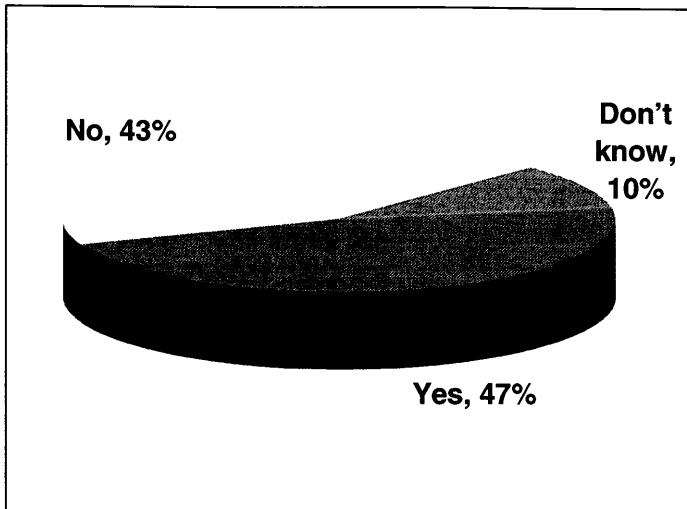


Figure 8. Fair treatment during trial proceedings

Further research needs to focus on the identity of "being outside the law", one of few that is readily available to disenfranchised youths, thereby assessing alternate identity pathways in which the "surplus population" has to form an identity with limited identity material at their disposal. In this regard the utilisation of diversionary measures from the criminal justice system with the view of identity enrichment would be useful.

## 6.2 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

The following discussion focuses on the relationship between identity development and experiences of discrimination. For purposes of the testing of hypothesis 2, a regression and correlation analysis was conducted.

### 6.2.1 Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 postulates that a significant difference in identity development will exist between incarcerated adolescents with regard to their level of identity achieved and their belief that they had been the target of discrimination.

Table 13 shows a regression and correlation analysis between the level of identity development achieved by the research participants and their experiences of discrimination during the pre-incarceration phase.

Table 13

*Correlation between Perceptions of Discrimination and Level of Identity Development*

Cause of discrimination	r	p-value
The way you look like (physical appearance)	-0.22	0.044*
Your race	-0.05	0.650
The way you behave	-0.20	0.077
Your friends	0.06	0.616
Your clothes	-0.31	0.005**
Struggling with school work	-0.11	0.318
The way your house looks like	-0.34	0.002**
The way your mother behaves	-0.30	0.002**
The way your father behaves	-0.30	0.006**
The way your brother/s or sister/s behave	-0.22	0.044*

\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

\*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$

Table 13 shows that hypothesis 2 cannot be supported. It, however, appears that some of the items used to test this hypothesis reached the set level of significance. Experiencing discrimination with regard to physical appearance, the clothes the individual wears, the type of home he lives in and the behaviour of his parents and siblings show a significant relationship to the development of a negative identity. It appears from this that a low level of identity development is related to discrimination concerning physical appearance and dress as well as behaviour of the family and the home environment. In this regard Craig (1986:361, 365) refers to the tension between the adolescent and society, particularly from a lack of fit between how they feel, their social standing and what they feel society wants them to be. This could be compounded by an acute concern with body image and body ideals, associated with a heightened sense of self-awareness with an over-all loss in identity (Berk, 2003:201; Santrock, 1986:354).

To extrapolate, according to Erikson (1956:105) the *body ego* or body image is that part of identity provided by the physical attributes of the organism. The demands (biological structure and its interface with a history of discrimination on the basis of physical appearance) on the ego ideal could have impacted negatively on the identity development of the research participants whose identities should have functioned under normal circumstances as an image of reality, being transmitted during successive childhood crises.

Discrimination of the research participants due to their physical appearance during adolescence - an acute and self-conscious developmental stage - impacted negatively on the development of a unique sense of self or identity. A high level of a personal identity could have served as the incarcerated adolescent's most important ego support in balancing the post-pubertal id with the superego and demanding ego ideal. Its synthesising function could have been diminished due to discrimination and the socio-economic and structural related determinant of a lack of affluence, namely poor quality of clothing and residence. In this regard, Holleran and Waller (2003:337) refer to poverty as a particular risk factor often associated with severe psychological distress when having to forge an identity in the "borderlands" or in a climate of prejudice, discrimination and marginalisation. Shaw and McKay (in Siegel, 2004:183) are of the opinion that an environment characterised by strain could furthermore favour the development of cultural deficits. With regard to the research participants, this translates into an absence of strong and virtuous parental figures.

Erikson (1956:79) is of the opinion that a sense of "outer isolation" (as the result of discrimination) may lead to an "inner vacuum" more open to primitive forms of identifications associated with a renewed struggle with archaic introjects. In other words, discrimination may precipitate the regression of the isolated incarcerated adolescent to infantile sexuality where a state of paralysis may eventually ensue. Concerning his identity development, one could conclude that the mentioned statistically significant discriminatory items could contribute to an increasing waste of defensive energy, that is "I am not that kind of person" hampering ego functions in the search of an identity that should have been associated under normal circumstances, with a playful engagement and experimentation with normative opportunities and associations, rather than being a retrograde move to previous developmental stages with limited identity capital as residue.

In view of the hypothesis not being supported as a whole it is recommended that each of the items that tested statistically significantly should be studied separately in relation to identity development. Such a study may show alternative pathways to identity development.

## 6.3 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND THE TYPE OF OFFENCE COMMITTED

The following discussion refers to the relationship between identity development and the committal of different types of offences.

### 6.3.1 Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 states that no significant differences will exist between the level of identity development achieved and different offences committed by different groups of offenders. To assess the relationship between the different types of offences and level of identity development achieved, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was done. The results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

*Comparison of Identity Scores of Incarcerated Adolescents who Committed Different Types of Offences*

Source	N	Mean identity score	p-value
Aggressive	41	163.81	0.395
Economic	25	163.52	
Sexual	11	172.18	
Other	6	172.00	

Although research participants who are incarcerated for sexual and other offences obtained higher scores on the identity scale than those who committed aggressive and economic offences, these difference are not statistically significant. Hypothesis 3 is therefore supported.

Concerning the process of epigenises (Erikson, 1963:245; 1968:94), the delinquency of the research participants as a collective could be viewed as an outcome of a basic mistrust in themselves and lack of belief in the future. It may furthermore serve as a function of the residue associated with a low level of identity development, namely a lack of purpose and direction (Erikson, 1968:185; Marcia, 1967:119; 1975:157). Their offending behaviour and subsequent incarceration could have deprived them of a psychosocial moratorium, thereby “arresting” greater interpersonal differentiation (Erikson, 1964:34; 1968:157). It may also be easier for the research participants to attempt to derive a sense of identity out of



identification with what they are least supposed to be (delinquent) than to struggle with societal demands they are unable to meet (Erikson, 1956:88; 1959:131). The development of a negative identity may be especially true in the context of the prison subculture that endorses "acting tough" and a sense of fidelity towards a prison code that is characterised by amongst others, a façade of courtesy to authority figures and non-committal responses to fellow inmates, devoid of emotional investment (Sykes, 1999:78).

Longitudinal research in corrections would be useful to elucidate more of the interplay between offending behaviour, labelling, institutionalisation and identity. An ideal situation would be to test the level of identity development at the time of incarceration and then after a period has elapsed. When comparing the mean scores obtained by the research participants with non-incarcerated research participants in other studies (Thom & Coetzee, 2004:188) it is apparent that their score is lower. It is suggested that future studies should endeavour to statistically compare scores of incarcerated adolescents with that found in other studies. It remains nevertheless important to view adolescence as both formative and fluid when assessing the relationship between level of identity development and the committing of various crimes during this critical developmental stage.

## **6.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY MEMBERS**

The following discussion summarises the explorative and descriptive data collected pertaining to the relationships between the research participants and their family members. After this overview, the relationship between family members and the identity development of the research participants will be examined through the testing of the hypotheses for statistical significance.

### **6.4.1 Exploratory and descriptive data**

The nature of the relationship with parental figures, siblings and friends was determined by means of Likert-type questions. These questions required of the research participant to indicate his closeness on a continuum of "very close" to "never close". If a particular

relationship never existed (e.g. due to death or divorce), the research participant could use the “not applicable” option. The relationships are summarised in Table 15.

Table 15  
*Closeness to Family Members and Friends*

Variable	Very close		Sometimes close		Never close		Not applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Closeness to mother	61	74	14	17	1	1	6	7
Closeness to father	32	39	20	24	23	28	8	10
Closeness to brothers/ sisters	58	70	16	19	6	7	3	4
Closeness to friends	24	29	51	61	8	10	0	0

Most of the research participants (74%) felt very close to their mother figure and siblings (70%). Thom (1988:267) found that the nature of the parent-adolescent relationship (e.g. degree of emotional closeness and advice valued) is the most important determinant influencing the degree of the identity development of white Afrikaans and English speaking as well as black adolescents in South Africa. On the basis of this, the research participants were asked to indicate whose advice they most value. In Table 16 the source of advice the research participants value most is shown.

Table 16  
*Advice Most Valued (n = 82)*

Source	N	%
Parents	65	78
Own opinion	7	8
Friends	5	6
Brother/sister	4	5
None mentioned	1	1
Total	82	100

According to Table 16, the advice of their parents is valued by most (78%) of the research participants. Whereas Table 15 shows that emotional closeness to the mother figure (very close and sometimes close is reported by 91%), is higher than for the father figure (very close and sometimes close reported by 63%), most of the research participants valued the advice of both their parents. This finding runs counter to the research of Montemayer (1982:151) indicating that often the opinion of the peer friendship group is more important to the adolescent than that of his family.

Papalia and Olds (1987:519) refer also to the constant tension of adolescents wanting to become more independent from their parents, often matched by “double messages” from the parents, wanting their children to become more independent but finding it difficult to “let go”. Despite the possibility of conflict associated with the need of the adolescent to become more autonomous, the majority of the research participants nevertheless valued the advice of their parents more than that of their peers, siblings or own opinion. This trend concurs with the research of Thom (1988:312) and studies cited by her on American adolescents and the quality of their relationships with their parents, but needs to be tested for statistical significance.

The following discussion refers to the testing for statistical significance of the relationship between the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent and his parents and siblings. (The role of peer friendships as a reference group will be discussed under hypothesis 6.)

#### 6.4.2 Hypothesis 4, 4.1 to 4.3

According to hypothesis 4 the level of identity development achieved will be significantly related to interpersonal closeness with family members<sup>1</sup>. Sub-hypothesis 4.1, formulated to test the closeness to the mother postulates that incarcerated adolescents who experienced a close relationship with the mother figure will show a significantly higher level of identity development than those who did not experience such a relationship. The findings are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

*Comparison of Identity Scores relative to Closeness to the Mother*

Source	N	Mean identity score	p-value
Very close	61	166.52	0.552
Sometimes close	14	167.14	
Never close	1	147.00	

<sup>1</sup> Identity scores of the research participants who experienced different levels of emotional closeness with their parental figures and siblings were examined through an analysis of variance on a nominal scale of “very close”, “somewhat close” and “never close”. All “not applicable” answers were excluded from this analysis.

Closeness to the father was tested by means of sub-hypothesis 4.2 which states that incarcerated adolescents who experienced a close relationship with the father figure will show a significantly higher level of identity development than those who did not experience such a relationship. The finding is shown in Table 18.

Table 18  
*Comparison of Identity Scores relative to Closeness to the Father*

Source	N	Mean identity score	p-value
Very close	32	168.06	0.684
Sometimes close	20	163.65	
Never close	23	166.91	

Sub-hypothesis 4.3 stating incarcerated adolescents who experienced a close relationship with siblings will show a significantly higher level of identity development than those who did not experience such a relationship, was formulated to investigate closeness to siblings. The finding is presented in Table 19.

Table 19  
*Comparison of Identity Scores relative to Closeness to Siblings*

Source	N	Mean identity score	p-value
Very close	58	167.45	0.539
Sometimes close	16	161.88	
Never close	6	165.83	

Tables 17, 18 and 19 show that there is no significant relationship between interpersonal closeness with family members and the identity development of the research participants. Hypotheses 4, 4.1 and 4.2 are therefore not supported.

This finding runs counter to research (Adamson & Lyxell, 1996:575; Ammaniti et al., 2000:330; Newman & Newman, 2001:521; Thom, 1988:190) that emphasises the importance of positive, supportive, warm and consistent parent-child interactions for the child to develop a personal identity that is rich in resources. A reason for a lack of statistical significance could be the possibility that the offending behaviour of the incarcerated adolescent and his official label as a criminal as well as the related physical isolation may cause both intra- and interpersonal emotional distancing, thereby minimising the role of the family as a primary reference group.

Despite the hypotheses not being supported further studies should be conducted utilising qualitative methods in combination with quantitative methods. In this way the adolescent's severance of emotional ties with his family members due to the very nature of incarceration could be explored. Furthermore, attention should be paid to the employment of defence mechanisms by the incarcerated adolescent to protect him emotionally and to divert feelings of abandonment in the captive and isolated prison environment.

### 6.4.3 Serendipitous findings

A serendipitous finding that emerged from the research relates to experiences of the research participants of being treated fairly or unfairly by the mother figure.

The research participants were asked to indicate whether they felt their mother figures treated them fairly or unfairly. The option was a simple "yes - fairly" or "no - unfairly". "Yes" responses were given by 73% and "no" responses by 27%. The two sets of responses were further compared in terms of the respective identity development scores.

Table 20 provides the results from the t-test for independent means.

Table 20  
*t-test for the Significance of Difference between Identity Development and Treatment by the Mother Figure*

Variable	Mean identity score	t-test	p-value
Fair treatment	168.5	2.305	0.024*
Unfair treatment	158.2		

\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

Table 20 shows that research participants who felt that their mothers treated them unfairly obtained a significantly lower identity development score than those who felt that their mothers treated them fairly. The importance of the mother figure in relation to the identity development of incarcerated adolescent was also illustrated in Table 13 showing that the higher the level of a personal identity, the lower was the perception of discrimination based on the behaviour of the mother figure.

In terms of future life-span development, Erikson (1966:281) stresses in particular the quality of the nature of the relationship between the mother figure and child. Feelings of emotionally closeness with the mother figure are usually associated with the virtue of trust and enables the adolescent to be loyal towards himself and significant others. If unfulfilled, the need to trust may be marked by cynicism which in turn masks his need to believe in other people and to trust them. The adolescent also needs to exercise autonomy, a further residue of his relationship with the mother figure emanating from early childhood. A sound relationship with the mother figure will result furthermore in the virtue of hope and a realistic time perspective (see 2.4).

Further research should focus on the role of closeness and fairness in the development of an identity. It should also be considered that being treated fairly does not necessarily imply closeness.

## 6.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

Prior to the testing of the hypothesis on the family structure of the research participants and their level of identity development, exploratory and descriptive data is firstly presented on the nature of the family structure.

### 6.5.1 Exploratory and descriptive data

The following discussion provides a summary of the family structure of the research participants. Table 21 depicts the family structure of the research participants referring to the incidence of structurally intact and non-intact families.

Table 21  
*Family Structure*

Variable	N	%
Married	29	35
Divorced	9	11
Deceased	4	5
Not living together	41	49
Total	83	100

The percentage distribution of the family structure of the sample is graphically represented in Figure 9.

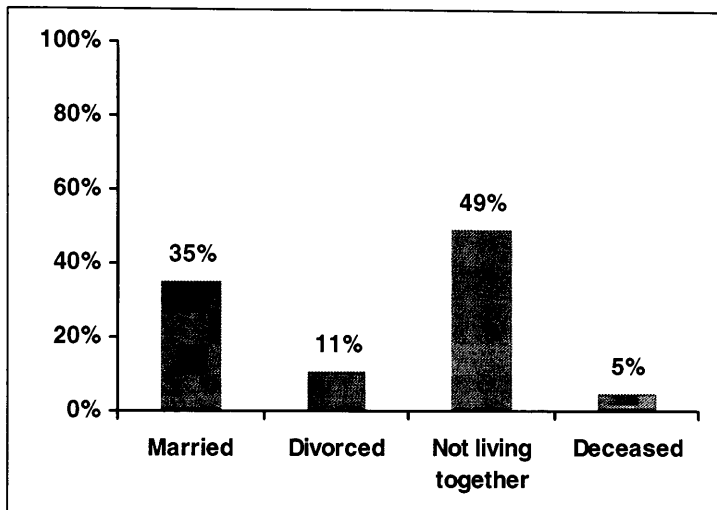


Figure 9. Family structure of the research participants

The majority of the research participants, namely 65% are from a family background characterised by parental absence. This could be attributed to the physical separation of the parents, divorce or mortality. Parental absence is frequently recorded in juvenile delinquency studies (Haskell & Yablonsky, 1982:79; Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1990:118; Peacock, 1993:174; Siegel, 2004:214; Weisberg, 1985:71; Yablonsky, 2000:314) and is often associated with inadequate supervision of the child (too restrictive, too permissive or inconsistent), a lack of appropriate role models, poverty, or child abuse by the new partner(s). According to Craig (1986:335) stress and coping with life-events such as family disintegration do not occur as single events, but often embody transitional processes. For the incarcerated adolescent this translates into the quandary of having to embark on greater interpersonal differentiation but within a wavering family context. The following discussion focuses on the statistical significance of the relationship between family structure and identity development of the incarcerated adolescent.

### 6.5.2 Hypothesis 5

In addition to the relationship between level of identity achieved and nature of family relationships, hypothesis 5 states that significantly more incarcerated adolescents with a

lower level of identity development will be from broken homes than those with a higher level of identity development.

For purposes of statistical analysis and the testing of hypothesis 5, the research participants were grouped into two categories, namely, those with married parents (intact family) and those with only one parent at home (either living apart, divorced or deceased), namely a non-intact family. Although the “married” group is somewhat smaller than the group with only one parent (35% vs. 65%), a statistical comparison was possible. A t-test for independent means was conducted and the results are presented in Table 22.

Table 22  
*t-test for the Significance of Difference between Identity Scores of Participants from Intact and Non-intact Families*

Variable	Mean identity score	t-test	p-value
Intact family	167.89	0.926	0.357
Non-intact family	164.09		

Although the participants in this study with only one parent have a slightly lower identity score, the difference is not statistically significant. Hypothesis 5 is therefore not supported.

A reason for this lack of statistical significance may be that within the extended or polygamous family of the black adolescent, the adolescent may have enjoyed the care of more than one “father” or “mother” (Lambo, 1972:8). Even though the incarcerated adolescent’s father or mother was absent, a surrogate(s) may have fulfilled his or her roles. It is therefore possible that other factors played a more important part in the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent than family structure.

It would be useful for further research on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent to focus on the surrogate function of the extended black family in particular, also as pertaining to the socio-political climate that impacted on family and community life in apartheid South Africa. With regard to the extended family it is essential to compare incarcerated adolescents who were raised in extended and in nuclear families. With reference to the socio-political climate, Alberts and Meyer (1998:287) as well as Thom and



Coetzee (2004:186) are of the opinion that apartheid had a profound bearing on the development of a collective political identity among the African youth. However, relating to the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent, Wedge et al. (2000:36), refer to engendering cycles of violence in young men who resort to violence as their only means of asserting themselves in society due to adopting violence as a problem-solving model set by their fathers (or father figures). An assessment of family structure within a broader socio-political and cultural context could therefore identify alternate identity pathways contributing to a negative or diffused identity of the adolescent.

## 6.6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND PEER FRIENDSHIPS

The following discussion examines the relationship between peer friendships of the research participants and their level of identity achieved. Firstly, exploratory and descriptive data will be presented on the nature of their relationship with their friends as a peer membership and reference group. This discussion will be followed by the testing of hypothesis 6 to determine the statistical significance of the data.

### 6.6.1 Exploratory and descriptive data

In Table 23 an overview is given of the research participants' perception of the nature of the relationship with their friends as a peer reference group.

Table 23  
*Nature of the Relationship of the Research Participants with their Friends*

Variable	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Obedient	17	20	52	63	14	17
Warm and close	25	30	48	58	10	12
Confident	36	43	37	45	10	12
Aggressive	27	33	38	46	18	22

Table 23 shows that 63% of the research participants are sometimes obedient in their peer relationships. A further 58% described their peer relationships as sometimes warm and close in nature. According to Piaget (in Craig, 1986:348) friendship patterns during childhood are typically egocentric. This data may signal the beginning of a shifting of pattern of friendships from childhood. It, however, signifies no statistical significance with

regard to the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent. The nature of the relationship of the research participants with their peers as a friendship reference group is further depicted in Figure 10.

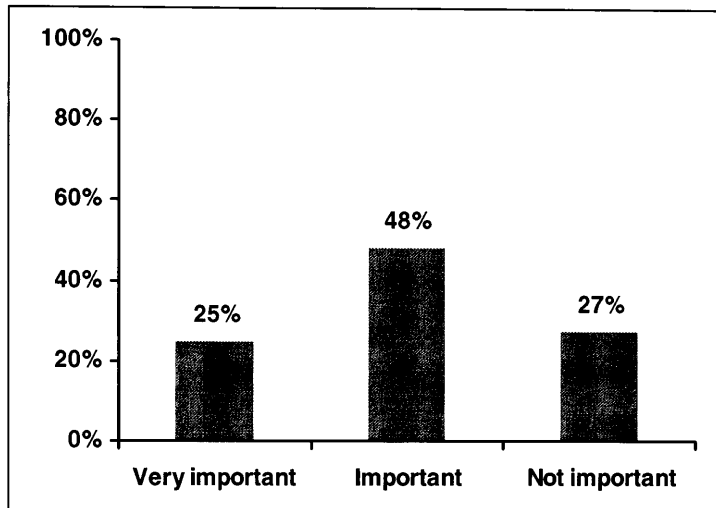


Figure 10. Importance of peer friendship to the research participants

Figure 10 shows a less than 50% rating on the different scales of importance of peer friendships to the incarcerated adolescent. Researchers (Berndt, 1982:1447; Garrod et al., 1992:170; Tarrant, 2002:110; Valliant, 1983:135) view peer friendships as valuable networks through which conceptions of identity and self-esteem are negotiated. To test the level of statistical significance of the relationship between peer friendships of the incarcerated adolescent and identity development, a correlation analysis was conducted.

### 6.6.2 Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 postulates that incarcerated adolescents with a low level of identity development will show a significantly less positive relationship with the peer friendship group than those with a high level of identity development.

In Table 24 the correlation between the nature of peer friendships and identity development is shown. The nature of the relationships of the research participants with their peers was determined by asking the participants to rate their relationships in terms of select concepts. A scale of “always”, “sometimes” and “never” was used to describe

the extent to which certain words reflected relationships. While the scale is strictly ordinal in nature, for the purpose of statistical “elegance” the mentioned scale was interpreted as an interval scale, ranging from 1 to 3. The scores obtained were then correlated with the level of identity development achieved but as is evident from Table 24, none of the p-values were below the statistical significant point of 0.05.

Table 24

*Correlation between the Nature of Peer Relationships and Identity Development Scores*

Variable	r	p-value
Obedient	0.12	0.300
Warm and close	0.14	0.203
Confident	0.05	0.638
Aggressive	0.16	0.138
Acceptance by friends	0.10	0.385

A lack of correlation indicates that the research participants have no defining type of relationship with peers that influenced their identity development, either positively or negatively. Hypothesis 6 is therefore not supported.

This finding differs from research showing that under normal circumstances, peers could assist each other with the stress associated with adolescence and could provide an identity pathway through the provision of behavioural directives, general acceptance and a collective identity (Berndt, 1982:1447; Damon, 2000:2; Garrod et al., 1992:170; Tarrant, 2002:110; Valliant, 1983:135; Wright & Keple, 1981:559).

Concerning the lack of statistical significance in this study, it should be noted that the prison environment is an unnatural environment characterised by a lack of free association that usually typifies peer friendships in open society. Research needs to focus on alternative support systems of the incarcerated adolescent that could have an impact on his identity development

## **6.7 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND OVERCROWDING CONDITIONS IN PRISON**

This section focuses on the influence of physical conditions of the prison environment on the identity development of the research participants. The exploratory and descriptive

data refer to the level of satisfaction with prison conditions, followed by an exploratory factor and correlation analysis of identity development.

### 6.7.1 Exploratory and descriptive data

Table 25 provides a summary of the level of satisfaction of the research participants with prison conditions.

Table 25  
*Satisfaction with Prison Conditions*

Condition	Satisfied		Dissatisfied		Don't care	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Size of your cell	54	65	14	17	15	18
Your bed ( bed and mattress)	40	48	30	36	13	16
Your bedding (e.g. blankets, sheets and pillows)	37	45	38	46	8	10
Washing facilities	44	53	32	39	7	8
Toilets	38	46	37	45	8	10
Food	28	34	47	57	8	10
Exercise opportunities	47	57	24	29	12	15
Reading material	51	61	27	33	5	6
Fresh air in the cell	42	51	33	40	8	10

Table 25 shows that 65% of the research participants were satisfied with the size of their prison cells, the reading material available to them (61%) and exercise opportunities (57%). Of the research participants, 53% was satisfied with the washing facilities and slightly more than half of the sample (51%), was satisfied with the fresh air in the cells. A further 57% was dissatisfied with the food provided. The levels of satisfaction with the size of the prison cells, availability of reading material, exercise opportunities, washing facilities and fresh air in the cells are higher than recorded in the studies of Goyer (2004:34) and Sloth-Nielsen (1998:16;19;21). The first author refers to prisons functioning as incubators for tuberculosis due to conditions of overcrowding and poor ventilation.

The finding concerning a 57% dissatisfaction with the food provided concurs with the local research of Sloth-Nielsen (1998:25) that reports that children frequently complain in prison about being hungry, the taste of the food and of losing weight. An inadequate diet could affect the normal physical and psychosocial development of the incarcerated

adolescent resulting in physical underdevelopment and under-activity (see 3.2.2). Although this data (Table 25) shows no statistical significance, it would remain nevertheless important to indicate that according to section 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) every sentenced prisoner has the right to conditions of detention that are consistent with human dignity, including at least adequate accommodation (see 1.3 and 3.2.1). Particularly, also in view of a review by Cherubin-Doumbia (2004:5) of eight NEPAD countries (Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda) that confirms that harsh and inadequate prison conditions are a problem in all of the African countries with the exception of Algeria that meets basic international standards.

### **6.7.2 Hypothesis 7, 7.1 to 7.7**

Hypothesis 7 postulates that a significant relationship exists between the level of identity development of the incarcerated adolescent and coping with prison conditions. Conditions associated with overcrowding may amplify the identity consciousness of the incarcerated adolescent. It was therefore probable that the incarcerated adolescent who has achieved a lower level of identity development, will display a lack of coping with prison conditions. To test this, the following sub-hypotheses were formulated:

***Hypothesis 7.1:*** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with bedding conditions than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.

***Hypothesis 7.2:*** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with ablution facilities than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.

***Hypothesis 7.3:*** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with food provisions than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.

**Hypothesis 7.4:** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with the size of their cells than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.

**Hypothesis 7.5:** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with exercise opportunities than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.

**Hypothesis 7.6:** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with available reading material than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.

**Hypothesis 7.7:** Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a high level of identity development will report significantly more effective coping with exposure to fresh air than those who did not achieve such a level of identity development.

To statistically test the relationship between satisfaction with prison conditions and level of identity achieved (hypotheses 7.1 to 7.7) an exploratory factor analysis was conducted. The exploratory factor analysis of the data revealed two main factors which are presented in Table 26.

Table 26  
*Two Factor Solution from a Principle Factor Analysis*

Condition	Factor 1	Factor 2
Size of your cell	0.312	
Your bed ( bed and mattress)	0.783	
Your bedding (blankets. sheets and pillows)	0.859	
Washing facilities	0.527	
Toilets	0.472	
Food	0.472	
Exercise opportunities		0.760
Reading material		0.669
Fresh air in the cell		0.252

Table 26 shows that aspects of prison life such as the size of a cell, the beds and blankets, washing facilities, toilets and food, all loaded on one factor, while exercise opportunities, reading material and fresh air loaded on a second factor. The first factor

reflects more basic needs whilst the second factor is associated with recreation, and could therefore be viewed as more aspiring or higher needs.

Table 27 shows the correlation analysis between factors one and two, level of identity development and satisfaction with prison conditions.

Table 27

*Correlation between Identity Development and Satisfaction with Prison Conditions*

Variable	r	p-value
Factor 1	-0.05	0.690
Factor 2	0.08	0.495

According to Table 27 satisfaction with these two factors, or with its independent aspects, is not influenced by degree of identity development of the research participants. Hypothesis 7 and hypotheses 7.1 to 7.7 are therefore not supported. From this it is construed that identity development is not influenced by prison conditions *per se*. Prison conditions may, however, impact on the physical well-being of the inmate or on his human rights.

A lack of correlation between identity development in particular and the physical environment, could be ascribed to Erikson's (1963, 1968) extension of Freud's (in Maddi, 1980:37) concept of the psychosexual beyond the physiological, or intrapsychic, to include a social dimension of identity development. In this regard an assessment between the level of identity achieved and for instance, the compensatory nature of prison gangs in a closed and deprived environment, would be useful (see Hypothesis 10).

In contrast to a high level of identity development achieved, a fluid and in flux sense of self-definition is usually associated with a lack of successful over-all adjustment, relatively high anxiety levels and an inability to solve problems (Adamson & Lyxell, 1996:580; Bernard, 1981:353; Berzonsky et al., 2003:113; Chapell & Overton, 2002:314; Klaczynski et al., 1998:204; Kumru & Thompson, 2003:482; Marcia, 1975:155; Meeus et al., 1999:429; Stark and Traxler, 1974:31). For purposes of further research, it would also be of value to compare specific coping skills, anxiety levels and various problem-solving skills between incarcerated and non-incarcerated groups of adolescents.

## 6.8 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND VICTIMISATION PRONENESS IN PRISON

The following discussion provides a summary of exploratory and descriptive data on prison victimisation where-after the hypotheses formulated will examine the relationship between institutional victimisation and the level of identity development of the research participants for purposes of statistical significance.

### 6.8.1 Exploratory and descriptive data

Table 28 depicts the witnessing of prison victimisation by the research participants.

Table 28  
*Witnessing of Prison Violence*

Type of violence	N	%
Members (prison officials) insulting inmates	59	71
Members (prison officials) assaulting inmates	60	72
Inmates being kicked by a member/s (prison official/s)	64	77
One inmate insulting another inmate	64	77
One Inmate assaulting another inmate	58	70
One inmate being assaulted by more than one inmate	55	66
An inmate stabbed with a knife or sharp object by an inmate	60	72
An inmate being sexually abused by inmates	48	58
An inmate being raped by another inmate	34	41
An inmate being raped by more than one inmate at the same time	23	28

Table 28 points to the instability of the prison environment. Most of the research participants (72%) have witnessed prison officials assaulting inmates; they also witnessed officials kicking inmates (77%); staff on inmate verbal abuse (71%); inmate-on-inmate assaults (70%); group assaults directed towards a single inmate (66%); inmate-on-inmate stabbings (72%); and inmate-on-inmate indecent assault (58%).

In addition to the witnessing of prison violence as depicted in Table 28, Table 29 highlights the incidence of the personal victimisation of the research participants.



Table 29

*Victimisation Experienced by Research Participants in Prison*

Type of victimisation	N	%
Insults by a member (prison official)	34	41
Assault by a member (prison official)	43	52
Blackmail by a member (prison official)	30	36
Insults by other inmates	46	55
Threats of violence from other inmates	45	54
Assault by only one inmate	23	28
Assault by more than one inmate at the same time	21	25
Sexual abuse (e.g. sexual remarks or being inappropriately touched) by another inmate	9	11
Rape by an inmate	6	7
Rape by a group of inmates at the same time	4	5
Blackmail by other inmates	25	30

Table 29 shows that more than half of the research participants (52%) were assaulted by correctional officials. A further 55% experienced insults from other inmates. Threats of violence or intimidation from other inmates were experienced by 54% of the research participants.

From the data presented in Tables 28 and 29 it is evident that prison victimisation is a not too uncommon feature in the institutional life of the research participants. The majority of the incarcerated adolescents in the sample have been either exposed to institutional violence or have been victims themselves. Table 30 summarises the different strategies employed by the research participants to protect themselves.

Table 30

*Strategies Employed to Avoid Victimisation*

Strategy	N	%
Warn them not to look for trouble with you	74	89
Walk away when trouble seems to be going on	71	86
Go and sleep	68	82
Always keep quiet	64	77
Keep to yourself in your cell	64	77
Defend yourself with your own physical strength	52	63
Exercise and use weights to be strong	49	59
Attack first before anyone can get to you	38	46
Rely on friends to protect you	26	31

According to Table 30 the most used tactic employed by nearly all of the research participants (89%) was to warn other inmates not to provoke them. Another strategy

referred to walking away when conflict was perceived (86%) or to simply go and sleep (82%). A further attempt referred to the self-imposed isolation of the research participants (77%) in their respective prison cells. Of the research participants, 63% defended themselves with their own physical strength or exercised and used weights to enhance their physical strength (59%). For purposes of further illustration, the ranking of the strategies employed against prison victimisation is graphically presented in Figure 11.

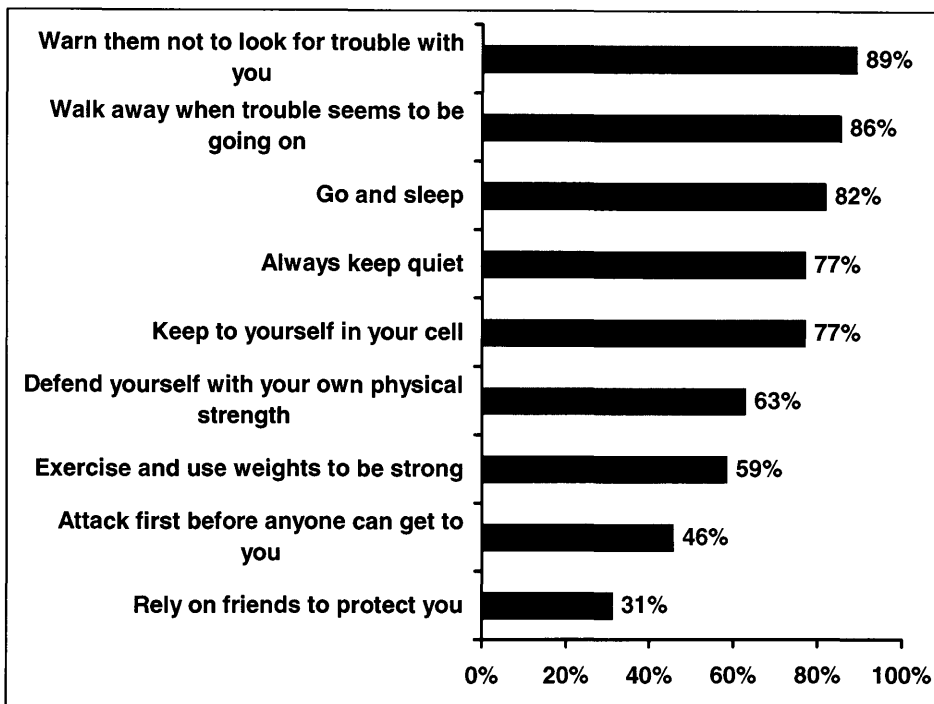


Figure 11 Percentage distribution of strategies to prevent prison victimisation

To test the data for statistical significance a correlation analysis was conducted between the level of identity achieved, prison victimisation and strategies employed to divert.

### 6.8.2 Hypotheses 8, 8.1 and 8.2

Hypotheses 8 postulates that the level of identity achieved will be significantly related to victimisation proneness in prison. To test this, sub-hypothesis 8.1 was formulated, which postulates that incarcerated adolescents with a lower level of identity development will

be more prone to prison victimisation than adolescents with a high level of identity development.

In Table 31 the findings are presented.

Table 31  
*Correlation between Prison Victimization and Identity Development*

Variable	r	p-value
Insults by a member (prison official)	0.05	0.684
Assault by a member (prison official)	0.08	0.481
Blackmail by a member (prison official)	0.15	0.178
Insults by other inmates	0.02	0.848
Threats of violence by other inmates	0.04	0.722
Assault by only one inmate	0.13	0.241
Assault by more than one inmate at a the same time	0.24	0.032*
Sexual abuse (e.g. sexual remarks or being inappropriately touched) by another inmate	0.10	0.347
Rape by an inmate	0.15	0.173
Rape by a group of inmates at the same time	0.27	0.014*
Blackmail by other inmates	0.12	0.271

\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

Table 31 shows that hypothesis 8.1 is not supported. Only two significant correlations were established relating to prison victimisation and the level of identity development achieved of the research participants. According to these two statistically significant findings, those with higher levels of identity are less likely to be the victims of assault by more than one inmate at the same time, or to be gang raped by other inmates.

With reference to incarcerated adolescents with a lower level of identity and thus who would be more likely to be targets of group victimisation, it can be said that adolescence is marked by an emerging sexuality and with its associated rapid physical development, extreme body consciousness and vulnerability, trauma to the body threatens security of the self or what Erikson (1956:105) coins as the “body ego.” Multiple victimisation (group assault and gang rape) could amplify what Erikson (1968:165) refers to as typical of the less self-directed adolescent: A lack of “being at home” in his body together with being deprived of an “inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count” and not “knowing where one is going.” This in turn may have increased his victimisation vulnerability within group context. Especially, when the “suitable” target experiences himself as a “deserving” object of violence when internalising his inferior status within both

group context and within the context of substandard prison conditions and treatment (Haney, 2001:12).

According to hypothesis 8.2 incarcerated adolescents with a lower level of identity development will be more inclined to employ passive precautions to deter prison victimisation than adolescents with a high level of identity development.

Table 32 shows the correlation between the degree of identity development and the strategies employed to cope with violence and victimisation. As these are dichotomous variables (“yes” being 1 and “no” being 2) it was possible to conduct a correlation analysis. The table below presents the correlation between the dichotomous variables on victimisation and identity development.

Table 32  
*Correlation between Strategies Employed to Avoid Prison Victimisation and Identity Development*

Variable	r	p-value
Keep to yourself in your cell	- 0.02	0.862
Warn them not to look for trouble with you	0.10	0.364
Defend yourself with your own physical strength	- 0.20	0.079
Exercise and use weights to be strong	- 0.25	0.023*
Always keep quiet	0.27	0.015*
Walk away when trouble seems to be going on	0.06	0.602
Attack first before anyone can get to you	- 0.10	0.384
Rely on friends to protect you	- 0.09	0.422
Go and sleep	- 0.29	0.008**

\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

\*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$

Hypothesis 8.2 is not supported due to all of the items not reaching the set level of significance. Several significant correlations are, however, seen in Table 32. A negative correlation indicates that the lower the identity development level of a research participant the more likely he is to make use of a particular strategy. A positive correlation indicates that the higher the identity development level of a research participant the more likely he is to make use of a particular strategy.

The following can be observed from the analysis: Research participants with a lower level of identity development are more likely to exercise and use weights to enhance

physical strength, and to avoid victimisation by sleeping. The implication might be that those with a lower level of identity development will resort to violence or withdraw from conflict situations. Research participants who obtained a higher level of identity are more likely to employ a strategy of keeping quiet when provoked.

The items that reached the set level of statistical significance are congruent with the features and general adjustment ability of a more stable sense of self-definition (Adamson & Lyxell, 1996:580; Bernard, 1981:353; Kumru & Thompson, 2003:482; La Voie, 1976:379; Meeus et al., 1999:429). In other words, the research participant who has obtained a higher level of identity, is more likely to contain himself when provoked, while on the other hand, the less self-directed incarcerated, utilises more aggressive precautions to deter prison victimisation (physical strength and endurance training), or opts for sleeping as an escape mechanism. A lower level of identity may also be the cause of *identity consciousness* rooted in doubt and shame that counteracts and complicates a personal sense of autonomy contributing henceforth, to an increasing waste of energy in aggressively asserting himself. This may arouse new conflicts and a deepened psychosocial isolation (Erikson, 1956:72, 74, 98).

Further research is needed to focus on the identity development of the perpetrators of prison victimisation as some incarcerated adolescents may find temporary relief in “acting-out” (violent) behaviour. This behaviour could serve as a mechanism to deal with the discomforts associated with the necessity and urgency to achieve a sense of a personal identity, but in a restricted, isolated and potentially violent prison environment.

## **6.9 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND ADHERENCE TO THE INMATE CODE**

The data presented under this section explores and describes the inmate code. To test the data for statistical significance an examination is presented under the discussion of the hypotheses.

### **6.9.1 Exploratory and descriptive data**

Attitudes towards the inmate code, and thus ways of acting in prison were measured by a Likert-type agreement scale requiring from the research participants to indicate their

agreement levels with certain statements. Table 33 presents the percentage distribution of the participants who agree or strongly agree with each statement representing the inmate code.

Table 33  
*Agreement with the Inmate Code*

Variable	N	%
Never show you are weak	65	78
Never interfere with other inmates	62	75
Don't exploit or take advantage of other inmates	59	71
Don't have arguments with fellow inmates	57	69
Don't pimp on other inmates	53	64
Don't respect guards	25	30

The ranking of the agreement statements is visually represented in Figure 12.

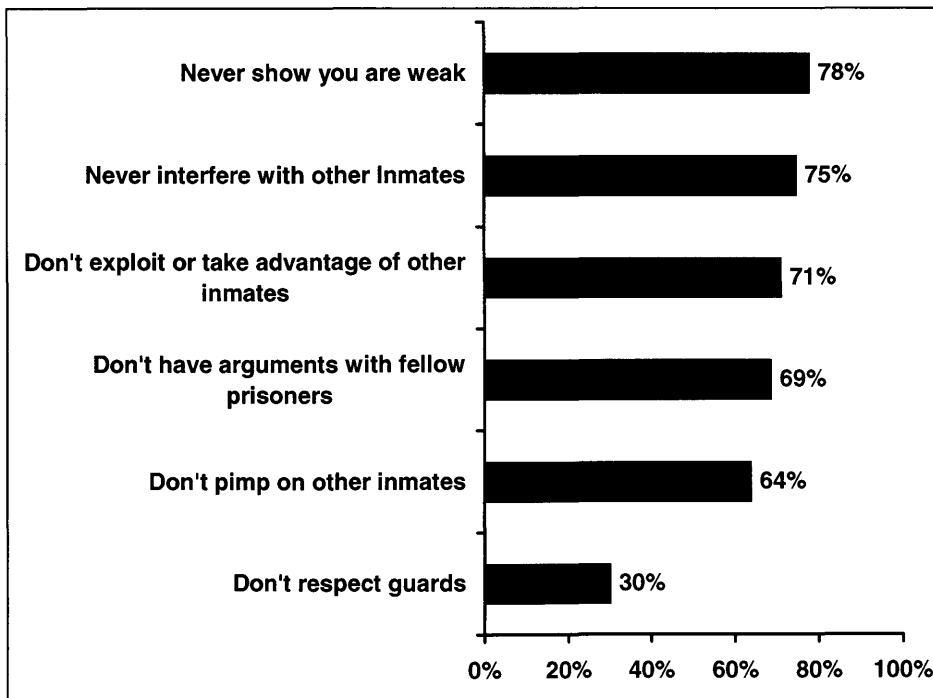


Figure 12. Percentage distribution of agreement to informal prison rules

The descriptive data shows that most of the research participants adhered to informal rules of social control of the prison environment. This adherence concurs with the views of Sykes (1999:78) and Sykes and Messinger (in Wilson, 1978:193), highlighting the need

of the inmate to adapt to the hardships of a prison lifestyle through a process of what is referred to as *prisonization*. A sense of social cohesion is created by agreeing not to

- interfere with other inmates (75%)
- exploit other inmates (71%)
- have arguments with fellow prisoners (69%)
- report (pimp on) other inmates (64%).

This cohesion could be best described as partially unstable. On the one hand, by defining “appropriate” prison behaviour, order is promoted but on the other, personal safety is jeopardised through the termination of communication lines (“don’t interfere” and “don’t pimp on other inmates”). Seventy five percent of the sample indicated that one should never interfere with other inmates. The endorsement of hyper-masculine values such as “never show you are weak” by 78% of the research participants could furthermore serve to alienate them, which in turn could promote prison victimisation vulnerability. Seventy eight percent agreed that one should never show signs of weakness. Hyper-masculinity with its adoration of physical and emotional “toughness”, force and domination could subsequently function as an essential component of the prison subculture.

To test the data for statistical significance, a correlation analysis was conducted with each of the rules of informal control and level of identity development achieved of the research participants.

### **6.9.2 Hypothesis 9, 9.1 and 9.2**

Hypothesis 9 postulates that the level of identity achieved will be significantly related to adherence to the inmate code. To test this, hypothesis 9.1 was formulated, which postulates that incarcerated adolescents with a lower level of identity development will be significantly more committed to the inmate code than those with a high level of identity development. Furthermore, hypothesis 9.2 states that adolescents with a high

level of identity development will agree significantly less with the attitude statement that guards should not be shown respect than those with a low level of identity development.

The correlation between the level of identity development agreement with each of the rules of informal social control is given in Table 34.

Table 34

*Correlation between Level of Identity Development and Agreement with the Inmate Code*

Variable	r	p-value
Never show you are weak	0.08	0.487
Never interfere with other inmates	0.07	0.524
Don't exploit or take advantage of other inmates	0.04	0.700
Don't have arguments with fellow inmates	0.05	0.656
Don't pimp on other inmates	0.12	0.300
Don't respect guards	0.31	0.005**

\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

\*\* =  $p \leq 0.01$

According to Table 34 a positive correlation shows that the higher the level of identity development, the lower the agreement with a particular item of the inmate code. Although most of the research participants adhered to the inmate code or elements thereof, only one significant correlation can be observed. Hypothesis 9.1 is therefore not supported referring to the probability that incarcerated adolescents with a lower level of identity development will adhere more significantly to the inmate code than those with a higher level of identity. However, research participants with a higher level of identity development agreed significantly less with the statement that guards should not be shown respect than those with a lower level of identity development. Hypothesis 9.2 is therefore supported.

The significance of this finding concurs with the research of Howells and Hollin (1992:283) and Lapsley et al. (1984:527) that negative attitudes towards parental authority are often transferred to impersonal authority figures. In a hostile and stressful prison environment prison guards as authority figures may have re-evoked childhood trauma pertaining to the less identity achieved research participant. The research participant who on the other hand has achieved a higher level of identity development, were not experiencing what Erikson (1963:245; 1968:94) coins as "authority confusion", a function of the residue of a less self-directed sense of self, or identity.



Concerning the lack of correlation between the level of identity achieved and the other elements of the inmate code, Van Zyl (1996:108) refers to the time dimension inherent to the process of *prisonization*. This translates into the criminogenic value of both frequency and intensity of exposure to the inmate code over a period of time, usually about nine months. With reference to the relatively short period of incarceration, most research participants (69%) have been in prison only for a relatively short period of time - 37% percent have been incarcerated for a period of less than six months and a further 32% between six to twelve months (see Figure 5).

It is therefore possible that as time progresses a significant correlation between all of the elements of the inmate code and identity will show. In this regard, longitudinal studies would be useful, especially if cognisance is taken of research (Berndt, 1982:1447; Garrod et al., 1992:170; Tarrant, 2002:110; Valliant, 1983:135) on the chronological young and vulnerable developmental age of adolescents, the particular susceptibility of adolescents to conform, their need to feel accepted and general quest for behavioural directives. Such studies would be of value as the end result of this socialisation process may impede on the successful integration of incarcerated adolescents into the community, once released from prison (Neser, 1989:147).

## **6.10 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND GANG MEMBERSHIP**

Gang membership could have had a profound influence on the identity development of the research participants. To assess this relationship, exploratory and descriptive data was firstly collected where-after a correlation analysis was conducted to test the data for statistical significance. Both sets of data are presented in the following discussion.

### **6.10.1 Exploratory and descriptive data**

Figure 13 represents the percentage of research participants with friends in gangs and those who are members of gangs themselves.

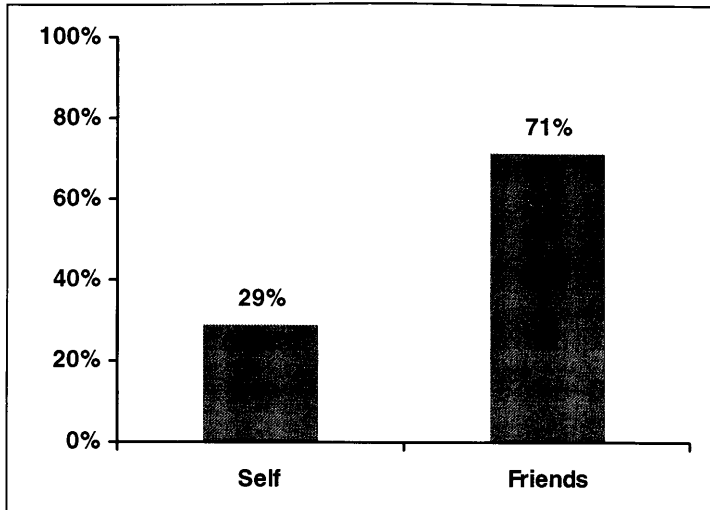


Figure 13. Gang membership (n = 82)

Figure 13 shows that 71% of the research participants' friends were members of a prison gang. With reference to the pioneering work of Lötter and Schurink (1984) on gangs in South African prisons and more recent research (Gear & Ngubeni, 2002:13; Goyer, 2004:36; Sloth-Nielsen, 1998:67), the data collected from the research participants confirmed that prison gangs remain a common phenomenon in South Africa. Of the research participants, 96% indicated that they were aware of the existence of gangs in prison. Most of the remaining four percent (three research participants) did, however, indicate at a later stage that their friends or they themselves belonged to a gang. It can therefore be assumed that all of the research participants (83) were aware of gangs in prison but that it remains a potentially sensitive topic to discuss. One research participant declined to provide any responses on the topic.

Tables 35 and 36 summarise the motives for belonging to a prison gang.

Table 35  
*Reasons for Friends of the Research Participants to Belong to a Gang (n=59)*

Variable	N	%
To be protected against other gangs	40	68
To be protected against inmates	47	80
To be protected against members (prison officials)	27	46
To feel that they have a place where they belong	38	64
To help them to know what is expected from them in prison	40	68
To get drugs (e.g. dagga)	34	58
To get sex	26	44
To get cigarettes, sweets or food	40	68
To get blankets	38	66
To get clothing or shoes	44	75
For status	40	68

Table 35 shows that 80% cited protection against other inmates as the most common reason for their friends to belong to a prison gang. This was followed by 75% who indicated the acquisition of clothing or shoes, 68% for protection against other gangs, 68% for behavioural directives in prison, 68% for status and the acquisition of tobacco, sweets or food and 66% to get blankets. In most of the cases (64%), gang membership was also cited as functional in terms of satisfying needs of affiliation, or “to belong”. This was followed by the need for drugs such as dagga (*cannabis sativa*) ranking at 58%.

Table 36 refers to the motives of the research participant for belonging to a prison gang.

Table 36  
*Reasons for the Research Participants to Belong to a Gang (n=24)*

Variable	N	%
To be protected against other gangs	12	50
To be protected against inmates	13	54
To be protected against members (prison officials)	11	46
To feel that they have a place where they belong	14	58
To help them to know what is expected from them in prison	13	54
To get drugs (e.g. dagga)	10	42
To get sex	6	25
To get cigarettes, sweets or food	16	67
To get blankets	13	54
To get clothing or shoes	15	63
For status	15	63

The acquisition of tobacco, sweets and food in the prison economy was cited as the most important reason by 67% of the research participants to belong to a gang. This was followed by 63% who indicated the need for clothing, shoes and status. In most of the

cases (58%), the need to belong was an important factor. Protection against other inmates (54%) and the provision of behavioural directives (54%) followed with the need for blankets in prison (54%).

The two sets of data (Tables 35 and 36) reveal deprived conditions of the correctional environment of the research participants. Gang membership avails in the provision of the most basic commodities in prison such as clothing, shoes, blankets and food but also tobacco and sweets. Apart from satisfying basic physiological needs it also attends to security needs, albeit in relation and/or opposition to other inmates, gangs or prison officials. It furthermore satisfies emotional needs such as the need to belong and to be of value and provides the incarcerated adolescent with behavioural directives in what could be perceived as a potentially explosive environment.

Gang membership refers also to high-risk activities such as the facilitation of sex and provision of illicit substances (drugs) and could favour the abuse of power of corrupt prison officials. However, not all of the research participants were members of a gang.

In the following discussion (hypothesis 10) it is postulated that gang membership may assist in particular the incarcerated adolescent with development deficits to attain ego identity through the provision of an identity pathway – enabling him to attain his own expectations as well as that of the group.

### **6.10.2 Hypothesis 10**

Hypothesis 10 postulates that a significant relationship exists between the level of identity development achieved and membership to prison gangs. According to hypothesis 10.1, Incarcerated adolescents with a low level of identity development will be significantly more members of a prison gang. Hypothesis 10.2 postulates that incarcerated adolescents with a low level of identity development will be significantly having more friends that belong to a prison gang than those with a high level of identity development.

Table 37 shows the correlation analysis between gang membership and the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent.

Table 37

*Correlation between Gang Membership and Identity Development*

Variable	r	p-value
Friends in a gang	-0.28	0.012*
Personal gang membership	-0.27	0.014*

\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

In Table 37 the likelihood of having friends in gangs and belonging to a gang are correlated with identity development. A negative correlation indicates that research participants with higher identity scores are less likely to belong to gangs. As is evident from Table 37 a significant negative correlation exists. It can therefore be concluded that research participants with higher levels of identity development are less likely to be involved in gangs.

Hypotheses 10 and 10.1 are supported due to a significant relationship between the level of identity development achieved and individual membership to gangs. Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a low level of identity are significantly more members of gangs than those with a high level of identity. It also transpired that research participants with a lower level of identity development are significantly more likely to have friends that belonged to a gang than those with a higher level of identity development. Hypothesis 10.2 is therefore also supported.

These findings concur with both the views of Erikson (1968:185) and Marcia (1975:157; 1967:119) on the common lack of purpose, value and direction associated with the adolescent with identity diffusion. This lack of purpose, value and direction rendered the incarcerated adolescent with a low level of a personal identity in particular vulnerable to gang membership being in need of fulfilment of his emotional and security needs. With limited identity material available to him in prison and with a precarious sense of self, one can expect that he will be progressively replacing his identity with the corporate identity of the gang. This lack of stable self-definition may increasingly become a tool of self-destruction as it may be sometimes easier for him to derive a sense of identity out of identification with what he is least supposed to be, than to struggle with societal demands in

a confined and deprived prison environment that he cannot meet. According to Erikson (1956:113) the collective identity of the group (gang) could both encompass and complete the identity of the less self-directed adolescent through the linking of common identities in an aggressive ideological struggle.

It is recommended for further research to focus on possible linkages between gangs inside and outside prison, and the socio-cultural and masculine “right of passage” provided by the gang to the incarcerated adolescent in a society undergoing transformation. Analyses should also refer to the eradication of prison conditions conducive to gang formation.

## 6.11 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN TREATMENT PROGRAMMES

This discussion focuses on the percentage distribution of the research participants’ involvement with treatment programs in prison. Once the exploratory and descriptive data is presented a correlation analysis follows to assess the relationship between the identity development of the research participants and their participation in treatment programs.

### 6.11.1 Exploratory and descriptive data

Table 38 presents the percentage distribution of research participants who participated in different types of treatment programs.

Table 38  
*Participation in Treatment Programmes*

Programme	N	%
Life-skills programme	26	31
Aggressive programme	20	24
Pre-release programme	17	21
Alcohol and substance abuse programme	16	19
Sex offender programme	13	16
Biblical courses	23	28

With reference to Table 38, none of the values are 50% or above. Forty one percent of the research participants have not been involved in any of the treatment programs. Of those who have been involved in a program, 34% have only been involved in one

program and 27% in two programs. There is no relationship between the number of treatments programs a research participant participated in and the length of time served in corrections. The length of incarceration does not necessarily denote participation in more treatment programs.

The data in Table 38 does not refer to any statistical significance. For purposes of statistical significance a correlation analysis was conducted of the research participants' attendance in treatment programs and level achieved of identity development.

### 6.11.2 Hypothesis 11

In hypothesis 11 it is postulated that incarcerated adolescents who participate in treatment programmes will display a significant higher level of identity development than those who do not participate in treatment programmes.

To test hypothesis 11, participation in treatment programmes was correlated with the level of identity development. A scale of participation was created by obtaining a sum of the number of programs that were attended.

Table 39 summarises the correlation between attending treatment programs and level of identity development.

Table 39  
*Correlation between Attending Treatment Programmes and Identity Development*

Variable	r	p-value
Number of programmes attended	0.35	0.756

From Table 39 it is clear that no significant correlation exists between participation in treatment programmes and level of identity development. Hypothesis 11 is therefore not supported.

A reason for this could be that none of the treatment programmes focus on identity development in particular, but relates to general life-skills development, dealing with substance abuse, conflict management (aggressive programme), sexual violence, spirituality and an orientation for purposes of release from prison. Cognisance needs to

be taken furthermore of conditions of overcrowding and a shortage of professional care workers that may impact on service delivery such as adequate program implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Hesselink-Louw & Joubert, 2003:91; Muntingh, 2001a:13; Sloth-Nielsen, 1998:55).

Further research needs to monitor the practical implementation of the rehabilitation path of “New Beginnings” as envisaged by the White Paper on Corrections (2005). In addition, research needs to focus on the enhancement of virtues necessitated by the incapacity to achieve in prison a high level of a unique sense of a personal identity. This in turn could promote less centrality of the deviant or negative identity, and henceforth, not only a sense of well-being but also crime reduction as long term aim.

## **6.12 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter a discussion of the results of the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent was presented. The results were discussed in relation to theory and research pertaining to identity development. In chapter 7 the analyses of the data will be examined in relation to the aims of this study and recommendations for further research will be formulated.



## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

With the exploratory analysis of the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent in the preceding chapter, it is now possible to ascertain if the aims of this study (see 1.4.4) have been realised. The data generated and analyses thereof present a foundation for further research, especially in lieu of the dearth of research on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent.

### **7.1 CONCLUSIONS PERTAINING TO THE REALISATION OF THE AIMS OF THE STUDY**

The following discussion focuses on an assessment of the realisation of the aims this study, followed by a presentation of guidelines for further scientific enquiry to expand on this research.

#### **7.1.1 Conclusion pertaining to the assessment of the level of identity development achieved by a group of incarcerated adolescents**

The first aim of this study was to ascertain the level of identity development of a group of incarcerated adolescents. Erikson's theory (1958; 1963; 1968) served to guide this research and the successful application of the Erikson scale (Appendix 2) testified to both the applied value of theory and achieving the first aim of the study. The Cronbach alpha was used as a method of determining the reliability or internal consistency of the items in assessing the construct identity. The Cronbach alpha of the Erikson scale reached 0.78, well above the cut off points suggested by Terre Blanch and Durrheim (1999:90). A general rule of thumb for determining what constitutes good internal reliability is given at an alpha value of 0.75 or more. The parsimonious Erikson scale is as result useful to apply in correctional context. It is relatively expedient to administer but for further purposes of economy of procedure it could serve as both an assessment tool and foundation of a classification system. Furthermore, its administration will enable therapeutic interventions focusing on the virtue enhancement of incarcerated youth.

The standard deviation, which was relatively small indicated that 68% of the participants rated between 183.26 and 147.58 on the Erikson scale. The mean score of 165.42 was lower than the South African white male (173.97) and black male adolescent research

participants (176.85) as was recorded in the local study of Thom and Coetzee (2004:188). Concerning the identity development of the group of incarcerated adolescents, it was found that the identity scores of the black and Coloured groups did not differ significantly, highlighting similarities in their experiential worlds and subsequent impact thereof on identity development.

Experiences regarding discrimination due to physical appearance, the clothes the individual wears, the type of home he lives in and the behaviour of his parents and siblings showed a significant relationship to the development of a low level of identity development. Despite research (Adamson & Lyxell, 1996:575; Ammaniti et al., 2000:330; Newman & Newman, 2001:521; Thom, 1988:190) emphasising the importance of parent-child relationships that are warm and supportive in nature, no significant relationship was found between the interpersonal closeness with family members and the identity development of the research participants. The circumstances of the incarcerated adolescent in this study differ to a large extent from those found in other studies. In particular, this lack of statistical significance could be ascribed to the possibility of intra- and interpersonal emotional distancing due to the offending behaviour of the incarcerated adolescent, his official label as a criminal as well as related physical isolation, thereby minimising the role of the family as a primary reference group. Although the majority of the research participants (65%) are from a family background characterised by parental absence, family structure showed also no statistical significance in relation to their level of identity development. Research participants who felt that their mothers treated them unfairly obtained a significantly lower identity development score than those who felt that their mothers treated them fairly. Being treated fairly, however, does not necessarily denote closeness.

No defining type of relationship with the peers of the research participants was found that could have influenced their identity development, either positively or negatively. This finding differs from research (Berndt, 1982:1447; Damon, 2000:2; Garrod et al., 1992:170; Tarrant, 2002:110; Valliant, 1983:135; Wright & Keple, 1981:559) indicating under normal circumstances, the supporting role of peers in alleviating the stress associated with adolescence. This lack of statistical significance could be ascribed to a lack of free association in prison. Free association is usually a feature that typifies peer friendships in open or free society.

### **7.1.2 Conclusion pertaining to the comparison of the level of identity development between incarcerated adolescents who have committed different types of offences**

No significant statistical differences were anticipated concerning the levels of identity development achieved by different groups of offenders. Although research participants who were incarcerated for sexual and other offences (kidnapping, malicious damage to property, possession of burglary tools and possessing an unlicensed fire-arm) obtained slightly higher scores on the Erikson scale (Appendix 2) than those who committed aggressive and economic offences, these difference were found not to be statistically significant. This assessment availed in achieving the second aim of the study.

The collective offending behaviour and subsequent incarceration of the research participants deprived them of a psychosocial moratorium, thereby “arresting” greater interpersonal differentiation. In accordance with the process of epigenesis their delinquency could be viewed furthermore as a residue of a basic mistrust in themselves and others, a lack of belief in the future, their role and value confusion together with a lack of purpose and direction. In accordance with the views of Erikson (1956:88; 1959:131), it may have also been easier for the research participants to attempt to derive a sense of identity out of identification with what they are least supposed to be (delinquent) than to struggle with societal demands they are unable to meet.

### **7.1.3 Conclusion pertaining to the nature of the relationship between the prison environment, prison victimisation, deviant group integration and individual identity development**

The final aim of this study was formulated to assess the nature of the relationship between prison conditions, prison victimisation, deviant group integration (gang membership) and level of identity development of the incarcerated adolescent. The level of satisfaction with prison conditions (size of the cell, bed, bedding and mattress, ablution facilities, quality of the food, exercise opportunities reading material and fresh air in the cells) showed no significant statistical differences in relation to the identity development of the research participants. Although these conditions could impact negatively on the physical well-being of the research participants and their basic human rights, this finding illustrates the importance of the social context in which identity development occurs, beyond the physical, physiological, or intrapsychic dimensions. In a

deprived, hostile and isolated prison environment the findings of this study highlight in particular the compensatory nature of the prison gang in relation to the provision of an identity pathway, identity capital and a collective identity. Incarcerated adolescents that achieved a low level of identity development are significantly more members of gangs than those with a high level of identity development. It also transpired that research participants with a lower level of identity development are significantly more likely to have friends that belong to a prison gang than those with a higher level of identity development. These findings concur with both of the views of Erikson (1968:185) and Marcia (1975:157; 1967:119) on the common lack of purpose, value and direction associated with the adolescent with identity diffusion.

Gangs also enforce the inmate code but other than the finding of research participants with a higher level of identity development agreeing significantly less with the attitude statement that guards should not be shown respect than those with a lower level of identity development, no statistical significance was found between adherence to the inmate code and level of identity development. In this regard Van Zyl (1996:108) emphasises the importance of the time dimension inherent to the process of *prisonization*. Most of the research participants (69%) have been incarcerated for a relatively short period of time. It remains therefore possible that as time progresses a significant correlation between all of the elements of the inmate code and identity will show.

The exploratory and descriptive data showed that prison victimisation was a prevalent and pervasive feature of the institutional life of the research participants. Concerning the relationship between their victimisation and identity development, two significant correlations were established. Incarcerated adolescents with higher levels of identity development are less likely to be the victims of assault by more than one inmate at the same time or to be gang raped by other inmates. Research participants with a lower level of identity development are also more likely to exercise and use weights to enhance physical strength, and to opt for sleeping as an escape mechanism. On the other hand, research participants who obtained a higher level of identity development are more likely to employ a strategy of keeping quiet when provoked. The items that reached the set level of statistical significance concur with both the features and general adjustment ability of a more stable sense of self-definition and the features of identity

consciousness rooted in doubt and shame that counteracts and complicates a personal sense of autonomy. The research participant, who has obtained a higher level of identity, is thus more able to contain himself when provoked, while the less self-directed incarcerated utilises more aggressive precautions to deter prison victimisation (physical strength and endurance training) or opts for sleeping as an escape mechanism.

Finally, no significant correlation was established between participation in treatment programmes and the level of identity development of the research participants. None of the programmes focused on identity development in particular but conditions of overcrowding and a shortage of professional care workers may have also impacted on adequate program implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Given the assessment of the nature of the relationship between the prison environment, prison victimisation, deviant group integration and the individual identity development of the incarcerated adolescent, the third and final aim of this study was realised.

## **7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER SCIENTIFIC ENQUIRY**

Huysamen (1994:15) refers to the successive nature of the scientific expansion of knowledge. Deductive and inductive phases of scientific enquiry succeed each other as different approaches present with opportunities to build and expand on each other. For purposes of the replication of the results of this exploratory study, the generation of research hypotheses and accumulation of more confidence in the tenability of Erikson's (1958; 1963; 1968) theory, recommendations for further research on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent have been formulated:

- **Longitudinal research**

Longitudinal research in corrections would be useful to elucidate more of the interplay between offending behaviour, labelling, institutionalisation and identity. It remains nevertheless important to view adolescence as both formative and fluid when assessing the relationship between level of identity development and the committing of various crimes during this critical developmental stage.

- **Identity and change oriented cultures**

Considering the size of the sample and that all the research participants were incarcerated, it is essential that further comparative studies with control groups should be undertaken. Such studies should include larger numbers of incarcerated adolescents from all the different cultural groups (Asian, black, Coloured and white). These “change-oriented” cultures should be cross-culturally compared, thereby also assessing identity within a historical context of ethnicity relating it to customs, religion, values, mores, language, arts, science and technology in a society undergoing transformation. According to Erikson (1968:23) personal growth and communal change cannot be separated, nor can an identity crisis in individual life be separated from contemporary crises within historical context. Both these crises define each other and are thus relative to one another.

- **Triangulation**

Further research needs to focus on the identity of "being outside the law", one of few that is readily available to disenfranchised youths with limited identity material available to them. This would enable an exploration of alternate identity pathways with the view of identity enrichment. Qualitative methods in combination with quantitative methods would be useful focusing amongst others on the adolescent's severance of emotional ties with his family members due to the very nature of incarceration; the employment of defence mechanisms to divert from feelings of isolation and abandonment; and the rite of passage and surrogate functions of the prison gang in a captive and deprived prison environment. It is recommended furthermore to compare specific coping skills, anxiety levels and various problem-solving skills between incarcerated and non-incarcerated groups of adolescents.

- **Identity development of the perpetrators of prison victimisation**

In addition, future research needs to assess and analyse the identity development of the perpetrator of prison victimisation. His behaviour could serve as a defence mechanism to deal with the discomforts associated with the necessity and urgency to achieve a

sense of a personal identity, but in a restricted, isolated and potentially violent prison environment.

- **Enhancement of virtues**

Research needs to focus on the enhancement of virtues of the incarcerated adolescent, necessitated by his incapacity to achieve in prison a high level of a normative and unique sense of a personal identity. This in turn could promote less centrality of the deviant or negative identity, and henceforth, not only a sense of well-being but also the prevention and reduction of adolescent recidivism.

- **Identity development of adolescent female offenders**

Further research needs to focus on the possible influences of gender on the identity development of the incarcerated adolescent. Women as a group have been historically neglected by researchers, particularly within a patriarchal framework of collective victimisation (Vold, Bernard & Snipes, 2002:276). It is also recommended to compare the identity development of adolescent male and female offenders. In this regard, feminist perspectives in tandem with Erikson's (1958; 1963; 1968) theory could prove to be useful.

- **Sentencing research**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996, section 28) states that every child has the right not to be detained except as a measure of last resort. In addition to the rights a child enjoys under sections 12, the child may be detained only for the shortest appropriate period of time, and has the right to be treated in a manner, and kept in conditions, that take into account the child's age. Section 35 refers to the right of everyone who is detained to conditions of detention that are consistent with human dignity, including at least the provision of adequate accommodation. The majority of the research participants in this study (96%) are first offenders. This signals the need to examine sentencing practices, especially with reference to identity development and the consideration of diversionary measures prior to resorting to a prison sentence for young and first time offenders. In a countrywide survey of presiding officers from lower and high

courts (Steinberg, 2005:13), it was found that 80% of the research participants claimed that they never or almost never consider the capacity of the correctional system to carry out a sentence when imposing a sentence.

### **7.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The uniqueness and fluidity of responses during the critical developmental stage of adolescence needs to be appreciated. The chronological young and vulnerable developmental age of the incarcerated adolescent, his particular susceptibility to conform, together with his need to feel accepted and his general quest for behavioural directives, may render him in particular vulnerable to societal strain, institutional and interpersonal victimisation as well as subsequent devaluation of his identity. To achieve a high level of a personal and unique sense of identity, he is confronted in prison with the developmental task to acquire new coping skills, though in an environment marked by overcrowding, deviant subcultures, victimisation, role stripping and loss of goods and autonomy. In concert with Erikson's (1958; 1969) portrayal of young man Luther and Mahatma Gandhi, the identity of the incarcerated adolescent should not be viewed as the sum total of a negative environment. However, without sufficient levels of trust, hope, autonomy, initiative and industry, his incarceration could continue to be an antithesis to his plight to experience feelings of continuity, "sameness" or uniqueness.



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# APPENDIX 1

## PERCEPTION OF YOURSELF AND IMPRISONMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer **ALL** the questions in this section. Make a tick (✓) over the answer you choose.

**EXAMPLE**

Do you go to school?      

Yes	No
-----	----

**Please Note:**

- Do not write your name or any identifying particulars on the questionnaire.
- **ALL** Information supplied will be treated as confidential.

**For office use**

**Respondent no.**

V1 

--	--	--

 1-3

**Card no.**

V2 

0	1
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 4-5

**A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**1. How old are you?**

1	2	3	4	5
14 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	18 years

V3 

--

 6

**2. Which cultural group do you belong to?**

1	2	3	4	5
Asian	Black	Coloured	White	Other (Specify: _____ )

V4 

--

 7

**3. Which ethnic group do you belong to? (tick only one)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Afrikaans	Coloured	English	Ndebele	Pedi	Shangaan	Sotho	Swazi	Tswana
10		11		12				
Xhosa		Zulu		Other (Specify: _____ )				

V5 

--	--

 8-9

**4. What is your home language?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Afrikaans	English	Ndebele	Pedi	Shangaan	Sotho	Swazi	Tswana	Xhosa
10		11						
Zulu		Other (Specify: _____ )						

V6 

--	--

 10-11

**5. What is your highest school education?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No schooling	Up to grade 4 (std 2)	Grades 5, 6 and 7 (std 3-5)	Grades 8-9 (std 6-7)	Grade 10 (std 8)	Grade 11 (std 9)	Grade 12 (std 10)
8						
Trade e.g. N 1						

V7 

--

 12



**6. For which crime or crimes have you been sentenced to prison? (e.g. theft, rape, murder)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Is this your first time in prison?**

1	2
Yes	No

**If No, for what other offences were you sentenced to prison before?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**8. For how long is your present prison sentence?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Less than 3 months	3 to 6 months	7 to 11 months	1 to 2 years	2 to 3 years	4 to 5 years	more than 5 years

**9. For how long have you been in prison now?**

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 6 months	6 to 12 months	12 to 18 months	19 to 24 months	More than 2 years

**B. EXPERIENCES BEFORE IMPRISONMENT**

**10. Have you ever been discriminated against because of (answer each question)**

	1		2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
10.1 the way you look like (physical appearance)				
10.2 your race				
10.3 the way you behave				
10.4 your friends				
10.5 your clothes				
10.6 struggling with school work				
10.7 the way your house looks like				
10.8 the way your mother behaves				
10.9 the way your father behaves				
10.10 the way your brother/s or sister/s behave				

**11. Before coming to prison, did your school teachers treat you fairly?**

1	2	3	4
Always	Sometimes	Never	Never went to school

**For office use**

V8  13

V9  14

V10  15

V11  16

V12  17

V13  18

V14  19

V15  20

V16  21

V17  22

V18  23

V19  24

V20  25

V21  26

V22  27

V23  28

**12. Did the police treat you fairly when you were arrested?**

1 Yes	2 No	3 Don't know
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**For office use**

V24  29

**13. Did the court treat you fairly when standing trial?**

1 Yes	2 No	3 Don't know
----------	---------	-----------------

V25  30

**C. FAMILY AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS**

**14. While growing up, were your parents**

1 Married	2 Divorced	3 Not living together	4 Deceased
--------------	---------------	--------------------------	---------------

V26  31

**15. If you lost a parent through death, which parent did you lose?**

1 Mother	2 Father	3 Both parents	4 Not applicable
-------------	-------------	-------------------	---------------------

V27  32

**16. Did your mother (or mother substitute, e.g. grandmother) treat you**

1 Fairly	2 Unfairly
-------------	---------------

V28  33

**17. How close to your mother/mother figure do you feel**

1 Very close	2 Sometimes close	3 Never close	4 Not applicable
-----------------	----------------------	------------------	---------------------

V29  34

**18. How close to your father/father figure do you feel**

1 Very close	2 Sometimes close	3 Never close	4 Not applicable
-----------------	----------------------	------------------	---------------------

V30  35

**19. How close to your brothers and/or sisters do you feel**

1 Very close	2 Sometimes close	3 Never close	4 Not applicable Only child
-----------------	----------------------	------------------	-----------------------------------

V31  36

**20. How close to your friends do you feel**

1 Very close	2 Sometimes close	3 Never close
-----------------	----------------------	------------------

V32  37

**21. Who's advice is the MOST important to you (tick only one)**

1 Parents	2 Brothers/sisters	3 Friends	4 Own opinion	5 None of the mentioned
--------------	-----------------------	--------------	------------------	----------------------------

V33  38

**For office use**

**22. Indicate your relationship with your friends (answer all of the following)**

	1	2	3
	Always	Sometimes	Never
22.1 Obedient			
22.2 Warm and close			
22.3 Confident			
22.4 Aggressive			

V34	<input type="text"/>	39
V35	<input type="text"/>	40
V36	<input type="text"/>	41
V37	<input type="text"/>	42

**23. How important is it for you to feel accepted by your friends**

1	2	3
Very important	Important	Not important

V38	<input type="text"/>	43
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**D. PRISON CONDITIONS**

**24. Indicate your satisfaction with the prison conditions (answer all of the following)**

	1	2	3
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't care
24.1 Size of your cell			
24.2 Your bed ( bed and mattress)			
24.3 Your bedding (e.g. blankets, sheets and pillows)			
24.4 Washing facilities			
24.5 Toilets			
24.6 Food			
24.7 Exercise opportunities			
24.8 Reading material			
24.9 Fresh air in the cell			

V39	<input type="text"/>	44
V40	<input type="text"/>	45
V41	<input type="text"/>	46
V42	<input type="text"/>	47
V43	<input type="text"/>	48
V44	<input type="text"/>	49
V45	<input type="text"/>	50
V46	<input type="text"/>	51
V47	<input type="text"/>	52

**25. Have you ever witnessed any of the following in prison?**

	1	2
	Yes	No
25.1 Members(prison officials) insulting inmates		
25.2 Members (prison officials) assaulting inmates		
25.3 Inmates being kicked by a member/s (prison official/s)		
25.4 One Inmate insulting another inmate		
25.5 One Inmate assaulting another inmate		
25.6 One inmate being assaulted by more than one inmate		
25.7 An inmate stabbed with a knife or sharp object by an inmate		
25.8 An inmate being sexually abuse (e.g. sexual remarks or being inappropriately touched) by inmates		
25.9 An inmate being raped by another inmate		
25.10 An inmate being raped by more than one inmate at the same time		

V48	<input type="text"/>	53
V49	<input type="text"/>	54
V50	<input type="text"/>	55
V51	<input type="text"/>	56
V52	<input type="text"/>	57
V53	<input type="text"/>	58
V54	<input type="text"/>	59
V55	<input type="text"/>	60
V56	<input type="text"/>	61
V57	<input type="text"/>	62

**26. Have you ever been a victim of**

	1		2	
	Yes		No	
26.1	Insults by a member (prison official)			
26.2	Assault by a member (prison official)			
26.3	Blackmail by a member (prison official)			
26.4	Insults by other inmates			
26.5	Threats of violence by other inmates			
26.6	Assault by only one inmate			
26.7	Assault by more than one inmate at a the same time			
26.8	Sexual abuse (e.g. sexual remarks or being inappropriately touched) by another inmate			
26.9	Rape by an inmate			
26.10	Rape by a group of inmates at the same time			
26.11	Blackmail by other inmates			

**For office use**

V58	<input type="text"/>	63
V59	<input type="text"/>	64
V60	<input type="text"/>	65
V61	<input type="text"/>	66
V62	<input type="text"/>	67
V63	<input type="text"/>	68
V64	<input type="text"/>	69
	<input type="text"/>	70
V65	<input type="text"/>	
V66	<input type="text"/>	71
V67	<input type="text"/>	72
V68	<input type="text"/>	73

**Respondent no.**

V69  1-3

**Card no.**

V70  0  2  4-5

**27. To avoid getting victimised by other inmates, do you (answer all of the following)**

	1		2	
	Yes		No	
27.1	Keep to yourself in your cell			
27.2	Warn them not to look for trouble with you			
27.3	Defend yourself with your own physical strength			
27.4	Exercise and use weights to be strong			
27.5	Always keep quiet			
27.6	Walk away when trouble seems to be going on			
27.7	Attack first before anyone can get to you			
27.8	Rely on friends to protect you			
27.9	Go and sleep			

V71	<input type="text"/>	6
V72	<input type="text"/>	7
V73	<input type="text"/>	8
V74	<input type="text"/>	9
V75	<input type="text"/>	10
V76	<input type="text"/>	11
V77	<input type="text"/>	12
V78	<input type="text"/>	13
V79	<input type="text"/>	14

**27. Place a tick (✓) under the category that best describes your views (please answer all the questions)**

	1					2					3					4					5									
	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
28.1	Never interfere with other inmates																													
28.2	Don't pimp on other inmates																													
28.3	Don't have arguments with fellow prisoners																													
28.4	Don't exploit or take advantage of other inmates																													
28.5	Never show you are weak																													
28.6	Don't respect guards																													

V80	<input type="text"/>	15
V81	<input type="text"/>	16
V82	<input type="text"/>	17
V83	<input type="text"/>	18
V84	<input type="text"/>	19
V85	<input type="text"/>	20

**For office use**

29. Have you heard about gangs in prison? 1 2  

Yes	No
-----	----

V86  21

30. Do some of your friends belong to a gang? 1 2  

Yes	No
-----	----

V87  22

**IF YES, PLEASE ANSWER QUESTION 31. IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 32**

31. If Yes, do you think they belong to a gang because they want

	1	2
	Yes	No
31.1 To be protected against other gangs		
31.2 To be protected against inmates		
31.3 To be protected against members (prison officials)		
31.4 To feel that they have a place where they belong		
31.5 To help them to know what is expected from them in prison		
31.6 To get drugs (e.g. dagga)		
31.7 To get sex		
31.8 To get cigarettes, sweets or food		
31.9 To get blankets		
31.10 To get clothing or shoes		
31.11 To get other things (mention: _____)		

V88  23  
 V89  24  
 V90  25  
 V91  26  
 V92  27  
 V93  28  
 V94  29  
 V95  30  
 V96  31  
 V97  32  
 V98  33

32. Do you belong to a gang? 1 2  

Yes	No
-----	----

V99  34

**IF YES, PLEASE ANSWER QUESTION 33. IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 34**

33. If Yes, why do you belong to a gang?

	1	2
	Yes	No
33.1 To be protected against other gangs		
33.2 To be protected against inmates		
33.3 To be protected against members (prison officials)		
33.4 To feel that you have a place where you belong		
33.5 To help you know what is expected from you in prison		
33.6 To get drugs (e.g. dagga)		
33.7 To get sex		
33.8 To get cigarettes, sweets or food		
33.9 To get blankets		
33.10 To get clothing or shoes		
33.11 To get other things (mention: _____)		

V100  35  
 V101  36  
 V102  37  
 V103  38  
 V104  39  
 V105  40  
 V106  41  
 V107  42  
 V108  43  
 V109  44  
 V110  45

34. Have you participated in any of the following treatment programmes?

	1	2
	Yes	No
34.1 Life-skills programme		
34.2 Aggressive programme		
34.3 Sex offender programme		
34.4 Alcohol and substance abuse programme		
34.5 Pre-release programme		
34.6 Other (mention: _____)		

V111  46  
 V112  47  
 V113  48  
 V114  49  
 V115  50  
 V116  51

## APPENDIX 2

### E. VIEW OF YOURSELF AND THE WORLD

On the following pages are a number of statements. Please indicate how often **EACH** of these statements applies to you by placing a cross (x) in the appropriate square.

#### EXAMPLE

- Place a tick (✓) in the square under **NEVER** if the statement never applies to you.
- Place a tick (✓) in the square under **SELDOM** if the statement only seldom applies to you.
- Place a tick (✓) in the square under **FAIRLY OFTEN** if the statement applies to you fairly often.
- Place a tick (✓) in the square under **VERY OFTEN** if the statement applies to you very often.

	Never	Seldom	Fairly often	Very often
I like to go dancing	1	2	3	4

#### Please Note:

- There are no right or wrong answers.
- The best answers you can give are those which express your feelings about yourself and life as a whole, therefore not to judge you as a person.

For office use

Respondent no.

V117    1-3

Card no.

V118  0  3  4-5

	Never	Seldom	Fairly often	Very often		
1. I wonder what sort of person I really am	4	3	2	1	V119	6
2. I lack the energy to get started on something I intended to do	4	3	2	1	V120	7
3. I get a great deal of pleasure from working	1	2	3	4	V121	8
4. People seem to change their opinion of me	4	3	2	1	V122	9
5. I am certain about what I should do with my life	1	2	3	4	V123	10
6. I am uncertain as to whether something is morally right or wrong	4	3	2	1	V124	11
7. Most people agree about what sort of person I am	1	2	3	4	V125	12
8. When people try to persuade me to do something I don't want to, I find it difficult to say "no"	4	3	2	1	V126	13
9. I feel the world's major problems can be solved	1	2	3	4	V127	14
10. I have a feeling that I would like "to sink through the floor" or become "invisible to those around me"	4	3	2	1	V128	15
11. I feel that my way of life suits me completely	1	2	3	4	V129	16
12. My worth is recognised by others	1	2	3	4	V130	17
13. I feel optimistic about my future	1	2	3	4	V131	18
14. I feel guilty when I am enjoying myself	4	3	2	1	V132	19
15. I am hesitant about trying out new methods of doing things	4	3	2	1	V133	20
16. I feel low spirited (depressed)	4	3	2	1	V134	21
17. I am filled with admiration for mankind	1	2	3	4	V135	22
18. I am prepared to take a risk to get what I want	1	2	3	4	V136	23
19. I am unnecessarily apologetic	4	3	2	1	V137	24
20. When I compete with others I try hard to win	1	2	3	4	V138	25
21. When I am looking forward to an event, I expect something to go wrong and spoil it	4	3	2	1	V139	26

	Never	Seldom	Fairly often	Very often	For office use	
22. I feel that what I am doing in life is not really worthwhile	4	3	2	1	V140	27
23. I feel that I fit in very well in the community in which I live	1	2	3	4	V141	28
24. I loose interest in something I started and leave it unfinished	4	3	2	1	V142	29
25. I feel proud to be the sort of person I am	1	2	3	4	V143	30
26. People seem to see me very differently from the way I see myself	4	3	2	1	V144	31
27. I am confident about carrying out my plans to a successful conclusion	1	2	3	4	V145	32
28. When people look at something I have done, I feel embarrassed by the thought that they could have done it better	4	3	2	1	V146	33
29. I am curious and inquisitive	1	2	3	4	V147	34
30. I have a feeling that there is something lacking in my life	4	3	2	1	V148	35
31. I make exciting plans for the future	1	2	3	4	V149	36
32. What happens to me is the result of what I do, rather than luck	1	2	3	4	V150	37
33. I feel left out	4	3	2	1	V151	38
34. I am afraid that someone will find out something bad about me	4	3	2	1	V152	39
35. People seem to disapprove of me	4	3	2	1	V153	40
36. I feel the thrill of doing something really well	1	2	3	4	V154	41
37. I feel that people don't trust me	4	3	2	1	V155	42
38. I feel pessimistic about the future of mankind	4	3	2	1	V156	43
39. People think I am lazy	4	3	2	1	V157	44
40. I change my ideas about what I want from life	4	3	2	1	V158	45
41. I am unsure as to how people feel about me	4	3	2	1	V159	46
42. I feel clever or competent	1	2	3	4	V160	47
43. I feel that I will achieve what I want in life	1	2	3	4	V161	48
44. People can be trusted	1	2	3	4	V162	49
45. I have a sense of accomplishment	1	2	3	4	V163	50
46. I worry that my friends will find fault with me	4	3	2	1	V164	51
47. My feelings about myself change	4	3	2	1	V165	52
48. I feel frustrated if my daily routine is disturbed	4	3	2	1	V166	53
49. I enjoy competing	1	2	3	4	V167	54
50. When I have difficulty in getting something right, I give up	4	3	2	1	V168	55
51. I make the best of my abilities	1	2	3	4	V169	56
52. I feel too embarrassed to admit that I disagree with someone	4	3	2	1	V170	57
53. I feel that I am putting on an act or doing something for effect	4	3	2	1	V171	58
54. I feel too incompetent to do what I would really like to do in life	4	3	2	1	V172	59
55. I avoid doing something difficult because I feel I would fail	4	3	2	1	V173	60
56. After I have made a decision, I feel that I have made a mistake	4	3	2	1	V174	61
57. I am sure about what I want in life	1	2	3	4	V175	62
58. I feel proud to be a member of the society in which I live	1	2	3	4	V176	63
59. I feel freer to be my real self, when I am away from those who know me very well	4	3	2	1	V177	64
					V 178	65- 66



DEPARTMENT: CORRECTIONAL SERVICES  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X136, Pretoria, 0001. Tel: 012 307 2359 Facsimile 012 328 5111  
124 Church Street West, Poynton Building West Block, Pretoria

Reference: 8/7/1

Enquiries: Ms CL Smith

Mr R Peacock  
PO Box 53555  
Troyeville  
2139

Dear Mr Peacock

**Re: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON "IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE INCARCERATED ADOLESCENT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS"**

It is with pleasure that I wish to inform you that your request to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services has been approved.

Ms J Matshego, at telephone 012 – 307 2413 has been appointed as your internal guide. You are requested to contact her before you commence with your research project.

The relevant Regional and Area Commissioner will be informed of your pending research project. It will be your responsibility to make arrangements for your visiting times. It is recommended that your identity document and the approval letter be in your possession when visiting the center.

Should you have any enquiries regarding this process, please contact the research unit for assistance at telephone number 012-307 2895.

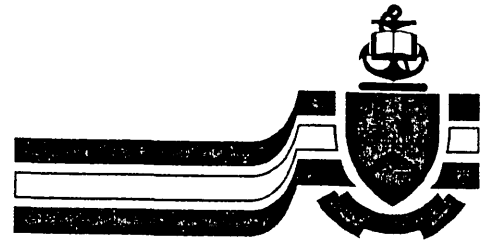
Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

*J A Schreiner*  
04-08-31

**CHIEF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER: CENTRAL SERVICES**  
**J A SCHREINER (Ms)**





University of Pretoria

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa  
<http://www.up.ac.za>

Department of Criminology  
9 November 2004

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

- 1. Title of the research:** Identity development of the incarcerated adolescent: a comparative analysis
- 2. Purpose of the study:** The aim of this study is to see how imprisonment affects a person's view of himself and his view of the world.
- 3. Procedures:** To achieve the above-mentioned aim use will be made of two questionnaires that should not take more than 45 minutes to fill-in. Please note that no names or identifying information should be written on the questionnaires. This is to make sure that you cannot be identified and that every thing you tick on the questionnaire stays confidential.
- 4. Risks and discomforts:** No risks are involved in taking part. Also remember that there are no right and wrong answers to the questions. You just have to express yourself.
- 5. Benefits:** Personally you will not benefit from taking part in the study. On the other hand, your answers will help to understand what it means to a young person to be in prison. The findings will also be used to make recommendations about the treatment of youths that are in prison.

- 6. Participant's rights:** Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any stage of the research. If you choose to withdraw, the questionnaires you completed will be destroyed.
- 7. Confidentiality:** The information you provide will be used for research purposes only. I would once again like to assure you that your identity and personal information will be kept confidential. **Please note:** No personal particulars should be written on the questionnaires.

Should you have any questions while filling in the questionnaires please feel free to ask the researcher. If you wish to speak to someone about the study at a later stage, you could contact the social worker that will help you.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in the study by signing a copy of this letter.

I have read this letter and understand what is requested. I hereby agree to take part in the study.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 5

Dear Research Participant

1. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research.
2. Your contribution is important as it will help to better understand how youths in prison see themselves and imprisonment.
3. Please note that participation does not offer benefits to you personally. The value of your participation is for the development of scientific knowledge about incarcerated youths.
4. Furthermore participation does not involve any risks or harm to you.
5. None of the questions have RIGHT OR WRONG answers.
6. What is important, is that you answer each question according to how YOU feel.
7. Would like to emphasise that you must not write your name or identifying particulars on the questionnaire.
8. This is to ensure that your anonymity is protected and that your answers will be treated as confidential.
9. Please note that all the answers will be analysed by a computer and not a person.
10. For scientific purposes I am interested in the answers given by the group as a whole and not a specific individual.
11. Please read the instructions carefully and make sure that you understand what is expected of you.
12. Make sure that you answer each question.
13. Should you have problems understanding any of the questions please put up your hand and I will assist you.
14. Generally the questionnaire requires about 30 minutes to be completed.
15. Please do not worry if you finish quicker or need more time.
16. I would like to emphasise that participation is voluntary.
17. Should you at any stage feel that you do not want to continue, you are welcome to withdraw from the research. If you withdraw, your questionnaire will be destroyed.
18. Once again thank you for participating