

# Breaking with Township Gangsterism: The Struggle for Place and Voice

DORIA DANIELS & QUINTON ADAMS

**Abstract:** For many Cape Flats communities in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, gangsterism defines the dominant culture. How the state of wellness in such communities influences decisions that individuals make, and the choices that are available to them when faced with hardships, violence-related trauma, and socio-economic crises, seldom seem to be part of the research agenda. Limited research has been conducted on the well-being of the youth who grow up in gang-infested areas. This article reports on research that sought to develop a critical understanding how the childhood experiences of township youth influence their decisions to become gangsters. The findings shows that decisions that township youth make cannot be separated from their community's social disorganisation. Gangsterism formed a safe backdrop to childhoods characterised by a lack of personal validation in families, scarcity of suitable role models and personal economic deprivation. The street gang provided the stability and validation that was lacking in their home environments. However, in adulthood their uncritical acceptance of the gangster lifestyle is challenged. The research found that critical incidents in their lives force them to re-evaluate their childhood decisions. It is when critically reflecting on the meaning of their lives that decisions to leave the gang occur.

## Introduction

The stories of people's lives have to be read within the historical, cultural, and political contexts that shape them. This seems to not be the case when the phenomenon of gangsterism is studied. Our knowledge of gangsterism within the coloured communities around Cape Town is shaped by the phenomenon as a criminal entity. This is apparent in research conducted in the disciplines of social work and criminology. In these disciplines, studies overwhelmingly focus on the social problems that gangsters create for society. The subjects of such studies are identified as at-risk individuals whose alienation and disengagement from community requires study. This deficit discourse positions individuals as problems to be solved.

How the state of wellness in their communities influences decisions that individuals make, and the choices that are available to them when faced with hardships, violence-related trauma, and socio-economic crises, seldom seem to be part of the research agenda. What is seen as a limitation of current research is its uncritical engagement with how the individual has been shaped by his or her community culture and how community history influenced the individual's decision to become a gangster. To engage with gangsterism only as a criminal

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**Doria Daniels** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. **Quinton Adams** is the director for the Centre for Youth and Child Development, South Africa.

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entity is to miss its complexity as a social and cultural phenomenon. Steinberg's research on the lives of gangsters, as written up in *The Number*, underlines this point. His research is one of the few South African studies that sought to understand crime through the life and circumstances of the individual.<sup>1</sup> By giving crime and criminality a human face he succeeds in moving beyond the criminal act to make meaning of why young coloured men of the Western Cape continue to live violent lives despite the opportunities that their democratic society now make available to them.

Children do not possess the maturity and self-knowledge to critically reflect on the historical, cultural, and biological reasons for their needs, wants, and interests. Thus, a decision to become a member of a street gang is not necessarily an informed decision. Researchers have to make sense of the relational, social, and cultural factors that influence the decisions vulnerable youth make about their lives and those who inhabit it, in order to understand them as adult subjects. Adults' understanding of the world is different from when they were children in that maturity fosters the need in the human being to make meaning of his or her life and to reflect on past decisions. Adulthood often times brings a clearer understanding of life experiences when it is known under what circumstances an expressed idea is true or justified.

Transformative learning theory and resilience shaped the theoretical framework within which we interpret how three former gangsters make meaning of the world they function in and their development of a more critical worldview<sup>2</sup>. We are telling their life stories for the insights they could provide on the dynamic interaction between resilience factors and transformational learning processes. This new knowledge is not just transformational for the three men; it could also be valuable knowledge for community educators who work with youth who are vulnerable to the lure of gangsterism.

### **Resilience and Transformational Learning as a Framework for Understanding Disentanglement from Gangsterism**

Resilience is often described as "individual variation in response to risk," or as an occurrence that is characterised by good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development.<sup>3</sup> The construct of resilience is a derivative of two bodies of literature: physiological aspects of stress and the psychological aspects of coping.<sup>4</sup> Within the discipline of developmental psychopathology resilience refers to the positive developmental outcomes for youth despite their exposure to adverse and negative circumstances. Defining resilience is challenging as many factors can be identified that could play a role. Some of the factors that researchers of resilience have pointed out are trusting relationships, emotional support that youth enjoy outside of the family, hope, and a belief in God and morality. The International Resiliency Project cautions that not enough is known about the dynamic interaction of these factors, the roles they play in various contexts, and the sources of such factors.

Risk is identified as a primary concept within the resiliency model, being a concept that refers to any power that facilitates the start of, the digression to or the continuation of the problem situation.<sup>5</sup> An individual's vulnerability to challenges, stress, and anxiety influences how he or she perceives his/her self worth as well as how he or she interacts with his/her world. Thus, demographic variables such as age and gender, together with disabling conditions such as parental conflict and marital violence are factors that could cause stress and anxiety in a

child's world. What is clear from all resilience studies is the relationship between culture and resilience factors. Culture includes family and community culture. It is from within the confines of the local community that men can be recognised as men and carry out their responsibility as such. Rutter and Salo have argued that one's identity is ingrained within the generational continuity of the household in which one was raised, together with the communal relationships and networks that exist within one's neighbourhood.<sup>6</sup>

Transformational learning theory is a second component that informed our thinking about these men as adults. According to Mezirow, adults are only able to claim ownership of their personal and social roles once they develop a greater understanding and awareness of the world and its issues.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, researchers of transformational learning processes argue that a traumatic personal event or a series of events during adulthood could result in an acute personal or social crisis for the individual. When this happens, it will challenge their positioning as men in the world and could lead them to undergo a perspective transformation. Such experiences are painful and stressful life events that lead the individual to re-evaluate his life and his purpose in life.

### **Community Disorganisation and Gangsterism**

Coloured people are over-represented in South African prisons. Though this group make up 9 percent of the population, they make up 18 percent of the prison population.<sup>8</sup> Higher level of incarceration could suggest higher levels of community criminality. Gangsterism in the Western Cape is often linked to the forced removals of coloured families and their dispersal all over the Cape Flats. Standing and other researchers have argued that the informal social control that communities had over the youth was lost when established Cape Town communities were disbanded under the Group Areas Act in the 1960s. Crime and felony-related conflict became much more prominent and problematic in coloured communities after they were relocated to the Cape Flats.<sup>9</sup> Official estimates for the 1990s put the number of gangs on the Cape Flats at approximately 130 and their combined membership at approximately 100,000.<sup>10</sup> Whereas in the past street gangs were described as expressions of social cohesion in peripheral communities, the Cape Flats gangs of the twenty-first century are violent criminal fraternities that have alarmingly powerful memberships and constitute sophisticated criminal networks.<sup>11</sup>

It cannot be ignored that the high levels of unemployment and poverty amongst township families have created the opportunity for gangs to exploit the vulnerable and the unemployed. Although young men are the primary victims of community violence, they are also overwhelmingly the perpetrators of violent acts committed in such communities.<sup>12</sup> This is borne out by Standing's research that found that hard-core gangs are more likely to target youths whose vulnerability is enhanced by economically unstable family backgrounds.<sup>13</sup> Poverty, unemployment, and the absence of meaningful jobs are found globally to be contributing factors to the recruitment of youth to gangs.<sup>14</sup> Capozzoli and McVey refer to the sense of hopelessness that poverty generates when youth are unable to obtain the goods and services that they need and that their peers have access to.<sup>15</sup>

The youth's involvements in gangs are often ascribed to either estrangement or disconnectedness from community.<sup>16</sup> However, not all researchers concur with this argument.

Salo views membership in a gang as the means through which gendered personhood is affirmed and through which communities are forged and reproduced.<sup>17</sup>

### Narrating the Personal Journey of Three Former Gangsters

Access to Fly, SB, and Nate (pseudonyms) was negotiated through a community leader with whom all three have a working relationship. This was because we anticipated that these former gangsters would be suspicious of our motives to research their life stories. They consented to be interviewed and audio-taped, on condition that the audio-taped interviews were destroyed once the transcriptions were done. In addition to the 1½ to 2 hours' interview transcriptions, additional field notes were collected in the community during informal contact sessions with the three men.<sup>18</sup> At the time of the interviews all three men had severed their ties with their gangs and said that they were vulnerable to vengeance attacks from gangsters. The names we use in the text are pseudonyms to protect their identities. We also scrambled some of the data that could identify their communities and be traced back to them. The table below provides demographic data on Fly, SB, and Nate.

Participant	Age	Parents	Siblings
Fly	24	Mother, 2 stepfathers	5 siblings
SB	26	mother	3 siblings
Nate	24	mother	3 siblings

The men's gender identities seemed to supersede their gangster identities, as they spoke a lot about their biological families and their positioning as sons in such families. When talking about their families, they focussed almost exclusively on their relationship with their mothers and the absence of their fathers. All three men were raised in female-headed households. Fly knew who his biological father was, though the men in his childhood were two stepfathers. There were many men present in the lives of their mothers, but none of these men seemed to have played a significant role in their lives. The various male figures from their childhood were described as abusive to both their mothers and to them as children. The following came from Fly's narrative, referring to one of the stepfathers:

The time when I became aware, he was already there, and he already beat up my mother and me too ... I remember once when he was hitting my mother, when I was a small boy, about three, four years old. While he was hitting my mother, I said to him: 'Dad, don't hit my mother like that,' and he started hitting, and I jumped back, and he threw me against the wardrobe. ... and I sat there 'wind uit' (winded) ... and the tears rolled ...

SB and his three brothers were born out-of-wedlock. His mother was leading a promiscuous life, and four different men fathered her four sons. She drank a lot and often did not come home at night. SB remembers that as a child he constantly sought his real father amongst the many male partners that his mother brought home. His mother's evasiveness about his paternity was interpreted by him as her unsureness of who fathered him. "She withheld things from me, ...

and the fact that I always found her with different men. That could have led to me becoming rebellious against her. All the time she hid things about my father from me, and what happens now?" SB eventually found out who his father was, but by that time he had passed away, and the opportunity to get to know him was lost.

Nate knew who both his parents were. They were drug dealers who had a shebeen and traded in alcohol and drugs. He, however, never knew his father, a man who had gained notoriety as one of the biggest drug lords in the community. Nate's father was forced to relocate to Johannesburg, due to what Nate believes were drug-related issues. His mother was a shebeen queen. What was evident from the three men's narratives was that the homes they grew up in contained no positive role models that they could emulate. Promiscuity, drunkenness, abuse, criminals, drug dealing, and drug running were amongst the descriptors they used to describing the adults in their lives. The anger and sometimes blame that the three men doled out was mostly to the parent who was present in their lives, namely their mothers. Nate stated that he "does not know what it is like to live with a mother," as he left home for six years as a child to live on the streets. So too, Fly became a "stroller" and lived on the streets for long periods of time, while SB's relationship with his mother was tumultuous.

### **The Community as the Gangs' School of Initiation**

We sought understanding of gang discourse and their composition of social capital, which we understand to be networks that grant a sense of identity and common purpose to both the gangster and the gang and imply costs and benefits. The townships in which SB, Nate, and Fly grew up had low socio-economic status and were typified by poverty and unemployment. All three townships were built between 1965 and 1980, after coloured communities were uprooted from urban residential areas that were rezoned as white residential areas under the Group Areas Act of 1950. Their parents' classification as coloured under the Population Registration Act led to them being restricted to live in these newly created Cape Flats townships.

Nate grew up in Clarkstown, which is "worlds away from Platteklouf (an affluent white suburb), and also Belhar (a middle-class coloured suburb)."<sup>19</sup> He described his family's resettlement in the early 1960s as being "dumped" in Clarkstown. According to him, Clarkstown groomed young men for gangsterism. "Clarkstown ... it is the place with the highest rate of gangsterism. I have adapted myself to what is the constitution of Clarkstown ... and I fall in with that constitution. If I do not fall in with that constitution, I will never make it there."

In his township people conform to the norms and standards by which Clarkstown residents live, namely that they produce and sell alcohol and drugs, and "stoop to the lowest level to acquire things." Young males become gang members largely in response to their interactions with the local conditions of poverty. As a youngster, if you did not own a particular pair of training shoes, you identified someone who did, and then you robbed him of his shoes. Thus, acknowledgment is earned through engagement with what is valued, which is membership in a gang and involvement in the drug trade. Nate's family is an example of what he describes. Nate was born into the drug trade. While growing up he was mainly exposed to people who made a living from trading in drugs and alcohol. His family was powerful in the community because they engaged with illegal activities such as running a shebeen in a residential neighbourhood.

At the time of the interview his sisters were running the shebeen and were still actively continuing their trade in drugs and alcohol.

Against the other two, SB seemed to have lived a normal childhood. Growing up he remembers his mother being the sole breadwinner for her four sons. His mother was always struggling to cope, both personally and financially. Things became difficult for the family when she fell ill and could no longer afford to keep her younger sons at school. When SB's eldest brother deserted the family and moved to another township, SB was in Grade 11. He had to quit school to become his family's breadwinner. It would seem that poverty, together with being pushed into the role of sole breadwinner whilst still a teenager, made him more vulnerable to be enticed by the gang. SB said he felt alienated and neglected by his mother and his tumultuous relationship with her influenced his decision to join a street gang at the age of seventeen. His gang members were all "boys growing up without dads, and who were used to being on the street." SB continues: "Maybe I was just looking for people that could listen to me ... They would maybe better understand than my mother did, that was what I thought."

After he joined the gang, he quit his daytime job because his gang membership came with benefits such as accumulating material goods and easy access to money. As an established gangster SB could walk into a shebeen or any place where illegal activities were taking place and then demand his "tax," which was the term he used for payoff money. In exchange for the "tax" that he received from his gang leader, his job was to rob businesses or individuals. SB later progressed from street gangster to prison gangster when he landed in jail.

Fly's family life can be described as unstable and challenging for any growing child. His mother was the black sheep of her family, a woman who was never in a stable relationship, and who constantly uprooted her family. As such, the family was constantly at the mercy of relatives and strangers to house them when they were homeless. At one time their "home" was an outside toilet in a family's backyard. An unstable family life together with a history of being fathered by a criminal impacted on how he was acted on by his relatives. "Whenever something would disappear, it would be Fly, Fly, Fly. My family, everyone, would ... watch me. When something goes missing, even when I did not take it ... And many times I would just get fed-up."

Throughout his narrative, Fly kept on referring to the importance of respect: "... it starts in the home ... your parents are the first to initiate you ... in other words, they are the first to show you some respect, discipline. And it is just about that. It is all about you not knowing how to act and react ... and then it is difficult."

Fly described himself as a quiet child who did not make trouble. However, during childhood he would disappear for months at a time, living on the street, or helping street vendors sell fruit in the city center. During such periods away from home, he attached himself to various male figures. He made constant reference to an "Uncle Leon," a street vendor who traded on Greenmarket Square in Cape Town. The first time he met Uncle Leon, also known as "Pappi," he was about eleven years old. He remembers helping Pappi find a site and set up his table for the day. For two years Pappi was the only family he knew. And the reason that he stayed with him for so long was because he was shown respect by Uncle Leon. Other than

saying that Uncle Leon gave him accommodation, Fly did not divulge much about their relationship.

Fly was fourteen years old when he first went to jail. Police picked him up on an occasion when he was again “strolling” and kept him in jail for a few weeks while trying to locate his family. His second brush with the law was in 2002, when he was caught stripping a car that had been reported stolen. He was jailed for a year-and-a-half. It was at this time that he was recruited by a jail gang. Fly was a “Frans,” a label used for an offender earmarked by the 28 prison gang as one with potential to become a gangster. In the year-an-a-half that he was in jail, Fly participated in and passed the tests and tasks to be inducted into the 28 gang, which is the most influential prison gang. Though Fly had tattoos all over the exposed parts of his body, our reading of him was that he did not fit the hardened gangster profile. His justification for having been a gangster was, again, that he found the discipline that he sought, which had always been missing in his life. Furthermore, his notoriety in the community earned him respect amongst his peers.

### **Leaving the Gang Behind**

In each of the men’s lives, a series of personal events happened that challenged their positioning as men in the world. Death of a family member or the birth of a child were two acutely personal experiences that influenced SB’s and Fly’s decisions to walk away from their lives as gangsters.

SB’s relationship with his mother was described as tumultuous. His gang involvement must have been the reason for many of their arguments, as it is clear that she consistently made her disapproval of his lifestyle known. She would remind him of the effects his lifestyle is having on her and his younger brothers, though he ignored her. Once, however, there was a retaliation attack on his family home after he fought with another gangster. The rival gang threatened his mother with death and trashed his family’s home. This incident was SB’s first experience of the dangerous consequences that being a gangster could have for one’s family. As a gangster, his mother’s voice stayed in his head, admonishing him about his lifestyle. “My mother’s voice, yes ... Her voice was the only voice that even now helps. She was always there, even when I went to jail. She would always talk, even scold, and say ‘I am not putting you out because you are a gangster, it is because I do not agree with what you do.’”

His mother persisted in reminding him that his younger siblings were growing up and were witnessing his actions. On such occasions he did consider distancing himself from gangsterism. From how he describes her actions in dealing with his gangster activities, it is obvious that she showed resiliency by refusing to accept any assistance from him that resulted from criminal activities. This must have been difficult given that she was a cash-strapped single parent who could easily have benefitted from the protection and material gains that immediate family members of gangsters enjoy. Instead she distanced herself from him.

The birth of his baby daughter seemed to be the catalyst for his decision to change his life around. Parenthood forced SB to reflect on his new role as a father as well as challenged his positioning thus far as a man against the female sex. When SB became a father the realisation hit him that: “SB, you have a baby, you have a girl, you have a mother ... you are older ... that is

when I decided that my life as a gangster cannot continue ... it is about the people who care about you.”

He tells the story of how he was standing outside the hospital while his daughter was being born and how the magnitude of the moment hit him: he was about to become a father, which would place immense responsibility on him as a person. He remembers that the gender of his child triggered memories of all the bad things he had done to girls. That night he walked many kilometres from the hospital to his house, crying about his new baby daughter. That night he made the decision to be a father who would protect her and raise her. For months after her birth he avoided his gangster friends and focussed on his new role as a father.

Fly’s transformation, too, was the result of a collective of transforming life events. Though he had been a “stroller” all his life, he continued to stay in contact with his family. He would occasionally return home to check in on his mother and sisters and bring them fruit. However, when his mother died, he experienced a great sense of loss, and of loneliness. “I was looking for something that was not there anymore. I lost something valuable that had great meaning in my life.” This great loss spurred him on to rebuild his relationship with his sisters. Though not close to them, he now more regularly visits them.

A second change in his life is linked to his personal relationship and the deepening of his spirituality. Even when he was a gangster, Fly would repent about his deeds and “had the urge to ... take on God in my life.” When he walked past churches, the “open lights,” he would pause to listen, and would silently ask that churchgoers pray for him too. However, at the time he did not take his thoughts about religion seriously and “did not realise how personal the issue (of finding God) was.” Fly’s religious conversion is however also tied to the emotional and spiritual support he received from the woman in his life. She was religious and was the one who motivated him to attend church with her and to lead “a life for God.” Her tragic death from a snake bite has been a very painful event in his life.

He spoke with great sadness about her death and her influence on his changed perspective on life. He has gained the confidence to pray on his own. Fly exudes an eagerness to understand the Bible and to reflect on what the verses mean and what their relevance are in his life. During the interviews his narrative was interspersed with quotes from the Bible, and he seemed very eager to engage us in discussion about religion. His wife’s untimely death has left him a single parent of one boy. Fly was very reflective about his role as a father, which he described as “a God-given responsibility.” He made a comparison between his role as a father and his experience as a son who suffered neglect and deprivation because of an absent father. Fly decided to break the generational continuity of the absent father by his decision to be present in his son’s life.

Nate gives religion as his reason for turning his back on the gang. He maintained that the only way for him to leave the gangster lifestyle was if he committed his life to God. Gangsters have a grudging respect for a gang member who decides to commit his life to God. However, this decision has made him vulnerable to constant prosecution and monitoring from fellow gangsters. Former gangsters always have incriminating information about other gang members and could place the operations of the gang under severe threat. Nate is very aware that one of the biggest concerns regarding ex-gangsters is that they will inform on the gangs, especially on



the operations of the drug trade. Therefore, the decision to leave the gang and gang culture is a serious one that required tremendous courage on his part.

When his decision became known, it was met with scepticism. The gang always assumes that there is a hidden reason for quitting and sets traps to catch one out. Nate related how a former gang member was shot dead when the gang found out that his religious conversion was a scam to sell drugs and increase his drug trade in the community. Despite his open declaration that he had quit gangsterism, Nate has had numerous opportunities presented to him to earn money by selling drugs. The seduction of easy money through gangsterism is a constant threat. These Nate saw as tests to determine whether he was serious about leaving the gang and to make sure that his decision was genuine. By saying no to such offers speak to the resilience of Nate to resist accepting the tempting offers of gangsters.

### **The Long Road Ahead**

Their break with a gangster lifestyle is allowing SB, Nate, and Fly the space to commit themselves to their personal visions and dreams. They have replaced the gang identity with a personal identity. However, their personal identity requires that they take responsibility for their own actions and commit themselves to new visions for the future. In the past, the gang put pressure on them to act according to the norms and rules of the gang, and there was little or no time as individuals to take responsibility for their personal needs and aspirations. Now they have the freedom of making decisions that could affect their future and purpose in life.

The personal hardships that those who break away from gangs have to experience are sometimes the very reason why people remain in the gang or return to it. SB, Nate, and Fly found themselves without an income, and not knowing how to earn an honest living. Though they did not possess the skills to launch themselves into new careers, they resisted returning to their former activities. Bouncing back from a lifestyle of gang activities and criminality requires consistency in pro-social behavior. Both Nate and Fly were fortunate and could make use of the training opportunities that their church provided to help them prepare for their new lifestyle. Both have participated in a government-sponsored life skills training program for adults living in adverse risk conditions. Nate has plans to set up his own belt-making business, Fly has decided to start his own scrap metal business, and SB has been trained to refurbish old computers. The jobs that they now hold are a far cry from the life of a gangster, and the income that they generate is a pittance when compared to the money to which they had access before.

### **Conclusion**

In this article we presented the stories of three former gangsters. By gaining knowledge from the perspective of the researched, we wanted to understand why male youths become involved in gangsterism and why some of them walk away from this lifestyle. The challenges that SB, Fly, and Nate faced as young men who became gangsters was researched within the ecology of their childhood, as well as that of the broader community.<sup>20</sup> The townships all three grew up in were characterised by disorganisation in both their personal and public life. Their childhoods mirror their multiple marginalities as poor, coloured children from very distressed families. Nate was raised in a shebeen where illegal activities were happening daily and where he was

initiated as a child drug runner. Fly's family was often homeless; thus becoming a child of the street was an option he preferred over being at home. SB's mother's promiscuous lifestyle and his early baptism into the life of family breadwinner could have been very stressful responsibilities for a seventeen year-old. Given such family backgrounds they had to find ways to survive, and gangsterism provided the way.

Poverty's impact on their worlds was in limited opportunities, marginalization, and social exclusion. All three boys' vulnerability to challenging, stressful families influenced how they perceived their self-worth as well as how they interacted with their worlds. Their involvement in gang activities was their way of obtaining a competitive advantage in their own poor and unstable communities. More importantly, the gang became the substitute family where their gendered personhood was affirmed. Furthermore, it became a vehicle to acquiring material goods necessary for minimal well-being, which in their situations were the shoes, clothing, and money to which teenagers from a higher socio-economic community had access. Gangsterism was an avenue to adulthood that these three men from three different townships on the Cape Flats took.

In adult life, the trusting relationships and emotional support that were provided by a partner, together with a growing trust in God and family, were challenging their existing belief system. Many disconcerting moral dilemmas started presenting themselves, such as how to be a good father whilst still a gangster, or how to be a gangster without bringing harm to your family. As gang members they were used to unquestioning and sometimes mindlessly accepting gang rules. Becoming a parent or losing a parent challenged their value systems. They started to actively engage with and question who they are in the world. This ties in with what Mezirow refers to as transformational learning.<sup>21</sup> They had "matured out" through a process of gradual disaffiliation and breaking away from the gang, at least in terms of commitment to and participation in violent gang activities. These changed perspectives were, however, facilitated by a need for common ground. Whereas in the past they adopted a self serving stance, they now seem to be living by normative values and rules.

Their transformed thinking about life and their roles in it are not easy and straightforward processes. They are constantly confronted by the deeds of their past for they had lived lives that included violence, crime, and drug trafficking, which led to their alienation from the community in which they lived. Though they have shed their gang lifestyle, they know that it is not a straightforward process of cutting one's ties with the gang. Nor is there instantaneous re-admittance to the community; or immediate support. These individuals know that living the life of the former gangster requires tremendous resilience and ongoing courage to stay focused on their new paths: one perceived misstep could mean alienation from the community, or even death.

## Notes

- 1 Steinberg, 2005.
- 2 Taylor, 2008.
- 3 Hawley, 2000; also Masten, 2001.
- 4 Tusaie and Dyer, 2004.

- 5 Waller, 2001.
- 6 See Salo, 2005; Rutter, 1987.
- 7 Mezirow, 1987.
- 8 Leggett, 2004.
- 9 Pinnock, 1984.
- 10 See Standing, 2005, on statistics on gangs. See also Kinnes, 2000.
- 11 For more, also see Kynoch, 1999.
- 12 Samara, 2005.
- 13 Standing, 2005.
- 14 For more see Curry and Thomas, 1992; Fagan, 1990; Huff, 1990; and Vigil, 1988.
- 15 Capozzoli and McVey, 2000.
- 16 Glaser, 2000
- 17 Salo, 2005.
- 18 One of us was working closely with these communities and with the families of these men. As such, data on the men were known prior to the interviews and were verified during that process.
- 19 This is a fictitious name for the township.
- 20 Bronfenbrenner, 1979.
- 21 Mezirow, 2000, p.8.

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