Young People’s Perceptions and Motivations for Joining Gangs in Norwich and Colorado Springs: Exploring the Implications for the Policy Response

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The thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Criminal Justice Studies of the University of Portsmouth.
Abstract

Building on the comprehensive research evidence from the USA and the growing research evidence in the UK, this study sought to achieve two aims. The first aim of this research was to gain an understanding of the factors that motivate and influence youths with regards to their involvement with street gangs in areas outside the large metropolitan areas where these studies usually occur. The second aim was to establish if these motivating factors differed between the USA and the UK, which may affect the viability and likely success of policy transfer, specifically gang suppression techniques in the US. This later approach appeared to be favoured in the UK, following the 2011 riots. However, the approach has been modified to include diversionary and support structures, coupled with enforcement, as evidenced by Operation Sceptre and Operation Shield, both Metropolitan Police operations based on the US based Operation Ceasefire.

The study reviews the existing literature, identifying the research evidence relating to motivational issues to join gangs. The research evidence is on the analysis of self-completion questionnaires from young people in mid-sized cities in the USA and in the UK. The findings generated research evidence that identified two significant differences, in relation to the relative importance of ‘fear’ and ‘fashion’. In the US fear was a compelling motivational factor, whilst it was not considered so in the UK. Fashion showed the opposite relationship with the UK deeming it a higher motivational factor than the US. Neither of the significant differences identified above were present in the results from those identifying as gang members. The research evidence supported prior works identifying reputation as the major influencing factor in youth involvement in street gangs, this being coupled with protection and friendship.

This thesis contributes to the knowledge about what motivates youth involvement in street gangs. It shows that similar motivational factors exist in mid-sized cities, as in the larger urban centres. This suggests that evidence based programs to reduce gang involvement are relevant in mid-sized cities, as well as in larger urban centres. The research supports a view that suppressive policies will do little to dissuade youths from joining if the societal conditions that lead to gang formation are not addressed.
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Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Purpose and background to the research

In 2009 the Centre for Social Justice was advocating the adoption of US anti-gang tactics to address growing concerns about youth violence and group offending. At this time, I was investigating the first criminal offences committed by a group of youths in my area, that the media went on to identify as a gang, while the police tried to prevent this group gaining kudos by denying that they constituted a gang. In light of undertaking this research, this group clearly met the gang definition used within the study. I questioned whether the adoption of US derived policies would be effective due to potentially differing motivational factors in the respective countries. A second consideration was would motivating factors further vary outside the large metropolitan areas where research into gang motivation in the UK had centred.

It was decided to answer these research aims by investigating the evidence pertaining to the reasons youths join street gangs. This was achieved by comparing existing research in both countries and conducting primary research in the two mid-sized cities, routinely overlooked by researchers and policy makers, in favour of larger metropolitan areas. This especially being the case in the UK.

In the United States, the National Institute of Justice (2011) identified there are various ways to address gangs, including:

- Prevention – through support services, educational programs and activities to prevent gang involvement.
- Intervention – Drawing gang members from their involvement, often by way of law enforcement and community group interaction to offer education, job training and community service opportunities as way of incentive.
- Suppression – Using a solely law enforcement based approach such as targeting and apprehension of gang involved individuals, gang injunctions, enhanced sentencing powers.
Diversion strategies are often employed when employing prevention and intervention tactics. Wilson and Hoge (2013, p.498) identify that most jurisdictions utilise some method of rehabilitative diversion strategy which can be implemented before criminal involvement, (pre-charge) or post criminal involvement (post charge). Wilson and Hoge (2013, p.498 - 499) describe these diversion strategies as being designed to reduce a youths involvement with police and the judicial system and reduce the impact of labelling and association with antisocial peers by reducing the youth’s exposure to the traditional justice system. It has been identified, by McAra and McVie (2007, p.318) that the further a youth is pulled into the criminal justice system, the more prevalent the risk of recidivism, therefore diversion schemes are important to try and divert youths from formal involvement in the criminal justice system. Diversion schemes are formulated on a risk / need / responsivity model (Wilson and Hoge, 2013). The risk element is linked to the criminogenic risk of the individual, which guides the level and intensity of the intervention. The need addresses the criminogenic need of the individual. For example, if substance misuse and parental issues are underlying factors, then these are the needs which need to be addressed. The responsivity element, is non-criminogenic and takes into account such aspects as the academic skills, emotional problems and strengths of the individual. (Wilson and Hoge, 2013 p.499)

An independent think tank called The Centre for Social Justice was formed in 2004 by former Conservative Party leader Iain Duncan Smith M.P. to put social justice at the forefront of politics. However, some such as White (2013) and Wiggan (2012) question the independence of the Centre due to its right-wing links and what some see as alignment to conservative policies. Antrobus (2009) in his Centre for Social Justice paper “Dying to Belong- An In-depth Review of Street Gangs in Britain” advocated the implementation of policies derived in the successful intervention led, Boston Gun Projects Operation Ceasefire (Braga, Kennedy & Piehl 2001). Operation Ceasefire has, since the commencement of this research, been implemented in several US cities including Chicago, Baltimore and New Orleans, as well as in Glasgow, Scotland, where it has been credited with a sharp decline in youth violence. The question of whether the motivating factors behind gang membership in the UK could be mitigated with the same degree of reported success, by implementation of a similar program, is the central theme of this research.

This notion of adoption of US programs needs careful examination prior to implementation. These operations, such as Operation Ceasefire Braga, Kennedy and Phiel (2001), have proven
successful in several large metropolitan US cities and should not be discounted, especially with a drive to implement evidence based policing in the UK. However, should it transpire that key differences exist in the reasons youths become involved in gangs, either transnationally, or due to the size of city, then development of new, customised initiatives to address street gang membership in the UK and smaller urban settings is crucial.

From my professional and research experiences in the UK, only prevention and suppression are currently undertaken to deal with the threat of gangs, though moves have been made to address this in the guise of the Metropolitan Police Safe and Secure scheme, Operation Sceptre Operation Shield.

Safe and Secure was designed to re-house those at high risk of gang related violence and end their involvement in the gang lifestyle (Whalen, 2013, p.2). Safe and Secure has delivered favourable results and when the reoffending rate is examined against a national cohort, there is a significant difference with the national figure being 75%, set against the reoffending rate of Safe and Secure participants of 31% (Whalen, 2013, p.3). The scheme is not however, without its difficulties. The responsibility for Safe and Secure, rests with the Boroughs and is split across the departments of Housing and Community Safety, as well as involving Youth Offending Services and possibly Children’s Services. This often leads to a fragmented approach in the pressurised operating environment of a local authority (Whalen, 2013, p.6). The scheme has also not been without controversy, with an Evening Standard investigation involving a probation worker who sought to get a young person on the scheme, stating that a person would only be accepted if they informed on their friends (Evening Standard, 2014). Another compounding fact is that the success of the scheme is predicated on availability of housing stock in a borough willing to accept the person who comes with a host of issues and no ties to that community.

Operation Shield was an initiative based on Operation Ceasefire. The principles for Operation Shield were centred on community mobilisation and harsh penalties for non-compliant gang members (Armstrong & Rosbrook-Thompson, 2016, p.285). The harsh gang penalties centred on the notion that as gang crime is a group activity, the authorities should target the group as a whole i.e. the offender and his or her known associates, subjecting all to measures such as gang injunctions, mandatory employment training or eviction from local authority housing (Pitts 2016, p.74). Unfortunately, the Operation Shield pilot did not work, as voluntary sector
and community groups in two boroughs withdrew after six months, as they regarded the targeting of gang nominals en-masse as draconian (Pitts, 2016, p.73). While based on a successful program, this success was not replicated in Op Shield.

Of the three initiatives mentioned above, Operation Sceptre appears to have been the most successful. Op Sceptre was launched in July 2015, with the aim of reducing knife crime and the number of families affected by knife crime across London. Information from the Metropolitan Police (n.d.) Operation Sceptre website, shows that there have been 2,294 arrests, with 473 of these being for weapons or knife offences, with 1,435 weapons retrieved. The operation also featured the implementation four educational packages aimed at making the target audiences think about their decisions and the consequences of their actions, with the aim of deterring that person from a life of crime and possible gang involvement. Whilst the figures for this program make the program seem like a success, it is set against a backdrop of increasing knife crime in London and around the UK, with a 34% increase in knife crime in London in the 12 months, November 2016 – November 2017 (Thomas & Titheradge, 2017).

The presence of gang members in less gang associated areas is now undisputable, as identified by the Home Office (2015). This can often take the form of established urban gang members, from large metropolitan area, travelling around the country to exert control over regional drug markets. This being addressed by the government and law enforcement under the banner of “County Lines”. From first-hand experience, I have seen how these gangs then indoctrinate local youths into a culture of drug dealing, drug trafficking and street gang like behaviour.

A statement that was often levied at me in my professional capacity, by youths suspected of gang involvement was “No one ever talks to us and tries to understand us.” After hearing this statement several times, coupled with my research, I concluded that to address the issues of street gang membership, it is imperative to gain an understanding as to what motivates youths to become involved in such activity. Then these factors can be mitigated by successful implementation of initiatives tailored to the needs of particular communities to divert youths from street gang involvement, the associated violence and involvement in criminality.
Street gangs as an important social and political issue.

This research is important due to the increased academic and media attention that has been given to UK street gangs since the turn of the century, Bennett & Holloway, (2004), Young, Fitzgerald, Hallsworth, & Joseph (2007), Pitts (2007), Antrobus (2009), Castella & McClatchey (2011), Sergeant (2012), Hallsworth (2013) and Williams (2015). The issue of street gangs is now seen as important in many metropolitan areas with London, Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool amongst policing areas with specialist gang units in the form of Trident, Manchester Multi Agency Gang Strategy, Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence and Matrix, respectively. The public are more aware of perceived gang related activity due to highly publicised incidents such as the tragic shooting of Rhys Jones in 2007 in Liverpool, and the fatal stabbing of Damilola Taylor, in 2000 in London. The riots which engulfed many UK cities during the summer of 2011 also prompted the then Prime Minister David Cameron, to declare “all-out war” using US suppression techniques (Hallsworth and Brotherton, 2012, p.4). The un-evidenced, and later disproven view was that gangs were the criminal masterminds behind the riots and gang culture was the cause, (Hallsworth, 2013) (Hallsworth and Brotherton, 2012) and that the root cause being a “complete lack of responsibility in parts of society” (Telegraph, 2011). In the Interim Report into the English Riots, Singh, Marcus, Rabbatts and Sherlock (2011 p.13) stated “most of the convicted rioters were not gang members” and only 13% of those arrested were known to be gang members, with the proportion being closer to 19% in London. Singh et al. (2011, p.59) further stated that it could not be ascertained if these individuals were acting in a single capacity, or as part of an organised gang in this instance. Amongst the causes for the riots they evidenced a feeling of no opportunities, not being listened to, materialistic greed and boredom amongst rioters.

There is an increasing amount of research evidence relating to gangs such as that of Toy (2012), Hallsworth (2013), Wood, Alleyne, Mozova & James, (2014) building on early works of Bennett and Holloway (2004) and Pitts (2007), as well as several government backed research papers, Home Office, (2008). However, there still is a relatively limited amount of academic research into the motivating factors for juveniles becoming involved in British street gangs, when compared to American academic literature (Ralphs et al, (2009), Bradshaw and Smith (2005), Young et al (2007). This leads to many policy decisions being
based upon American research and policy (Klein et al., 2006), Ralphs et al. (2009), Bradshaw & Smith (2005), even though as identified by Hallsworth (2013), this massive investment in anti-gang programmes based largely on suppression, in the US has seen little by the way of measurable success. It is for these reasons that this research is important. It will offer research evidence in regard to whether the UK can utilise US based academic research and the intervention programs. If different motivating factors are identified, it would indicate a need to adapt policies to address demands faced in smaller metropolitan areas of the UK or design a tailored strategy to address the issue.

Some researchers question whether the gang problem even exists, Hallsworth (2013) being at the forefront. He believes the focus on gangs is spawned by a “moral panic” (p8) and driven by the government to disguise wider, unaddressed, social issues and drivers, (p.19). Hallsworth goes on to criticise those who talk up the issue, referring to them as “gang talkers” (p.69) these being “experts” with a vested interest in street gang suppression. Nevertheless, street gangs are portrayed as becoming a far more familiar factor for police and communities around the UK. Data derived from youth surveys in 2011, shows that between 2% - 7% of youths aged between 10 – 19 years had had gang involvement (Home Office, 2011). This view was echoed by professionals involved in the field with Young et al. (2007, p.1) commenting that there is a “growing concerns in Britain about the reported increase of gang-related offending and the use of weapons by young people.” The research evidence, governmental research papers and popular press indicate increasing concerns about the harmful impact street gangs are having on society, their influence and effect on youths growing up within our communities, and the wider community itself. Pitts (2007, p.74) estimated that forty core gang members in Waltham Forest, London, indirectly affected 1,400 youths and a further 6,000 family members, through their gang activity. Before the riots of 2011, Home Office (2011, p.13) identified a three-generation gang involved family, living in the West Midlands, who have cost the UK taxpayer “£2.7 million” in criminal justice sector costs alone, through amassing “78 arrests, 55 convictions and 13 prison sentences amounting to 27 years.” Whilst these figures are alarming, those such as Hallsworth (2013), who question the level of street gang activity in the UK, see these as a rare instance of gang behaviour, publicised by those with vested interests in the gang suppression industry, as the norm, to make the exception appear the rule.
Research sites, methods used in the study

With the UK site of Norwich established it was important to identify comparable research sites in the US. to meet the aims of this thesis. Population sizes of several US cities were researched and compared to the UK study site. After identifying five US cities with similar populations, other factors such as proximity to other large urban centres, ethnic comprisal of the population, socio-economic factors, such as mean income, employment rates and major industries, along with climate were examined. It was soon recognised that there were always going to be factors that differed, including, but not limited to recognition of street gangs within the city by law enforcement agencies.

Data was collected through a self-completion questionnaire, which was distributed to youth groups and programmes where there had been identification of street gang involvement by current or former attendees. Semi-structured interviews were planned, but these failed to materialise, due to a lack of engagement, which is discussed further within the methodology chapter. The final sample comprised of seventy-six questionnaires, thirty-six from the UK and forty in the US. A more detailed examination of the methodology is given in Chapter 4. These questionnaires provided both qualitative and quantitative data, the results being shown in Chapter 5, with a copy of the questionnaire included in the Appendix at page 167.

One of the key definitions within this Thesis surrounds the ongoing academic debate around what is a street gang? This extensive debate is covered in more detail in Chapter 2. For the purposes of this study the Eurogang definition was accepted as the working definition. This being a definition decided upon by a group of leading gang researchers from Europe and the USA at the Eurogang Network workshops. The definition was accepted at the second Eurogang Network workshop in Oslo in 1999.

A street gang (or troublesome youth group corresponding to a street gang elsewhere) is any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of its group identity.

For the purposes of the study this definition was adapted to;

A street gang is a youth group, who generally congregate on the streets, or similar outdoor areas, who have been in existence for a significant period of time, and who are recognised as being involved in illegal activity.

The modification of the definition was only to simplify the language used, to reflect common language, in line with the advice of Hagan (2003) to avoid vague wording. The rationale behind this was that the intended survey sample were individuals who were involved in street gangs. The level of education of these individuals was unclear at the outset, so the wording was simplified from that of the original definition, whilst retaining the factors associated with gang membership. This was especially important as this definition was included in the first question of the questionnaire and therefore needed the participant to engage with the research and not feel that they were unable to complete the questionnaire due to not understanding vocabulary in the questions. Having personally experienced how the use of certain language can be exclusionary and the impact this can have on individuals whilst working in my profession, I deemed this especially important in seeking to engage with participants. While the term group identity is not explicitly mentioned in the revised definition, it was felt that by stating that the group was identified as being involved in criminality this addressed this aspect.

**Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this research was, to gain an understanding of the factors that motivate and influence youths with regards to their involvement with street gangs in areas outside the large metropolitan areas where these studies usually occur.

The second aim was to establish if these motivating factors differed between the USA and the UK, therefore affecting possible policy transfer.
To achieve these aims, the following objectives were identified:

1. Review research evidence on youth gangs in the USA and UK, with specific focus on the motivation to join gangs.
2. Conduct primary research via self-completion questionnaires and interview with gang members / youths from gang affected areas.
3. Analyse and compare the research findings from both study sites, to establish if these motivating factors differed between the control sites in the UK and USA.
4. Review the evidence against existing scholarly work and comment on potential implications for policy transfer from the USA to the UK.

The structure of the thesis

The body of this project goes on to review the convoluted academic and practitioner debate in regard to what comprises a street gang, discussing definitional importance not only for research, but also for practitioners and gang members themselves. The third chapter reviews the academic literature in regard to issues surrounding the existence of street gangs and troublesome youths, and factors relating to motivations behind youths’ involvement. This encompasses research evidence ranging from the classical works of Cyril Burt to the present day, coupled with analysis of government reports, published in the wake of the UK riots of 2011 and beyond. This chapter is important to establish the background of the research and highlight how it guided the development of the methodology which is covered in Chapter 4. The methodology includes comment on comparative criminal justice research alongside an explanation of the rationale behind the format of the questionnaire, the selection of study sites and the chosen statistical analysis method.

The research findings are discussed in Chapter 5. This includes both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis of the quantitative data to examine trends in the data set and identify data which allows for inferences to be made to the wider population. Included in this chapter are the qualitative responses, with content analysis utilised to ascertain commonalities and differences. Chapter 6 focusses on themes identified within the data and addresses the stated aims, theorising about implications for working practices and policy, while identifying areas for further research. The final chapter, Chapter 7, concludes the thesis and includes
reflective practice on the part of myself regarding the completion of this challenging process of completing a doctoral level research project.
Chapter 2

What is a youth street gang? Reviewing the debate and implications for the current study

Introduction

To fully understand the motivational issues around street gang membership, it is important to examine what actually constitutes a youth street gang. To establish this, it was important to review the existing body of academic literature on the debate. Utilising the University of Portsmouth Discovery search function and Google Scholar, it was possible to search a large body of existing databases simultaneously. Those which produced results cited in this review include; ScienceDirect, Emerald, Ebsco, Nexis, JSTOR and Wiley. The search terms used included “youth street gangs” “street gang definitions” “what is a street gang” with “US” and “UK” being added to these search terms, interchangeably.

In this chapter, I discuss the academic argument about what constitutes a gang, from the early origins of gang research by Thrasher in the 1930’s, through to statutory instruments in 2015, highlighting the inconsistencies in modern definitions and discussing the implications. Political resistance to gang recognition and links between gangs and criminality are discussed. This is supported by utilising the works of Gordon (2000) and Hallsworth and Young (2004) and reviewing the academic debate about when youths transition from a delinquent youth group to a gang and the consequences of incorrect labelling, especially where suppression policies are utilised.

Whilst there is a growing acceptance in the UK that street gangs exist, there is considerable debate amongst academics and practitioners as to what constitutes a street gang. This is not a problem confined to the UK, with a review by Barrows and Huff (2009) revealing that only two states in the USA used the same definition of a gang member. The issues arising from definitional debates is recognised by Matsuda, Esbensen and Carson (2012) who identify that it is impossible to identify and respond to gangs if you cannot identify gangs and gang members.
Often there have been political reasons why certain stances have been adopted, as to admit to the existence of street gangs is to acknowledge the existence of, what are seen by the public as criminal entities, akin to the representations of gangsters in American pop culture. This might raise questions about the effectiveness of police, statutory agencies and policy makers. This was acknowledged by the Eurogang Network, who at the first meeting identified the sensitivity of the topic of gang existence in Europe and accepted that “acknowledgement of European gangs might cause moral panic that could stimulate a suppressive over-reaction to the phenomenon.” Weerman, Maxson, Esbensen, Aldridge, Medina, & van Gemert (2009, p.3). Some, such as Hallsworth (2013) would argue that exactly that has happened.

**What is a gang? Definitional arguments**

There are numerous definitions of street gangs, from Thrasher in 1927, to the definition provided in the Section 34(5) of the Policing and Crime Act 2009, as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015. Whilst there are commonalities such as involvement in violence and crime, durability and identifiability in all of these definitions, there are also subtle differences such as the laying of claim to a territory, as highlighted by the series of definitions below.

As defined by Thrasher in his 1936 work on Chicago Street gangs (p.46):

> An interstitial group originally formed spontaneously and then integrated through conflict…and characterized by meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict and planning. The behaviour develops a tradition, unreflective internal structure, esprit de corps, solidarity, group awareness and attachment to local territory.

Pitts (2007, p.10) cites the definition of Walter B Miller (1982)

> A group of recurrently associating individuals with identifiable leadership and internal organisation, identifying with or claiming control over territory in the community, and engaging either individually or collectively in violent or other forms of illegal behaviour.
Hallsworth and Young (2004, p. 12)

A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group’s identity.

Antrobus et al (2009, p.21) came up with the following working definition, stating that they had assessed all of the various definitions used in Britain and taking into account those used in America:

A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who:

(1) See themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group,

(2) Engage in a range of criminal activity and violence,

(3) Identify with, or lay claim over a territory,

(4) Have some form of identifying structural feature, and

(5) Are in conflict with other, similar gangs.

This is the current definition used by the Association of Chief Police Officers, as identified by the Home Office (2011). This however differs from the definition provided in Section 34(5) of the Policing and Crime Act 2009, as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015, in regard to gang violence which is:

Violence or a threat of violence which occurs in the course of, or is otherwise related to, the activities of a group that:

a) consists of at least 3 people; and,

b) has one or more characteristics that enable its members to be identified by others as a group.
As we can see from the above definitions, the general consensus is a gang is a group of people who act together in committing crime. Looking at the definition of Sharp et al (2006, p.1) who decline to use the term gang, we get the following definition of a delinquent youth group:

Young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves). The group spend a lot of time in public places. The group has existed for three or more months. The group has engaged in delinquent or criminal behaviour together in the last 12 months. The group has at least one structural feature (either a name, an area, a leader, or rules).

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term delinquent as “(typically of a young person) tending to commit crime, particularly minor crime.” Here we see the issue with the reluctance to use the term “street gang” and the debate about when a delinquent group becomes a “street gang”. All the other defining points of Sharp et al are present in one or more of the other presented definitions of street gangs, but there is an abject refusal to use the term. While caution needs to be used when labelling a group, a “street gang”, a decisive decision needs to be made in order to guide policy, as to what constitutes a gang, this being a recommendation of the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2015). This highlights the debate that has led to blurred and unclear definitions that exist within research today and result in policy makers not having a clear definition to work with.

To try and resolve the issue of acceptance of a standard definition with regards to street gangs and provide a methodological framework for comparative research to take place, a group of leading academics from Europe and the USA, held a series of workshops under the auspice of the Eurogang Network. The following definition was put forward in the second Eurogang Network workshop in Oslo in 1999 and is utilised within this research’s questionnaire:

A street gang (or troublesome youth group corresponding to a street gang elsewhere) is any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of its group identity.

This definition again identifies that a gang is a group who are involved in criminality, who have a degree of durability, echoing many of the previous definitions. What this definition does not include are the factors of territoriality and structure that are present within the definitions of Miller (1982), Hallsworth & Young (2004) and Sharp et al (2006).

There are those who when defining a gang, focus on shared identity, activities, sense of solidarity and territoriality as gang identifiers, and argue that criminality should not be a defining criterion. Chu et al (2011, p. 130) cite Ball & Curry (1995), Duffy (2004), Howell (1998) and Spergel (1995) amongst those promoting this argument. This would seem at odds with the other definitions quoted above, which all highlight an involvement in criminal activity / illegal activity / violent activity as a defining characteristic of a street gang. The confusion between the definitions provided, actually highlights the problems of who constitute a “street gang” as asked by Squires, Silvestri, Gimshaw & Soloman (2008).

**Street gangs and group criminality?**

To address the issue, of where these groups sit on a crime continuum, Pitts (2007) cites the work of Hallsworth and Young (2004), Gordon (2000) and Klein & Maxson (2001) in placing these gangs in the context of their activity. These range from simple associative groups, through to organised criminal enterprises with defined structures and are broken down into distinct groups below.

**Three-point Typology for Urban Collectives**

| **Peer Group:** A small, unorganised, transient grouping occupying the same space with a common history. Crime is not integral to their self-definition |
| **Gang:** A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group’s identity |
| **Organised Criminal Group:** Members are professionally involved in crime for personal gain operating almost exclusively in the ‘grey’ or illegal marketplace. |


Table 1
Robert Gordon (2000) produced a longer continuum in regards to street gangs, expanding on the peer group and stages of transition into street gangs identified by Hallsworth & Young (2004). Gordon identified the “Wannabe group” that is referred to in several academic papers including Hayden (2010), Bradshaw & Smith (2005) and Antrobus et al. (2009). In response to this he produced the Five-point typology in relation to “Street Gangs”, as set out in Table 2.

**Five-point Typology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth movements:</th>
<th>Are social movements characterised by a distinctive mode of dress or other bodily adornments, a leisure-time preference, and other distinguishing features (e.g. punk rockers).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth groups:</td>
<td>Are comprised of small clusters of young people who hang out together in public places such as shopping centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal groups:</td>
<td>Are small clusters of friends who band together, usually for a short period of time, to commit crime primarily for financial gain and may contain young and not so young adults as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wannabe groups:</td>
<td>Include young people who band together in a loosely structured group primarily to engage in spontaneous social activity and exciting, impulsive, criminal activity including collective violence against other groups of youths. Wannabees will often claim ‘gang’ territory and adopt ‘gang-style’ identifying markers of some kind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street gangs:</td>
<td>Are groups of young people and young adults who band together to form a semi-structured organisation, the primary purpose of which is to engage in planned and profitable criminal behaviour or organised violence against rival street gangs. They tend to be less visible but more permanent than other groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal business organisations:</td>
<td>Are groups that exhibit a formal structure and a high degree of sophistication. They are composed mainly of adults and engage in criminal activity primarily for economic reasons and almost invariably maintain a low profile. Thus, while they may have a name, they are rarely visible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 2, it is interesting that in the context of the continuum, Criminal Groups appear before Wannabees. Gordon makes the distinction that these groups are smaller, less organised than Wannabes, do not have a group identity and lack the durability of Wannabees and Street Gangs. This is despite crime being the reason behind their existence as a collective.

Klein & Maxson (2001) suggested that the complexity of street gangs in the US has now transcended small scale criminal involvement and that there is now a morphing of organised criminal groups, involved in large scale criminal enterprises in regards to drug related and criminal endeavours. From this work, the characteristics of five gang types was developed.

**Gang Categorisation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gang Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Traditional Gang</strong></td>
<td>Has usually been in existence for 20+ years. It has a large membership and a wide age range and almost always claims territory (Turf/Hood/Barrio) It is able to regenerate itself and is composed of sub-groups that are often determined by age (Seniors/Juniors) but sometimes by neighbourhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Neotraditional Gang</strong></td>
<td>Is similar to the traditional gang but has been in existence for a shorter period (less than 10 years). It usually contains sub-groups based on age or area but encompasses a smaller age range. It claims and defends territory like a traditional gang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Compressed Gang</strong></td>
<td>Is small (less than 50 members). It has no sub-groups, a narrow age range and has been in existence for only a few years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Collective Gang</strong></td>
<td>Is like the compressed gang but bigger with a wider age range but no subgroups. It is a ‘shapeless mass’ of adolescent and young adult members that has not developed the distinguishing characteristics of traditional and neo-traditional gangs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Speciality Gang</strong></td>
<td>Is narrowly focussed on a few offence types. Its major focus is criminal rather than social. It is small (less than 50 members), has a narrow age range and is less than 10 years old. Its territory is either residential or based on opportunities for particular forms of crime.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Klein and Maxson (2001) p.4 – 5

Table 3
In the cities utilised as data collection sites for this research, the typology of Hallsworth & Young (2004) and Gordon (2000) were reflective of the youth group structures present within the UK, while a far greater range of gangs identified in the above tables were evident in the USA. When looking at the work of Klein and Maxson (2001) the only category that was in existence within the UK study site was the “Compressed Gang”. The gangs tended to be in existence for a relatively short period of time, usually a couple of years and tended to be comprised of youths aged from fourteen to nineteen years old. There were strong links to adults involved in more serious criminality, such as larger scale drug supply, by older gang members. The main activities of those thought to be involved with this particular group, were street robbery, theft, street level drug dealing and violence against other groups. The typology of Gordon (2000) is especially pertinent to Norwich in the UK, with the three of the first four classifications of Youth Movement, Youth Group and Wannabee’s being visibly present in the area of the shopping centres, open spaces and parks around the city centre.

The most concerning of these groups, which cause the greatest difficulty for authorities dealing with the issues surrounding street gangs are the Wannabes. This is due to the groups aim of appearing as a street gang as Gordon (2000) identifies. Due to their appearance and actions, these groups often appear to members of the public as street gangs, and as identified by Squires et al (2008), this is likely to have an “inflationary and alarmist effect on popular and political debate.” Gordon (2000, p.48-49) defines a “Wannabe groups” as:

…young people who band together in a loosely structured group to engage in spontaneous social activity and exciting, impulsive, criminal activity including collective violence against other groups of youths. A want to-be group will be highly visible and its members will openly acknowledge their “gang” involvement because they want to be seen by others as gang members.

Despite the perceived distinction between these two groups, it does not mean that the Wannabes can be ignored by authorities. The fact that members of these groups actively seek the label of a gang member raises concerns. These individuals are most at risk from joining street gangs, thorough recruitment and exploitation by those involved in more organised criminality, due to their willingness to get involved, to gain the status they crave. As highlighted in Gordon’s definition above, this group is also involved in criminality, though on a spontaneous basis, and as such will draw the police attention. This can be
utilised by the more organised street gangs to divert attention away from their illicit activity, shielding it from the prying eye of law enforcement, as identified by Toy (2011). Wannabe groups, through their own ambitions can transcend as an entity into street gang status, through their desire to be seen as such a gang Pritchard (2008). These individuals can be the most difficult to divert from involvement in criminality, due to their perception of the life it offers. Through understanding what drives youths to this point, more effective diversion and deterrence measures can be implemented. If suppression and criminalisation is utilised as the sole method to deal with such groups, entrenchment of the individuals concerned in the criminal justice system is likely to follow, as attainment of a criminal record makes it far more difficult to attain a legitimate well-paying job, (Agan & Starr, 2016).

The gang definition debate continues; however, it is clear that this is an issue that needs to be resolved, at least in the practitioners’ world. This will allow agencies to consider their response to a defined issue, opening the pathway for a concerted multi-agency approach to dealing with the issues at hand. This being recognised by the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2015).

**Implications of the definitional debate for practitioners**

An established definition is imperative if we are to follow the example of certain US states in regards to enforcement and suppression actions against street gangs. In the US states of California and Illinois, there are tougher penalties in place for those involved in street gangs. As identified by Esbensen et al (2001, p.112), Californian Penal Code 1999, sections 186.22[b][1] states “Actively participating in any criminal street gang, can mean imprisonment”. In Illinois, there is no probation under statute for persons convicted of forcible felonies, if the offence is related to organised gangs.

While the UK’s political focus has now moved on to new issues, it is crucial that before stringent penalties are imposed for those convicted of gang related criminal offences, a clear definition of a street gang is in place. This will assist the police and partners involved in combating gangs, as well as the courts in gathering the related evidence and imposing the correct penalties, commensurate with the criminal activity and the aggravating factor of gang membership. Without this in place, we could see people wrongly being given enhanced
sentences, or restrictions when mistakenly being identified as gang members. This is one of the concerns surrounding the current definition of a gang used in seeking gang injunctions under The Policing and Crime Act 2009, which relies on the wording of Section 34(5) of the 2009 Act, as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015 to define gang-related violence. This is presented on page 21 of the thesis.

In its Statutory Guidance paper, the Home Office acknowledges that it is difficult to capture a single definition of gang violence, as this can vary by area (Home Office, 2015(a)). With the broadness of the definition, there is a heightened risk of those with a limited understanding of gangs applying for this restrictive injunction to be applied to youths who are not gang affiliated, but simply offend in a group. Such ambiguous use of the term “gangs”, can lead to problems. Young et al (2009) and Squires et al (2008) citing Hallsworth (2005) stress that caution must be used with the application of the label of “gang” due to its negative connotations. Professor Rod Morgan, the former chair of England and Wales Youth Justice Board, stated in his leaving speech, that there is a risk of demonising a whole generation by labelling youths as “thugs in hooded tops” and “gang members” (Youth Justice Board, 2007). Hallsworth (2013) goes further by questioning the perceived extent of street gang existence by highlighting that it is difficult to draw a distinction between street gangs and street life in which individuals can commit criminal acts, with only loose criminal associations to others, in a tangled non-hierarchal structure.

In New York City, they have introduced a greater degree of oversight by supervisors before an individual can be labelled a crew member, with New York Police Department classifying street gang members as crew members. The information which would lead to a person being labelled as a crew member must pass four stages of verification, via three chief officers and one supervisor, who must be able to verify the information, before labelling occurs. (Phelps, 2014). With this level of oversight, it might be assumed that labelling individuals as gang members might be less controversial, however, it appears that the debate over what constitutes a gang is not restricted to the UK and Europe.

Following a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) to the New York State Department by Howell (2015, p.15-16), lodged in September 2nd, 2011, New York Police Department, eventually disclosed the following rationale for recording a person as a gang member on January 7th 2014.
An individual can be certified in any of the following ways;

1. An individual will be entered if he/she admits to membership during debriefing OR

2. Through the course of an investigation an individual is reasonably believed to belong to a gang and is identified as such by two independent sources. (Ex. Pct. Personnel, Intell, School Safety, Dept. of Correction, or Outside Agency) … OR

3. Meets any Two below mentioned criteria
   - Known gang Location
   - Scars/Tattoos Associated w/ Gangs
   - Gang Related Documents
   - Colors Associated w/ Gangs
   - Association w/ Known Gang members
   - Hand Signs Associated with Gangs

Some of the criteria listed above in category 3, give rise to concerns, due to the potential breadth of their application. Simply classing a person as a gang / crew member due to them being in a gang location and associating with gangs, or using hand signs associated with gangs, seems overly simplistic, whatever the level of oversight and supervision. By being placed on a database, that has no requirement, or provision for informing the individual, as well as no documented maintenance, or purging of details (Howell, 2015, p.16), potentially non-gang affiliated individuals can be exposed to the implications of being incorrectly labelled, as discussed in this chapter.

In the definitions set out above, there is a theme of the use of the word “youth”. As children transition into adolescence, an increased amount of time is spent outside the family home, in parks and on the street, where youths congregate with their friends and peers. This can bring them into contact with the police, with Ralphs et al (2009) identifying that this contact can often be adversarial, a fact also highlighted in the papers cited by Ralphs et al (2009), in Aye-Maung (1995), Flood-Page, Campbell, Harrington & Miller (2000) McAra & Mcvie (2005). This can then manifest itself in the incorrect labelling of groups as gangs, should
minor, spontaneous criminal activity occur. Young et al (2007) and Hallsworth (2013) identify that young people often offend in groups, but this does not necessarily make them a gang, hence the problem with the definition included in The Policing and Crime Act 2009. Referring to the definitions above, Hallsworth and Young (2004), Antrobus (2009) and Weerman et al (2009) all include criminality, that is either integral to the group identity, or an ongoing theme attributable to this group, as essential criteria for labelling a group as a street gang. What separates a delinquent group from a street gang according to Huff (1990) (cited by Antrobus (2009, p.43) is:

1) The gangs more routine involvement in illegal activities
2) A more deliberate quality of these illegal activities
3) A greater tendency to claim some turf
4) Generally, a better developed leadership

**Implications of the debates of what constitutes a youth street gang - Implications for policy**

Labelling a person, a gang member, and the resulting police targeting can sometimes simply arise from the association of an individual with a person identified as a street gang member, as opposed to any involvement in criminal activity (Ralphs et al, 2009). In areas where a higher concentration of street gangs are present, this can be a huge issue, as a young person growing up within that area is likely to have associations with people involved in street gangs. These associations are often established through friend and peer networks, developed at school and local amenities such as parks or sports fields. If simple association is enough to get a person labelled a gang member, despite no evidence of criminal activity, then this can have major ramifications for that person. These can range from increased police attention, through to being excluded from community events (Ralphs et al, 2008). As identified by Ralphs et al (2009) in their case study, into an unnamed estate, a further implication of being wrongly identified as a gang member can be suspension from school, based on little or no evidence, apart from presence in an area and infrequent association with gang members, who lived in the same locality. The stigma of being labelled a gang member, by the authorities, or others can also make it hard for individuals labelled as such from accessing agencies facilities.
as identified by Bullock & Tilley (2008). Due to the overwhelming majority of gangs being present within areas with identified levels of deprivation (Bradshaw & Smith, 2005); this could have a huge impact on the individual’s ability to extract themselves from a position of potential poverty. Being ostracised from mainstream social provisions could entrench the factors which some, including Ralphs et al (2009), and Pitts (2007) see as the precursors for street gang involvement. Access to support agencies is often vital, not just to those individuals labelled gang members, but also to their families. Should individuals be wrongly labelled, the implications can be far more impactful than just on the family, should suppression be the only tactic utilised to deter gang activity.

Another problem associated with the inaccurate labelling of individuals as gang members, may be the resulting targeting of that individual by a rival gang, as identified by Heale (2008). Whether this labelling is from a rival gang, or by authorities, this can have extremely serious consequences for an individual. These consequences could include personal violence, restriction of mobility, due to the inability to enter a rival gang’s territory and access to services and amenities, should a rival gang congregate in that area.

Individuals wrongly identified as street gang members, who are subject to increased police attention and restrictions, such as those highlighted above, may exhibit signs of “secondary deviance” and further criminality (Ralphs et al 2009, p.490). This can be due to inaccurate labelling, and the potential for targeting by rival gangs, leading the individual to seek to protect themselves from physical violence, by seeking the protection of a gang. It could also mean that they capitulate to pressure from the local gangs to hold drugs or even weapons, in exchange for cash payment, due to the fact that they cannot access legitimate services, such as further education and youth service provisions. Denial of access to these services impact on the ability of an individual to acquire or hone a skill set, where they may have a genuine interest and which will allow them to find employment.

A further unwanted result, from the inaccurate labelling of individuals, is the advancement of the cases of Wannabee groups. This has been identified by Bullock & Tilley (2008) and Marshall et al (2005) as a problem. This arises when a group aspiring to be street gang members, are labelled as such by the authorities, or the press. This gives the group kudos and enhances their reputation, resulting in recognition by youthful peers and potentially emboldening them to increase their criminality to an increased and more organised level. This
results in their group matching the criteria laid out in the above definitions. This has been evidenced in Norwich, where a gang that was arguably on the cusp of being a street gang was subjected to intensified police attention and press coverage, which included their group name. This led to an increase in persons falsely purporting to be part of this group, as well as an expansion of actual membership and an increase in criminality linked to the group, including street robbery, theft, assault and drug offences. When re-examined, in light of this new activity, in my view, this group was now clearly identifiable as a street gang when using the definitions highlighted above.

Some, such as Marshall et al (2005) and Hallsworth (2013) argue that the use of the term “gang” distracts the public and politicians from the real underlying problems, which cause this behaviour, with a focus more on suppression than intervention. Others such as Young et al (2007) see the whole issue of labelling individuals as “gang members” as a balancing act, between exacerbating the impression of the prevalence of gangs and not tackling the problem. An accepted definition of what constitutes a “gang” needs to be adopted within the UK. This will allow agencies charged with dealing with perceived gang related activity a common starting point to work from. Should such a definition become available, careful consideration of an individual’s circumstances, coupled with any further research can be used to establish their true status. This will allow for a focusing of attention, in regards to intelligence gathering and enforcement activity against those who meet the criteria, as well as promoting the facilitation of exit strategies for those receptive to the idea and intervention for those who have not progressed to street gang member status. The correct labelling will hopefully aid in preventing wrongful attribution of the label of a gang member, to those individuals who are not involved and allow them to access the services and support they need to advance their lives.

Implications of the debates of what constitutes a youth street gang - Implications for this research

With such a vast array of definitions in existence both in the academic and practitioner fields in regard to what constitutes a youth street gang, the question of how to define a street gang in the context of this study is crucial so as to meet the aims laid out in Chapter 1. Regardless of the chosen definition, there will be those who question its suitability. It was decided to use
the Eurogang definition, due to the number of respected academics involved in its development, as well as the researchers own belief that this is an accurate description of what a street gang is. This definition also separates a street gang from the peer / youth groups, criminal groups and wannabees identified by Gordon and Hallsworth and Young.

With the researcher having settled on a definition for inclusion, the question of what a study participant considers a gang becomes relevant due to the self-nomination process used. This methodological challenge was addressed in the design of the questionnaire through assessing participant agreement with the Eurogang derived definition in the very first question. This was then augmented by asking a series of qualifying questions that reflect the criteria of the Eurogang definition, within the questionnaire used.
Chapter 3

Aspects to street life gangs and motivation to join

Introduction

In order to inform this study, a literature review was undertaken to establish the existing research. A search strategy was devised so as to ensure that relevant existing literature was captured. Several key search terms were decided upon, these being “street gangs”, “street gang motivation”, “UK street gangs”, “US street gangs”, “youth gangs”, “gang motivation.” These search terms were then entered into both Google Scholar and the Discovery Service, hosted by the University of Portsmouth Library. This allowed me to search numerous databases, resulting in a list of journal articles, books, eBooks, news articles, conference papers and governmental papers. Journals that were returned from the search strategy included the following peer reviewed journals; Youth Justice, British Journal of Criminology, Criminology, Criminal Justice, Criminology and Criminal Justice. The search terms were designed to be sufficiently broad to encompass as many articles as possible, due to the literature being relatively scarce at the onset of this study. Once the articles were read, pertinent points were noted and categorised under the headings that are laid out below.

The knowledge base surrounding UK street gangs and the motivating factors behind youth involvement has seen considerable growth since this study commenced and these findings have been included in the literature review, which has been under constant review as the subject area has expanded. This literature review was performed to identify pertinent trends in regard to the motivational reasons behind involvement in street gangs, so as to be able to compare these to the findings of this study and ascertain if the reasons youths joined gangs varied by geographic location.
The existence of street gangs in the UK

The concept of street gangs is nothing new to the UK. According to McDonald (2010, p.59) there have been “gangs present in London since the 1800’s, with prostitution, pick pocketing and robbery being some of the activities undertaken”. However, it is the popular version of American style street gangs, and Gangsta Rappers, which pervades the media today, and it is this image that is disseminated to the general public, through the press, visual media, and music videos. It is therefore surprising that there appears to be a dearth of academic research specifically addressing the issue of the motivating factors for juveniles becoming involved in British street gangs (Ralphs, Medina & Aldridge, 2009; Bradshaw and Smith, 2005; Young, Fitzgerald, Hallsworth & Joseph, 2007). Most of the UK gang policy is based upon American research and policy, which is largely focused on suppression (Klein, Weerman & Thornberry, 2006; Ralphs et al, 2009; Bradshaw & Smith, 2005).

Seminal research regarding gangs

Historically there have been some isolated pieces of research, such as that of Downes (1966) in regards to teenage gangs in London and Patrick (1973) into “Knife Gangs” of Glasgow, as well as the classical piece of research into youth delinquency in London by Burt (1925). With the exception of Patrick (1973) these research papers concerned themselves with delinquency, with Burt setting out to identify the reasons that youths became delinquent in the first place.

This research follows the philosophy of Burt, as he deemed it essential to understand and discover the causes of behaviour, prior to prescribing cures. (Burt, 1925). Burt also placed great importance on the study of juveniles, in order to reduce future criminality, stating “the juvenile offender is easier to study, and, at the same time, he is easier to reclaim.” (Burt, 1925, kindle location 594)

Burt disagreed with the contentions of leading scholars of the time such as Professor Ceaser Lombroso (1876), Dr Charles Mercier (1890) and Dr Henry Maudsley (1873) that youths were born “morally blind”, a view seemingly echoed by David Cameron in his statements following the London Riots (Telegraph, 2011). Burt put forward the idea that there were
events, environmental factors and associations that when combined through the course of a young person’s life determined whether they were more likely to become delinquent or not. He contested that “Crime is not inherited” (Burt, 1925, kindle location 1355). It was Burt’s contention that the major factor associated with delinquency was family life and defective discipline therein, that was either too strict or too lenient, resulting in a delinquent rate that was “five times higher than that in a stable family environment” (Burt, 1925, kindle location 2011). Away from the home Burt identified the following reasons as the main causes of delinquency; “unemployment, uncongenial school or work, defective or excessive facilities for leisure, influence of adult friends and above all the influence of peers.” (Burt, 1925, kindle location 3659), views we see echoed by many current gang researchers, notably Hallsworth and Brotheron (2012), Hallsworth (2013) and Gebo and Bond (2012).

In the US, there has been a far greater historical research pool in regard to street gangs, with works stretching back to the early part of the twentieth century in the form of Ashbury’s study into the gangs of New York (1928) and Thrasher’s study of 1,313 gangs in Chicago (1936). This has since been supplemented by studies such as the Seattle Social Development Project (Battin, Hill, Abbott, Catalano & Hawkins, 1998), The Denver Youth Study (Esbensen and Huizinga 1993) and the Rochester Youth Development Study (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte & Chard-Wierschem 1993) Thornberry, Lizotte, Krohn, Farnworth & Jang (1994), Thornberry (1998), Pyrooz (2013)). Due to these large scale longitudinal studies, there is a far greater depth of knowledge in regards to the drivers behind street gangs and delinquent youths in the US. It is often this research which is referred to in UK studies.

**Why study gangs? - Gangs and Violence.**

The fact that gang members are involved in increased levels of violence is widely recognised (Klein *et al*, 2006; Pyrooz, Moulle and Decker, 2014). Research evidence shows that street gang members are more violent and delinquently engaged than other youths / delinquents. (Howell, 1998; Huff, 1998; Thornberry and Burch. 1997, cited by Esbensen *et al*, 2001). The Rochester Youth Development Study found that although only comprising one third of the sample size, those identified as gang members were responsible for 69% of all the violent delinquent acts committed by the study sample (Browning, Thornberry and Porter, 1999, p.1). These findings are echoed in the work of Matsuda, Melde, Taylor, Freng and Esbensen
(2012, p.14), where it was found that joining a gang was associated with an increase in the frequency of violent offending by 253%, within the sample. The prevalence of violence amongst gang members is further evidenced in the work of Gordon, Lahey, Kawai, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Farrington, (2004, p.67) where 99% of self-reported gang members in the study, stated that they were involved in violence. Gordon et al (2004) in a longitudinal study, found that the youths who went on to become gang members of the future, already exhibited higher levels of involvement in violence and property crime, than youths who would not become gang members. The study revealed that levels of offending substantially increased during an active gang membership period and returned to pre-gang membership levels on the cessation of gang involvement.

While the studies highlighted above are based in the USA, it can be seen that this propensity for violence is also present within UK street gangs. Squires et al (2008) identified that gang members in the UK are more likely to carry weapons than non-gang members. This has been quantified within the research of Marshall et al (2005, p.17), who identified that gang members were five times more likely to carry a gun than non-gang members, with twenty-seven percent saying they had carried a gun in the last year, compared to four percent of non-gang members. The research identified that gang members were also seven times more likely to carry a weapon, thirty-nine percent of gang members, compared to seven percent of non-gang members. The findings of Marshall et al (2005) are no real surprise, as the incidents of youth murders related or linked to street gangs, which appear on the news, such as the murders of Andrew Jaipaul, 21, in Finsbury Park, London in June 2011 and Daniel Graham, 18, in Dulwich, East London in January 2012, invariably involve knife crime. Marshall et al (2005, p.17) identifies that 25% of knife murders involve group offending, which is indicative of gang involvement. A recent Metropolitan Police Service analysis cited in the report Ending Youth and Gang Violence (Home Office, 2011, p.18) states that “gang members were responsible for 48% of all shootings and 22% of all serious violence generally in London.” This analysis further states that “An analysis of teenage homicides in London in 2007 – 2008 found that a quarter were gang related”. Klein et al (2006, p.433) supported these findings, but found lower levels of violence than in the USA, though their research supported findings that higher violence levels were associated with gang members than non-members. Whether this lower violence level is attributable to more stringent gun control in Europe, than the USA, is a question in itself.
Violence attributed to gang members also manifests itself over time. Toy (2011) identified that there is a progressive evolvement in violence exhibited by gang members as they get older. Toy (2011) identified that those aged 8–11 years old exhibited disruptive behaviour, 13 – 14-year olds became involved in low level crime, 16 – 17-year olds became involved in robbery and drugs, with those aged 17 – 21 years old were involved in serious violence. This identification of the evolvement of violence is important in establishing that intervention should occur at as early a stage as possible, in order to prevent the escalation of offending and minimise the risk of harm to others.

What is interesting in looking at street gang violence are the reasons behind the violence. Pitts (2007, citing Wright, Brookman and Bennett (2006)), states that much of the violence exhibited by street gang members is concerned with respect and recognition, not monetary gains. The factor of “respect” as a reason for membership of a street gang is explored further within this paper, with Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012) identifying it as a major factor in gang involvement. This need to protect the perception of respect at all costs often manifests in violence towards those who disrespect the gang member. This could be a major contributing factor in relation to the identification by Sharp et al (2006) of an increase in the use of knives by youths in the UK, where guns are harder to come by than in the US. With this in mind the sheer impact of gang violence on the victims, their families and the families of the gang members cannot be understated. This is not to mention the considerable police, court, prison service and probation time and expenditure invested in following suppression led policies to address the issue of gangs.

**Criminality associated with street gangs**

Street gang members are also at an increased risk of involvement in criminality per se, this has been recognised by Sharp, Aldridge and Medina (2006), Batin-Pearson, Thornberry, Hawkins and Krohn, (1998), Hill, Lui, and Hawkins (2001), Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, Smith and Tobin (2003) and Bradshaw (2005). With Thornberry et al (2003) reflecting that offending rates were multiplied by a rate of four for street gang members, compared to youths not involved in street crime. Marshall, Webb and Tilley (2005, p.10) further identified that gang members “committed five times the amount of offences as non-gang affiliated youths” in the areas of London, Manchester and Nottingham.
The studies above are not alone in highlighting the association of street gangs to criminality, with the link being identified on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In UK studies, Bradshaw and Smith (2005) acknowledged a larger amount of offences committed by street gang members, as well as higher substance abuse rates. Pitts (2007) identifies the direction of the “Elders” towards the “Youngers / Soldiers” whose responsibilities include criminal activity by means of drug dealing, violence in regards to debt collection and for vengeance, as well as involvement in street crime and burglary. With the establishment and control of drugs markets, comes the link with violence as highlighted above. Whilst many think the UK is relatively gun free, Squires et al (2008), citing Hales, Lewis and Silverstone (2006) found that guns were a frequent association with the drug markets where gang membership was very common.

Drug involvement has featured heavily in research into street gangs within the UK. Sharp, Aldridge and Medina (2006) identify that drugs are both sold and used within delinquent youth groups, as does Pitts (2007), Antrobus et al (2009), and Densley (2014), with both cannabis and Class A drug sales being identified. Involvement in drugs use and sales is echoed in research in the US. Gordon, et al. (2004, p.67) reported that in self-reported gang activity, in the Pittsburgh Youth Study, 59% of gang members stated that they sold drugs and 21% stated that they used drugs. Within this longitudinal study, it was identified that youth drug use and sales was the same for future gang members as for non-gang members. Drug use and sales increased during the gang membership and failed to decline to the initial levels, post gang involvement. The issue of gang members having a higher rate of drug involvement personally and in regards to distribution was further evidenced in the Seattle Social Development Programme, Hill et al (2001).

As gangs evolve and become established, Densley (2014) found that they became far less personally orientated and became focused on goals of financial gain, through involvement in crime. This is largely achieved through the sale of drugs as identified above, with this comes in the inevitable link to Organised Crime Groups (OCG’s), who facilitate the importation and initial distribution of the drugs, often via several layers to the street gangs, for sale on the street. The research of Squires et al (2008) suggests that gangs and organised criminal markets of drug supply and drug markets are intrinsically linked. This fluid transition between street gangs and organised crime has also been commented on by Densley (2014), who identifies that with globalisation and increased technology, OCG’s connected to London,
have incorporated street gangs into their business models and that there is a distinct flow between the two. However, Densley (2014) also goes on to argue that very few gangs meet the criteria to be classified as an OCG in their own right, with this view being supported by Hallsworth (2013), who sees street gangs as nodes in the drug distribution network, with no control, and not the corporate entity some would suggest.

Even with this in mind, we see the involvement of youths that might initially be classed as a troublesome youth group, who then progress into petty criminal activity, through to drug supply, now being incorporated into the ruthless world of the organised crime groups, where money is the sole driver and exploitation is prevalent. We now see evidence of London based gangs migrating beyond the saturated markets of London and targeting the drugs markets in regional towns and cities (Windle and Briggs, 2015, Home Office, 2015). Is it materialistic gain that drives this involvement, or is it the lack of alternatives?

**Social conditions for gang development**

Research evidence of Pyrooz (2013), regarding the development of gangs and gang culture notably in the USA, identifies poverty as a condition in which gangs usually thrive. Ralphs et al (2009) identified that gangs usually emerge in conditions of social exclusion, with Pitts (2007) finding that gangs and gang territories are often found in socially deprived areas. These results are supported by the disproportionate ethnic make-up of street gang members, with a far greater concentration of ethnic minorities within street gangs, when compared to the greater population. This may well be due to these populations being historically discriminated against, via social exclusion and as a result, finding it difficult to climb the socio-economic ladder and migrate to more affluent neighbourhoods, with fewer gangs. This gap between the rich and poor is becoming more entrenched, with Wacquant (2009) identifying that we live in polarised cities, with wealth inequalities proliferating and social segregation being entrenched.

The formation of gangs as a result of social exclusion and poverty would suggest that protection and financial gain are major drivers behind youth involvement in gangs. When examining poverty, it quickly becomes apparent that gang involvement does not alleviate this problem. Most street gangs do not have capacity to offer lucrative financial rewards (Melde,
Diem & Drake (2012), citing Levitt and Venkatesh (2001) and Venkatesh (1999). In Levitt & Dubner (2006, p.93 citing Levitt and Venkatesh (2001)) attention is drawn to the fact that in study of the economic lives of young men growing up in the Chicago Projects, a foot solider in a crack dealing gang earned only “$3.30 an hour, less than minimum wage”, while the officers in the gang, the supervisors of the foot soldiers, earned “about $7 an hour.” Levitt and Dubner (2006, p.92) concluded it was the draw of making the upper echelons of the supply chain, where the man at the top of the franchise earned an “hourly wage of $66”, that kept the foot soldiers interested. This was despite the slim chances of making it this far, in what is regarded as the most dangerous occupation in the USA, with a 1:4 change of getting killed over a four-year period. These studies, whose findings are supported by Densley (2014) would suggest that the chances of making oneself financially secure via gang membership offers only a slim chance of success. However, Pitts (2007, p.41) identified that two thirds of those involved in his study were excluded from school and therefore at a disadvantage in the job market. In light of this, the slim chances of making one’s riches via gang involvement may seem a lot more appealing than a minimum wage position in for instance McDonalds, even with the increase in risk to personal safety and only a miniscule change of successfully scaling the career ladder.

The fact that there is a widening economic gap between those who have their own house and those who reside in council accommodation in the UK, is identified by Pitts (2007, p16). Pitts highlights data from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation that show that in the 1980’s the average council house income was 73% of the national minimum wage. By the 1990’s this had fallen to 48% and by 1995, 50% of all council houses had no salary. Pitts (2007) states that by 1997, 25% of all under 16-year olds lived in council houses. With the increasing gap in comparative wealth between those in private accommodation and council housing, coupled with an increasing proportion of young people growing up in relatively impoverished households, is it any surprise that young people are turning to any means possible to improve the quality of their lives. The alternative is the attainment of recognised qualifications that take time to study for, with no guarantee of success following graduation as recognised by Densley & Stevens (2015). If a young person is looking to acquire a degree, this also comes with a financial implication in respect of any fees and a narrower job market as work and university study is balanced.
There is an alternative theory put forward in current research, whereby money is not the driving factor behind street gang membership and involvement. This theory, put forward by Hallsworth & Brotherton (2012), focuses on the disenchantment of certain deprived communities with public services, coupled with unemployment and poverty. In this theory, it is the perceived discrimination in the quality of public services and mistrust and isolation within the legal system, which has led many to reject the white middle-class values of status and success, instead striving for the more attainable option of respect of peers through toughness and violence. This manifests itself in a situation where youths have no stake in mainstream society. Having been shown no respect by society, they show no respect in return for a society that has materially excluded them. This concept of respect is something which has been very apparent to me in my policing career, with those who I have arrested, who would fall within the category of relative social poverty often quoting the lack of respect shown to them as a reason for their often violent actions. I have also witnessed times when showing respect to those involved in incidents, which necessitated police attendance, has made the resulting police intentions a lot easier to attain and vice versa, when certain officers act in a demeaning manner towards those involved. There is no doubt in my opinion, that respect is very much part of street / gang culture, as are material items.

It is clear that reasons for street gang membership are complex. Through the injection of financial revenue, opportunities and easing the pathway for those marginalised communities to gain respect through the route often followed by the wider community, some of these motivations may be reduced. However, if these theories were all encompassing, every child emanating from these communities would be running with street gangs, but this is not the case. There must be other causes as well. As identified by Bradshaw and Smith (2005), while contextual and ecological influences are the greatest influencing factors, individual choices also play a part.

**Social and individual circumstances prevalent amongst gang members**

The Seattle Social Development Program (Hill, Lui & Hawkins 2001) and the Rochester Youth Study, (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, Smith and Tobin, 2003) identify several factors attributable to individuals which place them at a higher risk of gang involvement between the ages of 13 – 18 years old, if these factors are present at the age of 12 years. Such factors
include antisocial influences in the neighbourhood, antisocial influences in the family and peers, failure to perform well at school and early initiation of individual problem behaviours. Gang membership was evidenced as being more prolonged should the individual exhibit violent or externalising behaviour. There are clear links between these factors especially the lack of performance at school, to the study by Pitts (2007) where two thirds of those in gangs were excluded from schools. Also, there tends to be a higher degree of antisocial behaviour in areas of relative impoverishment, such as welfare housing areas, where incomes are not as large as in private housing areas, as observed by my daily work and identified by Pitts (2007). A lot of these findings are echoed in the UK based work of Bradshaw (2005), who identifies risk factors from his Edinburgh study. These can broadly be grouped under the headings of; Family Factors in the form of being in care, single parent families, lower parental supervision, more frequent arguments with parents and more punishment from parents. Individual Factors including risk taking impulsivity, which would link back to involvement in violence, criminality and drug taking, identified by Fox, Ward and Lane (2013) in their works on Self-Control Theory, as well as other contributing factors of social class, lower attachment to school and association with delinquent peers linked to gangs.

It is difficult to recognise individual factors which contribute to gang membership, as identified by Bullock and Tilley (2008), though there is research that identifies contributing factors. Densley & Stevens, (2015) identify an offending history coupled with that of offending of family members, association (actual or suspected) with firearms, and association with prominent gang members as contributing factors. Sibling involvement in gang membership is seen as a factor by Densley (2012) and Young, Fitzgibbon and Silverstone (2014). Regular visits to a residence in a gang related area, being a victim of a gang, mental health issues, low self-esteem, drug involvement, being in care, having abusive / violent / neglectful parents, homelessness, truancy or exclusion from school are factors associated with gang membership, highlighted by the Home Office (2011).

Many parallels can be drawn from the research evidence, notably a lack of parental supervision, whether from lack of available time, due to the circumstances of the parent, absenteeism as a result of imprisonment, or through choice. The influence parents and peers through behaviour and gang membership is a factor identified on several occasions. This coupled with low attainment and / or attendance at school, a penchant for risk taking and a need for acceptance, can be further contributing factors as identified in research evidence.
cited above. Many of these identifying factors can be seen in the work of Burt (1925) and his work into delinquent youths.

Another fact that has been attributed to gang membership is ethnicity, with Pitts (2007, p.39) citing the Metropolitan Police Pan London Gang Profile (2006) stating that 48% of gang members were of an African / Caribbean descent and 21% being of an Asian descent. The Home Office (2011) refute this, arguing that gangs are based on territory and social networks rather than ethnicity, therefore reflecting the demographics of an area. This may also be a factor, but there is no denying that ethnicity can and often does play a part in the formation of gangs. In my experience, one gang drew its members from a ten-mile radius, though they all frequented the same geographic location with membership largely based on race, though there was a small overlap with persons from other ethnic backgrounds. There was a rivalry with another group of youths, who had no ethnic minority members within their group and displayed affiliations with the English Defence League. Race was clearly a factor in defining which group youths would become involved in. This is a situation mirrored in the USA where there are gangs heavily linked to ethnic heritage, such as the Sureno which are of Hispanic origin, as are the Nortenos and the Bloods, Crips and Folk, which are largely of a black background. As we follow the progression along the gang continuum towards the Organised Crime Groups within the UK, we often see ethnic affiliations, with recognised crime groups amongst the Jamaican Yardies, Russian Mafia, Chinese Triads and organised crime groups emanating from former Eastern Bloc countries such as Albania, amongst others.

There are undoubtedly female members of street gangs, including those identified in this study. However, there is a much lower membership associated with this gender and the type of offending tends to differ. Pitts (2007) recognised that girls tended to be loosely associated with the gangs, being used to hold weapons and were subject to sexual exploitation, a fact also identified by the Home Office (2011). Several trigger factors for involvement in gangs / Delinquent Youth Groups, identified by Sharp et al (2006), were applicable to both males and females. These included having friends who are in trouble with the police, being excluded from school and having strong affiliations with delinquent youth groups. Sharp et al identified that females tended to be attracted to gangs for other reasons. These included there being less to do in their area and poor teaching and discipline within a school. This differed from drinking behaviour and attitude towards delinquent acts which were identified as male triggers. However, many of the other triggers remained the same.
It is extremely important that the triggers identified in these papers are addressed in a holistic and sustainable manner. The continued social connections with gangs, by young people impedes growth in social realms such as education and employment, with this embeddedness acting as an evolving and cumulative disadvantage which feeds the cycle of social disadvantage, as identified by Pyrooz, Sweeten and Aquero (2011).

Gang prevalence in the UK.

While the identified factors are enough to suggest a response is needed, it is the prevalence of these gangs and youth involvement that will drive the urgency and scope of this intervention.

In response to the London Riots of the summer of 2011, Theresa May, then the UK Home Secretary stated “Gangs and youth violence has been a serious problem in some of our cities for several years now...we need to do more to prevent young people joining gangs or getting involved in violent crimes” (Home Office, 2011, p.3).

The Home Office (2011, p. 17) identifies that youth surveys have found between two to seven percent of youths aged between ten years and nineteen years report being a gang member. Within this group, there will be the Wannabees and those who do not wish to disclose gang involvement, but self-reporting has often been proscribed as the most effective way of gathering such data, with advocates of the technique including Bradshaw & Smith (2005), Esbensen & Weerman (2005), Curry (2000) and Gordon, Lahey, Kawai, Stouthamer-Loeber & Farrington (2004). This is a disturbingly large number of youths involved in gang activity and an increase on the figures previously provided, with Stelfox (1998, p.398) stating that there were seventy-one gangs in the UK, while a figure of one hundred and seventy-one London Gangs was put forward by the Metropolitan Police Authority (2008, p.54-5). Figures seemingly continued to rise through 2008, when Hayden (2008, p.24-25) stated that 23% of a survey of 1,320 Year 10 students (14-15 years), from fourteen different schools, self-nominated as a gang member. This figure dropped to 3.9% when complying with the Eurogang criteria and 4% if only one criteria of the five stipulated by Eurogang was missing. Within the schools there was a range from 0% to 11.3% of respondents who met the Eurogang criteria. These figures were comparable with another school survey conducted by Klein, Weerman and Thornberry (2006). If the Home Office (2011) figures are correct, then
we are seeing an exponential growth in youth involvement in street gangs, with the associated undesirable consequences.

While the numbers involved in gangs are relatively high in regard to the proportion of the population, the degree of involvement can vary. Pitts (2007, p.74) identified that one percent of the age range between ten years and twenty-nine years were involved in gangs, but that in regards to one specific gang of sixty-five members, there were five Core members / Elders (7%), ten Soldiers / Youngers (14%), ten Shooters / Street Drug Dealers (14%), ten Wannabees / Girlfriends (14%), twenty Occasional (Ambivalent) Associates (20%) and ten Reluctant Affiliates (14%). So as can be seen in a group of sixty-five self-reporting gang members, there were actually only twenty-five (35%) with regular involvement in criminal activity, with another ten (14%) aspiring to greater involvement. Indeed, in regard to the overall study of 600 – 700 individuals in the nominated age range, Pitts (2007) identified two hundred and fifty “Reluctant Gangsters” two hundred and fifty “Wannabees”, one hundred and sixty “Soldiers” and sixty “Core.” This is still a considerable number of individuals involved in street gang criminality, but the figures quoted align to other research evidence. The overall population of ten year – twenty-nine-year olds in Waltham Forest, during the survey was 66,969 (Pitts, 2007, p.30, citing National Census 2001). These figures would suggest an involvement in the region of 1%, though with an active involvement more in the region of 0.32%, with the core accounting for 0.08% of the population. The figures will vary by geographic location and the relative social and economic conditions, but Pitts study does illustrate that there is a large discrepancy between core involvement in street gangs and just being affiliated to a street gang.

Many of the UK and US studies have concentrated in larger metropolitan areas, such as in the US; Seattle (Battin, Hill, Abbott, Catalano & Hawkins, 1998), Denver (Esbensen and Huizinga 1993) and Rochester (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte & Chard-Wierschem (1993) Thornberry, Lizotte, Krohn, Farnworth & Jang (1994), Thornberry (1998)). In the UK research has followed a similar pattern with the following research sites; Waltham Forest, London (Pitts, 2007), Edinburgh (Bradshaw and Smith, 2005) London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and Strathclyde (Home Office, 2008). Despite this, Maxson and Klein (1994) and Curry, Ball & Decker (1996), Home Office (2015) have identified that gangs are present in smaller communities. This shows how the gang culture has spread and also
identifies a gap in the research data in regards to small towns and cities and potential differing motives for youth’s involvement.

**Gang prevalence in the USA**

While practitioners and academics debate the prevalence of gangs in the UK, there is no disputing the gang prevalence in the USA, as research evidence exists to support this fact. In 2015, law enforcement identified 33,000 violent street gangs, motorcycle gangs and prison gangs with about 1.4 million members in the US and Puerto Rico. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015). These figures differ from the US Based National Gang Centre who in 2012 reported 30,700 gangs and 850,000 members; however, this was focused on a National Youth Gang Survey and achieved an 83% coverage rate (National Gang Centre 2012). Another study which indicates that the prevalence of gang in the USA, is that of Pyrooz & Sweeten (2015). In this research, it was indicated that there was a youth gang membership (5 – 17 years old) in the USA of 1,059,000. This figure being derived from a sample of 7,335 individuals and then extrapolated. These figures would indicate that the real gang figure in excess of those reported in the two government papers.

This research evidence surprisingly indicates that there is a similar percentage of the population involved in gang activity in the USA as the UK. Pyrooz & Sweeten (2015, p.416) identify a mean percentage of 2% (1.2% - 2.8%) of youths involved in gangs between the ages of 5 years and 17 years, though this average is highly affected by the results of less than 1% from the ages of 5 years to 9 years. When we look at the figures for membership at 13 years at 2.3% (1.5% - 3.4%) and 14 years at 5% (3.9% - 6.0%) we can see they resemble to figures quoted by the Home Office (2011, p.17) of 2% to 7% of youths aged between 10 years and 19 years being involved in street gangs in the UK.

**Is the gang problem overstated?**

A factor that needs to be accounted for in regards to the public perception of the gang problem is the influence of the media. Jensen and Tuibodeaux (2013) identify that public perceptions in the US are driven by media sensationalism and generalisation. Jensen and Tuibodeaux identify that other constructionists suggest that the police are responsible for
fabricating generalised panics that do not coincide with reality, these views being supported by Hallsworth (2013) and Shute and Medina (2014). However, this was balanced with the view that most researchers agreed that gang behaviour had developed and evolved in the past twenty years.

As can be seen by the comments, post the UK Riots of 2011, linked to Theresa May (Home Office, 2011) and David Cameron (Hallsworth and Brotherton, 2012), the political agenda can greatly influence media coverage. Politics are not confined to the politicians and are evident in police messages disseminated via social and traditional media. Should it be the incumbent Chief Officers prerogative to tackle youth crime, then this issue may gain more attention and commentary regarding how well the local police are tackling the issue, resulting increased media coverage. However, if the local Police Chief is concentrating on community safety and wants to portray their area as a safe area to live, then it is far less likely to see the police commenting about the presence of street gangs and youth crime.

Regarding the politicisation of media reporting, Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012) cite Christie (2001) in identifying drugs users in Oslo as a suitable enemy, the social construction of which no one can argue. Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012) identify gangs as a suitable enemy in the light of the riots and identify that the fear provoked is not always proportionate to the danger of the threat, but that this fear can be ratcheted up by “deviance amplification spirals” resulting in moral panic.

Hallsworth (2013) has questioned the prevalence of gangs in the UK and sees this growing area of research as being driven by “gang talkers” defining Gang Talk as “a conspiracy discourse, by those with vested interests, but no real-world involvement.” Hallsworth argues that there has been a blurring of the lines between street life and purported gang involvement, arguing that gang researchers such as Delaney and Pitts, over generalise the crime continuum between street gangs and organised crime and that gangs are not linked to the crimes attributed to them. Hallsworth sees gang talk as a discourse of power, as gang talkers define deviance and predominate over street representations. This discourse then permeates the middle classes, causing anxieties about social disorder, disintegration and chaos. These views are supported by Shute and Medina (2014), who argue that even though youth crime is falling, there is a focus on gangs to create moral panic, therefore justifying more police powers in socially marginalised communities, further embedding the suppression led policy.
Previous findings relating to motivating factors behind youth involvement in gangs

Having examined the socio-economic factors linked to street gang members and the politicisation of the problem that drives the response, there is a need to understand the individual drivers behind becoming part of a street gang. Why would a young person choose a life of increased drug exposure, violence and possibly death? Is it the trappings of wealth that are displayed in the numerous music videos? Is it the lack of resources and the resulting boredom, or is it the need for self-esteem and protection?

A lot has been made of the influence of territoriality in the formation of street gangs. It is thought that young men were bound together in order to protect their perceived territory and this led to violence and street gangs. Is the emergence of street gangs attributable to racial tensions from the nineteen seventies and eighties, as suggested by Kintera, Bannister, Pickering, Reid and Suzuki (2008)? This research identifies that minority ethnic gangs formed to protect themselves and their communities from racist attacks, with protection as the main focus, a trait they concede is still continuing and not solely attributable to race, but the fear of violence in a locality. Territory and post code are identified as “part of the raison d’être, an integral part of identity” for street gangs by Farmer & Hairston Jr. (2013), Densley and Stevens (2015), Antrobus et al (2009). This view is shared by Pitts (2007) (a), who links the territoriality to the increasingly tenuous links to the drugs business and the territorial violence as a means to display aggression and fighting prowess, so as to gain respect. Despite the recognition that gang activity can be linked to territoriality Kintera et al (2008, p.14) reconcile this by stating “Territoriality is associated with gang membership, although, to be clear, gangs are not the only expression of territoriality and by no means are all gangs territorial.”

There are others such as Toy (2011) who believe that territoriality and gang involvement is a misconception. Toy suggests that gangs are about illegal economy, with feuds relating to this, and the desire for retribution relating to impingement on another’s share of this economy. These factors coupled with personal conflicts due to perceptions of being “disrespected”, being the real drivers. This can be linked to territoriality, but by means of marketplace, rather than defending one’s neighbourhood. In order to sell drugs, at a street level, you must have an
established area for your customers to come and purchase from, therefore your territory must be vigorously and ruthlessly defended, both to establish the marketplace and also to maintain order within it and deter rivals, who might wish to encroach.

While certain gangs to lay claim to territories, it cannot be said that residing in one of these territories is the sole motivating factor for youth’s involvement in gang activity. There are many stories of individuals coming from “gang riddled” neighbourhoods and making a major success of their lives. One such example is that of Richard Sherman, the Seattle Seahawk Cornerback, Super Bowl winner in 2014 at Super Bowl XLVIII. Sherman is from the notorious Compton District of Los Angeles, but he graduated from Stanford University, with a degree in communication and pursued a Masters Degree. All this has been achieved, without gaining a criminal record, against the backdrop of growing up in a neighbourhood synonymous with a heavy concentration of Bloods and Cripps, made notorious in the Gangsta Rap NWA song “Straight Outta Compton.” If individuals like Sherman can avoid gang activity, what other drivers are there apart from territory?

Several academics including Densley (2014), Marshall et al (2005) and Kintera et al (2008) believe that gangs start as a means of keeping entertained, with friends. They suggest this often occurs when there are little or no facilities or opportunities, often in impoverished neighbourhoods, where family budgets do not allow for chargeable entertainment, or to provide transport to areas, where there may be free activities and open space. Hallsworth (2013) identifies the street as a place where young people are often decanted to in poorer neighbourhoods, due to a lack of space at home. He calls the street a place of wonder and enchantment, identifying that street gang members are likely to inhabit these spaces as well, due to them wanting to be where the action is. This is not a new theory. Cyril Burt (1925) also identifies that the lack of things to do and the displacement from often overcrowded family homes onto the street, can lead to boredom and mischief. Where there is little to do on the street, this can often lead to petty criminal acts, and as with the Broken Windows Theory of Kelling and Wilson (1982), if this goes unchecked, these petty acts can evolve into more serious criminality.

Other reasons given for youths’ involvement in gangs, are family breakdown and the lack of a father figure in the family (Antrobus et al, 2009), or weak family ties, common in immigrant families geographically removed from their former support networks (Densley,
In these situations, youths may look outside the family for support and effective peers. This is often found in their friends, which if already gang affiliated can lead to the affiliation of the individual themselves, as they seek to please and emulate their new “family” (Densley, 2014). This can be more prevalent in low income areas, where there is less physical space. Here youths can often be displaced from the home, as they are seen as an irritant. Sometimes they are offered no support in the familial home and therefore their normative location is the street, associating more readily with their fellow street dwellers, than their families. These factors can then link in with those identified by Burt (1925), Densley (2014), Marshall et al (2005) and Kintera et al (2008) and lead to involvement in petty crime and misdemeanours.

Vulnerable youths can grow up without the financial support from their familial peers, meaning they must find an alternative source of income. Historically the employment of the working class has been in factories or industrial works. With increased mechanisation and a move away from the traditional industry, the avenues for youth employment have dwindled. This decline of the traditional manufacturing industries led to falling employment for those leaving school. Pitts (2007a) notes that between 1984 and 1997, the employment rate of those aged 16-24, in the UK, dropped by 40%. From figures produced by Field and White (2007), there was a further increase of 70,000 in unemployment between 1998 and 2007. By December 2011, this had risen to 1.04 million, with an unemployment rate of 22.5% amongst the same age group. (Riots Communities and Victims Panel, 2012, p.59). This has led to the use of the phrase NEET – Not in Education, Employment, Training. With so few people leaving education able to secure meaningful employment, coupled with already deprived conditions and isolation from opportunities, is it any wonder that youths are turning to the more materially orientated gangs (Kintrea et al 2008). Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012) identify there is now a case of chronic job insecurity for many young people today. Many of those who are technically employed are on zero-hour contracts, which mean that no steady source of income can be relied on. Temporary jobs remain temporary and rarely turn into permanent positions. Aside from the financial implications of increased unemployment, the deeper-seated problem, recognised by Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012), is that there is no transition from childhood to adulthood for many working class males. It used to be the case that you finished school, got a job and then provided for your family. With the transition being removed, where is boundary between childhood and adulthood? More importantly where does a young disenfranchised male gain the respect that used to be gained from providing for his family, by holding down a steady job? This has led to a large percentage of
the male population being volatile and alienated, from a chaotic background, whose formative experiences of formal institutions are negative (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009).

Young et al (2007) and Antrobus et al (2009) identified respect as an important reason for youths to join gangs in both the US and the UK, with Pitts, (2007) stating that reputation was more important than money, identifying that many gang members have virtually an obsessional preoccupation with status and respect. Hallsworth (2013) identifies that the search of honour and respect is the imperative around which street life is organised. Being able to define oneself as a man, independent of one’s family and able to provide, is one of the central tenets of the successful transition from child, through adolescence and into adulthood. This is important, so as to gain the respect of your parents and peers. This is often achieved through the establishment of steady improvement. This notion is supported by Hallsworth (2013, p.148) who states “Respect is a social good also sought by everyone else in mainstream society, including the wealthy, powerful and privileged. What differs is the way it is achieved.” With the decimation of the traditional manufacturing jobs of the working class, respect must be earned by other means.

In their Interim Report into the London Riots, The Riots Communities and Victims Panel (2011) found that young people had a sense of injustice, felt powerless and saw a lack of opportunities for themselves, which weighted heavily on their mind. This led them to believe that they did not have a stake in society. Moran (2015) identified that a sense of inferiority can lead to feelings of shame and that street subcultures serve to generate pride by drawing on the solidarity values found in working classes, which enable commitment to peers and places, therefore serving to convert the shame into self-worth, dignity and respect. Densley (2014), when interviewing gang members, identified that by committing criminal acts the individuals gained respect. Further to this Densley identified that this reputation enhanced the ability of the individual to conduct more criminality, such as drug dealing. Families also benefit from an individual’s reputation and respect as identified by Young, Fitzgibbon and Silverstone (2014) who saw benefits to families of those who were respected, in so much that it raised the families away from the risk of victimisation.

With legitimate jobs being restrictive, demeaning, and poorly paid, and seen as adding to the wealth of those who seem to exclude individuals from society, in the form of taxation (Densley & Stevens (2015)), it seems logical that those with a disposition for risk taking and
impulsiveness, seek alternative, more independent means to gain respect and provide for their family in more than just a monetary manner.

This is not a position unique to the UK. Studies by Anderson (1994 & 1999) in Philadelphia, found that poverty, unemployment, a perceived lack of quality of public services, in the form of the police and social welfare, aligned with discrimination, led to feelings of mistrust and isolation in the legal system. This in turn led to the rejection of white middle-class values of status and success gained through materialism, to as more achievable option of respect through toughness. Matsude et al (2012, p.3) defined “The code of the street” as “One’s own respect must be defended”. From a sample of 2,000 individuals from gang reduction programs, educational and training research providers, across seven states of New Mexico, Illinois, Texas, Colorado, Tennessee, Pennsylvania and Oregon, Matsude et al, found that gang membership, led to a greater acceptance of “The code of the street”.

It seems that in the globally uncertain financial times, youths are being increasingly heavily hit. It is now more expensive to attend university, due to the introduction of educational fees, in the UK, meaning that, despite this being means tested, there will be youths, who are not acquiring the education their intellect deserves. Due to the changing employment markets many youths face an uncertain economic future. The transition to gain respect from a different source is not difficult to understand. Everyone wishes to be respected and if the only apparent way to gain respect is thorough ruthlessness and toughness on the streets, then there are those, who in the absence of other opportunities, will be willing to take this route along with the inherent risks it entails. As the white middle classes and politicians struggle to comprehend what can be done to prevent gang behaviour, they continue to pursue policies of suppression. They fail to see that in the drive to acquire respect and status themselves, through improved efficiencies, resulting in less manual jobs and spiralling energy and food bills, they have marginalised these youths. In some instances, these marginalised youths see no other route, but to take what they aspire to by force, or through the sale of items shunned by the legitimate economy.

Often coupled with notions of respect, status and success is the allure of money. In the capitalist world, rich people are often seen as the ultimate in success and research evidence suggests that it is this material draw, which turns youths to street gang culture (Young et al 2007, Antrobus 2009, Melde et al 2012). With many street gangs being found in relatively
impoverished neighbourhoods, opportunities are not readily forthcoming. Some would argue that in the modern societies of the UK and the USA, there is adequate welfare provision for those without a job. Indeed, in the UK, there is often a local authority house provided, an acceptance that certain taxes are not paid and also the entitlement to benefits. However, in a world dominated by smart phones, tablets, fashion etc., where the Job Seekers Allowance, as at 19/03/2014 was £56.24 per week, for those aged 16-24 years old, this does not provide for items, so cleverly marketed by the big corporations. Kintera et al (2008) argue that it is this material inequality, which motivates youths to get involved in crime through street gangs and Densley and Stevens (2015) argue that the drive for money and materials is a self-destructive response to the conditions that capitalism has created.

While money and monetary gain, might be the aim of some of those who join street gangs, Densley (2014) argues that actual monetary gain from gang involvement is minimal. However, Densley (2014) goes on to identify, that when money is made, via this means, it is not easily invested due to increasing money laundering regulations. Therefore, this money invariably gets invested in drugs and guns, a view supported by Kintera et al (2008), with the sale of these items leading to more money. As we can see from this, involvement in street gangs, where money is involved can place a youth on the crime conveyor belt and see them progress through the crime continuum, from troublesome youths to organised crime, where serious amounts of drugs and guns are traded. As involvement in this market increases, so do the risks, not just in regards to attention from lawful authorities and the risk of imprisonment, but also from others involved in this trade, where morals are often lacking and retribution for failure to pay, or transgression into another’s market place can be met with serious violence or worse.

With involvement in criminality the need for protection becomes more apparent. Protection is a factor Fitzgerald et al (2007), Marshall et al (2005), Farmer & Hariston (2013) and Densley & Stevens (2015) identified as a motivating factor for gang involvement. Youths may also seek the protection of a gang to alleviate bullying, or to feel safer in their neighbourhood. Pitts (2007) identifies that previously non-affiliated youths can often join gangs for protection with several youths in his research pool joining for protection, even though they did not want to. Pitts also noted that, by not joining the gang, the youth could be socially excluded from certain events and facilities, especially if a certain gang had established a degree of control in this area or facility. This obviously poses a conundrum for the youth, as previously it was
identified that gang membership could result in exclusion from facilities and geographic locations.

There is research evidence that youths become affiliated with gangs for protection, even though there might be a reticence for the youths to admit this on the street. Melde et al, (2012) identify that those who tend to join a gang for protection, actually experience an increase in victimisation. These findings were supported by Pyrooz, Maile and Decker (2013) and Young, Fitzgibbon and Silverstone (2014). The unfortunate truth for some of those who become involved, is that once they have embarked on this life course, it is increasingly difficult to leave and, in some instances, expressing a desire to leave, may result in experiencing violence above and beyond that which they joined to avoid.

There is often a culture of friendship portrayed in the movies, where genuine friendships transcend the gang violence. This notion was voiced by young people in gangs, who I have encountered, both professionally and in both research sites. Densley (2014) identifies that gangs can act as social support, peer affirmation and a surrogate family, especially in the absence of an individual’s real family. Young et al (2007) identify that girls may be more drawn into this world, on the pretext of friendship, but this is also usually based around protection. However, it seems that peer pressure from gang affiliated youths, who are friends of an individual might be a far bigger factor. This idea is supported by Melde et al (2012) who identify the push factor of following family and peers, as one of the most common push factors, citing Spergel (1966), Thornberry et al (2003) and Vigil, (1998), as other proponents of this view. Chu et al (2011) identify that gang affiliated youth often have low self-esteem and a greater need to belong, as identified by Dukes and Stein (2003), Esbensen and Deschenes (1998), White (2002) and White and Mason (2006). Due to these reasons, Chu et al (2011) state that peer influenced behaviour is likely to have a far greater effect on gang affiliated youths, than non-affiliated youths, due to this need to belong. Young et al (2007) identify peer pressure on joining secondary school at the approximate age of eleven, as a large driver in gang affiliation. This peer pressure to become involved, coupled with insecurities of joining what is usually a bigger school and feeling the need to establish oneself, gain acceptance and gain respect, is a potent mix and one ripe for exploitation and the commencement of gang affiliation.
Gang affiliated youths have several identified risk factors attached to them. Existence of these factors in youths could indicate a substantially higher risk of becoming gang affiliated. This was identified by Klein and Maxson (2006) cited by Chu et al (2010) and Esbensen, Peterson, Taylor & Freng (2009) cited by Melde et al (2012). Klein and Maxson identify the following as contributory risk factors preceding gang involvement “negative life events, co-occurring non-delinquent behaviours and delinquent beliefs, poor paternal supervision and delinquent peer networks”. Esbensen et al (2009) identify five generic risk areas as individual, family, peer, school and community. A lot of the factors identified by Klein and Maxson fit into the broad categories identified by Esbensen et al, but there are clear links between parental involvement as well as internal and external familial peers, in the life of a youth on the cusp of gang involvement. This is of course coupled with many other factors but reinforces that fact that the people who surround you have a great impact on your life and your life choices. Those who end up in gangs, often are from homes and communities where there is little encouragement or belief that they will succeed and where circumstances often transpire against them, making life at a young age very difficult. Without encouragement or support it would be very easy for the young person to become disillusioned and look for alternative routes to succeed and gain respect, with one viable option, in often deprived neighbourhoods, being a street gang.

**Benefits of street gang membership**

This paper focuses on identifying what motivates youths to become involved in street gangs, with the aim of contributing to the pool of knowledge that seeks to deter more youths becoming embroiled in negative gang activities. However, it would be remiss not to reflect on the benefits that can be derived from such membership. Benefits beyond those envisaged by those involved, such as monetary gain, increased respect and rebellion against the system, which has cast them aside, are identified in several research articles. The fact that gangs can provide a haven for youths trying to withdraw from mainstream social interaction has been identified by Howell (1998) with Spergel (1995) identifying safety from racist attacks. But as seen previously, those who seek sanctuary in a gang, for the perceived protection, can often find themselves at increased risk of victimisation, as identified by Melde et al, (2012). This however might be far more pronounced in those seeking social withdrawal, than a group of people from a similar racial background, who band together for protection.
A far more beneficial aspect of gangs, is that these affiliations, whether they are loose, or constrained by a written constitution, such as that of the Latin Kings, provide a sense of family for the individual (Kintera et al (2008) and Densley (2014)). Often these individuals, through no fault of their own, find their family breaking down, especially in the high stress environments of socially deprived environments. In these circumstances, gangs can provide a social life and activities outside the familial home (Densley 2014). In the wider context, benefits for the community have also been observed, such as when gangs progress to the governance stage and are well established in a community. Here the benefits go beyond the gang and affect the community, as identified by Densley (2014), who observed gangs protecting some communities from violence and exploitation in London, as well as providing financial sustenance, organising recreational activities and serving the community.

While certain benefits of gang presence are evident, research evidence identifies an increased propensity for crime, especially violence and drug related crime, in areas where gangs are present. When young people are dying because of gang presence or gang involvement, it is morally correct to explore the factors surrounding this involvement and ascertain if strategies can be identified to reduce the gang’s negative impact upon individuals and communities.

While there is a vast library of literature surrounding gangs and why young people get involved in the context of the major cities of the USA, as well as a growing amount of academic literature on UK gangs, this tends to be focused on larger metropolitan areas as highlighted in the following papers; Burt (1925) – London, Bradshaw and Smith (2005), Edinburgh, Marshall, Webb & Tilley (2005), London, Squires, Silvestri, Grimshaw & Soloman (2008), London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow, Bullock & Tilley (2008), Manchester, Toy (2011), London, Williams (2015), North West, Windle and Briggs (2015). In these studies, it has been identified that violence, criminality, money, respect, boredom, friendship, race and protection are all contributing factors to youth’s involvement in UK street gangs. What is not evident is whether the same factors identified and attributed to youths’ involvement within these large urban environments, are present within smaller cities and towns, where there are different demographic, geographic and socio-economic factors that could influence youths.

The field research conducted for this thesis seeks to bridge this gap in current knowledge by drawing on the existing academic knowledge to establish if these factors are identifiable as
motivating factors for street gang involvement amongst youths in smaller, non-metropolitan areas and if so, which has the largest influence. It is hoped that the study will contribute to the growing pool of knowledge, allowing policy makers to identify if successful strategic interventions and policies developed in larger urban settings will work in less populous areas. If different factors are prevalent, different strategies need to be developed, which will have a better chance of being effective if implemented. This is something that despite the growing academic discourse on the gang situation in the UK, seems to have been overlooked, against what is a constantly changing picture of gang activity, behaviour and expansion.

**Policy Transfer**

Implementation of US policy is not new to the UK. Over the last twenty years we have adopted several US developed concepts including the Child Support Agency (Dolowitz 2000) and Sure Start (Hulme, 2000). Though despite Rothman (1995, p.29) describing the American criminal justice system as “remarkably ineffective, absurdly expensive, grossly inhumane and ridiculed with discrimination” the UK still seems to lean towards implementing US policies as evidenced by the recommendations of Antrobus (2009).

Why is it that we in the UK seem so keen to implement policy responses adopted by the USA? Newburn (2002, p172) argues that this is due to a phenomenon called “ideological proximity” where the governing parties in respective countries hold a similar ideological view as evidenced by the Thatcher / Regan relationship and the Blair / Clinton relationship. Newburn argues this lends itself to one country viewing the others policies sympathetically and that by adopting the same policies they can define their problems in similar ways. This then lends itself to a shared language with which to define and address the issues at hand and a way to explain and justify policies.

Another reason identified is that of the commercial interests of individuals. Such an example is privatisation within the prison sector where private companies such as Wackenhut, run as Premier Prison Services in the UK in 2002 operated three UK prisons (Newburn, 2002 p.179) With Hallsworth (2013, p.69) making reference to “gang talkers” as those with a vested interest in talking up the gang problem, are we seeing the possible commercialisation of anti-gang initiatives via policy adoption?
While many accept the term policy transfer, researchers such as Gilardi (2012) point out that the terms of policy transfer, policy convergence and policy diffusion are often used interchangeably, but each have a different meaning. Policy diffusion has been described as “a trend of successive or sequential adoption of practice, policy or programme.” (Berry and Berry 1999, p.171) This describes the gradual uptake of policies by another party, until they reach a level where the policies show a high degree of similarity. Policy transfer was initially seen as “a voluntary process undertaken by civil servants and politicians to emulate best practice” (Stone, 2012, p.485) however since early research this view has developed.

Convergence is not necessarily an outcome of policy transfer, especially when negative lessons are drawn from experience elsewhere, and contribute to divergence. What policy transfer literature also allows us to see is the possibilities for convergence around the broad policy objectives and principles but scope for divergence with regard to the instruments adopted, type of legislation or institutional modes of policy control / delivery.

Stone (2012, p.485)

This shows that policy transfer understanding has now progressed beyond the simple notion of wholesale import of an idea and has evolved into a selective adoption of policies based on evidence of the effectiveness. Research now indicates that a far more discerning process takes place, with positive aspects adopted, while less advantageous policy items are modified or discarded.

When we examine the notion of policy convergence, an argument is made that this is not a conscious choice, such as in the case of policy transfer and policy diffusion, but more of an outcome from structural forces.
Scholarly thinking on “policy convergence” suggests that transfer is less of a consequence of agency and more the outcome of structural forces. That is, driven by industrialisation, globalisation or regionalisation forcing a pattern of increasing similarity in economic, social and political organisation between countries. Where diffusion / transfer attends to the conscious spread of policies and ideas between countries, convergence represents an important counter-factual proposition that challenges the logic of choice.

Stone (2015, p.487)

A good example of policy convergence is the European Union, where the adoption of policy has not always been to the satisfaction of all involved. This in turn has led to the emergence of the far right and ultimately a vote in the UK to leave the European Union.

In terms of this study and the implications for addressing gang membership, the research evidence with regard to drawing on the positive and negative consequences is highly important when deciding if US policies should be adopted. This notion of policy transfer needs to be balanced against numerous other factors including those identified in the methodology regarding comparative studies. Practitioners need to ensure that they implement this expanded view of policy transfer and do not just think that the policy can be adopted wholesale. This needs to be balanced against the suitability to policies for implementation given the differing social and political situations in both countries. This paper will add evidence as to whether US derived policies might have a similar effect in the UK, based on what motivates youths to join street gangs in the first instance.
Chapter 4

Methodology

The overarching methodology behind this research is that of a comparative study into the factors that motivate youths to become involved in street gangs. Pakes (2010) identified that early comparative research was seen as a luxury, with Bayley (1999) going further to say that it was seen as an excuse for international travel and that serious social scientists left such work to dilettantes. Whilst some within my organisation definitely saw my research trip to the USA in the same light, I hope that through applying academic rigour to this study, I am able to change their minds.

These days comparative criminal justice research is seen as a necessity when dealing with the increasingly globalised criminal networks, so as to lead to a coordination of international efforts to stem the flow of criminality (Pakes, 2010). Other advocators of comparative research have identified several reasons to pursue this method of study. These include Bayley (1999, p.6) who identified the reasons of; extending our knowledge of alternative ways of working, developing more powerful insights into human behavior, increasing the likelihood of successful reform and gaining perspective on ourselves and our own systems. Reichel (2008) identified the advantages of avoiding ethnocentrism by looking at other ways of working and checking if they might apply to our own systems, using the knowledge to implement new ways of working and encouraging international cooperation and giving practitioners an understanding of how to work in a ‘flat’ world.

In this study, the comparative was between two different geographical areas, one in the USA and one in the UK. The selection of these sites is covered in more detail below. The focus was on the youths in these areas, recording their thoughts behind why youths joined street gangs. This is identified by Pakes as being a “focused comparison” (Pakes, 2010, p.16), with this particular study taking the form of a “most similar design”, that being;
“A most similar study design takes similar countries for comparison on the assumption that the more similar the units being compared, the more possible it should be to isolate the factors responsible for the differences between them.” (Hague et al (1998, p.281).

I adopted the role of the “Reformer – comparative researcher” (Pakes, 2010, p.23), due to travelling abroad to see if arrangements to tackle gang activity in this study site, could yield answers as how to tackle activities in my home setting.

**Research Approach**

The research plan with regards to this project proposal was devised by drawing on the prior learning and experiences that were gained during part one of the Professional Doctorate, and by reflecting on the best method to achieve the stated aims of the research.

At the outset, I proposed to utilise qualitative and quantitative data to facilitate the research. This allowed me to use the best combination of methods to answer my research question, with this method being identified as offering a practical and outcome orientated method of inquiry, by Johnson and Onwegbu (2004). I conducted my research from the episimological perspective of pragmatism, as it takes into account the importance of the natural world, recognising the social and psychological world, involving language, culture and human institutions, as well as subjective thought. I believe that this approach best suited the project and would generate data that would facilitate the production of a piece of work that is in line with doctoral standards and which would add value to my immediate workplace, the wider policing community and beyond, with regards to understanding gangs. By doing this I will be adding to the body of knowledge that is gradually accruing, in an attempt to divert youths from becoming involved in criminality. This was completed using a deductive approach to conclude whether the data generated from both data sets agrees with existing research evidence surrounding the motivating factors behind street gang involvement, or whether these factors differed in these smaller communities, therefore necessitating a new approach to the issue.
On deciding on how to measure the thoughts of the two different research groups, I needed to decide on how to acquire the data. The intended approach was to combine self-completion questionnaires, with semi-structured interviews, with survey research being highlighted as an excellent tool for primary data gathering (Creswell, 2003). This approach enabled me to utilise the advantages of questionnaires, as in dissemination to a large number of people, with a relatively low-cost implication and elimination of interviewer bias. This research instrument also enabled the gathering of base line information, on issues such as age, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, as well as simple data collection with regards to motivating factors in youths joining street gangs. Direct comparison between to the data received from the two study areas could be achieved, due to the identical questions asked. This method also allowed me to research effectively by avoiding the inevitable ethical conflict between my role as a researcher and my professional role in law enforcement.

Due to the often superficial answers given in questionnaires and the respondents’ choices often being forced into predetermined boxes, it was proposed to augment this approach with semi-structured interviews. This was to gain a deeper understanding of the issues involved, and the feelings and thoughts of the young people, who are at risk of becoming involved in street gangs. With regards to sampling sizes, I envisaged, disseminating the questionnaire to all those who were above the informed age of consent, and who agreed to take part in the study. In addition to this, those who wanted to be involved in interviews, who were classed as a youth or juvenile subject, (under 18 years old), were also going to asked to complete a form expressing the informed consent of their legal guardian. The need for these interviews was driven by the historical low response rate in the use of self-completion questionnaires, as well as the foreseen need to establish as broad an understanding as possible of the problem.

In regard to the semi-structured interviews, it was intended to use the Equal Probability of Selection Method to select between five and ten interviewees, in order to give every respondent, who indicates they have been involved with gangs, or who know people involved in gangs, as equal a chance of being involved in the research as possible.

The UK research was planned to be carried out, through a community school. Here they have a facility which offers, education to those children often excluded from mainstream schooling. This being identified as a risk factor for becoming involved in gang culture (Home Office (2011)). Also, previous students had been involved in such a culture. This school
employed outreach workers who engaged with gang members and troublesome youths. This offered a suitable path to introduction to these young people. The Community School was very keen on becoming involved in the research, with the Project Director, and Founder volunteer, being a vocal supporter as they deemed gang membership a pressing issue for the local community.

In the USA, I involved myself in correspondence with the Police Department at the selected study site. This Police Department offered their unequivocal support for the research, through their anti-gang unit. This was to take the form of introducing me to groups working with youths in order to dissuade them from joining street gangs and showing me evidence of best practice in the setting of this US city. This helped lessen one of the methodological hazards attributed to comparative research, identified as “Touching Base” (Pakes 2010), as in knowing who to talk to in a foreign research setting. It allowed for early identification and approach to several groups involved with youths at risk of gang membership. At these groups and agencies, I explained my research and provided a copy of my questionnaire, as soon as it was finalised, to aide in allowing management of these agencies to decide whether to allow me access to their organisations to disseminate my questionnaires. Within the US the data collection methods were planned to match those of the UK. This research was facilitated by the attainment of a Fulbright Police Research Fellowship, in order to study the proposed research title.

Pakes (2010) identifies that the world of comparative criminal justice is not known for its academic rigour, with methodologies often driven by convenience or opportunism. He goes on to state that there is no need to adopt too rigid a position with regard to methodological imperfections, as it is less important than a balanced assessment of the advantages and weaknesses of the method, so as to allow for evaluation of the findings according to their merits. This being a view shared by Bayley (1978) and Martinson (1978). This element of “convenience” of methodological selection is evident in this research due to the subject matter under investigation and the profession of the researcher, which had the impact of limiting the research designs available. Secondly, having acquired a Fulbright Award to facilitate the study in the US study site, time was a limiting factor, so data needed to be generated to a suitable level for statistical analysis, within a relatively short research window.
The importance of a thorough pre-test of a self-completion questionnaire, prior to dissemination was recognised during the research design phase. This was identified by the use of self-completion questionnaires earlier in the Professional Doctorate, where slightly ambiguous questions, that at the time appeared very clear to the researcher, were obviously not as clear to the recipients of the questionnaire. In this instance a pre-test was envisaged, but due to a clerical error by the ethics committee, resulting in a delay of ethical approval, set against a set research time window in the USA, this was not possible, as ethical clearance was not completed until the research period in the USA had commenced. An adequate time period had been allowed for this to be completed prior to departure, with the project proposal being submitted in August 2010.

**Ethics**

The use of questionnaires allowed for the anonymous collection of data from participants. This was especially important in the UK where dissemination of the questionnaires was undertaken by the venue allowing research to be undertaken. This was essential due to my professional role of a police officer and the potential for ethical conflict if the disclosure of undetected criminal activity had been made to me. If this had occurred I would have had to report this instance, therefore bringing harm to the participant, through their involvement in the study.

In order to avoid ethical conflict during the semi-structured interviews, I recruited a research team of five students from a local university. This allowed for the planned interviews to be conducted in an anonymous manner. All the students recruited had recently completed an elective, undergraduate module at university, entitled “Research without numbers”, which encompassed tuition on how to conduct structured interviews. It was planned that consent would be obtained from the participants, prior to contact with the university students. This was to be achieved by completion of the consent form, by those participants who showed an interest in taking part in the interviews, along with that of their legal guardians, if required. This was organised between myself and the program leader at the Community School. The forms were planned to be returned to the program leader at the Community School and an interview space then being made available once a number of participants were identified. As part of the preamble to the interview, a verbal check was to be conducted by the interviewer,
with the interviewee, in order to ensure the consent form has been completed and returned. The interview was to be audio recorded, with at no point the interviewer asking the interviewee their name, and therefore, no correlation could be able to be drawn between the responses in the interview, and the details on the consent form.

In the USA, the same ethical conflict in regard to my profession did not apply. Due to this I was able to distribute questionnaires and conduct interviews myself, though several venues undertook the distribution of the questionnaires on my behalf. The same research approach was adhered to with regard to anonymous completion of questionnaires, therefore maintaining the anonymity of the individuals partaking in the research. This ensured that no direct link could be made between any admissions of criminal activity and the participant.

Aside from the implications of my role in regard to the ethicality of performing the planned semi-structured interviews in the UK, other ethical considerations surrounded the safety of the respondent and data security. In all instances of data acquisition names were never recorded and each questionnaire was simply coded by a brief lettered code related to the research venue and then assigned a sequential number, e.g. FP1. This allowed for me to understand the geographical origin of the data and keep track of individual responses from these locations, without identifying individuals. Once the questionnaires were completed they were kept in a locked filing cabinet, with only myself having access. Once codified for analysis, they were stored on an encrypted and password protected hard drive, again within the locked filing cabinet. In relation to the semi-structured interviews, it was planned for these to be digitally recorded, then downloaded against a reference number, as above and stored in the same manner. As in the case with the questionnaires, at no point were people’s names asked for, or recorded. By following these procedures, it would be impossible for any individual, including myself to attribute answers to a participant and for anyone else to access the data in its raw format.

**Questionnaire Design**

The design of the questionnaire was essential to the acquisition of enough accurate data for analysis and the identification of trends and patterns. It was deemed important to have a questionnaire which was long enough to ascertain the required information, but not so long as
to dissuade the participant from completion, or indulgence in frivolous answers due to boredom with the process.

The initial rough draft of the questionnaire was devised by comprising a variables list, so as to ensure duplicative issues, unmeasured concepts or undesired emphasises were identified, as per the advice in (Hagan, 2010). From there it was deemed important to establish data which situated the respondent within the study, such as their contact with street gangs, personal gang involvement, length of any involvement and criminal conviction as well as questions about age, sex, ethnicity and education. Questions were also drafted so as to establish baseline knowledge in regard to the subject matter.

Once a collection of variables and other information to be addressed had been established, consideration was then given to how to word the questions and then construct the questionnaire. In doing this consideration of Hagan’s (2003, p.148) “suggestion on questionnaire wording and construction” was undertaken. This included;

- Avoid biased or leading questions
- Avoid double-barrelled questions
- Avoid asking questions in an objectionable manner, which was very important in addressing questions to those still in a gang
- Avoid assuming prior knowledge on the part of the respondent
- Avoid vague wording
- Avoid asking more than you need to know
- Avoid “response set” patterns by reversal questions. This was achieved by reversing the Likert scales in several questions

The questions were largely of a closed nature, so as to lend themselves to coding and eventual statistical analysis, though there were areas where free response open questions were included so as to allow respondents to further explain their views. In organising the questionnaire, the advice of Hagan (2003) was again taken on board, ensuring that the respondent was engaged due to the initial questions being interesting, with the following questions being structured in a logical manner which was easy to follow and avoided the need to skip between sections, on all but one occasion.
The first question introduced the topic and sought to establish the respondent’s views on what constituted a gang. This was due to the multitude of varying academic and practitioner definitions discussed in Chapter 2 of this study. It was important to ensure that what the researcher understood as a gang was clear to the participants. This question also allowed scope for participants to put forward their own ideas and definitions, which was deemed important as this may lead to indications of motivations. In identifying what constituted a gang, the modified version of the Eurogang definition, put forward by Weerman, et al (2009) as discussed in Chapter 1 was presented, with an option to agree or disagree with this. If there was a disagreement, the respondent was asked to provide their own definition.

It was then determined whether participants believed gangs were present in their locality. If so the names of these gangs were requested, as well as details of any contact between the respondent and the gangs and in what setting this had taken place.

Within this section of the questionnaire relating to gang contact, one of the options was to identify oneself as a gang member. If a positive response was attained, qualifying questions pertaining to the length of membership and the acquisition of any criminal record were asked. This was done, so as to attempt to identify any “Wannabee” individuals, as identified by Gordon (2000). When relating to the Eurogang definition, a central tenant, along with other accepted gang definitions is the role of criminality in the gang. If an individual claimed a gang membership of notable duration but declared that they had no criminal record derived from this membership, then this would cast doubt on their claims to genuine membership of a gang. Questions were also asked, in this section, as to any regrets the individual had relating to gang membership. This was done so as to provide data to those seeking to dissuade an individual on the cusp of such membership, as a possible deterrent and help focus gang diversion initiatives.

The next section of the questionnaire explored the central theme of this research by assessing the views of the respondent, as to what motivated youths to join street gangs. This was done by asking the respondent to grade a number of given factors, established through analysis of previous academic works on what motivates youths to join street gangs, on a Likert scale, ranging from one to five. In addition, a free response option was included for the respondent to identify any other reasons which they felt were pertinent to youths joining gangs. This was done in recognition that academics, whilst thoroughly researching the topic area, have rarely
lived in the societies they wish to study and can sometimes force responses into predetermined boxes, within questionnaires. This is something I was keen to avoid, as much as possible.

The next section of the questionnaire addressed the person’s views on gangs, such as whether they saw gangs as glamorous, did gangs worry the individual, the individuals’ perception of the sexual and ethnic composition and age of gang members. The issue of whether gangs were glamorous was included, so to ascertain whether those who had contact with them, aligned their motivational beliefs to the projected glamorous image often portrayed in the media and music industries. This section also explored concerns that the respondents might have in regard to the perceived increase in gang activity and any curtailment of their movement or involvement in activities.

As the reason of this research is to identify why young people join gangs, to assist in devising a rationale to reduce gang membership, it was deemed important to ascertain the respondents view of current police interaction with gangs and their effort to reduce gang activity. This is due to the fact that many academics cited in the literature review, identify that the largest proportion of gang prevention work is currently undertaken by police departments, on both sides of the Atlantic. This is routinely achieved through suppression techniques. In this section respondents were asked about police engagement with gangs, how well they dealt with gangs and what they could do better. Finally, in this section, the respondent was asked what they saw as being effective in preventing gang membership.

The final, short section of the questionnaire asked non-identifiable questions about the respondent, such as age, sex, ethnic background and highest academic achievement. This section had two intended purposes. Firstly, there was a need to establish a relevant research population. It would defeat the object of the research to obtain the views of forty white females, aged in their fifties, who all held doctorates, as they might not be best placed to answer these questions with little direct interaction with gangs. Secondly, this section allowed information to be collated on those who identified themselves as gang members, for comparison against the perceptions of those completing the questionnaires who were not gang members and for comparison against established views, of those who comprise a gang. This section was left until last as Hagan, (2003) states putting such questions at the beginning of a questionnaire would result in a low response rate, due to them being routine, boring and
failing to engage the respondent. The questionnaire, finished by thanking the person for completing the questionnaire and inviting them to partake in an anonymous interview, where they could expand on any topics they wished to.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

Once the data had been collected, the qualitative data from questions; 2, 10, 21, 24, 26, 27, 34 and 35 (Appendix B) was analysed by utilising thematic analysis to analyse the data in a systematic way that results in credible answers to the research question and objectives. This allowed for key issues and themes to be identified. Nkwi, Nyamongo, and Ryan (2001, p.1) define qualitative research as “**Qualitative research involves any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal values**”. The study of the data took an exploratory approach, rather than being hypothesis driven. As identified by Bernard and Ryan (1998) cited by Guest, Macqueen & Namey, (2012, p.9) the text was used as a Proxy for Experience, as it was the perception, feelings, knowledge and behaviours of the individuals which this thesis was concerned with. Semantic analysis and word count, as described by Guest, Macqueen & Namey (2012) were then utilised in a quantitative word-based analysis by evaluating the frequency and co-occurrence of particular words or phrases in the body of the textual data, allowing for identification of key words, repeated ideas, or configuration of words with respect to other words in the text. This allowed for comparison can then be made with respect to these terms between the research populations.

While Guest, Macqueen & Namley (2012) highlight that word-based techniques are noted for their efficiency and reliability, they also draw attention to the fact that this type of analysis can mean that the context of the data is often overlooked. In regard to this study, due to the size of the data pool, therefore allowing for greater scrutiny, I do not feel this was a factor in the analysis.

**Quantitative Data - Statistical Analysis**

Where Likert scales had been reversed throughout the questionnaire so as to avoid response set pattern, in order for the analysis to be under taken all values were standardised so that a value of 1 was assigned as a Big Factor and 5 was Not a Factor for all questions.
The quantitative data was input to SPSS and the responses were split between descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the data by identifying the number of people who responded in each category within a particular question, as well as measuring central tendencies and establishing the significant differences. These statistics were then presented in charts, tables and written comment.

The inferential statistics were utilised to analyse the responses that directly related to factors affecting gang membership. This allows for inferences to be made about the population and to make judgement on the probability that differences between the groups are dependable, or whether they happened by chance (Bennet 2013). Where a significant difference is identified it means that these results are very unlikely to have happened by chance, therefore we should take note of these differences.

T-tests were used to establish if there was a significant difference in the data sets, due to there being two conditions, but only one variable with the data being scalar. The respondent was asked to assign a value on this Likert Scale, ranging from 1 - 5 to the importance of the variable under consideration, such as how much of factor boredom plays in motivating youths to join a street gang.

**Comparative UK / US study sites.**

While the benefits of comparative research were set out at the beginning of this chapter, when looking for a suitable comparative study site in the USA, the problems identified by Mawby (1999) became apparent. This included availability of data. This was due to data being recorded by government agencies under differing statutory recording requirements, an example being the median age of the population. Differing definitions posed challenges, as different criteria were used to measure certain factors, such as the Poverty Line, and educational achievement. Definitional differences were very evident when looking at crime rates and offenses, which meant that broad terms had to be used to group similar types of offences.

In deciding on a US city as an appropriate comparative site for this research, several factors with regards to demographics and geography had to be accounted for. It was always going to
be challenging to find a comparative to the UK city, given that the USA has such a vast landmass, with each state being more like an individual country than a traditional British county. Each state has its own culture, history, climate, geography values and laws, which vary so much across the continent. In identifying the US city, I initially looked for cities with a comparative population to that of the UK study site. Secondly, I examined the geographic location of this city, this being due to the relative isolation of Norwich from other large towns and cities. These were thought to be two of the most important attributes in finding a comparative location. Various other factors were researched and examined, relating to socio-economic and geographic conditions. These included; ethnic composition of the population, demographics, climate and several other factors identified in Table 5 below. It was soon apparent that while similarities could be drawn between Colorado Springs and Norwich, there would always be numerous anomalies, which would need to be allowed for in the analysis of the data. An example of this being the access to health care, which affords free and equal access in the UK, but which requires an expensive insurance policy in the USA. Other factors that differed quite markedly were the ethnic populations present within the data sets of each area, with the UK site having no Hispanic representation, as opposed to the US, where the Hispanic population was well represented in the data set.

**City demographics and size**

As can be seen from Table 5, below, Colorado Springs has a comparable population to the population of Norwich. However, the Colorado Springs is geographically a lot bigger in size than Norwich, having an area 4.8 times larger, resulting in a population density ratio of approximately 1:4.

Colorado Springs has a population which is comprised mainly of a white ethnic background (79.3%) as does Norwich (89.36%). Where the ethnicity base does vary, is in the fact that Norwich has no recorded population of persons of a Hispanic / Latino, or Pacific Islander ethnicity, and similarly Colorado Springs, does not have a recorded population of persons of Chinese ethnicity. Given that the term Asian is often used to describe persons of an Oriental background in the USA, as opposed to a person from the Indian sub-continent in the UK, this may, this may reflect a population of persons of what Norwich describes as “Chinese” of 2.9% in the Colorado Springs, compared to 2.57% in the Norwich. Norwich also has a lower
percentage of persons of Black ethnicity at 1.36%, compared to the Colorado Springs at 6.6%, but the overall trends are similar.

Whilst the median age of residents of Norwich was not recorded, the majority of the population can be seen to fall in the age range of 25-64, with the age ranges of 25-39 and 40-64 both accounting for 25.73% of the population. Colorado Springs has a median age given of 33.6 years at 2009. The adult population is also predominantly comprised of married couples, with Colorado Springs showing a 52.4% marriage rate, against Norwich’s marriage rate of 40.6%. Both cities have a similar divorce rate at 13.5% and 10.2% respectively. In terms of single parent families, the percentage in Colorado Springs is slightly lower at 9.8%, against 10.2% in Norwich. This was thought to be an important comparable, due to the cause of juvenile offending and misbehaviour, often being blamed on coming from a single parent family (Bradshaw, 2005).

**Population financial position**

When examining the financial position of the residents of the two cities, we can see that the residents of the Colorado Springs on average earn 66.31% more than the residents of Norwich. This being the case when an exchange rate of $1.6 - £1 is applied, which was the rate at the time of the data collection. This is counter balanced by a greater unemployment rate in Colorado Springs of 8.7%, compared to the rate of 4.7% in Norwich. This could be an important aspect of the study, as the gap between the “haves” and the “have not’s” could be far greater. This exacerbating the issues identified by Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012), of youths feeling abandoned by society. Of course, to counter unemployment, welfare provisions are made in both countries. It is very difficult to provide a like for like comparison in a short discussion, due to the plethora of different benefits on offer and the different criteria for accessing these. For the purposes of this study and selection of study sites, the welfare provision or Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) was ascertained for a single person recipient, in 2011. In the US, the welfare provision was $674 a month, which equates to approximately £421, in the UK, the JSA stood at £318. In a simplistic view, this would mean that not only does the US average wage earner, earn more than their UK counterpart, by 66%, but a US welfare recipient also receives approximately 25% more than their UK counterpart.
Another factor considered was the percentage of the population who lived below the poverty line, due to the fact that gangs tend to be found in areas of relative financial impoverishment. It was established that different measures were used. In Colorado Springs 6.1% of the population lived below the poverty line, while in Norwich 17.6% of the population were shown as income deprived.

A further factor which might be used to gauge a population’s relative wealth and ability to gain employment are the educational achievement levels. The graduation rate from High School in Colorado Springs was 93.3%, while in Norwich, there was an attainment of five or more GCSE’s, by 48.1% of the population. However, the difference is dramatically reduced when we look at the number of graduates in the population. In Colorado Springs, 37.4% held bachelor degrees or higher, while in Norwich, 27.7% held bachelor degrees or higher. The Colorado Springs participants possibly have access to higher paying jobs in the prevalent sectors of Aerospace / Defence, Bio-Technology, Customer Service, IT and Tourism, as indicated by the 66% higher average earnings in Colorado Springs and the lower amount of people below the poverty line, as compared to the sectors of Business & Financial, Public Service, Retail, Tourism and Manufacturing in Norwich.

**Crime and Law Enforcement**

This was an area where comparisons were difficult, due to definitional challenges. The crime rate per 1,000 residents in Colorado Springs is 389.3, compared to 64 in Norwich. Again, recording standards made a direct comparison difficult, complicated by extracting the figures for a single city in the UK. This is due to the police force in the UK covering a county and where figures reflect County Crime, or distinct districts, not taking account of urban sprawl. Once some simple addition of the crimes which fitted in the relevant categories had been made, the following comparative crime figures were available for criminal activity often associated with gangs.
### 2011 Crime figures for study sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>US</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>US per 1,000 pop.</th>
<th>UK per 1,000 pop.</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Social Behaviour</td>
<td>12,024</td>
<td>18,222</td>
<td>-6,198</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>-21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>3,180</td>
<td>1,330</td>
<td>+1,850</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>+350</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Crime</td>
<td>1,451</td>
<td>1,462</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>3,161</td>
<td>-1,161</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Crime rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>389.3</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>325.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

In terms of the amount of law enforcement personnel available to prevent and detect crime, again, a simple comparison is not easy due to the differing jurisdictions of the respective police departments. In the US, the police department serves the city and therefore a figure for law enforcement agents, who work solely for the city, is easy to ascertain. However, this number is increased, when you take account of the State Troopers, Federal Agents, such as DEA, FBI, ATF, who serve this area alongside the Sheriff’s office. In the UK the situation is reversed, in that the police department, or constabulary, covers a county area, which far exceeds the area of the US city. In order to ascertain a number of officers who worked in the area of Norwich, a Freedom of Information request was submitted, asking how many officers were based in the city. This included officers, who had responsibilities across the county, but did not account for those who were based outside the city, but who would deploy into the city boundary if needed. It transpired that Colorado Springs had 638 officers, compared to Norwich’s 433 officers, accounting for all ranks. This gives an officer ration: population of 1:658 for Colorado Springs and 1:807 for Norwich, or if sticking to the geographic boundaries of the city 1:330. This would give an average of 1:568, as those officers stationed close to, but outside the city boundary cover geographic areas, which can take them far from the geographic boundaries of the city, effectively removing them from officer strength.
Climate and geographic location

An important factor which came under consideration in regard to street gangs, was the average temperature and precipitation. When the elements are inhospitable, the street population decreases, as does the antisocial behaviour, street violence and robberies. When comparing the two cities, the bottom average temperature range differed by 10°C and an upper average range differed by 8°C, with the US having the lower and higher ends respectively. In terms of precipitation there was only a 72mm difference per annum average difference, with the US exhibiting a figure of 409mm and the UK 481mm.

One of the more unique features of Norwich is that in terms of UK cities it is relatively, geographically isolated from other large UK towns or cities. At the time of the research, you needed to travel single lane carriageway to arrive from any of these large conurbations. According to the AA Route Finder, Norwich is 43.4 miles from the next county administrative centre, a large town in an adjoining county and 62.1 miles away from the nearest city. Colorado Springs in comparison is 70 miles south of the nearest large conurbation. Both cities are serviced by airports and both by major road networks; however, Norwich also has a railway station, allowing for easy transportation to other major towns and cities in the region, while Colorado Springs does not.

Four other cities were selected and considered, but these were deemed not suitable for many reasons. The population and the geographic proximity to other large cities being foremost of these reasons. From these factors, it was deemed that the cities in the US and the UK were suitable comparative sites, albeit with variances in certain facts, but with enough similarities to produce a data set worthy of comparison.
### Comparative Data between US and UK study sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All figures from government websites (2011)</strong></td>
<td>All figures from government websites, accessed in 2011 unless stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>419,848 (est. 2011)</td>
<td>143,000 (376,500. <em>Work and live in area</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area (sq. Miles)</strong></td>
<td>194.68</td>
<td>40.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population Density sq. mile</strong></td>
<td>2,325</td>
<td>8,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity:</strong></td>
<td><strong>White</strong> 79.3%</td>
<td>89.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Black</strong> 6.6%</td>
<td>1.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Hispanic/Latino</strong> 14.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Asian</strong> 2.9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Hawaii / Pacific Islander</strong> 0.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Chinese</strong> -</td>
<td>2.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average age</strong></td>
<td>33.6 yrs. (2009)</td>
<td>25 yrs.-64 yrs. 51.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male: Female</strong></td>
<td>49:51</td>
<td>49:51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marriage rates</strong></td>
<td>Never married: 27.2%</td>
<td>Never married 39.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Now married: 52.4%</td>
<td>Married 40.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separated: 2.3%</td>
<td>Separated 3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Widowed: 4.6%</td>
<td>Widowed 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Divorced: 13.5%</td>
<td>Divorced 10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single parent families</strong></td>
<td>9.8% (7.2% female)</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education levels</strong></td>
<td>High school or higher: 93.3%</td>
<td>High school 5 GCSE + 48.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelors Degree or higher: 37.4%</td>
<td>Bachelor Degree or higher 27.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Average household income** | $51,227 (2009)  
(FX@1.6= £32,016) | 9.82 p/h (@ 40hrs p/w =£20,425)  
(FX@ 1.6=$32,680) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployment rate</strong></td>
<td>8.7% (June 2010)</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welfare amount p/m</strong></td>
<td>$674 individual $1011 per couple.</td>
<td>£318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Families below poverty line</strong></td>
<td>6.1% (41.7% of which were female householder families with related children under 5 years)</td>
<td>17.6% income deprived according to Index of deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crimes per 1,000 pop.</strong></td>
<td>383.9</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USA Disorderly Conduct &amp; Disturbance</strong></td>
<td>12,024</td>
<td>18,222 (6 months x2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UK Anti-Social Behaviour</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Police officers</strong></td>
<td>638</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Average house price**     | $246,072 (2010)  
(FX@1.6=£153,795) | £166,954  
(FX@1.6=$267,126) |
| **Main Industries**         | Aerospace / Defence  
Bio-Technology  
Customer service  
IT  
Tourism | Business & Financial  
Public Service  
Retail  
Tourism  
Manufacturing |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance from nearest cities (miles)</th>
<th>70 miles</th>
<th>62.1 miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transport links</td>
<td>Airport / interstate &amp; highway</td>
<td>Airport / A roads / rail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University in City</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Temperature Range (°C)</td>
<td>-8 to 29</td>
<td>2 to 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precipitation avg. (mm)</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.

Data generation methods

In Norwich primary data was initially gathered at a Community School that accommodated young persons excluded from mainstream education. As identified on page 43, of the thesis, the Home Office (2011) has identified this factor as increasing the chances of youths involvement in street gangs. It was also identified that several of those who I had dealt with professionally as a Police Officer, for involvement in gang activity, attended this school. Due to the required number of responses not being generated from this school, the dissemination of the questionnaire was expanded to a Youth Activity centre, where identified gang members had been known to attend.

In Colorado Springs, primary data was gathered by way of questionnaire dissemination at various locations. One of these was via patrols to gang affected neighbourhoods with the Police Department’s specialised Gang Unit (COMMIT). COMMIT is responsible for the multi-faceted mission for the police department’s strategic Gang Reduction Program encompassing enforcement, education and prevention. Here data was collected from individuals who were encountered on daily patrols. Those who answered the questionnaires did so on a voluntary basis, with the COMMIT officers not being present and away from police vehicles and personnel. It was stressed to participants that they were under no obligation to answer the questionnaire and that I was a serving UK police officer. Once
completed the questionnaire was identified by a unique code and then placed randomly amongst other completed questionnaires and kept securely on the researcher for the duration of the tour of duty. At no point did the COMMIT officers have access to any of the completed questionnaires.

Primary data was also gathered from the local Criminal Justice Centre (CJC). CJC houses all individuals arrested on misdemeanour and felony charges by all law enforcement agencies in the El Paso County area. The inmates housed at CJC are pre-trial or sentenced to the County Jail or Department of Corrections. The inmates who were approached were all suspected of gang involvement prior to their detention. It was stressed to the individuals who participated, that their involvement was completely voluntary, and that they were under no obligation to complete the questionnaire. The voluntary completion of the questionnaires was essential to ensuring that the views portrayed in the responses were a true reflection of the opinions of the individuals concerned. These responses were some of the most insightful gained. On being received the questionnaires were coded and stored as per the questionnaires received whilst on patrol. At no point were individual questionnaires shared with CJC staff and no inducements were offered to participants.

With regards to outside agency involvement, four organisations that had direct involvement with youths in the area were approached. These were two agencies directly involved in gang intervention and desistance programs, a Boy and Girls Club, in a neighbourhood well known locally for gang activity, and an organisation which housed homeless youths and provided outreach for them.

A high school, identified as being in a high gang risk area, by the local police force was approached, as was a home for youths on probation. At the home, the need for an independent ethical review prevented the process due to time constraints. At the High School the Principle, after initial interest, declined to be involved in the study, stating that there were no gang members at her school. This was despite the local police force and the incumbent School Liaison Officer, freely stating that there were several dozen, gang affiliated youths who attended and who were well known to the Principle. I believe that this reticence to acknowledge gangs, is part of the ongoing problem in combating gang activity. Schools and public service leaders fear being identified as having a gang problem, due to the perceived negative connotations of the local population about the effectiveness of the managers of the
said services. This prevents leaders identifying and addressing the problem, in order to preserve their status. Clearly this problem, as highlighted in the literature review, as being prevalent in the UK, is not confined to the eastern side of the Atlantic Ocean.

**Reflection on suitability of data collection methods**

It was not possible to conduct semi-structured interviews, due to a lack of volunteers. In hindsight, it was necessary to engage with the community school and various youth groups over a far greater period of time to engender an atmosphere of trust with the students, who were reticent to disclose information to a person they knew was linked to a serving police officer. Due to this a far greater emphasis had to be placed on the responses contained within the detailed questionnaire.

The number of self-completion questionnaires sought, was increased in both the UK and the USA, due to this factor. In the UK, this was achieved by dissemination to youths who attended a city centre youth organisation, where those identified as being involved in the street gangs, frequented. This site was deemed suitable as those youths attending may have had an involvement in street gangs or would have had an association with those involved in such gangs. In all thirty-six completed questionnaires were returned in the UK, twenty of these coming from the community school and sixteen from the youth organisation. In the USA, forty completed questionnaires were obtained, five from contacts established through the police department, twelve from the CJC, five and six from the attendees at the gang intervention and desistance programs, two from the Boys and Girls Club and ten from the homeless outreach organisation. All the responses were gained voluntarily with no coercion or inducement for completion.

Most respondents were 15 to 19 years old, with over 75% being male. In the USA, the ethnic comprisal saw a far higher comparative percentage of Black and Hispanic / Latino participants than exist in the general population, but it was far more representative of the perceived ethnicity of street gang members, that was exhibited by the respondents. In the UK, the ethnical breakdown of those responding was more comparable to the population statistics, but disproportionality white when judged against the perception of the respondents as to the
race of street gang members. A table is present in the appendix which displays the demographic data of those responding to the questionnaire in both study sites.

**Sample achieved**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Site</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Potential Bias</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UK</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community School</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Schools for Youths excluded from mainstream education, with identified, self-stated gang members attending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Group</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Youth Group, open to all, but with identified, self-stated gang members attending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Department</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Persons encountered on patrol with COMMIT</td>
<td>Reticence to answer regarding gang involvement due police encounter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJC</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Houses persons awaiting trial or serving short term sentences.</td>
<td>Reticence to answer regarding gang involvement due to possible sentencing implications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang Desistence (1)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Engages with youths at risk of gang involvement.</td>
<td>Possible implied pressure to be negative towards gangs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang Desistence (2)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Engages with youths at risk of gang involvement</td>
<td>Possible implied pressure to be negative towards gangs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Outreach</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Engages with youths who do not have a defined home. Either street homeless, or sofa surfing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys &amp; Girls Club</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Youth Group in gang affected neighbourhood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Table 6. |
Although self-reporting questionnaires have their critics, including Nettler (1978, p.107) who states that “asking people about their behaviour is a poor way of observing it” and Deutscher (1966); Philips, (1971) (both cited by Hagan 2003), who put forward the argument that there is little relationship between attitude and behaviour, there are others such as Junger-Tas and Marshall (1999, cited by Hagan 2003) who indicate that many of the historic problems associated with the self-reporting method have been addressed by various methods. One that was utilised within this study was the inclusion of a measurement of internal consistency. In this instance, I asked about an individual’s involvement in gang activity, and then asked about their acquisition of a criminal record and type of criminal conviction if any. While this information was important to the study it also sought to check the respondents answer in regard to their involvement in street gang activity, which the Eurogang definition states is linked to criminal activity. Therefore, if an individual claimed a gang membership of 10 years, but claimed no criminal record, this would cast doubt on the validity of the responses gained.

Whilst accepting that self-completion questionnaires are not without their critics, in the context of this study this methodology was the only appropriate data collection method, given the ethical considerations and as Hagan (2003, p.209) states “The only perfect research is no research.”
Chapter 5

Results

This chapter reports on the findings of the questionnaire described in the Methodology chapter, a copy of which is included within the Appendix at page 167. The chapter reports on the data from the forty questionnaires in the USA and thirty-six questionnaires in the UK. The research was grouped into the following areas;

- The presence of gangs in an area and the subjects’ interaction with any such gangs
- Why the respondents felt youths joined gangs
- Respondents views on gangs
- Views on police interactions with youths and gangs
- What might be done to deter youths joining gangs

For the reasons laid out in the methodology chapter, on pages 79 - 80 and also in Table 6 on page 82, I am confident that I identified the correct people for the research. Each individual approached in respect of this study was either an identified gang member or spent a significant amount of recreational time in areas where there was an identified gang presence. This would give the individuals exposure to gang members and therefore form a perception and understanding of why individuals joined street gangs.

Street Gangs and their existence in the study site communities.

The first things the study sought to establish was whether the experiences of the young people surveyed matched the perception of the researcher in regard to the existence of gangs within the locality. Therefore, the first section of research sought to ascertain the respondents’ view of what a gang was and whether gangs existed in the cities where they resided.

It was important to establish what a gang was defined as in the context of the study. It was decided that the respondents should be asked whether they agreed with a definition that was
provided. This was based very closely on the definition used by Eurogang, with the only changes being made so as to simplify the language. The results are shown in table 7 below.

**Do young people agree with the research definition of youth street gangs?**

"A street gang is a youth group, who generally congregate on the streets, or similar outdoor areas, who have been in existence for a significant period of time, and who are recognised as being involved in illegal activity"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>USA SSGM</th>
<th>UK SSGM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes (%)</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (%)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declined (%)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 illustrates that although the definition is based largely on the Eurogang definition, there is still a relatively high percentage of those responding who did not agree with the definition. There was a noticeable difference between the USA and the UK, approximately 17.5% in the overall results and 12.1% difference in the Self-Stat ed Gang Members (SSGM). In both groups, the UK had a higher degree of agreement. Respondents were given an opportunity to state why they disagreed with the given definition, and responses included:

From the USA:

“I consider a street gang to be an outlet for abused or hurt kids that need a family, someone to care” (GL3)

“A family looking out for each other” (HC4)

“A group that protect their culture or neighbourhood” (CJC1)

“A family partially organised and bound together for the safety of each other.” (CJC4)

“A family that’s down for each other, no matter what.” (CJC12)
“Sum(sic) that’s just don’t give a fuck, sum(sic) one that takes, think there sumthing(sic)” (UP1)

From the UK:

“A group of people who want to fight other groups of people and get into trouble” (FP2)

“Not all street gangs get involved in illegal activity” (FP7)

“Like a family” (FP10)

“Bunch people they think they are hard and think they can treat people like shit” (O12)

From the above statements, it is apparent that there is a sense of family associated with the street gang in the USA and to a lesser degree in the UK where a stronger sentiment existed that street gangs can be seen as people exhibiting macho pride and exerting their will through violence. These themes will be examined further within this chapter.

There are obvious implications with a lack of agreement of the subject in respect of the definition of what constitutes a street gang. This lack of agreement could impact on the relevance of their further answers to the research question. However, as seen in the literature review, this is also a disagreement present in the academic and professional arenas. From the free text responses, it seems that most of the disagreement stems from the lack of the term family in the given definition and the degree of involvement in criminality. Again, this disagreement is not unfamiliar in academic circles, with the gang continuum ranging from peer group to organised crime group. Given that the definition is stated to be the one that is central to the research, coupled with the fact that there are no large anomalies between the statements provided and the given definition, it is reasonable to include the remaining responses from these subjects in the research.

The next question went on to ascertain if the respondent felt that there were gangs within the survey city. As stated in the literature review, there is reluctance by some to acknowledge the existence of gangs, especially within the UK, though there was also evidence of this in the
USA. It is for this reason that the respondents were asked their views, as well as comparing this data with official police records where they exist.

**Are Street Gangs present in your city?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think there are street gangs present in your home town?</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes (%)</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>86.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declined to answer (%)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.

As can be seen from Table 8, there was an overwhelming response that street gangs were present in both study sites. To add credibility to the responses, participants were asked to name the gangs that they were aware of. As can be seen in the table below, sixty-one gangs were named by US respondents that are not identified by the US police department. Whether this is through lack of police knowledge of the existence of a group or a feeling that these groups do not constitute a gang is unclear. Of course, within the data set there is a possibility that a proportion of the responses were not genuine and that fictitious groups exist within the data. Within the responses given, Bloods, Crips and Folk have not been named as being recognised by the department or respondents, as they are the overarching principal gangs, from which the subset gangs get their affiliation. There are possibly eight examples of duplication within this data, where initials have been used within questionnaire responses, instead of the full names. Where the full name has been given, with further examples of initials which do not exactly match the full name, each has been treated as a separate entity. This means there may only be eighty-seven gangs named by questionnaire respondents in the data. Some attribution has taken place where initials have exactly matched names given, such as the response ICP being linked with the gang name of Insane Clown Posse, used by the Police Dept. No such comparison can take place with the UK Constabulary covering the study area, as there is no requirement to record such information.

In order to try and validate the answers, those groups named on more than three and five occasions have been highlighted. This is not to say that those named less than three times do not exist, but with the same name being mentioned numerous times a higher degree of certainty can be attributed to a groups existence.
What Street gangs are you aware of?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of street gangs respondent aware of</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of gangs named</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of gangs named by 3+ people</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of gangs named by 5+ people</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of gangs named by respondents on police files</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of gangs named by 3+ respondents on police files</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of gangs on police files</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.

Respondents interactions with Street Gangs

From establishing that there were, in the view of the respondents, street gangs present in the study sites, the type of contact that the respondents had had with street gangs was ascertained.

When have you encountered Street Gangs in the US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US Respondents</th>
<th>37 with Street Gang Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the Street</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in gangs</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-stated gang member</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim of a gang</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Free Responses</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member in gang</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a relationship with gang member</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.
The overall USA respondents indicated that 92.5% of respondents had had direct contact with street gangs, as opposed to 61.1% of the respondents from the UK whose responses are shown in Table 11 below. Respondents were then asked to identify all occasions in which they had been in contact with gangs. The responses are shown in Table 10. There were also sixteen other responses given, in the free text option, which are included in the foot of the Table 10, where the response was cited more than once.

Also mentioned as gang contact occasions were business, neighbourhood contact, gang outreach, and surprisingly contact with gangs through service in the military.

### When have you encountered Street Gangs in the UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UK Respondents</th>
<th>22 with Street Gang Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the Street</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in gangs</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-stated gang member</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim of a gang</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11.

In the UK, twenty-two of the respondents stated that they had had contact with gangs. There was only one person who identified other reasons, and this was given as in a professional capacity.

### Self-Stated Gang Members level of involvement

Those who had identified themselves as gang members in the question about the type of contact situations the respondent had had with gangs, were asked a series of five questions in regards to their current or former membership. With regards to the USA, this meant there were twenty-two respondents, and fifteen from the UK. These questions concerned themselves with, length of membership, criminal convictions as a result of membership, and whether the individual regretted their involvement in gang activity. The question with regards to criminal activity was seen as central to establishing a degree of accuracy in regards to
proclaimed gang membership, as opposed to those who have been dubbed “wannabes” by Antrobus et al (2009).

Without re-entering the debate over definitions in relation to street gangs, the definition of a Wannabe shares all the essential characteristics of the Eurogang definition of a street gang such as a youth group, who engage in criminal behaviour, albeit minor crime. What is lacking in the definition is a reference to durability, and direct reference to congregation in a public space, otherwise the definition is arguably transposable. I would contend that a wannabe group is in the context of UK street gangs, a group of youths who aspire to the film and music industry’s portrayal of a gang lifestyle, who congregates on the streets, and who are involved in no more than anti-social behaviour. Once the wannabes have transgressed into anything more than trifling criminal activity, as a collective entity, then they meet the Eurogang definition of a gang. With the question relating to length of gang membership and any criminal record I sought to establish those who met the Eurogang definition of a street gang, as opposed to those who wished to represent themselves as gang members, when they are no such thing.

**Longevity of gang membership.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-stated length of Gang membership</th>
<th>US (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11+ years</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10 years</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11 months</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5 months</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.

Table 12 clearly shows that there are far less participants with long term gang membership in the UK as opposed to the USA. This could indicate that there is a growing gang culture within the UK, especially as 73.3% of those who stated that they were gang members, had a membership of less than three years. As the question also referred to past membership, it could also indicate that gang membership is nothing more than a passing phase of
adolescence and those individuals do not become motivated or entrenched in the lifestyle and culture, which seems so difficult to escape when in the context of gang membership in the USA.

Self-Stated Gang Members length of membership against criminal record.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of membership</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th></th>
<th>USA</th>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Street related</td>
<td>No street gang related</td>
<td>Street related</td>
<td>No street gang related</td>
<td>street gang related</td>
<td>criminal record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 years +</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11 months</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5 months</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13.

The figures in Table 13 do not mean that the responses from those who declared membership are not accurate, but they do cast doubt on the validity of those who claim longer membership of street gangs, due to the intrinsic nature of a street gang’s involvement in criminal activity. The lack of such a record could be explained by only having a peripheral involvement, or an association with the gang, though this would seem unlikely given the length of membership. Another explanation is that the individual escaped police notice for the duration of their involvement or was not convicted at court. However, given the street gang definition used in this report, these responses must be viewed with care. The same may not be said for those claiming a shorter membership, as they may well work on the periphery of the gang, as they have not earned trust and respect. They may also not have come to the attention of the authorities, due to their relatively new emergence on the gang scene. Again, this is impossible to ascertain, and the presence of a criminal record, and self-declared street gang membership, only gives weight to the claim of membership, while the lack of such a record detracts from the weight of the declaration.
Of those who claimed street gang membership, and disclosed a criminal record associated with that membership, a further question was asked asking them to identify these offences which were grouped into broad categories, for the reasons laid out in the methodology chapter. The results of which are shown in Table 14 below.

### Self-Stated Gang Member’s conviction type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conviction</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theft / Burglary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sexual misconduct</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Witness intimidation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Forgery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Murder</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14.

There were anomalies identified in the responses to the question surrounding the acquisition of a criminal record and convictions within the data set. US based respondents who claimed membership of 6-11months and 7-10 years, claimed convictions for theft (1 respondent), robbery (1 respondent) and drugs (1 respondent), despite claiming to have no criminal convictions in the previous question. This could be attributable to marking the incorrect box on the previous question or could be systematic of a person trying to present themselves in a way which is not accurate, with the respondent falsely answering either of the questions. This is a common problem in the completion of a self-reporting, anonymous questionnaire as there is no verification available. As with the findings for the USA there were results within the UK data that showed anomalies with previous answers, such as persons claiming street gang membership of between 6-11months, claiming single convictions for violence and robbery, despite not disclosing a criminal record. This was coupled with a person claiming 4-6 years of membership stating they had a conviction for a theft / burglary offence, despite denying the existence of a criminal record.
Individuals identifying as current or former street gang members were then asked if they regretted involvement with street gangs. Reasons for regretting involvement in the USA included:

“Almost lost life, kids and family. Shot 6 times” (CSPD2)

“I violently hurt many people. I led family members and friends into that lifestyle and brought drama and negative influences into my life and those around me” (GL4)

“I regret all the years of my life in penitentiaries, my life was filled with people who did not gives a rat’s ass about me. I am 36 and have no career, or plan for retirement” (CJC11)

“Sometimes cuz (sic) of the trouble I have gotten in trouble for” (HC5)

“I have kids now; I put them before anything especially my gang. I don’t want them following the same path I took, so yes I do regret ever getting involved”. (CJC3)

“I wish I had made better choices” (CJC1)

From these responses, which are indicative of all the answers given, we can see the main areas of regret involve bringing problems to other friends and family members, as well as bringing the member into trouble with law enforcement. There is a sense of wasted time with nothing to show for involvement and a portrayal of the use of violence experienced and dealt out as a gang member, with regards to getting shot six times (CSPD2).

In contrast those who did not regret involvement in the USA put forward the following reasons:

“The gang provided me with a family that I never had.” (CJC1)

“They made me the man I am today, when I had no one else in my gang.” (CJC7)
“It defines the person I have become, I learned a lot, even if it was at the community’s expense. There are lots of things I wish I could take back, but I do not regret anything. To do so would take away from who I am.” (CJC10)

“Because they are family, always will be family, born and raised together. Ride or die.” (HC4)

“I love and respect these “gang members” they are my family, friends and husband” (CJC12)

“No, because sometimes you are just born to that regardless of life. The upbringing is in the blood, what a true family upholds.” (CJC4)

“I had a hard time answering this question, because, yes I regret the times going to prison for my prison family, but I also have grown up in the streets, so at least I have members to watch my back in times of need.” (CJC6)

“It has its up’s and downs” (UP9)

“Because it’s all family.” (UP7)

“It was interesting but not for me” (CSPD3)

There seems to be an overwhelming feeling of family amongst gang members, with the gang providing the structure and support that guide a person’s development, though the wider community might question the direction of the development. This obviously conflicts with the views expressed as to why people do regret involvement, where they cite bringing negative influences to those around them. It would seem that these people had an external support network, away from the gang, who were affected by the individuals’ involvement in street gang lifestyle. Also, in the response CJC11 there is a statement about the fact that this individual did not feel the support from his gang, which so many others seem to extol the virtues of. A response of interest is that of CJC6. Here the respondent regrets life in prison but identifies the positive attributes of the group collective and the benefits it held for them,
whilst growing up on the streets. The factor of friendship and protection as motivational issues are directly examined later in the data set.

In the UK, there were a smaller percentage of respondents who regretted involvement with street gangs. Reasons that were given included:

“Because some of them, nice to get along with and some of them aint (sic), and they got me into weed, but I got myself off it” (FP7)

“Childish” (FP17)

“Mess your life up and get you in trouble” (O11)

“Because I finally came to my senses and thought it was a stupid idea” (O8)

“Mess your life up and you have it all coming to your house and gets you in trouble” (O10)

“As I would not be who I am, or where I am” (FP9)

In these answers, some of the reasons given by respondents in the USA can be identified. Again, there is the element of getting in trouble with law enforcement, and bringing trouble to the home, as expressed by USA respondents GL4 and HC5. There is also more than a passing similarity in the responses from CJC11 and FP7, where the former alludes to people not caring about them, and FP7, highlighting an introduction to drugs, in the form of cannabis. These are all issues identified from the literature review as being present in gang membership.

Those who stated that they did not have regrets about their involvement in street gangs, explained their stances as laid out below:

“I enjoy being wiv (sic) all my m8 (sic), have in a laugh and going out and stuff” (FP2)
“Because they are my family” (FP10)

“Because I have met some truly good friends, and they have supported me and still support me to this day.” (FP16)

“Becoz (sic) they are my mates” (O5)

“They always have my back” (O16)

“It’s all good fun” (O9)

In the responses of O16, O5, FP2, FP10 and FP16, we again see the mention of family, or good mates. FP10 makes the only direct reference to family, but this sense of belonging exudes from the responses. There is also an element that highlights a fun element, in the responses of O9 and FP2. There is no direct reference to anything other than fun, but it raises a question regarding would the youths still have an involvement, if they felt there was something more entertaining to do? Is boredom and family a major motivating factor behind youths’ involvement in the UK?

What motivates youths to join street gangs?

After identifying the fact that gangs were in existence within the respective communities and that the vast majority of respondents either had had contact with gangs, or were past or present gang members, the respondents were asked their views on why youths joined street gangs. This was done by using questions with a Likert scale response ranging from a value of one through to five (reversed in some questions, see pp172). Respondents were asked to score several factors, with regards to how much of a motivation these were in youths becoming involved in street gangs. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of these responses, with the rationale for the use of this analysis being laid out in the Methodology chapter.

The data collected from these responses is shown below in tabular and graphical form. Table 15 shows the data collected from the overall data sample, with the descriptive statistics being
displayed graphically in Graph 1, where the mean value from respondents at each site is shown. When analysing the data from the Likert scales, the value of 1 was standardised as the highest value assignable to a motivating factor, with 5 being the lowest. In order to represent the data graphically, the values have had to be reversed, with the value of 5 having the highest importance, so as to portray the correct visual impact with the factors deemed more important having the largest bars. So as to not cause confusion with the written data, no scale has been included on the graph. Table 16 shows the isolated data of the self-stated gang members. The descriptive statistics, illustrating comparative mean values are shown in Graph 2.
## Factors in youths joining street gangs (overall results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Sig Dif</th>
<th>USA overall results</th>
<th>UK overall results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>(74)=1.651</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>(74)=2.424</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Pressure</td>
<td>(74)=-0.834</td>
<td>0.407</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>(74)=1.329</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>(74)=-1.433</td>
<td>0.156</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Interest</td>
<td>(73)=-1.684</td>
<td>0.970</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>(74)=-0.332</td>
<td>0.741</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>(74)=1.735</td>
<td>0.870</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>(74)=2.158</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1.259</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15.

Graph 1.
Factors in youths joining street gangs (Self-Stated Gang Members results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Dif</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>USA SSGM</th>
<th>UK SSGM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>(36)=0.931</td>
<td>0.358</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.621</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>(36)=1.596</td>
<td>0.119</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.584</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Pressure</td>
<td>(36)=0.020</td>
<td>0.984</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.234</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>(36)=0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.314</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>(36)=0.590</td>
<td>0.559</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.619</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>1.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Interest</td>
<td>(36)=−1.626</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.251</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>(36)=−1.326</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>1.443</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>(36)=−0.061</td>
<td>0.952</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.460</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>(36)=−2.030</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.234</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16.

Graph 2

Factors in youth’s joining street gangs (Self Stated Gang Members)

- Factors in youth’s joining street gangs (Self Stated Gang Members results) USA
- Factors in youth’s joining street gangs (Self Stated Gang Members results) UK
Fashion was a motivational factor which identified a significant difference. This question was posed, due to the depiction of individuals, living the “gangsta” lifestyle in music videos, enjoying the trappings of wealth such as fast cars, yachts, and being surrounded by sexy and glamorous members of the opposite sex. The results would indicate that the perceived status that goes with being a gang member, hold a far higher value in the UK, especially by those not already in a gang. The impression of fashion being an important motivating factor did significantly differ $t(74)= 2.424, p=0.018$ with those in the UK ranking fashion 4th in the overall results (M 2.67 SD 1.414) identifying it as more important than US respondents who ranked it 6th (M 3.48 SD 1.485). This was not the case in the self-stated gang members who ranked fashion 6th in the self-stated gang members (M 2.72 SD 1.323) against those in the USA, where fashion ranked 9th and last (M 3.35 SD 1.584).

Another area where a significant difference was identified amongst the overall response was that of fear $t(74)= -2.158, p=0.0347$ with those in the US ranking fear 5th in the overall results (M 2.43 SD 1.259) attributing more importance than UK respondents who ranked it 8th (M 3.08 SD 1.402). Amongst the self-stated gang members fear was the bottom ranked motivating factor in the UK, with a ranking of 9th (M 3.20 SD 1.146) whilst it ranked 5th (M 2.39 SD 1.234) in the USA. This ranking in the US meant that fear was seen as a higher motivating factor than money by those involved in street gangs. If fear is driving individuals to seek out gang membership, then a strategy other than the suppressive tactics so common in the USA should be considered, though when balanced against privacy rights and governmental cutbacks, implementing crime prevention initiatives will be difficult.

It seems certain that boredom does play a motivating factor in gang membership. It ranked 3rd in the overall results from the UK (M 2.56 SD 1.319), but only 8th in the US overall results (M 3.10 SD 1.533). This was similar in the self-stated gang members, where it ranked 4th in the UK (M 2.60 SD 1.502) and 8th in the US (M 2.39 SD 1.234). The mean value results attributed to boredom would seem to reflect the findings cited by Sharp et al (2004) in the reporting of Bradshaw (2005), who states that UK gang members are prone to risk taking and impulsiveness. This could take the form of committing minor crime with the risk of getting caught. In a time of immense public spending cuts, it is always difficult to obtain funding for social projects. However, if boredom is such a large factor in street gang membership in the UK study city, more investment in these types of services and the maintenance of green
spaces is an investment in the future of youth and is cheaper than processing individuals through the courts and youth services.

The respondents were next asked to comment on peer pressure as a motivating factor in street gang membership. In both the US and the UK, this factor was seen as an important factor in motivating youths’ involvement in street gang activity. In the UK (M 2.72 SD 1.323) and the US (M 2.48 SD 1.261) peer pressure was ranked as 6th of nine factors. In the self-stated gang members, peer pressure was seen as even more important, with it being ranked 4th in both study sites, UK (M 2.60 SD 1.404) and US (M 2.61 SD 1.234). This factor of peer pressure is a very difficult area of influence to combat. This is a challenge that needs a strategic and pragmatic approach by those in a position to influence a youth’s life and cannot be confined to one or two influencers, and certainly not just left to the police. An educational led approach coupled with multi-agency support would seemingly be the best option. This will allow most youths to receive the message, with those who are disengaged from main stream education, being fed the same message, via the multi-agency approach. Early intervention strategies of a robust nature, that can be adjusted to meet any specific individual needs, would seemingly be a useful starting point to address this motivating factor.

Reputation was the next factor examined to determine how much the kudos, and the making of a name for oneself played in motivating a youth to join a street gang. Reputation can also be seen, as someone making something of their life and as identified in the literature review, the research evidence points to this being a highly influential factor behind gang involvement, Pitts (2007, citing Wright, Brookman and Bennett (2006)), Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012), Young et al 2007, Antrobus et al 2009, Matsude et al (2012). The results attained reinforce the fact that reputation is seen as a significant factor in youth involvement in street gangs, both in the UK and the USA. In the overall results, reputation ranked 1st in the UK (M 1.94 SD 1.308) and 3rd (M 2.38 SD 1.497) in the USA. Those in gangs in the US (M 2.00 SD 1.314) ranked reputation as the 2nd amongst the factors. In the UK, self-stated gang members’ ranked reputation 1st (M 2.00 SD 1.195) with the same mean value as that assigned to the factor by US self-stated gang members.

At a time where almost 20.5% of youths in the UK, aged between 16-24 years old, who are economically active are now unemployed (Pym, 2011), could it be that gaining a reputation from being part of a street gang, now compensates for the lack of opportunity that young
people spoke about in the findings of Interim Report into the London Riots, The Riots Communities and Victims Panel (2011), and that being someone is all important as suggested by Hallsworth (2013)? From the results of this study and the research evidence, it would suggest that it is.

The next motivating factor examined was that of money. As stated above, with youth employment running at an extremely high level in the UK, there may be an expectation that money was an integral part of the motivation in joining a street gang, who were seen to profit from illegal activity. The picture with regards to youth unemployment was similar on the national scale in the USA to the UK, with the figure for those aged 16-24 years old running at 18.1% in July 2011 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). In Colorado Springs, the unemployment rate amongst those aged 16-19 years old was a staggering 24.6% in November 2010. In this context, the motivating factor of money might be seen by many as a huge influencing factor in involvement in street gangs. The mean results were not as high as might have been expected from popular media portrayals of young people intoxicated on materialism. In the UK overall results, a ranking of 7th of nine factors was given (M 2.89 SD 1.389). Money was seen as more important in the US overall results, with a ranking of 4th given (M 2.40 SD 1.566) In terms of the self-stated gang members money ranked 7th (M 2.87 SD 1.407) in the UK, as compared with a ranking of 6th (M 2.57 SD 1.619) in the US. Aside from the overall US sample population, all other groups ranked money in the lower half of the motivating factors.

From the materialistic and image side of the motivating factors, the questionnaire moved on to examine the motivating influences of having a common interest, friendship and protection. With the responses gained earlier in the questionnaire from those who stated that they were or had been street gang members reflecting the importance of the feeling or attribution of family values to the street gang, it was expected that there would be a high value placed on these answers, especially when examining the qualitative responses to questions surrounding gang definitions and the lack of regret in joining a gang.

The first area to be examined was that of individuals having a common interest. From the results, the UK overall data recorded a ranking of 9th (M 3.11 SD 1.278) out of nine for the factor. In the US, a ranking of 8th was recorded (M 2.60 SD 1.355). Therefore, it does not seem that this is seen as much of a factor. We can however see that having a common interest
was seen as more important by the self-stated gang members in the US with a ranking of 3\textsuperscript{rd} (M 2.26 SD 1.251), as opposed to the UK self-stated gang members ranking of 8\textsuperscript{th} (M 2.93 SD 1.141). This result would seem to contradict the view put forward to me, when working as a police officer in the UK. Youths who were encountered and who had been identified as being part of a gang, would often state that they just hang around together as they were into the same things. Often these youths were jointly involved in criminality, so in the context of the Eurogang definition, they were a street gang, as they were also known by a collective name. From the results in the US, it seems that having similar interests is far more of a factor in encouraging gang membership in the USA. Whether these are legitimate interests in the eyes of the wider community is potentially another question.

Friendship was the next motivating factor to be examined. As stated above, following the previous answers from those involved in street gangs at some point in their life, it was thought that this might be a category where there was high motivational value attribution, reflecting the qualitative free response answers. From these responses, it is clear is that there is a higher value placed on friendship in gangs, in the US, both from the overall stats and the self-stated gang member statistics than in the UK. In terms of the overall results friendship ranked 2\textsuperscript{nd} in both the UK (M 2.31 SD 1.283) and the USA (M 2.20 SD 1.471). In terms of the self-stated gang members the mean value assigned to friendship showed that it was deemed more of a motivating factor in the USA with a ranking of 1\textsuperscript{st} (M 1.91 SD 1.443) but in the UK, there was a lower value resulting in a ranking of 3\textsuperscript{rd} (M 2.53 SD 1.356). This result is not surprising given the free response answers and the common referral to friendship and family, with friendship not ranked outside of the top three by any group, emphasising its inherent importance to all involved in street gangs.

Friendship is a very difficult area for the policy makers and those involved in the lives of young people to act upon. Everyone wants to be accepted and have a group of friends. Everyone wants to be popular. Maybe the way forward in trying to dispel the notion that a gang provides genuine friendship, is to bring ex-offenders into contact with young people and get them to explain the nature of these friendships. They could explain that many of these friendships are superficial in nature, and that some of the people involved will manipulate these friendships for their benefit, without giving a second thought to others, as I have witnessed professionally. This is not to say that many genuine friendships, might not be
forged inside a gang, but whilst in this setting, these friendships, usually lead to negative outcomes through involvement in illegal activity.

Protection was the next factor to be examined. There being various reports in the UK over the last few years covering attacks on youths, by groups of youths including those on Ben Kinsella, and Damilola Taylor, with both attacks being fatal. In 2010 the US study site, according to local Police Department figures, recorded five cases of Murder / non- negligent manslaughter with regards to gangs. How much of a factor did protection play in youths seeking membership of a street gang?

From these series of results, it is apparent that protection is a big issue for youths on the street today, with the mean values regarding protection being within 0.03 of each other for those involved in gangs. In the UK, a ranking of 2nd (M 2.33 SD 1.397) was assigned amongst self-stated gang members, this only ranking behind reputation and as identified in the literature review, reputation can bring about its own form of protection. In the USA, the value assigned by self-stated gang members resulted in a ranking of 4th (M 2.30 SD 1.460). The factor of protection was seen as being of more relevance by the overall responses from the US, with a ranking of 1st (M 2.10 SD 1.336). In the UK, the mean value assigned by the overall data set showed that protection was seen as less of a draw for those outside the gangs with a ranking of 4th (M 2.67 SD 1.512). Despite the slight differences in mean value we can see that all the data sets indicated that protection was an important motivating factor. It is difficult to ascertain if this is due to a perceived increase in street violence, coupled with a mistrust of the police, following the much publicised cases of Mark Duggan and Azelle Rodney, in the UK and Michael Brown, Eric Garner and Alton Sterling in the USA. But for whatever reasons youths see the need to protect themselves. If the youth is driven to protect themselves by carrying a weapon, and is found in possession of such an item, then they can be arrested for this offence in the UK, as you can be in the US study site, if you are below the age of 18 years old or have a felony conviction. Carrying a weapon also carries the risk of having it removed from you in a confrontation, and the weapon used on yourself. More work would need to be conducted in this area, in order to ascertain the exact cause for the feeling for the need for protection. This research evidence could then be used to address the risks so that youths are not placed in a situation where they feel they need to resort to street gang membership, in order to keep themselves safe. Given the high weighting given to protection it seems strange that there was not more value placed on fear as a motivating factor.
In addition to the motivating factors identified in the questionnaire that were subject to inferential statistics space was available for free response answers. When respondents in the USA were asked if there were other factors that influenced street gang membership, the most common answers were those surrounding family, with the responses of “Lack of family / family support”, “Family history of gang involvement” and “No father figure”, getting nine, six and three responses respectively. Other responses present included “Want to be something in this world”, which would support the notion of respect as a motivating factor. “Neighbourhood” and “Honour and respect” attained four, four and three responses respectively. The responses of “Poverty”, “Oppression” and “Drugs” were on the list, but these only had a small response rate. A full table of the free response answers can be seen in the appendix to this report at page 179.

In the UK, only four free response answers were gained. These were “If they want family”, “Fun” and “Do not respect their families.” Again, there is a mention of family. The answer of “fun” can be aligned to the predefined responses of boredom, surely this is a lot easier issue to address than social conditions and poverty?

This question had the potential to be really insightful due to the lack of predefined boxes and the ability of the respondent to bring forward any reasons they thought important in motivating youths to join street gangs. This could have evidenced reasons previously unidentified within this, or other research and also had real potential to identify differences in the respective samples. However, due to the very low response rate from the UK sample size this potential was not realised. What was evidenced was the value placed on the gangs in the US acting as extended families for those without such support structures at home. This is a common thread amongst the answers from the US and reinforces the ranking of friendship as 1st amongst the surveyed US street gang members.

The views of and impact of street gangs

It was deemed important to ascertain respondents’ view of gangs. This was done via descriptive statistical analysis, so as to establish central tendencies and standard deviation, with free text responses being sought to gain a more in depth understanding by content analysis in certain areas. The perceived glamour of gangs and the respondents’ impression of
those in gangs were examined, as well as how the presence of street gangs impacted on them. This was deemed important, as if the gang member is viewed in a favourable light by their peers, when coupled with other motivating factors, then the individual may be more inclined to seek gang affiliated and gang membership.

The first aspect to be examined was that of glamour. As stated previously, “gangsta” lifestyle is portrayed as glamorous in many music videos, where those performing appear surrounded by the trappings of wealth, such as flash cars, fast motorbikes, expensive jewellery, luxury yachts, and attractive members of the opposite sex. When respondents were asked about how glamorous gangs were, the score was low, with US respondents having a slightly more glamorous opinion (M 4.23 SD 1.271) than UK respondents (M 4.25 SD 1.204) When looking at the figures from the self-stated gang members, the results were reversed. The impression of gangs being glamorous still scored low, but the UK respondents had a more glamorous opinion (M 3.67 SD 1.175) than US respondents (M 4.13 SD 1.217). Both of the self-stated gang members saw gangs as more glamorous than the overall survey populations, indicating those drawn to such a lifestyle do see it as more glamorous, even despite having experience of the reality of such situations.

When looking at the differences regarding the perception of people in gangs, in regard to the overall sample, the impression of people in gangs did significantly differ $t(74)= -2.118$, $p=0.038$ with the US respondents having a more favourable opinion (M 3.20 SD 1.344) than UK respondents (M 3.83 SD 1.254). When looking at the responses from the self-stated gang members in isolation, the impression of people in gangs did not significantly differ $t(36)= 0.104$, $p=0.918$ with the UK respondents having a more favourable opinion (M 3.00 SD 0.926) than US respondents (M 3.04 SD 1.430). With this more favourable opinion in the US, there is potential for the stigma attached from being a gang member could be reduced, and so the attainment of the reputation, so strived for amongst gang members, being more achievable within the wider community.

The survey progressed to ask participants how street gangs make them feel. Questions were asked with regards to if gangs worry them, and if they will avoid areas where street gangs are known to congregate. This was deemed important, as if youths were avoiding certain areas due to gang presence, then this could have several impacts. It could reduce the contact between members and non-members, hence making it less likely that the non-members will
get recruited and whilst reducing victimisation of the non-members. From a law enforcement point of view, there is also a far greater need to patrol these areas, with a potential for an increased intelligence case, enabling the often debated use of stop search and similar proactive measures in these areas, where gangs are known to congregate, while non-gang members avoid. Finally, and most importantly, if the gang members were congregating in areas of service provision, such as libraries, basketball courts or local shops, then this could affect access to amenities and recreational activities for other youths, depriving them of services with the implications identified in the literature review.

When looking at the differences of the samples in terms of overall statistics, as to whether street gangs worried participants, it appears that there is not a great deal of concern in regard of gangs from those who participated in the research. UK respondents were slightly more worried (M 3.92 SD 1.025) than US respondents (M 4.10 SD 1.317). That being said, the mean scores in all sample populations was sufficiently low to indicate that gangs do not cause real concern for the participants. This is somewhat surprising given the scores attained for the impact of protection and fear as a motivating factor, especially in the USA.

When asked why a gang would or would not worry them the following responses were gained in the USA:

“Because all people should be able to live in peace and not worry about living on a wrong block and having a street gang that causes chaos and harm to others”

“Violence they use on each other and others”

“Shooting”

“Robbery”

“Because sometimes your own people turn on you, even your family, so now days it’s hard to trust some people.”
“When situations get out of control, and pride is a factor, it doesn’t matter who is around, or what happens to innocent bystanders. For me, I worry that my family may be around in a situation like that”

As can be seen from these responses, it is the level of violence associated with street gangs which causes the most cause for concern within the US study site. This correlates to the identification of protection as the most important motivational factor and fear also attaining a high ranking.

In the responses, that indicated that the respondent was not worried about street gangs, the following comments were made:

“Been around gangs all my life, so I’m used to the drama”

“Gangs are just like anyone else”

“I know not to mess with the wrong people”

“They respect you, if you respect them”

“Nah, I bang and all my homies bang”

“My family and I are known in our neighbourhood.”

“I am a product of my environment so it is normal to see gangsters. The only thing I worry about is the generation after me.”

“I’m not scared of anything, or anyone.”

“Not afraid to die”

From these responses, it seems as if there is an acceptance of the existence of gangs by those who are put in a situation where they might encounter gangs, whether it is by way of being in a gang or just living in a neighbourhood where there is a gang presence. These answers also
give some context to the question about the impression of people in gangs, with the response of “Gangs are just like anyone else” showing a level of acceptance. There also seems to be a feeling that if you leave the gangs alone, then you will be left in peace, as you will if you have a reputation. This correlates to the high ranking of reputation as a motivating factor in both the US and UK. The most disturbing response was the final one highlighted above, where the respondent stated “I am not afraid to die” Whether this is a macho response, or whether this is the way in which a life is valued so cheaply is hard to determine in the lack of more probing questions that interviews would allow.

In the UK, the free response option yielded the following responses:

“It’s intimidating”

“The fear of being beaten up or threatened”

“Because I might get beaten by a bigger person”

“Might beat me up or rob you for no reason”

“Because they may try and rob you for money”

“They will generally hurt you in any way”

Again, similar to the US, we can see that where there is concern, it is generally in regard to experiencing violence at the hands of the street gang.

With regards to those who stated they were not concerned with street gangs, the following reasons were written:

“Who cares, do what they want.”

“Gangs don’t worry me; they make me laugh.”

“They generally leave me alone”
“As long as I don’t have a problem with them they leave you alone.”

“Because if you don’t start on them you don’t get any trouble.”

“I know most people in gangs.”

“I know harder people.”

As with the US, responses focused on the fact that if you left them alone then street gangs did not seem to interact with you as an individual. There were also a couple of responses, that relied on knowing the people in gangs, or knowing people who were perceived to be “harder”, and therefore able to protect and prevent any harm coming to the individual. This indicates further evidence for the factor of protection as a motivating factor and its high-ranking position in all data sets. There was also one response that seemed to intone, that gangs in the UK were not that intimidating with the words “Gangs don’t worry me, they make me laugh.” From this statement, it is clear that this respondent does not see the gang as a threatening entity. This is a response that is not present in the USA, where there are far greater concentrations of gangs, from police figures and the number of gangs named in the questionnaire. These gangs seem to be far more developed in their nature, with some of these having direct links to Organised Crime Groups, who still purport to be street gangs, such as the Bloods and Crips, People and Folk.

A measure of how gang presence impacts on an area apart from the potential recruitment of members of the neighbourhood and associated criminality is if the gang creates no go areas. This was examined within the questionnaire by ascertaining whether the participant would avoid an area where gangs congregate.

**Will you avoid an area if a Street Gang is present?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If a street gang congregates in an area, will you avoid it?</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>USA SSGM</th>
<th>UK SSGM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes (%)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (%)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declined (%)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17.
What can be seen from these responses is that a relatively small number of participants would avoid the area. This seems somewhat strange given the portrayal of gangs in the popular media, as violent groups who are highly territorial. Whether this is due to a genuine lack of fear due to familiarity with the situation, given where the research was undertaken, or bravado is expanded upon below.

Some of the more common answers as to why an area in the USA would be avoided are shown below, with the responses as to why an area would be avoided being shown first;

“Because of the violence and guns”

“Generally no, but if my rivals are in that area then I will probably avoid the area.”

“If I’m not welcome there, I won’t go there. Sometimes you can’t go to an area because of your friend either. Number one rule, if you can avoid a problem, avoid it.”

“If I had my kids with me then yes”

“I’m not going to live my life in fear, but if I’m with my family or kids, then common sense, yes, I would avoid that area.”

“Avoid Bloods or Crips area, as I’m a Sur (Sureno), I have no business there”

“Because you never know what will happen”

“I don’t go around areas I don’t know”

All of the above responses give an indication of violence in the area. Explicit mention is made of the reticence of some participants to enter an area if they have their family with them.

The responses given as to why an area would not be avoided included the following;

“Why should I, its everyday life where I come from”
“Been around gangs all my life, so used to the drama”

“They expect respect in the area they claim. If you smile and are gracious to them, and respect them, but not from fear, hate or looked down on.”

“No, our code is to show no fear. It does not matter how big the numbers are.”

“Not afraid. My involvement in gangs is that my gang is superior and can go anywhere”

“It’s America, so I go wherever I please”

“Why would I avoid an area? I’m well respected”

A lot of the responses in regards to why an area would not be avoided indicate a familiarity with street gangs, and a fact that the respondent is well respected. There are however a few responses, that show how easily inter gang rivalry could occur. In the responses above it would seem that one gang is keen to exert its dominance over another gang and does not agree with the notion of respect for the other gang’s area, as so often highlighted in other responses. This also flies in the face of some of the answers that were gained from those stating they would avoid certain areas, as they had “no business there.” Again, the concept of being respected is brought up and this is a central theme that keeps emerging during the research.

In the UK, with regards to reasons why an area would be avoided the following reasons were given;

“I don’t fancy being verbal abused by people while getting to the area I need to get to.”

“Because I don’t wanna(sic) be brang(sic) into the fighten(sic)”

“To protect myself. I don’t want to get bad attitude with them”

“Coz(sic) I is nothing (sic) going there”
“If I’m on my own, not if I’m with people”

As in the US, all these responses seem to indicate that the reason to avoid an area where a street gang congregates is to avoid violence, and the associated trouble that it brings. In regards to those who stated that they would not avoid an area, the following reasons were given;

“If I had to go somewhere, where a street gang is known, I would still walk through that area.”

“I’ll join them and get messy”

“I know everyone”

“Because I live there, and no(sic) some of the gang members”

“I’m not scared of a gang, like I said, there just the same”

“You have rights be there”

“Coz I iz(sic) well ard (sic)”

In these responses, we see a commonality with some of the responses gained in the US, relating to a sense of familiarity with gang members, negating the need to avoid an area. There are also answers that present the respondent as being not afraid of the street gangs, some as they believe they are the same as everyone else and others because they feel that they are in a position to deal with anything that occurs. Whether this last reason is pure bravado, or a real sense that the individual can deal with whatever they are faced with, cannot be determined, but it may indicate that again, the gangs in the UK study site are not as intimidating as those in the US site. There is also one similarity to data from the US, which purely states that the individual believes that they have a right to go where they want and does not comprehend any harm coming to them. This may be a rather idealistic notion, given the propensity for violence that has been attributed to street gangs in the research evidence and participants both in the UK and the US.
It was important to examine the activities that street gangs were involved in within the respective cities, as these can also serve as a motivating factor to those who become involved. In the US thirty-three different activities were identified, as being areas of street gang involvement. The most commonly cited of these were drug distribution and trafficking, violence and drugs, along with anything to make money. Other identified activities included gun possession and trafficking, break-ins, carjacking and robberies, as well as the serious criminal offences of extortion, prostitution and murder. Away from the criminal aspect of activity, street gangs were also identified as being involved in drinking and partying, rap music, sports, tattooing and car clubs, as well as legitimate businesses, which were usually cash businesses. Whether these legal cash businesses were to an effort for members of the gang to go straight, or whether they were to facilitate the laundering of the money derived from the criminal enterprise is open to speculation. The disguising of illegal sources of income is a must for any criminal enterprise, in which large amounts of money is generated and businesses such as cell shops, car repair workshops and clothing stores, afford such opportunities. These were all identified as businesses in which street gangs would have an involvement. One of the more surprising responses was that of community work and charity involvement, which was put forward on two occasions. This would link in to the notion of family, and protecting and looking after the neighbourhood, as identified by Densley (2014) though it is not a usual activity linked with street gangs in contemporary academic literature.

In the UK study site, the list of activities numbered sixteen. The most commonly named were fighting, drug dealing, drugs, robbery, theft, and drinking, as well as being intimidating / abusive to people, which again ties into the reasons that respondents stated that they would avoid an area populated by gangs. Also named was “chilling,” “hanging about on streets”, “graffiti”, and general disorderly behaviour. There was one mention of “killing”, but this was in isolation, and cannot be confirmed, due to the fact that there is no stipulation to record any crime as gang related by the Home Office.

The perceived activities of gangs in the UK study site are not as diverse as those in the US, though the activities of drug dealing, violence and robbery feature highly as illegal aspects of both study sites. There is also recognition of drinking and drugs within street gangs, in line with the findings of Bradshaw and Smith (2005) and their study of gang membership and teenage offending in Edinburgh.
Perceived composition of Street Gangs

Moving on from the impact and perception of the respondents regarding those in street gangs, it was deemed important to gain an understanding of the perceived composition of those involved in street gang activity. This data would be essential in targeting resources to help prevent gang involvement by youths.

Participants experience of Street Gang Members Ethnicity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal experience of majority of gang member’s ethnicity</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>USA SSGM</th>
<th>UK SSGM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic / Latino</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No particular race</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18.

Table 18 shows the results of the questioning over the racial characteristics of street gangs. Interestingly, there was a much higher perception of people of a white ethnic background being involved in street gangs in the UK as compared to the US, with a value being 21.7% higher for the overall responses and 19% higher for those self-stated street gang members. In contrast, there was no mention of any persons of a Hispanic / Latino ethnic background, or indeed an Asian, or Indian sub-continent background, in the UK figures, this despite there being an increasingly ethnically diverse population within the study site area.

In both communities, the perception of the involvement of those with a black ethnic background was much higher than the representation in the overall city populations. In the US study site, the figure was 22% higher in the overall responses, and 25.8% higher amongst those claiming street gang involvement. Here the figure for Hispanic / Latino involvement was 17.5% higher in the overall responses and 23.6% higher in the responses of those self-stating gang members. In the UK, the figure in the overall responses was 37.54% higher, and 31.94% higher amongst those self-stating gang members. This study is not saying that these figures are wrong, but without accurate recording of crimes involving street gangs, this will not be able to be quantified. Later the ethnicity of respondents will be examined, and a
comparison of the percentages of those claiming gang memberships will be made. This is a small scale study and it would need to be carried out on a far greater scale to determine if this disproportionate perception of the ethnic compraisal of street gangs is accurate, or if the perception is based on conjecture amongst the youth population of each respective city.

Participants experience of Street Gang Members Age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived age of gang members</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>USA (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
<th>USA SSGM (%)</th>
<th>UK SSGM (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-14 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19 years</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24 years</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29 years</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+ years</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19.

In the USA, the age that is thought to be most prevalent in street gang members is clearly 15-19 years, with membership generally declining post this age. For those who claimed street gang membership, past or present, again the most prominent age group is 15-19 years, though a far higher weighting was given to the 11-14-year category, with this being 7.1% higher than in the overall results. Again, there was a perceived drop off after the age of 19 years. Whether this is symptomatic of youths growing up and facing new responsibilities or as a result of criminalisation through involvement in a street gang, and choosing another path, this cannot be ascertained within the scope of this study.

In the UK, we can see that by far the highest perception of street gang members’ age is that of the 15-19 years old category, with a drop off in membership after this age. Worryingly there was a mention of youths as young as 5-10 years being involved in street gang activity. This would seem an unnaturally young age for involvement but given that the age of criminal responsibility is 10 years old in England and Wales, it would make sense for those who want someone to courier, or hold illegal items, to involve youths at this age, thus avoiding the obtaining of a criminal record.
Participants experience of Street Gang Members Sex.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived sex of majority of gang members</th>
<th>USA (%)</th>
<th>UK (%)</th>
<th>USA SSGM (%)</th>
<th>UK SSGM (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal mix</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20.

Finally, with regard to the demographics involved with street gangs, the respondents were asked what they perceived the sex of the majority of street gang members to be, with the results being displayed in Table 20. It is striking, though not surprising due to prior research evidence, that in both areas males dominated the street gang scene. When this is placed in context with the most prominent age group, we see that this is the age when young men are trying to assert themselves and carve a name. Where they are not given the opportunities or right direction, be it by schools, parents or other agencies, then they forge ahead, sometimes in the wrong direction, and ultimately, can end up embroiled in street gang activity. This also links with the notion of respect being such an important motivating factor, identified both within the context of this study and the wider research evidence.

Police interaction with gangs and possible preventative and diversionary intervention.

Although I am strongly against the notion of a solely police-based response to the situation involving gangs and am a strong advocate of a multi-agency approach, it cannot be ignored that this study presented a good opportunity to ascertain how young people perceived their relationship with the police. In particular, it was an opportunity to gauge youths’ opinion of the police approach to street gangs, which is almost entirely suppressive in nature in both countries, and for lessons to maybe be learned. This is especially relevant given the riots in 2011 across the UK, after the shooting of Mark Duggan. Similar civil unrest has occurred in the US amongst ongoing Black Lives Matter protests across the country, and riots of 2014, following the Grand Jury decision not to indite Officer Darren Wilson, following the shooting of Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri and the death of Freddie Gray in Baltimore.
Before exploring the results of the questionnaire, it is important to acknowledge the differences that are present between UK and US police agencies. The police in England and Wales, carry out their duties by policing by consent, under the Peelian, Nine Principles of Policing, with this being a common consent of the public, as opposed to the power of the state (Home Office, 2012). This has been described as a philosophy of policing ‘unique in history and throughout the world because it derived not from fear but almost exclusively from public co-operation with the police, induced by them designedly by behaviour which secures and maintains for them the approval, respect and affection of the public’. (Reith, 1956, p.140). This has led to police forces in England and Wales placing an emphasis on public order and keeping the peace, as opposed to the US model with an emphasis on crime control. (Pakes, 2010).

US policing has developed through three distinct phases, as identified by Kelling and Moore (1988), these being the political, reform and the community problem solving era. Kelling and Moore (1988) identify that American police departments developed as a quasi-military organisation, with powers derived from local politicians, whose interests they reflected. In the reform era, circa 1900, the police moved to narrow their functioning to crime control and criminal apprehension, becoming law enforcement agencies, before moving into the community problem solving phases of the early 1980’s, where there was an emphasis on community strategies to crime control and prevention.

These differences in development and focus have led to variances in how the two police communities interact with the public. Utilising the community policing style of Japan, that is similar to that in England and Wales, Bayley (1991, p.86) distinguishes the two approaches as such.

An American policeman is like a fireman – he responds when he must. A Japanese policeman is more like a postman – he has a daily round of low – key activities that relate him to the lives of the people among whom he works.

Despite these differences, police in England & Wales and the USA also share core functions. Both are charged with preventing and detecting crime, which often brings them into conflict with the community at large. In the USA in 2016, such conflicts accounted for 66 officers being feloniously killed and a further 57,180 officers being assaulted at a rate of 97 per 1,000
officers. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2016). This compared to figures from the UK of 25,504 assaults on officers at a rate of 207 per 1,000 offices. However, there was only a single, unlawful police fatality, this being that of PC Keith Palmer, in a terrorist attack at the Houses of Parliament on the 22\textsuperscript{nd} of March 2017 (Home Office, 2017). A reason behind this might well be issues around gun control, with there being a vast difference between the countries.

In the USA there is a right under the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Amendment to possess a gun, this only being subject to certain restrictions under National Firearms Act of 1934 and the Gun Control Act of 1948, as amended by the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act 1993 (Krouse, 2012). In the UK the main legislation covering firearms possession is the Firearms Act 1968, which is highly restrictive, only allowing members of the public to own rifles and shotgun, both which require a certificate to own. This has led to a huge disparity in the numbers of firearms owned in the respective countries. Figures obtained from GunPolicy.org (n.d.), which describes itself as “the world's most comprehensive and accessible Web source for published evidence on armed violence, firearm law and gun control” and which is hosted by the South Sydney School of Public Health, indicates that there are between 265,000,000 to 310,000,000 illegal and illegal firearms in circulation in the USA, giving a gun per capita rate of 101.5 per 100 citizens. In the UK in 2010 the number of legal and illegal firearms is estimated at while that number is only 2,373,186, giving a gun per capita rating of 3.78 per 100 citizens.

In order to gain an understanding of how respondents viewed the police, several questions were asked, again using Likert scales, which asked for a value to be assigned to how well the police engage and deal with street gangs, and how they could improve their response. This then allowed for the use of inferential statistics to be utilised in the form of T-tests, so as to draw inferences from the data.

The first area to be examined was that of police engagement with street gangs. This is not meant to comment on how the police deal with those involved in criminal acts, at the time of the interaction, but rather their general interactions. The UK respondents having a slightly better opinion of police engagement (M 4.25 SD 0.937) than US respondents (M 4.28 SD 0.987). This was mirrored in the statistical analysis of the views of self-stated gang members where the impression of how well the police engaged with people in gangs again scored
poorly with UK respondents having a slightly better opinion of police engagement (M 3.93 SD 0.961) than US respondents (M 4.13 SD 1.100).

The mean value scores were very high, indicating a poor relationship with the police in both the US and the UK, though interestingly the self-stated gang members in both data sets had a better perception of the police. The question needs to be asked whether this is due to a generic poor approach by the police to youths they interact with, or the fact that the police force is a figure of authority and suppression. It has to be remembered that effective communication with all sections of society, is essential to effective police work, as this is how confidence in the police within communities is fostered, and also how valuable intelligence, and assistance in investigations can be gained. It also must be remembered, that although the police force is constantly re-branding itself, as a more publicly friendly body, with a move from the use of the term police force, to police service, at least in the UK, the essential role of the police force is maintaining law and order. Sometimes robust actions, and communication styles are needed to be used, in order to gain control of a situation and perform this task. However, there are other instances where the opposite approach is needed, and a softer approach can be more effective. Each style of communication has its merits, depending on the situation, and a police officer must learn to recognise these situations, adapting their communication styles accordingly. Within the powers invested in them, they should err from stereotyping people, and treat each situation on the circumstances, using whatever approach is necessary in order to achieve the desired outcome, and not being inflexible in their approach. This is reflected in the views expressed in the qualitative data responses to the question “What could the police do better?” While commenting on this aspect of police work, I am aware and cede that there are officers out there who treat people with disrespect, who are corrupt and racist, but in my experience, garnered on both sides of the Atlantic, these are fortunately in the minority.

The next area where the respondents were asked to comment was in regards to how well the police dealt with street gangs, using the same scale as in the question relating to police engagement. The UK respondents had a slightly better opinion of police action (M 3.89 SD 1.036) than US respondents (M 4.03 SD 0.974). This is mirrored in the views of self-stated gang members where UK respondents had a slightly better opinion of police action (M 3.47 SD 0.915) than US respondents (M 3.74 SD 1.010). What is interesting here is that although the general consensus is that the police deal poorly with street gangs, there is a perception
from those who claim involvement that the police are dealing with street gangs more effectively than those who are not involved. Whether this is down to a lack of publicity or the fact that there is still a large gang presence within the US is unclear, and again, interviews would have helped ascertain an understanding of this issue. Maybe it is a misconception that the police are responsible for the sentences handed down to gang members who are effectively prosecuted. There may also be a perception that the police are the sole agency addressing the issue and that therefore all the blame is levied at this agency, rather than other agencies taking their portion of the feedback, in regards to areas where their policies are seen to be failing.

The method by which an arrested person ends up in court varies between the US and the UK. In the US all prosecutions are commenced by prosecuting attorneys—officials who after studying the information from investigators and information gathered from individuals involved, decides whether to present the case to court (Offices of the United States Attorneys, n.d.). United States Attorneys are independent of the courts and police (Offices of the United States Attorneys, n.d. (a)). In the UK, the police can make the charging decision in certain instances, these being all summary offences irrespective of plea and any either way offences anticipated as a guilty plea and suitable for sentence in a magistrates’ court, with certain exclusions where certain levels of violence are present, terrorist offences, sexual offences involving a minor, domestic abuse and hate crime related offences, criminal damage to a value exceeding £5,000 and handling stolen goods (College of Policing, 2017). In respect of all other offences, a charging decision is required from the Crown Prosecution Services, which is the criminal prosecution agency in England and Wales. To obtain a charging decision the Crown Prosecution Service must be satisfied that the investigation passes the evidential threshold, which is to say there is a realistic prospect of conviction at court, as well as the public interest threshold, which means it must be in the public interest to pursue a prosecution (College of Policing, 2017).

In both countries the judicial system is based on an adversarial trial basis (Pakes, 2010). This is where the prosecution and defence argue their cases in open court, with a magistrate or judge presiding over the trial.

Certain minor offenses may be tried before a U.S. Magistrate Judge. Otherwise, all federal criminal trials are conducted by a single U.S. District Judge. At trial, the judges rule on all
questions of law and evidence. If there is no jury, they also determine whether the evidence is sufficient to convict. The sentencing of convicted persons is also the responsibility of the judges at the District Court level. (Organization of States, 2007)

In England and Wales, minor offences are heard by Magistrates’ Courts, where cases are heard by three magistrates. Magistrates do not need any legal qualifications, and they are advised by a Clerk, who is a qualified lawyer. Magistrates do not state reasons for their decisions (Chartered Institute of Legal Executives, (n.d). Serious offences, such as murder and rape, are heard in the Crown Court. A jury consisting of 12 people chosen at random from the local population will decide, without giving reasons, whether the defendant is guilty of the offence. The jury is advised about the law by the judge, whose role also includes imposing a sentence if the defendant is found guilty (Chartered Institute of Legal Executives, (n.d).

The next question wanted to gauge whether the respondents felt that the police could do better with regards to street gang activity.

**Can the police do better in dealing with Street Gangs?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can the police do better in dealing with street gangs</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>USA SSGM</th>
<th>UK SSGM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21.

Given that participants thought that the police were doing a poor job in dealing with the street gang situation in both areas, it was surprising that over a third of all respondents stated that the police could not do anything more than they are already doing. In the US, the areas where it was felt that the police could deal with street gangs more effectively, that were most commonly stated were;

“Get to know people / talk to them”,

“Don’t discriminate / have preconceived ideas/ Superiority complex”,
“Have a little more understanding and respect”.

These responses or similar to them each got over five respondents stating them. Two respondents stated that there needed to be

“More street gang specific cops”

In the UK, there was not the same concentration of answers in specific groups, with no more than two people stating similar ideas. Those that were expressed included;

“More police attention”

“Don’t have such a negative attitude”

“Help to arrange somewhere for youths to congregate”

“Deal with more serious issues”

“Listen to gang’s side of the story / take more interest in individuals”

“Don’t think people playing football are a gang”

“Don’t see it as a waste of time”

Again, the fact that officers were seen to act in a disparaging way to those they perceived as gang members was mentioned, with negative attitudes, being displayed. This can be linked back to the notion of respect, that featured so prominently in the motivational factors and research evidence behind youth involvement in gangs, and a perceived lack of respect by the police towards youths that they encounter. Also present again was the idea of officers trying to gain an understanding of the circumstances involved in the youths becoming involved in gangs, which is what this paper seeks to do. There is also the mention of not generalising that all groups of youths on the streets are gangs. As discussed in Chapter 2, the incorrect labelling of those who are not actually engaged in street gang activity can have far reaching negative connotations in the personal life of such youths, and indeed drive them towards
involvement, as identified by Bullock & Tilley (2008), Hallsworth (2013), Marshall et al (2005), Young et al (2007). The need for officers’ effective communication is highlighted by these responses, and as stated above, a range of responses and communication types will be needed depending on the circumstances of each situation.

Commonalities can be drawn against the response of more police attention, and the call at the US study site, for more street gang specific officers. In the current economic climate, when huge cutbacks are being made in Departments and Constabularies on both sides of the Atlantic, this does not seem plausible in the foreseeable future.

An interesting response was that the police needed to “Help to arrange somewhere for youths to congregate.” While in the current climate, this might be seen as something the police can do, this is something that should be led by the local authorities. This is not withstanding that the police could support the creation of such a space, engaging in a multiagency approach to the problem, but this is endemic of the view that the police are the sole agency with responsibility of dealing with street gangs, that pervades the UK train of thought. This is something that needs to be addressed at the earliest opportunity, to effectively deal with the current issues being faced.

As this thesis seeks to address the aspect, that those who purport to be involved in street gangs, state that they are not listened to, it was deemed important to allow participants the chance to suggest what could be done to discourage street gang involvement. In the US, forty-three responses were elicited, while in the UK that number fell to twenty-two.

In the US study site, by far the most popular answer was;

“Better activities to keep them busy”

This was highlighted by ten of those responding, followed by counts of five and four respectively for the ideas of;

“Use ex members to highlight negativity associated with street gangs”

“Positive mentors”
Those ideas that featured three times in the responses were;

“Showing them what it can lead to i.e. death, drugs, jail”

“Fund places where youths can go and talk through problems, and be encouraged to realise potential”

“Nothing”

Up until the last response of “Nothing”, all the responses were of a positive nature, and all were achievable, with only a relatively minor investment. Other views expressed that featured on two or fewer occasions were;

“Jail”

“Better rehabilitation programs”

“Show the youths love and grace”

“Better education / Vocational courses”

“More jobs”

“Kick their asses without getting charges”

“Start at home with the parents”

“Mobilise the community”

“Showing them what jail is like through overnight visits”

“The feeling of structure”

“Make an example of them”
Obviously, some of these are far easier to enact than others, with “Jail” and “Making an example of them” being the easiest and in line with current suppression tactics. The aspects of providing better training and vocational courses, require funding, but are a very real proposition if the money is available. Through the acquisition of an education, the youth can feel empowered to change their circumstances, and aspire to achieve something. This in turn will then hopefully mean that more are eligible for employment, so addressing the suggestion of “more jobs”, should they exist, as jobs cannot simply be created, but are driven by the economy.

Two interesting concepts were those of “Kick their asses without getting charges” and “Showing them what jail is like through overnight visits.” The notion of bestowing a community punishment, or restorative justice which will also give the youth a chance to reflect on the effects of their behaviour, could be very beneficial, for those involved in minor crime. This is not to say that it will work in every circumstance, but if it is deemed proportionate, this could be a highly successful way of affecting a youth’s mind-set. However, care must be taken that this is not seen as an easy way out, with youths knowing that if they commit a crime, they are likely to receive restorative justice, with this not being seen as a deterrent, due to the ineffective management of the system. The ability to challenge the activity of a youth, without the obtaining of a criminal record, that could hamper future employment chances, is a very useful and effective method as I have personally witnessed. This is currently utilised in the UK under the Youth Rehabilitation Order and other Youth Justice Provisions of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008. However, this is only beneficial if the system is managed robustly, and the conditions imposed truly do make the youth reflect, rather than just ticking boxes.

In the UK, the responses were almost identical to those provided in the US. Here the most popular response was;

“More activities”

Ten out of twenty-two responses highlighted this as a way to discourage street gang membership. The challenge here is to provide activities that are free or relatively low cost that youths wish to engage in. The funding of such activities is obviously a major concern in the current financial climate. However, from these results it can be seen that youths, and
those who have previously been involved in street gang activity, both in the US, and UK, see this as a vital activity to divert youths from criminality.

The second most populous response put forward by respondents from the UK was;

“Educate them about the dangers of gangs”

This gained five responses, and again echoes the view portrayed in the US. Obviously, the best way to do this is through the carefully managed programs involving exposure of these youths to ex-gang members, who have renounced the gang lifestyle and exposing them to the truths of gang membership, such as jail, and possibly death. Any encounter between youths and a person convicted of a gang related criminal offence, would need to be managed carefully, but the positive aspects that could be gained, far outweigh those of being taught about the dangers of gangs by a person who has only read about such features in a book. Youths are far more likely to listen to the views of those who have had first hand involvement, and take the message on board, hence meeting the objective of the activity.

Other responses that gained two or less mentions, but are no less valid are;

“Better education”

“Investment in areas that are run down”

“Provide somewhere to go”

“Nothing”

“Less drugs, weapons and crime”

“Money”

The first three responses listed are all very valid answers, and it is a case that funding is needed to carry out these, with the possible exception of providing somewhere to go, as there are plenty of venues that if properly supervised, could be used for youths to congregate. This
could be achieved if members of the community were mobilised to provide the required supervision in a non-condescending way, so that the youths did not feel that they were being baby-sat. Again, the response of “Nothing” appears, and is as disturbing in the UK, as it is in the data set from the US. The answers of “Less drugs, weapons and crime” is something that every police force in the country would aspire to achieve, but where there is a demand for such items, there will be those individuals who seek to exploit the opportunity to make gain for themselves. This is currently a feature in many police force areas where County Lines activity is being experienced. The most effective way to prevent the proliferation of weapons and drugs on the streets is to remove the demand for such items, as without demand, there is no market.
Chapter 6
Discussion and Conclusions

Contribution to knowledge.

In seeking to achieve the research aims of;

- Gain an understanding of the factors that motivate and influence youths with regards to their involvement with street gangs in areas outside the large metropolitan areas where these studies usually occur.

- Establish if these motivating factors differed between the USA and the UK, therefore affecting possible policy transfer.

I have sought to increase the academic knowledge pertaining to why youths join street gangs. This has been achieved by focusing on areas outside of the large metropolitan areas where such studies area usually situated.

In terms of contributing to knowledge, this is the first occasion, I am aware of, where a research paper has focused solely on mid-sized cities. By focusing on locations within the research site cities, where attendees included those linked to gang activity the study has gained a valuable insight into the perceptions of young people about why youths become involved in such activities. This paper has identified that reputation is seen as the most important motivating factor behind youth street gang membership in the UK, thus agreeing with the findings of Young et al 2007, Antrobus et al (2009) Pitts, (2007), Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012,) Anderson (1994 & 1999), Matsude et al (2012). This has important implications, as it means that where successful, evidence based, gang diversion strategies are put in place in larger cities, these might achieve similar results in smaller geographic locations, where funding may be less accessible.

The study went further than just ascertaining how important motivational factors were to individuals in the UK research city by simultaneously undertaking a comparative study in a
US research study city. It was proposed in this research that if the motivating factors differed between the countries, then the one cap fits all approach would be more likely to be ineffective in tackling street gang membership. During analysis of the data it became evident that while there were different values attributed to the categories contained within the questionnaire; there was very little significant difference between the responses, particularly between those gained from self-stated gang members. This bodes well in regard to potential policy transfer which is addressed at the end of this chapter

**Motivations displaying significant differences**

The notion of fear acting as a motivating factor did not rank very highly, despite protection being seen as a prominent motivating factor in the study and also cited as a motivating factor by Melde et al (2012) and Kintera et al (2008). However, there was a significant difference between the US and the UK, both in the overall dataset and the self-stated gang members’ responses with regard to fear as a motivating factor. In the US, the difference in the overall results was a ranking of fifth for fear, compared to first for protection, with US self-stated gang members ranking fear fifth, compared to fourth for protection. In the overall UK responses, the ranking for fear was eighth, compared to a protection ranking of fourth. In the UK self-stated gang members responses, the ranking for fear was ninth compared to second for protection. Reasons for this are difficult to accurately ascertain, without further investigation. There could be several reasons including a sense of bravado by the gang members in the UK who do not wish to display fear, as it is a trait often seen as a weakness. There is also the possibility that due to the propensity of individuals to own firearms and other weapons in the US, there is a far greater fear of getting shot, sustaining a grievous wound, or potentially dying as a result. In the UK, whilst it is acknowledged that there are guns and other weapons available within the criminal fraternity, these are less common place and the penalties for possession are far greater, due to the illegality of hand guns and automatic weapons. However, there still exists the risk of a knife attack, with every kitchen in the country housing a potentially lethal weapon, not to mention the potential for any number of items to be used in such a manner. There is also the risk of dying either directly or indirectly from a heavy blow sustained in a fight. What is apparent is that the respondents to the questionnaire readily accept that there is violence associated with street gang involvement, through their assertion that protection is a highly ranked motivating factor. It is
only the fear of this violence that varies. The question does however exist of why one would value protection so highly, if they were not fearful of violence being bestowed against them.

There is also a question as to whether, given the ranking afforded to protection, fear means the same in the two datasets? Does fear relate to fear of violence, fear of failing to achieve self-actualisation or something else altogether such as fear of the gang itself? Given the weighting afforded to reputation and protection, it is conceivable that violence and not achieving self-actualisation are being referred to. However, the disconnect between the UK and the US results would merit further study, especially given that there is a significant difference in the responses received in the course of this study.

The one other factor which did display a significant difference during statistical testing was that of Fashion amongst the overall respondents. This was not evident in the self-stated gang members. Amongst the overall respondents, fashion in the UK ranked fourth, while it was sixth in the US. In the self-stated gang members, the rankings were sixth in the UK and ninth (last) in the US. This perception of fashion being a more motivating factor in the UK than the US, may be driven by the fact that there was an emerging gang in Norwich for approximately two years prior to the dissemination of the questionnaire. This gang attained a lot of publicity in the local press, for relatively minor offences and therefore there were a lot of youths claiming to be part of this group, when those actually involved denied those people were part of the group. This would align with Gordon’s (2000) notion of “Wannabees” The notion of fashion being a higher motivating factor in the UK study site than the US, could also be attributed to the fact that outside of the major metropolitan areas, street gangs were a relatively new phenomenon. This is not the case in the US, where the origins of the Blood and Crips can be traced back to Los Angeles in the late 1960’s / early 1970’s, in the case of the Vice Lords the late 1950’s and Gangster Disciples the late 1960’s in Chicago. The allure of belonging to something that is new and portrayed in the media as exciting and part of a subculture, which rebels against the norms of society, could be something that appeals to young disenfranchised youths looking for excitement. This being no different to the youth movements of the Mods and Rockers in the 1960’s and the punks of the 1970’s.
Motivations displaying no significant difference

Analysis of the two data sets and further division of the responses into overall responses and those purely from those claiming street gang membership, identifies several categories that are prominent in all data groupings. In both the overall and self-stated gang members’ responses from the UK, reputation was seen as the most important factor, by a relatively large margin. Reputation also scored very highly in the US, where it was ranked third in the overall results and second in the self-stated gang members’ responses, with exactly the same as UK based self-stated gang members. The high scoring of reputation, is consistent with the findings of Young et al 2007, Antrobus et al (2009), Pitts (2007), Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012), Anderson (1994 & 1999), Matsude et al (2012). Most of these research papers cite the decline of traditional pathways to gain respect through legitimate employment and provision for one’s family, as well as a feeling of marginalisation from mainstream society. The attainment of a local reputation through becoming a powerful player in a gang is obviously a draw for those adolescents who become marginalised. This is especially so when criminal icons such as Sonny Barger of the Hells Angels, Taco Bowman of the Outlaws, Stanley “Tookie” Williams of the Crips, Larry Hoover, founder of the Gangster Disciples and Willi Lloyd of the Almighty Vice Lords, exist within society, with some such as Barger becoming an author and an American subculture icon. When adolescents are deprived of legitimate opportunities through lack of openings, facilities or discrimination it is hardly surprising that the story of the boy from the neighbourhood, who made his reputation through gang involvement and is now a revered cult hero, draws the attention of youths. In order to address this concern opportunities, need to be created for those young persons within impoverished neighbourhoods. They need to have access to activities and opportunities that can see them realise their potential whether this be via conventional or non-conventional routes. Funding should be set aside to fund youth projects and youth clubs, where those involved in the running of such ventures are passionate about youth development and the realisation of potential. Through realising this potential, youths derive a sense of achievement and respect from their peers.

The second most prominent factor present throughout the data sets, was that of friendship. This was identified as a factor by Young et al (2007), with Dukes and Stein (2003), Esbensen and Deschenes (1998), White (2002) and White and Mason (2006) all alluding to the fact that
gang affiliated youths may have a lower self-esteem, therefore more of a need to belong. The motivating factor of peer pressure, which might be seen to go hand in hand with friendship and which has been attributed as a motivating factor by Spergel (1966), Thornberry et al (2003) and Vigil (1998), was afforded a much lower value than friendship, with no significant differences between the data sets.

There is no doubt that friendship is seen as hugely important to gang members, with membership being seen, in many cases as akin to being part of a family. This was very evident in the responses gained regarding whether self-stated gang members regretted their involvement in street gangs, with most stating that they did not, due to the bonds or influence of friendships they had made in the gang. This is a particularly difficult, if not impossible motivating factor to challenge. While it might be easy to highlight the exploitative relationship between those at the top of the gang hierarchy and those at the bottom, it is the genuine lateral friendships that are important to so many. One possible way to challenge these notions of an unbreakable friendship is to highlight the cost involved in exiting a gang, and the involvement of those classed as family in enforcing this cost at the bequest of the gang. However, if an individual has nothing else viable to class as family, these bonds can be especially difficult to challenge.

As with the factor of reputation discussed above, the provision of youth facilities and youth activities such as sports teams could also be used to address this issue. Firm friendships are often forged in sporting teams, or joint projects. If a youth is actively involved in such activity, they might be less inclined to seek friendship via street gangs.

Another factor which is very close to that of friendship, which was a recurrent theme during the free response section of the questionnaire, was that of family that the gang provides. While there can be no influence over the biological familial arrangements and little influence over the living situation of a youth, other than placement in a foster home, there are potentially other avenues to engender a sense of family in more productive ways. Whilst conducting this research, I experienced some people, including prominent US based ex-gang members, advocating the indoctrination of youths into organised religion. Undoubtedly many people gain immense love, support and satisfaction from such involvement. Should a youth wish to explore this, gain these advantages and be diverted from gang affiliation, then this is a desirable outcome. However, for those not drawn to religion, I return to the notion of the
provision of sporting teams and facilities that can have a similar affect, as can an interest group, such as music. The feeling of striving to achieve something as a group of people, who have a similar goal can help engender similar feelings of family and support, as often highlighted when a sports person refers to their teammates with affection reserved for close friends and family. There are usually individuals within a community who are willing to give up their time to provide such opportunities. These people should be supported, with funding and access to venues to allow for this activity to be undertaken. Once engaged and comfortable in this type of activity, the youth can be engaged and supported, hopefully diverting them from gang involvement. Examples of such successful schemes include the Philadelphia based swim coach, Jim Ellis, who formed the PDR swim team in 1971 and Herman Boone, who integrated black and white American football players at T C Williams High School, Alexandria, Virginia, at the height of civil unrest in 1970’s America, leading to a 13-0 season. Whilst this might seem expensive to facilitate such ventures, the cost of supporting several teams, would surely be a lot cheaper than the cost of processing an individual through the court system, often on repeated occasions. This was identified by Toy (2011, p.15-16), who states that in 2009 / 2010, the trial of six known gang members, involved in the drugs market, related to four gang related homicides cost the tax payer £8,800,000, whilst a year in jail costs the UK tax payer between £40,000 to £50,000. If we can divert one person from jail for a year, this would help fund numerous teams and hopefully prevent many more individuals from entering the criminal justice system.

It is really telling that the first two factors all have to do with attachment. As identified by Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012) and Singh et al (2011) the working-class youths of today feel abandoned by society. They feel as if they have no stake in social order as traditional employment pathways close down and opportunities diminish. While the decline of traditional manufacturing jobs will be extremely difficult to address as offshore companies provide cheap labour, other pathways need to be established. Without the development and provision of such pathways youths will continue to seek to establish themselves in a peer group via whatever means afforded to them.

Another highly scoring motivating factor was that of protection, with no significant differences between the data sets. This is hardly surprising with the influence of gaining a reputation scoring so highly and in the street gang culture the use of violence to secure this reputation as identified in the literature review.
Other factors that varied in their ranking of motivating factors that are commonly cited as reasons behind youth’s involvement were money (Fitzgerald *et al*, 2007, Kintera *et al*, 2008, Antrobus 2009, Melde *et al*, 2012 and Densley 2014) and boredom (Bradshaw (2005). In the US, it can be argued from the results that money does play a motivating factor, with the overall results ranking it fourth and the self-stated gang members ranking it sixth. This compares to seventh in both the UK categories. This could be attributed to a welfare provision in the US, which is generally not seen as sufficient to make ends meet (Welfare Information, 2014). While welfare provisions in the UK are not overly generous, they are seen as affording a basic standard of living. In a world where gang members are portrayed as having flash cars, expensive jewellery and bundles of cash and there is a constant reminder of the materialistic items to be purchased via advertising, perhaps it is not surprising that young men and women are drawn to street gang involvement. What is more surprising however is that money is valued so much lower in both the US and the UK than reputation, due to the fact that the attainment of money has traditionally been a measure of success. These findings align with those put forward by Anderson (1994 & 1999).

The mean values given to boredom did not significantly differ through statistical testing and the application of independent T Tests, however the placement of boredom in the rank table did show that it was viewed as being more of a motivating factor in the UK, where it was ranked third overall and fourth by self-stated gang members. In the US, boredom ranked ninth (last) and eighth.

It has for a long time been recognised in the UK that boredom plays a part in troublesome youth behaviour, with Burt (1913) recognising this in his classic work on the subject. With an increase in the monopolisation of space in city centres by housing and an intent by councils to prevent popular urban activities such as skateboarding and parkour in the city centres, indeed in some instances invoking legislation to ban such activities, youths are left with few opportunities for active recreation. This can lead to loitering in groups in city centres, where their presence is felt by some to be intimidating, drawing the inevitable attention of law enforcement bodies. While people see the need for activities to be provided to young people, they display a large degree of intolerance in what is sometimes referred to as the NIMBY phenomenon, of “*Not In My Back Yard*”, a fact I am constantly reminded of in my current role, where we get daily complaints of youths congregating outside people’s houses. Today’s youth arguably have fewer freedoms than their ancestors, with those resources that do exist
already under financial pressure and little by way of funding available for new ventures. This is compounded by a world that is portrayed as increasingly unsafe, resulting in the reticence of parents to let their children out to play, set against what I see as a growing culture of intolerance. With limited ability to express themselves in active pursuits, unless the finances are provided through family or friends, there is a chance that boredom will manifest and the pursuit of risk and excitement ensue. Where there are street gangs waiting to exploit the next generation, who are free of police attention, this can be a potent mix.

While all the motivating factors received some recognition as a motivating factor, undoubtedly the leading factors were reputation, friendship and protection. Law enforcement have traditionally been handed the responsibility of dealing with gang issues, via suppression tactics, including disrupting the gangs’ activities and arresting members. With the identification of these factors as motivating factors in the research sites, is this still a suitable model? Whilst law enforcement can go some way to addressing the issues around protection by working with local authorities on architectural design and places to congregate, where the youths are not at risk of victimisation, they cannot address the factors of friendship and reputation. As stated above, friendship is an area that no government agency is going to be able to influence, apart from facilitating the potential for friendships to develop away from the sphere of gang influence. This could potentially be augmented through the use of former gang members to highlight how the nature of friendships can change, depending on if life courses diverge from one another.

Reputation is also a very challenging area to address. Again, the use of former gang members who have reformed could be beneficial, as could the use of neighbourhood mentors, who have forged a successful, legitimate career. The youths from gang afflicted neighbourhoods, should be afforded every opportunity to fulfil their potential, through the provision of resources such as appropriate schooling, adequate health provision, housing and recreational facilities. From my experiences during this research these commodities are often absent in gang affected areas. For some of those youths who are vulnerable to gang affiliation schooling cannot take the form of traditional education, due to experiences they have encountered in their early lives, whether it is the behaviour of their parents and possible dependencies, or behavioural problems they have. Not every child will excel in maths and English, but a child who cannot spell might be a wonderfully expressive musician, a gifted artist, or have the potential to become a skilled person working as a tradesman, or
businessman. It is through the provision of alternative avenues to explore such potential talents and the encouragement to endeavour in the pursuit of development of these skills, that youths will find self-worth and external recognition.

**Differing motivations in mid-sized cities?**

It is clear from the results discussed above and in the research chapter that similar motivational issues are in existence in mid-sized cities and larger urban areas usually associated with street gang research. The motivations identified as having the greatest impact in this study, are the same as those identified in the research evidence discussed in the literature review and referred to above.

This has important implications for policy development as it means that effective, evidence based policy, utilised in large urban areas can be assessed for viability in mid-sized cities where funding is not always as widespread. This is especially important as we see the migration of street gang members from larger urban areas into smaller provincial towns as they look to establish control of regional drugs markets. This inevitably leads to the recruitment of local youths, making gang desistence strategies in mid-sized cities more important than ever before.

**Policy transfer - Would a US derived gang desistence policy work in the UK?**

In bringing this study full circle and examining whether US led anti-gang initiatives could work in the UK, there is a mixed message. In the selected study sites, there is viable evidence that the factors identified by previous research, as being motivational factors behind youths’ involvement in street gang activity are present. However, despite there being a lot of similarities between these factors in the US and the UK, there are also differences, with this issue being exacerbated by the policies being placed in two different cultures. The evidence suggests that the aims of utilising successful, evidence based, multi-site programs such as Operation Ceasefire, may be viable in the UK, though there will be governance challenges. Such issues were evident during the attempted introduction of Operation Shield, the gang intervention program modelled on Operation Ceasefire and led by one of the original authors.
David Kennedy. As noted by Behrmann, (2015) and Topping (2015), there were significant political hurdles to implementation that caused the project to fail. This was largely attributable to the fact that the operation was seen by the local community as mired in suppression. This led to a lack of the necessary support for the program. This can be a problem when introducing policies from other countries, as despite the “ideological proximity” described by Newburn (2002, p172) what is acceptable practice in one culture, might not meet with the same level of acceptance in another, an example being US policing practices, set against the British concept of policing by consent.

To address this above factor, any gang diversionary / anti-gang initiative is going to have to be modified to address the needs of the community it seeks to impact upon. It will require consultation with community leaders in the planning stage, so as to engender support and avoid local barriers. By working with statutory and non-statutory partners in the community this notion of policy transfer, with the positive and negative aspects of a practice being examined, as identified by Stone (2012), can be undertaken. If this is carried out correctly we may not see the policy adoption and convergence that was suggested by Antrobus et al (2009), but rather a development of an effective, but acceptable policy response, using successful evidence based strategies such as Operation Ceasefire as the foundation for development, with selective adoption of policies to meet the situation and cultural needs. If this is done we should recognise the benefits of comparative study as identified by Bayley (1999, p.6) as extending our knowledge of alternative ways of working, developing more powerful insights into human behavior, increasing the likelihood of successful reform and gaining perspective on ourselves and our own systems.

Also, if a law enforcement led initiative is instigated through heavy punitive measures, then street gang involvement in the UK is likely to grow, as it has in the US, as it does not address the motivating factors deemed important in this study. A solely punitive style of intervention i.e. suppression based, will not solve any gang problem, as the youths and street gang members of today have little invested in a world they see as having abandoned them (Hallsworth & Brotherton 2012). The threat of incarceration might offer little deterrent in this case, as it only enhances reputation and does not affect the chances of attaining a job which the individual was never likely to acquire anyway. This is currently evident in the UK study site where a young person established a strong reputation, with a degree of adulation from other youths. On being imprisoned, his reputation has increased amongst these youths.
The youth engagement element of program needs to accommodate not just teenagers, but youths under the age of ten, as from the evidence acquired in the course of this study, children are becoming gang involved as young as 5 - 10-years old and significantly by the ages of 11 – 14-year-old. What is abundantly clear in both cities is that the age groups identified as having the highest representation in street gangs are still within the education system, at least at the lower range of the group, and is therefore accessible to educational and support programs that could be delivered to discourage such activity and augment the overall strategy aims.

If the UK is to adopt such a pulling levers policy approach, led by the introduction of support agencies to provide youth with opportunities to succeed and establish their own reputation, with law enforcement and civil authority enforcement following, should the gangs not cease violent activities, then a degree of success could be achieved. This is possible due to debasing the gang’s status and reputation of those involved by showing their actions hinder support systems being implemented. For this to be work, early consultation with all envisaged partner agencies, as well as the public consultation as highlighted above, is imperative to ensure partner acceptance and ratification of the scheme. It is also important that such action cannot be a police derived operation that is bestowed upon partners with an expectation of acquiescence. This has historically been my experience of partnership working and it leads to an inevitable suppression-based approach, as that’s what the police do. What is clear from this research, which correlates with the studies mentioned above, is that any such approach needs to be support services led, with criminal and civil interventions following for those who refuse to engage or hinder the process.

Evidence points to a sustained, multi-agency intervention program, backed by monetary funding, that provides opportunities for self-fulfilment, safe places to live and participate in recreational activities, adequate housing and welfare provision and as the best course of action to address gang offending. This type of program addresses the very motivational factors that drive youths towards street gang activity, as identified within this study and the research evidence on both sides of the Atlantic. By the successful implementation of such programs hopefully more youths can be deterred from partaking in gang activity.
Chapter 7

Implications for practice and recommendations

Implications for practice from this research

This research has identified that similar motivating factors are present in the mid-sized cities chosen as study sites, as in the larger metropolitan areas. It has further been identified that there is little significant difference between the motivating factors, other than in respect to fear and fashion, with possible reasons for this being discussed in the previous chapter. What is very clear is that the main motivating factors are linked to establishing oneself. They centre on reputation, friendship and protection. Money and fashion, which have been often put forward by the public, have been evidenced as not being as important as these factors. It is these impactful motivational factors that now need to be addressed as politicians, law enforcement, public servants and the community look to decrease gang membership in their communities.

This research has also indicated that the development of successful anti-gang initiatives in the larger metropolitan areas of the UK, could be replicated in smaller cities, with an expectation of success, based on research evidence. This is due to the findings of this research reflecting the research evidence of notable academics such as Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012), Hallsworth and Silverstone (2009), Young et al (2007), Antrobus et al (2009), Pitts (2007), Matsude et al (2012) Anderson (1994 & 1999).

The fact that there was such a small degree of significant difference between the two research sites, would indicate that the notion of successful gang intervention polices being implemented in this country is possible. However, due to cultural differences in respect of views of law enforcement and the acceptance of firearms and civil rights, this might not always be possible, as is discussed below.
Current anti-gang tactics

While the academic and wider community search for the answers as to why youths become involved in gangs, it must be acknowledged that the vast amount of endeavour seeks to identify the answer to one question. How do we stop youths joining gangs? It is notable that there has been an increasing academic effort in identifying the means to achieve this and in the wake of the London Riots 2011, where the politicians blamed gangs for nefarious activities and have started asking the same question. Often the response to unwanted activity has been to try and break those involved through suppression tactics. This is a view we saw voiced in the wake of the riots by The Former Prime Minister David Cameron and the former Home Secretary and now Prime Minister Theresa May, where they have declared an all-out war on gangs and gang culture, based on US gang suppression tactics (Hallsworth & Brotherton, 2012). What the politicians failed to realise in this knee jerk reaction, to appease the media and the general public, is that such suppressions tactics have not worked that well in the US, despite ruthless enforcement and there is little to suggest that they will work here (Hallsworth & Brotherton, 2012). This can be evidenced in the UK by the spread of gangs from large metropolitan urban areas to smaller cities and towns around the country, to take control of local drugs markets. If anything, gangs are more prolific now than in 2011.

This policy of gang suppression dates back to the 1960’s in the US, where gangs were seen as demons (Hallsworth & Brotherton, 2012). Antrobus et al (2009) recognise that the response in the UK has also been too enforcement orientated. Now as knowledge grows in the area of gangs and gang prevention, new ideas are coming to the fore and new approaches are sought. The fallibility of these suppression tactics has been highlighted by events, such as the rioting in LA in the summer of 1992, after the beating of Rodney King, and the Tottenham Riots, after the death of Mark Duggan, in the summer of 2011. While neither of these riots can, or should be attributed to gangs, they started in the neighbourhoods associated with street gang activity, namely South Los Angeles and North London. These are areas are often subject to heightened police presence, due to the street gang activity. Where low tolerance policing is invoked, then, as identified by Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012) an angry and alienated constituency of youths may develop. With this comes a deteriorating relationship between the police and the community, leading to the discontent which has unfortunately led to rioting, where the community do not have a legitimate voice in society. This approach is the antithesis of gaining respect by these youths and contravenes the research evidence.
The problem in this scenario, is that responsibility of gang reduction has for too long been regarded as purely a police matter as identified by Squires et al (2008) and that young people, who are involved in street gangs, or troublesome youth groups, are uniformly hostile to the police (Pitts, 2007). There is a real communication problem between youths and the police today, which I have witnessed in my policing roles and as emphasised by the views of participants to this study who had a poor opinion of the police and their effectiveness in dealing with gangs. This is reflected in the findings of this research, where police were rated very poorly by the participants both in the UK and the USA. This was picked up on by Kinsella (2011), in her Home Office backed report on knife crime, where she reported that from research undertaken in July and August 2010, youths did not talk to the police, due to being fed up being branded as thugs and hooligans and being treated with a lack of respect. This undermines the process of deterring youth involvement in gang activity, as respect is the very factor which was deemed as the greatest motivating factor behind youths becoming involved in UK street gangs in the first place. This has then caused the youths to disrespect the police causing a cycle of unease and resentment.

Another problem with the approach of suppression through arrest and imprisonment, is that prison does not rehabilitate a lot of those incarcerated, rather it builds defiance and consolidates gang loyalties (Sherman, 1993, cited by Pitts, 2007). These elements of defiance and camaraderie, coupled with other elements of prison life, then transcend to the street, whereby cultural interplay generates, what Waquant (2004) calls “deadly symbiosis” between prisons and the streets. It is easy to understand, why a person, may turn to the known structures and relationships generated in prison, when they are released back into a society, which has probably, not provided for them, prior to their imprisonment and which is far less likely to do so now with a criminal record attached.

A suggested way forward in addressing gangs

In order for the issue of gang diversion to move forward, there needs to be a shift from the police led suppression systems of the past where the police have picked up the pieces when other agencies have not intervened, Antrobus et al (2009). This situation has arguably not changed, especially in smaller cities. In one of the research cities, briefings taking place in 2017 had to be police led in response to an emerging gang culture. Several other agencies
were not aware of this threat and the involvement of the youths engaged with their services. A multi-agency, multi-faceted approach is imperative, to tackle not only the groups in existence, their behaviour, but also to work towards preventing others joining, rather than relying on suppression once youths are involved. In order to do this, it is crucial that a working definition is derived, that is agreed by all partner agencies and those with an involvement in gangs. This will ensure that different projects and agencies look at the same issues and prevent exaggeration by politicians and the press (Marshall et al 2005). Once this is achieved, then a multi-agency driven approach to gang prevention can be implemented.

It is also important that it is recognised that what might have worked in one context, might well not work in another, due to differing motivation factors, alongside factors such as age range and gang status (Toy, 2011). This is not to say that common path approaches cannot be used, as from the results in this study, we can see that similar motivating factors are present in smaller population centres, as well as the larger metropolitan cities and in the transatlantic context, the difference is usually in regard to the embeddedness and proliferation of gangs. Another factor identified by Toy (2011) is that there is a need for a risk based approach to gang prevention, with a shift occurring from the lead agency being one who has the resources and feels competent, to a multiagency approach, where skills and talent is best utilised and those with the best placed means to resolve the particular issue, taking ownership for that issue. This is arguably not occurring, with multi-agency approach only occurring at a local level and in a fragmented manner. Given the current research and police evidence showing gangs branching out from the urban metropolitan centres into smaller towns and cities, a networked approach is necessary to address the problem, rather than a silo approach.

A multiagency approach is not a new philosophy. Indeed, Burt (1925) identified the opening of play centres, evening clubs, Boy Scouts Groups, Girl Guide Groups, as being responsible for “the rescue of several beggars, pot thieves, and prostitutes” (kindle location 3074) from a life of professional crime. This is a recurrent view of participants within this study who cite activities and places to go as things that could be done to divert youths from gang activity. Burt went on the identify that crime rates were higher where there were no open spaces, parks and playing fields, with no space for recreation amongst youths and cited recreation clubs as being the most promising method of tackling childhood delinquency and a downward spiral into a life of crime. This was a view forwarded and championed by Cloward and Ohlin (1961) who argued that youth gangs could be dealt with by empowering the disadvantaged
young people, through community projects and investments set up to change the opportunity structures. Therefore, allowing the “have not’s” to move to a better position to become the “have’s” and acquire the material aspects of life that appeal so much to the majority of human nature. Another suggestion put forward within this study to help prevent youth involvement in gangs, was the introduction of positive mentors who have made a success of themselves, despite growing up in the areas most affected by gang presence. Cloward and Ohlin, built upon the work of Clowards mentor, Robert Merton and developed the Mobilization for Youth program, which was funded by the Kennedy administration in the USA in the 1960’s. This was a process was comprised of a holistic, innovative and far reaching framework, which formed the basis for the War on Poverty, run by the USA in the 1960’s and continued by Lyndon B. Johnson.

In a statement on the 8th of July 1964 in regard to the Mobilization for Youth Program, Lyndon B. Johnson stated the following:

*Joblessness amongst young men and women today is the bitter root of today’s poverty. While unemployment among young workers has always been higher than among the more mature, it has been worsening in recent years. Almost 1 million young men and women are today without work. The unemployment rate for teenagers is 18 percent.*

*I am especially concerned about the plight of those young people, who are growing into adulthood in areas of poverty and depression. There unemployment is not just a temporary hiatus between school and work. It is too often the beginning of an enduring disqualification from opportunity. It is turning onto a road that leads nowhere. Lack of skill, language difficulty, ignorance of work discipline and poor academic backgrounds enforce discriminations hand. The result is a generation without a future.*

The parallels between the problems highlighted by Johnson and the findings in the wake of the UK Riots of 2011 is plain to see (Riots Communities and Victims Panel, 2012). There is a stark reality of those without a visible and viable future in mainstream society, turning to alternative means to attain the material wealth and recognition which they strive for. While investment in programs such as Mobilization for Youth, was taking place throughout the
1960’s, by the late 1960’s, New York Police Department was reporting that “inter gang violence had waned significantly” and there was “a significant decrease in the numbers of youths joining gangs” (Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012, p.21). In the age of austerity that has continued to cut the budgets of government funded projects, the police and other statutory agencies, what other means are being put into programs similar to Mobilization for Youth, in the UK? If anything, in the UK, we are seeing the budgets of those initiatives set up to help disadvantaged and marginalised youths, squeezed through underfunding. This is despite researchers and practitioners calling for investment in areas where youths have an interest, such as sport, art and drama, and making a provision for positive people in the community to work with people to create a positive influence, to counter the negative influences that surround them.

In the Denver Youth Survey, Browning and Huizinga (1999) found that the best chances of a youth not being involved in a street gang were realised if the youth had conventional friends, a stable family, good parental monitoring, positive expectations and non-delinquent friends. With direction from parents and the active involvement of schools and other agencies, as well as the provision of clubs and open spaces, where children can succeed, then these are realistic aims. It was recognised by Melde et al (2012) that parents, schools and the wider communities all had a part to play in monitoring the involvement of youths in offending and violence and therefore a proclivity for gang membership. The early identification of such tendencies can lead to timely intervention and maybe restore balance to the factors highlighted by Browning and Huizinga (1999). It was however noted that teachers, coaches and peers had a reluctance to become involved with such youths, who have a reputation for violence, due to the potential negative consequences. Should a young person, be dissuaded from a life of crime, by whatever means, Browning and Huizinga (1999) identified from the longitudinal Denver Youth Survey, that they became imminently more pro-social in their attitude and behaviour. Here again law enforcement become important, as the continued pursuit of those who have decided to conform to society, can have the effect of pushing the youth back in the direction of the gang, who place many of the initial motivating factors of retaining friendships, protection and reputation / respect in the path of these youths, to get them to return to their previous lifestyles. This is of course a careful balancing act, as there are many, who will profess to have turned their back on a gang, only to retain links and eventually become fully engrained in such a gang.
After the success of the 1960’s War on Poverty and Mobilization for Youth, the USA has again returned to an age of mass suppression of these street gangs. Hallsworth and Brotherton (2012) identify that this system has not worked and that gangs continue to grow and evolve in the United States. They go on to state that they foresee this trend continuing, while the adverse social conditions that give rise to them are present and that gang suppression has sustained the development of the US mass incarceration system and a burgeoning gang suppression industry. Where any powerful industry is present, with financial backing for government, or prospective government officials, lobbying on policy matters pertaining to their areas of interest, can be somewhat swayed. This can be evidenced by the National Rifle Association and their impact on the lack of legislation surrounding firearm ownership and registration, even in the wake of the atrocities of Columbine, Aurora, Sandy Creek Elementary and the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. Is it likely to be any different with anti-gang initiatives?

While politicians have advocated a US style “all-out war on gangs” they have failed to recognise that the UK is not the USA and that there are significant cultural differences between the countries, despite their common language. There remain significant doubts as to how well these US programs would work and do we really want to see large swathes of British youths locked up in prison, at considerable cost to the taxpayer, as are the millions of young people in the USA? This was reinforced with the residents of Lambeth and Hammersmith refusing to ratify the anti-gang Operation SHIELD, due to feelings that it was too draconian in its approach (Behrmann, 2015) (Topping, 2015). Here we see the cultural challenges associated with implementing foreign policy in a domestic setting. SHIELD was based on the much-heralded Operation Ceasefire, which was accepted in Boston, USA resulting in some notable successes, including a 63% fall in youth homicides, a 32% decrease in shots fired calls, a 25% reduction of gun assaults and in one of the highest risk areas of Roxbury, Boston, a 44% reduction in youth assaults, all via a multi-agency, pulling levers approach (Braga et al 2001, p.3). SHIELD proposed to use the same tactics and involved some of the original practitioners in the form of David Kennedy of John Jay Criminal Justice College, New York. While this strategy envisaged having multi-agency working at its core it was still mired in suppression. It seems that it is this fact which led to various councils reneging on their involvement, despite the success in Boston and various other US cities, due to the different cultural approaches to policing and law enforcement between the two countries. The challenge is now to bring these partner agencies back to the table in order to
facilitate a truly multi-agency approach to the problem, potentially using the Operation Ceasefire model as a template, that can be adapted to a culturally acceptable and sustainable framework to reduce gang involvement. This, in an increasingly socially conscious world, facilitated through social media campaigns, also needs to engender public support to achieve success.

Even within the conclusions of Operation Ceasefire, Braga, Kennedy and Phiel, were keen to stress that this was not a policy to eradicate gangs, but a series of policy decisions that formulated a deterrence strategy. They also identified that a singular agency response, such as those waged by law enforcement agencies would be unlikely to succeed. This was highlighted in the statement “Operation Ceasefire understands law enforcement do not have the capacity to eliminate all gangs, or powerfully respond to all gang offending, in gang troubled jurisdictions. Pledges to do so, although common are simply not credible” (Braga et al, 2001, p.66)

Though the politicians are keen to appease the public outcry relating to the increase of teen murders and the London Riots, of 2011, they will do well to heed the words of Braga et al, (2001). They must recognise that gang reduction needs a much broader remit than pure law enforcement and must address complex social and economic issues, coupled with a robust deterrence. While the structure and methodology, coupled with the undeniable success of Boston’s Operation Ceasefire holds a huge appeal as a ready-made solution to the perceived gang problem in the UK, this has been proven to not be the case. Steps now need to be taken to ensure that a new holistic, sustainable, multi-agency derived policy is developed and implemented, with sufficient funding to allow for effective implementation and growth, should peer reviewed analysis show genuine successes. As Braga et al (2001) themselves noted, the gang structure in Boston was markedly different from that, approximately 1,000 miles away in Chicago, let alone 3,250 miles away in the differing cultural context of London and further afield in the other towns and cities across the UK.

In conclusion, there are a large degree of similarities between the motivating factors of the US respondents and the UK respondents in respect to why youths become involved in street gangs within the study areas. The only significant difference surrounded fear as a motivating factor and the potential reasons for this being discussed in the previous chapter. What is also apparent is that when we focus on addressing gangs via a purely law enforcement approach,
we must look at the US where such suppressions tactics have not worked that well, despite ruthless enforcement, with little to suggest that they will work here (Hallsworth & Brotherton, 2012).

There are several factors that need to be addressed in order to make progress in deterring youths from street gangs. Firstly, the extent of the problem needs to be understood. This can only begin to take shape when a universal working definition for practitioners is used in deciding what constitutes a gang. At present the approach to recording is too fragmented, with no clear guidelines. Once a definition has been created that satisfies the majority, then recording of group offending needs to be an indicator under the national crime recording system, so as to ascertain the scale of the issue. This will allow for a greater analysis and structured approach to the problem, with appropriate structures and finance. Once this has been started, all the relevant agencies need to convene to discuss how to tackle this problem, with these including, but not limited to, education, social housing, local authorities, law enforcement, social services, health providers, probation, volunteer organisations and community leaders. Through constructive talks, those with the most expertise can be given designated areas to lead in and an approach similar to that implemented with a marked degree of success in Operation Ceasefire, the Boston Gun Project can be implemented. This must be modified to meet the cultural needs of an area, hence the need for community leaders to be involved at an early stage.

There needs to a marked shift away from the police acting as the lead agency in all matters pertaining to street gangs. The police are experts in law enforcement, but the aspects relating to the motivating factors behind youths’ involvement identified within this study, as well as other notable studies, do not lead themselves to being addressed by suppression. Indeed, suppression only embeds them further. The police must look to reconnect with the disenfranchised youths of today, who will become the population of tomorrow. This does not mean that the police need to become soft. Rather it just means that a degree of respect is shown to those they interact with in the community, whether this be in the process of maintaining law and order, or otherwise. This is especially relevant in the wake of the current community / police relation breakdown in the US, largely influenced by the Black Lives Matter campaign, that has of summer 2016 seen representation in major UK cities such as London and Cardiff. While the culture of policing is different in the UK, the police cannot afford to have a population of disenfranchised youths resent the police to same extent as we
have seen in certain sections of society in Ferguson - Missouri, Dallas - Texas and Baltimore - Maryland.

For some, the suggested new approach will be easy, whilst for others it will mark a vast change in the way they work. It is only through working with communities and demonstrating that gang activity will not be tolerated, getting the community to support and instil this message, that gang activity can be decreased. As in Boston, as gang problems decreased, there was an increase in provision of facilities and services to the communities, which afforded individuals opportunities that had previously not been available to them. This in turn helps strengthen the message, when coupled with a robust, but fair law enforcement approach to illegal activity, which was reinforced via the courts. Whilst this may incur a significant cost in term of finance, time and effort, this is nothing to the financial cost, time, effort and personal cost to perpetrator and victims of gang activity. As a society, we owe it to our youth to provide them with the best opportunity to fulfil their potential, regardless of their socio-economic background.

There are steps that can be taken with regards to preventing street gang membership. It is not as easy as throwing money at the problem and hoping it will go away. In the current economic climate, both in the UK and the USA, this is not likely to happen in the near future. With a moderate investment, and the mobilisation of the community, with regards to safeguarding the futures of the youth of the communities in which they live, and whose victims they may become if the youth does become involved in criminality, whether street gang based or not, then hopefully the youth of today can be dissuaded from becoming the street gang of tomorrow.

**Reflective practice**

This study was challenging due to the time constraints placed on the research in the US and also the ethical complications caused by the opposing roles of ethical researcher and law enforcement official in the UK. Both of these had an impact on restricting the research pool. When applying reflective practice to the research phase it is noted that the study needed a far longer engagement process in both countries, with possible face to face talks being undertaken with potential participants as well as management teams of the static locations.
where the research took place, allowing for question and answer. This might have engendered trust within potential participants, prior to the dissemination of the questionnaire, meaning they might be more likely to participate in interviews, which would have enhanced the research. In addition to this, a more regular communication stream should have been maintained with the UK research site, when in the US, as even though it was stated that there was a clear understanding of how the research was to be gathered prior to departure to the US, on returning, there was a nil return of questionnaires.

Whilst the data was numerically restricted, which may well have resulted in differences in the statistical analysis being classed as not significant, when in a larger research pool, they may have exhibited a significant difference, this is not to say that the data has no relevance. What was clearly established is that in both the US and the UK study sites, reputation, friendship and protection are all seen as major reasons why youths join gangs, agreeing with the research evidence Given the traditional law enforcement style anti-gang initiatives only deal with punitive responses to gangs, it is difficult to see how this approach will work when employed in the absence of wider socio-economic reforms and opportunity provision.

**Closing remarks**

There is a pressing need to address the issues raised in this Professional Doctorate Final Project. Whilst at the time of the start of the research, some such as Marshall et al (2005) and Hallsworth (2013) questioned the existence of street gangs in the UK, the evidence shows a sharp rise of 21% in reported knife related crime from 2016/17 to 2017/18 (Shaw, 2018), coupled with an increase in the number of arrests of under-18s for possession with intent to supply and supplying drugs by 28% between 2013 and 2017 (Marsh, 2018). Both of these have been identified as activities that are associated with street gangs by Marshall et al (2005) and Squires et al (2008) in relation to violence and Sharp, Aldridge and Medina (2006), Pitts (2007), Antrobus et al (2009) and Densley (2014), with this being supported by this study in relation to the type of convictions of self-stated gang members, shown in Table 14 and the responses to Question 17 of the questionnaire, relating to gang members activities, as shown on page 114 and also the Appendix at page 179. This research indicates that young people in Colorado Springs and Norwich, do not find gangs glamorous, but even less were worried about gangs. Youths in both locations saw reputation, protection and friendship, as
the main motivating factors associated with gang involvement, alongside money in Colorado Springs and boredom in Norwich. Reputation in the form of respect is an important factor for every person as identified by Hallsworth (2013), though those excluded from mainstream opportunities may seek to achieve this via alternative means of toughness as identified by Matsude, et al (2012). Reputation can also serve as protection, as identified by Silverstone (2014) are both important factors in the establishment and maintenance of an active drugs market (Densley, 2014), with Kintera et al (2008) identifying that the material inequalities in society drive youths to criminality in the absence of other viable options, a view supported by Densley and Stevens (2015). In order to address these issues, we must address the complex social and economic issues that exist in modern day society, coupled with robust law enforcement as identified by Braga et al (2001). This will need community acceptance, as evidenced by the failure of Operation Ceasefire and continued investment from government to fund a multi-agency approach aimed at providing youths with alternative, legitimate routes to self-actualisation and success, with this in turn diminishing the motivating factors behind youths involvement in street gangs.
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Youth Justice Board (2007 January 26th) Rod Morgan leaves the Youth Justice Board, (26th January 2007) Youth Justice Board Retrieved from:
Dear Jonathan,

Full Title of Study: A comparative study between Norwich, (UK), and Colorado Springs, (USA), into the motivating factors behind youths involvement in street gangs

Documents reviewed:
Professional Doctorate Application Form
Draft Questionnaire
Letter to Future Project
Consent Form
Participant Information Sheet

Thank you for your response to my last letter and for providing the requested documents. I am now pleased to confirm the favourable opinion of the Research Ethics Committee.

I wish you every success with your research.

David Carpenter
Chair: FHSS REC
Appendix B – Research Ethics Checklist
### FORM UPR16
Research Ethics Review Checklist

Please include this completed form as an appendix to your thesis (see the Postgraduate Research Student Handbook for more information)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information</th>
<th>Student ID:</th>
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<tr>
<td>PGRS Name:</td>
<td>Jonathan Bendall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>ICJS</td>
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<td>First Supervisor:</td>
<td>Nathan Hall</td>
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<td>Start Date: (or progression date for Prof Doc students)</td>
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| Thesis Word Count: (excluding ancillary data)   | 52,683 |

If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University’s Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study.

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

### UKRIO Finished Research Checklist:
(If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: [http://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research](http://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research))

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<td>a) Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>b) Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged?</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>c) Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>d) Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration?</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>e) Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements?</td>
<td>YES</td>
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**Candidate Statement:**

I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)

**Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):**

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If you have *not* submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered ‘No’ to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain below why this is so:

Signed (PGRS): [Signature]

Date: 10/07/2018

UPR16 – August 2015
Appendix C – Questionnaire
Study Title:
A comparative study between Norwich, (UK) and Colorado Springs (USA) into the motivating factors behind youths involvement in street gangs.

FHSS REC Ref No: (if applicable)

Name of researcher and supervisor (if applicable):
Researcher: Jon Bendall      Supervisor: Dr Nathan Hall

Contact details:
If you wish to contact me please, do so via the address shown above, with any letters addressed to Jon Bendall c/o Dr Nathan Hall. Or you can email me at fulbright2010@yahoo.co.uk

Invitation
Thank you for reading this. I would like to invite you to take part in my research study by completing this questionnaire. It is entirely up to you whether you participate but your responses would be valued. You have been identified as a potential respondent by  

I am approaching you as a student researcher with the University of Portsmouth. My study is involved at looking into the views of young people, with regards to why young people get involved in street gangs. I believe that it is important to get the views of young people on issues that affect them, and that these views are recognised and given consideration by those making the rules and laws surrounding these areas.

By completing this questionnaire you will be helping me with my study into what motivates youths to get involved in street gangs. From this information, I am going to write a paper, which will hopefully result in the award of a Professional Doctorate in Criminal Justice Studies. As I am also going to Colorado Springs, USA to do the same research there, after the
award of a Fulbright Police Research Scholarship, a copy of the paper will also be sent to the National Police Library.

I neither need your name nor any identifying details; the questionnaire can be completed anonymously and all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality. This is done, so that no-one can tell who has completed which questionnaire, so allowing you to be honest with your answers.

Responses from completed questionnaires will be studied for analysis; once this is complete the original questionnaires will be kept until the award of my Professional Doctorate in Criminal Justice Studies, and then be destroyed. Up to this stage, completed questionnaires will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. If you wish to learn more about the results of the research please email me at the address set up for this research, which is shown at the top of this letter.

Thanks again for taking the time to read this, and hopefully complete the questionnaire.

Jon Bendall.
Questionnaire instructions

Please read the following questions carefully, and answer all the questions listed below, placing a X in the relevant boxes where applicable. Please DO NOT write your name or address anywhere on the questionnaire.

Part 1: What is a gang? Personal experience of gangs

1) A definition of a street gang, that is based upon a definition settled on by the Eurogang consensus is:

“A street gang is a youth group, who generally congregate on the streets, or similar outdoor areas, who have been in existence for a significant period of time, and who are recognised as being involved in illegal activity.”

Do you agree with this definition of street gangs?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

2) If you answered “No” to question 1, what do you consider a street gang to be?

__________________________________

__________________________________

__________________________________

__________________________________

3) Do you think there are street gangs in Norwich?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

4) If you answered YES to Question 3, please list all the names of the street gangs you are aware of below.

__________________________________

__________________________________

__________________________________

__________________________________

__________________________________

__________________________________

__________________________________
5) Have you had contact with street gangs?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

If you answered NO to question 5, please go to question 12.

6) If you answered yes to Question 5, please mark all the types of occasions you have come into contact with street gangs.

☐ On the street  ☐ Member  ☐ Victim  ☐ In school  ☐ Friend(s) in gang  ☐ Other

If you stated other, please say in what way: ___________________________________________

If you have not identified yourself as a street gang member, please go to question 12.

7) If you have identified yourself as a street gang member. How long was / is your membership?

☐ 0-5 months  ☐ 6mths-11mths  ☐ 1-3yrs  ☐ 4-6yrs  ☐ 7-10yrs  ☐ 11yrs +

8) If you identified yourself as being a street gang member in question 6. Has this involvement led to you getting a criminal record?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

9) If you answered yes to question 8 please indicate what area of criminal activity (mark all that apply)

☐ Theft/Burglary  ☐ Violence  ☐ Weapons  ☐ Robbery  ☐ Drugs  ☐ Criminal Damage  ☐ Other

If you marked other, please state what this is in relation to below.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
10) If you stated that you are or have been a member of a street gang, do you regret getting involved with street gangs?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

11) Please explain your answer to question 10.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Why do youths join gangs?

12) How much of a factor do you think boredom is in young people joining gangs?

☐ 1  2  3  4  5
Big Factor Not a factor

13) How much of a factor do you think fashion is in young people joining gangs?

☐ 1  2  3  4  5
Big Factor Not a factor

14) How much of a factor do you think pressure from friends is in young people joining gangs?

☐ 1  2  3  4  5
Not a factor Big Factor

15) How much of a factor do you think reputation is in young people joining gangs?

☐ 1  2  3  4  5
Big Factor Not a factor

16) How much of a factor do you think money is in young people joining gangs?

☐ 1  2  3  4  5
Not a Factor Big factor

17) How much of a factor do you think having a common interest is in young people joining gangs?

☐ 1  2  3  4  5
Big Factor Not a factor
18) How much of a factor do you think friendship is in young people joining gangs?

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Big Factor | Not a factor

19) How much of a factor do you think protection is in young people joining gangs?

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Not a Factor | Big factor

20) How much of a factor do you think fear is in young people joining gangs?

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Not a Factor | Big factor

21) Are there any other factors that you think make young people join gangs?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Part 3: Your views on gangs

22) Do you think street gangs are glamorous?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
1 2 3 4 5
Not at all Very

23) What impression do you have of people in gangs?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
1 2 3 4 5
Good Bad Impression

24) Do street gangs worry you?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
1 2 3 4 5
A lot Not at all

25) Please explain your answer to question 24

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

26) If a street gang is known to hang around in an area, will you avoid that area?

☐ ☐
Yes No

Please explain your answer.
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
27) In your experience, what type of activities do street gangs get involved in?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

28) In your own personal experience, from what ethnic backgrounds are most gang members? (e.g. White, Black, Asian, Hispanic, no particular background)
__________________________________________________________________________

29) In your own personal experience, what age are most people in street gangs?

☐ 5-10 years  ☐ 11-14 years  ☐ 15-19 years  ☐ 20-24 years  ☐ 25-29 years  ☐ 30+ years  ☐ Don’t know

30) In your own personal experience, what sex are most gang members?

☐ Female  ☐ Male  ☐ Equal mixture  ☐ Don’t know
Part 4: Police interaction with street gangs & what can be done to discourage gang membership

31) How well do you think the police engage with street gangs?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
1 2 3 4 5
Very well Very badly

32) How well do you think the police deal with street gang activity?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
1 2 3 4 5
Very well Very badly

33) Is there anything better the police could do when dealing with street gangs?

☐ ☐
Yes No

34) If you answered Yes to Question 33, please give examples below.
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

35) What in your opinion could be done to discourage young people from joining street gangs?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Part 5: About you

36) What ethnic background are you? (e.g., White, Black)

_____________________________________________________________________

37) How old are you?

☐ 5-10 years ☐ 11-14 years ☐ 15-19 years ☐ 20-24 years ☐ 25-29 years ☐ 30 years+

38) What sex are you?

☐ Female ☐ Male

Thanks, conclusions and further advice / support
Thank you for completing the questionnaire, please return it to Dawn Jackson, at the Future Project, 168b Motum Road, Norwich, Norfolk, UK, NR5 8EG, in the envelope provided, sealing the envelope before you do. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE ENVELOPE.

If you have any concerns regarding this research please contact me or my supervisor in the first instance. If you are not entirely happy with a response please contact: Dr Phil Clements (Course leader, Professional Doctorate in Criminal Justice Studies) at the address at the top of this page.

If you would like to be involved in an anonymous interview with regards to this study, please let a supervisor know.
Appendix D – Tables of free response answers
Are there other factors that you think motivate youths to join street gangs?

**USA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of security</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family history of gang involvement</td>
<td>IIIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad home life</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No father figure</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of family / family support</td>
<td>IIIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back up</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to be something in this world</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppression</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad family life</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media influence</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of hope</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something to stand for</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self confidence</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honour and respect</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are there other factors that you think motivate youths to join street gangs?

**UK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If they want family</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not respect families</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In your experience, what activities do street gangs get involved in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car jacking / Theft</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break ins / Burglaries</td>
<td>IIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking and partying</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robberies</td>
<td>IIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>IIII IIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun Possession / distribution / trafficking</td>
<td>IIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug distribution / Trafficking</td>
<td>IIII IIII I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug taking</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>IIIII IIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAP / Music</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chasing women</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making money</td>
<td>IIIII I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anything illegal</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative ones</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagging</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tattooing</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play sports</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extortion</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car clubs</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog fighting</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small business e.g. cell shops, weed dispensaries, clothes stores</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubbing / Partyng / Block party</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community activities / charities</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling stolen goods</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive by shootings</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money laundering (landscaping/auto motive customising/construction)</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just hanging about</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In your experience, what activities do street gangs get involved in?

**UK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drug dealing</td>
<td>IIIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td>IIIII IIII III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>IIIII I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killing</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidating / Abusive to people</td>
<td>IIIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>IIIII IIII II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing damage</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglaries</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>IIIII III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partying</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorderly behaviour</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilling</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal stuff / Crime</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging around on the streets</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**In your opinion, is there anything the police could do better when dealing with gangs?**

**USA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pull more cars</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get to know people / talk to them</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More SG specific cops targeting gang areas</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get involved in community to understand reasons of SG involvement</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take it more seriously</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change approach &amp; Learn to love them</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t discriminate / have preconceived ideas/ Superiority complex</td>
<td>IIIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a little more understanding and respect</td>
<td>IIIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t harass them if they are not doing anything illegal</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have a superiority complex</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join one to learn more</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In your opinion, is there anything the police could do better when dealing with gangs?**

**UK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More police attention</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have such a negative attitude</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help to arrange somewhere for youths to congregate</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with more serious issues</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t think people playing football are a gang</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to gangs’ side of the story / take more interest in individuals</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave them alone</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More police presence on street</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break them up</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t see it as a waste of time</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**In your opinion, what could be done to discourage youths from street gang involvement?**

**USA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>USA Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better activities to keep them busy</td>
<td>IIIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing them what it can lead to i.e. death, drugs, jail</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better rehabilitation programs</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show the youths love and grace</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use ex members to highlight negativity associated with street gangs</td>
<td>IIIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund places where youths can go and talk through problems, and be encouraged to realise potential</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better education / Vocational courses</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive mentors</td>
<td>IIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More jobs</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kick their asses without getting charges</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start at home with the parents</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilise the community</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing them what jail is like through overnight visits</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The feeling of structure</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make an example of them</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In your opinion, what could be done to discourage youths from street gang involvement?**

**UK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>UK Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More activities</td>
<td>IIIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better education</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate them about the dangers of gangs</td>
<td>IIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in areas that are run down</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less drugs, weapons and crime</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide somewhere to go</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E – Participants demographic information
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>USA SSGM</th>
<th>UK SSGM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic / Latino</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>76.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No particular race / declined to answer</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>53.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still in education</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not graduate High School</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated High School /Finished school</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Education</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
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