This is how we do it! Multidimensional theory of strategies to build resilience to resist serious youth violence and offending

Nsang

THIS IS HOW WE DO IT

- MULTIDIMENSIONAL THEORY OF STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE TO RESIST SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE AND OFFENDING -

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of West London for the Professional Doctorate in Policing, Crime and Security
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ABSTRACT

Gang-related crime and Serious Youth Violence (SYV) in London have been a concern for at least the last two decades. Two years, in 2023, there was a hike on recorded teenage homicide with more than 21 teenagers killed in London alone; and 2024 - 2025 followed this same trajectory. Whilst stabbings and shootings steal the headlines, the lives and lived experiences of most children and young people living in the capital's more deprived and gang-affected

boroughs remain under-explored. Over 700,000 children live in the most deprived areas of London. Over 95% of them have never been involved in any SYV or gang-related crime.

This study analyses the effective strategies that Children and Young People (CYP) and their families living in London's gang-affected areas use to build personal and community resilience so that they can resist getting involved in criminality. The findings are the result of 14 semi-structured interviews with young adults who grew up and live in some of London's more socially deprived gang-affected areas. The participants have not been involved in Serious Youth Violence (SYV) and/or group offending.

The findings aim to contribute to emerging research in the United Kingdom around the subject. Whilst recent gang scholarship emerged in the UK about 20 years ago, little, if any, of it addressed the fact that over 90% of CYP living in London gang affected areas, who despite the presence of criminogenic have never been involved criminal activity or behaviour. Literature, knowledge, policy, and intervention seem to mainly focus on risk factors, diversion and exit strategies rather than deterrent from engaging in SYV or offending behaviour.

From this study, key findings reveal that:

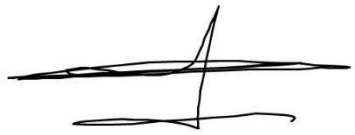
1) The majority of CYP living in gang-affected areas do not engage in criminal behaviour.
2) Authoritative parenting style seems to act as the best parenting style for CYP living in gang-affected areas.
3) Older siblings are key to support positive guiding of CYP living in gang-affected areas.
4) Parental intensive monitoring and supervision minimises the risks for CYP to engage in criminal behaviours.
5) Self-control can be learnt and modified after formative years.
6) Escorting CYP to/ from school through primary and early secondary could reduce the risks to criminal involvement.
7) Pro-social friendships minimise the risks to be involved in SYV and criminal behaviour.
8) Pro-social hobbies and activities can contribute to reduce the risks to engage in SYV and youth crime.
9) There is a high level of community/neighbourhood trauma that impacts on the daily lives and general emotional wellbeing of residents living in London gang affected areas. This impacts as well parenting capacity and CYP's ability to self-control.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Professional Doctorate in Policing, Crime and Security, at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of West London.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name of Candidate: Nsang Cristià Esimi Cruz



Date: February 2024

In Memory of: María Pérez Asensio

To my children: Kwasy Esimi (C.R.U.), Ebela Maria Esimi, Ayekaba Akuba Esimi, Aaliyah Reo Esimi, Ri'ókó Francisco Esimi Reo, Riheka Oyana Esimi Reo

Every single letter that I typed symbolises a second that I lost to spend next to you and with you.

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Terminology and definitions

When discussing topics, it is important to clarify the meaning of the terms so that the reader understands to what the author is referring to. With a study like this at hand, stereotyping and demonising are a risk. The author attempted to move away from certain terminology, but he found it almost impossible to circumvent certain words that are negatively charged and may ostracise communities. Nonetheless, for the purpose of the better good, these terms are clarified for the readers.

Serious Youth Violence (SYV)

The Metropolitan Police Service defines serious youth violence as *'any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19' i.e. murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm*. 'Youth violence' is defined in the same way but also includes assault with injury offences (London Safeguarding Children Procedures, 2023).

Gang

The definition of gangs is the first step to clarify for any study relating to serious youth violence and street gangs. There are many definitions and interpretations, some old and some new. The semantics are important, but for the purpose of this study the definition of gangs is:

> *'A geographically street based collective of young people who are described either by themselves or/and others as a group for whom, either collectively or individually, crime and violence are part of their characteristic' (Esimi-Cruz, 2010).*

This author chose this definition as this was designed and co-produced by CYP who were involved in street gangs. In 2010, during the research *Gangs and their impact on CYP, their families and their communities,* Esimi-Cruz (2010) interviewed a few CYP who were either active gang members, associated or affiliated (see definition below). This author, together with the participants developed a definition that, in the CYP's views, represented a more fairly description of their experience and the structure of street gangs in London. This remains relevant for today's context.

Gang-associated

An CYP that have grown up in an area known to be gang-affected. They know gang nominals, interacts with them but do not generally socialise with them beyond their local context.

Gang-affiliated

Person that self-identifies or is identified as being part of a youth gang. Nonetheless, is not actively involved in regular Serious Youth Violence or Gang Activity.

Gang-active

Entrenched in gang activity, including SYV, criminal and offending behaviour within the context of youth gang criminal activities.

Adolescenthood

Adolescenthood is the notion of human development that outlines adolescence as a separate entity rather than as a period of transition and change. During this period humans develop from childhood to adulthood, and they should not be viewed as child or adult. Nonetheless, they are treated as child, adult, or both. Adolescenthood provides this different entity at this developmental stage. (Maier, 1965).

Abbreviations:

Further education - Pathways into education, employment, training after 16 years of age

SYV – Serious Youth Violence

CYP – Children and Young People

MOPAC – Mayor of London Office for Policing And Crime

SEN – Special Education Needs

PVA – Parental Verbal Abuse

PF – Protective Factor

RF – Risk Factor

CAMHS – Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services

EET – Education Employment and Training

NEET – Not in Education Employment or Training

MT – Microsoft Teams

VRU – Violence Reduction Unit

Endz – Slang term used to refer to a specific post code, ward, or area. As well refer by others as 'Turf' in more recent past.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In submitting this thesis, I would like to acknowledge and thank the following: Dr Anthony Goodman and Dr David Porteous, for helping me to start this journey; Dr Suzella Palmer and Professor John Pitts for opening the doors, for the support and guidance throughout the last decade. Belen Abueso Alberdi for her tenacity and pushing me to complete this thesis. Mrs. Valeri Mirvis for her kindness, patience, and dedication to mutual learning. Dr Simon Harding for the encouragement to enrol in this program and all the support throughout the years. Dr Allan T. Moore and Dr Rashid Minhas for the feedback and support.

I would especially like to thank all the young people interviewed for their time, support and trust. This thesis would have not been possible without you. To their parents/carers for the incredible strengths and tenacity rearing their children. Lastly, my thanks to my wife, Ilda Reo Sulekopa, for showing support, understanding and patience during this journey. And my first born, Ebela Maria Esimi, for teaching me a thing or two about data collection and analysis.

Preamble: Numb to it - traumatic experiences of growing in London gang-affected areas -

The following quote is an excerpt from one of the interviewee's responses to this study. The interviewee (Winston - 24 yrs old) brought up and living in a North London gang-affected ward. The author felt that this quote encapsulates well the current study whilst reflecting the complexities faced by Children and Young People (CYP) their families and their communities. Hopefully, it sets the reader to better understand the urgency of developing further knowledge, policies and interventions to support CYP to minimise Serious Youth Violence (SYV) and to further design/share effective strategies to navigate such challenging environments.

> *"It's very, very, very, very frequent, almost to the point where you do become very numb to it. You tend not to blink twice anymore just because you couldn't pop down the street without hearing oh, so and so over here is dead. Now even a few people went to school with died from crime. A lot of the time, crime they're not even involved in, or they could just be doing nothing. I remember one person I went to school with, they were on their way to the cinema, and they were just shot in the head. And then they went on Snapchat. And social media obviously amplifies your exposure to all of this. But and then they filmed it and put it on Snapchat. So, everyone from the school ended up seeing it and it's like, wow. But having grown up in an area where stuff like that happened all the time, when it came to that point, it almost hardens your heart to it. And so, you're not like, Oh my God, like, and you don't. You don't unfortunately, you don't really tend to blink twice just like, oh yeah, another day, you know. So, although I was fortunate that it wasn't often on my doorstep, it was so prevalent in the area that it you'd just become very numb to it."* (Winston)

Source: The author

Chapter 1. Setting the Scene (Introduction)

This study is a continuation of the author's research and professional practice in the social work and youth justice field and explores how individual, parenting and community strategies can minimise the pull factors for local CYP to resist engagement in SYV and offending throughout their childhood and 'adolescenthood' (Maier, 1965). The research aims to address gaps by reviewing tested positive strategies and protective factors (PF) to divert and deter CYP from youth offending/crime. By doing so, the research promotes suggested changes to existing youth services, family intervention programmes and policies by exploring and analysing existing effective parenting/family, education and communities to build resilience to resist SYV and group offending.

The findings analysed in this thesis are based on 14 semi-structured interviews with young adults who grew up in one of the selected London gang-affected areas and have not been involved in SYV or group offending.

Since the contemporary literature first emerged on UK street gangs, the focus has been to understand risk factors and predictors for SYV and/or street gang involvement. There is limited literature and understanding about why most young people with known risk factors, living in gang-affected areas, do not engage with SYV and/or crime. Due to limited research on resilience and resistance to SYV, this thesis focuses on how to transform the risk factors into positive strategies in order to, hopefully, positively impact UK policy design and family intervention. This will support reduction in the negative impact that SYV and street gangs have in certain sectors of our society, raising concerns around community safety, youth experiences and neighbourhood cohesion.

1.1. Serious Youth Violence (SYV) within the context of street gangs in the U.K.

The frequency and intensity of SYV in London in particular and in the U.K. in general have become national headlines. In recent decades, concerns regarding SYV in London have been more evident. Recorded knife crime in the year ending September 2023 saw an increase of 5% (with 48,716 offences) compared with the previous year, 46,367 offences (ONS, 2024). There was also an increase of robberies involving a bladed weapon, up 19%, (Ibid, 2024). Headlines, such as those below have become worryingly more frequent in London and the United Kingdom.

'According to Met Police figures, 7,512 children aged between 10 and 14 were suspected of violent crime, including knife offences, in 2023, a rise of 38% from 2020.'

(BBC News 2, 2025)

'Two boys, 12, arrested after teenager stabbed'

(BBC News, 2025)

'Stabbed boy pleaded 'I'm 15, don't let me die'

(BBC News 1, 2025)

'London knife and gun crime surges amid gang warfare'

(The Telegraph, 2023)

1.1.1. Young people and violence

It is well documented that most young people occasionally act without following societal constraints, aggressively and violently, and often this is perceived as deviant or criminal (UN, 2003; Pickard, 2014; Males, 2009). Some research suggests that crime is expected as part of adolescent development specially in young men (Witte and Witt, 2000; Ebensen and Weerman, 2005; Pitts, 2015). The illegal behaviour and involvement in crime increases during adolescence and this appears to be a normal part of their developmental stage (Moffit, 1993). There is extensive research that demonstrates that 'adolescenthood' is a distinctive developmental stage, this impacts brain functioning, particularly for male adolescents' brains which do not reach maturity until 25 years, approximately (Anderson et al, 2001;), leading to male adolescent being cognitively closer to younger children's cognitive development, than adults (Baird, et al…, 2005). The parts of the brain that control cognitive function are the last parts to develop, leading to adolescents being more impulsive, especially males (William, 2012), whilst negatively impacting their consequential thinking, goal setting, planning, remorse and empathy (Icenogle and Cauffman, 2021). Thus, it is unsurprising that approximately 90% of young men have committed a delinquent act (Witte and Witt, 2000). Farrington and West (1990), in their longitudinal research, found that 64% of the males they interviewed selfreported engaging in offending between the ages of 10 - 18. Similarly, 74 % of the offending population in England and Wales are aged between 10 - 17 years (Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, 2024)

1.2. The Darwinian argument - Violence innate to humans

Such discussions are central to the dichotomous philosophical argument about the influence of ‘nature versus nurture’ on criminal behaviour. The Darwinian argument is that the moral sense is innate to human beings, therefore, we can differentiate between right and wrong without socialisation (Baschetti, 2008). Along the same lines, evolutionary forensic psychology argues that what modern societies categorise as crimes may just be part of the natural selection process that gives some individuals an advantage in competition for limited societal resources (Duntley and Shackelford, 2008; Duntley 2005). Anderson (2019) suggests that violence and aggression are believed to be intrinsic elements of our nature as human beings, and these traits are more evident during ‘adolescenthood’ (Maier, 1965) without the need to have learnt said behaviour from their environment.

Baker (2007) argued that human behaviour may be inherited, and genes may be a significant factor, but believed that behaviour can be influenced by a wide range of factors. Thus, the genetic makeup of a person and their environmental factors influence behaviour, bring to the forefront the nature vs nurture arguments underpinning this study. It is perhaps critical to understand learning and control theories to comprehend how behaviour is influenced, and how resilience is embedded by CYP living in gang-affected communities.

1.3. Violence learnt through socialisation and manifested due to lack of control

Akers and Jennings (2015) argue that all our values, moral compass and understanding of the world are learnt through socialisation with others. Social Learning Theory differs from the innate sense of human behaviour (Akers and Jennings, 2015). It is believed that humans are able to process information, and their innate feelings, can associate the consequences of their behaviour and thus adapt their behaviour to individual context (Bandura, 1977). Social Learning Theory emphasises the capacity to be conditioned through observation, modelling, and imitate attitudes, behaviours, and the emotional reactions of those surrounding us, such situation, it is argued, may conceptualise violence and aggression (Albert, 2017). Clark (2004) described classical Conditioning Theory [Pavlov 1897/1902] as a learning process during which people’s response to an action is adapted through their interaction with others, especially a trusted person.

Bandura (1977) introduced two important elements to Pavlov’s classical Conditioning Theory (Watson, 1924; Pavlov, 1897/1902; Pavlov, 2023): the first is the interaction between stimuli and responses, and the second is the belief that behaviour is learned through your environment observing and learning from a valued role model, this is known as mediational process (Bandura, Adams and Beyer 1977; Greewald and Albert, 1968).

Bandura proposed 4 mediational processes which are elemental to understanding if imitation happens once the model is detected: *Attention* - when the model gets the interest of the observer, and deems it worthy of imitation; *Retention,* - when we store said behaviour's model in our minds, and we are able to remember it; *Motor reproduction,* - the ability to replicate the behaviour that we observed which can be internally or externally replicated; *Motivation*, this process (motivational and reinforcement) is the rationale and ability to think about the positive or otherwise negative consequences of replicating the model observed and their actions. Bandura argues that it is very much about the rewards or punishment that result from said actions (Bandura, 1969; Bandura, 1971; Bandura, 1971b Bandura, 1977).

This dichotomous philosophical argument between the nature vs nurture influence on criminal behaviour is an essential tool when analysing and studying juvenile deviance within the context of SYV in London. The overall position is that there is interaction within the nature and nurture (Tabery, 2023). Regarding London street gangs literature and research, some commentators see this as part of the natural (nature) developmental process for adolescents (Fagg, Curtis, Stansfield and Congdon, 2006; Hallsworth, 2013; Hallsworth and Young, 2008) considering that this is a phase, and they will grow out of it by the late teens or early 20's (National Institute of Justice, 2014). Nonetheless, Harding (2020) states otherwise, during his research he alludes that many youths are no longer growing out of it and remain entrenched in offending and criminality influenced by their environment up through their adult lives. In certain London Boroughs, it appears to Anderson et al., (1994); Rutter and Giller (1983) and Pitts, (2008) that the percentage of youth going through this phase, committing offences or petty crime in one way or another, is so high that it is almost generally expected.

The Greater London Authority (2021) research into SYV in London, concluded that several factors in the neighbourhood (area) can impact levels of violence. These factors include: 'benefit receipt, health, food, employment and living environment' (ibid:18). They further argued that deprivation and social discrimination of the areas where CYP grow up make the CYP more prone to get involved in violence. Watkins and Gearon (2024) argue that vulnerable CYP growing up in gang-affected areas may inevitably get involved in SYV as a result of grooming and exploitation or/and through fear created by societal normalisation of violence leading to a believe that they have to arm themselves for protection.

Pitts (2020) explains these two UK emerging schools of thought: first those who argue such behaviour is only a phase of 'adolescenthood' leading them to wonder if street gangs actually exist at all (see Hallsworth and Young, 2008). Based on post-modernist theories of Deleuze

and Guattari (1993), Hallsworth (2013) asserts that 'the gang' is a 'projection', created by an institutionalised politically charged mechanism. This school of thought thinks that gangs do not exist arguing that this all part of moral panic (Cohen, 1972;) labelling those academics who believe in street gangs as 'gang talkers' of the 'gang industry' (Hallsworth, 2013; Hallsworth and Young, 2008). In the same school of thought, we find authors such as Aldridge, Medina and Ralphs (2011) who argue that as part of moral panic (Cohen, 2011), the UK media is wrongly identifying as gangs, mere associations of young people who occasionally engage in group minor offences (Medina and Ralphs, 2011).

The second school of thought, centres on the research of Harding (2014 and 2020) and Pitts (2007 and 2008); their overarching view, also adapted by Palmer (2009) and Esimi (2010) is the understanding that in London/UK, street gangs are violent, organised, and are in fact connected to wider organised criminal structures.

In the last 20 years or so, SYV has become of great concern for police and policymakers (Sharp, Aldridge and Medina, 2006; MOPAC, 2022). In the last decade from 2012/13 – 2022/23 there has been a sharp increase in SYV in England and Wales (Youth Endowment Fund, 2024). This included homicides and knife assaults where the victims were children or young people (aged 16 -24). Although it is declining, numbers remain higher than a decade ago (Ibid: 2024).

However, research shows, it is a small percentage of young people who are involved in SYV in London. Nonetheless, the negative impact on the communities where they live is clearly devastating for all (Home Office, 2011). The Youth Endowment Fund survey of 7,500 children who live in England & Wales, concluded that 47% had witnessed violence in the last year, Furthermore, their survey highlighted that 25% of the participants were victims/perpetrators of SYV (Youth Endowment Fund, 2023).

When a young person belongs to a street gang their risk of becoming a victim of SYV increases exponentially (Cottrell-Boyce, 2013; Home Office, 2011) and this is exacerbated disproportionately in some communities, some individuals, and families in London, who are repeatedly suffering significantly greater levels of youth violence than others (Home Office, 2011; Pitts, 2008). This creates challenges for practice and policy makers.

1.4. The policy and practice context to safeguard CYP from SYV:

Since 2003, England & Wales have worked under the legal framework of Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003). This policy marked the duties for all professionals working with CYP, and their families to develop partnership working and systemic approaches to meet the needs of CYP from birth up to the age of 19. This policy's aim was to ensure that all children, despite their racial, social, ethnic, cultural, religious, or economic background should be supported to achieve the following goals: *Be healthy, Stay safe, Enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.* This policy sets the obligation for any responsible adult working, or in contact with, CYP to deliver services that support CYP and their families to achieve these basic objectives (Ibid, 2003). Nonetheless, since its conception CYP and their families, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, as the interviewees, are not included systematically, into this political process (Pitts, 2003; EsimiCruz, 2010). Furthermore, for CYP living in gang-affected areas to achieve the outlined goals all pertinent agencies need to work together in partnership if they wish to meet this policy's objectives. To achieve so, the environments where CYP (and their families) grow and live need to be safer to achieve these goals (Esimi, 2010).

Similarly, in 2014 the Children and Families Act 2014, was enacted to reinforce the existing duties of the Children Act 1989 (Bainham and Gilmore, 2015). Part IV of this Act focuses on further governmental support for parents/carers to raise their children in their community (Department for Education, 2014). This includes further leeway for schools to help local CYP by funding breakfast and after school clubs; and provide a wider option of childcare and childcare arrangements for Local CYP (ibid, 2014). These policies are part of the legal framework created in England and Wales to contributed to minimise SYV, youth gang violence and child exploitation.

Different policies have been designed over the last two decades in an attempt to support safeguarding CYP and more specifically to safeguard them from extrafamilial and contextual risks. For example, *Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation* (Home Office, 2011) which looked at how to tackle youth gang related violence; protect vulnerable locations; reduce exploitation; and knife crime; safeguard young women and girls associated with street gangs; and provide exit strategies to street gangs. A second example is the *Police and Crime Plan* 2017 – 2021 whose five priorities were: to better police services, to better the Criminal Justice Service, to keep children and young people safe, to tackle violence against women and girls and to deal with hatred and intolerance (Greater London Authority, 2017). The *Police and Crime Plan* further attempted to integrate information sharing to enhance the identification of London's most vulnerable CYP (Ibid, 2017). Similarly, the *Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2025* laid out their plans to protect CYP who are vulnerable to criminal exploitation and to reduce SYV in

London through the *Violence Reduction Unit* (Mayor of London, 2021a). The *Violence Reduction Units (V.R.U)* initiative looks to better understand the reasons for youth violence and prevent it through early interventions focusing on education and positive activities opportunities for CYP and their communities (Mayor of London, 2018).

VRU follows a public health approach to reducing violence (Mayor of London, 2019). There is national and international evidence where this public health approach has reduced incidences and causes of serious violence, including SYV (Fraser and Gillon, 2024; Butts, et al…, 2015). An important aspect of this policy is that acknowledges the developmental stages of adolescenthood, especially brain development (Mayor of London, 2019). Whilst previous U.K. legislations such as Every Child Matters defines a CYP only to the age of 18, the VRU considers CYP up to the age of 24 (Ibid, 2019). This is in line with adolescent brain development which at that staged is transforming and this impacts negatively on young people's ability to make sensible decisions around risk taking as well as consequential thinking and following pro-social behaviour (Icenogle and Cauffman, 2021; Walters, 2022).

The Children's Social Care National Framework, in 2023, put the social care reforms in motion (DfE, 2023a). These reforms are key policies for SYV interventions. The Conservative government brought forward Children and Families Services reform in the *Stable Homes, Built on Love* (DfE, 2023) this remained at a consultation level which then became in 2024 *Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive* (DfE, 2024) when Labour government came into power, aspects of the social care reform became law through the *Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill* (House of Commons, 2025).

The above policies may have changed with the names and governments in the last two years; however, the essence of the aims and objectives of the reform remains the same:

1. Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need.
2. Children and young people are supported by their family network.
3. Children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes.
4. Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes.

(House of Commons, 2025).

These aims and objectives are relevant to understand the general policies that underpin this research. Nonetheless, point three is of special interest to our fieldwork when discussing SYV as it aims at:

> "Children's social care acts swiftly to protect children and young people from harm, whether that is at home, where they live, or outside in their wider neighbourhood, community and online," the framework says. "Children's social care manages the uncertainty and nuances of the complex circumstances in which harm takes place, working in partnership with other agencies to increase safety." (DfE, 2023a).

More recently, the new Labour government announced their Child Poverty Strategy. In summary, the focus of the strategy is to tackle child poverty, at the individual level and the socioeconomic impact society especially with regards to the social costs on education, health, policing, children's services, housing, social care and the criminal justice system (UK Government, 2025), all of which are relevant to this study. The Child Poverty Strategy four key themes: 1. Increase incomes, 2. Reducing essential costs, 3. Increasing financial resilience, and 4. Better local support. This last point is of especial interest for this study as it focuses on improving access, quality and co-ordination of services at the earliest stage for CYP living in deprived communities across UK (Ibid: 2025).

Nonetheless, despite the efforts in developing policies to tackle SYV, it remains a challenge for policymakers and practitioners, but above all it remains as a major concern for London citizens (Youth Endowment Fund, 2024). As the UK understanding of SYV evolved many scholars and agencies in the field of gangs and youth offending have explored the factors that make a specific cohort of young people more prone to be caught up in youth offending and criminal activities within the context of London street gangs (Deuchar and McLean, 2021; Pitts. 2008; Harding, 2014; Alleyne and Wood, 2014).

Multiple casual factors are identified for youth offending and gang involvement including family factors such as poverty (Annan, et al., 2022); carers' substance misuse (Bosk, et al. 2021); single parenting (Villadsen and Fitzsimons, 2023); siblings/parents that are offenders (Harding, 2014); adverse childhood experiences such as neglect and child abuse (Wilmot, 2022); mental health within the household (Adjei, et al, 2022) domestic violence and/or abuse (Haylock, et al, 2020). Other risk factors are believed to contribute to young people being involved in serious youth violence and youth crime such as neurodiversity (Smith, 2023); low self-control; low self-esteem, trauma, neglect, victims of child exploitation (sexual/ criminal), absconding from home/care, missing from home/care, violence and/or substance misuse (Pitts, 2008; Harding, 2020; Home Office, 2008; Hagedorn, 2007; Children's Commissioner, 2019).

Whilst in the last 20 years literature around SYV in London has started to emerge, there is scarce research exploring how young people presenting with some or all of the aforementioned risk factors, have managed to stay away from SYV. This leads to the answer as to why it is important to contribute to existing literature around protective factors to resist SYV in London despite individual, environmental and contextual risk factors. A field that authors such as D.P. Farrington and J. Shute (see Farrington, 1990; 1993; 2015; 2016; 2019 and Shute, 2008, 2013) have for decades been exploring and providing insight.

Whilst most other academics focus on diversion and desistance, , this study is founded on the authors personal and career experience and as such focuses on protective factors that act as deterrent for children and young people not to engage SYV despite the contextual risks and pull factors.

1.5. Reflective rational for topic selection (professional context)

Here the author provides the rationale for this thesis based on his professional context and experience as a social worker and community organiser in London, supporting CYP and their families who are impacted by child exploitation (criminal/sexual), SYV and contextual risks in general throughout the last 17 years.

1.5.1. Reflections on the personal and professional journey towards this study

The professional career experience, and the lived experience, of this author has strongly influenced my understanding of the topic and propelled my desire to undertake research in this field.

The author graduated in BSc Social Work (2008) then MA Youth Justice, Community Safety and Applied Criminology (2010) before working as a Qualified Social Worker and a Practitioner-Researcher focusing on SYV, Youth Offending and family interventions. My work in a Crisis Centre for young adults with suicidal ideations (2004 – 2014), helped me to understand some of the risks' factors around childhood neglect, childhood trauma and how they manifest later on in our lives.

In 2008, I professionally experienced the risks of SYV whilst completing my student placement, when one of my clients aged 14 was stabbed. The family wanted specialist support for their son and the family. He was told by the local authority that there was no specialist 'gang services' as there were no 'gangs' in the borough. This encouraged me to complete a BSc

Social Work dissertation on *Gun Crime in the Black Community* and continue with a MA in Youth Justice Community Safety and Applied Criminology, focussing on mapping/ completing risk assessments for all the street gangs in existence in the NW10 catchment area. In this primary research I interviewed self-identified gang members, parents/carers and young people affected and/or directly involved in gangs. The dissertation was graded First Class and conferred The Yvonne Heart Award for best postgraduate dissertation. Concurrently, I carried out my first research for the Children's Workforce Development Council in 2010 exploring *'The Impact of Street gangs in Social Work Intervention'*. As a result of my research, I was asked to design and implement more effective structures for the Local Authority and I started to develop and put into practice some of my recommendations by integrating services such as the Youth Offending Service, police, community safety teams, Education, health, Social Services and Community organisations at both strategic and operational levels.

My work was referenced by leading UK experts in the field such as Professor John Pitts and Professor Anthony Goodman. The author worked closely with Bedfordshire University and Middlesex University. At Bedfordshire University, as a Guest Lecturer, I prepared and delivered lectures about Group Offending for undergraduates and for the Master's Programme. At the same time, I became a member of the London Gangs Forum chaired by the then Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Mr Chuka Umunna. Owing to the author's delivery of personal development and diversion programmes for young offenders through the Damilola Taylor Trust and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) from 2011 – 2015 in various Youth Offending Institutions (YOI), I was enlisted to give monthly first-hand evidence for 4 years to the London Gang Forum about the state of the YOI as well as, to analyse and comment on Government White Papers relating to youth crime and SYV. During the same period, the author co-designed and delivered a professional programme "The Deviant Adolescent" with Ariel Nathanson, a Consultant Child, Adolescent and Adult Psychotherapist at the Tavistock and Portman Clinic, where we trained professionals about childhood trauma, attachment, the impact of impulsivity and the links to youth violence and crime.

From 2008 – 2014 I worked at the Crisis Intervention and Support Team and the Family and Adolescent Support Team providing wraparound support to CYP and their families impacted by SYV. The author continues to this day, in another borough, to manage a multidisciplinary team providing that same wraparound holistic support to CYP and families who are impacted by SYV and Youth Crime.

These experiences, academic and professional work, in conjunction with my experience of voluntarily running a youth group in Tottenham, Haringey, where I lived and raised a family for

over 17 years add further focus to this research. My lived experience includes serving the communities and youth of Broadwater Farm, Bruce Grove, St Ann's, Wood Green, Turnpike Lane and parts of Hackney as well as being a Parent Governor at a Secondary Academy in Tottenham. In this intersection of academia, professional and voluntary experience, I was exposed to a wider understanding of the roots causes of youth crime in London.

At the time, the Chicago School, especially with their Zonal Hypothesis (Burgess, 1924) and Social Disorganisation Theories (Shaw and Mckay, 1942) resonated with my professional experience. Working in London in a transitional zone 2, I witnessed the impact of social disorganisation, the concentration of poverty and social ills such as mental health unemployment, deprivation, family and social dysfunction. This had a significant impact on the way I assessed risks and, in the recommendations, and interventions that I suggested to families that found themselves at immediate threat from SYV. This literature was very helpful to understand the environmental and contextual risk factors of the families I was supporting. As a result of my understanding of the theories, I believed that as the risk factors are arguably geographically centred, the overall and easy solution was to remove the risks by removing the families from their environment and uprooting them from their support network and familiar environments. Thus, the consequences of my thoughts and actions made me reflect on instances in my past practice when I had advised families to move away from areas that were perceived as being as unsafe without having considered increasing their protective factors. Said protective factors, could have been sufficient to ensure that the CYP/families stayed in their familial area with appropriate supportive structures.

As I started on my Advanced Systemic Practice in Social Work at the Institute for Family Therapy and completed the Adaptive Mentalization Based Integrative Treatment (AMBIT) at the Anna Freud Organisation, my strengths-based approach made me question further some elements of the criminological theories and interventions on which I had relied for the previous 10 years or so, and I started to look deeply into the statistics and the data on which I had based my interventions.

As I questioned my evidence-based practice derived from theory and academia I started to analyse and investigate my experience resulting from my practice-based evidence. I started to observe clearly that whilst I was supporting families to 'move away for safety' under schemes such as the 'Safe and Secure' from MOPAC; hundreds of CYP and their families, with similar if not the same risks factors were able to remain in said areas and the children were able to navigate the pressures and the pulls from the streets and successfully transition from childhood, to adolescenthood, to adulthood without having been involved in any type or

form of SYV or youth crime (Warr, 1998). This was the case, even within sets of siblings, twins and was beyond the biosocial theories as many of the young people were neglected, traumatised, diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Attention, Deficit, Hyperactivity, Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and still were able to be resilient to resist their environmental and contextual pressures.

Through this realisation, and after 11 years of managing multi-disciplinary therapeutic teams supporting families and CYP affected by SYV, I found a potential gap in this field. This inspired me to look more in detail into understanding and exploring the strategies currently in place that most families (and CYP) are using to be successful despite personal, familial, environmental, and contextual risk-factors. Leading to this study at hand.

Summary of remaining chapters

This thesis, This Is How We Do It, Multidimensional theory of Resilience strategies to resist Serious Youth Violence and offending continues with:

Chapter 2, Theoretical framework underpinning of SYV in London (Literature Review)

This chapter details the literature, theories and hypotheses that underpin the work around risk factors, policies, and strategies for Serious Youth Violence with focus in London. It deals with the questions around strategies to build resilience in areas with high rates of SYV.

Chapter 3, Research Design and Methodology

Chapter three, describes the research design and methodology, including the interview scheduling, methods for data collection and analysis, the sampling strategy, the ethical considerations and the research methodological limitations. Furthermore, this chapter, explores the aspects and roles of the ‘gate keepers.’

Chapter 4, Building Resilience to resist SYV in London (Research findings) and Discussion

Here, the study findings are presented. These are mainly the outcomes of the responses from the semi-structured interviews analysed through the study evaluation process. Analysis is undertaken by following the structure of the two dimensions (Setting and Temporal) and their concepts, unveiling the strategies used by participants and their families to build resilience to

resist SYV and crime. The discussion analyses the effectiveness of the strategies and the relevance to theory, policy and practice.

Chapter 5, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter reviews the key findings, their relevance for police, theory and practice. It then moves into recommendations. These are summarised including the implications for future design of policy and interventions for practitioners, policymakers and families.

Chapter 2 Theoretical framework underpinning SYV in London

This chapter analyses how to build resilience to resist being drawn into youth violence and offending in gang-affected areas. The chapter starts by defining three main concepts: protective factors, risk factors, and resilience. Following this, the chapter its structured in the multidimensional framework based on Time/Developmental stage (childhood, adolescenthood and adulthood) and Space (Parenting/Family, Educational setting and community/neighbourhood). 2.1. Control Theories: revisiting and analysing, the Chicago School. It analyses literature around Social Control, self-control, and parenting styles. This chapter continues with 2.2. which presents a discussion of Family Resilience in ‘gang affected’ neighbourhoods. Here, the thesis analyses literature within the context of structural and structuring dimensions. This chapter ends by outlining some of the literature review gaps and limitations around resilience to SYV found by the author.

2.1. Protective Factors (PF) to support building resilience

There has been much discussion about the definition of protective factors (Farrington et al., 2016; Luthar, 1993; Rutter, 1987; Lynch et al., 2021). Farrington et al., (2016) define interactive protective factors as a factor that interacts with a risk factor to annul its impact. On the other hand, they termed a risk-based protective factor as the element that predicts a small likelihood of offending for an individual belonging to a section of society considered to be at risk (Ibid, 2016).

The basic formula for the interactive protective factor is PF which minimises probability of offending even when the risk factor is present (Farrington, et al., 2016). Regarding extrafamilial risks and harms, Firmin, et al., (2022) describe protective factors as the element/s that allows CYP to navigate safely extra-familial risky scenarios and relationships. In a more generic social work and safeguarding approach to protective factor, the Signs of Safety approach defines protective factors as the individual, community and/or family strengths that have been tested against risk factors (Roy, 2022). Protective factors are the conditions and characteristics that safeguard CYP from negative or risky behaviour like those relating to SYV and youth offending (Ibid, 2022). These are a combination of individual, family and community resources that support CYP to build resilience, navigate adversity and build a safer life (Bailey, et al., 2023) despite a number of risk factors.

2.2. Youth offending risk factors

In the social work field, risk factor is defined based on the probability of harm in a multidimensional way (Gigerenzer, 2014). Within the field of social work, the focus is on the likelihood, and the seriousness of the particular harm (Taylor 2017). When looking at risk factors within the context of offending and SYV, Farrington and Loeber (2000) define it as the factor that predicts the likelihood of offending. Protective and risk factors are habitually categorised and can be scaled which helps us to study, analyse, predict, and design policies and interventions to attempt to prevent, minimise or cease the risks associated with youth offending and general criminal behaviour (Case and Haines, 2013; Farrington and Loeber, 2000).

Longitudinal surveys helped to learn about risk factors for involvement in youth offending and crime. This includes factors such as impulsiveness, low school achievement, punitive or erratic parental discipline, poor parental supervision, child physical abuse, parental conflict, troubled families, antisocial parents, large family size, low family income, antisocial peers, high delinquency rate schools, and high crime neighbourhoods (Murray and Farrington, 2010; Roskam, et al., 2013). Understanding protective and risk factors is essential to build resilience on CYP to resist youth violence and general involvement in youth offending (Mueller and Carey, 2023; Griffin, 2012; Farrington, et al., 2016).

2.3. Resilience to youth offending

When referring to resilience within the context of SYV we refer to the development of psychological resilience (Hodgkinson, et al., 2024). It is suggested that resilience during adolescenthood can be a protective factor, especially for those who have experienced childhood trauma or adverse childhood experiences (Agaibi and Wilson, 2005). Various authors refer to resilience as the interaction between protective and risk factors (Farrington, et al., 2016; Luthar et al., 2000).

Resilience in this context follows a theoretical framework that considers emotions, behaviour and stress and how these interact with the believes, consequential thinking and coping mechanisms leading to positive or negative responses as a result of the interaction between CYP and their environment (McLachlan, 2024; Fletcher and Scott, 2010).

Infurna et al., (2015) argued that low resilience can be manifested through anger and aggression; whilst positive emotions may act as a factor to moderate the impact of trauma on the CYP's behaviour (Ibid, 2015; Likitha and Mishra, 2021).

Whilst there are many discussions around the definition of resilience, for the purpose of this study, the most relevant to SYV and youth offending is that of Mukherjee and Kumar (2017) who argued that resilience is "good psychological functioning and good behavioural outcomes despite adverse circumstances expected to jeopardize normative growth and adaptation" (Ibid, 2017:3). Thus, CYP who develop resilience are more likely to be able to resist getting involved in SYV and/or youth offending despite their individual adverse childhood experiences, childhood trauma and extra-familial risks factors.

When exploring resilience to SYV in gang-affected areas, it is important to analyse key schools of criminology. The Chicago School of Criminology developed and analysed theories such as Social Disorganization Theory, Social Control Theory, Zonal Hypothesis theory among others (Shalin, 2025). This focused on the environmental and social factors of youth crime and youth offending (Weisburd, et al. 2023); emphasising that these factors (environmental and social) may supersede any individual trait that could act as a risk factor to engage in SYV or youth offending (Walters, 2022). They argued that social bonds and social organisations lead to social controls minimising the likelihood of SYV and youth offending (Kempf, 2023).

2.4. Control Theories: Revisiting and analysing the Chicago School of criminology

The Chicago School of sociology (and criminology) is seen by many as the founder of environmental criminology (Cullen and Kulig, 2018; Andresen, Brantingham and Kinney,

2010). Their distinctive focus on the setting element of crime and their analysis of criminogenic neighbourhoods (Hayward, 2012) resonates with this thesis' field of research. Authors like Park and Burgess (1925) are key to this literature review as understanding their work such as 'The Growth of the city' (Burgess, 1925) where theories like zonal hypothesis and general theories of human ecology emerge (Guest, 2019) is essential. Other authors such as Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) contributed to this field by looking at the risk factors in these communities and the impact on their youth. Specially looking at how control theories are internalised by the individuals, developing self-control. The range of proposed theories is wide. At this stage, the thesis will focus on Control Theories.

2.5. Social Control theory and SYV

The Chicago School commented upon the increase of street gangs and criminal youth groups, in summary they argued, that due to city growth in small communities, immigrants become excluded communities characterised by a lack of social control on their second generation. This second generation, they argued, will form gangs because of social disorganisation, lack of social control and the conflict of culture and values between first-generation and second generation. The Chicago School described this process employing different theories such as Social Control, Self-control, and Human Ecology (Hagedorn, 2007; Bernard, Snipes, Gerould, 2010; Sheptycki and Wardak, 2005; Jupp, 1989).

Social Control Theory is founded on the idea that it is natural to have a criminal desire and believes that people will only commit crime if there are no boundaries that stop them from engaging in criminal gangs and offending (Burke, 2001; Vold, Bernard and Snipes, 1998). The Chicago School argues that crime is a daily occurrence of ordinary people and thus there is no need for motivation to commit crime. Family, community, and the state should establish social restriction and control, and these boundaries are either followed or ignored by the individual (Garland, 2001, Morrison, 1995; and Vold, Bernard and Snipes, 1998). Following this theory, London street gangs and their criminal activities are deemed as expected, especially where there are no social controls or boundaries, as is assumed in socialdisorganised and gang-affected areas where research shows a high number of young people are displaying low self-control (Pitts, 2007 and 2008; Harding, 2014; Bannister, Bates, and Kearns, 2017;). Nonetheless, Sampson, et al (2022) and Sampson (2024) on their analysis demonstrated that gang-affected neighbourhoods do have structure, organisation, norms, values and social control.

It could be interpreted, that Hirschi (1969) presented Social Control Theory based on the Darwinian and Hobbesian theories of the nature of human beings; instead of asking the question why do we not obey society's rules? Hirschi (1969) in Causes of Delinquency asks, "Why do men obey the rules of society? Deviance is taken for granted; conformity must be explained" (Hirschi, 1969, p:10) to explore and understand Social Control. For Social Control Theory the nature versus nurture philosophical argument, theorises that crime is innate in human beings and nurturing (social rules and boundaries) are set and people follow these rules to be part of society and succeed in life (ibid:1969).

Hirschi felt that the familiar risk factors between youth offenders and non-offenders were substantial, these included parental supervision, education performance, aspirations, and peer groups (Costello and Laub, 2020). Hirschi argued that adolescents have a social bond, and it is through this bond that people gain their identity and status within their society, therefore have something to lose if they were to display criminal or deviant behaviour (Hirschi, 1969b). His Social Bond Theory was based on the elements of cohesion which included a) attachment to family, b) commitment to social norms and rules, c) involvement in positive community activities and d) believing that these social bonds' elements are relevant for their success in life (Krohn and Massey, 1980; Hirschi, 1969b).

2.6. Attachment Theory to build resilience and resist SYV

Hirschi (1969b) argued that to understand Social Bond it is essential to analyse their attachment (psychological affection) to their parents/carers (assuming they are prosocial), prosocial organisation and institution (schools, clubs, etc…) and people that follow said prosocial values. These attachments, Hirschi (1969b) concluded, can control behaviour, mainly through CYP developing commitment to social relationships and a sense of fear to disappoint those who they love.

2.7. Commitment theory to build resilience in CYP to resist SYV

Commitment is the concept of social relationships that young people value and do not want to endanger through disappointment by behaving in a criminal or deviant manner (Hirschi, 1969 b). It is important to highlight two reciprocal concepts here; firstly, the value that the CYP puts on those people; and secondly, the value those people put and have demonstrated that they care and appreciate the young person (Mears and Stafford, 2024; Croall, 1998; Hirschi, 1969b). This with time, is embedded and it becomes the value system for CYP (Cullen, Lee,

and Butler, 2019). It is argued that pro-social activities and parents/carers involvement is essential for this (Hoffmann, et al., 2020).

2.8. Involvement theory to build resilience in CYP to resist SYV

Hoffmann, et al., (2020) describe Hirschi's understanding of involvement as how time is structured through prosocial accepted activities which minimise deviant and criminal behaviour while strengthening discipline. Thus, a young person who attends school regularly and engages in activities such as football, with prosocial peers, has less unstructured time and therefore, Hirschi (1969b) concluded, is less likely to behave in a criminal manner as it develops social bond.

2.9. Social bond theory to build resilience in CYP to resist SYV

An element of Hirschi's Social Bond theory is 'belief' (Hirschi, 1969b). Kempf (2023) conceptualises this factor as the legitimacy that a young person gives to their social rules, values, and norms. The more the young person internalises those values the more unlikely it is that they will behave in a deviant or criminal manner. This refers to the belief in and validity of the values and norms of the mainstream society. The more these values and norms have been internalised, the more difficult it becomes to violate them. When the meaning of norms is questioned, the intrinsic motivation to obey them also decreases (Hirschi, 1969b). These mainstream societal values and norms can be blurred by contextual violence and trauma.

2.10. Community trauma as a catalyst to SYV

Research evidence highlights that neighbourhood/community violence is one of the factors that can make a young person question social rules, values and norms leading to local CYP rebelling against it (Charuvastra and Cloitre, 2008; Buggs, Kravitz-Wirtz, and Lund, 2022). Community violence in overpopulated boroughs raises stress and creates unmanageable trauma for families living there (Lane et al., 2017). This can lead to historical mass trauma which is underpinned by the deliberate and systematic suppression and control of a community (Sotero, 2006). Historical Trauma can be a result of the socioeconomic and political context such as unfair power structures and social class inequality (Silverman, 2013). It is not restricted to an individual tragic incident and endures for a long period of time. The level of trauma wrecks the natural psychosocial development of the community leading to socioeconomic and health disparities that impact many generations (Perry, 2019), creating a

universal experience of trauma in the community through echoing the traumatic event (Sotero, 2006).

In recent years, social media broadcast traumatic events live and unfiltered (Lubens and Holman, 2017). Emerging research findings show that exposure to violent traumatic events via social media has significant psychological risks to adolescents and children. This can aggravate distress and retraumatise victims taking them back to that particular traumatic incident (Ibid:2017). Videos and images of blood and death lead to worry and fear in the community which contribute to anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (P.T.S.D.) increasing collective, neighbourhood or community trauma (Holmes and Mathews, 2010).

Community violence, causing trauma PTSD and stress, is harmful to the whole community. It is associated with maladaptive behaviour of children in said communities, especially if community trauma is unaddressed, it can increase future chances of their children becoming perpetrators of violence entering a never-ending cycle of violence (McCart, et al., 2007; Eitle and Turner, 2002).

2.11. Code Switching in gang-affected neighbourhoods

Community trauma also links to Elijah Anderson's Code-Switching research and findings. Anderson (1999) explained that CYP that lives in gang-affected areas, as the participants in this study, are at risk to victimisation due to general violent environment. Furthermore, he explains that even though there are many negative pull and contextual risks factors in the community there are community protective factors that can counteract the pull factors to engage in SYV and offending (Ibid: 1999). These included being a pro-social family with family values, this can often offer a protective factor great enough to oppose the 'street culture' (Ibid: 199; Farrington, 2011).

Anderson (2000; 2019) explains that these two tendencies, pro-social and street, are essential part of these communities, they coexist and have serious repercussions for CYP. This coexistence means that CYP that lives in pro-social values homes have to switch codes in order to survive in their communities leading to what Anderson (2019) described as 'code of the streets'. The 'code of the streets' is an established informal system of rules to regulate interpersonal relationships and interactions in the community, including how to respond to threats and violence in an approved manner (Anderson, 2008; Swartz and Wilcox, 2018). When there are sufficient protective factors within the family and/or community and/or school, the pro-social and nonviolent values could prevail among CYP living in gang-affected

communities (Anderson, 2019). It could be argued that code switching is a concept within control theories.

2.12. Limitations and Criticism of Social Control and Social Bond theories

Hirschi's work is considered by many as a turning point in criminology. Nonetheless, it is not without criticism and deep analysis of its limitations and validity as a theory. Gibson (1970), argued that Hirschi was stuck in the eighteenth century as he was getting his inspiration from Hobbes, dismissing all the relevant psychological research (at the time) that had moved on from Hobbes. Gibson (1970) further criticised the methodology used by Hirschi (Ibid: 1970). Others criticised the lack of analysis of other environmental factors such as the debilitation of values and moral compasses due to negative interactions with the law-and-order and justice systems (Travis, Western, Redburn, 2014). They argued that said interactions weaken social bonds.

Agnew (1991) in his longitudinal Test of Social Control Theory and Delinquency highlights studies that challenge Hirschi's Social Control and Social Bond Theory. Agnew (1991) starts by questioning the significance given to parental attachment, suggesting that it has minimal effect on criminal behaviour. He continues by looking at the element of commitment, arguing that a strong commitment to social norms is not linked to diversion from criminal behaviour in the future. Furthermore, Agnew (1991) states that data from longitudinal studies suggests that involvement of parents is also mostly unrelated to future criminal or deviant behaviour.

Similarly, Higgins, et al., (2008) argued that a social bonding measure has a negative link with the likelihood to display criminal behaviour and this is consistent with Hirschi's (2004) results. Higgins, et al., (2008) maintained that participants were less likely to commit crime if they were attached to their caregivers and committed to school. Thus, it is argued that social bonding acts as control mechanism leading to restraint (Ibid, 2008). Finally, it could be argued that Social Control Theories are relevant potentially to understand why young people start to offend rather than explaining re-offending (Schreck and Hirschi, 2009; Triplett, 1988).

Social Bond and Social Control Theories, especially the four elements of attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief, with all their limitations, have been pivotal to this study as they conceptualise the main question to answer for this piece of research: How do they do it? How do young people living in some of the gang-affected areas in London managed to not engage in criminal or offending behaviour, despite having a mix of prosocial and anti-social values and norms due to the environment and contextual psychosocial combination of risks?

This leads to another of the main theories of this study, self-control.

2.13. Self-control theory and SYV

These same principles of Social Control and Social Bond Theories could be applied at the individual level; this is known as Self-control Theory. Self-control Theory assumes that selfcontrol can be achieved through the internalisation of the social constraints that individuals encounter at an early age and remain thereafter within them (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). Freud (1930) explained that the power of the individual to control his/her impulsivity to conform to societal values and rules is the pinnacle of civilised expression. In fact, some argue that self-control is what separates human beings and other primates (Osvath, Osvath, 2008) from other animals (Beran, 2018; Tobin, Logue, 1994).

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1989 and 1990) emphasised that the most common reason for low self-control is loose boundaries during childhood. Vazsonyi et al., (2001) studied self-control on adolescents in different countries, their findings supported Gottfredson and Hirschi general theory of crime. Vazonyi et al., (2001) supported the idea of the multidimensional construct as well of self-control (Vazsonyi et al., 2001). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argued that selfcontrol is the result of effective and nurturing parenting during childhood, especially during the first 10 years of life of the child (Ibid, 1990). That's what is known as The Stability Thesis which assumes that the level of self-control that we acquire as children remains unaltered throughout our lives (Ibid: 1990; Beran, 2018; Forrest et al., 2019).

Tangney, Boone and Baumeister (2018) and Meldrum, Young, and Weerman (2012) argued that the lack of stability, can generate low self-control from an early age. Low self-control is associated with criminal behaviour and impulsive behaviour such as addiction to alcohol, substances, eating and sex addiction (Vohs and Faber, 2007; Tangney, Baumeister and Boone, 2004). This lack of self-control may lead to attenuated commitment towards social norms and boundaries (de Puiseau, Glöckner and Towfigh, 2019; Elliot, Ageton and Canter, 1979 in Burke, 2001).

In this thesis, instead of asking, 'Why do young people engage in offending and criminal behaviour?' using Hirschi's approach, the author asks, 'Why do the majority of young people living in gang-affected areas do not engage in offending and criminal behaviour?' Thus, the theory to be tested is if participants have developed self-control i.e., if they have developed positive attachment and internalised expected prosocial frameworks and lifestyles. CYP would have learnt said moral framework through interaction with different prosocial actors of their

system/s such as schools, clubs, community, extended family, and immediate family. Within the context of street gangs, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) explained that people with low self-control are more prone to commit crimes. And they are also more likely to socialise with young people who commit crimes or offend (Fox, Ward, and Lane, 2013). Therefore, the study explores what happens when CYP with self-control socialise in gang-affected areas with other peers who have low self-control and engage in offending behaviour.

These groups of young people with low self-control, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argued, create gangs. Despite the myth and romanticism around gang loyalty and brotherhood, the cold reality, is that gang members may not form a strong sentimental or emotional attachment with one another (Densley and Pyrooz, 2019). Part of the theory behind low self-control is that individuals with low self-control are unpredictable, impulsive, unreliable and within the context of street gangs they are dishonest and dangerous due to the criminal and violent context of such associations (Ibid, 2019). Although, Ralphs, Medina and Aldridge (2013) explained that membership to a gang can represent a positive relationship better than that existing within family for some of the CYP. Similarly, Pitts (200, 2008 and 2013) discusses in detail the relationship between CYP who belong to street gangs and how this membership, even when reluctantly, serves as a substitute to family.

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) explained that street gangs and group offending provide a safe hub for people with low self-control. Responsibility for criminal acts becomes ambiguous and the group creates somewhat security for the perpetrators. Those with higher self-control see the group as a vehicle to commit crimes that otherwise they will not commit on their own. Those with a more impulsive tendency and lower self-control, within that same group are more likely to commit criminal acts with or without the umbrella of the group/gang (Morselli, Turcotte, and Tenti, 2011).

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) believe that lack of self-control is the main cause of crime for adolescents and adults. They believed as well that peer influence is irrelevant to determine the risk factors to develop low self-control. In their view, self-control is developed during childhood and is unchangeable after the age of 10 or so (Ibid, 1990; Densley, and Pyrooz, 2019).

Gotfredson and Hirschi (1990) differentiate between criminality and crime. Criminality is described as the tendency to commit criminal behaviour while crime is described as the actual act of breaking the law. It is understood that criminality looks and takes the opportunity to commit a crime. Thus, criminality is an essential element which is peculiar to people with low

self-control. People with self-control will be able to resist impulsivity to behave criminally. Levels of self-control in people can vary, but the reality is that opportunities to commit crime are easily available and do not require complicated planning (Ibid: 1990; Abrams, 2021).

Self-control and Social Control Theories are founded on the rationale that engagement in criminal gangs and offending is more likely to occur when young people have limited controls (internal and external) to constrain them (Leverso and Matsueda, 2019; Downes and Rock, 1995). Other research show that biogenic factors are the main cause of low self-control and emotional regulation; relating the probability that environment and family factors are linked to low self-control (Beaver, Wright and DeLisi, 2007; Tremblay, 2003; Beaver and Wright, 2005; Wright and Beaver, 2005; Beaver et al., 2009). A longitudinal study by Wright and Beaver (2005) showed that to achieve self-control, parenting input is statistically insignificant when compared with genetic factors. Although, Morris, et al., (2021) clarified that parenting is influenced by genetic factors. Similarly, behavioural genetic studies are consistent with evidence that genetic factors account for up to 90% of the factors impacting self-regulation, self-control, and impulsivity (Wright, Beaver, DeLisi, and Vaughn, 2008; Price, Simonoff, Waldman, Asherson, and Plomin, 2001). Some biogenic studies, point that self-control is to some extent influenced by the functioning and the structure of the prefrontal cortex of the brain which is mainly constructed by genetics (Ishikawa and Raine, 2003; Cauffman, Steinberg, and Piquero, 2005).

However, Rutter (2006), among other researchers, clarifies that behavioural genetic theories explaining self-control are not incompatible with social and environmental theories that also explain self-control. In fact, Rutter (2006), and others such as Robinson, (2004) and Moffitt (1993) argued that social factors and biogenic factors can interact and at the same time act independently to create low self-control and the disposition to be involved in SYV and crime. Regarding parenting, it is not isolated from biogenetics, Purwanto (2022), argued that parenting style is influenced by genetics. Purwanto (2022) stated that parenting style and genetic personality (of parents and children) can be a significant factor on self-control and character development of CYP, especially during their formative years (primary school 5 yrs – 11 yrs). This means that the more positive the parenting style, the better the child's character development process will be (Ibid: 2022). Li, et al., (2019) on their meta-analysis on the relationship between parenting and self-control of CYP aged 10 yrs to 22 yrs. After analysing 191 articles producing 1,540 effect sizes, they argued that their research showed that parenting is linked to CYP’s self-control and this influences future parenting.

Self-control Theory has been key to this study as it helps to investigate some of the strategies that young people may have used as children to stay away from criminal behaviour and whether self-control was a strategy. Since Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) 'general theory of crime' came about, there has been a wave of research to prove and disprove their work, especially the emphasis that the authors put on self-control (see for example Hay, 2001; Arneklev, Cochran, and Gainey, 1998; Meldrum et al., 2012).

2.14. Limitations of Self-Control Theory as a factor on involvement in SYV

For this study the focus is on the limitations of self-control theory on adolescents looking at two aspects, firstly if this can be positively or negatively impacted by peers and secondly if parents/carers can still influence self-control in their teen children. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argue that self-control is developed, especially, during the first 10 years of a child's life and that rarely could be influenced after this stage. Furthermore, they argued that peers had little influence over individuals' self-control.

This assumption clashes with Social Learning Theory (Akers, 1997) and to some extent Hirschi's (1969) own Social Bond Theory. Both authors are clear that humans influence and learn from one another including positive and negative behaviour based on acceptance, conformation, and reward for said actions. Akers (2008) reinforced that limitation of Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) as his research evidenced that self-control is influenced by peers through reinforcement of behaviours, not just in adolescents but adults as well. Warr (2002) expanded on this and evidenced that peer groups not only influence the level of an individual's self-control but also the values and norms which are internalised by the individual.

Taylor (2001) concluded that Hirschi (1969) and Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) theories need to be calibrated, she argues that they need to adopt the wider impact of structural factors throughout the CYP's lives, including during their adulthood to encourage self-control and emotional regulation. Li, et. al., (2019) argued that secure attachment to parents is the bases for CYP to regulate their emotions. This leads to future self-control. Their results highlighted that parenting style predicts adolescent self-control. Moreover, their findings demonstrated how and why parenting influences self-control during adolescenthood and beyond. Similarly, the study by Meldrum, et al., (2012) concluded that self-control continues to be significant during adolescence beyond the formative years. These forms of evidence are promising as it demonstrates that even if a young person does not have a high level of self-control this can be altered, positively, through their parents/carers' controls and influences.

As others have noted, it is essential to develop further research and knowledge about this area of study and that this should be a priority for anyone studying violent street gangs, criminal networks and youth offending in London, the United Kingdom and elsewhere (Krohn and Thornberry, 2008).

Hirschi and Gottfredson (2018) argued about existing evidence suggesting that self-control development takes place during formative years and this is practically consistent through their life's trajectory. Nonetheless, in 2019, Hirschi and Gottfredson (2019) added that when dealing with the limitations and questions on their publication '*A general theory of crime'*, they had to acknowledge the connections between self-control and social control theories. Hirschi and Gottfredson (2019) further acknowledge that there is now more evidence that demonstrate that both theories are not oppositional and thus, they concluded that self-control and social control theory are essentially the same theory under a same definition.

In summary, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argued that low self-control was the unitary cause of crime, delinquency, and negative behaviours. Although this assumption was the foundation of their theory, they also further expanded on how to develop self-control. Gottfredson and Hirschi explained that young people's ability to develop self-control depends mainly on three different parental strategies: supervision, acknowledgement of misbehaviour and discipline or correction for said behaviour. Parents who follow these three strategies, they argued, will generally raise young people with high levels of self-control. On the other hand, parents who fail to engage in these three parental strategies will, normally, raise children with low levels of self-control. Thus, it is essential to understand the different family structures, parenting styles and level of involvement in providing positive structures that can foster self-control.

2.15. The Structural Dimension of Family Resilience (parenting and family) in 'Gang affected' Neighbourhoods

All the control theories discussed above, seem to agree that despite the fact that control is influenced by external, social, and/or individual factors, the biggest influence to inculcate this is through parenting (Farrington and Ttofi, 2011). Parenting, and family are key to teach social, self-control and emotional regulation both positively and negatively.

2.15.1. Parenting and emotional regulation to build resilience against offending

When living in areas presenting with multiple socioeconomic complexities, such as a high rate of youth crime, it is key for CYP to learn to regulate their emotions to successfully navigate the environments where they live and socialise (Lambert, et al., 2017; Hoekstra, 2019; Mallion,

and Wood, 2018). There is a large body of research on how parenting practices allow CYP to learn how to regulate their emotions (see Vygotsky, 1978; Thompson, 2000; Bowlby, 1951; Cooke, et al., 2019) and those who achieve to regulate their emotions are less likely to behave in a deviant manner during their adolescenthood (Cox, 1996; Holmes, Slaughter, and Kashani, 2001; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Gottfredson, and Hirschi, 2017).

Bornstein (2005:105) explains the importance of parents' support in building self-regulation stating that *"autonomy support, structure, and involvement"* are essential for motivation and internalisation. Grolnick and Ryan (1989) explain that parents providing autonomy support actively encourage and scaffold self-initiating and autonomy in their children. For this, a secure attachment is needed.

2.15.2. Parenting and positive attachment to build resilience against offending

To develop emotional regulation, one needs to have at least one secure attachment (Orehek, Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis, Quick and Weaverling, 2017; Hayslett-McCall and Bernard, 2002). Shute (2008) explains that in structuring a healthy family it is parenting practices that provide an opportunity to regulate emotions, build positive attachments, and create socialisation and interactions through positive structure and activities for the CYP. Bowlby (1979) defined four forms of attachment: secure, anxious-ambivalent, disorganised and avoidant. Children who develop secure attachment are confident, and empathic and have positive social interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, children who develop anxious ambivalent attachment, avoidant attachment, or disorganised attachment normally present with a lack of empathy; emotional regulation; and challenging behaviour (ibid: 1979). They are more likely to develop dysfunctional coping mechanisms and engage in criminal behaviour during their adolescenthood and/or adulthood (Yoder, et al., 2020).

Literature through the decades has shown the link between poor childhood attachment and youth offending (i.e. Ainoutdinova, and Ainoutdinova, 2019; Yang, and Perkins, 2021; Greenberg, et al., 1983). Avoidant and anxiety attachment seem to be more prominent in offenders (Ogilvie, Newman, Todd, and Peck, 2014) and are described as aggressive and more likely to engage in violent behaviour (Wekerle and Wolfe, 1998; McAra, and McVie, 2016).

To build secure attachment the main caregivers are expected to be emotionally available, provide the child (from an early age) with attention; have positive warmth interaction (including hugs and congruent facial expressions i.e. smile); validate the child's emotions and scaffold to

manage them; set consistent age-appropriate boundaries and show interest in what they like or enjoy doing (Bowlby, 1979; Ainsworth, 1978; Bowlby, and Ainsworth, 2013). Secure attachment requires caregivers able to self-regulate and have time to provide quality and nurturing environment to their children. This may be more difficult to achieve in context of high tension, such as areas with high levels of Serious Youth Violence, aggression, and youth criminality (Lynch, and Cicchetti, 2002). Thus, Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1979) as part of parenting has been a key element in analysing the experiences of participants regarding street gangs as it is identified as one of the main protective factors.

2.15.3. Parenting as a protective or risk factor to predict involvement in SYV

There are three main types of parenting styles relating to parenting and developing self-control on their offsprings: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative (Yakin, Laily, and Amelasasih, 2021; Lavrič and Naterer, 2020; Baumrind, 1966).

a) Permissive Parenting as a risk factor for CYP getting involved in SYV

The permissive parenting style is of an affirmative and nonpunitive nature towards the children's actions and wishes. Parent/Carer attempts to behave in a nonpunitive, acceptant, and affirmative manner towards the child's impulses, desires, and actions (Amran and Basri, 2020; Baumrind, 1966). A parent following this style sets very few boundaries around house rules and expectations, makes little demands about behaviour, allows the child to behave at will and expects that the child will learn through actions and reactions and this, they assume will shape the child's future through self-learning (Ibid, 1966). Permissive parents avoid controlling their children's behaviours (Devi and Bhuvaneswari, 2023). CYP living in such households have the freedom to make decisions. Permissive parents are said to be unable to control their children's behaviour even during childhood and spend less time with their children (Shahsavari, 2012).

A permissive parent is described as manipulative and careless about their child adhering or not to external values and rules (Baumrind, 1966). Permissive parents show warmth and acceptance of their children but are barely involved emotionally with their children and do not discipline or correct their misbehaviour (Devi and Bhuvaneswari, 2023; Arnett, 2007). Research suggests that the impact of permissive parenting on CYP is that they develop low self-control and low self-esteem during their childhood (Pinquart, and Gerke, 2019; Woff, 2000). During their adolescenthood, they tend to misbehave (Dalimonte-Merckling and Williams, 2016). Adolescents of permissive parents tend to be aggressive, dominant, lack

selfdiscipline, are emotionally unregulated, impulsive, and likely to be vulnerable to addictions and to commit criminal behaviour (Ibid, 2016). Permissive parenting is one of the predicting factors for youth offending and gang involvement (Sarwar, 2016; Johnson, 2016; Simons and Sutton, 2021). This will corroborate Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) predictions of what happens when the three parental strategies of supervision, acknowledgement of misbehaviour and discipline or correction are not implemented effectively by parents. Discipline and correcting are basic elements of authoritarian parenting.

b) Authoritarian parenting as a risk factor for CYP getting involved in SYV

Baumrind (1966) explained that the authoritarian parenting style is based on shaping, controlling, and evaluating the children's behaviour and attitudes following a code of conduct and absolute standard. The control of authoritarian parents is very direct and demanding. They try to guide children by dominating most of their interactions and enforcing obedience based on strict directions (Baumrind, 1978; Vuk, 2017). Authoritarian parents restrict the children's autonomy, have high expectations for respect, very rigid structures and responsibilities within the household and do not believe in having two-way conversations with the child, who must accept what they have been told (Minnett, 2021; Eisenberg, Fabes, and Murphy, 1996).

Authoritarian parenting represents the most controlling style of the three parenting approaches. They are demanding but not responsive and they show little nurturing or warmth. When they meet out punishment, they rarely give an explanation (Pattillo, 1998). If the rules are broken, they do not believe in giving their children many choices nor do they believe in dialogue and are very likely to ensure shaming on their reprimands (Shaw, and McKay, 1931).

Authoritarian parenting style is very relevant to the study at hand. Firstly, Shaw and Star's (2019) findings indicate that this parenting style together with family stress are relevant factors in emotional regulation and their findings suggest that parenting lack of emotional regulation (especially mother's) is inhered by the children, during their childhood and adolescenthood, leading to low self-control and making them more likely to have high impulsivity and get involved in criminal behaviour.

It is important to highlight the development of parenting styles since Baumrind's (1966) three types which are discussed here. Simons, et al, (2013) added the typology of corporal punishment. There is significant research in the USA highlighting the difference that

authoritarian parenting has on different ethnic groups. Relevant to this study is the suggestion that authoritarian parenting is more characteristic of African (Black) communities in the USA (and potentially London and in the United Kingdom) due to the high level of violence that can be found in many of the Black communities (Lansford, Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, and Pettit, 2004; Gu, Warkentin, Mais, and Carnell, 2017). Parenting in so-called inner-city boroughs, characterised by deprivation and complex socioeconomic ills (Rhodes and Brown, 2019) creates challenges for parenting.

Some parents, out of frustration may use counterproductive disciplinary practices. These may cause harm to CYP by damaging their self-esteem, confidence and it contributes to psychopathologies (Ghosh, 2021). It has negative outcomes for White youth (Simons and Sutton, 2021), but Pinquart and Kauser, (2018) and Brody, Kogan, Chen, and Murry, (2008) findings show that it has positive outcomes for African American adolescent and serves as a deterrent to criminal behaviour. It is important to highlight that this authoritarian parenting is not driven by corporal punishment but by demandingness (Baurmind, 1991; Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, and Pettit, 1996; Pinquart and Kauser, 2018). Children of such parents may grow frustrated, isolated and apathic (Cuccì, et al., 2019; Shahsavari, 2012).

Corporal punishment (physical chastisement) has been identified for decades as one of the main factors to predict future involvement in anti-social and criminal activities (e.g. Plummer and Cossins, 2018; Glueck and Glueck, 1964; Wilson and Herstein, 1985). Rowland, Gerry, and Stanton's (2017) findings demonstrate that physical chastisement may help to rectify behaviour immediately, but this rectification is not sustained. Physical chastisement is associated with future child aggression, less capacity to internalise social and family moral values and prosocial behaviour (Plummer and Cossins, 2018; Farrington and Malvaso, 2019). It could lead to future increase risks of becoming victims and perpetrators of physical abuse, having learnt that violence is a conventional way to resolve conflict, perceiving the world as a dangerous environment and therefore living in fear, and decreasing their understanding between right and wrong (Rowland, Gerry, and Stanton, 2017). The wealth of evidence linking physical punishment to future negative outcomes is shifting the perception of these disciplinary strategies globally (Durrant, and Ensom, 2012; Farrington, and Malvaso,2019).

Silveira, et al., (2021) researched the use of physical disciplinary strategies among ethnic minority parents. They argue that physical chastisement is more prevalent in those communities. This, they explained, should be contextualised within institutionalised discrimination. The use of physical disciplinary strategies may be best understood as a protective measure to reassure their children to follow social norms, as their status as ethnic

minorities may mean that they will be harshly punished by the state if they are found breaching social norms. Physical is not the only aggression, CYP of authoritarian caregivers may experience Parental Verbal Aggression (P.V.A.).

As with any type of child maltreatment (physical, sexual or neglect), children who are victims of verbal abuse are also as likely to develop conduct disorders in the future although this is less researched, especially about future involvement in Serious Youth Violence or crime (Silveira, et al., 2021). Teicher, et al., (2006) findings suggest that PVA should be considered as a form of child abuse and maltreatment. Victims of PVA is linked to depression, disassociation, anger, aggressivity and emotional dysregulation (Teicher, Gordon, and Nemeroff, 2022).

Other research findings point out that PVA has been linked to internalising symptoms i.e. depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive and related disorders, trauma and stressor-related disorders, and dissociative disorders (Beckmann, et al., 2021; SachsEricsson, et al., 2006). Their findings also identified the link between self-criticism, mediating between PVA and internalising symptoms (ibid: 2006). Furthermore, a study by Choi, et al., (2009) reinforce that the brain, when exposed to poor and adverse early experiences, can be severely impacted. Their analysis of neural connectivity patterns highlighted how the brain can be vulnerable to the impact of early stress of PVA, and this could lead to negative psychiatric, neurocognitive, and behavioural traits. They concluded that exposure to PVA only can have a detrimental impact on brain development (ibid: 2009).

Finally, a longitudinal study from Johnson, et al., (2001) highlighted that children who experience PVA from their mother are three times more likely to develop emotional dysregulated behaviour, obsessive-compulsive, personality disorder and paranoia during their adolescenthood and adulthood. PVA, they concluded, contributes to personality disorder regardless of the child's innate character, parental psychopathology, or being a victim of other forms or not of abuse (Ibid, 2001). Therefore, it seems that more attention needs to be given to authoritarian parenting as well as PVA and its impact on CYP development as a risk factor for youth offending and future involvement in criminal behaviour.

c) Authoritative parenting as a protective factor to resist SYV

Baumrind (1966) explains that unlike authoritarian parenting, the authoritative parent is direct but rational; can have dialogue and encourages conversation to nurture the child's cognitive reasoning for the boundaries, rules and moral values. An authoritative parent allows children

to object with rationale and has high expectations and clear disciplinary measures and allows the child to foster individuality, particular interest, and personality. Authoritative parenting style allows a smooth balance whereby the parent acknowledges the child's positive qualities while cementing clear behavioural codes (Baumrind, 1966; Sarwar, 2016). It allows options to foster responsibility on the child, but those options would be set by the parent and limited (Baumrind, 1966; Sadeghi, et al., 2007).

The authoritative parenting style is a combination of high responsiveness, high-control, and high demandingness (Farrington, 2010; Sarwar, 2016). It nurtures age-appropriate level of independence, empathy, self-control; and fosters a trusting relationship between the parent/career and the CYP (Simons and Sutton, 2021). It is considered to be the most positive parenting style to deter adolescents from engaging in criminal behaviour (Farrington, 2010; Simons and Sutton, 2021). This authoritative style is also linked to promoting empathy, commitment and attainment in education and general positive outcomes during their adolescenthood (Laali-Faz and Askari, 2008; Lavrič and Naterer, 2020). Hardy, et al., (1993) examined the relationship between parenting style and children's emotional regulation; they concluded that authoritative parenting supports CYP to develop emotional regulation strategies and deters them from impulsivity.

There is extensive research in the last three decades that points to authoritative parenting as a positive type of parenting in gang-affected/excluded communities such as the ones researched (Farrington, 2010; Simons, et al., 2005). Nonetheless, other researchers point out that authoritative parenting without warmth and support can escalate offending behaviour (Sarwar, 2016; Hays, 2001; Wright and Cullen, 2001). If the child fails to adhere to parental rules, the consequences can be serious in terms of the possibility of getting involved in SYV and crime considering the contextual risks to criminal exploitation and the risks to come to serious harm (Simons, and Sutton, 2021). Thus, parenting monitoring and supervision are recommended (Farrington, 1994) as part of a repertoire of parenting strategies.

d) Parenting monitoring and supervision to build resilience against SYV

CYPs offending and criminal behaviour have been linked to various familial and parental risk factors among them domestic violence, low monitoring, and supervision (Farrington, 2015). As discussed before, it is argued that parenting styles are directly linked to youth offending and crime. Certain characteristics of parenting and family's structure for early adolescenthood (12yrs – 15yrs) influence greatly the chances of offending later in their early adult life; certain aspects of parenting are affected by socioeconomic context (Smith, 2004). Families living in

deprived areas with high rates of serious youth violence may struggle to enforce supervision and monitoring (Ibid, 2004). Low monitoring and supervision could be because of parents working long hours to make ends meet (Cox, Allen, Hanser, and Conrad, 2021) or due to peer pressure and pull factors within their area (Walters, 2016; Shaw and Mckay, 1942). Those who manage to provide sufficient parental monitoring may support to minimise contextual risks by building resilience against SYV and offending (Farrington, 2011).

e) Parental Monitoring to build resilience against offending

Dishion and McMahon (1998) define parental monitoring as a set of parenting skills used from the early years of childhood to adolescence and perhaps even into early adulthood. The essence of monitoring is to have awareness of your child's activities, to show interest and concern about the activities and to be aware of their activities (Flanagan, et al., 2019). Dishion and McMahon (1998) clarified that there is a slight difference between monitoring and supervision; monitoring requires key parental activities that are important to the cognitive and general psychological development of the child. Monitoring is a parental characteristic that has been evidenced that can protect, minimise risks and rectify anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Shute (2018) explains that monitoring reduces the opportunities to be negatively influenced by peers. When the monitoring is weak it is likely to lead to gang involvement and offending behaviour. Nilsson, et al., (2021) findings imply that parental monitoring varies on how CYP perceive the area where they live. Their results show that CYP who experience high levels of community efficacy and cohesion/order also experience higher levels of monitoring, indicating that parent and CYP's behaviour is moulded by the values of the community in which they live.

Research suggests that this parenting strategy is key to healthy parenting and functions as a major protective factor for CYP living in areas with high rates of Serious Youth Violence and youth crime (Dishion and McMahon, 1998). Thus, it is not surprising to find that parents in gang-affected areas implement a stricter parenting strategies than their counterparts living in in areas with a lower rate of Serious Youth Violence and crime (Nilsson, et al., 2021).The adolescents' perceptions of their parents' knowledge about their whereabouts, activities, and peers, seem to be the most important protective factor when it comes to adolescent offending (Ibid: 2021). It is important to understand that monitoring needs to be accompanied by support, especially in late teens and into adulthood, as this promotes greater autonomy for young people (Johnson, et al., 2011). Nonetheless, monitoring on its own is not sufficient to prevent

future criminal behaviour. If a CYP has been inculcated with family and social values and is able to self-control, they would be unlikely to offend even if their parents/carers are not monitoring or supervising (Hardie, 2021).

f) Parental Supervision to build resilience against offending

Parental monitoring has been clearly defined as: a) having awareness of your child's activities, b) showing interest and concern about the activities and c) knowing the whereabouts of the CYP (Dishion and McMahon, 1998). On the other hand, definition for parental supervision does not seem to be as clear, especially as some authors interchangeably use parental supervision and parental monitoring (see Kerr, et al., 2010; Farrington and Welsh, 2008).

West, and Farrington, (1973) referred to parental supervision as watching over one's child's activities and implementing parental controls. For this research parental supervision is understood as the ability of a parent/carer to have awareness of their child's activities and be aware of their whereabouts, but it does not presume nurturing interaction between parent and CYP (Dishion and McMahon's, 1998). Farrington (2017) argues that of all parental strategies and methods, poor parental supervision is typically the most relevant and predictable indicator of future offending. Parents unaware of their children's whereabouts and those who allow their children to be unsupervised in the streets are likely to foster their children's offending and criminal behaviour.

This goes in line with low parental monitoring. The higher the level of monitoring and supervision, the less likely the risks of future offending. Nonetheless, in considering the value of parenting strategies to foster self-control in their children and the link between low selfcontrol and criminal behaviour, the author of this study argues that parental monitoring is recommended over parental supervision. Parental monitoring incorporates supervision but adds a trusted and nurturing relationship between parents and CYP as parents show interest and concern about their CYP activities. They are demonstrating a positive level of parental involvement. Furthermore, children whose parents plan prosocial structured activities from an early age have been found to have higher levels of emotional regulation and self-control (Morrish, et al., 2018; Morris, et al., 2017).

These structured activities could include playdays with specific friends, building a prosocial network, encouraging your child to attend prosocial activities i.e. Scouts (Ladd, 1999). This allows children to strengthen their social skills. Pettit, et al., (1993) noted that parental involvement in childrearing and play activities minimises negative disciplinary strategies and

fosters positive parent-child relationships. Thus, the active positive involvement of parents/carers to bridge and scaffold prosocial and positive structures secures not just autonomy but the development self-control. This leads to the minimisation of future risks of being negatively influenced by peers or their environment.

g) Parenting and positive structure to build resilience against offending

Positive structure from an early age is key to building attachment but also to maximise positive outcomes for children. Children whose parents/carers spend time planning family days, ensuring that there is quality time together during meals and encouraging them to join leisure activities, are more likely to have a prosocial life during their adolescenthood (Kuppens and Ceulemans, 2019; Vigil, 2007).

Positive structure supports CYP to developing emotional regulation and help as well to foster autonomy, develop leadership skills and decision-making, create, and maintain prosocial peer groups, participate in community affairs, develop self-awareness and create strong bonds with family, extended family, local institutions and the community (Butts, Bazamore, and Meroe, 2010). Thus, for parents/carers living in areas with high levels of serious youth violence it is recommended that they take the time, where possible, to provide their children with such opportunities to minimise the chances of future criminal behaviour (Johnson, 2016).

Welsh and Farrington's (2011) findings reinforce the view that activities (sports and physical activities in this case) can prevent crime. They demonstrated that such activities are vehicles for CYP to engage in prosocial behaviours. It also reduces the opportunity for CYP to be criminally exploited or pulled into offending behaviour as they develop social values, support networks and they contribute positively to society. It is suggested that the more prosocial structures a CYP engages with, the less of a chance there is that they will engage in criminal behaviour (Ladd, 1999). Recently there has been increased political attention on the impact that sports can have on changing CYP's experiences, especially young people at risk of offending (Deuchar, 2013).

Positive structures and activities such as football and other crime prevention strategies must have three elements to be effective: weaken the supply of offending opportunities, motivate CYP and create support structures that increase supervision for young people at risk (Cameron and MacDougall, 2000). With these objectives in mind, Cameron, and MacDougall (2000) said you have the design of an effective crime prevention strategy, through positive activity. Findings of meta-analysis on the efficacy of such strategies indicate a global

statistically substantial crime reduction because of CYP engagement in positive activities (Braga and Weisburd, 2012).

Different research however can point to methods to make positive activities effective in reducing crime and diverting CYP from youth gang involvement. One of these diversionary methods, providing positive opportunities to CYP living in deprived areas with appropriate adult supervision for participants, and such structure minimise the risks to criminal and offending behaviour, delinquent behaviour and violent offences (Nichols and Crow, 2004; Deuchar, et al., 2016). Another method is diversion through music, art and sports schemes that act as a pull factor to move young people from deprived areas with high rates of crime and SYV into positive activities (Hartmann and Depro, 2006). Jump (2015) argues that these positive activities allow young CYP to develop prosocial skills and abilities and provide a safe space to build trusted relationships, improve self-esteem and adopt prosocial values and discipline, supporting the reduction of CYP predicted engagement in SYV and criminal behaviour.

Britain (2011) explained that the UK Government likes to invest in targeted positive activities, especially for deprived communities, with the emphasis being on targeted by area and by highest at-risk CYP. Their report emphasises the need for these activities to be run by positive role models.

So, we can assume that positive activities such as sports, scouts, or arts, if structured with the three elements suggested by Cameron and MacDougall (2000) will allow CYPs to participate and learn prosocial values. However, other authors (Deuchar, et al., 2016), alert us, that activities such as boxing whilst providing young men with the right environment to develop self-esteem, respect, and a prosocial venue to channel their aggression, can trap men in a masculine cult of respect that teaches and expect them to act aggressively to maintain said status and respect. Thus, some caution as to the danger that boxing among other ‘violent’ sports which may not allow CYP to learn the prosocial values desired to divert and deter them from criminal and offending behaviour (Jump, 2015; Deuchar, et al., 2016).

Finally, regarding sport-based activities, the element of competition together with the physical element of sport have been linked to various negative social outcomes, suggesting that such programmes need to be designed to ensure that CYP can get a positive experience out of it to minimise the risk factors and their predicted involvement in SYV and criminal behaviour (Fraser-Thomas, et al., 2005). As with all the other factors discussed in this literature review, parenting involvement in positive activities account for one of the factors that can minimise the predictability of crime, but on its own, cannot be concluded that it is the solution and the

deterrent for CYP not to engage in criminal behaviour. Thus, a combination of parenting styles and strategies may be recommended to minimise the challenges of parenting CYP in gang affected areas.

h) Challenges of parenting CYP in gang affected neighbourhoods

Research shows that a combination of parenting style depending on the context is more effective (Farrington, 2010; Vuk, 2017; Munsawaengsub, 2007; Fuemmeler, et al., 2012). Other family factors can influence both parenting and the CYP's ability to self-control such as birth order of the CYP; developmental stage of the CYP; family/parents' needs; age of parent; among other factors (Gaines, 2010; Shute, 2008; Ziberi and Fejzuli, 2023). For instance, Van Volkom, et al., (2019) highlighted that their findings showed that birth order affected conscientiousness and neuroticism.

They argued that the youngest child is more neurotic than the middle one and the oldest children are more conscientiousness than younger children. On the other hand, Keijsers, et al., (2012) argued that parenting may vary pending on the developmental stage of the child. They stated that as the child grows parents spend less quality time and do fewer joint activities, this does not impact on affective bonding where there is a strong based attachment.
Nonetheless, it can be strained especially if there is offending on the part of the CYP (Lytton, 1990). Another factor to consider is the parents/carers' needs. Athanassiou, et al., (2023) found that parental history of mental health and/or offending could impact their parenting style leading to developing risk factors for children to get involved in offending and crime.

Kershaw, et al., (2014) argued that the age of the parents may impact on their parenting style. CYP whose parents are young are more likely to develop high risk factors for offending (Ibid:2014). Young parents are more likely to use permissive and/or authoritarian parenting styles, especially with toddlers, potentially due to lack of maturity (Kim, et al., 2018). On the other hand, older parents use a more positive mixed of parenting styles due to maturity and provide a more nurturing environment for their children (Ibid: 2018). Similarly, the Pittsburgh Youth Study (Loeber et al., 2011) demonstrated the domino effect of risk factors. They argued that socioeconomic and environmental factors such as poor housing or deprivation can impact negatively in parenting style; this impacts negatively increasing the probability for CYP to engage offending behaviour (Ibid: 2011) due to contextual harmful influences.

Thornberry and Krohn (2001) identified Interactional Theory as a positive and consistent familial bond, that minimises harmful influences regarding peers who offend. They argued that

there is a correlation between factors leading to gang engagement during the life course of the young person. Interactional Theory provides a framework to analyse school, individual, family, and peer pressures, and how these impact on youth involvement with local street gangs (Ibid: 2001; Thornberry, 1987; Thornberry and Krohn, 2017). Thus, it is argued that CYP are part of families, and their families are part of communities it is therefore considered by some that parents (and their parenting styles) are influenced by their environment as much as the behaviour of their children (Farrington, 2010; Hoeve et al. 2009; Huang and Ryan 2014). If parenting is influenced by environment, as it is believed, then the mixed parenting styles used and the percentage of offending within those communities should be much higher, which is the gist of this study, to find out: how do they do it? Parenting per se is only one factor to understand offending in CYP other risk and protective factors more dominant exist aside from parenting, such family (Aldridge, et al., 2011).

Joan McCord's (1991) and more recently Ozer, Lavi, Douglas and Wolf's (2017) research highlights relational factors such as intra-familial relationships as strategies to minimise youth involvement in offending and criminal behaviour. Researching parent/child attachment and interaction, mainly between mother and child, evidenced that positive parenting minimises the risk of children getting involved in gangs and offending/crime in general (Shute, 2013; Ozer, Lavi, Douglas and Wolf, 2017).

Some of the characteristics of this positive parenting involve positive engagement, encouragement, and confidence (Shute, 2013; Lemanska, 2015). On the other hand, Farrington, Ttofi, and Piquero, (2016) and McCord's (1991) research found that fathers were also relevant to minimise involvement in offending and crime, especially during the 'adolescenthood' period. It is understood that a parenting style needs to be part of a wider range of strategies rather than a standalone solution to minimise risk (Farrington, 2010; Francis, Pal and Badagabettu, 2021).

Research that studied the role of family and family networks on the desistance process for young people living in socially disorganised areas was found to be limited (see Stansfield, 2016; Wigzell, 2021; Kissner and Pyrooz, 2009; Schreck, Fisher, and Miller, 2004, or/and Warr, 1998). Nonetheless, it focuses, again, solely on the family factors that push young people into gangs and on how to stop CYP from re-offending (Whitlock, 2002). It is important to acknowledge that the research suggests that our participants of this thesis had some of those push factors elements mentioned in its findings.

It could be, as suggested by Agnew (2016), that participants could have been part of those certain deprived communities living in 'gang-affected areas' that have developed flexible mechanisms and resilience to deal with discrimination, oppression, and socio-economic deprivation. Therefore, the participants and other members of their communities are as likely or more likely than the general society to have many of the factors to resist crime, especially conventional successful support such as, "support from extended family and religion, flexibility in coping, and high self-esteem" (Agnew, 2016:19).

2.15.4. Family as a protective or risk factor to predict involvement in SYV

CYP whom experience negative pareting increases exponentially their risks to be involved in SYV (Holmes, et. al., 2001). There is a robust body of evidence in the UK about the importance of family involvement as a protective factor for CYP to resist involvement in SYV (Rutter, 2012; Farrington, 2010; Shute, 2008); including meta-analysis by Farrington and Ttofi (2011) and Farrington, et al., (2016). When family factors fail, the risk factors for CYP to get involved in SYV increase.

a) Low family involvement as a risk factor to engage in offending behaviour

Shute (2018) explains that regardless of the environmental conditions, family relationships and involvement with their adolescents are critical in their lives. Having a positive relationship and quality time with your adolescent children minimises the chances of them joining gangs (Paik, 2017; Hill, et al., 1999). The importance of the family role to minimise gang involvement is well documented (Pitts, 2008; Barker 1998; Lahey, et al., 1999; Harding, 2014).

Agnew (2016) further analyses the importance of role modelling effective communication and healthy relationships between parents, especially how the father relates to the mother influences the young person's behaviour. If the father showed respect, the children were more likely to learn such characteristics, however, if the fathers were aggressive and engaging in crime or offending the children/young people will tend to mimic such behaviour, thus demonstrating that children/young people learn how to behave, in both situations, from their family environment (McCord, 1991).

Friedman, et al., (1975: 601) found that *“poor family relationships preceded and predisposed the youth to gang affiliation and delinquency”*. The family is less and less influential for gang members. The father is likely to be the victim of his child’s violence while his influence is devalued (ibid: 1975; McCord, 1991). This statement is of great importance for our research,

there is evidence that it is, in fact, poor family relationships that pushes CYP into socialising with other vulnerable and offending CYP. Bums (1979) suggests three family conditions foster the nurturing development of children their autonomy and initiative; warmth, acceptance, clear family rules and boundaries and allow the child's autonomy and initiative.

There is a lot of interest in testing the correlation between family involvement and offending. Meta-analysis showed a significant correlation between positive family relationships and resistance to offending (Hoeve;2008). The study demonstrated that family relationships have an impact on future criminal behaviour or offending, also that no single characteristic of said family relations was responsible for the correlation (Ibid, 2008). Family relationships are particularly difficult in large families (Blake, 2022).

b) Large family and family support to develop resilience

Belonging to a large number of siblings is one of the predictors of offending (Tygart,1991; Farrington, Ttofi, and Piquero, 2016). West and Farrington (1973) found that the number of siblings could double the risk of a young person being convicted of a crime. Farrington (1993) stated that belonging to a large family was one of the most significant predictors of imprisonment well into adulthood. The main reason for this, as West and Farrington (1973) explained is the increase in the number of children in the household, and the parent's individual and nurturing attention to each child decreases and this was seen to be more apparent in households with reduced space, linking overcrowding as a predicting factor rather than the number of siblings (Ibid: 1973).

In the USA the research around families focuses on the ethnic difference. For instance, Mollborn, et al., (2011) found that nuclear families, which are most common in USA were a protective factor for white children, while three generations and non-kin households were linked to higher positive outcomes for children from African American and Latino families. Nonetheless, Hoffman (2006) explains that there are no conclusive pieces of evidence that family factors lead to offending behaviour and that other aspects, such as deprived neighbourhoods, are very influential in leading to offending. He found that CYP living in deprived neighbourhoods with high levels of diversity, unemployment, mental health problems, poor housing and poor schools are more likely to experience behavioural problems regardless of family structure. He explained that young people and children living in 'socially disorganised' and gang-affected areas, even if they live with both parents are as likely to engage in offending behaviour than those who live in a single-parent (generally single-mother) household (Goldson and Jamieson 2002; Hoffman, 2006).

c). Relatives and gang/family' criminality

Relatives can be a protective factor or a risk factor. If a parent or close relative is known to be engaging in crime, this will increase the risk of the child getting involved in similar behaviour (Aldridge, et al., 2011; Murray and Farrington, 2008). One of the factors to predict offending and indeed gang affiliation is the criminal normalisation process through parents or family members (Harding, 2012). Siblings who are already involved in gangs and criminal behaviour, or any other affiliation, association or involvement within the immediate family increase the risks of engaging in criminal and offending behaviour (Curry and Spergel, 1992; Besemer, et al., 2017). The relationship between the younger and the old sibling is key here. Harding (2012) noted that older sibling involvement in gangs will normalise the lifestyle and will provide a sense of safety, familiarity, and pre-disposition to the context of Serious Youth Violence. The new member may not even need to be encouraged or persuaded to participate and observing the benefits of affiliation and criminal behaviour may be sufficient for the child to decide to join.

Other members, as identified by Pitts (2007), will join reluctantly. Several CYP reluctantly joined their local gangs to navigate their context (Esimi, 2010). Some of them were younger brothers of known gang nominals and felt the need to join the gangs for protection (Pitts, 2008). Murray and Farrington (2008) went a step further and attempted to fill the gap in research around the impact of parental imprisonment and the predictability of offending. While the evidence was too weak to reach a firm conclusion due to the lack of more rigorous tests around the correlation between parent imprisonment and child antisocial and criminal behaviour, they argued that if a parent is imprisoned the child may suffer from mental health, trauma, drug addiction, low school attendance and which may lead to child antisocial and criminal behaviour.

There is a strong link between the prediction of offending if a sibling is also engaging in criminal behaviour and this is a higher risk factor than if the parents are convicted (Rakt, Nieuwbeerta, and Apel, 2009). Having siblings as gang members and role models is a high-risk factor, and this increases if they witness the sibling making financial gains from their criminal activities (Harding, 2012) especially a low-income family living in a deprived area feeling economically excluded and lacking licit venues to genuine opportunities (Young, 1999) pushing individuals and families into poverty.

d). Family poverty as risk factors to build resilience

Bradshaw (2005) explained that CYP living in low-income families are more at risk of committing crimes. Deprivation and poverty, passed from generation to generation combined with a lack of access to employment or low-paid jobs and/or lack of social opportunities create a lack of aspiration and increase the risks of crime (McLean, et al., 2018). The correlation between poverty and crime is bound by early childhood experiences of poverty, the impact varies when computing factors of length of the experience of poverty (Fergusson, et al., 2004). It is believed that a prolonged experience of poverty during childhood adversely impacts the family dynamics causing emotional distress (Kornhauser, 1978). Long experiences of poverty impacts the opportunities that CYP have in society. It impacts their identity and emotional stability. This then increases the chances of future involvement in criminal behaviour (Skardhamar, 2009).

Living in poverty makes offending and violent crime more likely (Kingston and Webster, 2015). Thus, family poverty is a key variable factor in explaining criminal behaviour, but it is not the only variable (Deuchar, 2009; Deuchar and Holligan, 2010; Shaw and Mckay, 1942). For decades, the Chicago School and others (see Shaw and Mckay, 1942; Clifford and Mckay, 1931; Bannister, et al., 2019) have developed and analysed the economic theories of crime implying that criminal behaviour is motivated by financial gains (Bourgois, 1995). Nonetheless, family poverty impacts as well on the options where families can live; deprived areas with cheap rents or high rates of social housing are known to be more criminogenic and therefore, people living in these areas can access crime more readily; therefore, poverty is a key factor, but not the determining one (Webster and Kingston, 2014). The correlation concerning family poverty, neighbourhood poverty and crime varies depending on the type of crime, how poverty is measured and other variables in the analysis (Bourne, 2011). This family context of poverty and access to social structures could further strained relationships when it encompasses extra stressors like those between 1st and 2nd generations of migrant families.

e). Family: 2nd generation as a risk factor to engage in offending

Another key variable of family involvement is cultural differences as a result of migratory experiences. Many of the participants in our research were second and third generation. In terms of poverty, Martinez, and Lee (2000) and Pitts (2008) demonstrate that immigrants tend to migrate and settle in deprived areas characterised by high rates of crime and social disorganisation. These ‘new’ arrivals find themselves adopting socioeconomic and criminogenic constructs that had been in existence for many decades, or even centuries (Lymperopoulou, and Finney, 2017; Antonopoulos, 2016). Although Martinez and Lee (2000)

and Handlin's (1959) studies are based in the USA, the same phenomenon is found in the streets of London (Hobbs, 2004; Lea and Young, 1993; Pitts, 2008; Antonopoulos, 2016).

It is believed, although the data is highly disputed, that the increase in immigration goes handin-hand with the increase in crime rates (Handlin, 1959). Nonetheless, other research shows that this may be due to the fact that immigration waves are characterised by single young men, settling in poor and criminogenic areas, such those researched in this study, and these variables need to be considered alongside their immigrant status (Ousey and Kubrin, 2018; Martinez and Lee, 2000).

Leah and Young (1993) demonstrated that the first wave of immigrants from Great Britain's former colonies settling in deprived areas of the United Kingdom were law abiding and that the crime perpetrated by their offspring (second generation) was inter-ethnic, dismissing the hypothesis of criminal behaviour as a part of fighting racism and imperialism. This contradicts Gilroy's (1987) stance that black youth crime in Britain was tied to political resistance. MOPAC (2022) explained that even today, the areas with more deprivation, where a high percentage of immigrants live, have high rates of crime and are more likely to be victims of serious youth violence.

The Chicago School scholars describe the increase of street gangs and criminal youth groups as the result of city growth resulting in small, excluded communities of immigrants, which are characterised by a lack of social control over their second generation (Hagedorn, 2007). This second generation, they argue, will form street gangs as a response to social disorganisation, lack of social control and the conflict of culture and values between first-generation and second generation (Jupp, 1989; Shaw and Mckay, 1942). The Chicago School described this process with different theories such as social control, self-control, and human ecology (Bernard, et al., 2010; Sheptycki and Wardak, 2005;).

Nowrasteh (2015) explains that immigrants from the European Union who came to work showed no impact on crime rates. This is relevant as it may indicate that the problem is not the migrant element of the population, but the access (licit or illicitly) to a paid job. It could indicate, it argues, that the decrease in deprivation, decreases the indicators and risk factors for future crimes. Therefore, the research suggests that immigrants are as motivated (or not) to commit crime as their native counterparts even if they do not have access legitimate employment. Another factor to consider is the ethnic element of this migrant population to determine if it has any, if at all, relevance as a predictor for their involvement in SYV and offending (Palmer, 2009).

f) The Ethnic Element of 'Gang membership'

Key scholars have evidenced that the ethnic element of street gangs reflects the ethnic composition of the estate or neighbourhood (see Le Blanc and Lanctot, 1998; Pitts, 2020; Bullock and Tilley, 2002; Harding, 2014; Pitts, 2008; Palmer, 2009). On that line of thought, an interesting report from Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 2018) highlighted some of the complexities regarding the ethnicities of gang members in London, especially those computed by the Metropolitan Police. In their report, 'Trapped in the Matrix: Secrecy, stigma, and bias in the Met's Gangs Database' (2018:15), Amnesty International highlight some of the bias and institutionalised racism that affect such frameworks in the Matrix. The report highlighted that by 2017 almost 4,000 people were on the Matrix, 78% of whom were classified as 'black' and this was considered to be disproportional as the black population in London is 13% and the police's own data showed that only 27% of those identified by them were responsible for serious youth violence in London (Ibid, 2018:3).

This nonintentional bias was replicated elsewhere in England (Manchester and Nottingham) as highlighted by Williams and Clarke (2016). The finding of their research highlighted that the gang concept is racialised to Global Majorities, especially non-white young men. They further ascertained that the creation of police teams with the pretext to respond to street gangs was racially biased from the beginning, impacting on policy and interventions (Ibid: 2016). This measure was exacerbated after the London Riots in 2011 (Amnesty International, 2018). Nonetheless, the context precludes ex-London Mayor and ex-Prime Minister Boris Johnson's famous threat to young gang members stating that:

> "If you fail to change, if you choose to go on making the lives of those around you a misery, embroil your neighbourhood in a culture of guns and knives and drugs, we will come down hard on you. Go straight or go straight to jail." Johnson (2014).

Former prime minister Tony Blair, similarly, wrote back in 2007 when attempting to divert governmental responsibility for failing socioeconomics policies that:

> "Is a problem amongst a section of the Black community …We need to stop thinking of this as a society that has gone wrong - it has not - but of specific groups that for specific reasons have gone outside of the proper lines of respect and good conduct." (Blair, 2007).

These quotes illustrate ‘Othering’ which is a process that arises from a particular cultural and political context (Palmer and Pitts, 2006). It entitles upholding dominant values whilst repressing difference (the Other) who are considered to hold values conflicting with the moral norm (Williams, 2015).

In reality, the evolution of the gang experience in London is directly linked to the deterioration of the socioeconomic condition (Pitts, 2020) of the Black population. Black male youth in particular, are isolated and pushed into the margins of society. They suffered reduction to access legitimated work options and the growth of underground economy (Venkatesh, 2000) and at the centre of this we find the drugs market (Pitts, 2020). This provides lucrative alternative employment to younger generation in their community (McLean, et al., 2018).

The reasons for the over-representation of Black youth in gang-related crime and crime in general in London are disputed. Some academics argue it is argued that it could be due to the ‘over policing’ and institutionalised racism of the Metropolitan Police (Amnesty International, 2017; Williams and Clarke, 2016); other say moral panic (see Hallsworth, 2013; Hallsworth and Young, 2008; Aldridge, et al., 2011); or the othering of Black male youth (Palmer and Pitts, 2006; Williams, 2015). One aspect of this theme that is not disputed, is that the ethnic element of youth ‘gang membership’ and crime in London reflects the local demographic and contexts (Pitts, 2020; Bullock and Tilley, 2002; Harding 2014; Pitts, 2008; Palmer, 2009). Another aspect where ethnicity seems to impact on outcome is within the educational system. It has been evidenced that institutionalised racism leads to disproportionate exclusion from education among specific ethnic groups (Graham, et al., 2019; HM Government, 2023)

2.15.5. Education as a risk factor or protective factor to engage in SYV

a) The school-to-prison-pipeline – education as a risk factor to engage in SYV

Education could be one of those venues to provide legitimate access to paid jobs and to improve social and economic life (Brown, 2017; Brown, Reay, and Vincent, 2017). Nonetheless, when observing the latest data from the Department for Education, we learnt that permanent exclusion has increased. In the latest data (autumn 2022-2023) more than 3100 children were excluded. This is an increase of more than 2000 compared to autumn 2021-2022 and there were more than 240,000 suspensions over the same period (autumn 2022-2023) which is an increase. 55% of the children have ‘persistent disruptive behaviour’

as one of the main reasons for their permanent exclusion or suspension (HM Government, 2023).

Sanders, et al., (2020) highlight that there is a school-to-prison pipeline composed of the structures and procedures that channel pupils who misbehave and breach school rules away from the educational field into the Youth Justice System ground (Ibid:2020). School permanent exclusion is consistently disproportionated among specific ethnic groups when compared to the general pupils' population, especially that of Black (Black Caribbean), Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and overall boys (Graham, et al., 2019; HM Government, 2021; HM Government, 2023). Permanent exclusion raises to 33% the chances of offending and custody (Sutherland, et al., 2023).

It is important to acknowledge that most of the children excluded come from deprived communities (Berridge, et al., 2001; HM Government, 2023; Dawson, 2019). It is understood that deprivation and social disadvantage impact negatively on people, especially children, and this increases their risks factors for those children to engage in criminal behaviour and be permanently excluded from the school. HM Government (2021 and 2023) demonstrates that the exclusion rates among pupils receiving Free School Meals is higher than their counterparts. This needs to be considered together with other factors such as chaotic or unstable family structures, unemployment, poverty, and other socioeconomic disadvantages (Arnez, and Condry, 2021). Another factor to consider is that living in gang-affected neighbourhoods exposes CYP to violence. This weakens the pupils' concentration and accessing their memories, leading to poor educational performance (Rich, 2009). Furthermore, Berridge, et al., (2001) research found that almost 44% of those excluded accounted in their research had Special Education Needs (SEN) and were in contact with statutory agencies (Ibid: 47). The same tendency can be found 20 years later; 47% in 2021 (HM Government, 2021).

As with all the risk factors discussed in previous sections, exclusion from education may contribute, no doubt, to future engagement in criminal behaviour and even custody (Sutherland, Tagliaferri, and Cathro, 2023), but this is in conjunction with pre-existing behaviours and risk factors i.e. a child displaying challenging behaviour at home and in the community is likely to behave similarly in the school and risk being permanently excluded, especially if that school is strict with high standards and a zero-tolerance/academized policy (Sanders, et al., 2020). Therefore, the author concludes that the school-to-prison-pipeline may not be a straight line and is more complex to understand or predict the risk factors. The evidence available suggests that school exclusion does not predict, on its own, future

offending behaviour (Berridge, et al., 2001). Furthermore, it cannot be dismissed the importance that school plays in teaching pro-social values on CYP.

b) Education as a protective factor to resist SYV

Lösel and Farrington (2012) explained that the protective factors from school functioning should not be minimised. Some of the factors are: *"academic achievement, motivation, school bonding, and class/school climate"* (Ibid: 14). School is seen as an environment where CYP can forge positive and trusting relationships with peers, teachers and trusted adults (Obsuth, et al., 2023; Farrington, 2011). School supports as well to build pro-social values (Farrington, 2019) and is an important protective factor to minimise involvement in SYV (Obsuth, et al., 2023). Li, et al., (2019) meta-analysis suggest that school values and discipline supports CYP to develop emotional regulation and self-control, which helps to resist SYV. This seems to be even stronger for older students (Ibid:2019). The Youth Justice Board (YJB, 2023) states that CYP in stable education are less likely to offend and reoffend.

2.16. Identifying research gaps in this fieldwork

As expressed, school could be a risk or a protective factor. The same is believed with parenting, family and community. After, having conducted an extensive literature review some gaps are evident. None of the theoretical frameworks reviewed are conclusive as to the reasons for the majority of CYP not getting involved in gangs, although, all, to some extent, demonstrated some useful understanding of the reasons.

The Chicago School of Criminology and Gottfredson, and Hirschi's (1990) General Theory of Crime, have provided considerable evidence which explains the push (family and environmental factors) and the pull (extended social network and social context factors) that make a very low percentage of children and young people to be more predisposed to engage in gangs. However, the Chicago School falls short, in the author's view, of explaining why the higher percentage whilst living in a similar family and social context are able to resist entering and engaging with criminal gangs. One could argue that the control theories provide the answer to the previous question.

To some extent, the general theory of crime, social control and attachment theories have demonstrated that those who experience positive and nurturing child-rearing are able to develop high levels of self-control and self-regulation. It is indeed evidenced, to some extent, that they develop self-restraint and whilst experiencing the same stress factors; they are not

experiencing the same pressures. Furthermore, those CYP with trusting relationships have embedded, and internalised conventional values and can differentiate right from wrong; and thus are less likely to get involved in criminal gangs and youth offending (See Park and Burgess 1925; Shaw and Mckay 1931 and 1942; Jones, 2006; Beaver, et al., 2009; Pitts, 2008; Palmer, 2009; Young, Fitzgerald, Hallsworth and Joseph, 2007; Harding, 2017).

It is evidenced, that those areas known in London as gang-affected, have high levels of adult unemployment, substance misuse, adult mental health, single-parent households, and large second-generation population (see Haringey at a glance - State of the Borough (2020) for statistics). Such circumstances demonstrate that environmental and familiar factors, whilst important, cannot be judged to be the primary reason for gang engagement, but rather are contributing factors as there is a very low percentage of young people in those areas, living under those circumstances (neglect, witnessing domestic youth violence, single-parent household, adult unemployment or multiple low paid jobs, poor housing, poor education, experiencing institutionalised racism and discrimination) that engage in gangs and crime.

Further literature and meta-studies are needed around resistance and theories about susceptibility to have a better understanding of the strategies used by families in what the Chicago School terms disorganised areas to resist gangs and crime (Shaw and Mckay 1931 and 1942) and how this is embedded in their children/young people throughout their lifespan. Similarly, Interactional Theory has helped provide some building stones as to what those strategies look like within the context of family gang resistance. A thorough review of this strengths-based/attachment-based research on psychological and sociological theories will support the study in the quest to answer why and how some families resist gangs while living in gang-affected areas.

Finally, whilst biogenic theories need to be further explored to understand the underpinning genetic factors that may make this 3% - 7% per cent of young people engage in gangs and criminal behaviour, and within the framework of contextual safeguarding (Firmin,2020), it is worth thinking about micro, meso and macro theories that underpin the context in which gangs exist, and a high percentage of families resist.

Chapter 3 Design and Methodology

The literature review has demonstrated that there is no conclusive evidence about the reasons for young people not to engage in youth crime and offending. Most of the research and

literature focuses on diverting young people that are already involved in offending and youth crime rather than focussing on young people that have not engaged with offending at all.

The Chicago school of Criminology explains quite well the risk factors for young people to engage in youth crime however it does not rationalise how a higher percentage of young people are able to resist engage in offending and youth crime. The literature review is quite strong in identifying three areas for building resilience and resistance to SYV. This includes parenting style, control (self and social control) and environmental factors. Psychosocial factors can predict the involvement in youth offending and youth crime but there is no agreed rational as to how some families managed to build resilience to resist SYV.

This Chapter, chapter three, attempts to answer the following questions:

- How do the majority of families, living in gang affected areas, manage to build resilience to resist serious youth violence?
- What strategies, at an individual, family and community level, have been tested and effective to resist getting involved in SYV and crime?

This chapter discusses the following themes to get a better understanding of resilience to SYV: 3.1. The chosen research philosophy of the practitioner researcher author concerning the theme of the study and its participants; 3.2. Deals with the methodology used for this study, explains the sampling strategy chosen for this study and details the data collection, data analysis and variables of the study; 3.3. Describes the ethical considerations taken for this study; 3.4. Considers the strengths and limitations based on the research and design chosen for this study.

3.1. ‘History from below’ the unheard experience of resilience in gang affected areas (Research design)

3.1.1. Marxian and Phenomenology (history from below)

The ontology weaving through this research is Marxian and links the essences of phenomenology and objectivity by joining the phronesis with that of the social class and social relations relating to power (Yu and Hui, 2009). Marxist philosophy argues the importance of looking at crime from ‘history below’ that is to ensure that the experiences of poor, deprived

and disadvantaged communities, such as the group researched, are at the forefront of the narrative rather than the conventional narrative of the elites (Logan, 2013 in Hale, et al., 2013).

This philosophy developed a critical approach as well to analyse and understand criminology known as ‘revisionist Marxism’ (Young, 2013). Revisionist Marxism argued that policy change did not lead to progress, at least not in progress for the marginalised, discriminated and oppressed communities (Weis, 2017). Hobsbawn (1974) developed the concept of ‘social crime’ as a distinctive type of crime attributed to these communities, linking it to ‘moral economy’ of Thompson (1971). Moral economy attempts to explain that certain crimes have a context and a rational within working class and marginalised communities/neighbourhoods, especially when crime’s gains are redistributed within said communities (Logan, 2013 in Hale, et al., 2013). In this aspect, Marxian philosophy, relating to crime, argues that crime is a result of how society is structured around the mode of production, especially the capitalist mode of production which they argued is unfair, unjust and exploitative towards those communities and specially some sections within those communities (Cooper, 2008).

Altvater (2010) argue that to change the existing status quo, inequality, deprivation, and greed, it is necessary to expose the contradictions of a capitalist system. Altvater (2010) argues that it is necessary to highlight the work that is needed to achieve these changes. Thus, it is argued that a Marxian philosophy helps to challenge the current exploitative structures by bringing to the forefront the lived experiences of the marginalised communities (Matthews, 2011; Walby and Gorkoff, 2023).

Marxian philosophy has been critically analysed and criticises from both right politics and left politics. Many became disheartened with this outdated philosophy which is associated with radical criminology because it is utopian and simplistic in a complex world in need of more realist criminology in order to change paradigms by applying more effective criminological policies (Hall and Winlow, 2025; Webber, 2022).

This research seeks to challenge the generally held perceived narrative about youth lived experience in gang-affected areas in London as a predictive factor of their likelihood to commit SYV and crime. The research reveals a contradictory narrative, albeit limited by the number of participants, by demonstrating the complexities of contemporary societies and communities such as the one investigated (Pycroft and Wolf-Branigin, 2015). By using Marxian ontology, the author presents new pieces of evidence from interviews conducted with 14 participants which produced new realities, theories, and praxis in line with the approach of Altvater (2010) around bringing the lived experiences of the marginalised communities to the forefront.

3.1.2. Understanding the communities through hermeneutical phenomenology

To aim to explore resilient and resistant strategies to SYV in gang-affected communities, this research utilised hermeneutical phenomenology, the uniqueness of every individual, as it helped to explore the experience of the participants and the way they understand it. It concentrates on highlighting elements that may be perceived as irrelevant aspects within their experience, but such elements create meaning inside their contexts (Wilson and Hutchinson, 1991) and of the themes being researched. Furthermore, it allowed the exploration of details such as feeling safe, perception of crime and relationships with primary care givers.

Hermeneutical Phenomenology is based on Heidegger's understanding of phenomenological philosophy (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Being a practitioner-researcher, and managing a therapeutic team, Hermeneutical Phenomenology married well with the author's position within this research. One of the key elements of Heidegger's philosophy is the existence of what the author identified as oneness or "being in the world" (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Heidegger set the principles for his philosophy which included: Being, Being in the world, Settings, Care Structure, Temporality and Being with. Heidegger argued that Being (subject and object) is not indivisible. His philosophy proposed that the researcher becomes, a tool of research and analysis, with the ability to question and explore personal existence of others but always ensuring that he self-reflects and puts into the equation his own assumptions, biases, and personal existence (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Hermeneutical Phenomenology also marries well with the authors social work practice (Smith, 1999).

As a social worker, this approach is key to build trust with clients, using the experiences (personal and professional) that allow to create fluid relationships based on the notion of self and oneness (Johnson and Williams, 2007). Poorman (2003) explained that the use of 'self' is a powerful therapeutic instrument which integrates, in this particular case, the researcher's belief system, relational skills, personality, and experience to help building positive rapport, with the participants, whiles ethical boundaries are maintained. The use of 'self' in this scenario, and in interviews, ensured that the participant felt there was epistemic trust between researcher and participant allowing to obtain information that otherwise could not be obtained (Rogers, 1962).

The Hermeneutical Phenomenology approach forced the author to acknowledge his bias to ensure that he was a vehicle for self-reflection analysis when interpreting the data and trying to make sense of the process of interviewing. This was particularly difficult as the author's

practitioner-researcher hat and his own personal experience in the area conflicted with the experiences that the young people were sharing, e.g. Promoting CYP's *"participation in decision-making wherever possible"* (BASW, 2021) or the CYP's believing that they are safe in areas which the author knows are not so. This forced the author to explore in depth his own experiences and assumptions and see how these relate, help or in fact challenge the process of the research (Allen, 1996).

Heidegger emphasised the importance of his philosophy where an object, in that case the interviewer or/and the participant, understands their own experiences; by achieving this, and acknowledging it fully, they can explore and contemplate "average everydayness" (Heidegger, 1927/2011 p:65). Experiences shared during interviews by the participants which did not appear to the author to be of note at the time became more significant when they were analysed. The everyday experiences shared by the participants brought a wealth of information and this helped to create new hypotheses for the study. Simple things like understanding who used to drop and pick them up from school, their friendships groups at different stages of their lives or their experience navigating their neighbourhood, brought rich data to organise and analyse the average everydayness of participants. To achieve this, it was essential to think carefully about the most appropriate design and methodology to apply for this research.

3.2. Design and methodology

This research was conducted as a practitioner-researcher study. Robson (1993) explains that a practitioner-researcher is one who carries out systematic enquiry relevant to their field whilst working on that same field. This role brings both advantages and disadvantages when compared with professional researchers (Rapaport and Manthorpe, 2017). Robson (1993) numbered three advantages: as 'insider', as a 'practitioner' and the 'practitioner-researcher' synergy. Bonner and Tolhurst (2002) expanded that been a practitioner-researcher, it is believe, that s/he will be better prepared to better understand the subject at hand; second, s/he will understand and work within the social interaction and synergy of the interviewerinterviewee; and third s/he will can analyse real data from the participants as s/he can relate to the experiences shared and with his familiarity with the subject will save time is deciphering data (Smyth and Holian, 2008).

Despite the aforementioned advantages, the practitioner-researcher may find some disadvantages (Smyth and Holian, 2008) including omitting important information due to familiarity, bias due to been too close to the matter, restricted time, lack of research expertise,

lack of confidence in academic writing and 'insider' problems (Robson, 1993; Smyth and Holian, 2008). Thus, the importance of structuring and being clear regarding the scope of the research and the parameters of the study before starting.

3.2.1. Scope of the research Sample size:

14 (13 male and 1 female) young adults aged 18 -26 years who grew up and lived/live in gangaffected wards.

The duration:

Professional Doctorate 2020 – 2024
Pilot 2021 – 2022
Final interviews and thesis 2023 – 2024

Inclusion and exclusion criteria:

London boroughs with high rates of youth crime and street gangs.

Geographical focus:

Wards were chosen by looking into MOPAC and Metropolitan Police data in Haringey, Hackney, Southwark and Enfield.

Aims:

The aims of this research are:

1. To investigate the strategies that participants who grew up and live in a London gangaffected community used as children to avoid being attracted to Serious Youth Violence and being criminally exploited by local street gangs.
2. To identify potential improvements that could be made to children and young people (CYP) and families' interventions and to the policies that guide, and fund said interventions.
3. To identify potential improvements in violence reduction and tackling Serious Youth Violence policy in the UK.

The following research questions were used to critically assess risk factors and resilient strategies in the areas researched:

RQ1: What strategies are effective to avoid been pulled into Serious Youth Violence?

RQ2: What can we learn from those who have successfully managed to live in gang-affected areas without engaging in Serious Youth Violence or youth criminal behaviour?

RQ3: How could their experiences support the design of new policies to minimise the negative impact of Serious Youth Violence in these areas and more broadly in the UK?

To try to answer the questions this thesis explores and examines effective parenting and CYP's strategies based on the experience of young adults who grew up and still live in said areas.

This thesis does not aim to judge families affected directly by Serious Youth Violence; nor does it claim that the findings are significant to create a new theoretical framework that will eliminate SYV and criminal behaviour within the context of street gangs in London. Rather it seeks to contribute to existing literature and research around SYV and provide effective tools and strategies not just to professionals and policy makers, but more importantly to parents/carers and CYP living in gang affected areas.

Objectives:

1. To examine effective parenting strategies to avoid CYP getting involved in/or exploited by street gangs
2. To examine CYP's strategies to avoid getting involved in street gangs
3. To inform the theoretical framework underpinning resistance and resilience within the context of child criminal exploitation and serious youth violence
4. To contribute to improving policy and practical interventions

3.2.3. Sources selected and search of literature

The thesis has focused on peer reviewed academic articles, books and relevant reports on the matter from the United Kingdom, the USA and Australia. The Literature Review commences at the beginning of the last century for some of the topics but overall, attempts to the development of youth crime literature, especially in the United Kingdom.

To obtain suitable electronic material, the keyword search was narrowed to ensure that the Boolean search process allowed the keywords of the four themes, and topics highlighted above as suggested by Denney and Tewksbury (2013). The search tools used were Summons, Google Scholar, EBSCOHOST, British Library, University of West London Library, Home Office and Mayor of London Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC).

Based on this, the following keywords were use for searching:

Topic 1. Family Resistance: Family resilience, family resistance, Parenting*crime, Family*Community*crime; Faith*gang; Support*group; family*Gang*interventions; Trusting*Relationships; Rescue and response; Safe*and*Secure; Evaluation*gang*intervention, risk factors to youth offending, protective factors youth offending, longitudinal studies protective factors UK, deterrent to crime and offending, DP Farrington protective and risk factors; deterrent from offending;

Topic 2. London Street gangs: London Gangs; Serious Youth Violence; Child Criminal Exploitation; County lines; Re-offending; Gang Matrix; street gangs UK,

Topic 3: Crime resistance, family resistance, resisting gangs,

Topic 4: Self-control, attachment, Control theories, Self-regulation, gang genes, Chicago school, self-control and offending, self-control in gang affected areas,

The search was limited to English. Core reading of theories and history of street gangs in London were used. A balance between essential/core reading that may seem obsolete and new research/publications is struck attempting to use articles from 2016 onwards where possible. Nonetheless, the literature on this matter is somewhat limited and publications over 10 years that are still relevant were used.

3.2.4. Understanding participants experiences of resilience - fieldwork process (Interviews schedule and design)

Data collection

The author chose qualitative research as it is the method used in the research of John Pitts (2007, 2008); Simon Harding, (2014 and 2020); and Simon Hallsworth and Tara Young (2008). Qualitative research helped the author to understand the subjective rationale of the participants experience (Noaks and Wincup, 2004). Qualitative research has its own criticism as it is felt that the data is likely to be “unreliable, invalid and generally unworthy of admission" (Robson, 1993:402) and biased i.e. the researcher could have interviewed young people who have offended, and they have lied during the recruitment process and during the interview. Despite the limitations, the author was able to gather data about growing up in neighbourhoods with high rate of youth crime and youth gang activity. There were four main boroughs of interest for the researcher:

The London borough of Haringey (2021) has the third highest rate of households in temporary accommodation in London; the second largest proportion of residents earning below the London Living Wage of all Inner London boroughs and the highest rate of knife crime in London. Haringey is the 4th most deprived borough in London.

Similarly, Enfield (2021) has 3500 households in temporary accommodation – the secondhighest number of all English authorities. It has one of the highest rates of crime in London and is the 9th most deprived borough in London and has as well the 9th lowest median household income of the 33 London boroughs (DWP, 2020).

Southwark (2023), and in particular the wards of Camberwell and Peckham, was chosen as well due to its profile of deprivation and high rates of crime. Southwark is densely populated, with a population of about 307,600 people, 40% of whom are immigrants from outside the United Kingdom. The biggest of these communities are from Nigerian origin. It has the highest percentage of social housing in England (40%) with 16,000 homes (10%) considered to be overcrowded (Southwark Council, 2023). Southwark has its share of street gangs. There were 1,794 incidents of Violence Against the Person (VAP) in 2022-2023. It is in the top 10 highest rates for serious violence in London boroughs. Overall, serious violence is mostly committed by young people against young people, and it happens mainly in certain wards such a Peckham. Police intelligence indicates that as of end of 2022 there were 43 Organised Crime Groups (OCG) operating from Southwark, their main ‘business’ being drug supply, with many children being criminally exploited within the context of county lines (Southwark, 20203 – 2024).

Hackney (2020) showed that there were over 3000 households in temporary accommodation, including 4000 children. Hackney has one of the highest proportions of deprivation in London and in the UK and has one of the highest crimes rates in London, despite the investment for the Olympics 2012 in the area.

The research helped the author to learn about unreported strategies to resist crime and offending in these areas (Coleman and Moynihan, 1996 in Noaks and Wincup, 2004). Qualitative research has its own criticism as it is felt that the data is likely to be “unreliable, invalid and generally unworthy of admission" (Robson, 1993:402) and biased i.e. the researcher could have interviewed young people who have offended, and they have lied during the recruitment process and during the interview.

The main goal of this research is to contribute to the field of research around individual, family and community resistance to street gangs and SYV in 'gang affected' boroughs in London. The author completed small-scale pilot research in 2022 in preparation for this research and to help to schedule and design the interviews. In order to test the research questions, Dörnyei, (2007) recommended to pilot the open-ended questions prior to the main research. A pilot of three participants was used to test the questions and to ensure that any changes were made to make the validity of the research more reliable. Some questions were changed to ensure that they were not leading participants to answer in certain way. Other questions were modified to allow more freedom and flexibility of answering. Open-ended questions within the semistructured interview were chosen as they facilitate more comprehensive answers about the experiences of the participants (Bryman, 2008).

A proposal for the small-scale pilot research was submitted to the University of West London – School of Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Panel. The SHSS Research Ethics Panel feedback helped to shape and improve the design of the final interview schedule. The first proposal raised concerns about the structure of the interview's questions. The main points being that the questions made assumptions, were ethically problematic and contradictory, i.e. asking: How involved have you been with offending, crime or serious youth violence directly or indirectly? This and other questions were rephrased to avoid assumptions and ethical issues as recommended by the SHSS Research Ethics Panel. Furthermore, the panel directed that for the pilot research to be authorised, the debrief sheet needed to be redesigned with more clarity and details. It advised as well to clarify the gift shop vouchers (reward) offered to participants, as they considered to be and ethical dilemma. All suggestions by the author's supervisor and by the SHSS Research Ethics Panel were addressed to gain authorisation and to make the interview process more effective.

By completing and analysing the initial outcomes of the pilot research and by summarising the evidence and knowledge of other empirical studies it helped to schedule and design the interviews for this project, providing key information on the topic in different theoretical frameworks. Firstly, the pull/ push factors for youth gang involvement were assessed. These included individual, family and community/social factors. Secondly, it revisited and analysed the Chicago School of Criminology and the General theory of crime. Thirdly, it analysed and compared the influence of external and internal factors by exploring control theories (social control, parenting styles and self-control theories). Fourthly, it reviewed newly developed and tested theories around Resistance and Susceptibility Theory, Interactional Theory and biogenetic theories that challenge or/and complement the conventional theoretical framework around factors for youth involvement gang.

The pilot research helped to test and review the resources and tools available for the process of this study. This included considering venues and best environment for interviewing, equipment such as a recorder, Microsoft Teams and Zoom utilities. It helped as well to test tools to transcript interviews effectively and what qualitative and quantitative data could be obtained from the interviews and how to analyse it. The pilot research helped in testing the questions and ensuring that an appropriate structure of the research was in place to maximise efficiency. Analysing the literature review and the initial outcomes of the small-scale pilot research completed suggested possible diversion and resistance strategies that would need further exploration to maximise the chances to resist the impact of street gangs.

Testing the pilot research questions helped to determine the type of data needed to achieve the goals of the research. This helped to sharpen and redesign the questions in order to obtain richer details and information from the participants. Prior to the final interview design, a similar process to that of the pilot research was followed. First, the supervisor assessed and reviewed the questions design and structure. Second, a submission to The SHSS Research Ethics Panel was made to obtain authorisation from the University of West London to proceed with the interviews stage of this main research.

3.2.5. Ethical considerations

During the ethical planning and the research design, ethical challenges and strains are identified and addressed (O'Reilly, Ronzoni and Dogra, 2013). To minimise any ethical concerns, the study followed the guidance (and use if required) of the University of West London (UWL) National Centre for Gang Research (NCGR) Distress Protocol (see here) for interviews involving youth engaged in Serious Youth Violence. This protocol advises how to prevent distress during the research stages (planning, evidence collection, postinterview/focus group), and what to do if participants were to require emotional or mental support.

All participants read and signed the information sheet, the Confidentiality Agreement, and the Consent Form before the interview. Participants were given an incentive in the form of £20 shop/gift vouchers funded by the author. The payment to research participants is not an unusual practice in this field of research (see Harding, 2014), although it can bring ethical dilemmas and controversy (Noaks and Wincup, 2004). There are strong ethical arguments about paying participants, as it could be argued that their stories were bought (Wardhaugh, King and Wincup, 2000). Nonetheless, offering payment to participants can be used as a

strategy to reduce potential exploitation (Noaks and Wincup, 2004). It is suggested that this practice shows appreciation for the time and knowledge provided, and empowers participants (Massat and Lundy, 1997, Harding, 2014).

To avoid any ethical conflicts, the author did not interview any clients with whom he has worked or who live in the area where he works (Blichfeldt, and Heldbjerg, 2011). However, experiences of the author's clients have informed the research (Boiral, et al., 2019; Chammas, 2020; Sobočan, et al., 2019) to understand the impact of street gangs on CYP and families.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998 were considered when collecting, storing data and regarding access to participants, as suggested by (Opsi, 1998a; Opsi, 1998b; Noak and Wincup, 2004). All interviews were securely recorded on a Digital Recorder and on Zoom or Microsoft Teams platforms. Interviews were saved on a secure Cloud folder as per this university's Research Integrity Code of Practice. Interviews were transcribed using software as well as manually, as previously detailed in a password-secured computer. The author diligently followed the UWL Data Management Protocol which clearly details the conventions of collecting and managing data. The research was scrutinised by the Ethical Review Committee at the UWL. Forms were submitted and the planning for the research, its aims and its objective were designed following the different requirements, feedback, and advice.

Ethical issues were also considered when formulating the questions. These needed to be designed without being insensitive or too intrusive. Due to the topic of the research, participants' experiences were carefully anonymised so that no one is identifiable. Noaks and Wincup (2004: 83-84) explain that protecting participants' and organisations' identity is an issue in criminological and criminal justice research. Therefore, the Confidentiality Agreement with was read aloud, and clarified where needed, to ensure the terms of confidentiality were well understood by all participants. This Confidentiality Agreement could potentially be breached in a scenario where the information given poses a threat to the participant or others. Participants were made aware of this in the Confidentiality Agreement. Participants were advised not to give any names of individuals and not to disclose any crime for which they have not been sentenced. Accounts that would be easily recognised by practitioners or the public were anonymised to guarantee anonymity as suggested by Beck (2002 in Noaks and Wincup, 2004:49).

Ethical consideration was given to the suitability of disclosing the boroughs and wards research for this study. Aldridge et al., (2008 and 2013) argued that anonymity of the areas,

especially during the publishing of the research reduces the stigma to those communities. Nonetheless, the author took the position argued by Harding (2014) on his Street Casino field research. Harding (2014) discusses that Aldridge et al., (2008) based their argument in traditional labelling theory rather than taking a more 'realist perspective of social field analysis (Ibid: 13). If the approach is Marxian 'history below' the centrality of the participants experience requires contextualisation of both geographical and personal interactions. By anonymising the areas, Harding (2014) argued that the local psychosocial, habitus context may lose meaning. Furthermore, it may weaken future research in said areas as 'evolutionary insights' cannot be tested (Ibid:13). The reputations of the boroughs/wards research are of public domain and whilst the author sought to avert further stigmatisation, naming the areas research brought validity to the participants experiences and acknowledged their existence, thus, empowering a sector of our society that experience discrimination and oppression.

The venues and times for the interviews were carefully agreed with all participants, providing flexibility for them. The author required a certain level of social competence and familiarity with the areas where face-to-face interviews were carried out. It was important to ensure that the author and the participant/s were always safe and that the venues were confidential. Meeting and study rooms within local libraries were used for the face-to-face interviews.
Pawelz (2018) speaks of the importance of understanding the local context and how at times interviewers can be perceived as police informants or outsiders with dubious intentions.

To try to overcome such barriers and obtain the best insight into family dynamics a qualitative approach was adopted. Methodologically, qualitative primary research is seen as an interpretation of the social construction of the participants and their own understanding of their situation; rather than the objective and all-constraining truth measured and subjected to statistical alien interpretation (Merriam and Grenier, 2019; Jupp, 1989). Qualitative research was selected because it is believed that qualitative data will help the author to better understand the personal contexts of participants (young adult and main carers) and their subjective reasons for their experience (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Moreover, qualitative research is used to understand meanings, definitions and constructions underpinning their behaviour (Jupp, 1989). In this case, bringing up children, or growing up, in a neighbourhood with high rates of youth crime and youth gang activity. Researchers such as Merriam and Grenier, (2019), Coleman and Moynihan (1996 in Noaks and Wincup, 2004) argue that qualitative research helps to understand unreported strategies and methods to divert from crime and offending.

Another factor for selecting qualitative research was the fact that this is the method employed by the scholars upon which this research is based. Simon Harding (2014 and 2020); Pitts (2007, 2008), Deuchar (2010) and Hallsworth and Young (2008) clearly used it to develop their analysis around causes and experiences of youth crime within the context of street gangs. Therefore, it seems sensible to use the same methodology and research style to contrast and complement their works.

The qualitative method, in the form of semi-structured interviews combine with a narrative approach with young adults, these seemed the most appropriate methods to use, as the research will not focus on objective truth but on the truth as the participants perceive it, as suggested by Daher, et al., (2017) and Burns (2000). Interviews with participants brought a privileged insight into their family and community lives. The interviews were semi-structured and there were no parallel checks to confirm or disproof their narrative about their lived experiences. The findings are purely based on the participants' self-reported experiences, but importantly, through conversations with participants, which facilitated a better understanding of Protective Factors as well as Risk Factors that may hinder CYP from building resilient and resistant strategies to divert them from criminal behaviour.

Therefore, the data collected will not represent a general picture of resilience and resistance strategies for CYP to resist SYV in gang-affected areas as a whole but rather a small sample that could be similar to a wider social experience around effective parenting and community strategies to divert CYP from youth offending and street gangs. Brink (1993) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain the reliability in qualitative research, emphasising the relevance of the research procedure. The overall purpose of this study is to share an initial finding of the strategies used by youth in the specified gang-affected areas.

Semi-structured interviews allowed more flexibility in the order of how the questions were asked. An important characteristic of this model is that the interviewer understands the context of the research and will have the ability to highlight significant topics (Mikuska, 2017). Semistructured interviews allowed participants to speak freely and at length through their own perceptions of the matter and with their terminology (Karatsareas, 2022; Jupp, 1989; Bell, 1993; Robson, 1993). The interview had numerous questions that helped to go in-depth into the subject to get rich details of the participants' experiences (Alsaawi, 2014). Semi-structured interviews allowed the interviewer to follow up some of the experiences shared, go deeper into some of the responses or ignore some questions if it was considered previously covered or irrelevant. (Olivares, et al., 2017). Furthermore, semi-structure interviews allowed the interviewer to build a relationship with the interviewee, Shamai, (2003), Brooks, et al., (2010)

and Murray (2003) argued that this a key factor to obtain a suitable and rich qualitative interview.

This was combined with a narrative approach to the semi-structured interviews. Narrative inquiry is a qualitative method to research that helps to analyse individual narrative to understand human experiences (Pino Gavidia and Adu, 2022). Some authors see narrative inquiry as its own methodology (Clandinin, et al., 2007). Chamberlain (2012) argued that the individual narratives and beliefs influence family and community dynamics with reciprocity.

This research framework, structure and formulation borrows from narrative inquiry's "three commonplaces - *temporality, sociality, and place* - which specify dimensions of an inquiry space" (Connelly and Clandinin,2006: p. 479). This provided a conceptual framework to design and implement the interviews in particular, and the research in general. First, *Temporality* (past, present and future) using this qualitative approach of narrative inquiry it is important to understand participants narrative as part of a developmental process (McKibben and Breheny, 2023; Connelly and Clandinin, 2006). Thus, the research structured the questions exploring the developmental dimension of the participants' experiences during their childhood, from toddler to primary school age - *four to 11 years of age* -; adolescenthood, from secondary school age -11 years to 18 years of age -; and adulthood - from 19 years of age and beyond – (Balasundaram and Avulakunta, 2021). Although, some will argue that adolescenthood could reach until 25 years of age which is when the brain fully matures (Lebel, et al., 2008).

Second: *Sociality or setting* this is where narrative relate to existential conditions, the environment, the contextual (neighbourhood, community, etc…) factors and influences which creates the participants individual context (Clandinin, 2022; Connelly and Clandinin, 2006). The research explores the narrative within the context of the psychosocial background of the neighbourhoods and the political times that participants narratives developed.

The third commonplace is *place*, this could be argued, is an extension of sociality, in this case, place refers to physical, topological and concrete spaces where the narrative takes place (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006). Clandinin (2022) explains that within narrative inquiry the place/location is key to contextualise and understand the participants experience, furthermore, it interweaves with the other two commonplaces, setting and temporal. Thus, within the research design questions were developed to encapsulate the participants' experiences in relation to these concrete places such as family/home, education/school/college, neighbourhood/area.

Using narrative inquiry's structure, formulation and its commonplaces of temporal, sociality/setting as suggested by Connelly and Clandinin (2006) helped to have a better understanding of the participants' narrative and experiences of SYV during their different developmental and setting dimensions. This helped to quantify some of the Risk Factors and Protective Factors based on the responses from the participants.

As the research approach was from a practitioner-researcher perspective, the data obtained from the interviews, was used to develop a screening tool that supports practice-based evidence intervention (see Wakefield, et al., 2021) by assisting triaging and considering priority of intervention based on the scoring of Risk Factors and Protective Factors identified by the researcher. This can be seen as analysing qualitative data by using quantitative method, thus, a mixed approach (Taherdoost, 2022). It is not unusual to combine approaches to maximise the use of data (Bans-Akutey, 2021). The questions were not designed to produce any quantitative data, but once the author analysed the data it became apparent that the recurrence of themes could be analysed using quantitative method to create a triage screening tool to enhance referral process for the outreach therapeutic team that he manages.

The key words here are *triage and screening* tool. The purpose of the tool is not to replace or complement AssetPlus assessment, which is the main risk-assessment and planning framework used by the Youth Justice Teams in England (Bartasevicius, 2020; Ministry of Justice, 2021). The main purpose is to be used as a back of the envelop initial assessment that is supporting to take decisions about which CYP to prioritise allocation and intervention on referral. This is in line with Farrington, et al., (2008) where they recommended that the purpose of a screening tool should be to identify CYP who require a more comprehensive assessment [and intervention]. The tool as well can help to determine what factors can be enhanced to have a quicker and better chance to support and sustain change.

Whilst the initial approach was qualitative, analysing the rich data the author could see the value to develop a screening tool based on quantified results that when computed help on the day-to-day practice. The resulting mixed data analysis (qualitative and quantitative) offers some advantages when compared with using only qualitative data (Wilkes, et al., 2021). Mixed methods to analyse data provides a better understanding of the participants experiences and how these were captured during the interview process and data analysis (Love, et al., 2022). It helped to decipher the complex nature of participants experiences (Creamer, et al., 2025) and how they built resilience through their different developmental stages and through their different setting environments.

3.2.6. Research Methods

a) Sampling strategy

This research employed purposive sampling to hear the voices of young people (Curtis and Keeler, 2021) living in the chosen gang affected areas of the London boroughs of Haringey, Hackney Enfield, and Southwark. There were two main reasons why these areas were chosen for this research. The first reason was due to their high levels of SYV and gang related crime; as well as high levels of general crime in those areas when compared with other London Boroughs (see MPS, 2025 and MOPAC, 2022). Secondly, the first three areas (Haringey, Hackney and Enfield) were chosen due to the author's familiarity with the areas as he has lived and volunteered at community level within those boroughs. This was aimed at easing the access to participants as the author was familiar with the area and had a significant network that in theory could facilitate access to the participants. On the other hand, Southwark, came up as a result of the snowballing process, and as it met the first criteria, high levels of SYV and gang related crime, it was included in the research.

The sample, therefore, was comprised of young adults who grew up and live in said areas; and who despite all risk factors (environmental and personal) have not been involved in youth crime and youth gang activity. A sample of 14 young people aged 18 – 26 years was used for this study. As it was a purposive selection, the ethnicity of participants was not matched with the local demographic of the specific area exactly (see profile of participants in appendix 2).

The role of girls/women in street gangs has been highlighted in recent research (Campbell, 1990; Young, 2009; Auyong, Smith, and Ferguson, 2018;). Nonetheless, statistically, whilst the impact of street gangs on girls is extensive (Miller, 2001; Molidor, 1996) their role and involvement in criminal behaviour within this context is believed to be low when compared to that of young men (Eshalomi, 2020; Esbensen and Deschenes, 1998). To ensure that their voice, and lived experience was heard, one woman was interviewed for this study as part of the cohort of 14 interviewees.

b) Gatekeepers

The recruitment of participants was intended to be through existing community networks and professionals i.e. grassroots organisations, religious leaders, and youth organisations. Nonetheless, this proved to be very complex and at times frustrating. Gatekeepers did facilitate the recruitment of some participants. The gatekeepers were briefed and provided with the

research information sheet, flier and questions, so that they could share it with potential participants. In this case, gatekeepers act as a bridge between participants and the researcher (De Laine, 2000). The author approached different gatekeepers, some are community leaders, others youth workers, religious leaders from local churches, mosques, synagogues, etc… To access the gatekeepers the author relied on existing professional relationships. These gatekeepers were chosen due to their trusting rapport with the community as recommended by Emmel, Hughes, Greenhalgh, and Sales (2007) and De Laine (2000). This is essential to attempt to gain participants who are reliable and will enrich the study at hand (Clark, 2010).

Table 1 Details of participant recruitment through gatekeepers

Gatekeeper number	Role	N° of participants referred	Borough	Still live there
1	Young resident in gang affected council state	1	Hackney	Yes
2	Member of African community in Hackney	3	Hackney	No
3	Youth worker resident in Hackney	1	Hackney	Yes
4	Respected historic member of Broadwater farm	0	Haringey	yes
5	Mentor and community leader	0	Hackney/Haringey	Yes
6	Church leader	0	Haringey/Islington	Yes
7	Mosque youth leader	0	Haringey/Islington	yes
8	Mosque Leader	0	Haringey	No
9	Head of sociology department (CONEL)	0	Haringey, Enfield	No
10	Metropolitan University	0	Haringey/Islington	U/K
11	CANDI	0	Camden / Islington	U/K

12	Youth Club director	0	Endfield	U/K
13	Community Centre coordinator	0	Haringey	

c) Snowballing

This research wrongly assumed that is would be easier to recruit participants who wanted to share their positive personal experiences. Unfortunately, the responses from the gatekeepers were not as successful as expected for different reasons. In some cases, straight lack of response from the gatekeepers themselves. In other cases, the gatekeepers' call out to participants generated no respondents. A critical factor was missed by the researcher; his professional experience and that of his professional and community network was (and is) about working with young people and families that are 'gang affected' or even 'gang affiliated' therefore, it was a challenge to penetrate, despite the big percentage and availability, young people that have been not involved in gang activity and their network through gatekeepers with whom the researcher had no relationship whatsoever. Therefore, snowball technique was used more frequently than expected.

Snowball sampling is a popular sampling method in qualitative research. It is based on the researcher's network and capacity to get initial participants following the chosen criteria. These initial participants, then recommend other participants creating a chain of participants. This cycle ended when saturation was reached (Parker, Scott, and Geddes, 2019). This was a timeconsuming process that needed to be carefully managed. Faugier and Sargeant (1997) explained the benefits and the difficulties of using snowballing when researching in areas considered to be hard to reach populations. They proposed that without snowballing those sensitive topics, such as the one this study approached, sampling can become difficult since respondents may find difficult to share (ibid:791). Regarding the random sampling, snowballing, although presented by researcher as a purposive sampling (Parker, Scott, and Geddes, 2019), can still provide random participants as the network of the first respondent is not controlled by the researcher (Snijders, 1992). Furthermore, Snijders (1992) goes further and believes that the initial sample of the snowball is a stratified random sample rather than a simple random sample.

Within this research, this initial purposive sampling was significantly relevant to achieve its aim. Five of the participants were recruited using this method. Snowballing helped the author to access participants to share their views and experiences about this sensitive topic. It was easier to certain extent than the first stage of cold calling. The initial participants had

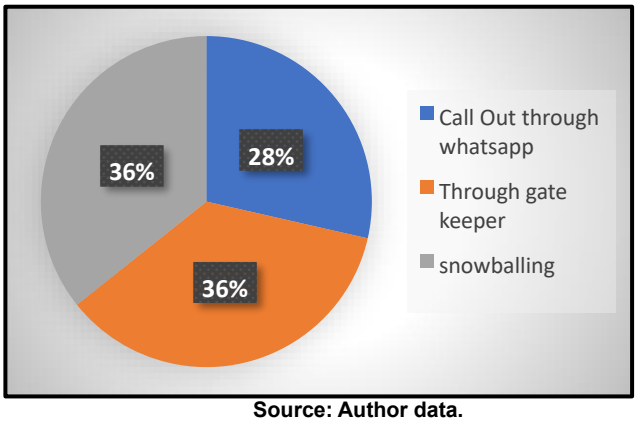
discussions with their network about the research, the purpose of the research and their own experiences of participating in said research. Based on the recruitment results, the initial participants were much more successful in recruiting than the author himself, perhaps, the trust element between the initial participants and their network was the effective factor to their success. Nonetheless, despite their success and the great facility to provide great number of potential participants, saturation was quickly reached due to the, almost homogenic, limited circle each initial participant was tapping into.

Whilst this method was supportive to recruit participants (as highlighted in the next section), snowball sampling does not come without limitations. First, the issue of bias, especially during the referral process (Parker, Scott, and Geddes, 2019). Second, the initial participant/s who refer their chosen 'friends' can easily derail the process or saturate the findings i.e. same strategies used, similar ethnic group, similar experiences. This can lead to failure to understand if the sample/s obtained resemble the aimed group thus minimising the chance to theorise and generalise based on the findings of said sampling (Raifman, DeVost, Digitale, Chen, and Morris, 2022).

Table 2 **Method of Participant recruitment**

Figure 1: **Method of Participant Recruitment in %**

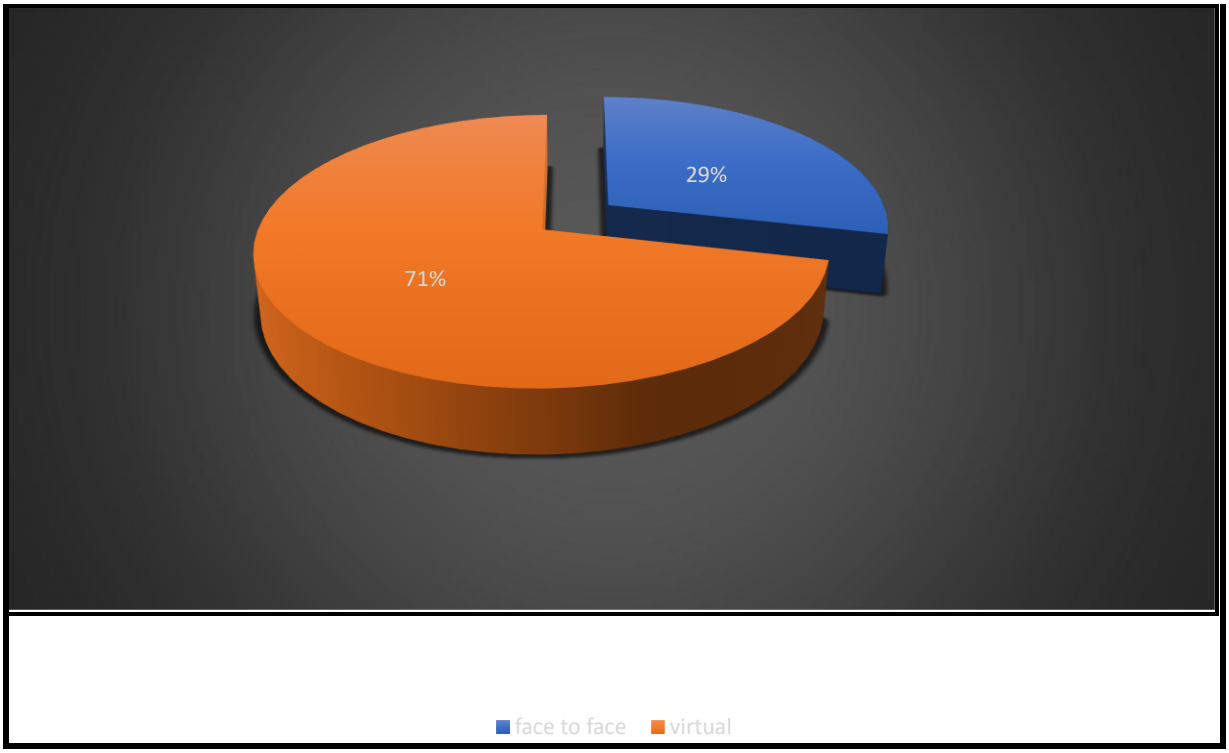
Participant pseudonyms	Recruited via…
Kwame	Call out through WhatsApp
Denrol	Call out through WhatsApp
Kostas	Snowball through Kwame
Winston	Snowball through Denrol
Yapo	Referred by Gatekeeper 1
Dajuan	Call out through WhatsApp
Tica	Referred by Gatekeeper 2
Qori	Snowball through Tica
Bioko	Referred by Gatekeeper 2
Benas	Call out through WhatsApp
Malabo	Referred by Gatekeeper 2
Azzedine	Snowball through Dwayne
Lula	Snowball through Azzedine
Dwayne	Referred through Gatekeeper 3



Source: Author data.

Source: Author data.

Fig 2 Interview setting



Source: Author data.

d) Procedure

Due to the post-COVID19 pandemic, and the fast adaptation to using new technology, some interviews were virtual videocalls, using end-to-end encrypted method Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Padgett (2017) highlighted the importance of providing options and flexibility to participants. Such flexibility proved to be positive during this stage of the research. When comparing the differences in effectiveness of the interviews between face-to-face and virtual these are minimal (Krouwel, Jolly and Greenfield's, 2019). Moreover, virtual interviews reduced risks around data breach and general storage of data and transportation of data. Although, it raised the dilemma of ensuring that all participants understood they should be in a suitable and private room/space during the interview (Mason and Ide, 2014; Moylan Derr and Lindhorst, 2015). Using video calls for interviews further reduced the time of the interviewing process such as avoiding to commute to meet physically, booking rooms, unfulfilled appointments or even having to transcribe interviews from scratch as Zoom and Microsoft teams record MP3 (audio), MP4 (video) and transcribe the interviews within 30 mins of finishing, thus saving time enabling being more productive in other areas of this study (Archibald, et al., 2019; Oliffe, et al., 2021).

3.2.7. Data analysis

The data was analysed by using coding categories within a table as suggested by (Robson,

1993); and in this case, a colour-coded system as used by Glenn, Stocker-Schnieder, McCune, McClelland, and King (2014). Saldaña (2013) explains that the coding is a construct for the researcher, it helps to interpret meaning of each participant. Saldaña (2013) concluded that the code embodies and encapsulates the root and meaning of the interviews i.e. participants' perceptions and experiences of resistance strategies in gang affected areas.

This qualitative analysis is a content analysis and Grounded Theory to categorise the interview data to classify and summarise the data. It then takes every case one by one to hypothesise, create and test theory.

The approach used was a hybrid of inductive and deductive. Deductive, as it has a set of established codes (deductive) and then new codes were added (inductive) while analysing the data obtained from the interviews (Creswell, 2014a). This qualitative approach is characterised by starting with empirical data and generating a more universal theory (Swain, 2018; Moses and Knutsen, 2012).

To structure the data Microsoft Word and Excel were used. Word document was used to classify all responses per question and then coded. The coded information was then passed to an excel spreadsheet to generate meaningful reading of qualitative data into numeric but as well into further themes that were not picked up in previous process (Ose, 2016).

a) Step One Transcribe Interviews:

The first step of the process was to transcribe all interviews. For the face-to-face interviews, transcription was completed using the 'Dictate' function in Microsoft Word. Each interview was played in a separate device and allow the Dictate function to transcribe it. Whilst the interview was being transcribed notes were taken of any mistakes overlooked by Microsoft Word. The transcriptions were then read over to ensure clarity and accurate reflection of the interview (McMullin, 2023).

For the interviews that were not completed face-to-face a transcript was generated automatically by the different applications (Microsoft Teams and Zoom). Microsoft Teams generated more accurate and readable transcripts although still editing was needed. Zoom application transcripts at times did not accurately pick up the speaker's words and this created extra work to ensure accuracy of the transcripts (Oliffe, Kelly, Gonzalez Montaner, and Yu Ko, 2021; Chia, Ghavifekr, and Razak, 2020).

The transcripts were then safely saved on individual Word documents with the name of each participant/interviewee and the date of the interview in. These were securely saved in the university's One Drive Cloud and the author's personal encrypted Cloud for backup.

b) Step two Content Analysis and Grounded Theory:

Once the transcripts were completed the planning for the coding started. First, the type of analysis to be used. For this research it was sensible to use Content Analysis as this is the process to categorise qualitative data resulting from the interviews, summarising, and organising the responses by tabulating the data (Kyngäs, 2020). Content Analysis helps to develop better understanding of the phenomenon by providing structure when there is significant amount of data text. This is completed through a systematic process of interpretation (Kleinheksel, 2020).

Grounded Theory was used to analyse the data through tests and revisions to create theories. This method helped to interact with and structure the data throughout the interviewing process and be in 'oneness', openness to absorb the information about the lived experiences of the participants (Charmaz and Thornberg, 2021).

c) Step three Coding Data:

The data was coded by using the comment function on Microsoft Word, highlighting the relevant information, and creating a hierarchy of codes based on the type of analysis, coding type and coding method chosen for this research. For this research the hierarchy used was #Question, #Respondent, #Structure Code, and #Phrase.

Table 3 Coding of data

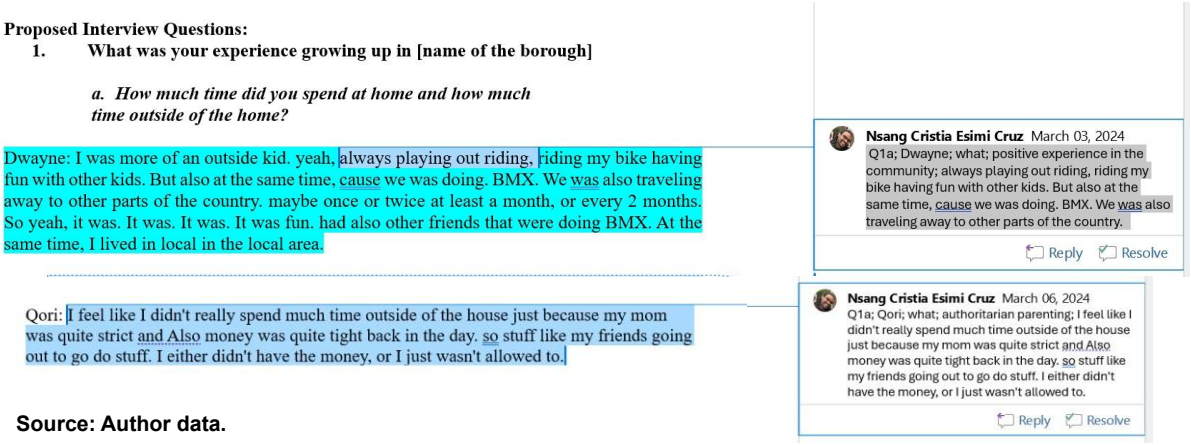
	Code	Description
1st	Question	Question being answered
2nd	Respondent	Alias of interviewee
3rd	Structure code	What/When/how/who/where/why/noteworthy example
4th	Phrase	Exact text/quote/response from interviewee

The answers of the interviews were carefully read and studied. Any interesting data that corroborated, informed theory (deductive) as well as new information that created new hypothesis or theories, was then codified by using the comment function and the defined code

structure, separating each code by a semicolon (;) (see figure 3). Separating the codes with a semicolon was essential to structure the data.

This process was carried out question by question (and by sub-question) analysing all participants' responses (transcripts). So, under question 1a all interesting information from all/any of the participants was coded following the aforementioned coding structure. It is important to highlight that analysing qualitative data is charged with assumptions and potential bias. What the author found as relevant was subject to his own interpretation and understanding of not just what was said, during the interview but was in the transcript (Mezmir, 2020; Eakin, and Gladstone, 2020).

Fig 3 Codification of Data in Word Doc



Source: Author data.

d) Step four structuring the data in Microsoft Excel:

Once all the responses were codified, all comments were copied and pasted into the first column of a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Then the column was highlighted and converted the data from text to column by using the function – Data →Text to Columns →Delimited (type of data by semicolon), that is why separating the codes by semicolon was important in the previous step. In this way, the data was then structured in a manner that allowed for filtering; and be organised in a more coherent and manageable way.

The columns were structured as follows: a) Questions b) Respondent c) Structure Code d) descriptive code e) Theme f) Text (see figure 4 below).

Fig 4 Structuring of Data

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Questions	Responden	structure code	descriptive code	Theme	text
23	Q1a	Qori	what	authoritarian parenting	parenting	I feel like I didn't really spend much time outside of the house just because my mom was quite strict and Also money was quite tight back in the day. so stuff like my friends going out to go do stuff. I either didn't have the money, or I just wasn't allowed to.
25	Q1a	Dwayne	what	positive experience in the community	positive childhood expereince	always playing out riding, riding my bike having fun with other kids. But also at the same time, cause we was doing. BMX. We was also traveling away to other parts of the country.

Source: Author data

This structuring of the data technique generated a total of 307 rows in the spreadsheet with details of the different analysis of the data coded. The Descriptive Codes that started to emerge, again subjective to the author's interpretation, included 237 descriptive codes such as 'A levels', 'Navigating SYV in the community', 'a lot of crime', 'acquaintances involved', 'authoritarian parenting', 'authoritative parenting', 'awareness of crime', 'awareness of hotspots', 'awareness of SYV', 'being chased by gangs and calling for back up', 'choosing negative friendships for protection', 'Church as a deterrent', 'Church as a strategy', 'college in hotspot', 'current pressure to set up a county line', and the list goes own (see appendix 5).

These descriptive codes were filtered alphabetically to detect emerging patterns in the 'description code' column. Then, they were grouped into 29 themes including: victim of crime/trauma, work, religion, positive childhood experience, parenting, options, and opportunities, navigating community trauma, moving out, moral panic, monitoring and supervision, importance of educational transition, family trauma, family, exclusion, egocentrism, delay of gratification, community trauma, common unity, childhood trauma, awareness of crime, associates influence. This allowed the author to critically analyse emerging patterns regarding positive (PF) and negative (RF) variables that could have impacted on the self-control ability of the participants, as well as some of the explicit and implicit strategies used by participants and their main carers during childhood and at present.

e) Step five - risk and protective factor participants' profile:

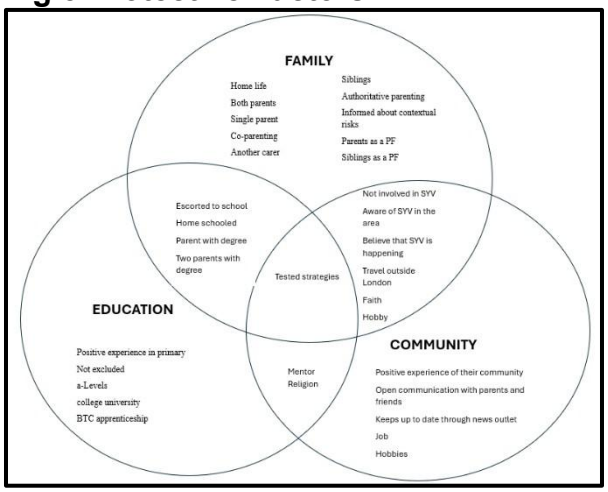
From the organisational analysis technique, variables were devised for each question (and sub-question). As the data collection was based on semi-structured interviews, some of the variables were measured and/or judged following the 'Yes' or 'No' response to a particular question i.e. question 1.b.i. Were you ever excluded from school? Answer 'Yes' was judged as been a risk factor to engage in SYV whilst 'No' was judged to be a protective factor that potentially minimised the risk to engage in Serious Youth Violence.

As the methodology used was semi-structured and narrative questions, some of the answers were opened to the authors interpretation and analysis based on the literature review, his professional and personal experiences of the fieldwork. For instance, through the different

answers, participants may not refer to events or personal experiences as traumatic events, but this may be interpreted by the author when analysing the data as traumatic events. Another example is victimisation. Being a victim of crime, increases the chances of becoming a perpetrator of SYV. Participants through their narrative may describe scenarios whereby they do not think it is important, but it had a negative impact on their view of the world nonetheless, the author may consider that it is a RF due to te developmental stage in which it took place.

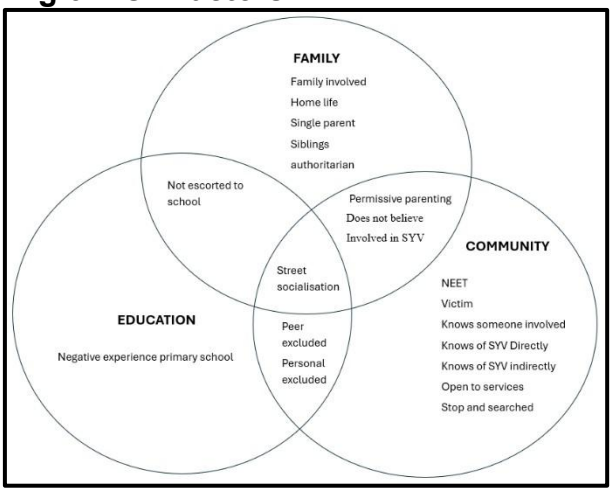
All variables that were considered to be a risk factor (RF) were scored -1 (minus 1) per setting dimension and marked as red on the table, whilst variables that were considered to be a protective factor (PF) were scored +1 (plus 1) per setting dimension and marked as green on the table. The colour code in this case was only to make it easier to differentiate the protective from the risk factors. Some variables were considered RF or PF depending on the impact to the CYP. Two Veen Diagrams were created to have a visual representation of factors' overlap on the different dimensions. The first one, shows the PF overlaps (see figure 5) and the second one shows the RF overlaps (see figure 6).

Fig 5 Protective Factors



Source: Author data.

Fig 6 Risk Factors



Source: Author data.

Based on this computation there was a maximum score for accumulation of PF and a minimum score as accumulation of RF for each question. Question 1 calculation had a maximum score of PF 35 and a maximum score of RF -24; Question 2 calculation had a maximum PF score 7 and a maximum score RF -2; Question 3 maximum PF score is 1 and the maximum score for RF is -4; Question 4 has a maximum PF score 2 and a maximum RF -2; Question 5 has a maximum PF 8 No RF computed in this question as only protective factors could be answered as the question enquired about strategies to resist SYV used by participants; finally, question 6 did not generate any variable as it was a general open question regarding participants'

thoughts about what needed to change to minimise SYV and crime in their areas. The responses are valuable but are beyond the scope of this research.

This simple calculation, using the Venn Diagrams and scores, allowed the author to interpret the answers in a way that identified any emerging pattern of significant protective factors and risk factors by comparing the overall scores of the different participants and analysing which factors are more likely to increase or decrease the chances of getting involved in SYV. The breakdown and rationale of the calculation is detailed in appendix six for the reader to have a better understanding of framework using for the scoring. Following the scoring, a ranking table was generated:

Table 4 Total score of protective and risk factors per participant

Participant	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Total score
Kwame	20	7	2	2	6	37
Denrol	19	2	2	1	6	30
Kostas	13	6	2	2	5	28
Winston	4	7	-4	2	4	13
Yapo	5	2	-4	2	8	13
Dajuan	17	2	-1	2	5	25
Tica	5	7	-4	-2	7	13
Qori	8	7	-4	2	5	18
Bioko	-1	0	-2	-2	3	-2
Benas	16	3	1	2	4	26
Malabo	-2	7	-2	-2	8	9
Azzedine	15	7	2	2	9	35
Lula	10	7	-2	2	8	25
Dwayne	11	7	-2	2	7	25

As a visualisation, this table represents a clear representation of the strengths that CYP and their families can build upon to resist been drown into SYV and offending. The author learned that these variables are reflective of other longitudinal and meta pieces of research completed around protective and risk factors to youth offending (Farrington, et al., 2012; Pardini, et al., 2012; Ttofi, et al., 2016).

This exercise helped to develop a triage framework tool for the team that the author manages. Said framework helps to ensure those who have no significant protective factors, those who seem to have high risk factors, are prioritised to receive key interventions to reduce their

extrafamilial risks as well as to minimise some of the push factors within the bosom of their family. Furthermore, it helped to identify protective factors that can be reinforced to minimise extrafamilial risks. This will be further discussed in chapter 4, findings section.

3.2.8. Limitations

The strengths of the research methodology were discussed previously. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that there are some limitations to the chosen methodology. Brink (1993) explains of the risks that participants may be provide half-truth as a way to please the researcher. Participants may want to pretend that things are better or worse that they are, this is known as social desirability bias (Bezemer, et al., 2024). To avoid this, the author as the interviewer a) ensured that all participants were clear on the nature of the study, b) contacted all participants to have conversations to ensure that there were no doubts, as well as to build a trusted relationship, c) ensured that any information that was not clear was clarified during the interview to avoid the participant becoming complicit with the queries and adapt the answers to please the interviewer's point of view and d) the researcher kept accurate field notes and replayed the audio/ video interviews (Ibid, 1993; Roulston, and Choi, 2018).

It is important to understand that in data collection in qualitative studies, such as this, , the tool is the interviewer/researcher himself. Therefore, questions around the researcher's competency, efficiency and biases are expected, especially if the researcher is a novice to the field of academic research, as is on this occasion. It is important to highlight, however, that in 2008 the author as a social worker qualified in Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings (UK Government, 2011/2023) and has several years of conducting such interviews in his professional capacity.

Validity of qualitative research and semi-structured interviews as the method of data collection have been heavily criticised (see Noble and Smith 2015; Coleman, 2022; Kihlgren, 2016). Nonetheless, semi-structured interviews are still valuable due to their firsthand and detailed narrative straight from the participants themselves about their own experiences (Ahlin, 2016).

Regarding participants, it is understood that whilst interviewing 15 participants was agreed during the Ethical Approval stage, only 14 were interviewed. It is common practice not to interview the determined number of participants if saturation is reached, which is when the interviewer starts to gather the same information interview after interview (Seidman, 2012; Guest, et al., 2006) as it was the case on this study. On these 14 participants' answers and the link to the literature review, are based the findings of this research.

Chapter 4 Building Resilience to Resist SYV (Research Findings)

The main findings of this study are based on 14 semi-structured interviews with 14 participants who grew up and live in some of London's boroughs with the highest rates of Serious Youth Violence and Crime. Participants experiences (the findings) highlighted their ability to build resilient strategies in the presence of criminogenic contextual and extra-familial risks. The interviews provided comprehensive information which the author analysed to generate rich data.

The analysis of the findings is organised following the two dimensions (setting dimension and developmental dimension). The setting dimension has three concepts: family, education and community. The developmental dimension has as well three concepts: childhood, adolescenthood and adulthood.

This chapter is divided into four sections. 4.1 provides the findings from the 14 interviews following the aforementioned variables. 4.2 describes and analyses the theory of this study. 4.3. Looks at the strengths of the findings contrasting with similar research, testing, and developing hypotheses based upon the findings. 4.4 Reports on the limitations of the findings and the research methodology as a whole.

4.1. Analysis of Interview Findings

4.1.1. Family - Building Resilience at Home

Overall, all 14 participants described having grown up in stable homes. Nonetheless, some participants had traumatic experiences during their childhoods which although, they did not consider them as having had a profound impact, the loss of a mother, parents' divorce, deportation of a father and near-death experiences of loved ones due to violence, will be considered by the author as stressful at least, if not traumatic, especially during formative years. The following participant quotations illustrates some of these elements: -

Loss of a mother:

> *"My mom passed away when I was very young. so obviously hearing through my father and family about… She was this person that you know, really loved you and had a bigger plan for you and stuff like that".* (Malabo)

Parents' divorce:

> *"My parents split up when I was 11 years old, just going into secondary. So, I think I think that was maybe like a big impact on me, because for me it was like I… I kind of grew up. It was very unstable where I was living... So not even just where I was living, but like between my parents, was quite an unstable relationship. So, I would often hear them like arguing, and for me it was like it wasn't that great". (Tica)*

Deportation of father:

> *"I lived with my mom. She was a single parent… my dad got deported when I was a kid. so had a lot of like issues kind of growing up around kind of like family then ex-boyfriend who lived with us at the time. After that he was an alcoholic and abusive as well, so, had a bit of complications in the home life growing up." (*Qori)

Near death experience:

> *"my uncle got like attempt... I don't know if he got robbed or they attempted, but they did stab him well." (Qori)*

When exploring early years experiences at home, the overall majority described nurturing and warm home environments with family involvement (parents, siblings) and family activities. In all cases, parents/carers seem to have been involved in supporting their children from a very early age, as described on these quotes.

> *"Until about year four, my mom would take me to school and pick me up from school…I spent a lot of my early formative years. Running around there with friends in the area I was outside as, as far as I can remember, pretty much every day. I was constantly outside, always playing with friends, riding bikes, doing silly things like climbing trees and then falling down" (Winston)*

> *"my dad got us in through the roller skating yeah well at my sisters there have been sometimes goes hackney downs but there was another park of proper roller-skating place was like a*

> *club, but I can remember where I was, I was young but it roller skating I loved it from young yeah time from time go out roller skating" (Yapo)*

> "my experience as a child? fun mainly well I guess most children all your focuses on just exploration and enjoyment of your time, and I spent quite a bit of time with my mom, dad and family in parks playing basketball feeding ducks things like that I just enjoyed being outside" (Denrol)

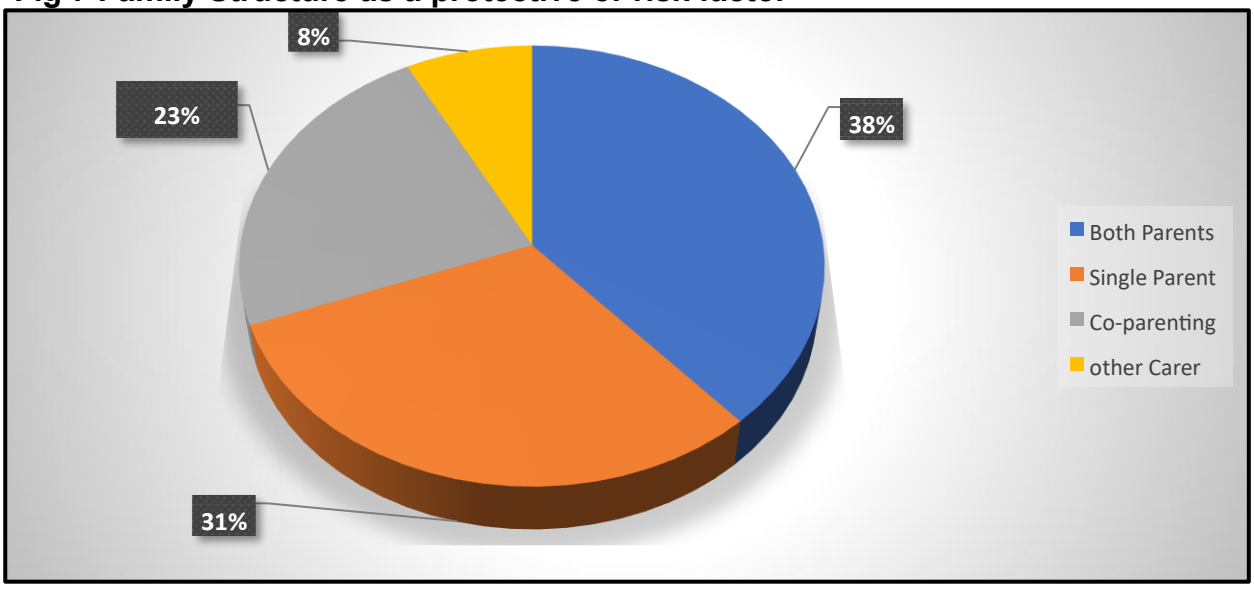
a) Family Structure as a protective factor

When discussing resilient from and resistant to strategies in gang-affected areas, it is crucial to discuss family structure as it is considered to be one of the main factors of both Protective and Risk Factors when assessing the contextual risks associated with those communities.

As expected, family structure was quite diverse. During the last census in 2021 it was estimated that in 81.3% of families were couples and 18.7% were single parents (ONS, 2022). Within the study group of participants 54% came from single parent households, which is much higher than in the general population.

In the graph below the author split the single parenting and co-parenting. This was due to a participant giving value to the input of the non-resident parent which was important to consider. If the co-parenting is added to the single parenting, the result is a total of 54% in single parent homes (all female led), 8% living with extended family, 38% living with 'both' parents including one who lives with his biological father and stepmother (although his birth mother died when he was aged one and therefore his stepmother was the only mother figure he knew).

Fig 7 Family Structure as a protective or risk factor



Source: Author data.

The literature review suggested that growing up in a single parent family is risk factor for predicted youth offending, although this is disputed by other researchers as illustrated previously. The research findings demonstrate no higher risk or less stable homes amongst participants in single parent household when compared with their counterparts living with both parents. It was noticed that of those living in single parent homes, all the participants, bar one, have or had older siblings living with them who appear to have a more hands-on involvement in guiding and parenting their younger siblings.

Most participants (13 out of 14) have or had siblings living with them. Of those, 10 had older siblings whilst one was the older sibling (half-sibling) in the household. The literature review identified that if an older sibling is involved in criminal behaviour, the risk of the younger siblings engaging in such behaviour increases. From all the participants, only two had older siblings involved in ASB although, they did not disclose if this was actually criminal and gang related. The conclusion could be drawn that their behaviour was beyond the 'expected' adolescent deviant behaviour and was moving towards offending. In one of the cases the older siblings seemed to provide protection for the participant which includes status in the community, which resulted in the younger sibling not getting involved in SYV. Whilst in the other case, the older sibling's involvement in offending served as a stark warning to herself with the result that she was determined that her younger sibling would not follow her path, thus acting as a deterrent.

Older siblings had a range of roles in protecting and providing resilient from and resistance to strategies for their younger siblings, ranging from escorting them to and from school, providing guidance, role modelling and even for the cases where it appeared that the older siblings were

involved in offending, one provided guidance on what *not* to do and the other provided protection in the community. According to Yapo:

> *"… obviously having older siblings helps as well 'cause they see it when they're friends with your siblings they see you like a younger brother as well so once you know…a couple of older people and it starts to go down is like everyone knows you and … is like they take you in as well as their little brother as well so … no troubles even in that estate … so yeah no troubles."* (Yapo)

In other cases, having family involved in gangs impacted significantly on their way of assessing risk.

Tica explained her experience as a child when her two cousins were stabbed and almost killed in a post code war between Hackney and Tottenham:

> *"…my cousins also got stabbed in Stamford Hill…both of them got stabbed, and there was 2 cousins and their friend, and sadly their friend died. I was still in primary school for this one as well. So, they also got stabbed to the point of near death. So, they got stabbed like 6 to 7 stab wounds… So my parents … just like distanced ourselves us from them after that happened, because there were like they don't want me growing up knowing about that…because they didn't want to open your eyes to soon."* (Tica)

Family structure, including extended family when they are closer (both geographically and emotionally) is important to consider when considering strategies to scaffold and support children in deprived communities to resist the pull factors into criminal behaviour and youth offending. The findings clearly show that overall, positive role models within the family may be considered to be a protective factor, but there are occasions when even the negative role models can be supportive in building protective strategies to minimise the contextual risks in the community.

b) Parenting Style as a risk or protective factor

Negative parenting style has been identified as one of the most important factors that increases likelihood of youth criminal behaviour (Hoffmann, 2006). The general questions and the discussions coming from the open-ended questions allowed the author to determine two main parenting styles from the participants shared experiences, authoritative and authoritarian.

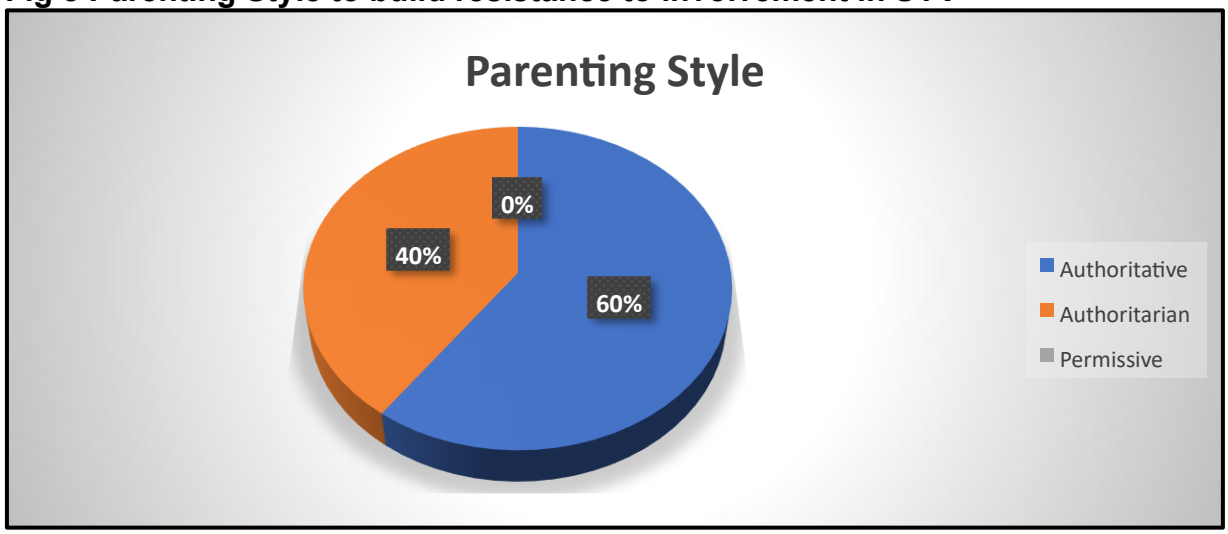
This can be evidence by statements like:

> *"[we had] …clear boundaries of what I can and can't do…if I was to go out, I'd have to say where I was going out, who I was going out with" (Benas).*

> *"I wasn't allowed to leave my estate so in my estate there is two, is next to each other, everyone knows each other but for my mom I wasn't allowed to go to the next one" (Yapo).*

One of the main requirements to participate on this study was to live in an area with high rate of youth crime and violence and to not have been involved in SYV. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the majority of the parents of the participants seem to use either authoritative or authoritarian or a combination of both.

Fig 8 Parenting Style to build resistance to involvement in SYV



Source: Author data.

Overall, parents were aware at all times of their children's whereabouts. Participants reported that their parents knew their friends and had clear boundaries and curfew times. Some of the house rules were clearly specified and understood whilst other of were unwritten rules i.e. assumptions that a CYP will make when reading their family values and moral compasses.

An important element of Authoritative Parenting is to provide children with a nurturing and safe environment to develop skills to rationalise and thinking critically. The majority of participants reported to have open conversations with their parents about safety in the community. This

was helpful, because it helped participants to comprehend the rationale for the strict curfews and boundaries in their homes, when compared with some of their counterparts in the community.

This can be evidence by statements like:

> *"…if you were getting chased by somebody or if somebody like in case of mistaken identity and you know, get because of gang activity in the area like we had a few houses that we could go and knock on the door in an emergency and that was considered a safe house and we were one of those houses for other neighbours as well"* (Kwame).

or

> *"At that age I didn't really know what was going on with the gangs, and that I was still quite young… my parents started to tell me later on"* (Azzedine).

Nonetheless, authoritative Style has to be combined with authoritarian at times to provide fewer options and more directions regarding keeping safe, in order to navigate the risks in the community. For example, some parents had clearly taken unilateral decisions when choosing schools, including secondary schools, or when deciding to cut off the friendship group of their children.

4.1.2. Education - impact on influencing CYP to resist or get involved in SYV

a) Primary school years

Despite the misconception, enrolment to a school does not depend solely on postcode or catchment area. Some families, especially those living in deprived areas look beyond their borders in order to provide a better educational experience for their children. This was observed during the research. Two of the participants reported schooling out of the area intentionally, whilst another reported moving homes in order to access a better school.

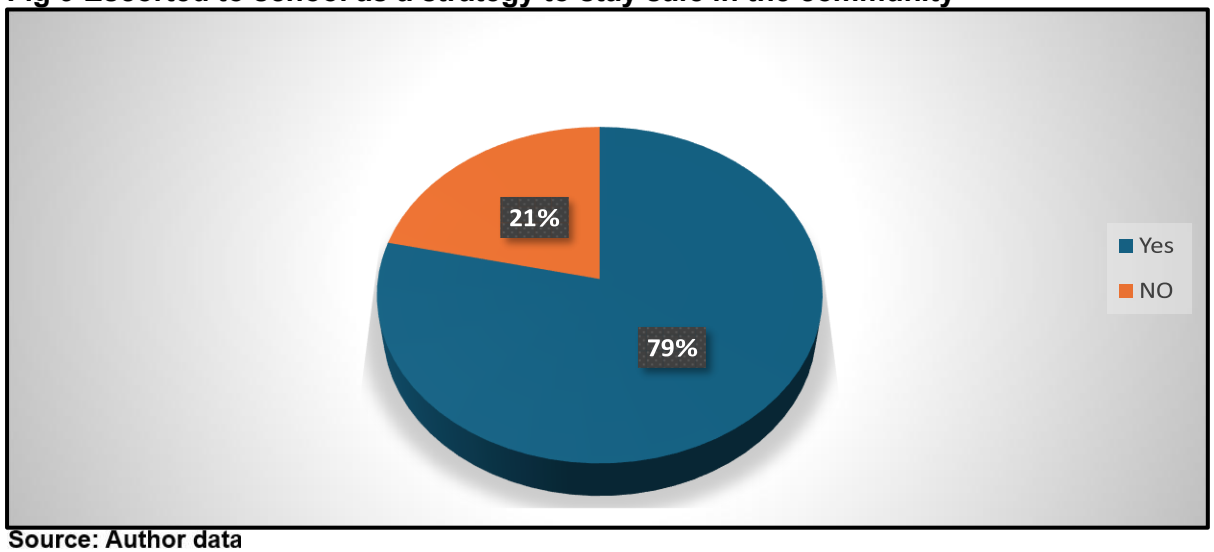
Overall, primary school seems to have been uneventful for all participants. Two were home schooled. This option seems to have been taken for personal reasons rather than feeling unsafe in the community. Another three commute to other areas within their boroughs or neighbouring boroughs to have a better experience.

> *"I did go to a school in Stoke Newington… My school was a lot further away from my house. And my mum, specifically was quite strict with going out …of the area"* (Tica).

Part of the authoritative parenting style are the elements of control and supervision. 11 out of 14 were dropped and picked up by their parents or their older siblings. This was the case for even those who lived very close to their primary school. For a large majority the escorting went well into secondary school (year 7 and 8).

> *"My primary school is only maybe 3 min away… my parents would take me… majority of the time it was my mother taking and … bring us back from school" (Azzedine*).

Fig 9 Escorted to school as a strategy to stay safe in the community



Source: Author data

None of the participants were excluded during primary school and none reported exclusions for any of their friends at that age that they can remember, except for one, who reported that his friends were excluded in year 5 and 6; one friend whose older brother was gang-affiliated, for bringing a knife to school and the other friend for engaging in fights within the school. The overall uneventful and positive experience of primary school (formative years) goes in accordance with what Mayers (2008) described at length in his book "Gifted at Primary, Failing by Secondary" when exploring Black British experience in the education system.

A pattern started to emerge from the interviews in which parents will enrol children out of their 'catchment' area to ensure that they have a different set of peers and to reinforce, potentially, the same family prosocial values. Where the local school was deemed to be inadequate or fostering ASB, participants spoke of their parents being willing to commute further to ensure

better environments. This was seen in at least 5 out of the 14 participants. This can be evidence by statements like:

> *"My school was a lot more further [sic.] away from my house. And my mum, specifically was quite strict with going out of the area." (Tica)*

or

> *"We moved from that secondary school to another one. This was further and better. It's just this one was academically better. With this it was proven that this school was having better results. There was less trouble. So, my mom was enticed to join this new school." (Azzedine)*

b) Transition to Secondary school years and contextual risk escalation

Transition into secondary is a period of great instability for CYP in general due to the change of environment as well as the big jump into adolescenthood and the gap between starters and veterans in the new school. While all participants shared anxiety at the time of transitioning from small primary school to a much bigger secondary school, only two out of the 14, had a difficult transition. One due to her height, which knocked her confidence during the first few months and another one due to finding it difficult to transition from home schooling into main education secondary school. This transition is key, as it is when many of the relationships during teenage years are forged at the same time that character, personality, hobbies and identity start to take shape.

The majority of participants started secondary with some of their closest prosocial friends from primary, which suggests that parents, in these cases, were carefully involved in choosing the schools for their children. Some took advantage of the summer activities provided by the secondary schools to start some connections:

> *"I remember I went to like this like little summer thing that the secondary school did so I was able to kind of go in during the summer, for like a week or 2, where they did like a few lessons, mainly just kind of like sports stuff, to kind of get people to meet each other, and, you know, get to know the school. So, I did that, and it was quite good"* (Qori).

There was a lot of thought put into secondary schools by parents, and although the participants spoke in first person, considering that the process starts in years 6 – 7 (aged 10 years -11

years old), it is assumed that parents/carers were leading in the process of choosing a secondary school. In this transition some parents ensured to move their children further away and breaking with friendships that may have caused some concern:

> *"I knew everyone from every year and stuff. It just felt just felt like the Youth Club or something… I had to say, take some self-reflection. It was so fun, but I had to…If I really wanted to learn, I thought I had to get change my school, you know"* (Dajuan).

The participants' perception of safety in secondary school seems to be nuanced and complicated in respect to ongoing conflicts and fights between different schools and young people that are associated with local street gangs and schools. When comparing participants' experiences of SYV during primary against secondary school years, there seems to be an escalation of negative experience, both in the community and in school, during the later stage. Experiences such the ones below clearly give a glimpse of that matter:

> *"I remember particularly there was one PE class where there was one student who was looking around sheepishly when we had to go to London Fields for a regional playing football and they took us down there for the day and they actually ended up having to send him back because he would have probably got stabbed in front of us they sent him back to school they were like yeah it's not safe for you to be here you should probably leave"* (Kwame). Or
>
> *"We also had a few people in our class that were in gangs as well… so obviously in school you've got like fights and everything that just happens"* (Qori).

Or

> *"I was then staying outside late when I shouldn't have or shouldn't be outside, and when I was staying outside late I'd be doing… associate myself with people that aren't really…you know, not very good. So, people who would walk around in gangs or threatening other people. or you know, holding knives and stuff like that. The wrong things. Everything to do with the wrong things. I experienced some people just you know, [been] stab themselves"* (Bioko).

Tica's experience of secondary school, is very interesting as well, as it highlights a clear stage of adolescent development. The following paragraph describes her difficulties during adolescenthood including losing strong friendships from primary school, falling out with friends,

making new friendships who are less desirable for her parents, going through puberty, and family stressors that act as push factors:

> *"My parents split up when I was 11 years old, just going into secondary. So, I think that was maybe like a big impact on me very unstable where I was living… still spoke to the girls that I was friends with at first. But then we all just started kind of going our different ways…. The guy that I was dating and his friends back in secondary school, they were involved. They were part of like a gang from London Fields… they would often carry knives and stuff, and you would hear them, they would hear about them chasing after other guys with knives and stuff. I don't actually know if… I don't think they ever stabbed anyone. But I knew that they were part of a gang and stuff"* (Tica).

It appears that secondary school marked a new chapter in all the participants' lives. Whilst all described this stage as being positive, some of the events and incidents where they were victims or which they themselves witnessed, appears to have been normalised. Perhaps this was the participant's coping mechanism in a highly violent and threatening environment, only mitigated by protective factors such as positive parenting.

Parents, by all the participants' accounts, seem to be present, involved and attempting to guide their children. This is important to clarify as it contributes to research such as Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory (1990) looking at learning and embedding self-control after aged 10 children. Some of the participants such as Tica, Malabo, and Bioko seem to struggle through their first years of secondary school, but clearly their parents/carers seem to be aware and on top of the situations to provide a nurturing environment:

> *"16, it was my most like rebel stages…whenever I had a meeting with the teachers or I've been with bad friends sort of thing. My parents would often come home and sit me down. My mum would message my dad for them to sit me down."* (Tica).

Azzedine explained how her mother moved him just before GCSEs to ensure better results:

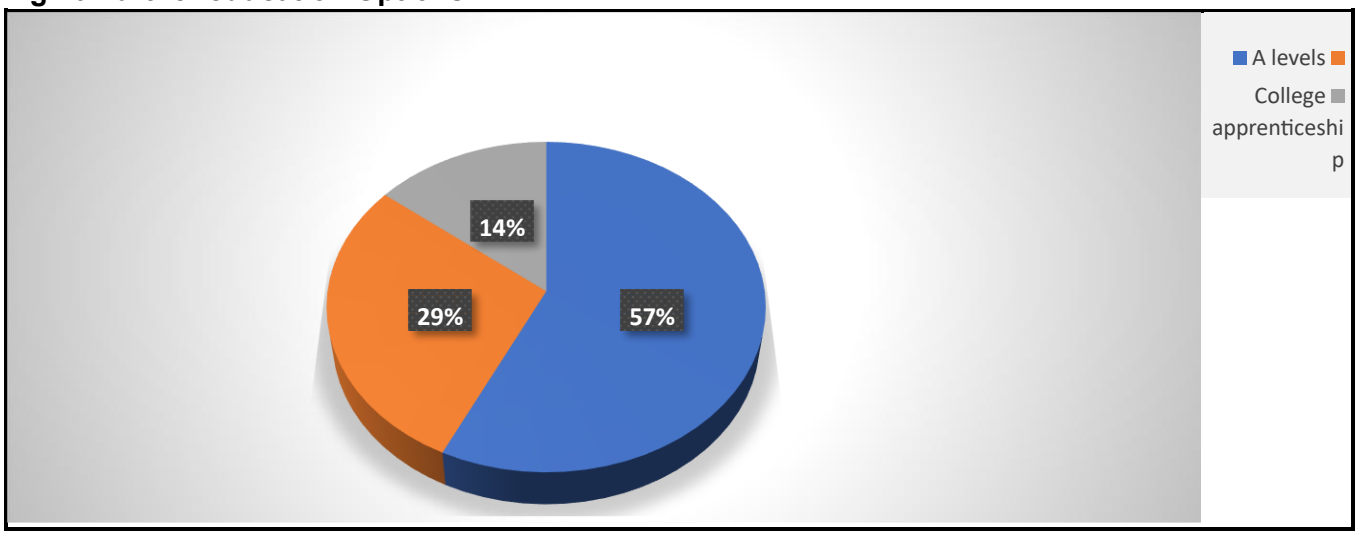
> "…year 10, we moved from that secondary … to another one…just this one was academically better. With this it was proven that this school was having better results. So, my mom was enticed to join this new school" .

In conclusion, secondary schools are hubs for young people coming from different parts of the borough and neighbouring boroughs and this can create tensions between rival gangs, as well new alliances as their members may find school to be a neutral ground and they can forge new relationships. All participants transition from their year 11 into 6th Form, College, or apprenticeship of some form.

c) Further Education as a protective factor to resist involvement in SYV

To go into further education is not just reassuring because further positive structure is in place at a key stage of adolescenthood but also demonstrates the desire of the parents/carers and the young person to set goals for themselves.

Fig 10 Further education Options



Source: Author data.

For some moving away from the area seemed like a good option:

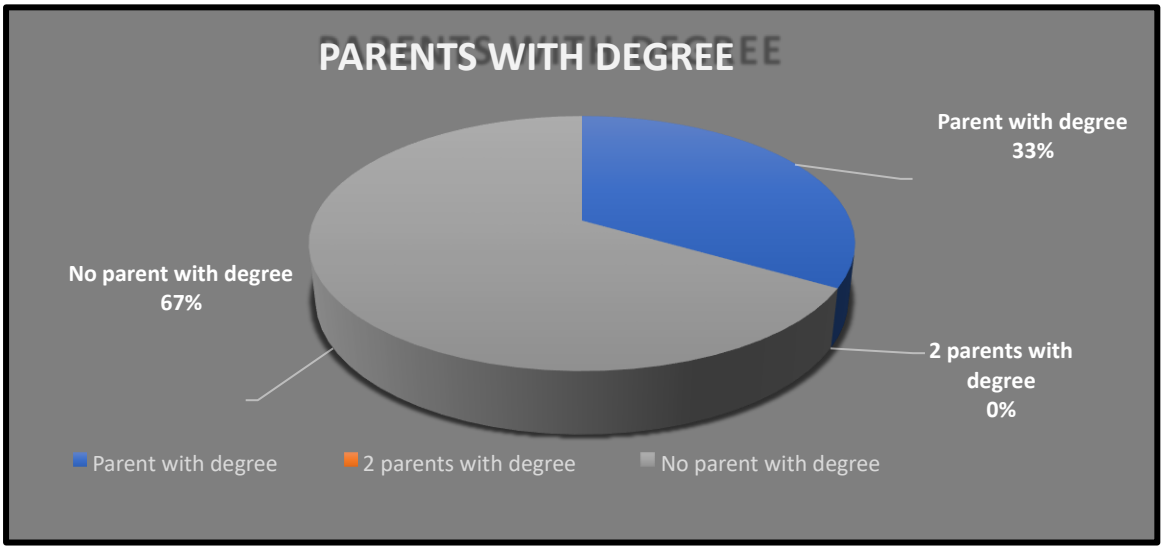
> *"So, college wasn't an option for me because … I thought college would be an easy way to lose myself again exposed to the wrong people… so I wanted to make sure that I was in the right environment. So, I went into Sixth Form. I studied economics and sociology… it wasn't easy leaving the friends that I had in the past… but… these are not my people. So, I completely stop to talking to them at that age16 – 17."* (Malabo)

Whilst for others, it seemed that their new host borough, for their college, was perceived worse than their own area:

"that's the only time I've ever felt like… yeah maybe shouldn't hang around too much?! if I personally went to name places that are [ok], Haringey fine, Tottenham fine, and Hackney are calm, Walthamstow! I don't know? … people in my college were getting robbed for their iPhones at axes point, fighting outside of college with knives… people are getting stabbed …" (Denrol)

Experiences at college followed a trajectory of highly charged environments and contextual risks. It has been noticed that all participants who attended Sixth Form progressed into university whilst those participants who attended college or apprenticeship, progressed into jobs.

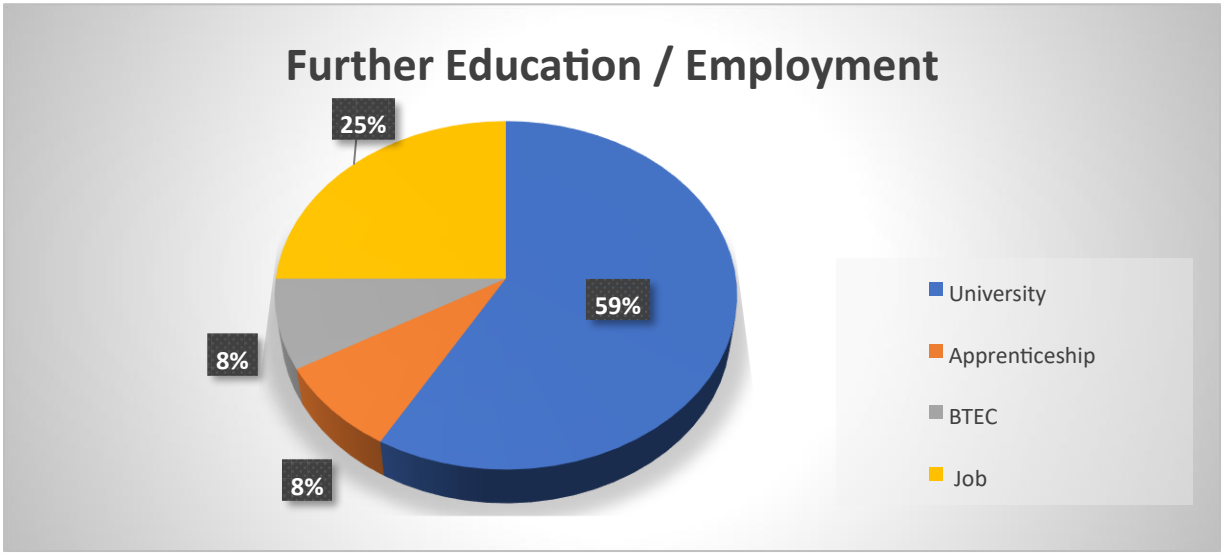
Fig 11 Parents with Degree



Source: Author data.

It is important to acknowledge that 33% of the participants had a parent/carer with a degree. None of the participants had both parents with a degree and 67% of participants had no parent/carer with degree. This is of relevance when analysing the different educational journeys that participants followed. Furthermore, it contradicts some of the research that considers the lack of parents with degree as a RF.

Fig 12 Further Education / Employment



Source: Author data.

Regarding the participants, 59% went to university, 25% got a Job, 8% an apprenticeship and 8% got into BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) course. All participants who progressed into university, work or had worked whilst studying. Their jobs are diverse, from dogwalkers and food delivery, to cleaning.

No reports of serious youth violence or incidents were made during that stage of their life, except for Qori, who explained that his acquaintances in the area are seeing the potential of extending their drug line into the University where he is studying. When closing the interview Qori explained:

> *"I have been offered quite a lot to kind of sell drugs ... Now. I've told them that I don't involve myself in none of that. I'm mature enough to kind of make that decision. And sometimes they respect this. Sometimes they ask me multiple times, but I tell them no, and I keep myself completely separate from it. But I have been asked multiple times to. That's why that's why it's kind of the asking has gone up because I've got, I'm in university, they see as a market, and they've asked me that I'm actually… look! You can get like so much money, If you do this for me! Like, you can distribute this. You can even grow in your house like and like I can help you out, and you can make money. I'm just like, Nope! that's… that's not the type of person I am. That's not something I want to get into. I know I can make a lot of money off it but that's nothing, I don't want to get into."* (Qori)

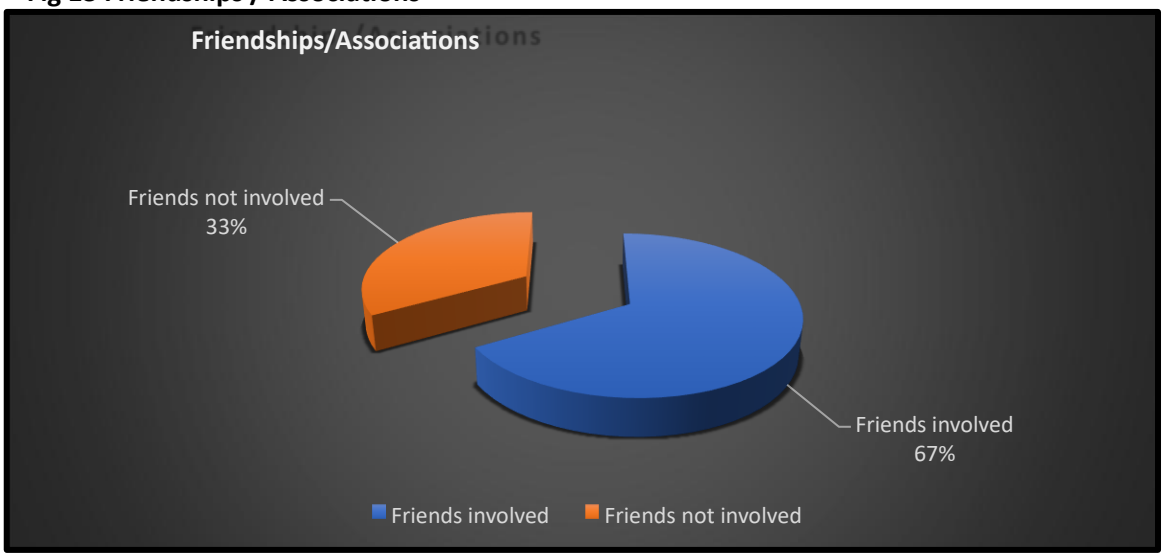
Qori's closing statement demonstrates the pressures that many of the participants are under. He demonstrates a certain level of self-control, consequential thinking and resistance. Despite having done all the right things and completed all the stages successfully (primary, secondary, further education, university, jobs), the contextual risk factors from the environments in which they grew up and they live in continue to be real. Their childhood friends, even though no longer their friends, may continue to tempt them into a life that they once thought they had left behind forever. Friendships, especially those forged during childhood and adolescenthood, seem to be a high-risk factor.

4.1.3. Community – external forces as pull factors to get involved in SYV

a) Friendships as risk or protective factors to be involved in SYV

Most participants (67%) had friends who were involved in Serious Youth Violence and criminal behaviour in their local community. These friendships and associations seem to be forged during secondary school.

Fig 13 Friendships / Associations



Source: Author data.

Participants who had older siblings or relatives involved in criminality, e.g. Tica and Yapo, seemed to have been exposed to the perils of their neighbourhoods at a much earlier age. Others, like Bioko and Malabo, seem to have been closely associated with young people who were involved, at least, in ASB to the point that their contribution to this research may be questioned as to whether they were involved in youth violence or not.

Bioko, for example, stated:

> "I've been chased out by a bunch of youth… because I know someone… I was scared, but I was angry at the same… because I'm alone, I'm seeing all these people coming to me. It's like. yeah, I have to go away. I have to run on this. But now that I went away with them, I'm angry because I had to run off them like now, they're gonna think I was scared of them. That was the mentality that they went.Yeah.so I will do. I will call my friends. All this happened. This happened, and then we will spin back to them." (Bioko)

Such a statement provides insight into resistant strategies that certain participants may had to use. While he insists that he was never been involved in SYV and he is not known to the police or the Youth Justice Services, his experiences really border the purpose of this research or maybe show a reality of the experiences of young people living in certain areas, who may, by association feel the need to have their backup.

A similar statement was provided by Malabo when he explained that:

> "*Youth clubs will be mainly associated with people who are in gangs or be an attraction for gang people in gangs where they felt so safe… is the sort of things I was exposed to at that time. I didn't like it. I didn't like seeing it. I acknowledged, and that this is not the path, that I wanted to live. In year 9 I… did a lot of things I shouldn't have done" (Malabo)*

When pressed for clarification, Malabo spoke of fights and stealing from shops. Whilst it shows concerns in terms of the validity of his interview, at the same time it gives insight into the thin balance between adjusting into the environment and being involved in SYV and criminal behaviour. Other participants had more prosocial friendships that will ensure further protective factors and minimisation of the contextual risks during their adolescenthood.

Only three out of the 14 participants shared they were not wearing the regular clothes most expect Londoner adolescents to wear (tracksuits, hoodies and designer trainers). It was particularly interesting to hear how young people can decipher who is and who is not involved in SYV and criminal behaviour, especially during heightened moments when they go in groups into each other's 'endz' to 'hunt' rivals. These experiences could be explained, potentially, applying 'code switching' (Anderson, 1999).

"I live in that area they don't see me with them so they it's like they have no reason to do anything to me and that's how who is doing maybe the occasional parties on the Saturday but again if I'm at the party out I am with the same friends who are not in that involved in and once when people are seeing that growing up they know OK this person he's not he's not with them so they know to leave you alone." (Yapo)

Or

"…typically, if you are not involved in anything people involved, they don't know you, they recognise you're just a school child. " (Denrol)

b) Traumatic events as risks factors to involvement in SYV

The quotes above detail events considered to be traumatic for participants. Of particular importance is the perceived normalisation of community violence which could be interpreted as a dissociative disorder, as a defence mechanism to cope with neighbourhood/community trauma as discussed elsewhere in this report.

Experiencing traumatic incidents seems to have been common among participants with 50% self-reporting episodes that the author considered as traumatic. These include being robbed three times with weapons, being robbed without the use of weapons, being chased with knives, being beaten up or assaulted. Whilst the other 50% declared to never have been victims of crimes, it is clear through their responses that all are aware of violent incidents in their communities and all the participants said that they take precautions when moving through their communities.

These traumatic events, either direct or indirect, are considered to be predictable factors for becoming involved in criminal behaviour. Research shows that many of the young people involved in youth criminal behaviour have been victims before becoming perpetrators and in the majority of the cases they combine these polarised roles (see Densley, et al., 2020).

All participants spoke of how unsafe their area is and how they perceive it. While some thought media plays a role in amplifying the risks, overall, all agreed that the reputation of high levels of crime is fair and represents their experiences.

Qori reported that he was robbed violently at least 3 times, causing a severe traumatic reaction which at times could be unbearable:

> *"… they surrounded me against the car, and they took my phone. They take like the money I had for the food, and they even punched me in the face and everything… It actually did kind of traumatised me a little bit. After that day. I was with my family, and there was like some party or something was going on near my house, where I saw a lot of people outside, a lot of like teenagers and kids on bikes as well again with bellies [note from author: slang for balaclavas] and everything, and it just kind of like hit like a trauma response to me. And I kind of broke down in front of my family and they were trying to get me home. But I didn't want to walk through that just because I saw the guys on the bikes and stuff like that, thinking something else was gonna happen to me."* (Qori)

Whilst Denrol reported the day-to-day occurrences in his area, wondering why people are not more aware of general criminality in the area:

> *"I'm aware of…some stabbings some shootings even recently some people get robbed all the time, that's super regular. I don't know people are doing currently at the banks on Wood Green in broad daylight people are being robbed at ATMs."* (Denrol)

These direct incidents as well as the perceptions of violence in their communities had an impact in the way participants conduct themselves out in their communities up to this day.

c) Participants' perception and experience of their community

Having an insight on participants' perception and experience of their communities was key to have a better understanding of their motivation to build and implement strategies to be resilient and resist SYV in their communities. The questions were designed to provide data about their perceptions at different stages of their lives. The answers were all subjective to the participants own interpretation of their experience.
Questions like: would you say your area has a reputation for crime and SYV?

Were matched with answers such as:

> *"…just the other day a woman got shot in Hackney, near Hackney Down so definitely." (Tica)*

Community experiences varied drastically among the different participants, even from the same areas. Those living within affected council estates seem to perceive their communities more knitted and supportive than those who lived near the big council estates but not directly on them.

> *"[My] experience is the community… 'cause me personally I would say compared to other boroughs Hackney is knitted so everyone knows everyone, so [we] go to the same school your parents know each other, so the community is very strong, so everyone is very friendly in Hackney growing up in ... estate we were most outside just sitting there playing out." (Yapo)*

Whiles Azzedine shared:

> *"There were certain times where I could go out and play with my friends. but … there were certain times where I had to be careful, cause certain groups of people come around, and I'll have to be careful amongst who I play with and who I associate myself with but, I would say, growing up as a child playing outside, it will be safe to a degree to an extent."* (Azzedine)

One thing all participants had in common is that their experience of their communities changed as they grew up. Primary school years seemed to be quite protective, and parents were able to cushion their children from external pull factors and 'hostile' environments. None of the participants reported any incidents in the community before entering secondary school, except for Tica, whose two cousins were nearly killed in a gang-related stabbing whilst she was still of primary school age.

4.1.4. Individual and Family Strategies to support to resist involvement in SYV

The participants' perception and experience of their community led to families and CYP to have to develop individual and family strategies to resist any involvement with SYV and/or offending.

The following table (Table 5) was generated to analyse the participants' individual and family strategies used to resist involvement in SYV. This table is a visual representation and helps to better understand what worked based on the participants self-reported experience.

Table 5 Strategies used by participants to resist involvement in SYV

participant	Parent/s	siblings	friendships	Mentor	travel	hobby	Total score
Kwame	1	1	1	0	1	1	5
Denrol	1	1	1	0	1	1	5
Kostas	1	1	1	0	0	1	4
Winston	1	0	1	0	0	1	3
Yapo	1	1	1	0	1	1	6
Dajuan	1	0	1	0	1	1	4
Tica	1	1	1	0	0	1	5
Qori	1	0	1	0	1	1	4
Bioko	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Benas	1	0	1	0	0	1	3
Malabo	1	0	1	1	1	1	6
Azzedine	1	1	1	1	1	1	7

As described above, different factors were suggested by the participants to be protective factors to support resisting getting involved in SYV and crime. These included parent/s, siblings, friendships, mentors' input and involvement, as well as the involvement and advice from families' faith (religious institutions and representatives), family trips and positive hobbies. These factors are explained in detail a below:

a) Family: Parent/s, as a strategy to resist involvement on SYV:

The Parent/s variable represents a protective factor for the participants where the parent/s were involved in inculcating protective strategies such as which roads to avoid, what to do in case of danger, providing positive structure and parenting monitoring. As discussed previously, most parents appear to have been open and honest with their children from a young age about the contextual risks in their neighbourhood. This factor supported children to grow up being knowledgeable and aware of their surroundings whilst minimising, where possible, the anxieties that could have been generated if directions, instructions, and curfews were given to them by their parents without rationale.

For this section, 'Parent' has its own value, and it must be clarified that all other six variables discussed in this section are as a result, in one way or another, of the parents' painstaking and thoughtful rearing of their children in very complex psychosocial environments. As aforementioned in the literature review, parenting does not happen in a vacuum, it is directly and indirectly impacted both positively or/and negatively by their environment including family network, community, area where they live, school, parents and CYP's friendships among others.

b) Family: Sibling/s as a strategy to resist involvement on SYV:

Based on the literature review and the research outcomes siblings can be a risk factor or a protective factor depending not only on their pro-social or criminal behaviour but on the advice that they passed to their siblings around their own strategies to resist or divert from SYV. Siblings' involvement in the upbringing of their younger siblings seems to have had a significant impact for participants. Statements such as:

> *"…my life is pretty chill I have very loving parents, my siblings are close to me like [I] consider them my friends)."* (Kwame)

demonstrate that.

The siblings/s' variable equates to some of the participants sharing their experiences of being coached by their older siblings about what is happening in the community and how to navigate it. The influence played by siblings is an important predictable factor both positive and negative. Within the participants cohort it was noticed how some could have been misguided and negatively influenced by older siblings but overall, the majority of siblings served as guides to embed pro-social behaviour and support to safer navigation of their communities. Even regarding of the involvement of Yapo's older brother with local youth groups which appears to serve as a cushion for Yapo to flourish and not be drawn into serious youth violence and criminal behaviour.

In addition, siblings provided extra support for parents, actively helping with daily tasks such as picking up and dropping from school as well as supporting to settle the younger siblings into primary and secondary schools, where joined them at the same school, thus minimising the risks of participants being pulled into offending or criminal behaviour.

c) Family: Friendships as a strategy to resist involvement on SYV:

As discussed during the literature review one of the biggest pull factors to resist or get involved in SYV and crime can be the influence of their friendships and closer networks.

> *"I was fortunate enough to be surrounded by friends smarter than I was, particularly more mature than I was as well. So, whereas other kids would be like, ooh, let's go back to B4! This is exciting! This is fun! My friends would be like: well, isn't that stupid? Like on these guys acting like idiots? And it was, it's seeing it from that slightly different perspective, I was like, yeah, you're right. It is stupid!"* (Winston)

Participants with pro-social friendship groups have been more successful in navigating their communities. Many of those groups were set up by parents at an early age. Others were formed naturally by the participants as they grew up, especially through their activities and their hobbies. Some found their groups in libraries, others in youth clubs or churches. Many had established their relationships at a younger age and have remained friends since childhood. What is relevant to this section is to acknowledge, again, that participants such as Winston, Tica, Malabo and others, expressed that it was through their friendship groups that they started more prosocial behaviours in their communities. These findings, back the opinion of Agnew (1991) that adolescents' behaviours can be influenced in post formative years both positively and negatively.

d) Family: Faith as a strategy to resist involvement on SYV:

Faith can be one of the tools and the structures to inculcate prosocial behaviour on CYP and people in general. Some studies argued that religious believes (faith) are a protective factor for individuals, in this case CYP, to resist the pull factors of been involved in SYV and offending (Desmond, et al., 2023; Ellis, et al., 2019).

> *"Sundays church yeah! my family is Christian, we are Catholic…baptism communion and confirmation. So, every Sunday 10 in the morning church."* (Lula)

Five out of the 14 mentioned Faith to be important to their life shared that their Faith and religious community group supported them to take positive decisions in their lives. Church and

Mosque are the two faith communities where some of the participants were involved. Tica found Church to be a source of 'renewed' friendships that were more prosocial and supported her to move away from her boyfriend and a lifestyle of drugs and bunking from school.

For Malabo, who had a rocky entry into his adolescenthood, Church seemed to have supported him to move away from a friendship that was displaying some criminal behaviour into a more prosocial friendship group:

> *"… my peer group? It was people who wanted to go into university. So, people who are studying or staying late to get the best grades which infers me to do the same thing. People who were interested in going to church. So, I'll start going to church around that time of quite a lot."* (Malabo)

> For Azzedine, he and his family go to the mosque together every Friday. He shared that at mosque there is a youth group and: *"They would advise us to be careful who our friends are and to be careful who we hang around with outside"* (Azzedine)

e) Travel with family as a strategy to resist involvement on SYV:

For many, travelling, especially family trips, helped them to broaden their view of the world and particularly of their communities. Those who had family trips, spoke fondly of their memories. It is clear from their experiences that going on family trips, even if it is only out of London, like Dajuan going to Cornwall, helps to widen their perspective and supports building relationships with their parents and siblings whilst storing very important fun moments and memories. Furthermore, it exposes participants to other cultures and lifestyles, which in turn shapes their own identity and character and can lead to more diverse friendships.

> *"So, we always go back home to Africa every year yeah so if it's not Africa then is somewhere Europe so even Africa, France yeah so, my mum side is in France she has her brother 'cause I'm from French speaking country so from France, Spain and Italy". (Yapo)*

4.1.5. Community as a protective factor

a) Mentors as a protective factor to resist involvement on SYV

Two participants reported having a mentor during their adolescenthood. The author incorrectly thought that more participants would have benefited from some form of mentor during their childhood or adolescenthood.

Azzedine had a mentor at his BMX club. The mentor uses the time at training to build a trusted relationship that supports Azzedine to resist pressures in the community. Furthermore, the mentor is in contact with Azzedine parents, which ensures that there is a sense of a coordinated support network.

> *"I built strong relationships with my coaches, and still to this day, I still have strong relationship with my coaches."* (Azzedine)

b) Hobbies and Positive activities as a PF to resist involvement on SYV

In analysing data emerging from the semi-structured interviews, hobbies and positive activities appeared as one of the most impactful factors to minimise the contextual safeguarding risks for young people; in this particular case for our participants, to engage in criminal or ASB. They have provided participants with positive structures for their days and with the opportunities to build a more diverse network of peers who share prosocial behaviour and different experiences, allowing CYP to develop social skills, whilst exploring the world in a nurturing and safe environment.

As with other variables and protective factors discussed previously, hobbies and positive activities rely on Authoritative Parents who can nurture their children, providing them with safe options to develop their skills and abilities. It is through this process of exploration in a nurturing and safe environment that participants expressed finding their interests. One analytical observation is that except for three participants interested in football (two taking it into a semiprofessional level) and rugby only, all the other participants had interests that are out of the ordinary for CYP in those areas or wards.

Table 6 Hobbies as Strategies to resist been involved in SYV

Participants	types of Hobbies

Kwame	Scouts, roller skate, roller blade, comic American football, walk dogs
Denrol	Gaming, comic, Manga, nature, feeding ducks
Kostas	Comic, Gaming
Winstons	Gaming, library
Yapo	roller skate, bike
Dajuan	football
Tica	Music (playing instruments) basketball
Qori	Rugby, Football, Stock trade
Bioko	football
Benas	Football, boxing, breeding and training dogs
Malabo	Music (R&B singer) and handball
Azzedine	BMX, Stock Trade
Lula	Football, Church, chess,
Dwayne	BMX, travelling

Some of the positive hobbies such as Scouts, provided opportunities for the CYP to move away from their immediate environment but still stay within their borough and socialise with children who do not share their experience of their community as they are living in a more affluent part of Haringey. Kwame shared that whilst the Scouts per se are not expensive, some of their activities need to be funded by the families meaning many of Haringey's youth population will be priced out of such activities. Kwame explained that Scouts gives him the opportunity to have fun, be out of Wood Green, get to know people from other backgrounds and to have some educational and interesting trips that would otherwise be unavailable.

Azzedine spoke of his BMX being his passion and to some extent his "obsession". His parents had to spend a lot of money on bikes, helmets, clothes and equipment, but they could see that this keeps him away from the streets. He used to spend 2 hrs at least 2 – 3 days during weekdays and 5hrs on Saturday and another 5hrs on Sunday on the BMX track.

Those playing football, i.e. Dajuan and Bioko, explained that their semi-pro status was recognised by others in the street who will not involve them in conflicts or behaviours that could damage their football career. Football is popular and clearly it has a pro-social element and as Dajuan explained, it opened many doors for him as he could move freely between post codes and boroughs as other CYP will recognise him from the game.

> *"Or you play football, and you know you're good that allows you to express yourself in other ways. And people kinda weirdly look up to you in other things. So, when you go into a secondary school, and then you got year nine's and year above's, and you're quite good, and you can play on their level. You almost feel welcomed straight away and respected. So, that's how I can from my perspective. Maybe that just made me adjust a bit quicker. And oh, you're that guy is all right, and then then you can flourish in your personality."* (Dajuan)

Malabo found his passion in handball and as it was out-of-the-area activity with a complete distinct network, this opened new opportunities and perspectives for him. He is now a mentor within the same organisation that provided that opportunity to him. Furthermore, he got into music, but rather than drill or grime he said he was "into R&B and Afro Beatz". He says that he stays away from smoking and certain environments that could damage his vocal cords and friendships that could jeopardise his professional trajectory.

Unusual hobbies and activities, especially if they are affordable may be advisable as they bring a new network and open new opportunities, for example, a large-Handball league in Hackney does not exist meaning youths must reach beyond their neighbourhood borders to compete. This could expand their horizons in terms of parallel community experiences and CYP can create new supporting networks with more pro-social friendships that influence their behaviour and lives experiences. The findings suggest that resilience and resistance was built despite the presence of criminogenic risk.

4.1.6. Resilience and Resistance in the presence of criminogenic risks

Summary of the findings

The findings presented clearly demonstrate the ability of parents, CYP, schools and community to build resistance through the strategies aforementioned.

As a matter of summary, Table 4 and 5 (shared here again for easy access) helped to have a better understanding of the strategies that are effective to resist getting involved in SYV. The strategies are diverse and spread through setting dimension and developmental dimension of the participant. Suggesting that the more PF throughout the participants development and settings the less likely they are to get involved in SYV.

The exercise as well addressed some of the queries about how transferrable and relevant to others can be these strategies, explored during the research. Most of the strategies explored during the exercise and shared by the participants have an element of emotional availability from their main carers, which in a sense, it does not require any cost to implement. Furthermore, it demonstrates that whilst parenting may be a significant factor, the combination of a positive support network may help to strengthen protective factors whilst minimising some risk factors. The findings supported the development of a theory.

Table 4

Total score of protective and risk factors per participant

Participant	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Total score
Kwame	20	7	2	2	6	37
Denrol	19	2	2	1	6	30
Kostas	13	6	2	2	5	28
Winston	4	7	-4	2	4	13
Yapo	5	2	-4	2	8	13
Dajuan	17	2	-1	2	5	25
Tica	5	7	-4	-2	7	13
Qori	8	7	-4	2	5	18
Bioko	-1	0	-2	-2	3	-2
Benas	16	3	1	2	4	26
Malabo	-2	7	-2	-2	8	9
Azzedine	15	7	2	2	9	35
Lula	10	7	-2	2	8	25
Dwayne	11	7	-2	2	7	25

Source: Author data.

Table 5 Strategies used by participants to resist involvement in SYV

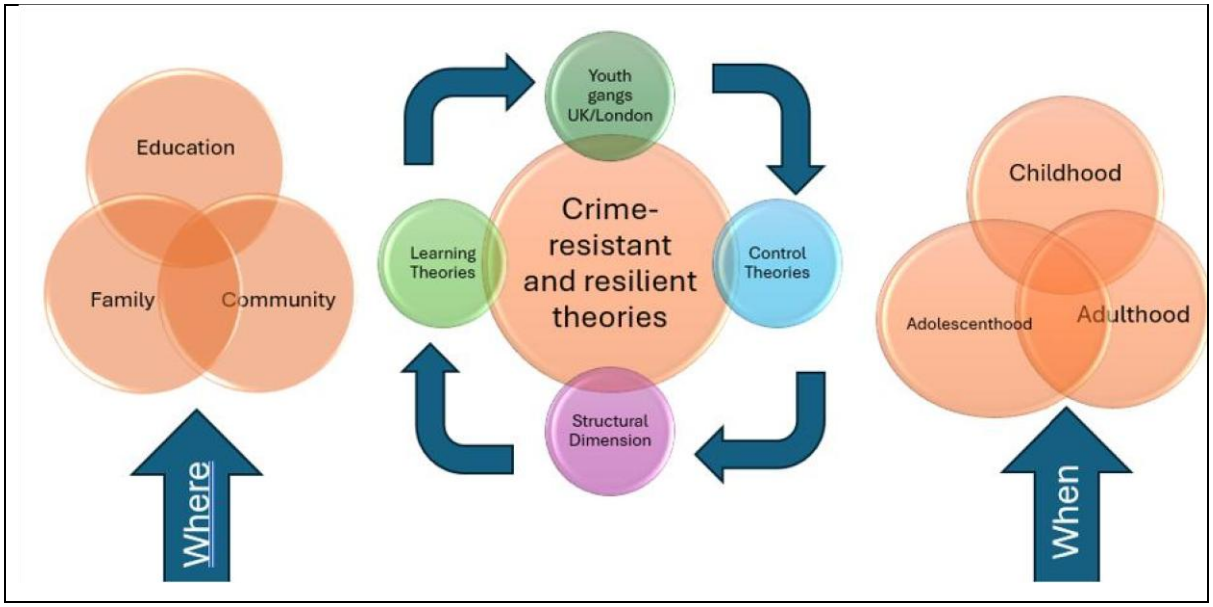
participant	Parent/s	siblings	friendships	Mentor	travel	hobby	Total score
Kwame	1	1	1	0	1	1	5
Denrol	1	1	1	0	1	1	5
Kostas	1	1	1	0	0	1	4
Winston	1	0	1	0	0	1	3
Yapo	1	1	1	0	1	1	6
Dajuan	1	0	1	0	1	1	4
Tica	1	1	1	0	0	1	5
Qori	1	0	1	0	1	1	4
Bioko	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Benas	1	0	1	0	0	1	3
Malabo	1	0	1	1	1	1	6
Azzedine	1	1	1	1	1	1	7

Source: Author data.

4.2. Developing a theory of practice from the findings

The participants' own interpretations and explanations of their lived experiences have grounded the analysis of the findings discussed in detail above. These findings revealed that CYP and families' resilient strategies to resist SYV and youth crime are complex and multidimensional. There is not a particular factor that could be identified as key to develop, implement and generalise a uniform strategy to minimise the pull factors of SYV and youth crime. or that could help, on its own, to develop more robust and effective self-control strategies for CYP living in London/U.K. gang-affected neighbourhoods.

Fig 14 Diagram of The Multidimensional theory of Resilience and Resistance strategies to resist Serious Youth Violence and offending



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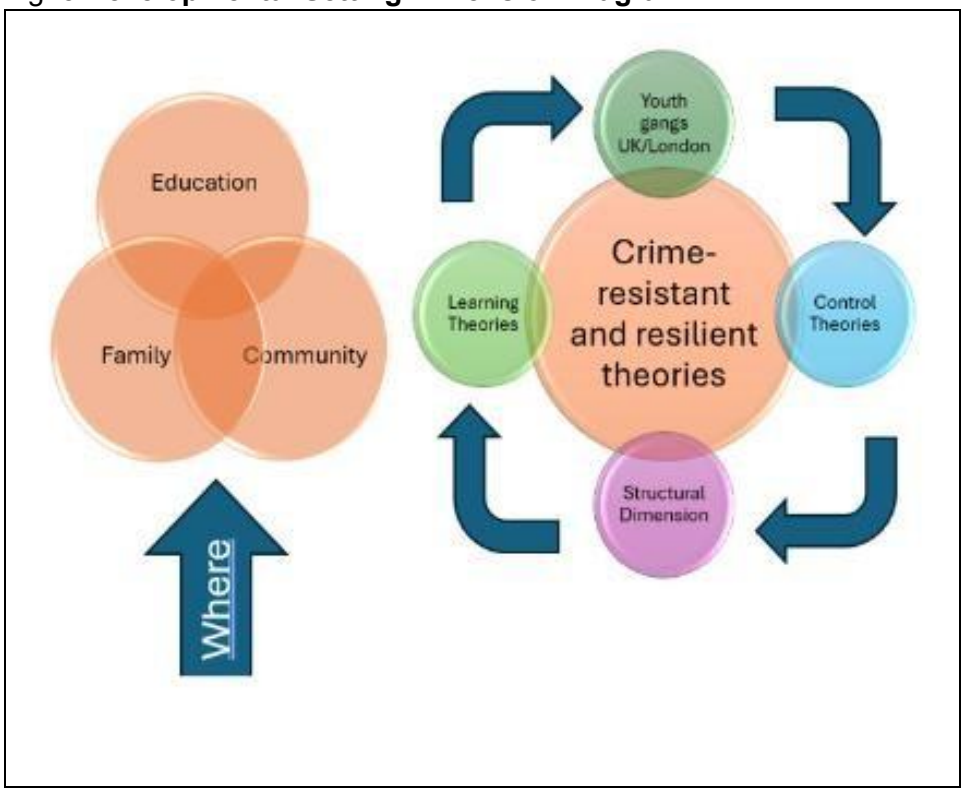
Analysing the findings, a Multidimensional theory of Resilience and Resistance strategies to resist Serious Youth Violence and offending emerges as a combination of three developmental setting interrelated concepts: Individual/family, Education and Community are underpinned by multidimensional theories that evolve within three developmental stages Childhood, Adolescenthood and Adulthood. It is important to clarify, that the same theory could be used for predictability and risk factors to offend as this are as well experienced in both dimensions (developmental setting and developmental stages). Nonetheless, as this study was focusing on resilience and resistant the outcomes, as highlighted, demonstrate to some extent that protective factors outweigh the risks factors.

In summary, the findings of this research provide a glimpse as to how strategies are developed in different developmental settings (family, education and community) at different developmental stages of participants' life journeys (Childhood, Adolescenthood and Adulthood). Thus, space and time are intertwined with community experiences of street gangs and SYV, Structural Dimension, Learning and Control Theory. Space, Time and theoretical multidimension create this Multidimensional theory of Strategies to build Resilience to Resist Serious Youth Violence and Offending.

Fig15 **Developmental Setting Dimension Diagram**



Source: author's own

4.2.1. Family

Participants shared a wide range of Individual and Family strategies that have been effective to avoid being attracted to engage in SYV and being criminally exploited by local street gangs. The strategies are diverse, but overall indicate that family pro-social values, opportunities and options with pro-social networks seem to be the best strategy for CYP and families living in gang-affected areas to minimise the impact of street gangs. These strategies are established in formative years, are consistently reviewed and can be implemented throughout their lives, even as adults.

The family structure be it with both parents, single parenthood (generally but not exclusively headed by mothers) or carers (extended family) has not varied the outcome of the participants' ability to resist from and build resilience to SYV. This is in combination with the actions and influence of pro-social older siblings who seem to take a proactive parental role especially in single parental households.

From the research, the author concluded that Authoritative Parenting with warmth emerges as the preferred parental style that he recommends for children growing in gang-affected neighbourhoods in London. Parents/carers' implementing such a parenting style are characterised by high levels of supervision and monitoring. This includes escorting children to

school through primary and beginning of secondary, knowing their whereabouts at all times, knowing their peers, creating/encouraging prosocial networks and ensuring that the children understand why such boundaries are set and implemented by their parents. Analysis of the findings seem to suggest that this approach best supported children to develop self-control during their formative years. In addition, while both positive and negative peer influence is possible during adolescenthood, so is the influence of parents, which continues to be key to sway behaviours even during adulthood.

The findings suggest that those participants with less pro-social peers are deemed to be at risk of ASB and offending. It is worthwhile noting that their behaviour was influenced by other more prosocial peers, but especially by their main carers.

4.2.2. Education

The second developmental setting concept of this suggested Multidimensional theory of Resilience and Resistance strategies to resist Serious Youth Violence and offending education. This encapsulates both formal and informal structures of education from the family/home environment to statutory educational settings. Analysing the findings of this study has shown that positive experiences during the formative years are key to develop a sense of belonging as well as developing self-control and a pro-social identity. The importance of smooth transition between educational milestones has demonstrated to be key. together with appropriate supports from family and networks.

Education Employment and/or Training (E.E.T.) for Further education and the opportunity to explore further afield from the neighbourhood or ward has as well demonstrated to be important as a resistant from and resilient to strategy. Parents/carers' involvement in their children's educational journey seems to be key for CYP to have a positive experience during their educational journey. Schools in gang-affected and deprived wards can act as safe havens for local CYP and potentially provide one of the few hubs for pro-social and less prosocial CYP to interact and influence one other both positively and negatively. This influence, the findings suggest, goes beyond the formative years and this can bring opportunities to create change into a more pro-social character or behaviour, even during the late teens leading on to adulthood.

4.2.3. Community

The third developmental setting concept of this emerging Multidimensional theory of Resilience and Resistance strategies to resist SYV and offending emphasising the notion of the family as the basic unit of society. The findings show that the majority of families in London's gang-affected neighbourhoods are able to resist and implement resilient strategies to minimise the impact of SYV on their offspring. Those living in gang-affected council states are able to survive by developing pro-social peer groups knitted through common interests, shared family values reiterated through schools, families and community. The studied communities seem to have limited resources for CYP in their areas and therefore, participants discussed having to move out of the area to access safer and more pro-social networks.

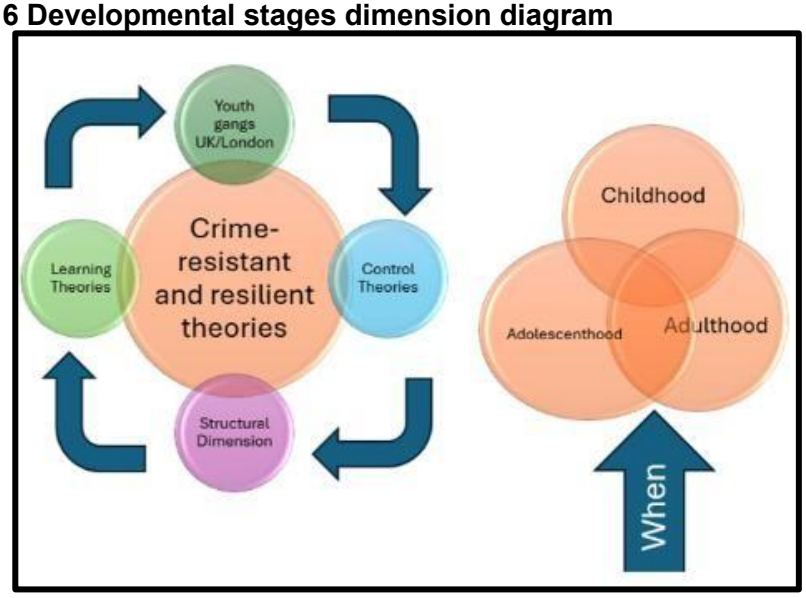
The findings suggest the existence of unwritten street codes on how peers differentiate between those CYP who are involved in SYV and those who are not. The findings point at codes and moral frameworks within their communities considered by many to be impacted by social disorganisation, but these frameworks show clear patterns of values and norms that are understood by the residents of such communities. It is hard for outsiders to identify the codes, be they dress codes, living within a gang-affected state, being associated with known 'gangmembers' or having relatives involved in SYV.

None of the codes per se seem to increase the risks of being identified or associated as a CYP involved in SYV, despite the highlighted incidents of victimisation suffered by almost all the participants in their wards. This could be as part of what Anderson (1999) described as 'code switching' between family values and the 'code of the streets', which as explained before, is an established informal system of rules to regulate interpersonal relationships and interactions in the community, including how to respond to threats and violence in a approved manner (Anderson, 2008; Swartz and Wilcox, 2018). It could be argued that participants of this study, had a mixed of sufficient protective factors within the family, community and school, to develop nonviolent values and resist the pulls to get involved into SYV and offending as suggested by Anderson (1999; 2000, 2018).

Findings from participants stress the need to differentiate between moral panic and community trauma and suggest that there is an overloading of incidents in said communities that is shared, magnified and to some extent dramatised through social media. Reality and perception could play in the minds of onlookers of that dynamic. Nonetheless, these 'regular' incidents may retraumatised participants and the community in general as they re-open unhealed wounds of past/present incidents of SYV where participants have unfortunately been victims or witnesses, directly or indirectly, of SYV. Whilst social media and media vilification of certain communities may feed moral panic (perception), the day-to-day and Present Traumatic Stress

Disorder (known as Continuous Traumatic Stress) impact on the unconscious minds of residents feeding a real fear of potential victimisation and having to finely balance perceived fear and real risk management plans when navigating their communities.

Fig 16 Developmental stages dimension diagram



Source: author's own

The developmental setting concepts discussed (Family–Education–Community) impact on and intersect with the developmental dimension of Multidimensional theory of Strategies to build Resilience to Resist Serious Youth Violence and Offending. The developmental dimension encapsulates three main stages of the participants development splited into Childhood, Adolescenthood and Adulthood.

In respect of developmental dimension, the findings suggest that all three developmental stages are important, but not essential on their own to provide a nurturing space to create resilience from and resistance to strategies to SYV. Whilst the findings indicate that positive structures and environment are key specially during formative years (childhood 0 -8 years), if traumatic events take place during this developmental dimension, it is still possible to form protective frameworks during Adolescenthood. Despite some participants suffering traumatic events during their childhood e.g. loss, separation, and parents' divorce, if the main carers remain protective and nurturing, pro-social character can be forged during later developmental stages.

The findings reflect the value of peer and parental influence during adolescenthood. This can be positive or negative depending on the peer network and environmental factor. This influence is believed to be possible even during adulthood especially by trusted relatives and

peers. The study findings show, to a certain extent, how the developmental setting concepts of family, education and community play throughout the developmental dimension creating an infinite combination of variables and realities for both positive (pro-social) and negative (offending/criminal) characteristics that can be embedded by people. Many such concepts could be completely beyond the control of the main carers and the CYP themselves, e.g. where they live, what school they are allowed to attend, how they experience their community/neighbourhood, so that the chances of being exposed to SYV can to a certain extent be considered external uncontrollable forces to overcome. Therefore, the earlier that the strategies to build resilience from and resist SYV are developed by family and communities, the more likely they are to be successful to act as a safety net to overcome the pull factors of SYV and general offending in the community.

Therefore, it could be argued that the developmental setting (family, education and community) interacts with the developmental stages (childhood, adolescenthood and adulthood) dimension and they cause the Multidimensional theory of Resilience and Resistance strategies to resist SYV and offending to emerge as a plausible theory to understand, measure and contemplate how a great percentage of families living in gangaffected areas in London are able to resist being drawn into the pull factors of SYV. Developmental settings and Developmental Stages dimensions are expected to be part of any human development and therefore, the same argument could be done for risk and protective factors. What the Multidimensional theory of Resilience and Resistance strategies to resist Serious Youth Violence and offending highlights the ability of families and CYP to build resilience in the presence of criminogenic risks.

4.3. Contribution of the research to theory

The findings attempted to address multiple gaps in the field of SYV and youth crime in London, particularly addressing gaps in literature and knowledge around strategies to build resilience and resist SYV. By addressing the gaps, it is the author's hope that this study will make important contributions to theory, policy and intervention/practice around the field of SYV in London (and the United Kingdom).

4.3.1. This is how we do it! - contribution to theory, policy and practice

The study integrates multiple theoretical frameworks and approaches i.e. Social Control, Selfcontrol, Social Learning, Conditioning, Family Structure, Role of pro-social activities among others. It extends these theories concerning strategies to build resilience and resist

SYV by investigating the variables that emerged from the interviews through the discussed hybrid (inductive/deductive) approach. In doing so, it adds to the theoretical development of the framework by suggesting the emerging of the multidimensional theory of strategies to build resilience to resist SYV; and how this Grounded Theory fosters different insight into CYP and families' strategies and shows the "Who?", "When?" and "How do they do it?" strategies to build resilience and resist SYV whilst living in London's gang-affected neighbourhoods/wards.

Family crime resilience and resistance as themes and as a theoretical framework were identified during the literature review as a gap in both research and knowledge, especially around the subject of street gangs in London and the United Kingdom. Further knowledge was needed to extend the general theory of crime and understand better why the higher percentage of CYP whilst living in a similar familiar and social context are able to resist entering and engaging with criminal gangs and how these strategies are embedded in children/young people throughout their lifespan. These findings contribute as well to the debate around Social Learning and Parenting Styles. The variables and the findings to an extent demonstrate that both peer and parental/trusted ones' influences go beyond the formative years.

4.3.2. Early holistic intervention - Contribution to policy

This research contributes to improvements to policies around Community Safety, Contextual Safeguarding, Community Trauma interventions, Education and Family and Children's Services.

At the family and parenting level the findings indicate the need to develop new policies that can promote and replicate some of the strategies used by the participants' parents or carers. Policies around monitoring and supervising children in their communities could be helpful if the policies are accompanied with appropriate support for those families who may not be able to comply with such guidance.

This study highlights the level of normalisation of violence in certain communities in London and looks at how incidents of violence are shared, experienced and internalised by the participants. The findings contribute to better understanding of community trauma and recognition of the complex balance between perceived moral panic and real experiences of community trauma.

The findings of this study contribute to better understanding the importance of school lived experiences for participants to build self-control and pro-social networks. The findings point to

educational transitions needing to be planned carefully to ensure children achieve their aspirations. It contributes to understand the strategies that work for participants, and it highlights the extra mile, literally, to which some parents/carers will go in order to secure a better chance of a positive schooling experience for their children. Finally, regarding policy, this study contributes to knowledge about using positive and pro-social activities and hobbies as a deterrent to SYV and to build resilience from and resistant to strategies. Policies need to be modified in order to make services more accessible to deprived communities. Policies should promote hobbies/activities that are pro-social, preferably group oriented, and allow exploration of more unusual ones such as handball, fencing and archery, ensuring that appropriate grants are available for families in low/medium income, those receiving financial support and more generally to CYP living in London gang affected areas.

4.3.3. Prevention is better than cure - Contribution to practice

This study has been completed within the framework of a professional doctorate and the author is a practitioner – researcher. Therefore, the findings contribution to practice/intervention was the main aim and a key factor of this research.

Overall, the findings contribute to enrich the knowledge of the role family and parenting play in developing appropriate resilience from and resistance to strategies to SYV. The findings contribute to understanding the importance of trusted relationships and community responses to SYV. They contribute to a better understanding of neighbourhood trauma and the need to implement a strategy to mitigate the negative impact. This study encourages new practices (triggered by new policies) around school options and admission process in gang affected areas. Consideration of the findings could prompt a better feeder school system between schools in different wards or different neighbourhoods to enhance children's educational experiences.

In summary, the findings address some of the gaps and make contributions to methodology, theory, policy, and intervention/practice of SYV and street gangs in London and the United Kingdom. Firstly, the study findings extend the limited research on the understanding of resilient and resistance strategies in London's gang-affected areas. This study is the best of the author's knowledge one of the first to consider how to develop the "Who?" "When?" and "How is it done?" Self-control and other control theories into frameworks for building resilience and resisting SYV for families living in London's gang-affected areas. Secondly, the findings assessed the role of family, educational institutions, and community in developing and implementing resilience from and resistance to strategies through the continuum of childhood,

adolescenthood and adulthood to minimise the 'inevitable' negative impact of living in a gangaffect neighbourhood. Thirdly, to the best of the author's knowledge and from the literature reviewed from academic databases, no previous study has analysed why the majority of young people in gang-affected neighbourhoods in London do not commit crime and what are the strategies created and implemented by CYP and their families to minimise this.

Finally, existing research on Crime Resistance, Social learning, Control theory has primarily focused on criminal and offending behaviour rather than on how families develop and maintain pro-social behaviour under the pressures of SYV. Nonetheless, despite the findings' strengths and contributions, there are some limitations to consider, which are discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5. – This is how we do it! - Multidimensional theory of Strategies to build Resilience to Resist Serious Youth Violence and Offending - Discussion, conclusion and recommendations

This chapter is organised to answer the main three Research Questions (RQ). First a summary of the key findings of this research is provided and discusses effective strategies to resist getting involved in SYV and offending, answering RQ 1. Then it moves to discuss and analyse the research implications through the prism of theory, methodology, highlights any gaps in the field and analyses what are the learnings from participant's experiences, who have successfully managed to live in gang-affected areas without engaging in SYV or youth criminal behaviour; it links the theoretical framework and the findings with the existing literature review. This section continues by suggesting future research for this field that will be helpful to cover the gaps, answering to RQ 2. Finally, this chapter ends with a discussion on implications for policy and practice. This includes the practical political and economic context/constraints, emphasising on how the findings of this study demonstrate the importance of government investment in children, families, schools and communities at an earlier stage. This, it is believed will minimise the chances of CYP been involved SYV and general offending due to their familial and/or social environment as a result of social exclusion and deprivation, answering RQ3.

This study set out to investigate the following questions:

RQ1: What strategies are effective to avoid been pulled into Serious Youth Violence?

RQ2: What can we learn from those who have successfully managed to live in gangaffected areas without engaging in Serious Youth Violence or youth criminal behaviour?

RQ3: How could their experiences support the design of new policies to minimise the negative impact of Serious Youth Violence in these areas and more broadly in London and England?

5.1. Summary of key findings - answering RQ1 - What strategies are effective to avoid been pulled into Serious Youth Violence? -

The findings in this study appear to reproduce those of precedent studies in this fieldwork highlighted in the literature review. It mirrors, to some extent, the findings and observations of authors such as Farrington (1993; 2019) Shutte (2008, 2013). The findings of this study demonstrated that the participants and their families have developed a variety of effective resistant strategies to resist involvement in SYV and youth crime. The theory that emerged from the findings is the Multidimensional theory of Strategies to build Resilience to Resist Serious Youth Violence and Offending. This is a combination of learning and control theories implemented in the developmental setting dimension and in the developmental stage/s dimensions of the CYP (see Fig12). These strategies have proved to be effective for the participants and whilst the sample of this study was small, there is potential for this theoretical framework to be expanded within the UK in the fields of Street gangs, Youth Work and Children's Services.

5.1.1. Building Resilience to Resist SYV at home

a) Home life

The research findings highlight the importance of early intervention as one of the main strategies to build self-confidence and self-control, especially during childhood and formative years. Despite the hostile environment created by the contextual safeguarding risks and their experience of collective and individual trauma, the majority of the participants living in gangaffected areas do display pro-social behaviour and their families provide stable and nurturing homes. Self-reported accounts of early years experiences at home, described

nurturing and warm home environments with positive family involvement from parents/carers and siblings.
Consistency and tenacity emerged as key to positive lived experiences in early years.

b) Parenting

This research found that parents/carers of participants were involved in through the children's life in planning their educational journey, supporting build their social networks, and ensuring they engaged in pro-social activities. It has been judged that the main parenting style used, based on self-reported responses, was authoritative, as participants reported parents implementing high level of monitoring and supervision with warmth.

The findings suggest that this parenting style is effective in minimising risks to SYV involvement when implemented consistently through the entirety of CYP developmental stage dimension (childhood, adolescenthood and adulthood). Open and honest conversations by parents or care givers around SYV, socioeconomic context of their family/environment and concerns with their children, appear to have provided participants with appropriate strategies to navigate their communities, and life in general, as suggested by Sarwar (2016) and Simons, and Sutton (2021).

The findings demonstrated that the authoritative parenting style was combined at times with authoritarian parenting style, characterised with a no-nonsense approach to more direct, demanding, and unilateral decisions (see Minnett, 2021; Eisenberg, Fabes, and Murphy, 1996). Only one participant self-reported physical chastisement but that does not mean that others were not chastised, only that it was not self-reported as there was no question prepared to get such information explicitly.

c) Family structure to build resistance to get involved in SYV

Most participants (54%) grew up in single parent households led by mothers. This was much higher than the general UK population. Some authors maintain that children growing in singleparent households are more likely to be involved in offending and criminal behaviour including in SYV (see Henry, Caspi, Moffitt, and Silva, 1996; Sampson, 1987) attributing this to Permissive Parenting Style and neglect (Avenevoli, Sessa, Steinberg, 1999). Nonetheless, the findings from this research found otherwise. These findings differ from those pointing a single parent household as a risk factor for CYP to engage in SYV or general youth offending. The findings of this research demonstrated that there are no increased risks between

participants raised in a single parent household when compared with their counterparts living with both parents, although, the role of older siblings was more noticeable in single parent household.

The findings show that positive family role models are a protective factor. However, relatives or siblings involved in criminal behaviour although could be categorised as negative role models, can be supportive in building protective strategies to minimise the pull factors of SYV and youth crime for their younger siblings. This could be due having opened and honest discussions about consequential thinking or purely as a status quo in the community through older siblings' involvement in SYV or through their associations.

d) Siblings as a protective factor and effective strategy to resist SYV

Harding (2012) discussed gang affiliation normalisation by siblings and family members. Hinshaw and Farrington (2017) considered that if siblings are involved in SYV and criminality this increases the risks of younger siblings to likewise engage. Nonetheless, findings of this research show that having siblings or close relatives involved could be both a Risk Factor or a Protective Factor as for some of the participants their older siblings' involvement in crime and SYV or their cousins been stabbed and seriously injured acted as warning and deterrent to not to engage in SYV. Therefore, the findings suggest that siblings and close relatives involved can be counted as part of the repertoire of strategies used to be resilient and resistant to SYV even if they themselves are or were involved in SYV.

e) Let's talk –honest conversations to build resistance to SYV

The findings described strategies used during participants' childhood by their parents and themselves. As part of the authoritative parenting style, open and honest conversations about SYV and how to navigate their communities seem to be one of the most powerful strategies for the participants. Siblings, as discussed above, served as guidance to embed prosocial behaviour and support to safely navigate their communities. Even in the cases where there were negative behaviours, these served as a warning for younger siblings. Travelling as a family seems to be another good strategy to build a wider worldview and particularly to build stronger bonds with family which helps to cement esteem, identity and character. All the above, seemed to have been essential to build epistemic trust with other family members which was essential to trust others advice around how to build effective strategies to resist getting involved in SYV and offending.

5.1.2. Building Resilience to Resist SYV at educational setting

Another resilient and effective resistant strategy identified was education. Education is one of the factors that can support to inculcate pro-social behaviour and cultures. The findings support that those who had positive experiences in primary school were able to employ strategies to build resilience and to minimise the risks of engaging in SYV.

a) Primary school as a protective factor

Findings from this research suggested that authoritative parents ensure their children had the best experience in education. Most participants were escorted to and from school by their parents or siblings through primary and secondary, even those that were living next to the school. This continued well into secondary school (year 7 and 8), demonstrating a high level of monitoring and supervision (Flanagan, Auty, and Farrington, 2019). Some parents will go 'the extra mile', literally, to provide their children with better educational options and to provide a wider variety of peer network.

These strategies helped to developed more prosocial behaviours from the CYP and supported children to remain engaged positively with education avoiding school exclusions. School exclusion was a rarity among the participants on this research. Only one participant was excluded – notably he scored the lowest in the matrix of variables (see table 4). This is consistent with the research from Sutherland, et al., (2023) highlighting greater chances of offending and custody when excluded. Regarding exclusion, literature review pointed at almost 50% of those excluded to have SEN (HM Government, 2021; Berridge et al., 2001). Nonetheless, the findings of this research reported otherwise. Three of the participants selfreported to have a diagnosis of SEN (Autism and ADHD). None of them had been excluded through their educational journey. This may point at considering different variables to have a better understanding of the links between SEN and exclusion as well as SEN and vulnerability to be pulled into SYV.

b) Transition into secondary school as a protective factor

Findings illustrate that positive transition into secondary school seems to be a key strategy to minimise the risks of SYV. Findings showed the importance of preparation, anticipation, and planning. Based on the findings it is suggested that this positive transition was only possible under an authoritative parenting style. Participants' responses showed the different strategies used to smooth the process of transition into secondary school. Some followed older siblings,

some moved with more pro-social group from primary school, whilst others moved away from the area to create new peer groups (hopefully pro-social). This transition was in some cases used by parents to disrupt unwanted relationships. This demonstrated that parental monitoring and influence is used well beyond formative years, and this contributes to cement or rectify levels of self-control as suggested by Dishion and McMahon (1998) and Akers (1997).

Overall, the findings point that this transition is a stage of anxiety for the majority of CYP. Nonetheless, the proactiveness of parents/carers and family can support to make this journey much easier.

c) Further education - a positive factor to transition to adulthood and resist SYV

Based on the findings it could be argued that these strategies supported all participants to resist the pull factors of SYV and crime in their areas and to strengthen their educational structures after their 16th birthdays. Findings from this research around engagement in further education (Sixth Form, college and apprenticeship) are in line with Hoffmann, Thorpe, and Dufur's (2020) argument that structured prosocial activities strengthen discipline and understanding of social norms whilst reducing the likelihood to engage in criminal behaviour, as concluded by Hirschi (1969b).

5.1.3. Building Resilience to Resist SYV within community setting

a) Community Trauma and Victimisation - risk factor to get involved in SYV

Further education is part of the developmental stage dimension of adolescenthood, from year 7 (11 years) upwards, findings showed that the participants experience of their community seems to negatively change for them. While participants did not report being aware of SYV incidents during their childhood, findings from this research point at general victimisation for the majority of the participants (directly or/and indirectly) during their adolescenthood. The context of secondary schools providing enrolment to a geographically wider community meant that the participants are exposed to post code wars from which they may have shielded during their primary school years.

The findings show a level of trauma through the normalisation and exposure to unacceptable levels of fear and violence whilst in their community. This manifested itself by 'playing down' having been threatened with a knife, joking about seeing fights with axes and knives, normalising some of the resilient and resistance strategies to SYV such as identifying

neighbours who will provide a safe haven if chased, or leaving the library before sunset to avoid expected trouble.

Some of the participants (50%) were victims of robberies with weapons, chased with knives, beaten up and general assaults. All participants reported being aware of the violent incidents in their communities and all took precautions when moving through their communities. Densley, Deuchar and Harding (2020) showed that such traumatic events, can lead to risk factors and pull CYP into criminal behaviour. Previous research evidenced that many CYP involved in SYV have been victims prior to been perpetrators and the majority are both (Ibid: 2020; Esimi, 2010; Pitts, 2007 and 2008; Harding, 2014). Nonetheless, the findings of this study suggest that being victim of SYV and crime, on its own, does not lead to becoming involved in SYV or offending behaviour. These experiences of victimisation, led to participants perceiving their areas as unsafe.

The findings show that despite playing down the concerns of SYV in their areas, the participants' actions/strategies demonstrate that they believe there are SYV risks that need to be mitigated. While some thought media plays a role in amplifying the risks, overall, all agreed that the 'reputation' of their neighbourhood is fair and represents their experiences (Pitts, 202; Hallsworth, 2008).

The findings from analysis of the variables show a high level of community trauma. The participants showed what could be described as normalisation of violence (Harding, 2014). While Harding (2014), during his field analysis, found that this was the case for young people affiliated to gangs and involved in SYV, the findings of this study suggest that normalisation of violence is expected as well for victims (direct or indirect) of SYV as well as for entire community members living in gang-affected areas in London.

This could be as a way of managing neighbourhood trauma (Sotero, 2006), especially as SYV incidents are shared and magnified through social media retraumatising individuals and whole communities as the ones researched by Holmes and Mathews (2010); McCart, et al (2007); and Eitle and Turner (2002) and those communities the participants of this research belong to. This factor could have impacted on the participants' ability to follow social rules and norms (Charuvastra and Cloitre, 2008; Buggs, et al, 2022); but the findings show that the participants have been able to develop self-control and pro-social behaviours, potentially as a result of implementing the Multidimensional theory of Strategies to build Resilience to Resist SYV and Offending.

b) Knitted communities as a protective factor to resist been involved in SYV

Some evidence emerging from the study findings suggest that despite the apparent level of social disorganisation there are clear frameworks of social norms, rules and values that are understood by community members and those who chose to understand their world. These findings concur with research findings from Pitts (2008), Harding (2014), Toy (2008) and Esimi (2010). Whilst gang-affected communities may appear socially disorganised, this research shows that often, these communities have their own social structures and organisations, values, norms and rules that encourage pro-social behaviour for their CYP. Thus, it could be argued that large part of the researched communities are well-organised to keep CYP away from getting pulled into SYV and crime.

c) Friendships as a protective or risk factor

Findings from this research show that participants who had peers involved in crime were more likely to have high risk factors for future involvement. In fact, those same participants' risk factors diminished drastically when they developed pro-social peer groups through the options of college or hobbies that their parents specifically choose, including them in the decision making. Participants self-reported strategically changing friendships and environments to move away from less pro-social friendships. These findings contrast with the view of Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) who argue that peer influence is irrelevant as self-control is developed only during formative years (Ibid: 1990; Densley and Pyrooz, 2019). The influence of peers is a key strategy to move away from ASB (for participants such as Malabo, Tica and Bioko for example) and into more pro-social behaviours and networks. This demonstrates the validity of Akers' (2008) assertion that self-control can be influenced (positively or negatively) by peers and parents through reinforcement of pro-social or offending behaviour from formative years through adolescenthood and adulthood as concluded by Akers (2008); Li, et al., (2019); and Meldrum, et al (2012).

d) Hobbies

Finally, findings showed the importance of hobbies and positive (pro-social) activities as a strategy for building resilience to resist SYV. Findings from this research supported participants to build new relationships with diverse and different pro-social children and families. Taking interest in more unusual hobbies and activities seemed to be key in order to access a more diverse peer group and explore the world from different lenses. Activities such as handball, chess and roller-skating were mentioned as part of the repertoire of positive activities

undertaken by participants. It is interesting to notice that these study findings indicate participants have been engaged in positive activities and had hobbies throughout their entire developmental stage dimension (childhood, adolescenthood and adulthood) providing a diverse menu of activities that they had engaged with through their life (see table 7) thereby expanding their pro-social network.

Positive pro-social activities and hobbies allowed participants to develop social skills, whilst exploring the world through a nurturing and safe environment. Furthermore, positive activities and hobbies enable the creation of new relationships with other pro-social children and families. These relied on authoritative parents who were able to nurture their children and provide safe options for participants to develop their skills and their abilities. These findings go hand-in-hand with the recommendations made by Deuchar (2013); Welsh and Farrington (2011) and Braga and Weisburd (2012). Interestingly enough for the author, faith played less of a role than expected as a strategy for resistance and resilience. Equally low was the mention of mentors as a strategy to mitigate the negative impact of SYV.

5.2. Reflections on findings

5.2.1. Precision / thoroughness of the findings

This research started with a pilot involving three participants. This process helped to test the questions, contrast some emerging themes, and adjust the methodology to ensure that the final research was transparent, consistent, coherent and more importantly that the findings were precise and thoroughly analysed. The philosophical stance of the researcher has been clearly shared throughout the research.

The findings are precise and credible due to the sample of 14 young people aged 18 – 26, that was used for this study. This was randomised and therefore, the ethnicity of participants was of a diverse demographic. Snowball sampling was used to access participants.

The findings are based on individuals' experiences and accounts of vivid memories of their not that faraway childhood and adolescenthood as well as present experiences as young adults. The findings were obtained by subjecting the data to a hybrid deductive and inductive methodology to obtain Grounded Theory as well as contrasts with and test core theories such as Control, Learning and Parenting Styles. They were contrasted through a continuum of human development while ensuring to be faithful to participants' experiences. Consequently, the value and precision of the findings is in the uniqueness of the multiple realities that coexist

within the same developmental setting context and the continuum on the developmental dimension of participants lived experiences.

The privileged position of the author as a practitioner-researcher and as someone who knows and relates to the researched community, was key to obtain rich data that otherwise would have been difficult to access. The views and perspectives of the participants were accurately collected, recorded, and clearly presented. Semi-structured interviews were audio/videorecorded thus permitted revisiting the collected data to evaluate emerging themes while remaining true to participants' stories. This process allowed for the data to be reviewed and consistency of findings to be evaluated.

Data analysis and variables have been discussed and detailed for transparency to compensate for any declared biases or assumptions. Analysis of the findings is accompanied by verbatim extracts of participants' accounts about their self-reported resilience from and resistance to strategies to SYV. This assists others to judge the validity of the data's analysis and interpretation and the suggested emerging themes. Thus, the findings are valid as the methods used demonstrates consistency, clarity and transparency creating the path for other researchers to explore and reach equal or similar findings.

Objectivity of the findings has been attempted through consistency and transparency of the approaches and tools used to thoroughly analyse and process the data collected. This approach proved essential in developing and identifying the emerging Grounded Theory, especially via analysis using Excel which permitted structured data to be filtered/ organised in a coherent manner. This further permitted analysis to produce comprehensive findings which was then triangulated through using different approaches such as the Colour Coded table. These tools are accessible for other to see and use.

The findings are practical because allow for measurement, consistency and applicability of the strategies which are relevant to SYV as well as to other more general contexts, social groups or settings. The findings referring to the developmental setting dimension can be applied for many social ills such as addiction, violence, offending, crime and other social matters relating to impulsivity or lack of control. The three developmental setting concepts (individual/family, education and community) are essential to understand the 'How?' and 'Where?' are control and learning strategies to taught by the parents and care givers and learnt by the participants.

The findings relating to the developmental dimension (childhood, adolescenthood and adulthood) can be applied as guidance for consistency and understanding the 'When?'

Findings point to the importance of consistency in implementing and enforcing core pro-social values in all three developmental settings (family, school and community) and throughout their developmental stage dimension (childhood, adolescenthood and adulthood) as a continuum to ensure that there are reinforcement and a better chance to build resilient from and resistant to strategies to SYV. More importantly, findings can be used more broadly in other fields to support the importance of influence (+/-) through the developmental dimension beyond the formative years.

The research process to gain, collect the data and obtain the findings have been discussed and opinion has been differentiated from analysis through reflexivity and a reflexion process minimising any biases to influence findings consciously or unconsciously.

5.2.2. Limitations of the findings

Firstly, is important to consider that this was a small sample. Only 14 young adults were interviewed. The author felt that data saturation was clearly achieved from these 14 interviews. The small number of participants and the lack of mixed methods i.e. longitudinal parenting questionnaires means that the research is based on authenticity and coherence with the participants experience. Secondly, the interviews were semi-structured, and participants questions therefore were not asked in the same way in each interview and this inconsistency could have impacted on the way participants responded. Furthermore, participants' answers could be unreliable generating 'inaccurate' data and findings.

Due to the lack of resources, there was no triangulation on the data collection, and this may have impacted on the findings. Had more resources and time been available, data collection could have included focus groups with CYP, parents/carer, surveys and questionnaires which could have enriched the findings.

Another potential limitation was the variables obtained from the semi-structured interview questions and self-reported data as they were many themes and at times unconnected which impacted in creating patterns. This means that the author's interpretation of the variables and manipulation was limited by his own understanding of the process and interpretation of the data.

5.2.3. Summary of the discussion

The findings of this study demonstrated that it is possible to live in gang-affected neighbourhoods and resist the pulls to SYV despite risk factors. Owing to the small sample the strategies developed by families and CYP interviewed cannot be adopted as a unique and uniform strategy that could be used for other families living in the same or similar areas in London, UK or elsewhere. Multidimensional theory of Resilience and Resistance strategies to resist Serious Youth Violence and offending brings a comprehensive combination of theories and strategies that have been successful in the participants' building resilience and resisting SYV through the different setting and developmental dimensions. The Protective Factors of the developmental setting concepts (family, education, community) and its strategies should be implemented through the continuum of the developmental stages dimension (childhood, adolescenthood, adulthood) to cement pro-social behaviour and minimise the chances of being involved in SYV or crime. A set of recommendations from these findings, it is hope, would be of interest for professionals and individuals interested in developing, increasing, maintaining protective factors for CYP living in gang affected areas and their families.

5.3. Conclusions

This concluding chapter considers the value of the findings of this study and its overarching theoretical proposition for tested strategies to build resilience to resist SYV and offending whilst living in London's gang-affected areas. It analyses further the validity and day-to-day use of the theoretical framework and the implication of the findings for policy and intervention. Lastly, it returns to the main findings to respond to the philosophical question of *why do some people do not commit crime despite the criminogenic environment and individual risk factors?*
Making some recommendations for policy, theory and intervention.

5.3.1. Conclusion: What have we learnt?

This study has shown and discussed the strategies that most carers/parents and CYP in the chosen gang-affected communities have used to resist SYV and offending despite their ecosystem and criminological, developmental, socio-economic, environmental and risk factors.

This study set out to investigate the following questions:

RQ1: What strategies are effective to avoid been pulled into Serious Youth Violence?

RQ2: What can we learn from those who have successfully managed to live in gangaffected areas without engaging in SYV or youth criminal behaviour?

RQ3: How could their experiences support the design of new policies to minimise the negative impact of SYV in these areas and more broadly in London and England?

This study has answered the research questions and has contributed to the scholarly field of UK street gangs by exploring and analysing this field from a different angle:- through the investigation of protective factors tested by the participants, their families and communities to divert and minimise child criminal exploitation and resist to be involved in SYV and youth offending/crime. The objectives of this study have been met by providing potential improvements to CYP and families' intervention programmes. Its findings aimed to thoroughly analyse existing resilience and resistant community and families' strategies that diverted CYP people from SYV and offending.

This was incapsulated by the Multidimensional theory of Resilience and Resistance strategies to resist SYV and offending emerges as a theoretical framework to understand better the protective factors and resistance to SYV used by participants. In summary, said theory illustrates how participants and their families created and used strategies in different developmental settings (family, education and community) at different developmental stages of participants' life journeys (Childhood, Adolescenthood and Adulthood).

The methodology and theoretical framework offer the following benefits:

- Better understanding of resilience in the presence of criminogenic risk
- Tested Parenting and individual strategies to resist SYV and crime
- The importance of parenting consistency through the developmental stages of CYP
- The interaction between developmental settings (Family, education and community) to build said resistance strategies
- The importance of universal community trauma informed programs

5.3.2. Brief overview of key findings

General statistics of Serious Youth Violence and youth crime in London and elsewhere in the U.K. present a strong case that gave value to these research questions. There is a growing academic school researching London and UK street gangs. This work often lacks knowledge/literature around strategies to build resilience and resist SYV and youth crime. This prompted the author to identify a rich field to be explored to provide a better understanding of

effective (and potentially cost effective) strategies that can be used by families and CYP across the country and worldwide.

There was a need to incorporate a phenomenology interweaved with practitioner-researcher understanding of gang-affected communities in London. The literature review exposed clear gaps in research attempting to understand the lived experiences of ordinary London citizens, living their lives surrounded by disgruntled youth who set structures to occupy the void of disorganised neighbourhoods.

The literature review identified focus on theorising, measuring, risk factors and diversion but provided few other practical solutions apart from strategies based on grassroots organisations and interventions rather than on the families and participants' own strategies to build resilience and resist SYV. This was a disappointment to the author who read them hoping to find new demonstrably useful interventions. Recent academic debates in the UK about gangs led by Hallsworth and Young, Pitts, Deuchar, Palmer and Harding among others have opened the gates to broaden knowledge about a social ill that continues to damage the fabric of society.

Using hybrid deductive and inductive approach, this study aimed to investigate the resilient and resistant strategies that participants who grew up and live in a London gang-affected community used as children to avoid being attracted to Serious Youth Violence and be criminally exploited by local street gangs. Through scrutinising and manipulating the data from the semi-structured interviews' responses, the explicit and implicit effective strategies started to be devised. Through the theoretical frameworks of Bandura (1977) Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), Akers (2008) and UK based researchers such as Harding (2014), Deuchar (2015) and Pitts (2008) Multidimensional theory of Resilience and Resistance strategies to resist Serious Youth Violence and Offending came to be. Encapsulating the theoretical framework to develop effective strategies to navigate gang-affected communities in London, and hopefully elsewhere.

This study has addressed gaps in the field of UK street gangs Methodologically, it contributed to qualitative research methods for data analyses, using semi-structured interviews to collect the data through 'new technologies. This research has contributed to expand control and learning theories relating to street gangs and criminal behaviour in London.

It is hope that the Multidimensional theory of Resilience and Resistance strategies to resist Serious Youth Violence and offending will help future research to identify a framework to analyse the lived experiences of people living in London's gang-affected areas.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to development and improvement of policy, especially around Community Safety, Contextual Safeguarding, Education, Trauma Informed Interventions and Family and Children's Services. The data has the potential to guide policy makers to provide practice-based evidence interventions to the communities discussed.

This study contributes to the knowledge around the most effective parenting style and the role of families in mitigating the negative impact of SYV. The research could help others to research considering "Who?", "When?" and "How do they do it?" Self-control and other control theories, that serve as resilient and resistant frameworks for families living in London gangaffected areas, are developed into strategies.

5.4. Policy implications (Recommendations)

As previously highlighted, this study generated new knowledge regarding strategies to build resilience to resist SYV used by (some) families living in London gang affected areas. The strengths of the findings should support new thinking for policy makers and practitioners in the field of families and children, youth offending and youth work. More importantly, it is hoped that they could benefit families and relatives of families living in London's gang-affected areas.

Interviews with participants, young men and one woman who grew up and live in London gang affected areas and who have successfully resisted the pull from local SYV and street gangs, have produce encouraging evidence of efficient tested strategies for CYP to navigate their communities. The interviews outlined the complexity of the Risks Factors and the variables that lead to effective strategies. Overall, the findings highlight that the more protective factors are implemented across the developmental setting dimension's concepts through the developmental stages dimension, the more likely CYP are to build resilience to resist SYV.

5.4.1. Recommendation 1: Positive parenting and family strategies to resist SYV

This research highlights the effectiveness of authoritative parenting style as to support CYP to develop resistance to SYV. This research recommendation is in line with the government social care reform aims and objectives (DfE, 2023a) and the Child Poverty Strategy (UK Government, 2025). Early Help Teams and organisations working with families and children in gang affected communities should consider promoting this parenting style through training and awareness campaigns. This not only support CYP to stay away from SYV or been victim

of Child Criminal Exploitation but potentially will keep CYP at home with their family, where this is safe.

Family and Children's services should proactively engage parents/families to identify and develop their family support network (siblings, extended family and friends) Prosocial siblings and extended family are a protective factor. Their involvement in their younger siblings' lives should be promoted through campaigns to raise consciousness by the Greater London Authority and Youth Teams.

Parents/carers involvement has been demonstrated to be key to development of pro-social behaviour on children. Parents should be encouraged and supported to participate proactively in their children's day to day activities. The findings shared good examples of monitoring and supervision, and these could be widely shared as guidance for parents of CYP living in gangaffected area.

When discussing SYV and crime focus is put on the CYP. More focus should be given to parents/carers and organisations working with them. Interventions should equally focus on parental and family concerns rather than solely on children. Therefore, it is recommended that schools, Children and Family Services, Youth Justice and Youth services work more proactively with parents/carers and at an early stage.

5.4.2. Recommendation 2: Positive experience of education as a strategy to resist SYV

Following the government Child Poverty Strategy and their focus on early help and education (UK Government, 2025) escorting children to/ from school was proven to be a Protective Factor. Schools in gang-affected areas should consider how families can be encouraged through school rules and norms to escort their children using carers/relatives at least until the end of primary school. This should encourage to continue through secondary school where possible.

As attending school has been shown to be a protective factor, schools should consider free breakfast clubs and after-school clubs for all children living in gang-affected areas. Regardless of receipt of benefits. This should provide a safety net for CYP whose parents/carers are unable to drop or pick them up from school during 'office hours'. Avoiding unsupervised time in the community, minimising the risks to get groomed into SYV and offending.

Primary and secondary schools should all provide the opportunity to build pro-social activities with existing and new students during the holiday period. It has been proven that transition is

more successful when the children visit and participate in activities in their future school. It is recommended that all schools, Local Authorities and NGOs should provide sessions to pupils on protective behaviour, safety planning and understanding child exploitation. This may include sessions around e-Safety/Online safety to mitigate some of the risks outlined in the previous recommendation.

5.4.3. Recommendation 3: Community experience as a strategy to resist SYV

It is necessary to promote and improve the living standards of families living in gang-affected boroughs. Participants shared their concerns around the high rates of SYV and crime in their communities. Further efforts should be made by Local Authorities to share positive experiences and celebrate the achievements of their younger residents in these communities; whilst statutory agencies (Police, Social Services, Community Safety) should continue in their endeavours to reduce youth crime by promoting positive alternatives to their CYP.

The findings of this study raise serious concerns around community and individual trauma. There is arguably an unrealistic expectation by policy makers that those impacted by SYV will proactively approach appropriate services. VRU, CAMHS and Children's Services in partnership with Community Safety and local NGOs should have an on-going outreach program and campaign focussing on therapeutic individual and community trauma-informed interventions in order to counter the levels of trauma and normalisation of violence in gangaffected communities This should not be reactive i.e., only as a response to a SYV incident, point three of the reforms sets out in the children's social care national framework is of special importance when discussing SYV and general contextual safeguarding risks. When considering further the aim that "*Children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes" …* it details that:

> **"**Children's social care acts swiftly to protect children and young people from harm, whether that is at home, where they live, or outside in their wider neighbourhood, community and online," the framework says. "Children's social care manages the uncertainty and nuances of the complex circumstances in which harm takes place, working in partnership with other agencies to increase safety." (DfE, 2023a)

This is in line with the findings of this research. The partnership is the developmental setting dimension. It is essential that all agencies work together and support CYP (and their families) identified to be a greater risk to get involved in SYV and offending.

5.4.4. Recommendation 4: Hobbies as a strategy to resist SYV

This research highlights the positive role of prosocial hobbies and activities as a protective factor and deterrent for CYP not to be involved in SYV. Greater London Authority Education, Children and Families Services and community organisations should consider extracurricular activities and hobbies (especially pro-social and group sports/activities) fully funded for all children living in gang-affected areas. Whilst the investment for such activities may seem too great, the financial and emotional cost of a life lost or permanently impacted will always be more costly individually and socially. Such initiative purposed

5.5. This is how we do it - Future research on Multidimensional theory of Strategies to build Resilience to Resist Serious Youth Violence and Offending

The findings of this study have addressed some gaps in street gangs research and in doing so have made, hopefully, important contributions to methodology, theory, policy, and intervention/practice around the field of SYV in London and the United Kingdom. The Multidimensional theory of Resilience and Resistance strategies to resist Serious Youth Violence and offending combines key theories and strategies that have been tested successfully for the participant.

a) Further testing some of the ideas using a similar approach in another research, knowledge and theory could accumulate overtime. This study serves as a blueprint for a metastudy to identify strategies used by families living in gang-affected communities in London that have effectively prevented their children from committing crime. The author suggests that future research in this field of study could be funded by Mayor of London Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the VRU and Greater London Authority Education and could assemble researchers with expertise in parenting, youth work, education, youth offending, community safety and health. This proposed team could expand research in areas that this study touched upon but was unable to complete due to restrictions of time, funding, and experience.

b) Family - Future research should review and expand knowledge around the most effective parenting style for CYP living in London gang-affected areas which should include a triangulation of methods and approaches. Semi-structured interviews with parents, CYP and school staff; parenting questionnaires and field research. Such study should include previous studies looking at combinations of parenting styles that are more effective when rearing young people with significant risk factors to engage in offending and crime. It could include, as part of the variable, the role of any older siblings, looking at family structure and gender i.e. more

effective older brother or sister to talk to younger siblings (male or female). This could be commissioned by the Department for Education, Family Services. Such research could look as well at the positive impact that siblings' affiliations can have to deter younger siblings from engaging in offending behaviour.

c) Education – future research could explore the experiences of young people transitioning into secondary school and research effective strategies that specifically supported those CYP living in gang-affected areas. Further research around admissions and parents/carers enrolling their children out of the ward/borough should take priority to ensure that there is better understanding of the strategies used by parents living in gang-affected areas.

Future research should consider any correlation between parents with degrees and their children's non-involvement in crime. This research has not found any correlation, but it could be encouraging to report on the success of changing narratives within one generation despite the contextual and socioeconomic stressors.

The apparent expansion of county lines drug networks into universities/colleges through associations could be of interest for future researchers. This was mentioned by one of the participants and is already in popular urban culture through drill music.

d) Community - further research is needed to understand better the social organisation in gang-affected areas in London; including understanding unwritten rules and how these are understood by CYP. The research did not provide the author with the opportunity to:

1) Clarify the unwritten rules that young people use to identify those who are or are not involved in offending/gang crime.
2) Ascertain how young people who live in notorious council states do not get 'G-check' by rival gangs.
3) Explore how the majority of CYP living in gang affected areas manage their lives.
4) Research how non-involved siblings of affiliated gang-members are allowed to move freely between post codes.

Further research should also seek to explain the difference between moral panic and community trauma by exploring how information about SYV is shared. It could also consider which 'proactive' therapeutic measures and programmes are already in situ to support those communities impacted by SYV and retraumatised; plus what role mainstream media and social media platforms play in retraumatising affected communities.

It is hoped that this research and its findings will be used as a blueprint to better understand the strengths and strategies already existing in the majority of families living in gang-affected areas. The Theory could be a useful point of reference for anyone seeking to better understand SYV in London. Ideally, the findings will support professionals in the field of family and children, education, community safety, youth justice and youth work, but more importantly will serve as an inspiration for those parents/carers/siblings attempting to explore how best to support their children/siblings to develop strategies to build resilience and resist SYV and offending.

5.6. Final reflection

There is not a single factor that can predict either involvement or resistance to be involve in SYV and crime. A combination of factors through all the different concepts of the dimensions can support a CYP to build resilience to resist being pulled into SYV and crime. There is not a single answer, thus, family, school/education and communities need to continue to work in partnership to provide real and effective strategies to CYP who live in the most deprived areas in London (and elsewhere). Efforts should be made to reach CYP and families at an early stage of their developmental dimension and ensure that this is embedded throughout their developmental journey (childhood, adolescenthood and adulthood). Whilst SYV is of great concern to everyone, it is important to recognise that the majority of CYP living in gangaffected areas lead prosocial lives. This research hopes to have shared some light as to how do they do it.

Let's help CYP to live a fulfilled childhood without having to normalised violence to the point that they feel numb. As a participant summed up: now SYV it is *"so prevalent in the area that it you'd just become very numb to it." (Winston)*

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Appendices

Appendix 1

UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON

Information Sheet

INFORMATION about this study

Title: "This is how we do it - the unheard and unseen youth"

We would like to invite you to participate in a study. In order to help you to understand what the study is about; we are providing you with the following information. **Be sure you understand it before you formally agree to participate**. If you would like any clarifications before you start, please contact us using the details below.

What is the purpose of this study?

The study aims to explore community and family positive strategies and protective factors that reduce and divert young people from youth offending and crime. The purpose of the study is to highlight existing community, family and youth's tested strategies which could potentially lead to changes on existing youth services, family intervention programmes and family strategies.

Why have I been asked to take part?

a) You are a young adult (18 – 26 yrs.) who grew up and lives in an area considered to have a high rate of youth violence and youth crime. You are not known to police or youth offending team for serious youth violence and throughout your adolescence, you have not engaged in group criminal behaviour.

Do I have to take part?

Should you find the topic of the study uncomfortable or upsetting, you should not take part. It is up to you to decide. If you would like to take part, we will then ask you to sign a consent form before participating. You are free to withdraw at any time, without the need to give a reason.

What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will participate in a video call interview. The interview will last for about 40 minutes. The interview will be recorded with your agreement. If you feel during the interview that you would like a break or more time, this will be agreed upon and discussed, always fitting your availability.

You can ask to listen to your recording and access the transcripts of your interviews if you want.

Your personal details would not be included in the interview script or throughout the process of data analyses and report design.

Your responses will be used to explore the topic and to help create an academic report on that area of criminology, and human-social science.

Possible benefits include:

a) Exploring positive strategies that worked during your childhood and early adulthood
b) Explore positive parenting strategies that worked
c) Contribute to clarifying positive and effective offending diversion strategies
d) Contribute to providing a framework of intervention for your community
e) Highlight and expose positive youth referents within your community

Possible risks include:

a) The entire procedure will take approximately 1 hour.

What do I get for taking part?

a) Any expenses incurred will be reimbursed.
b) A £20 shops voucher for your time as a token of appreciation

What will happen if I begin the study but then no longer wish to take part for any reason?

If you withdraw from the study, all data and information collected from you will be destroyed. Please note that you are free to withdraw for any reason at any time and do not need to give a reason.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Data will only be made available to the research team directly involved in this study. All identifying documents will be destroyed in accordance with the UWL Research Data Management Statement. There is no need for the researcher to record your name, address or any other identifiable data.

Who has reviewed the study?

Our research has been looked at by an independent group of professional people, the School Research Ethics Panel to protect your safety, rights, wellbeing, and dignity.

Further information and contact details:

For general information about this research and/or further information about this study, please contact:

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Professional Doctorate in Policing, Crime and Security (DPCS)
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If you would like to contact the third party, you can contact my supervisor:

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Appendix 2

CONSENT FORM

Project Title:

"This is how we do it - the unheard and unseen youth"

- I have fully read the previous page which contained information about the study and have had the opportunity to ask any questions that I may have had.
- I understand what is being proposed.
- I consent to the interview being recorded
- I consent to the use of anonymised quotations
- I understand that my personal involvement and my particular data from this study will remain strictly confidential. Only researchers involved in the investigation will have access.
- I have been informed about what the data collected in this investigation will be used for, to whom it may be disclosed, and how long it will be retained.
- I understand that the data resulting from my participation may be used for purposes of publications and/or presentations and that no personal identifying information will be used for these purposes.
- I hereby fully and freely consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time until the researcher's dissertation is submitted, without giving a reason for withdrawing.
- I agree to take part in the study.

Signed_____

Date_____

Debrief Sheet

Title of Project:

Appendix 3

“This is how we do it - the unheard and unseen youth”

Name of Researcher: Mr Nsang Cristià Esimi Cruz

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study to investigate the lived experience of resilient youth in areas with high crime rates and youth gang activity.
Your involvement will entail participating in a 40 minutes interview exploring your experiences as a teenager living in your neighbourhood.
All information shared would be stored securely and confidentially.

You are entitled to withdraw and stop the interview at any point. You can contact me, Nsang Cristià Esimi Cruz on 07903706325 or my supervisor Dr Simon Harding on 02082312468. If talking about any of the topics has impacted negatively your emotional well-being you can seek further advice/support from:

- Your registered G.P.
- Family Lives 0808 8002222
- Samaritans 116 123
- SANEline 0300 304 7000

The data from the interviews will be analysed to help understand family and community strategies to support young people to divert or avoid being pulled into youth offending and youth criminal activity in their local area.

Following the ethics UWL guidelines, data would be securely stored in an encrypted device for 5 years. You are entitled to a copy of your interview.

If you wish further information or make a complaint about any of the topics covered during the interview, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor (Dr. Simon Harding).

Thank you again for your participation,

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Appendix 4

UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
The Career University

Semi structured interview schedule for young people

Interview Questions:

1. What was your experience growing up in [name of the borough]
    a. How much time did you spend at home and how much time outside of the home?
        i. Home life
        ii. Community experience
    b. What was your experience during your primary school years?
        i. Were you ever excluded from school?
        ii. What did your friendships and network look like at that time?
        iii. What were your arrangements for going and coming from school?
    c. What was your experience during your secondary school years?
        i. Focusing on the transition from primary to secondary school.
    d. Was there any professional involvement from social services during your childhood?
    e. What was your experience during your late teens' years? (College, apprenticeship, etc…)
2. Were you aware of any crime issues/youth violence occurring in your area?

a. Would you say your area has a reputation for crime and youth violence? Why do you think is that the case?

3. Were any of your friends ever involved in criminal issues or youth violence in your area?
   a. how did you know about it?
4. Were you ever involved in any of these issues in any way?
   a. Tell me about it
   b. How often
5. how did you manage to avoid getting involved in crime or violence in your area? Was there anything that influenced you? Or prevent you from getting involved in crime and violence in your area?
   a. parenting / extended families
   b. culture/ethnic background influences
   b. community (faith/school/youth centres/
   c. hobbies
   d. peer group
   e. Caring responsibilities
   f. Health problems

6. based on your experience what advice would you give to other young people seeking to avoid being drawn into crime or violence?

Notes:

- Travel
- Will you bring up your children in…
- Stop and search

Appendix 5 <u>Profile of participants</u>

name	age	Gender	identity	Background	1st Language	2nd Language	Born UK	1st Gen.	2nd Gen.	Beyond 2nd Gen.	SEN	Borough	area
Kwame	26	M	Black British	West African / African Caribbean	English	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	Haringey	Wood Green
Denrol	23	M	Black British	West African / African Caribbean	English	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	Haringey	Wood Green
Kostas	25	M	White British	Crete	English	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	Haringey	Turnpike lane
Winston	23	M	Black British	African Caribbean / White British	English	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	Haringey	Wood Green
Yapo	19	M	Black British	West African	English	French	✓	X	✓	X	X	Hackney	Hackney Downs
Dajuan	22	M	Black British	African Caribbean	English	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	Haringey	Harringay
Tica	22	F	White British	Latin America	English	Spanish	✓	X	✓	X	X	Hackney	Hackney Central
Qori	23	M	White British	Latin America	English	Spanish	✓	X	✓	X	X	Haringey	Bruce Grove / St Ann's
Bioko	20	M	Black British	Central Africa	English	Spanish	X	✓	X	X	X	Hackney	Dalston
Benas	21	M	White British	Lithuanian	English	Lithuanian	✓	X	✓	X	✓	Enfield	Edmonton Green
Malabo	22	M	Black British	Central Africa	English	Spanish	X	✓	X	X	X	Hackney	Hackney Central
Azzedine	20	M	British Arab	Moroccan (White African)	English	Arab/French	✓	X	✓	X	X	Southwark	Camberwell
Lula	20	M	White British	Brazilian	English	Brazilian	X	✓	X	X	X	Southwark	Camberwell
Dwayne	24	M	Black British	Caribbean / White British	English	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	Southwark	Peckham

Appendix 6

Rational of Variables

The following section will breakdown all variables individually explaining the reasoning for the judgement and the measuring based on the authors interpretation and understanding.

Question 1:

What was your experience growing up in [name of the borough]?

a. How much time did you spend at home and how much time outside of the home?
   i. Home life
   ii. Community experience
b. What was your experience during your primary school years? [4-11 yrs old]
   i. Were you ever excluded from school?
   ii. What did your friendships and network look like at that time?
   iii. What were your arrangements for going and coming from school?
c. What was your experience during your secondary school years? [11-16yrs old]
   i. Focusing on the transition from primary to secondary school.
d. Was there any professional involvement from social services during your childhood? e.

What was your experience during your late teens' years? (College, apprenticeship, etc…) [1619yrs old]

Question 1 Variables Home Life:

This variable consisted in understanding and interpreting if the participant experience of their Home Life during their childhood was positive or negative, and how this may have impacted in their ability to develop pro-social behaviours, self-control and resistant/resilient strategies. Comments such as:

> *"relatively quiet very enjoyable like my life is pretty chill I have very loving parents my siblings are close to me like consider them my friends so it was it was it was very much an enjoyable experience" (Kwame)*

were considered to be a protective factor; while comments such as:

> "*my parents split up when I was 11 years old… so I think that was maybe like a big impact on me, because for me it was like…very unstable … between my parents, was quite an unstable relationship. So I would often hear them like arguing, and for me it was like it wasn't that great"* (Tica)

would be considered to be a risk factor. Every participant will have an unlimited combination of PFs and RFs in the same theme. It was important for the author then to use his own judgement to score the variables and consider if overall the participant had a positive or

negative Home Life based on the overall responses. This methodology was used throughout the scoring of variables for every question (and sub-question).

Community experience Positive and Community experience Negative (2 variables)**:** These variables were developed through analysing the participants' responses to their lived experienced outside in their communities during different stages of their lives, mainly divided into Primary School years, Secondary School years, Further education and currently. As aforementioned in the previous variable (Home Life), participants may provide both variables (+/-) during the same and/or different stage of their life. For instance, responses such as:

> *"I had a great experience… there's a very diverse borough, and there's a lot to do. So, I really enjoyed it" or, "I've got friends from Tottenham, but I only go to their house, but I knew there was nothing there for me I don't really go around Tottenham… Tottenham, Wood Green… I was always very hesitant [to go there]. I don't know why that was"* (Dajuan)

A convoluted response like this, which was very common because of the way the question/s were structured and the span of time (childhood, teen, adult) in which the experience of community evolved, would be scored as a positive variable (PF) and a negative variable (RF) resulting in (+1 -1 = 0). Where the experience was only positive the score will remain as a +1 and where the experience was negative it will be scored only as -1.

***Reared by both Parents/carers / *Single Parent / *Co-parenting / *Other Carer:**

These four variables were scored together, but every participant could only score in one of them. No risk factor was scored for this section as despite the initial assumption around the risk factor of 'single parenting', the findings of this research indicated that other variables such as siblings, parenting style and family network were important to be considered before considering 'single parenting' to be a risk factor within the context of this research. Through the process of the semi-structured interview questions such as:

> *"She was single mum, but she was always working, but she did make it a priority… on my early stages on Saturday and Sunday to take me to football"* (Dajuan)

helped to highlight the family structures and any support that may be available from siblings, extended family network or not at all.

Siblings

This variable help to analyse if the siblings (normally older siblings) were a Protective Factor or a Risk Factor. As aforementioned, if older siblings are involved in criminality, there is a higher risk of younger siblings being drawn into SYV, even if reluctantly (see Pitts, 2007 and 2008). Thus, based on the participants' responses, the author had to analyse if the older siblings' behaviour was pro-social or anti-social and if this behaviour amounted to Serious Youth Violence or gang involvement. Furthermore, he also assessed if siblings had actively supported parents/carers to build understanding, resilience, and resistant strategies in the participants. If their siblings were considered to be a Protective Factor the score was +1 (plus one) if it was considered that the siblings were a Risk Factor the score was -1 (minus one). When siblings were in fact involved but were as well actively supporting younger siblings to stay away from engaging in SYV this was computed as a +1 (plus one) based on the experience of the participant/s and the assumption that the older siblings support had contributed to keep participant/s at bay from entering/being affected by SYV and other contextual safeguarding risks.

> *"I think 'cause obviously having older siblings helps as well 'cause they see it when they're friends with your siblings they see you like a younger brother as well so once you know when you know a couple of older people and it starts to go down is like everyone knows you, and the younger you get is like they take you in as well as their little brother as well so the idea of no troubles even in that state"* (Yapo)

A statement like this was interpreted that the older sibling was a RF -1 (minus 1) rather than PF as there is no active engagement with the younger sibling that was expressed, rather an unwritten street rule about respect. In the same breath, one could determine that "it starts to go down" with other "endz" (Yapo) or with other council estates. Yapo could be seen as the little brother associated with the risky young people on that estate and become a victim. on the other hand, if the researcher received responses such as:

> "[learnt the lessons from…] *my oldest sister's experience because she was the first one to be raised in Tottenham, you know, to be raised in Haringey.*

> *And so, my sister went through it and made sure that none of us had to do it after."* (Winston)

would be scored as PF +1 (plus one), even though the sibling was involved in potential SYV or ASB in the past. Other responses less ambiguous and clearly PF were scored with +1 (plus one). For instance:

> "Why did I get robbed? What have I done with these people? I've never seen them before?... I didn't really understand it. It was. It was very confusing. But then, obviously, I had the older brother who advised me, told me a lot of people love to do silly things and press their friends. It's nothing personal. They don't know you. You don't know them. Just be more wary and be more vigilant when you walk to school and try to avoid less populated areas, such as parks and whatnot. So, he advised me to walk in the main roads." (Azzedine)

Such a response prompted the author to consider the older sibling to be PF and scored accordingly +1 (plus one) as it clearly described the active role from the older sibling to support the younger to have a better understanding of contextual risks and build pro-social, resistant, and resilient strategy.

Authoritative / Authoritarian Parenting style

In the absence of specialist questionnaires or assessments, the variables were analysed and interpreted following the definitions aforementioned in this report (see Baumrind, 1966). It is understood that parenting style may fluctuate and use a combination of styles depending on the situation and context. The author, based exclusively on the participants' responses about their personal lived experiences, had to interpret what was the overall parenting style that they experienced and if this was a PF or a RF. Permissive parenting was not perceived from any of the participants' responses. Overall, parenting styles were scored solely based on the participants' experience and no opportunity or intention was sought to triangulate with parents/carers' own understanding of their parenting. This was not a miscalculation but an intentional strategy to hear the voices of the young adults (participants) unfiltered and unchallenged. The following are examples of responses that were judged to be PF and the rational why a particular parenting style was selected.

> "…I had to stay in my one [estate] and for her if she called my name two times and I didn't answer then there's a problem, so I wasn't allowed to be too far from home…" (Yapo)

This was scored as PF under Authoritative Parenting by the author it demonstrated a combination of high responsiveness, high-control, high demandingness, nurturing of an ageappropriate level of independence, empathy, self-control, and fostering a trusting relationship between the parent/career and Yapo as suggested (Simons, and Sutton, 2021). With the advantage of analysing and interpreting Yapo's responses to other questions, the author concluded that emotional warmth and love were features, and these are considered to be key aspects of effective Authoritative Parenting.

The rationale for calling a parenting style as Authoritarian was based on the understanding that it represents the most controlling style of the three parenting approaches. It is demanding but not responsive. Authoritarian parents show little nurturing or warmth. When there is punishment, they rarely give an explanation. If the rules are broken, they do not believe in giving their children many choices nor do they believe in dialogue and they are very likely to ensure shaming when they reprimand (see Cuccì, O'Leary, Olivari, Bonanomi, and Confalonieri, 2019; Shahsavari, 2012; Shaw and Mckay 1931). Based on this understanding of Authoritarian Parenting responses such as:

> *"Any time I got into trouble in school… you know. Come late. My mom would tell my dad and my dad would always tell me; you know… Don't do that. Don't do this, and I would receive beatings from our parents up the age of 16. So yes, I guess that there was for my dad and the beatings from our parents… discipline and influenced me to carry on to the right path."* (Lula)

highlight that whilst the comment seems to suggest some dialogue and explanation from the parents, the fact that the participant stated "up until the age of 16" , the style had to be interpreted as RF due to the alleged frequency, duration and potential emotional harm that this could have had on Lula, despite his experiencing it as a PF and one of the main strategies for him not to be involved in SYV or offending. This can be interpreted as bias analysis due to the author's profession as a Social Worker in Child Exploitation and Child Protection and his own understanding of physical chastisement and childhood trauma, which can lead to a push factor

to be caught up Child Criminal Exploitation and SYV (see for example Durrant, and Ensom, 2012; Farrington, and Malvaso,2019).

Finally, the last of the parenting style variables was Permissive Parenting style. As a reminder Permissive Parents avoid controlling their children's behaviours. Children and adolescents living in such households have the freedom to make decisions. Permissive parents are known to be unable to control their children's behaviour even during childhood and spend less time with their children (Devi and Bhuvaneswari, 2023; Shahsavari, 2012). This style of parenting would have been scored as -1 (minus one) due to the contextual safeguarding risks of the wards/neighbourhoods where the participants grew up and live/d none the participants' responses pointed at having experienced Permissive Parenting Style.

Escorting to School

As part of the supervising and monitoring aspect of parenting, the variable of being escorted to school was considered to be a PF and scoring +2 (plus two) and RF -2 (minus two) if not escorted, especially during primary and the first few months of secondary (see Dishion and McMahon, 1998; Flanagan, Auty, and Farrington, 2019). It scores two or minus two because it overlaps with the concept of education and family within the Venn Diagram, figures 5-6. To help understand the analysis of such variables are two examples:

> "My primary school is only maybe 3 min away from me. So, it was relatively close to me. From primary school, from year one to year three, I would say, my parents would take me but from year 3 to 6 my little brother joined to school as well, so my parents would still come, regardless to pick up my little brother. So, I still went with my mother" … "was our dad would drop us to [secondary] school" (Azzedine)

or

> "The area wasn't too safe when I was in school, so my mother would pick me up and take me at home as well. even when I was in year six. When I was about to finish for school, my mother was still picking me up and drop me off… Every day, if she couldn't make it, I had to go to after school events." (Kostas)

Experience of Primary School / Home School

Participants' experiences of their primary school years were considered to be relevant to evaluate their ability to emotionally regulate any potential traumatic experiences i.e. exclusion, bullying or isolation and determine if their friendships/classmates' group were pro-social or deviant and how this impacted negatively or positively on their development and understanding of any contextual safeguarding risks in their neighbourhood. The following example:

> "*So, my group... It was a just mainly the boys really stuck together, and the girls…I really enjoyed my time…it was really, really fun."* (Azzedine)

Such comments suggested to the author that the experience of primary was positive, and it would be considered to be a PF and scored +1 (plus one). All participants had a positive experience in primary school, except for two who were homeschooled, with one of these quoted below, but had a positive experience as well, so it was considered PF and scored with +1 (plus one):

> *"very enjoyable like my life is pretty chill I have very loving parents my siblings are close to me like consider them my friends so it was it was it was very much an enjoyable experience being homeschooled during those primary school years I didn't really know anything else to be able to compare it I suppose"* (Kwame)

Excluded / Peer Excluded

Another variable to consider was school exclusion and if that was during primary or secondary school. The variable looks as well into the exclusions of friends and network to explore any influences or impact on the participants behaviour. Exclusion of self or a close friend was scored as a -2 (minus two), but on the other hand if neither the participant nor their friends were excluded, it was scored as a +2 (plus one). This variable scores 2 or -2 because it overlaps two of the concepts of the setting dimension (education and community. This variable was not open to interpretation as the answers were based on a "yes" or "no" option.

> *"Yes, yes, I had. I had a few. I do remember I had a few friends, friends of mine who did get excluded from the primary school years for bad behaviour… his siblings were gang affiliated… He once brought a knife into school"* (Lula)

A comment like this was scored as a -1 (minus one) as there was the RF that exclusion could be normalised. As mentioned previously, there is supporting evidence linking exclusion as a RF to engagement in offending and crime (see Sutherland, Tagliaferri, and Cathro, 2023; Sanders, Liebenberg, and Munford, 2020). For those participants that were never excluded and had no close friends been excluded it was considered to be a PF and scored with a +1 (plus one).

Traumatic Events as risk factors to engage in SYV

Traumatic events are considered to be a RF and a predictor for future criminal and offending behaviour (Ainsworth and Bowlby, 1991; Farrington, 2019; Likitha and Mishra, 2021). Therefore, this variable was scored as a PF +1 (plus one) if the participant did not experience any traumatic event during their childhood and as a RF -1 (minus one) if in the past they experienced a traumatic event. The consideration for categorising an event as traumatic or not was down to interpretation of the researcher and his capacity to reflect on his professional and academic experience and knowledge when analysing the responses of the participants. It is important to note that whilst participants at times spoke casually, and at times even joked about serious youth violence in their neighbourhood, the traumatic event was not considered by the researcher only at a personal level but as well at a community level. Everyday family scenarios such as divorce, absent fathers, deportation of parents were analysed within the context of the participant and considered RF or not pending on how they experienced the events.

For instance, responses such as:

> "my cousins also got stabbed in Stamford Hill… there was 2 cousins and their friend, and sadly their friend died… I think I was still in primary school for this one as well. So, they also got stabbed to the point of near death. So, they each had like 6 to 7 stab wounds." (Tica)

Or the impact on Qori the first time that he was robbed by a group of youth:

> *"I was walking down the road, and I see like 5 guys on bikes. And I kind of thought… oooh like something's gonna happen…and then they surround me against the car and they take my phone. They take like the money I had for the food… and they even punched me in the face and everything. And yeah, they just robbed me them… It actually did kind of traumatize me a little bit. After that day. I was with my family, and there was like some party or something was going on near my house, where I saw a lot of people outside, a lot of like teenagers and kids on bikes as well again with bellies [balaclavas] and everything, and it just kind of like hit like a trauma response to me. And I kind of broke down in front of my family."* (Qori)

These, and similar responses to experience of safety in their communities were scored with a -1 (minus 1) and where there was no such experience remained as a 0 (zero).

Positive or Negative Transition into Secondary School:

Transition into secondary school is a key stage for any child (see Curson, Wilson-Smith, and Holliman, 2019; Mumford, and Birchwood, 2021), but especially for those who live in gang affected areas (see Irwin-Rogers and Harding, 2018; Carson, Melde, Wiley, and Esbensen, 2017). This variable looked at their transition from primary to secondary and scored +1 (plus one) when this was positive and – 1 (minus one) when this was negative.

The analysis of participants' responses was essentially interpreting the meaning of their experience and considering if this has been positive or negative and if this had any impact on their sense of safety in their community. Comments like the one below, were considered to have had a negative transition and were scored as a -1 (minus one), despite adjusting quickly to the new environment:

> I think these social aspects of transitioning from homeschooling to public schools was where the issue kind of came in, it was a big culture shock … I went from being in a quiet environment … to suddenly there's hundreds of other kids around me and they are loud but also you know I went to school in Hackney. (Kwame)

Whilst others had clearly a better experience of the transition and this was scored as a +1 (plus one):

> "When I started year seven, she [sister] was year nine, throughout my secondary I was always seeing my friends from primary school. I went with three of the same friends from primary school to the same secondary school, so I was comfortable with people in the area" (Yapo)

A levels / College / Apprenticeship / Job

Another variable was Further education trajectories. All options: A levels, College, Apprenticeship and/or Job were considered as PF and scored as +1 (plus one) with a maximum of +1 in this area despite the combination of options i.e. if a participant completed a college course while working would be a +1. The score was not an interpretation, but the recording of self-reported trajectory after secondary school. All participants responded that they had/have engaged in further education, are working while in further education, or worked or are working after secondary school, therefore for this variable there was no RF to be considered. Nonetheless, if the participants had disengaged from positive structures after Secondary School, this could be considered as a RF scoring -1 (minus one) as it increases the risk of their being pulled into SYV or criminality in the community.

Parent with a Degree / Two Parents with Degrees / No Parent with a Degree

Another variable to take into account was if the participants' parents/carers had a university degree. There is literature that suggests that parental education (and income) can decrease the risks of their offsprings getting involved in crime (see Swisher and Dennison, 2016; Savolainen, et al 2015; Rud, Van Klaveren, Groot, and van den Brink, 2014). Based on this literature, those participants that self-reported that their parent/s or carers had a university degree were scored +2 (plus two) whiles those who reported that their parent/s or carers did not complete a university degree were scored -2 (minus one). This is as it overlaps two concepts of the setting dimension family and education.

University/Apprenticeship/BTEC/Job

The study also captured data around the participants 18 + trajectory and considered their engagement in post 18 positive structures i.e. Education Employment or Training (EET) as a PF variable scored +1 (plus one) as further education minimises their chances to get pulled into anti-social or criminal behaviour and it cements their pro-social character. Trajectory post

statutory education age is key to determine positive outcomes in early adulthood and beyond. The participants social context meant that they were more likely to be Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) than their counterparts in more affluent London Boroughs (see Karyda, and Jenkins, 2018).

Victim

Being a victim of crime, within the context of SYV in London, increases the chances of becoming a perpetrator of SYV (see Densley, Deuchar and Harding, 2020; Pitts, 2008). This variable was scored as -1 (minus one) if the participant self-reported to have been a victim, at least once, of a robbery or SYV as the aforementioned literature shows that victimisation is a RF to future criminal behaviour. For those who did not suffer victimisation, the score was +1 (zero) it was considered a PF.

Knows someone involved in SYV and/or crime

If the participant reported to know someone close to them who had been or was involved in SYV, this was considered to be a RF and therefore scored as a -1 (minus one). Clearly, living in a gang-affected area/neighbourhood, some of your acquaintances, neighbours and classmates would be expected to be involved in SYV or street gangs. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this scoring, only close friends or relatives were included in this variable. If the participant reported that none of their inner circle were ever involved, it was scored as 0 (zero) rather than +1 (plus one). This was to balance the fact that some of their acquaintances were involved, and participants knew about their involvement.

Level of Involved Services

This variable looked at any services involved with the family which could include Special Education Needs, Home Education Team, Home Office, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS or any other relevant services other than the generic education and health services to which the majority of their peers would have access. Those who were involved with agencies were scored as -1 (minus one) in line with literature that highlights these links (see Paterson-Young, Hazenberg, and Bajwa-Patel, 2019; Thomas and Loxley, 2022).

Hobbies

The variable of hobbies was computed as a PF scored +1 (plus one). The details of the hobbies were considered, but all hobbies were scored the same based on the literature that suggest pro-social activities as deterrent of criminal behaviour.

Question 2:

Were you aware of any crime issues/youth violence occurring in your area?

a. Would you say your area has a reputation for crime and youth violence?
b. Why do you think is that the case?

Question 2 variables:

Informed about SYV by Family/Friends

This variable was considered to be a PF and was scored as +1 (plus one) for participants who openly discussed or were briefed by their families (and friends) about the contextual safeguarding risks were considered to experience Authoritative Parenting and having trusted relationships with parents, family and friends.

Accessing News about SYV on Media

This variable was considered to be a PF as it supported participants to separate perceived levels of crimes from 'real' levels of crime, which in turn allows participants to modify their resistant and resilient strategies to minimise any contextual safeguarding risks whilst navigating their communities. This variable was scored as a +1 (plus one). Those who selfreported not to read/listen to news were marked as 0 (zero) rather than -1 (minus one) as there were other methods through which they reported they received local news about local SYV and youth crime.

Awareness of SYV

Those participants who self-reported to be aware of local SYV were scored +2 (plus one) as this variable was considered to be a PF. Awareness is the first step to articulate protective behaviour strategies to minimise any involvement in SYV and Youth Crime. The variable was scored +2/-2 as it overlaps community and family concepts of the setting dimension.

Belief about Levels of SYV

This variable was open to the author's interpretation of the responses and his professional experience. Participants may be aware of SYV and youth crime but may not believe that this is an issue or concerned. Those who believed that their area had a reputation of crime were

scored +2 (plus one) on this variable while those who believed it was not the case were scored -2 (minus one) as their perceived misconception may make them vulnerable to the contextual safeguarding risks around local SYV. As above, This variable was scored +2/-2 as it overlaps community and family concepts of the setting dimension.

For example:

> *"statistics are not a reflection of reality they might seem to be but you know you only need to know what you know and not everything can be measured"* (Denrol)

The author scored this as -2 (minus two) to capture the perception of the participant and the potential lack of acknowledgement of the problem.

Understanding of Local SYV and Youth Crime

This variable was scored as a PF +2 (plus one) if the participant was judged by the author to understand SYV and youth crime in their area. Where the participants were believed not to understand their local contextual safeguarding risks this was scored as a -1 (minus one) to reflect the risk of being pulled into SYV or criminal behaviour. For instance, the response below indicated that the reputation of high levels of crime was somewhat popular folklore about a few criminal youths:

> *" People around Hackney they were feared of what they can do, so they will all gas… were"* [just a] few guys (Bioko)

Question 3:

Were any of your friends ever involved in criminal issues or youth violence in your area? Yes/No

How did you know about it, was it directly or indirectly?

Question 3 variables:

Yes / No

For this variable 'Yes' was scored as a RF -1 (minus one) whilst 'No' was considered to be a PF +1 (plus one).

Relatives

If relatives were involved it was considered a RF -1 (minus one), but if there was no involvement within the immediate family, it was marked as a PF +1 (plus one). This was in line with literature that demonstrates that family involvement in crime (especially parents and siblings) increases the risk of younger siblings' involvement (see Fitzgibbon and Silverstone, 2013; Pitts, 2008; Harding, 2014).

How You Knew – Directly/Indirectly?

This variable emerged through the responses of the participants. If they knew about their friends or inner circle's involvement in crime or SYV either directly or indirectly, it was scored as a RF -1 (minus one) for each category as it creates a complex situation where people are informed about serious crimes i.e. stabbings, robberies, etc… directly or indirectly, but are then expected to keep silence and not report such offences to authorities. Those who had no relatives or friends involved were not scored on this variable and remained at 0 (zero).

Question 4: Were you ever involved in SYV or crime? Yes/No

This variable was scored as a PF +1 (plus one) if the participant self-reported as never being involved. The main criteria for participants' selection for the research was not to have been involved in SYV or crime. Nonetheless, some of the participants' responses were judged by the author to indicate that they may have had been involved in SYV or group offending. This was a difficult call to make as it was open to interpretation. Those participants whose comments seemed to open the doors of scepticism were scored as RF -1 (minus one). Their participation was not disregarded as it was left to the author's impression if their actions amounted to crime or not. For instance, comments such as:

> *I've been chased out by a bunch of youth because I know someone, this one friend. Oh, yeah, let's go catch him [they said]… and I'd be chased… I was scared at the same time because I'm alone, I'm seeing all these people coming to me. It's like. yeah, I have to go away. I have to run away on this. So, I will call my friend. All this happened. This happened, and then we will spin back to them.* (Bioko)

led the author to believe that Bioko may had been involved in at the very least ASB.

Question 5: How did you manage to avoid getting involved in crime or violence in your area? Was there anything that influenced you or prevented you from getting involved in crime and violence in your area?

Question 5 variables:

Variables emerging from this question (and the participants' responses) included Parent/s / Siblings / Hobby / Travel / Friendships all were considered to be PF +1 (plus one) and were explicitly referred to by the participants. Faith and mentoring programs were considered to be a protective factor and scored as 2 as it involved the family and community.

Example of a variable of parenting considered a PF:

Lula:

"I was going to school with my mom, and she would come and then pick me up… when I hit 16, my dad then put me to start working with him… I was just cleaning help and clean the store… so I was working part-time. I was working through weekends helping out. And I guess that what it done was install some discipline in me. because then I wouldn't go out with my friends anymore. I wouldn't go out to play football. I remember I would also go out to the block with some of my friends as well, and they would like do drugs and stuff in there. I've never done drugs. Luckily, I was, you know, focused. But yes, so my friends would always do that. I'll go around to the block. They'll smirk and stuff, and luckily my dad put me to work which driven me away from that stuff."

Example of a variable of siblings considered as a PF:

Azzedine:

"…at the time [that I was robbed] I didn't really understand it. I was thinking, why is it? Why me? Why did I get robbed? What have I done with [sic] these people? I've never seen them before?... I didn't really understand it. It was. It was very confusing. But then, obviously, I had the older brother who advised me, told me a lot of people love to do silly things and press their friends. It's nothing personal. They don't know you. You don't know them. Just be more wary and be more vigilant when you when you walk to school and try to avoid less populated areas, such as parks and whatnot. So, he advised me to walk in the main roads."

Example of a variable of hobbies considered as a PF

Kwame:

“in terms of hobbies I suppose gaming kept me home a lot because there was nothing like the PlayStation two in the afternoon that could keep me occupied for hours and hours. I was also quite sporty and I suppose I still am I would try my hand at any and everything particularly on the side of extreme sports… Skateboarding, snowboarding, rollerblading. I got into baseball in my later teens when I went to university the first time American football, I started it when I was 10 when I started American football so I've basically I would pick up any hobby. so I spent a lot of time doing things like I would watch the X Games on TV the winter X Games Winter Olympics the Olympics as well watched NFL football on TV but even I just from doing so much reading because at home essentially from school regiment was pretty much either I was being taught something or I had my nose in encyclopaedia pretty much and I would just read endlessly and so then I would pick up obviously there so like I even got into things like knitting I've done sewing because my dad actually knows how to sew but also getting into the scouts and learning how to do stuff like that and like survival.”

As stated before, Hobbies, Mentors and Faith are considered to be PF and scored 2/-2 as it overlaps community and family on the Venn Diagram (see figure 5- 6).

Examples of a variable of faith considered as a PF:

Lula: *I've always been doing church. I've always gone to church, and I've always had morals… I'll say, mostly the fear of God.*

Examples of a variable of faith considered as a PF:

“I built strong relationships with my coaches, and still to this day or my, I still have strong relationship with my coaches, so I would say it was… it's my coaches”

Example of a variable of travel considered as a PF:

Yapo:

“every year so we always go back home to Africa every year yeah so if it's not Africa that in somewhere Europe so even Africa, France yeah so, my mum side is in France she has her brother 'cause I'm from French speaking country so from France, Spain and Italy…. the way they live there is more to life than the small stuff [one] does in England… travelling going out you can [meet] people doing different things, is very important as well don't surround yourself with just the people you know, obviously it's good to see other people with perspectives, yeah! just be open minded! (Yapo)

This PF was scored 2/-2 as it overlaps family and community. It is key that when referring to travelling CYP spoke of trips outside of London. This broaden their horizon and the way the perceive and experience their world.

Example of a variable of friendship considered as a PF:

Malabo:

"my peer group. It was people who wanted to go into university. So, people who are studying or staying late to get the best grades which infers me to do the same thing… yeah, just that. Those are the kind of things"

This was scored +1/-1 depending on the response from the participant.

Based on all the above detailed variables and their scoring for all five questions, the following table was created. It helped to identify what may the variables that add protective factors (the higher scores) and which risk factors (the lower scores) are of great concern when it comes to the future risks of involvement in offending or crime.